

Friday Times

ISSUE NO: 17611 THULHIJJA 6, 1439 AH | FRIDAY, AUGUST 17, 2018

9 'Al-Haris Al-Khafeer' joint military exercise concludes



20 Music icon Aretha Franklin dies at 76



37 Turkey will emerge stronger: Minister



IOC temporarily lifts ban on national sports

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri yesterday expressed relief at a decision taken by the executive bureau of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), temporarily lifting the ban on the Kuwaiti sports, pending "completion of the roadmap that has been agreed upon by the two parties."

Minister Jabri said in a statement that the temporary lifting of the ban came after fruitful meetings with the IOC, during which "fair members" expressed understanding and respect toward the Kuwaiti Constitution and the State laws. The roadmap that has been agreed upon aimed at securing stability for sports in Kuwait, Minister Jabri said. He thanked His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah

Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah for their guidance to overcome all obstacles facing the Kuwaiti athletes.

Jabri touted in particular diligent follow up on part of His Highness the Premier and expressed gratitude to all who had held the top posts of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs and Public Authority for Sports in the past. Moreover, he said, continuous support lent by speaker and members of the National Assembly was quite effective for lifting the ban, temporarily. He affirmed that full coordination would be pursued with the IOC to implement all

what has been agreed upon in the roadmap toward the aspired objective of lifting the ban permanently.

The lifting of the ban should allow Kuwaiti athletes to take part in the 18th Asian Games, which open in Jakarta, Indonesia tomorrow, under their own flag and anthem. The Kuwait National Olympic Committee had been suspended since October 27, 2015 due to what the IOC described as 'government interference', with the country's sports laws not being compliant to the Olympic Charter. Kuwaiti athletes were forced to participate under the IOC flag at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, where shooter Fhaid Al-Daihani won a gold medal as an Independent Olympic Athlete in the double trap. — Agencies (See Page 47)



Mohammad Al-Jabri



100 feared dead as Kerala flood rage continues

See Pages 12-13

Local

What is privacy online?



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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Kuwait has begun blocking caller ID apps for violating privacy of individuals. The Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) said such apps violate a person's privacy because they access his private information and threaten people's security.

These apps have also led to family disputes and bank thefts. The information technology security department explained that when the user installs a caller ID application, he allows the app to access all information on his phone such as phone numbers and addresses.

I am not a regular user of mobile caller ID applications except for Truecaller, which I rarely use and don't even know if it is included in this new decision or not. But I personally don't think blocking smartphone apps is the solution to family problems and bank thefts that may arise due to phone apps. Smartphones have made it easier for people to communicate with other users via email and social networks, but security experts have warned that user privacy can be compromised by information that a user may think is safe and cannot be retrieved from his phone.

Personal data can mean a lot of info such as first and last name, email address, location and many other bits of information. When anyone wants to download an app, he is usually asked to give his permission to the policy of the app, which means it may collect and share personal data for marketing purposes or otherwise. So we have the choice to agree or not. But, as usual, when we download an app, we just click "Yes" or "Agree" to everything without going through the details of what we have agreed to! When you agree to a privacy policy, you will be under the obligation of the policy's terms.

While telecommunication companies have the right to collect data, users must agree to the privacy terms of these networks, which often include items that justify collecting information about users on the grounds that they use them to improve their experience and services, noting that many users usually agree to these terms without reading them.

So my question is - do I need a privacy policy for my mobile app? And what is the purpose of storing and sharing personal data? This year, Google was embarrassed by reports of unexpected errors concerning data privacy and privacy of users. One suggestion was that the user should revoke the permissions granted to any external application to access the profile of his or her account. This topic is still a subject of controversy and global debate, which I don't think will end soon.

I think it's important to define the concept of privacy regarding smartphones and digital media. It is known that users of smartphone applications can control the feature of geographical location and turn it on or off as desired, but it is still possible to obtain data through telecommunication companies. This means there is no absolute privacy when it comes to smartphones, and perhaps blocking some mobile apps in Kuwait and having strict conditions concerning privacy of individuals may limit the existence of such applications.

But the concept of personal privacy is a difficult one in this open era of the Internet and social media. The Al-Arab newspaper published a report on the privacy of smartphone users and mentioned that a company specialized in information security has revealed that more than 28,000 smartphone applications violate user privacy by retaining personal information. According to the report, hackers can access users' personal information very easily. I think technology has not done enough to safeguard user privacy even in educating the user about what information is private and personal and what is not.

Photo of the day



KUWAIT: Until the mid-1920s, pilgrims hopped on camels and braved a hard journey from Kuwait to Makkah that lasted at least three months. Kuwaiti pilgrimage convoys, with hundreds of camels, passed through many areas on their way to Makkah. The cost of the Hajj was 150 rupees paid by the pilgrim to the owner of the convoy, not including food. — KUNA

#stopandthinkchallenge



IN MY VIEW

By Ramona Crasto

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There is a new challenge in town, the #stopandthinkchallenge. Not in the middle of the road or any place unsafe, not with a bucket of ice or in plank post. Instead, we are required to stop and think. I know it's a bit of a challenge, but play along with me.

Have any of us truly considered how these challenges may be crossing the line from fun and adventurous to dangerous? How our better judgment and sense of self-preservation is eroded by the latest internet/social media craze?

It all started when the Ice Bucket Challenge first spread like wildfire and people forgot that it started to promote awareness of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as motor neuron disease and encourage donations for its research.

We don't realize how dangerous these challenges have turned out to be. The Plank Challenge, a craze in which people lie face down in strange places while someone takes their picture, claimed the life of a young man in Australia who plunged to his death from an apartment balcony while "planking". The Floor is Lava Challenge turned out to be more harmful than fun when two girls in Solothurn in Switzerland climbed onto a staircase, wanting to 'save' themselves while attempting the challenge. Things took a turn for the worse when one of them lost their balance and fell four meters over the railings to the stairs below. Luckily, she didn't suffer any major injuries.

Nearly every day we hear stories of people dying or being seriously injured while trying to film themselves for social media doing crazy stunts or jumping on the viral challenge bandwagon.

What does it take for us to understand the dangers we cause by not only putting our lives at risk but also of those around us.

Which bring us to the latest Kiki Challenge that involves a person jumping out of a slow moving car and dancing to the song 'In My Feelings' by Drake. A teen from Iowa tripped and hit her head when she attempted to get out of the car and try the Kiki Challenge. She had to be taken to the intensive care unit. To avoid such a situation, many countries including Kuwait and UAE have taken measures to ban this challenge.

In Kuwait, attempting the challenge can lead to a KD 100 fine and three months of imprisonment. Three influencers in UAE were arrested for doing the same and will be faced with imprisonment and a fine. Many might call this an extreme measure, but the authorities believe that most car accidents are caused by lack of attention on the road while driving, even when the driver isn't speeding.

No one is against having fun - the Mannequin Challenge was all about it. But then came challenges that were the exact opposite. The Blue Whale and Momo challenges created to provoke suicidal tendencies in teenagers are proof of how people are so keen on having fun and attempting to challenge their fears that it ends up costing them their lives. And let's not forget that oftentimes no one really knows where these challenges start. There are plenty of trolls on the internet who invent silly and dangerous challenges with the intention of causing harm.

So let's stop and think about how we can have fun without hurting ourselves and others.

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SCAM ALERT!

SCAMMERS CALLING, TEXTING! BEWARE

Scammers change style and tactics

By Chidi Emmanuel

When Favor Tata, an African expat, got a call last month from someone posing as a customer care representative at one of the telecommunication companies in Kuwait, the offer was too enticing to refuse and she saw no reason for not handing over some of her bank details. "Congratulations! You (your phone number) have just won a sum of KD 10,000 through a draw. We just need your full name, civil ID number and the last four digits of your account number," the caller requested. It wasn't until she read between the lines in the email that subsequently followed the call that she realized that scammers had gained access to her private information.

They pose as professionals - lawyers, government officials, company executives, royal family members, etc as they prey on their victims, luring them with giveaway offers. Some scammers are crafty and use mock corporate mail extensions, which are available via some free email providers. For credibility, some fraudsters pretend to be Europe-based and use what look like foreign telephone numbers.

"It is not uncommon for companies to call you and

offer you better services or special promotional offers - but these days, scammers are tapping in and hacking people's information. On many occasions, the victim will be given an email address or phone number of a third party and asked to contact him or her. Usually, it is the same scammer using a different email address. The purpose of this is to draw the victim deeper into the plot and darken reality. In some cases, the victims will be asked to provide their bank information," Kuwaiti legal practitioner Nawaf Al-Fusia explained.

A Lebanese expat told Kuwait Times about her ordeal. "I got a message on my Instagram account from someone claiming to be a sheikha from the UAE. The scammer later sent the ID card and personal information of "Sheikha Mariam" as proof via WhatsApp and requested me to send \$1,000 to a Syrian woman. The so-called sheikha promised to reward me handsomely in appreciation and asked for my bank details. I rejected the offer because there is no way a sheikha from such a ruling family will be asking someone she doesn't know to send money," Sareena Sahar explained.

Technology has made it easier and cheaper for scammers and telemarketers to connect with people - and also makes it difficult to identify and deal with a fake call.

These days, scammers are finding ways to get their calls through, with some unscrupulous companies hiding the real numbers from which the calls originated. Recently, an Egyptian man reported that an unidentified person stole KD 16,000 from his bank account. The man, who works in an oil company in Kuwait, told police that he found the money missing from his account after someone called him via Viber (with a local bank's logo) claiming he has won KD 8,000. He was asked to provide his personal details for confirmation.

MBA for \$2,000

The latest tactics of phone scammers is to pretend to be from online US universities. The scam begins with a phone call to the potential victim. The scammers will offer you admission and subsequently lure you with a scholarship offer. The victims will be asked to give their credit card's last digits. To make it real, scammers tell their victims that the conversation is being recorded.

"They sent me an email congratulating me. I was told to fill an online form - stating my name, contact numbers, place of work, salary, years of experience, etc. After that, I received a call from a Mrs Rosaline who claimed to be the deputy registrar of a school. She told me that the school

Local

has gone through my application and has decided to offer me an MBA certificate based on my 10-year experience. Surprisingly, I was told to pay only a token sum of \$2,000," said Esther Ada, a teacher. "What baffled me was when she asked for the last four digits of my credit card number. I told her I am no longer interested, but they have kept calling till today - offering different courses and packages," she added.

Black magic and powers

Criminals are using fears of black magic to swindle people too. A woman and a man were recently arrested by Kuwaiti police for defrauding people who paid for their 'services'. The duo randomly called residents and convinced them they were bewitched. They then collected money from them, promising to use black magic to cleanse their family members.

Wash wash

'Wash wash' or the black money scam is probably one of the strangest advance fee fraud formats in existence. A con artist poses as a businessman who has different kinds of currencies but only needs some chemicals to wash and clean the banknotes. The scammer then offers the victim a share of a large consignment of banknotes that have been stained black.

He then demonstrates how the notes can be recovered by cleaning a coated banknote with a special chemical. The chemical quickly removes the black stain and a clean banknote is revealed. The victim will be told that the chemical is the only sample left. The victim will be persuaded to buy more to clean the notes. The more chemical, the more cash the victim gets. The conman may at this stage introduce a third party who will supposedly supply the chemicals. What he does not explain is that the trunk box full of black money is only cut-up black craft paper - not money at all. The excited victim will then be persuaded to pay more and more for the so called 'cleaning chemicals'.



"It appeared real. They even gave me the KD 20 to go and spend after they washed it. I was very excited so I gave them KD 2,000 to buy a small bottle of the chemical, hoping to get KD 10,000. Till today, I never saw or heard from them again. I later found out that the KD 20 was real money coated with a black substance which was later removed with methylated spirit," an Arab expat named Ahmed lamented.

Advice and tips

Fraud is now at record levels as scammers get increasingly sophisticated in their attempts to get money and personal details. "Be observant and protect yourself from being scammed by following these basic tips," Fusia ad-

vised. "Avoid dealing with uninvited and untraceable contacts. Remember, if it looks too good to be true, it might probably be a scam. Know who you are dealing with. Beware of any requests for your bank details or money. Never send money or give credit card details, online account details or copies of personal documents to anyone you don't know or trust. Don't agree to transfer money or goods for someone else - money laundering is a criminal offence. Be wary of unusual payment requests," he said.



Kuwait Times

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Carrom: Traditional game widely loved in Gulf region

KUWAIT: Carrom is a game consisting of a square-shaped wooden board, played by two or four players similarly to billiard, and is very famous in the Gulf region. Abu Hamid owns a workshop where he designs and makes carrom boards is different from the traditional boards sold in the market. Abu Hamid's passion for the game started 30 years ago. He used to search for carrom boards in different shops and sport stores, until he had the idea of making it locally with his own designs, using high quality wood, and with the help of some craft workers. The family-friendly cue sport-inspired tabletop game is of a South Asian origin; very popular in Nepal, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and surrounding areas, and is known by various names in different languages. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Carrom board maker Abu Hamid. — KUNA photos



Abu Hamid in his workshop.



The board, designed by Abu Hamid.

Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, UAE affirm support to Bahrain's financial stability

Bahraini Crown Prince hails financial support

MANAMA: Finance ministers of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, affirmed in a joint statement Wednesday on their commitment to support public finances stability in Bahrain and to continue to stimulate economic growth through the implementation of a program to achieve fiscal balance between expenditure and government revenues. A joint statement quoted by Bahrain news agency (BNA), said the ministers held a meeting in Manama, during which they reviewed a report prepared by the joint technical team of those countries in coordination with the Arab Monetary Fund, including the program to achieve financial balance.

The statement noted that this comes due to the strong bond and ties between the four countries, constructive cooperation, and common destiny, adding that all options will be available to provide support needed finalize the strategic plan of an integrated program, which would enhance the stability of public finances in the kingdom.

Meanwhile, Bahrain's Crown Prince Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, welcomed the support presented by Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and UAE towards strengthening Bahrain's fiscal stability, which he described as "a reflection of the strength of relations between the countries."

Bahrain News Agency (BNA) quoted Crown Prince Salman as he received Mohammad Al-Jadaan, Minister of Finance of



MANAMA: This photo released by the Bahrain News Agency on Wednesday shows Bahrain's Crown Prince Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa meeting with Mohammad Al-Jadaan, Minister of Finance of Saudi Arabia, Obaid Al-Tayer, Minister of State for Financial Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, Nayef Al-Hajraf, Minister of Finance of Kuwait, and Dr Abdulrahman Al-Humaidi, Chairman and Director General of the Arab Monetary Fund.

Saudi Arabia, Obaid Al-Tayer, Minister of State for Financial Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, Nayef Al-Hajraf, Minister of Finance of Kuwait, and Dr Abdulrahman Al-Humaidi, Chairman and Director General of the Arab Monetary Fund, at Riffa Palace. During the meeting, Prince Salman noted the longstanding ties between the Kingdom of Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, UAE

and Kuwait. The Crown Prince highlighted the strength of cooperation and unity between Bahrain, KSA, UAE and Kuwait, adding that the countries' shared objectives and values underpin extensive collaboration. Shaikh Ahmad bin Mohammad Al-Khalifa, Minister of Finance of Bahrain, also attended the meeting. — KUNA

Prime Minister meets Kuwait Society for Quality Education's delegation

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received a delegation from Kuwait Society for Quality Education and representatives of civil society at Seif Palace yesterday. During the meeting, they discussed efforts to enhance the quality of academic education and proposed plans to improve the efficiency of the outputs of Kuwaiti educational institutions, as well as ways to develop the mechanisms of accreditation of academic degrees, thus contributing to promoting the country's human development. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with a delegation from Kuwait Society for Quality Education and representatives of civil society. — KUNA

Speaker receives Indian, Kuwaiti ambassadors

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem received India's Ambassador to Kuwait Jeeva Sagar yesterday. The speaker also received Kuwait's Ambassador to Jordan Aziz Al-Daihani. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem meets with India's Ambassador to Kuwait Jeeva Sagar. — KUNA

News in brief

Amir offers condolences to Afghan, Indian presidents

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent yesterday a cable of condolences to Afghan President Ashraf Ghani over the death of citizens in a suicide bombing targeting an educational academy in Kabul. Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of condolences to Indian President Ram Nath Kovind, expressing sincere grief towards the victims of floods and landslides due to the monsoon rains on the state of Kerala in southwestern India. His Highness the Amir wished the injured a quick recovery and officials in the friendly country to overcome the effects of this natural disaster. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to the Afghan and Indian presidents. — KUNA

Kuwait condemns bombing

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly denounced on Wednesday the suicide bombing that targeted an educational center in capital city of Kabul earlier in the day. The despicable attack claimed nearly five dozens of innocent people and wounded more than 60 others, an official at the ministry said in a statement. The government of Kuwait renews solidarity with Afghanistan and reaffirms rejection of all forms of violence and terrorism, according to the statement. The source reiterated the call for more international efforts to combat terrorism and ensure security for all humanity. The source expressed condolences to the families of the victims and wished the wounded quick recovery. — KUNA

'Al-Haris Al-Khafeer' joint military exercise concludes

Featuring forces from police, military, national guard, American troops



By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A military exercise joining forces from the police, military and national guard in addition to American troops concluded yesterday. The 'Al-Haris Al-Khafeer' (Invincible Sentry) exercise included drills on how to handle cross border terrorism. It took place at the Special Forces Theater in the presence of the Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Special Security Maj Gen Shukri Al-Najjar. The exercise had joint response scenarios and coordination tactics against terrorism in addition to improving the means of dealing jointly with rumors threatening

regional security.

Approximately 400 US military personnel joined 362 Kuwaiti security forces 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, the US Embassy said in a statement yesterday.

The scenario focused on bilateral coordination and response to a transitional terrorism threat. "The exercise was a unique opportunity to allow participating forces to train together and pursue ways to better address common threats to regional security at the operational level," the embassy said.



Panel mulls proposal to reduce expats in public schools

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The parliament's education committee approved a proposal to review the number of expatriate students in public schools. Expats are generally not allowed to enroll their children in state-run schools, but exceptions are given to those working in certain professions such as public school teachers and medical staff in public hospitals. There are nearly 30,000 Arab students in public schools according to official statistics, and their education is costing the government around KD 9,000 for each student, argue the lawmakers who submitted the proposal. The MPs are requesting that the government reconsiders its current policy of providing education for non-Kuwaiti students at public schools, and instead refocus the funds that can be saved from reducing the number of Arab students on improving the quality of education given to Kuwaiti students. Kuwait ranked 94th out of 137 countries in the 2017-2018

Global Competitiveness Report, issued by the World Economic Forum early this year.

Meanwhile, Minister Dr Hamid Al-Azmi and former minister Bader Al-Essa had repeatedly addressed the issue of students' overcapacity at public schools, which forces staff at some schools to increase the number of students in each classroom, especially in Farwaniya and Hawally. And while they noted that the number of expat students is on the increase, they said that the number of bedoon (stateless) students is currently limited, as they include the children of military personnel only, according to sources. The MPs propose only keeping non-Kuwaiti students who are Gulf nationals and children of Kuwaiti woman, along with bedoons who are children of military personnel.

In other news, the Ministry of Higher Education announced that it started accepting scholarship applications for Kuwaiti holders of English secondary school certificates. This will continue until August 27, and the applications can be made online. Scholarships for 2018/2019 include 134 majors in eight countries only: The United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, Malta and France. The ministry distributed the majors between countries as follows: The US with 40 majors, Ireland with 29, Australia with 26, the UK with 19, New Zealand with 9, Canada with 8, France with 2 and Malta with 1. Conditions for citizens who wish to receive a scholarship include that applicant's age must not be less than 17 years and no more than 23, and gets a score of five in IELTS or 45 TOEFL during one year of the date of acceptance.

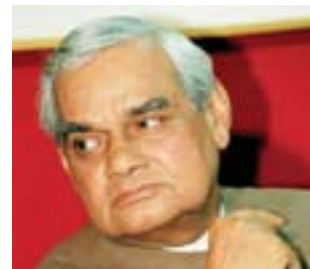
Third suspect arrested in Arab man's murder

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Police arrested a man identified as the third suspect in the murder of an Arab man recently. The suspect, who has been at large since Sunday, was arrested in Um Al-Haiman area yesterday, the Relations and Security Information Department at the Interior Ministry said. He was later taken to the concerned authorities. The suspect was involved in the murder of an Egyptian man who was stabbed to death during a fight in Bneid Al-Gar last Sunday. The alleged murderer and his wife were arrested less than 24 hours later at Kuwait International Airport while they were trying to leave Kuwait.

Meanwhile, the Interior Ministry denied reports about airport taxi drivers going on strike. It said that a traffic policeman was surprised by a taxi driver attacking him, and he asked for backup as other drivers joined in and attacked police. All the drivers involved were later arrested.

In other news, Farwaniya municipality carried out two campaigns to remove encroachments on state property, following complaints about automobile body spare part shops. The campaigns resulted in the removal of 13 unlicensed garages and issuance of six citations. The Head of the Emergency Team Ahmad Al-Shareeka said a campaign in Ardhiya resulted in issuing seven citations for violations of failure to place signs in visible areas, while 18 street ads were removed.



India's three-time prime minister Vajpayee dead

US newspapers hit back at Trump, defend free press

Page 15

page 17



BAMAKO: Supporters of Mali's incumbent President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita gesture as they celebrate at his election campaign headquarters in Bamako yesterday after the official announcement of votes in Mali's second round presidential election. — AFP

Keita re-elected as Mali president with landslide

Voting marred by jihadist attacks, sporadic violence

BAMAKO: Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita has been re-elected for a five-year term after winning a landslide victory in a runoff ballot, according to official figures yesterday.

The elections have been closely watched abroad, as Mali is a linchpin state in the jihadist insurgency raging in the Sahel. Keita, 73, picked up 67.17 percent of the vote on Sunday against 32.83 for opposition challenger and former finance minister Soumaila Cisse, 68, who also ran against Keita in 2013, the government announced. Turnout was low, at 34.5 percent.

Mali, a landlocked nation home to at least 20 ethnic groups where most people live on less than \$2 (1.76 euros) a day, has been battling a years-long Islamic revolt that has now fuelled intercommunal violence. Hundreds of people have died this year alone, most of them in Mopti, an ethnic mosaic in central Mali, in violence involving the Fulani nomadic herder community and Bambara and Dogon farmers.

Keita's response to the burgeoning security crisis was the big campaign issue, with opposition candidates rounding on him for alleged incompetence or indifference.

But the verbal assaults failed to dent his core support, and a fractured opposition and widespread voter apathy left him firm favorite in the final round.

Voting was also marred by jihadist attacks that forced the closure of a small percentage of polling stations, and by allegations of ballot-box stuffing and other irregularities.

The three main opposition candidates mounted a legal challenge to the first-round result, but their bid was rejected by the Constitutional Court.

'Fraud' claim

Cisse on Monday declared in advance that he would reject the results. He called on "all Malians to rise up... We will not accept the dictatorship

of fraud"—a verbal broadside that triggered a UN appeal for calm.

On Wednesday, the opposition claimed a technician working for Cisse was tortured while detained by security forces for three days. Internet access was cut on mobile networks in Bamako yesterday morning ahead of the announcement, AFP journalists witnessed.

However, observer missions sent by the European Union and the African Union (AU) have issued provisional reports saying the election was not badly impaired.

"Our observers did not see fraud but irregularities," EU mission chief Cecile Kyenge said. The AU said voting was conducted "in acceptable conditions."

Political analyst Souleymane Drabo downplayed the risk of voter unrest, saying the country's politicians, including Cisse and Keita in past ballots, had a long history "of calling fraud at election time."

"Everyone knows that the page has turned," Drabo said, adding that the most immediate issue for most people was to prepare for Tabaski, the west African name for the festival of Eid-Al-Adha.

But Jonathan Sears, Sahel researcher at Centre Francopaix in Montreal, was more cautious, fearing that doubts about voting transparency could erode Mali's democracy.

"These elections have been a lost opportunity and Cisse's insistence in interrogating the results underlines that," he told AFP. "The rejection is deeply concerning—if Cisse is speaking for many people, there is a possibility of it being socially disruptive."

Challenges

Keita will take office on September 4, facing high expectations to boost a 2015 peace accord between the government, government-allied groups and former Tuareg rebels.—AFP

International

Iraq religious tourism hit by Iran sanctions

BAGHADA: With hotels facing mass cancellations, Iraqis in the holy city of Najaf are being hit hard by US sanctions on neighboring Iran, which have forced cash-strapped pilgrims to stay home.

At the city's edge, surrounded by mosaic-covered walls and topped by a golden dome, sits the shrine of Imam Ali, son-in-law of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) and a revered figure among Shiite Muslims.

The shrine draws a million and a half Shiite pilgrims to Najaf each year, in addition to those who travel to the holy city for the huge annual Arbaeen commemoration. The vast majority hail from neighboring Iran, whose population is overwhelmingly Shiite.

"More than 85 percent are Iranians," said Saeb Abu Ghoneim, president of the hoteliers' union in the city. Signs throughout the city, 150 kilometres (95 miles) south of Baghdad, are translated into Farsi.

Iran's national language can be heard across Najaf, spoken by women in full-length black veils and by male pilgrims, walking in the shade to avoid the searing sunlight.

But just days after Washington this month re-imposed sanctions on Iran, following President Donald Trump's decision to pull the US out of a landmark 2015 nuclear accord with Tehran, the impact is already being felt in Najaf.

Currency crisis

The Iranian rial has been severely hit by internal economic woes and the US measures, losing around half of its value against the dollar since April. Farzad Reza Ali, an Iranian who did manage to fund his trip to Najaf, said the

drop in pilgrim numbers was a direct result of the currency crisis. "(It's) because the rial is worth nothing," he said, a travel company badge tied to a ribbon around his neck in the colors of the Iranian flag. The first round of sanctions against Iran covers financial transactions and imports of raw materials.

Further measures due to hit in November will affect Iran's central bank and the vital hydrocarbon industry. At the start of the year the dollar exchange rate was 42,900 rials. It has since hit nearly 120,000 rials on the black market.

To get the \$40 (35 euros) needed for a visa to Iraq, Mokdabandeh Mehrban said he had to go to the black market. "Now the market fluctuates and it's not supported by the government, so there are fewer Iranian pilgrims," he said, wearing large sunglasses and a striped shirt.

Market in 'free fall'

Cancellations by Iranian pilgrims could have dramatic consequences for Iraq's tourism sector, which last year directly or indirectly employed some 544,500 people. It also contributed three percent of GDP, nearly \$5 billion dollars, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council.

Tourism is almost exclusively religious in Iraq and is concentrated in Najaf and nearby Karbala, the country's other holy Shiite city. As Najaf prepares to welcome pilgrims for numerous religious festivals this month, there is a notable lack of Iranian arrivals.

Transport links have been slashed-Najaf airport, which used to offer 35 flights a day between the two countries, now operates just



NAJAF: An Iraqi vendor sells Iranian currency in a street in Najaf. Iraqis in the holy city of Najaf are being hit hard by US sanctions on neighboring Iran, which have forced cash-strapped pilgrims to stay home. — AFP

12. Officials say most of the passengers on the flights leaving Najaf for Iran are Iraqi pilgrims heading for Iranian holy sites.

"A lot of hotel reservations have been cancelled and the number of pilgrims to Najaf is very fragile," said Abu Ghoneim, although he was unable to provide precise figures from the city's 285 hotels.

To counter the trend, hoteliers have been forced to offer rooms at bargain basement

prices. "Prices have been slashed, to less than 50 percent sometimes," said Youssef Abu Al-Tabouk, owner of Najaf's Al-Balad Al-Amine hotel. But discounted stays and other special offers are not enough to make up for the impact of sanctions, the 85-year-old said, his head covered with a traditional black and white keffiyeh scarf. Without Iranian pilgrims, he said, "the market is in free fall". — AFP

Kuwait Times

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International

Monsoon fury in Kerala unabated, toll rises to 100

More troops deployed as thousands remain stranded



COCHIN: Indian navy and rescue personnel evacuate local residents in a boat at Aluva, in the Indian state of Kerala, yesterday. — AFP

COCHIN: Helicopters airlifted stranded families from rooftops and dam gates were thrown open as incessant torrential rain brought fresh havoc yesterday to the Indian state of Kerala where about 100 people are feared dead.

Hundreds of extra troops were deployed in the southern state, a major tourist hotspot, as the government issued a "red alert" over the region's worst floods in decades.

State authorities said the confirmed death toll was 72 but officials and media reports said up to 30 more people were feared dead yesterday in landslides and as rivers burst their banks, flooding scores of villages. At least eight people were reported dead and 15 others, including a three-month-old infant, were trapped inside three houses hit by a landslide near an irrigation dam in Malappuram district, the Hindu newspaper said. The Cochin airport is now expected to remain closed until August 26. The airport was earlier expected to open on Saturday (August 18), but the situation not improving, the airport authorities have decided to extend the closure.



Cochin Airport to remain closed till August 26

Authorities said many people were trapped inside their houses. More than 60,000 people have sought refuge in relief camps. "At least 6,500 people are stranded in different parts of Kerala and the situation in three districts is particularly grim," a Kerala state disaster management official told AFP.

Kerala, famed for its pristine palm-lined beaches and tea plantations, is battered by the monsoon every year but this year's damage has been particularly severe. Floods have also caused havoc in other states, including Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh.

Some 540 army, navy and air forces reinforcements were sent to Kerala yesterday to join the rescue effort. The army said it had rescued scores of people with helicopters sent to the region. Defense forces and government boats were also used in an increasingly desperate rescue operation. Authorities appealed for victims to stand in open fields or on rooftops away from trees so helicopters were not damaged during rescue efforts.

'Please help'

People could be seen paddling lifeboats provided by the military, while in some areas families commandeered local wooden boats to ferry themselves to safety.

Army helicopters rescued families but also dropped food packets and drinking water to some of the worst-affected districts. The gov-

ernment says 10,000 kilometers (6,000 miles) of Kerala roads have been destroyed or damaged and hundreds of homes lost.

It has ordered the opening of gates at 34 dams and reservoirs where water levels had reached danger levels.

Cars and livestock washed away in the floods were seen on Indian television, and men and



ERNAKULAM: Indian commuters travel in a truck to a safer place as flood waters ravaged the National Highway 47 in Ernakulam district of Kochi yesterday.—AFP

International

women wading through chest-high waters that had gushed into their homes.

Many used social media to send rooftop distress calls, some with video.

Greta Mathew pleaded for help for her family in a Twitter message. "Anybody reading this, PLZ HELP. My relatives are stuck on the upper floor of house with an 8 months pregnant

lady, in Edayaranmula, Pathanamthitta dist. All rescue control rooms' numbers busy. No rescue team reached yet. No contact with family since last evening," she said.

North and central Kerala has been worst hit by the floods but all 14 of the state's districts have been put on alert as heavy rain is predicted for several days. In the main city of Kochi, the in-

ternational airport was closed until at least Saturday because of flooding. Departures were cancelled while incoming flights have been diverted to other airports in India.

All public transport has been stopped with many buses left abandoned in the road.

Elsewhere, eight people were swept away on Wednesday after a sudden water surge hit

a popular picnic in Madhya Pradesh state. Another 45 stranded were rescued on Thursday by police. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said yesterday on Twitter that he has ordered the defense ministry "to further step up the rescue and relief operations across the state. Praying for the safety and well-being of the people of Kerala". — AFP



COCHIN: India residents stand on the shore as Periyar river flooded following monsoon rains at Aluva, in the Indian state of Kerala, yesterday.—AFP



COCHIN: Kochi's International airport apron is seen flooded following monsoon rains in the Indian state of Kerala on Wednesday. — AFP



ERNAKULAM: Fire and Rescue personnel evacuate local residents in an inflatable boat from a flooded area at Muppathadam near Eloor in Kochi's Ernakulam district. — AFP



ALUVA: Indian fire and rescue personnel evacuate local residents in boat following monsoon rains at Aluva yesterday.—AFP

Kerala situation grave: Top court

NEW DELHI: India's Supreme Court yesterday termed as "grave" the flood situation in Kerala and agreed to hear a plea seeking central government's mediation between Kerala and Tamil Nadu state governments over the issue of the Mullaperiyar Dam crossing the 142-foot threshold.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Dipak Misra and Indu Malhotra considered the submission of a lawyer and agreed to hear the plea today itself.

The petition seeks a decision on disaster management steps in the background of the floods, opening of 33 dams in Kerala, confusion between Kerala and Tamil Nadu chief ministers as water in the Mullaperiyar Dam has crossed the 142-ft threshold.

The death toll in the current phase of monsoon fury in the southern state has crossed 100 while rains and flood water have caused extensive damage.

Rise in flood waters in Periyar River due to the rains and opening of all shutters of all major dams including Mullaperiyar, Cheruthoni, part of Idukki reservoir, and Idamalayar, have severely affected millions of lives of people in downstream areas.



KOCHI: Submerged vehicles on a flooded street are pictured following monsoon rains in Kochi, in the Indian state of Kerala, yesterday. — AFP

International

Italian bridge company under fire as rescuers toil for third day

Between 10-20 people may still be missing

GENOA: Italy's populist government was on a war footing yesterday with the Italian operator of the bridge that collapsed and killed dozens in the port city of Genoa as desperate efforts to find survivors in the rubble went into a third day.

Shares in Atlantia, the holding company of infrastructure giant Autostrade per l'Italia, plummeted after the government said it would seek to revoke its lucrative contracts.

On the ground, rescue workers toiled among bulldozers and cranes to find survivors amid the ruins of a vast span of the Morandi bridge that collapsed on Tuesday, sending about 35 cars and several trucks plunging 45 metres (150 feet) onto railway tracks below. There still may be between 10 and 20 people missing under the rubble of the highway bridge that collapsed in Genoa this week, the city's chief magistrate said yesterday.

Francesco Cozzi told Reuters by telephone that it was the working hypothesis based on information from relatives who have not heard from family members and the number of vehicles believed to be on the bridge on Tuesday.

Officials said 38 people were confirmed dead. "We were unlucky last night, we did not find anyone. We are still looking for cavities that can hide people, living or not," said fire official Emanuele Gissi, adding that the unstable rubble has made the search operation "dangerous".

"We are trying to cut the big pieces of concrete that fell off the bridge, after which we will move them with the cranes and send in search dogs. Then our personnel will try to see if there

are any positive signs."

The government has blamed Autostrade per l'Italia, which operates and maintains nearly half of the country's motorways, for the tragedy that Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte said yesterday has claimed at least 38 lives.

Children aged eight, 12 and 13 were among the dead, Interior Minister Matteo Salvini said Wednesday, adding that more people were still missing. Sixteen people were injured.

Three Chileans, who live in Italy, and four French nationals were also killed. The government has announced a year-long state of emergency in the region, with five million euros going towards recovery work. Conte said Wednesday that his government would seek to revoke the company's contract for the A10 motorway, which includes the bridge, while Transport Minister Danilo Toninelli said the company should be fined up to 150 million euros (\$170 million).

The government, in power only since June, claims that Autostrade failed to carry out necessary maintenance of the bridge, which has also drawn fire from engineering experts.

A transport ministry spokesperson told AFP the government was mulling revoking all other motorway contracts awarded to the company.

Autostrade denies that it scrimps on motorway maintenance, saying it has invested over one billion euros a year in "safety, maintenance and strengthening of the network" since 2012.

Autostrade's holding company Atlantia, whose shares crashed 24 percent yesterday after



GENOA: A man living near the Morandi motorway bridge answers journalists' questions during his evacuation, two days after a section collapsed in Genoa yesterday.— AFP

a brief suspension, slammed the government for threatening to revoke its contracts "without any verification of the material causes of the accident". It warned that the government would have to refund the group the value of the contract, which runs until at least 2038.

The tragedy has focused anger on the structural problems that have dogged the decades-old Morandi bridge and Autostrade. Deputy prime minister Luigi Di Maio said yesterday:

"You just can't die while paying tolls."

Survivors recounted the heart-stopping moment when the bridge buckled, tossing vehicles and hunks of concrete into the abyss. Davide Capello, a former goalkeeper for Italian Serie A club Cagliari, plunged with his car but was unscathed. "I was driving along the bridge, and at a certain point I saw the road in front of me collapse, and I went down with the car," he told TV news channel Sky TG24. — Agencies

Police get more time to hold man arrested over UK parliament attack

LONDON: British police on Wednesday obtained more time to question a man arrested outside the Houses of Parliament for attempted murder and suspected terrorism after a car ploughed into cyclists before crashing into protective barriers.

Three people were injured when the 29-year-old, named by media as Salih Khater, careered over a pavement and into the group of cyclists during Tuesday's morning rush-hour in Westminster. Police said the man, a British national originally from Sudan, was initially arrested on suspicion of terrorism offences but had now been "further arrested for attempted murder".

Westminster Magistrates' Court approved a warrant Wednesday to continue holding the suspect until Monday, authorities added. The BBC reported that he came to Britain as a refugee and had been granted asylum. He remains in custody at a south London police station.

Two of the injured victims—a man and a woman—were taken to hospital but have now been discharged. The third was treated at the scene. The incident had disturbing parallels with an attack last year, when a man drove his car into pedestrians on Westminster Bridge before crashing outside parliament and running inside. Khalid Masood fa-

tally stabbed a police officer guarding parliament—one of five people killed that day—before being shot dead.

The man involved in Tuesday's incident was believed to be from Birmingham, according to his local MP—the same English city where Masood also lived.

Police searched two addresses in Birmingham on Tuesday and were at a third address on Wednesday. Another location in nearby Nottingham was also searched.

Son of Sudanese farmers

Top police counter-terrorism officer Neil Basu said on Tuesday that the suspect was not believed to be known to intelligence agencies, but British media reported he was known to local police. Reports said that Khater is a shop manager in Birmingham and had studied at Sudan University of Science and Technology, citing his Facebook page.

His brother described him as a "normal person" with no fanatical ideas, and no links to any religious group, according to the BBC. Abdullah Khater told the broadcaster his family—who are originally from Darfur in Sudan—was in "a state of shock" over the incident.

Meanwhile Abubakr Ibrahim, a childhood friend, told The Times: "He is not a terrorist. I have known him since childhood. He is a good man." He told the newspaper Khater was the son of sorghum farmers, and had moved to Britain about five years ago in order to earn money to help his family. A spokesman for Coventry University in central England confirmed Khater began studying accountancy there in September, but dropped out in May.

The Daily Mail tabloid reported friends of Khater saying that his father and brother had recently died within months of each other. It added that he had shared music with his friends on Facebook, including Celine Dion, Eminem and Rihanna, but had not posted much for several years. — AFP

Man jailed for hoax bomb call so he could catch UK flight to Los Angeles

LONDON: A French man who was running late for his flight from London to Los Angeles tried to delay it by calling police to say there was a bomb on board.

Librarian Jacob Meir Abdellak, who lives in east London, made the call eight minutes before his 5.47 am Norwegian Air flight from Gatwick Airport was due to leave on May 11 because he was significantly late and airline staff had refused to allow him on board, a court heard.

His hoax meant passengers had to be re-screened and take-off was delayed by 90 minutes. An investigation by Gatwick revealed that the hoax call had been made using the same number linked to his booking.

When Abdellak returned to the airport to take another flight to the United States on May 22, he was arrested.

He initially claimed he had lost his phone's SIM card but on Tuesday pleaded guilty at Lewes Crown Court to communicating false information regarding a noxious substance likely to create serious risk to human health. He was sentenced to 10 months in prison.

"This was a quite ridiculous decision made by Abdellak, who fabricated an extremely serious allegation purely for his own benefit," said Gatwick Police Chief Inspector Marc Clothier yesterday.

"He was running late for his flight and thought it would be a good idea to call in a hoax bomb, however this turned out to be the worst decision he could have made." — Reuters

International

US newspapers hit back at Trump, defend free press

Hashtag #EnemyofNone joined by more than 200 newspapers in US

WASHINGTON: US newspapers big and small hit back yesterday at President Donald Trump's relentless attacks on the news media, launching a coordinated campaign of editorials stressing the importance of a free press. Leading the charge was The Boston Globe, which had issued an appeal for this drive—accompanied by the hashtag #EnemyofNone—that has been joined by more than 200 newspapers around the country.

"Today in the United States we have a president who has created a mantra that members of the media who do not blatantly support the policies of the current US administration are the 'enemy of the people,'" the Globe editorial said.

"This is one of the many lies that have been thrown out by this president, much like an old-time charlatan threw out 'magic' dust or water on a hopeful crowd," it added in a piece entitled "Journalists are not the Enemy."

Trump's treatment of the press is also encouraging strongmen such as Vladimir Putin of Russia and Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey to treat journalists like enemies, the Globe argued.

The coordinated effort comes amid Trump's persistent claims that mainstream media outlets that publish articles critical of him are churning out "fake news."

Free press advocates argue that Trump's efforts threaten the role of the news media as a check against abuse of power in government and imperil the constitutional First Amendment guarantee of freedom of the press. The New York

Times, one of the most frequent targets of Trump's criticism, ran a short, seven-paragraph editorial under a giant headline with all capital letters that read "A FREE PRESS NEEDS YOU" and with the statement that it is only right for people to criticize the press, say, for getting something wrong.

"But insisting that truths you don't like are 'fake news' is dangerous to the lifeblood of democracy. And calling journalists the 'enemy of the people' is dangerous, period," the Times wrote. Across the country, other papers joined in, defending their place in society—from upholding the truth to simply saving people time. "At a practical level, we journalists sit through boring government meetings and learn about public school financing formulas, so you don't have to," said The Arizona Daily Star. "It's not as lofty a statement as the First Amendment, but it serves."

Cannot sit back

Free press advocates say Trump is a real threat to the role of the press.

"I don't think the press can just sit back and take it, they need to make their case when the most powerful man in the world tries to undercut the First Amendment," said Ken Paulson, a former editor-in-chief of USA Today who heads the Newseum's First Amendment Center and is dean of communications at Middle Tennessee State University.

But Paulson questioned whether editorials

would be effective. "The people who read editorials don't need to be convinced," he said. "They are not the ones trying to shout you down at presidential rallies."

In the face of a White House onslaught, Paulson said the media needs a broader marketing campaign to highlight the importance of a free

press as a core value. The campaign also faces the potential for galvanizing supporters of the president around the notion that the media is out to get him. "The media are organizing an ever more deliberate and public attack on @realDonaldTrump and on the 'deplorable' half of the country who support him. — AFP

bankruptcy and undercutting the moral authority of the leadership of the Church, which has some 1.2 billion members around the world. A statute of limitations is a law requiring that prosecutors bring a criminal case within a certain time frame. The advocacy group Child USA said such statutes can block justice as children may not realize they were victims of sex crimes for decades.

Amy Hill, a spokeswoman for the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference, the bishops' political arm in the state, declined on Wednesday to say whether bishops supported or opposed eliminating statutes of limitations. "The time to discuss legislation will come later," she said. "Our focus now is on improving ways that survivors and their families can recover." In the past, the group had spoken out against the idea.

The national bishops' conference did not respond to a request for comment. Some 41 states have eliminated statutes of limitations for criminally prosecuting child sex abuse. Earlier this year, Michigan and Hawaii passed laws giving victims more time to report sexual assaults on children. Pennsylvania was one of the first US states to raise the age for reporting child sexual abuse. In 2002 it lifted the age to 30 from 23 and five years later raised it to age 50. State legislators are ready to take up Rozzi's bill eliminating the limit, said Steve Miskin, a spokesman for House Majority Leader Representative Dave Reed. "It's definitely something that he's looking to bring up sooner than later," Miskin said.

Tuesday's report could help push through bills in states from California to New Hampshire that would relax the limits for criminal or civil action on sexual assaults on children, said Marci Hamilton, chief executive of the advocacy group Child USA. —Reuters



BOSTON: People pass by the busy intersection of State Street and Congress Street across from the new location of the Boston Globe at 53 State Street, Boston, at one Exchange Place in the Exchange Building on Wednesday. —AFP

US clergy sex abuse revelation fuels push to reform assault laws

BOSTON/NEW YORK: The latest revelation of widespread child sexual abuse by Roman Catholic clergy has given impetus to efforts by legislators, including a Pennsylvania lawmaker who has said he was raped by a priest as a child, to make it easier to prosecute such cases.

State Representative Mark Rozzi, 47, said he has fought for years to give people who say they were sexually assaulted as children more time to report such crimes to police in Pennsylvania, one of 14 U.S. states considering bills to extend the statute of limitations for such offenses.

"We're going to get what the victims want," Rozzi said in a telephone interview on Wednesday, a day after a grand jury found that 301 priests had sexually abused about 1,000 children over the past 70 years in Pennsylvania.

"You either support victims or you support pedophiles," Rozzi said. The grand jury report was the latest revelation in a scandal that has rocked the Catholic Church since the Boston Globe in 2002 reported that priests had preyed on young boys and girls and that church leaders had covered it up.

Similar reports have emerged in Europe, Australia and Chile, prompting lawsuits, sending dioceses into

Ex-CIA boss says won't be scared into silence after Trump slap

WASHINGTON: Former CIA Director John Brennan fired back at President Donald Trump yesterday with an op-ed published in the New York Times one day after the president revoked the Obama-era official's security clearance, saying he would not be scared into silence.

The Republican president said in a statement on Wednesday that he was evaluating whether to strip clearances from other outspoken former top officials. Trump said he revoked Brennan's authorization for making what he called "a series of unfounded and outrageous allegations" about his administration and engaging in "frenzied commentary" that sought to "sow division and chaos." Brennan has been a sharp critic of Trump. In an interview with the Wall

Street Journal, Trump directly connected his decision to the ongoing federal probe into alleged Russian interference in the 2016 election and allegedly collusion by his presidential campaign.

"I call it the rigged witch hunt, (it) is a sham," Trump told the newspaper on Wednesday. "And these people led it."

"It's something that had to be done," Trump added. The president has denied any collusion and Russia said it did not interfere. Brennan, who led the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency under Democratic President Barack Obama, called Trump's denials "hogwash."

"The only questions that remain are whether the collusion that took place constituted criminally liable conspiracy, whether obstruction of justice occurred to cover up any collusion or conspiracy, and how many members of 'Trump Incorporated' attempted to defraud the government by laundering and concealing the movement of money into their pockets," he wrote in the Times. Trump's move showed he "clearly has become more desperate to protect himself and those close to him, which is why he made the politically motivated decision to revoke my security clearance in an attempt to scare into silence others who might dare to challenge him," Brennan said. — Reuters

International

Malaysian PM heading to China with mega-projects in focus

Mahathir seeking to cut Malaysia's national debt

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad begins a visit to China today, seeking to renegotiate or even cancel major Beijing-backed projects signed under the country's scandal-plagued, former regime. The 93-year-old leader, who returned for a second stint as premier following a shock election win in May, has railed against a series of deals struck with Chinese state-owned companies by the administration of toppled leader Najib Razak.

His government has suspended China-backed projects worth more than \$22 billion, including a major rail link, and Mahathir has pledged to raise the issue of what he views as unfair terms related to some of the deals on his five-day trip.

During his nine-year rule, Najib was accused of cutting quick deals with Beijing in return for help paying off debts linked to a massive financial scandal that ultimately helped bring down his long-ruling coalition. "We're looking at the agreements entered into by the previous government," Mahathir told a press conference this week. "Where we can drop we will drop, where we can modify we will do that—but the most important thing is for us to save money." Mahathir—who will visit Hangzhou and Bei-

jing, and hold talks with President Xi Jinping during his visit—is seeking to cut Malaysia's national debt, which has ballooned to some \$250 billion.

Bilateral ties were warm under the old regime, and Chinese investment into the country surged as Beijing signed deals for major infrastructure and construction projects. But critics said there was often a lack of transparency and the terms, such as interest rates on loans, were unfavorable to Malaysia, fuelling suspicions about Najib's real motives. Najib and his cronies were accused of plundering billions of dollars from a sovereign wealth fund, IMDB, in an audacious fraud.

Since losing power, Najib has been charged over the scandal and will stand trial. He denies any wrongdoing. As well as the rail link, which would have run from the Thai border to Kuala Lumpur, the government has suspended a China-backed project to build pipelines after alleging that almost all the money for the work was paid out but only a fraction of the project had been completed.

Asked about Mahathir's threat to cancel projects, the Chinese foreign ministry said in a statement to AFP that China and Malaysia's economic and trade cooperation has maintained a positive growth momentum.— AFP



BEIJING: Relatives of passengers aboard the missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 gather after delivering a letter to the Malaysian embassy in Beijing yesterday. Chinese relatives of those who disappeared on board Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 asked to meet the country's Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad when he visits China this week. — AFP

Facebook says it was 'too slow' to fight hate speech in Myanmar

YANGON: Facebook has been "too slow" to address hate speech in Myanmar and is acting to remedy the problem by hiring more Burmese speakers and investing in technology to identify problematic content, the company said in a statement yesterday.

The acknowledgement came a day after a Reuters investigation showed why the company has failed to stem a wave of vitriolic posts about the minority Rohingya. Some 700,000 Rohingya fled their homes last year after an army crackdown that the United States denounced as ethnic cleansing. The Rohingya now live in teeming refugee camps in Bangladesh.

"The ethnic violence in Myanmar is horrific and we have been too slow to prevent misinformation and hate speech on Facebook," Facebook said. The Reuters story revealed the social media giant for years dedicated scant resources to combating hate speech in Myanmar, which is a market it dominates and where there have been repeated eruptions of ethnic violence. In early 2015, for instance, there were only two people at Facebook who could speak Burmese monitoring problematic posts. In yesterday's statement, posted online, Facebook said it was using tools to automatically detect hate speech and hiring more Burmese-language speakers to review posts, following up on a pledge made by founder Mark Zuckerberg to US senators in April.

The company said that it had over 60 "Myanmar language experts" in June and plans to have at least 100 by the end of the year. Reuters found more than 1,000 examples of posts, comments, images and videos denigrating and attacking the Rohingya and other Muslims that were on the social media platform as of last week.

Some of the material, which included pornographic anti-Muslim images, has been up on Facebook for as long as six years. There are numerous posts that call the Rohingya and other Muslims dogs and rapists, and urge they be exterminated. — Reuters

Vietnam mobilizes troops, warns of floods as tropical storm approaches

HANOI: Vietnam put thousands of soldiers on standby, readied evacuation plans and ordered vessels to stay in port yesterday as flood-prone northern provinces braced for a tropical storm due to make landfall today.

Tropical storm Bebinca, with wind speeds of up to 100 kilometres (62 miles) an hour, is expected to dump up to 450 millimeters (17.7 inches) of rain in Thanh Hoa and Hoa Binh provinces, threatening floods and landslides. The capital Hanoi, north of the two provinces, was expected to get up to 300 millimetres of rain, the National Centre for Hydro-Meteorological Forecasting said.

Bangladesh detains dozens in student protest crackdown

DHAKA: Bangladesh police said yesterday they have arrested nearly 100 people as they step up a crackdown after student protests that paralyzed the capital. Dhaka and other cities were brought to a standstill for more than a week by tens of thousands of students demanding better safety measures after two teenagers were killed by a speeding bus.

Police in Dhaka said they have detained 97 people "for violence and incitement in the social media" during the demonstrations that began on July 29. The moves have sparked fear among activists, protest leader Bin Yamin Mollah told AFP.

"Everyone is in a panic," he said. "Almost all the students who have led the protests have gone into hiding." "Many students who posted about the protests have either changed their Facebook accounts or removed their posts. Even yesterday two students were arrested for

"Mountainous areas in northern and north-central Vietnam face high risks of landslides and flash floods, while low-lying provinces face severe flooding," the agency said in a statement. The Southeast Asian country is prone to destructive storms and flooding due to its long coastline. Natural disasters - predominantly floods and landslides triggered by storms - killed 389 people in Vietnam last year.

More than 528,000 people, including 54,732 soldiers, were on standby to cope with the storm, the government's search and rescue agency said yesterday. The central government ordered northern provinces to ban vessels from going out to sea and to prepare evacuation plans for people living in low-lying areas.

"The storm is evolving in a complicated manner and may gain strength before making landfall early Friday," Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Nguyen Xuan Cuong, said in a statement.

Bebinca is forecast to weaken to a tropical low pressure system as it moves further inland by today afternoon, with sustained wind speeds of 50 kilometers an hour, the meteorological agency said.

Natural calamities, mostly floods and landslides, killed 88 people and left 24 missing in Vietnam in the first seven months of this year, according to the Vietnam Disaster Management Authority. — Reuters

their Facebook posts. Teachers are being harassed for supporting the protests," he said. The detentions include acclaimed photographer Shahidul Alam and actress Quazi Nawshaba Ahmed, who were held over comments made on Facebook during the protests.

Writer Pinaki Bhattacharya, a high-profile critic of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has not been seen since intelligence officers asked him to report to their headquarters on August 5, his father told AFP.

On Wednesday police arrested a 22-year-old student leader Lutfun Nahar Luma at a remote hideout.

Dhaka police's cybercrime chief said Monday that officers have investigated about 1,000 Facebook accounts they say spread rumours during the unrest.

Rights groups have criticized the crackdown and the violence used to end the protests. About 1,000 people were injured in police action and attacks by pro-government groups on students and journalists. On Wednesday, Human Rights Watch said the arrests have created "an atmosphere of fear, putting a serious chill on free speech". "Authorities should halt arbitrary arrests, prosecute those involved in violent attacks, and immediately and unconditionally release people it has thrown in jail," said Brad Adams, Asia director for the rights group. — AFP

India's three-time prime minister Vajpayee dead

A gentle face of Indian nationalism

NEW DELHI: Three-time Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee has died, current leader Narendra Modi said yesterday of the ailing 93-year-old who had been hospitalized.

"Atal Ji's passing away is a personal and irreplaceable loss for me," Modi said in a tweet yesterday, using a Hindi-language honorific. "It was Atal Ji's exemplary leadership that set the foundations for a strong, prosperous and inclusive India in the 21st century."

Vajpayee had battled poor health for years but his condition deteriorated sharply in recent days. The former premier was being treated at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi, where he was admitted nine weeks ago with health complications.

"Unfortunately, his condition deteriorated over the last 36 hours and he was put on life support systems. Despite the best efforts, we have lost him today," AIIMS said in a statement.

"We join the nation in deeply mourning this great loss." His waning health sparked a flurry of visits from top dignitaries yesterday, including Modi and senior cabinet ministers.

Vajpayee, a former journalist and poet-turned-politician, was credited with helping lay the foundations for the meteoric rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the right-wing political powerhouse that rules India today.

He was hospitalized more than two months ago with a kidney infection and chest ailment but illness has kept him out of the public eye for years.

Vajpayee, a former journalist and poet turned politician, is credited with helping lay the foundations for the meteoric rise of

the BJP, the political powerhouse that rules India today.

Vajpayee was one of the few opposition lawmakers inside parliament when India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, still held office.

His more than five-decade long career peaked in the 1990s, when his masterful oratory attracted tens of thousands of people to his rallies across the country.

He also became the first non-Congress leader since India's independence in 1947 to complete an entire term in office as head of a BJP-led ruling alliance between March 1998 and May 2004.

Many top ministers in cabinet today including Modi were protégés to Vajpayee and his deputy Lal Krishna Advani in past administrations.

He embarked on a historic bus ride to arch-rival Pakistan in 1999 and held talks with then-premier Nawaz Sharif in the city of Lahore. But his peacemaker image was shattered when Pakistan-backed forces pressed over the disputed Kashmir border and he later helped ramp up tensions in South Asia by testing nuclear weapons in 1998.

Vajpayee withdrew from the public eye after a BJP-led alliance suffered a shock defeat in 2004.

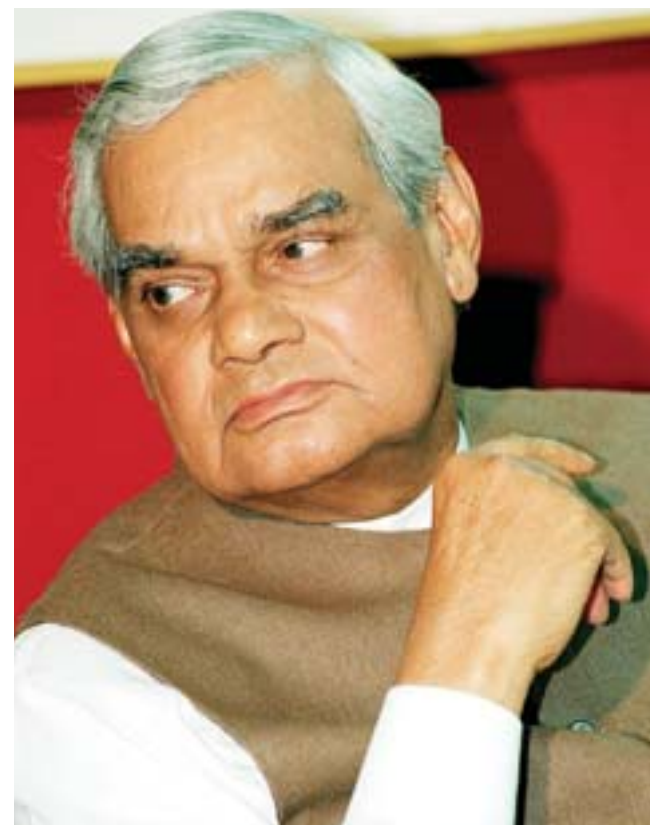
He has since rarely been seen or heard in public. It is widely reported that he suffered a stroke in 2009 which largely confined him to his New Delhi residence.

He continues to enjoy devotion in many parts of the country, especially in key bellwether Hindi-heartland states in north and central India.

Vajpayee's often conciliatory tone, and poetic jibes directed at opponents, attracted popularity on both sides of the political divide. — AFP



A personal and irreplaceable loss for me: Modi



Atal Bihari Vajpayee

Gunmen attack intelligence training center in Kabul

KABUL: Gunmen attacked an intelligence training center in Kabul yesterday, officials said, as families buried loved ones killed by a suicide bomber a day earlier in the war-weary Afghan capital.

The attack on the training facility was the latest incident in a blood-soaked week that saw militants deliver crippling blows to government forces across Afghanistan.

"Clashes are ongoing and the area is cordoned off by the Afghan security forces," said Kabul police spokesman Hashmat Stanikzai. The firefight erupted near a training center overseen by the National Security Directorate-Afghanistan's intelligence agency—with the gunmen holed up in a construction site near residential buildings, an official at the scene said. Live television footage showed humvees patrolling the empty streets while gunfire echoed and a helicopter circling above.

Commandos were also deployed to the scene to help contain the fighting, accord-



In this file photo, a French soldier walk during an operation in Uzbeen valley of Surobi district in Kabul province. — AFP

ing to another security official. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the incident.

Bloody week

The attack comes just hours after a suicide bomber detonated explosives inside an education center in a predominantly Shiite area of western Kabul, where students were studying for college entrance exams, killing at least 37 people. The attack was claimed by the Islamic State (IS) group yesterday

via their Amaq propaganda service, as families of the dead held a mass funeral where mourners wept and clutched the wooden coffins. An industrial-sized digger helped soften the arid ground for the fresh graves as men removed rocks from the soil with pickaxes. Mourners decried the unrelenting bloodshed, while others dismissed murmurs of possible ceasefires and peace negotiations between the government and the Taliban, even though the attack was claimed by IS. — AFP

Student leader joins growing list detained in Bangladesh

DHAKA: Bangladesh police said they had arrested a prominent student leader on Wednesday, in the latest detention of government critics following protests that brought Dhaka to a standstill earlier this month. Authorities have taken social media activists, journalists and students into custody in the days since the demonstrations were violently dispersed.

Lutfun Nahar Luma was arrested at her grandfather's home in the north of Bangladesh where she had been "hiding" since the end of the protests, said Sirajganj district police chief Abdur Razzaque.

"There is an allegation that she has conspired against the government," Razzaque told AFP. Dhaka and other cities were paralyzed for more than a week as tens of thousands of young students blocked the streets to demand road safety measures, following the death of two teenage pedestrians in a bus accident.

About 1,000 people were injured in the unrest when the protests were broken up.

Numerous people have been arrested since, including renowned photographer Shahidul Alam, a television actress and the head of an online media outlet.

Authorities have also this month arrested at least seven leaders of a series of demonstrations earlier this year as police widened their dragnet. —AFP

International

Philippines' Duterte could resign if Marcos Jr becomes VP: Official

China rebuffs Duterte's South China Seas rebuke

MANILA: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte could step down if the son of former dictator Ferdinand Marcos succeeds in overturning his 2016 vice presidential election defeat, Duterte's spokesman said yesterday. Duterte's single term ends in June 2022 and he has spoken often recently about quitting before that. At two separate events on Tuesday he said he was "ready to go", expressing frustration about his failure to tackle illicit drugs and corruption in government. However, he said was reluctant to do that now because a constitutional succession would mean handing power to Vice President Leni Robredo, whom he said was not up to the job.

Robredo, who leads the opposition party, was not Duterte's choice for vice president and was elected separately having narrowly defeated Ferdinand Marcos Jr, the son and namesake of the ousted former ruler.

Marcos, better known as "Bongbong", has challenged the result alleging fraud. The Supreme Court has ordered a recount, a complex process that got underway in April and could take several years. Robredo says she won fairly. Duterte's spokesman, Harry Roque, said the president had a "real, genuine wish to step down" if a qualified leader could replace him. Marcos was among those he would prefer, Roque said. "If there's development and he will win the protest and he becomes the vice president, yes, he will make true his word," Roque told a regular news briefing.

In a statement, Marcos expressed his grati-

tude to Duterte for showing faith in him, but said the president should finish his term. "I urge him not to leave the presidency as our people still need him for the betterment of our lives and our country," Marcos said.

South China Seas rebuke

China rebuffed Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's call for Beijing to rethink its conduct in the South China Sea yesterday, saying China had the right to react to foreign ships or aircraft that get close to its islands.

Duterte said China has no right to repel foreign aircraft and boats passing by its artificial islands in the disputed waterway, and that he hoped China would "temper" its behaviour and stop restricting movements. In a statement sent to Reuters, China's Foreign Ministry said the Spratly Islands are China's inherent territory and that China respects the right to freedom of navigation and overflight that all countries enjoy in the South China Sea under international law.

"But China has a right to take necessary steps to respond to foreign aircraft and ships that deliberately get close to or make incursions into the air and waters near China's relevant islands, and provocative actions that threaten the security of Chinese personnel stationed there," it said.

"China urges the relevant party to meet China halfway, and jointly protect the present good situation that has not come easily in the South China Sea," the ministry added, without elaborating. China, Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaysia,



MANILA: In this file photo, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte delivers his speech during the 117th police anniversary celebration at the national headquarters in Manila on August 8, 2018. — AFP

Vietnam and Brunei have competing claims to the Spratly archipelago, where China has rapidly turned reefs into artificial islands that appear to be military installations, from which its personnel routinely instruct foreign vessels to leave. Duterte has a policy of engagement with Beijing, in the hope of securing billions of dollars in grants,

loans and investments, and has rejected criticism that he is acquiescing to Chinese pressure or surrendering Philippines sovereignty. However, instead of blaming China for building and militarizing islands in disputed waters, he has said the United States was at fault for not blocking the construction when it started. — Reuters

Vietnam activist gets 20 years for 'inciting protests'

HANOI: An outspoken activist in Vietnam was jailed for 20 years yesterday for allegedly calling for an election boycott and inciting environmental protests in the one-party state that has little tolerance for dissent. The communist country is notorious for jailing its critics but the harsh sentence was the heaviest in years as a hardline administration in charge since 2016 intensifies its crackdown against activists.

Le Dinh Luong was convicted for "attempting to overthrow the state" in a half-day trial against the 52-year-old who appeared gaunt and grey-haired in court in central Nghe An province. The swift trial was conducted with none of his witnesses allowed to testify, which the court mysteriously blamed on "health reasons", his lawyer Ha Huy Son told AFP.

"I asked for a cancellation because witnesses were not allowed to speak, but they were not brought to court," Son said, confirming the 20-year jail term. A prominent activist in the region, Luong was accused of posting clips online in-

citing people to join months-long protests following a toxic leak by a Taiwanese steel firm that caused mass fish deaths in 2016.

Luong was also blamed for calling for an election boycott that year, according to state media. His wife said yesterday he had been unfairly targeted for trying to help people. "My husband is innocent. He has only acted on behalf of the poor and victims of injustices," Nguyen Thi Quy said. Luong joins scores of dissidents, bloggers and lawyers behind bars in Vietnam, where public protests of any kind are banned and political parties prohibited from forming.

All media is state-run in the country and many activists like Luong have turned to social media to air grievances. But a new cybersecurity bill that requires Facebook and others to hand over user data and remove "offensive" content if requested by the government threatens to censor one of the few remaining platforms available to activists in the country. — AFP

Vietnamese dad of Kim murder suspect wants 'kind' daughter home

NAM DINH, Vietnam: Doan Van Thanh proudly displays diplomas and photos of his daughter at his home in rural Vietnam, hopeful she'll be freed from a jail in Malaysia where she's on trial for the murder of the North Korean leader's half-brother.

He refuses to believe that "affable and kind" Doan Thi Huong could kill anyone, in line with defence arguments that she was tricked into the assassination along with her co-accused, Indonesian Siti Aisyah. "She was cheated," Thanh told AFP, his eyes bloodshot and his face weathered.

Huong and Siti have been behind bars since Kim Jong Nam was killed with the toxic VX nerve agent at a busy Kuala Lumpur airport in February 2017. After months of hearings, a judge ruled yesterday there is enough evidence for the trial to proceed, dashing hopes of an acquittal. "I love my daughter and miss her, but there's nothing I can do," said Thanh, 64, who works as a cleaner and parking lot attendant at a nearby market.

Huong, a former hair salon worker, left home after high school and spent a few years studying pharmacology and accounting in Hanoi. She then moved to Malaysia, where like many Vietnamese migrant work-

ers she hoped for a better life than the one on offer in her poor rice-farming village.

Her flashy fashion, foreign boyfriends and edgy hairstyles quickly sparked chatter among neighbours back home. That gossip exploded after she was linked to Kim's murder, and videos quickly circulated of a woman who looks like her auditioning for the "Vietnam Idol" TV series. Other unsubstantiated images showed the same young woman kissing a famous social media prankster on a popular YouTube channel.

Her apparent hunger for fame may have embroiled her in the shocking assassination that has grabbed global headlines. Huong and Siti's lawyers say they believed they were taking part in a practical joke for a TV show, but prosecutors argue they acted with intent to kill. Thanh is adamant that his 30-year-old daughter, who spent much of her youth going to church with him, is innocent. "I'm very sad," he said, sitting in his house 130 kilometers (80 miles) southeast of Hanoi where Huong grew up.

Seeking fair trial

The two women are the only people in custody for Kim's death after four North Korean suspects implicated in the assassination fled Malaysia shortly after the killing. The pair now could face death by hanging if found guilty. Huong visited her village sporadically over the years, one of the last times in 2015 after her mother died of heart disease when Huong was just 27 years old. "She cried and cried," her dad recalled, sitting next to his deceased wife's altar. Huong has appeared sullen in her court appearances since her arrest and looked shocked and tearful yesterday as the judge handed down the ruling. — AFP

Lifestyle

Friday Times

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In this file photo Aretha Franklin performs during the finale at Radio City Music Hall for the 91st birthday concert for Nelson Mandela. —AFP

‘Queen of Soul’ Aretha Franklin dies at 76

See Pages 20-21



In this file photo taken on August 27, 2007 Singer Aretha Franklin performs during a ceremony honoring the late African-American tennis player Althea Gibson at the US Open in Flushing Meadows, New York.



In this file photo taken on February 27, 2015 Outgoing Attorney General Eric Holder (center) wipes his eye next to US President Barack Obama as they listen to singer Aretha Franklin at the Justice Department in Washington, DC.

MUSIC ICON ARETHA FRANKLIN DIES AT 76

Key dates in the life of US soul legend Aretha Franklin:

March 25, 1942: Born Aretha Louise Franklin in Memphis, Tennessee, to a Baptist preacher.
1956: "Spirituals," the first recording of Franklin, is released on a local label.
1960: Columbia Records releases the album "The Great Aretha Franklin."
1967: Wins the first of her 18 Grammy Awards for her cover version of the Otis Redding classic "Respect," which becomes a feminist anthem.
1968: Sings "Precious Lord, Take My Hand" at the funeral of civil rights icon Martin Luther King Jr.
1987: Becomes the first woman to enter the "Rock and Roll Hall of Fame," the US pantheon of rock.
1991: Receives the Grammy Legend Award for her influence on the American music industry.
2005: Receives the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest US civilian award, from George W. Bush.
2009: Sings "My Country 'Tis of Thee" at the inauguration of Barack Obama, America's first African-American president.
2017: Announces in February she will retire from touring. In November she sings at an anniversary gala for the Elton John AIDS Foundation, where she appears very thin.
2018: Franklin dies in Detroit on August 16 at age 76. — AFP

In this file photo Singer Aretha Franklin performs during the National Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony on the Ellipse adjacent to the White House in Washington, DC. — AFP photos



In this file photo taken on October 16, 2011 (from left to right) First Lady Michelle Obama, US President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden watch as soul diva Aretha Franklin performs during the dedication of the Martin Luther King Jr Memorial in Washington, DC.



In this file photo taken on February 23, 1998 Opera singer Luciano Pavarotti (right) laughs along with singer Aretha Franklin (left) and the group Boyz II Men (rear) after accepting the eighth MusiCares Foundation 'Person of the Year' award in New York.

Aretha Franklin, the music legend, icon and Grammy-winning singer celebrated as the "Queen of Soul," died at her home in Detroit yesterday, her longtime publicist announced. She was 76. Franklin—who influenced generations of female singers with unforgettable hits including "Respect" (1967), "Natural Woman" (1968) and "I Say a Little Prayer" (1968) — passed away at 9:50 am (1350 GMT) at her home in Detroit from advanced pancreatic cancer, surrounded by family and loved ones. She cemented her place in American music history with her powerful, bell-clear voice that stretched over four octaves. In her decades-long career, her hits spanned the genres, from soul to R&B, gospel and pop.

"It is with deep and profound sadness that we announce the passing of Aretha Louise Franklin, the Queen of Soul," her family said in a statement issued by her publicist. "In one of the darkest moments of our lives, we are not able to find the appropriate words to express the pain in our heart," the statement said. "We have lost the matriarch and rock of our family. The love she had for her children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and cousins knew no bounds."

She was the first woman to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1987. In 2010, Rolling Stone magazine put her at the top of its list of the 100 greatest singers of all time, male or female. The 18-time Grammy award winner inspired myriad

singers during her five-decade career from pop diva Mariah Carey and the late Whitney Houston, to Alicia Keys, Beyonce, Mary J. Blige and the late Amy Winehouse.

She was the first woman inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and sang at the inaugurations of two presidents—Bill Clinton and Barack Obama. Franklin's declining health was first disclosed on the Showbiz 411 website late Sunday by Roger Friedman, a reporter and family friend. He wrote that she was "gravely ill in Detroit. The family is asking for prayers and privacy." The Detroit News later reported that she was in hospice care, as artists from across the musical spectrum offered well wishes to the legendary singer who lived in Detroit—the Motor City, home of Motown—most of her life.

Franklin—who was widely known by only her first name, in true diva style—rose from singing gospel in her father's church to regularly topping rhythm and blues and pop charts in the 1960s and 1970s. Beyond "Respect," her powerful cover of the Otis Redding tune that became her calling card, Franklin had dozens of Top 40 singles, according to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Other hits include "Day Dreaming" (1972), "Jump to It" (1982), "Freeway of Love" (1985), and "A Rose Is Still A Rose" (1998). A 1986 duet with George Michael, "I Knew You Were Waiting (For Me)," hit number one in several countries. — AFP

How Aretha Franklin made 'Respect' a feminist anthem

It may be the most rousing feminist anthem ever, but "Respect"—the song that made Aretha Franklin the "Queen of Soul"—was actually written about a man demanding a break from his wife. Franklin's genius was to turn the song—and the traditional values it espoused—on their head by some deft changes to the lyrics and by adding the stirring "R - E - S - P - E - C - T" chorus. In so doing, she made Otis Redding's 1965 lament of an exhausted working man demanding some slack from his woman into a rallying call for downtrodden African American women.

Rolling Stone magazine put her version in the top five greatest songs of all time, saying Franklin was a "woman calling an end to the exhaustion and sacrifice of a raw deal with scorching sexual authority." And even Redding—who wrote other such timeless classics like "Dock of the Bay" and "Try a Little Tenderness"—acknowledged within months of Franklin's recording that the song belonged to her. His biographer Mark Ribowsky said that at the 1967 Monterey Pop Festival in California, Redding joked to the crowd, saying: "This next song is a song that a girl took away from me." Five months later, the "King of Soul" died in a plane crash aged just 26.

Franklin was an almost unknown gospel singer from Detroit when she went into the studio to record "Respect" with her sisters Erma and Carolyn. She speeded the song up and cooked up the provocative high-tempo "Sock it to me" refrain, producer Jerry Wexler later recalled in his autobiography, "Rhythm and the Blues: A Life in American Music." "The fervor in Aretha's voice demanded that respect," he wrote. But American musicologist Professor Victoria Malawey told AFP that Franklin's take on the song was far more than a jazzed up cover version.

A new soul

She insisted that Franklin changed "the song so radically... that I would argue she re-authored it." "It was not just her altering of the lyrics, or changing the point of view of the song from a male one to that of a woman, she also gave it an entirely new energy and soul," the pop music specialist added. Malawey, chair of music at Macalester College in Minneapolis-Saint Paul, credits Franklin with turning the song into an anthem for both the feminist and civil rights movement in the late 1960s.

"Not only did she add the R-E-S-P-E-C-T chorus, but her remaking of the song gives it a whole different empowerment message, both sexually and politically." "In my opinion, the extent of her re-authoring grants her status as owner of the song, and makes it a whole new sonic experience. That is why multiple social movements have claimed Franklin's 'Respect' as theirs" over the past half-century, she said.

The hit won Franklin the first two of her 18 Grammy awards, and went on to feature in more than 30 major films including "Platoon", "The Blues Brothers", "Mystic Pizza" and "Forrest Gump". Malawey said that Franklin, the daughter of a Baptist minister, always denied that there were sexual overtones to the lyrics she added.

Sexual empowerment

But Wexler begged to differ. "More respect also involved sexual attention of the highest order. What else would 'Sock it to me' mean?" he said. Others who knew her said she was drawing from her tumultuous marriage at the time. "Whatever the intention, people have taken a definite female sexual empowerment message from the song," Malawey said. "There is a long tradition of black female performers allowing for a variety of meanings from their lyrics to assert their sexuality. You see this right down to Beyonce."

But Malawey said it was Franklin's "voice, and the power and soul she gives the song, which has inspired and empowered so many people. "It is something beyond lyrics or the melody that really moves us and that is all to do with Aretha Franklin's own vocal delivery. That is what has made the song so powerful, so lasting and so relevant today." — AFP



In this file photo taken on November 9, 2005 US President George W Bush presents the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civil award, to singer Aretha Franklin (left) as actor Andy Griffith (right) watches in the East Room of the White House in Washington, DC.



In this file photo taken on January 20, 2009 Singer Aretha Franklin performs during the inauguration ceremony for US President Barack Obama at the US Capitol in Washington, DC.



Aretha Franklin (left) with her father C.L. Franklin and sister Caroline in this undated handout photo from the New Bethel Baptist Church.



Aretha Franklin sings in this undated handout photo from the New Bethel Baptist Church.



People await the departure of wooden boats in one of the many improvised ports along the riverside in the city of Tefe. — AFP photos



People arrive through one of the many improvised ports along the riverside in the city of Tefe.

Tefe, a town afloat in the Brazilian Amazon



A water taxi driver waits for customers in one of the improvised docks along the riverside in the city of Tefe.

To get around town, the 60,000 people of Tefe—in the heart of Brazil's Amazon—hop into boats. Even the outside world is only reachable by water or air. Situated around 500 kilometers (310 miles) west of the jungle city of Manaus, capital of Amazonas state, Tefe is the last outpost of civilization for scientists working at the Mamirauá Sustainable Development Reserve. There are two options to get here: by air, on a 50-minute flight from Manaus to the small local airstrip; or by river, a three-day boat ride. All goods come in through the river network, from fruit and furniture to television antennas. "It's not a good idea to have a car. To get around town, the river is the only way," said Joao, 65, who pilots one of the dozens of motorboats known as "fliers" that criss-cross town.

Each one carries six to eight people, who must get in and out carefully to

avoid tipping the boats over. A ride within town limits costs one real (26 cents). But leaving Tefe is another matter. "For that, everyone has their own boat, even if it has a homemade motor," said Joao, holding a parasol in his hand to protect his passengers from the hot sun. His "flier," with its engine taken from a motorbike, fits five passengers. The buzz of boat engines mixes with the cries of street vendors flogging DVDs or acai, a local fruit, to create a sort of soundtrack for the town. The local electricity station runs on expensive, polluting diesel fuel shipped in from Manaus. Internet access comes via satellite link.

The Mamirauá Institute shares a connection of barely six megabytes among its 300 workers in Tefe and in the floating houses that serve as research centers and residences in the middle of the reserve, which covers 1.124 million hectares (2.8 million acres). — AFP



Carmelio Silva, 64, fruit seller, prepares his basket at a local market in the city of Tefe.



Main entrance of Tefe airport in the city of Tefe, Amazonas state.

DRONES FLY TO RESCUE OF AMAZON WILDLIFE

Drone view of Mamiraua Institute and WWF-Brazil researchers working in the area of Maciel Lake at Mamiraua Sustainable Development Reserve in Amazonas state, Brazil.



View of a Tucuxi River dolphin (*Sotalia fluviatilis*) and a drone with a 360° camera.

A hoarse sound abruptly wakes visitors staying at a floating house that serves as a base for environmentalists on the Jaraua river in the Amazon rainforest. During flood season, the Mamiraua Sustainable Development Reserve—located 500 kilometers (310 miles) from the Amazonas state capital Manaus—fills with water. For researchers from the Mamiraua Institute and WWF-Brazil, that means their nearest neighbor is a caiman they call Dominique. It has decided to squat for the day at the end of their house. But the surprising noise was something else. “Don’t worry! That’s just the river dolphins breathing. It’s scary in the middle of the night, right?” biologist Andre Coelho says.

The next day, scientists got into two boats, slowly navigating the endless spread of water-filled forest. In this primeval landscape, the researchers used a drone to help them watch the Amazon’s pink river dolphins, whose scientific name is *Inia geoffrensis*. The voyage in late June, which AFP was invited to follow, was the last in the series of a project called EcoDrones, which monitors populations of the pink river dolphin and another type, the tucuxi, or *Sotalia fluviatilis*. “We need to understand their behavior and habits so that we can propose policies for their preservation,” said

Marcelo Oliveira, from the World Wildlife Fund-Brazil.

Drones “are a tool that will reduce costs and speed up the investigations,” said oceanographer Miriam Marmontel, from the Mamiraua Institute. The expedition is using new thermal imaging cameras to allow work to continue at night. “We can observe the animals at times when before it was impossible,” Oliveira said.

Some of the research will be sent to the University of Liverpool in association with WWF-Brazil, with hopes of developing an algorithm that will allow scientists to identify every one of the dolphins during their observations. “There are many different Amazons in what we call the Amazon jungle,” said Marmontel. “Our monitoring means we can understand how to preserve animals in each region—what are the dangers and how they can be faced.”—AFP



World Wildlife Fund-Brazil Conservation Specialist Marcelo Oliveira gets back a drone during the field work of EcoDrones expedition at Mamiraua Sustainable Development Reserve.



Drone view from the float where the scientists stay during their research on river dolphins, at Mamiraua Sustainable Development Reserve in Amazonas state, Brazil. — AFP photos



A volunteer weaves a wig as part of the Bosnian 'My hair, your hair' campaign. — AFP photos



Hairdressers prepare the hair of young donors before snipping off some as part of the "My Hair Your Hair" campaign in Sarajevo.

'My Hair, Your Hair': Bosnians weave wigs for kids with cancer



Hairdressers prepare the hair of young donors before snipping off some as part of the "My Hair Your Hair" campaign.



Bosnian football star Edin Dzeko (left) and manager of Sarajevo's 'Heart For Children' foundation Fikret Kubat address media after signing an agreement of partial sponsor at the 'Parents' House' in Sarajevo.

Ajla Nizic did not know what cancer was when she was diagnosed with it at age four. "But I knew that I lost my hair," said the Bosnian leukaemia survivor who is now 19 years old. Now a medical student, Nizic is leading a campaign to give other sick children a luxury her parents could not afford: wigs. Bosnia, one of Europe's poorest countries, has no domestic wigmaking industry. The nearest available source has been neighboring Croatia, where wigs cost up to 2,000 euros (\$2,300) — more than four times the average monthly salary in Bosnia. "As trivial as it might seem at first while a person is battling such an aggressive disease, hair loss is often a huge psychological burden, particularly for girls who do not dare to go out without hair," said Nizic, who now has long brown tresses.

Her campaign—"My Hair, Your Hair"—is encouraging Bosnians to donate their locks to a new wigmaking workshop that opened in Sarajevo in October. There, volunteers are weaving wigs specifically for children who are undergoing chemotherapy or have lost their hair because of other health complications. Hundreds of people—mainly women, as the hair must be at least 30 centimeters (12 inches) long—have flocked to hair-cutting events held at schools and shopping malls around the country. Others have cut their own hair and mailed it to the campaign.

On a recent afternoon at an elementary school in Sarajevo, several young pupils sat calmly as their hair was combed into sections and then snipped off. "I don't want to be the only one smiling," said 13-year-old Suana Sehic, now sporting a bouncy bob. "I would like a smile to return to the face of all children."

Wigmaking revival

Solidarity often saves lives in Bosnia, where many families struggle to cover the costs of basic medical care, let alone "secondary" therapies like wigs. Local media publish almost daily appeals to help raise money for Bosnians seeking medical care abroad—often with little or no reimbursement by Bosnia's social security system. The Sarajevo workshop uses donated real hair to avoid the expense of the materials needed to make synthetic wigs.

It takes at least two weeks—and the hair of six people—to weave one wig, and a dozen volunteers have woven around 20 wigs since October, according to Nermina Cuzovic, 39, who set up the project with funding from the Swiss government. In addition to making the wigs, the small studio is also training a dozen future weavers to carry on the exacting work, which involves using a small metal needle to sew strands of hair into a mesh cap that covers the head. The pieces of donated hair must be as close in color as possi-

'I would like a smile to return to the face of all children'



Volunteers weave wigs.



A volunteer weaves a wig as part of the Bosnian 'My hair, your hair' campaign.

ble, said Fuad Halilovic, 22, who manages the workshop where the weavers work under bright lamps. "We try to make it so the wig resembles the hairstyle the child had before losing their hair," he told AFP. "We measure their heads and look at photographs of how their hair looked before."

A house for parents

The wig project is part of a wider effort by a Bosnian association called "A Heart for Children with Cancer" which helps young patients and their families. In 2016, the group opened Bosnia's first "Parents' House"—a small apartment complex near Sarajevo's paediatric hospital where families who live far from the capital can stay while their children are being treated. "Before, some parents slept in their car near the hospital, because it is expensive to pay for accommodation in Sarajevo, particularly because the process of recovery is very long and exhausting," said Fikret Kubat, the association's president.

Atifa Buldic-Besic, 30, spent seven months in the home in 2016 when her daughter was being treated for leukaemia. Now, her child is on the road to recovery and Buldic-Besic works in the Parents' House as a volunteer. "That was our second home, the only place where our daughter smiled, the place where she started running, the only place where she played with other children," she said.

The Parents' House was built through donations and organizers are now seeking to find a sponsor for the upkeep of each of the 10 apartments. Edin Dzeko, a Bosnian footballer who plays for Serie A Club Roma, recently signed up to fund one of the apartments for three years. "All of us who have children know that they are the most precious to us," he told a news conference at the Parents' House. "I want to show these children and their parents that they are not alone." — AFP



A volunteer weaves a wig.



Bosnian football star Edin Dzeko (second left) poses for a selfie with members of Sarajevo's 'Heart For Children' foundation outside the 'Parents' House'.



People sit outside the pediatric hospital in Sarajevo.

'Monster Hunter: World'

A towering achievement of game design and world-building

By Aakash Bakaya

This is not going to be a traditional review. 'Monster Hunter: World' is much too dense a game to fully review in less than a week. So as a compromise, I thought a first impressions sort of take would be more satisfactory. 'Monster Hunter' got its first PC release this week after being regulated to the handheld and console market for over a decade. It has had a rocky introduction to say the least. Customer reviews on Steam are pretty divisive due to numerous bugs and issues while fans are divided if the overall quality of the game trumps these technicalities facing this PC port. Whether these reviews are justified and how much it should affect your purchasing decision is what I hope to convey with this piece.

This is the first 'Monster Hunter' game I've ever played. I was only faintly aware of the franchise before its major E3 announcement but after that first trailer came out, I was instantly hooked. So after over a year of self-inflicted hype (that went so far that I pre-ordered the game, the only time I've done so) did the title live up to my lofty expectations? Yes, very much yes.

I'm an experienced RPG gamer. I've played a variety of them - everything from top-down to turn based to rogue-likes. But even with that experience, the first couple hours of 'World' overwhelmed me. The story was simple enough to follow but the game-play mechanics were a load to take in. This is the fifth entry in the main 'Monster Hunter' series and was built from the ground-up with the notion to appeal and widen their fan base. In most cases, this would mean that the devs are deciding to "dumb-down" or



"streamline" the mechanics but not here...at least that's what the newcomers think. Old hunters say everything from the combat to the extensive crafting system has been made easier to accommodate new players but even with that in mind - there is a lot to get the hang off. But it was in this process of understanding the game where I grew to love it.

Draw your weapon

Let's start with the combat. The closest and most relatable comparison to it would be 'Dark

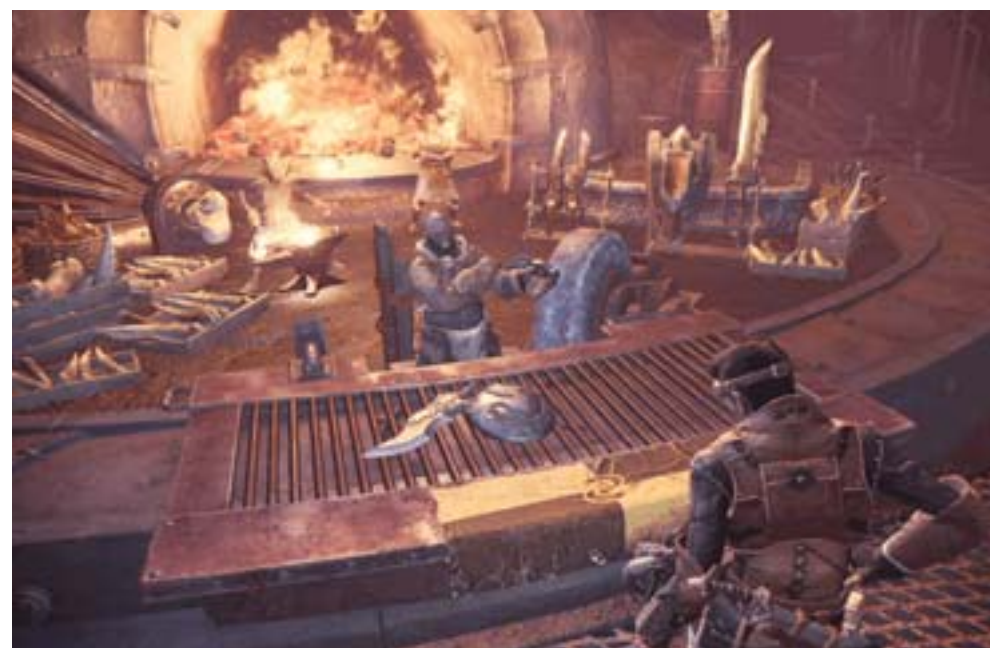
Souls' but with combos - many, many combos. The tutorial like pretty much every tutorial in the game is barebones and minimal. They get the main points across and it is acceptable because of that but some things simply cannot be explained in a 10 second video clip. This is especially prevalent in the weapons training area.

Weapons are the bread and butter of the 'Monster Hunter' experience and there are 14 different ones to choose from. You start with the base version of each one which can be either a fantastic or foolish decision depending

on your prior time spent with these types of games. The weapons themselves are too loosely explained and the tooltips teach you only half or less than half of their full potential. Unlocking this potential is not only about learning combos which aren't too hard to execute on their own. The challenge comes from understanding a weapons weight, the timings of certain swings and of course getting the hang of the monster's move-set as well. Getting to a point of adequate weapon use takes time but like almost everything in this game - the patience you have with it pays off tremendously. Not only will you get used to your starting weapons, you'll find picking up new weapons you haven't used before become much easier. I was amazed at how fun almost all the weapons were. I wanted to build a more agile, fast moving character and all the weapons that encourage this were great and varied. It's a fantastic combat system that rewards tactical combo use and environmental knowledge. It's a bit tough to handle at first but give it time and you'll be swimming in monster hides in no time.

Skinning and winning

The crafting system is another beast entirely. Skill trees, armor upgrades, ammo crafting, potion crafting and trap crafting are all important in the hunt in some capacity or the other. The crutch comes from the fact that different crafting recipes use similar ingredients. Fire herbs for example can be used to make different types of ammo or arrow coatings. They can also be used in barrel traps and certain potions. This is a more straight-forward example because you can tell just from the name - fire makes things go boom. There are also a vast number



Lifestyle | MixTape

Friday, August 17, 2018

of plants you can collect and tools you can use which supplement your hunts but the core of crafting and what you'll be spending most of your time with is on armor and weapon forging.

There is no character experience or level system here. Your progression and capabilities are all tied to forging and upgrading new weapon and armor sets and each one of these sets and weapons are tied to individual monsters you kill both big and small. Few things can match the feeling of wearing the skin of a monster you just had great difficulty defeating. It's here where the main loop of the game unveils itself - prepare, hunt, kill, craft and repeat. It might sound simple, it may even sound repetitive but surprisingly it is neither because of how dynamic hunts are.

'World' takes place in multiple open-world levels. The average level size is a little smaller than the open world map from 'Arkham City' but is packed with a number of things to do. You can fish, hunt for certain bugs and track a pig that can lead you to a unique mushroom colony. Of course then there's the wildlife. The herbivores are generally docile but can use a few defensive measures against you and the predators that hunt them.

The predators are the focal point of most hunts. Ranging in size and fully aware of their place in a pre-determined food chain, they clash and hunt with their rivals as much as they do with you. Having two Apex predators go off against each other in the middle of a hunt is a sight worthy of the best National Geographic documentary. It's thunderous and loud, violent and filled with raw carnage. These monster clashes are a first for the series and the devs really nailed them.

When you begin 1v1 fights with them, it's more than just smashing your attack buttons. Landing combos can lead up to damage boosts with certain weapons while range weapons require efficient ammo use to down a monster fast. Most hunts are on a timer and letting the timer run out results in a quest failure. The timer is not usually an issue but quests also come with a limited amount of lives aka faints. Monsters get tougher as you progress but fortunately the first few monster fights teach the basics well and provide ample room for experimentation and freedom.

'How about fighting alongside a friend?'

Along these lines and separate from the usual quests and investigations, both of which involves hunting or capturing specific monsters, you can go on expeditions. Here you can explore and gather materials at your leisure and it's in these quiet moments I realized how wonderful the level design was. 'The Ancient Forest' starting level is a thick jungle filled with lavish plant life, massive ever-winding trees and elaborate cave systems. You can swing from vines, grapple hook from glow beetles and squeeze through tangled vegetation just to name a few. Monsters are still present on the map and I found finding their nest or resting place an important factor in future hunts as I could simply place traps there knowing that eventually this is the spot they'll end up at.

There are also a number of side activities you can take part in. I already mentioned fishing earlier but even there you can use different baits and the varieties of fish you catch have different properties. Cooking as well is simple yet deep at the same time. You can simply eat the default platters for certain boosts or if you want you can create your own! You can mix and match meats and vegetables and tailor buffs to better aid your hunt. I haven't really explored cooking as much but the possibilities are all still there.



You won't have to do this alone. 'Monster Hunter' is as much a cooperative game as a single player one. You can party up in groups from two to four either with strangers or friends and be able to do pretty much anything together. The servers at the moment though are a bit of mess. Disconnects are common and the whole lobby/party system is a pain to understand initially. But the few group parties I've managed both with friends and strangers have been a blast. Four hunters, all with different weapons, taking down a massive creature is something only 'Monster Hunter' can uniquely emulate. If you don't feel like grouping up, you always have your feline Palicos to accompany you. Fully customizable both in appearance and equipment, these adorable cats are one of the highlights of the entire game for me.

The technical issues however don't stop with the disconnects. I am currently playing on a gaming laptop with a NVIDIA GeForce GTX 1060 6GB and a 2.8 GHz Intel Core i7 with 16GB of DDR4 ram and I get a steady 50-60 FPS even during intense fights at the highest settings. Apart from the numerous disconnect from the Steam servers (which just results in your status going offline, no progress gets lost) I have had no issues with the PC port. Others are reporting on certain issues with AMD drivers as the game is very GPU intensive so double checking if your specs are compatible is important.

The rave reviews the game received on consoles remain true expect for a few problems the transition to PC has brought. If you're a fan of Hayao Miyazaki's 'Princess Mononoke' or 'Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind' the story will draw you in and the imaginative and quirky world will engross you. If you're a fan of challenging and deep RPGs, then you will find yourself right at home here. If you're simply a fan of old-school games before the days of micro-transactions and loot boxes, one that strips away all the needless fat then you'll enjoy many of the game's stellar qualities. 'Monster Hunter: World' is a towering achievement and a Japanese RPG of the highest caliber.



FACING A GLUT OF CHERRY TOMATOES? TURN 'EM INTO A COBBLER

By Elizabeth Karmel

This time of year, I could live on tomato sandwiches. But it's hard to make a sandwich out of cherry tomatoes, and I have loads of cherry tomatoes. I don't know what it is, but I can't resist buying them when I see them at the farmer's market. If you are like me and have a glut of cherry tomatoes, this recipe is for you.

Often, I make a simple fresh tomato sauce with cherry tomatoes, but this week, on a rainy day, I was craving summertime comfort food. There is nothing more comforting than homemade biscuits and I had all those cherry tomatoes, so I decided to combine them and make a biscuit-topped cobbler. Just the idea of it, hit the spot. To be honest, I had never made a tomato cobbler or even tasted one, but it made so much sense. Once I decided to make the savory cobbler, I thought of one of my favorite childhood sandwiches; a hot open-face pimento cheese and tomato and so, pimento-cheese biscuits it would be!

I wanted the cobbler to be simple and showcase the fresh vine-ripened local tomatoes, so I kept it to basically two ingredients, leeks and tomatoes. I sweated three leeks with olive oil, salt and white pepper, but you could use about half as many shallots instead. Once they were soft and fragrant, I de-glazed the pan with balsamic vinegar which would be the "tang" in the cobbler. I gently mixed in the clean whole cherry tomatoes and seasoned them with salt and granulated garlic, not wanting to add any more "wet" ingredients. Finally, I added some corn starch to thicken the juices. I wanted the cherry tomatoes to cook in a similar manner to a berry cobbler.

After nearly an hour in the oven, I was more than rewarded. Although the ingredients were few, the combination of the leeks, farm-fresh cherry tomatoes and the balsamic vinegar baked into a luscious complex filling that was perfectly accented by the flaky pimento-cheese studded biscuits. I may never eat cherry tomatoes any other way - this is one dish that I am going to have on rotation until the vines run out of cherry tomatoes!

TOMATO COBBLER WITH PIMENTO- CHEESE BISCUITS

Ingredients

Servings: 6-8
Start to finish: 1 1/2 hours

5-6 cups cherry tomatoes, any variety
Extra-virgin olive oil, about 2 tablespoons
3 leeks, chopped
1 teaspoon Kosher salt, divided
1/8 teaspoon ground white pepper
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
2 tablespoons cup corn starch
1/4 teaspoon granulated garlic

For the biscuits:

2 1/4 cups self-rising flour, divided
1/2 (generous) cup favorite pimento cheese, preferably home-made (see my Classic Pimento Cheese recipe below)
1/4 pound cold (1 stick) lard (or cold butter that you grate with a box grater in a pinch)
1/2-3/4 cup real buttermilk such as Kate's
1/2 stick salted butter, melted

Preparation

Heat oven to 375 F. Place parchment paper in cookie sheet or half-sheet pan. Pick the stems off of the cherry tomatoes and rinse them under running water. Do not cut the cherry tomatoes - you want to keep them whole so they cook and collapse on themselves but do not become a liquid-y sauce.

Warm the olive oil in a heavy-duty skillet over medium-high heat. When warm, add the leeks and about 1/2 teaspoon of salt. Sauté until the leeks are very soft and tender, at least 10 minutes, add the balsamic vinegar and stir. Turn off the heat.

Meanwhile, mix the cornstarch, remaining 1/2 teaspoon of salt and granulated garlic together. Add the corn starch mixture to the leeks and mix well. Add the cherry tomatoes to the hot leeks. Stir gently until the leek mixture is evenly mixed with the toma-



atoes. Let sit for an hour. Pour the cooled leek-tomato mixture into a square baker and set aside.

To prepare biscuits: place 2 cups of flour in large bowl. Add the pimento cheese. Cut in shortening, using a pastry blender or blending fork (or pulling 2 table knives through ingredients in opposite directions), until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add 1/2 cup of buttermilk; stir with fork until soft dough forms and mixture begins to pull away from sides of bowl. If the dough is too wet, add the extra 1/4 cup of flour, little by little. If it is too dry, add the extra 1/4 cup of buttermilk, little by little.

On lightly floured surface, knead dough 1-2 times, or just until smooth. Do not over-work the dough. Roll out dough to about 1/3-inch thickness. Cut straight down with a floured biscuit cutter (2-3-inch round cutter)_do not twist the cutter. You will need 7-9 biscuits to cover the top of the baking pan, depending if you

use an 8 x 8 or a 9 x 9 baking pan and how big your biscuit cutter is. Bake the extra biscuit dough to serve on the side.

Place the biscuits over the tomatoes. You may need to cut some of the biscuits in half to fit the pan. Brush the biscuits with a little melted butter. Place the baking pan on the sheet pan to catch drips, and then transfer to the pre-heated oven. Bake for 50-60 minutes, until the tomatoes are very bubbly and the tops of the biscuits are nicely browned. When the cobbler comes out of the oven, brush tops again with the melted salted butter. Transfer from sheet pan to a cooling rack and let the cobbler rest for at least 15 minutes before eating.

COOKING ON DEADLINE:

Roasted Broccoflower with Shiitake

By Katie Workman

My family loves cauliflower, the “it” vegetable of the moment - if you believe in things like “it” vegetables. So, now what’s this about a broccoflower? It’s the “it” vegetable’s more colorful cousin. Either one gives a dish a bit of a wow factor - and who doesn’t love a vegetable that starts a conversation?

Broccoli and cauliflower are also cousins, both members of the cruciferous family, and therefore can naturally cross-pollinate, which has resulted in these

two attractive and delicious broccoflower varieties. All broccoflower can be cooked or eaten raw, and has a slightly sweeter and less bitter taste than either regular cauliflower or broccoli. Either variety can be cooked the same way as broccoli and cauliflower - steamed, boiled, roasted, sauteed - and so can be substituted in pretty much any recipes that calls for either one. And of course that means that if you have cauliflower or broccoli on hand, you can use them in this recipe, an unusual roasted vegetable combo that makes a terrific side for any autumnal dinner. But the conversation then might be less lively.



ROASTED BROCCOFLOWER AND SHIITAKE MUSHROOMS WITH ROSEMARY AND GARLIC

Ingredients

Servings: 4
Start to finish: 45 minutes
1 head broccoflower, cut into 1-inch florets
8 ounces shiitake or other type of mushrooms, wiped, stemmed and halved
3 tablespoons olive oil
6 cloves garlic, peeled and smashed
2 medium sprigs rosemary, cut into 2-inch pieces
1 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more to taste
1 tablespoon maple syrup
2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice

1 tablespoon white vinegar
Freshly ground black pepper to taste

Preparation

Preheat the oven to 400 F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil, and lightly spray with nonstick spray (or lightly oil the foil). Distribute the broccoflower and shiitake mushrooms on the baking sheet. Drizzle with the olive oil. Add the garlic and rosemary sprigs, and sprinkle with the 1 teaspoon salt. Use your hands to combine everything well, then spread the vegetables back over the baking sheet so they are in a single layer. Roast for about 25 minutes, until the vegetables are just tender, and

lightly browned in spots. While the mixture is in the oven, in a small bowl or container mix together the maple syrup, lemon juice and vinegar. Remove the rosemary sprigs and garlic cloves from the cooked vegetables and sprinkle the maple syrup mixture over the vegetables; toss to coat. Taste and season with salt and pepper if needed. Spoon the vegetables into a serving dish and serve hot or warm.

Nutrition information per serving: 80 calories; 6 calories from fat; 1 g fat (0 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 0 mg cholesterol; 516 mg sodium; 17 g carbohydrate; 6 g fiber; 8 g sugar; 5 g protein.

Lifestyle | Food

A STIR-FRY WITH EASY-PREP INGREDIENTS DONE IN UNDER AN HOUR

By America's Test Kitchen

Quick-cooking stir-fries are a natural choice for weeknight dinners. This one combines easy-prep ingredients with a leveled-up sauce made from Asian pantry staples. To save on time, use precut broccoli florets rather than fussing with a whole head of broccoli. For a crisp-tender texture and bright green color, we steam the broccoli slightly in the skillet before sauteing it. You will need a 12-inch nonstick skillet with a tight-fitting lid for this recipe. Note that you'll need 1/2 cup of basil, so shop accordingly. Long-grain white, basmati, or Texmati rice can be substituted for the jasmine rice.

Stir-Fried Chicken And Broccoli With Herbs And Scallion Rice

Ingredients

Servings: 4
Start to finish: 45 minutes
1 1/2 cups jasmine rice
Salt and pepper
1/4 cup oyster sauce
1 tablespoon rice vinegar
1 tablespoon Asian chili-garlic sauce
1 tablespoon fresh ginger
1/2 cup fresh basil
1/4 cup fresh mint
4 scallions
12 ounces broccoli florets
1 red bell pepper
1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts
2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon vegetable oil

Preparation

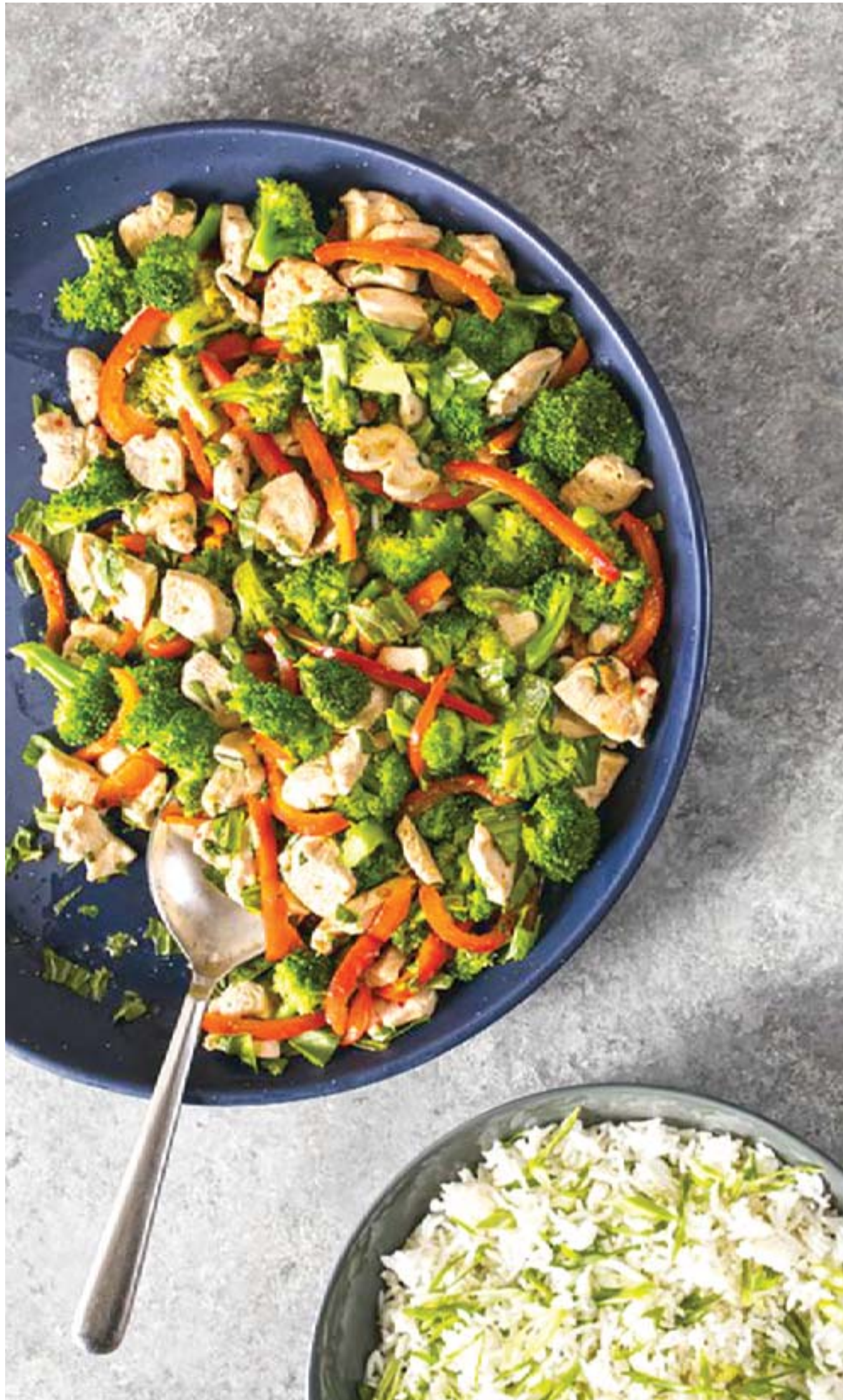
Rinse rice in fine-mesh strainer until water runs clear. Bring rice, 2 1/4 cups water, and 1/4 teaspoon salt to simmer in large saucepan over medium heat. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer until rice is tender and liquid is absorbed, 16 to 18 minutes. Remove pot from heat, lay clean folded dish towel underneath lid, and let sit for 10 minutes.

While rice cooks, whisk 2 tablespoons water, oyster sauce, vinegar, and chili-garlic sauce together in small bowl; set aside. Peel and grate 1 tablespoon ginger. Chop 1/2 cup basil and 1/4 cup mint. Slice scallions thin. Cut broccoli florets into 1-inch pieces. Stem and seed bell pepper, then slice thin. Trim chicken, slice each breast in half lengthwise, then slice crosswise 1/4 inch thick.

Heat 1 tablespoon oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Cook chicken until no longer pink, 1 to 2 minutes per side. Transfer to plate. Add 1 tablespoon oil to now-empty skillet and increase heat to high. Add broccoli and cook for 30 seconds. Add 1/3 cup water, cover, and reduce heat to medium. Steam broccoli until just tender, about 2 minutes.

Uncover broccoli, stir in bell pepper, and cook until vegetables are tender and most of liquid has evaporated, about 3 minutes. Push vegetables to sides of skillet. Add remaining 1 teaspoon oil and ginger to center and cook, mashing ginger into pan, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Return cooked chicken, with any accumulated juices, to skillet and toss to combine. Stir in oyster sauce mixture and simmer until slightly thickened, about 1 minute. Off heat, stir in basil and mint. Fluff rice with fork and stir in scallions. Serve stir-fry over rice.

Nutrition information per serving: 503 calories; 92 calories from fat; 10 g fat (1 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 83 mg cholesterol; 940 mg sodium; 67 g carbohydrate; 4 g fiber; 4 g sugar; 34 g protein.



Comic

WORD SEARCH

90's Songs 3

Find and circle all of the 1990's songs that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional song.

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

ANGELS	HANDS	LULLABY	THE POWER
ANOTHER NIGHT	HIGH ENOUGH	MIAMI	THIS HOUSE
BABY	HOLD ON	MY BODY	TOGETHER AGAIN
BLACK	HOOK	ONE WEEK	TOO MUCH
CANDY RAIN	HYPNOTIZE	POISON	TUBTHUMPING
CUPID	I BELIEVE	REGULATE	UNPRETTY
DITTY	IMPULSIVE	RELEASE ME	WATERFALLS
DREAMLOVER	INSENSITIVE	SABOTAGE	WHAT'S UP
EVERY MORNING	IRONIC	SHINE	WHATTA MAN
FLY AWAY	JEREMY	SHY GUY	WILD NIGHT
FORTUNATE	KISS ME	SWEET LADY	ZOMBIE
FROZEN	LAST NIGHT	TEMPTATION	

Yesterday's Solution

90's Songs 2

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

AGAIN	EPIC	MOUTH	STAY
BABY, BABY	ESCAPADE	MY WAY	STRONG ENOUGH
SAILAMOS	FANTASY	NAME	SUMMER GIRLS
BARBIE GIRL	FUNKIFIED	NO SCRUBS	THE SIGN
BELIEVE	GETTO JAM	NOSOBY	THIS KISS
BOOMBASTIC	HONEY	ORDINARY WORLD	TODAY
CAN'T STOP	IRIS	PLUSH	TOO FUNKY
CRUSH	LET'S RIDE	REAL LOVE	TWISTED
DANGEROUS	LINGER	RUNAWAY	UNDERSTANDING
DOWNTOWN TRAIN	LONGVIEW	SLAM	UNSKINNY BOP
EMOTIONS	LOVE IS	SMOOTH	WEAK
ENDLESS LOVE	MOTOWNHOLLY	SPOONMAN	WONDERWALL

The hidden song title is: LOSING MY RELIGION

CROSSWORD 1988



ACROSS

- One who works hard at boring tasks.
- Mint plants.
- Again but in a new or different way.
- An Eskimo hut.
- The mountain peak that Noah's ark landed on as the waters of the great flood receded.
- A member of an American Indian people of Yucatan and Belize and Guatemala who once had a culture characterized by outstanding architecture and pottery and astronomy.
- United States humorist who wrote about rural life (1818-1885).
- A person who weeps.
- Plausible glib talk (especially useful to a salesperson).
- The capital and largest city of Yemen.
- (Greek mythology) One of the mountain nymphs.
- A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
- The sciences concerned with gathering and manipulating and storing and retrieving and classifying recorded information.
- (Christianity) Saved from the bondage of sin.
- Any organic compound formed by adding alcohol molecules to aldehyde molecules.
- A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
- A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
- A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
- A family of languages of the Fula people of west Africa in the sub-Saharan regions from Senegal to Chad.
- Not divisible by two.

- Group insurance that entitles members to services of participating hospitals and clinics and physicians.
- Identify the location or place of.
- Of or relating to the stomach and intestines.
- A blood group antigen possessed by Rh-positive people.
- The federal agency that insures residential mortgages.
- (Sumerian) Water god and god of wisdom.
- Small genus of dioecious tropical aquatic plants.
- Standard time in the 5th time zone west of Greenwich, reckoned at the 75th meridian.
- (old-fashioned) At or from or to a great distance.
- Small fatty fish usually canned.
- (Babylonian) Father of the gods.
- Someone who consumes food for nourishment.
- An anxiety disorder characterized by chronic free-floating anxiety and such symptoms as tension or sweating or trembling of light-headedness or irritability etc that has lasted for more than six months.
- An international organization based in Geneva that monitors and enforces rules governing global trade.
- Of or relating to Canada or its people.
- A benevolent aspect of Devi.
- United States sculptor and architect whose public works include the memorial to veterans of the Vietnam War in Washington (born in 1959).
- A mining town in southern Wales.
- The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.

DOWN

- A fricative sound (especially as an expression of disapproval).
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- Group of people related by blood or marriage.
- Of or relating to the kingdom of Kuwait or its people.
- (British) A waterproof raincoat made of rubberized fabric.
- A wrong action attributable to bad judgment or ignorance or inattention.
- The basic unit of money in Nigeria.
- A wooden peg that is used to fasten timbers in shipbuilding.
- Cause to suffer.
- A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
- The basic unit of electric current adopted under the System International d'Unites.
- Submerged aquatic plant having narrow leaves and small flowers.
- Having an eye or eyes or eyelike feature especially as specified.
- A raised mark on the skin (as produced by the blow of a whip).
- Any member of Athapaskan tribes that migrated to the southwestern desert (from Arizona to Texas and south into Mexico).
- An uproarious party.
- A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- The twelfth month of the civil year.
- The act of ceding.
- A doctor's degree in education.
- The 11th letter of the Greek alphabet.
- Boiled or baked buckwheat.
- Weedy annual grass often occurs in grainfields and other cultivated land.
- A long thin fluffy scarf of feathers or fur.
- A characteristic state or mode of living.

- German iris having large white flowers with lavender-tinged falls and a fragrant rhizome.
- The dull explosive noise made by an engine.
- From fermented juice of black morello cherries.
- A longitudinal beam connected to the keel of ship to strengthen it.
- A nucleic acid consisting of large molecules shaped like a double helix.
- A metric unit of length equal to one thousandth of a meter.
- Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
- A college town in central New York on Lake Cayuga.
- Make attractive or lovable.
- A colorless and odorless inert gas.
- Dissociative disorder in which a person forgets who who they are and leaves home to create a new life.
- Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
- Measuring instrument in which the echo of a pulse of microwave radiation is used to detect and locate distant objects.
- The basic unit of money in Peru.
- An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
- Massive plantigrade carnivorous or omnivorous mammals with long shaggy coats and strong claws.
- Bulky grayish-brown eagle with a short wedge-shaped white tail.
- A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
- Brief episode in which the brain gets insufficient blood supply.
- A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.

Yesterday's Solution

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

Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

TV Listings



01:30 Captain America: The Winter Soldier
 03:55 San Andreas Quake
 05:30 Patriot Games
 07:50 Taken Heart
 09:35 Captain America: The Winter Soldier
 12:00 Abducted
 13:35 Starship Troopers: Traitor Of Mars
 15:15 Lost & Found
 16:55 Acts Of Vengeance
 18:35 Standoff
 20:10 Rampage: President Down
 21:55 Check Point
 23:35 The Assignment



00:45 North Woods Law
 01:40 Expedition Mungo
 02:35 My Fat Pet
 03:25 Lone Star Law
 04:15 North Woods Law
 05:02 Wildest Islands
 05:49 Pit Bulls & Parolees
 06:36 Swamp Brothers
 07:00 Swamp Brothers
 07:25 Keeping Up With The Kruger
 08:15 Lone Star Law
 09:10 Lone Star Law
 10:05 North Woods Law
 11:00 Wildest Islands
 11:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees
 12:50 My Fat Pet
 13:45 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
 14:40 North Woods Law
 15:35 Expedition Mungo
 16:30 Keeping Up With The Kruger
 17:25 Lone Star Law
 18:20 My Fat Pet
 19:15 The Bronx Zoo
 20:10 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
 21:05 Wildest Islands
 22:00 Expedition Mungo
 22:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees
 23:50 The Bronx Zoo



00:00 Homicide Hunter
 01:55 Crimes That Shook Australia
 02:50 Cold Case Files
 03:45 Crimes That Shook Britain
 04:30 Nightmare In Suburbia
 05:15 Crimes That Shook Australia
 07:00 It Takes A Killer
 07:20 The First 48
 08:05 Cold Case Files
 08:50 Crimes That Shook Britain
 09:35 Nightmare In Suburbia
 10:30 Crimes That Shook Australia
 11:25 Crimes That Shook Australia
 12:20 Homicide: Hours To Kill
 13:15 Cold Case Files
 15:05 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
 20:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
 21:00 I Killed My BFF
 22:00 It Takes A Killer
 22:30 It Takes A Killer
 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 Takeshis Castle Thailand
 04:40 Takeshis Castle Thailand
 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 Snack Off
 10:10 Snack Off
 10:35 Ridiculousness Arabia
 10:58 Ridiculousness Arabia
 11:22 Ridiculousness Arabia
 11:50 Takeshis Castle Thailand
 12:15 Takeshis Castle Thailand
 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
 15:35 The It Crowd
 16:00 The It Crowd
 16:30 The It Crowd
 16:55 The It Crowd
 17:20 Takeshis Castle Thailand
 17:45 Takeshis Castle Thailand
 18:10 Friends
 18:35 Friends
 20:12 Detroiters
 20:35 Detroiters
 21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
 21:30 Martha And Snoop Potluck Dinner Party
 21:55 Graves
 22:25 Daniel Tosh: Happy Thoughts
 23:15 Tosh.0
 23:38 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 Obsession: Dark Desires
 06:10 I Almost Got Away With It
 07:00 California Investigator
 07:25 Love The Way You Lie
 08:15 Evil Online
 09:10 Murder Comes To Town
 10:05 The Perfect Murder

11:00 Disappeared
 11:55 Love The Way You Lie
 12:50 I Almost Got Away With It
 13:45 Obsession: Dark Desires
 14:40 The Perfect Murder
 15:35 Who Killed Jane Doe?
 16:30 Love The Way You Lie
 17:25 Evil Online
 18:20 I Almost Got Away With It
 19:15 Obsession: Dark Desires
 20:10 The Perfect Murder
 21:05 Married With Secrets
 22:00 Evil Online
 22:55 Forbidden: Dying For Love
 23:50 Swamp Murders



00:00 Hank Zipzer
 00:25 Alex & Co.
 00:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
 00:50 Evermoor Chronicles
 01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
 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
 09:50 Tangled: The Series
 10:15 Bizaardvark
 10:40 Bizaardvark
 11:05 Liv And Maddie
 11:30 Liv And Maddie
 11:55 K.C. Undercover
 12:20 K.C. Undercover
 12:45 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
 13:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
 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
 22:50 Lolo Rock
 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
 10:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
 13:10 Vampirina
 13:35 PJ Masks
 14:00 Muppet Babies Show And Tell S1
 14:05 The Legion Of Pirate Villains
 14:50 PJ Masks Shorts
 15:00 Mission Force One
 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
 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 Walk The Prank
 13:29 Walk The Prank
 14:00 Walk The Prank
 14:29 Walk The Prank
 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 Marvel Super Heroes Black Panther: Trouble In
 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 Botched
 03:40 Botched
 04:35 Botched
 05:30 Celebrity Style Story
 06:00 So Cosmo
 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
 15:15 E! News: Daily Pop
 16:15 Botched
 19:00 E! News
 20:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
 21:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
 22:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
 23:00 Very Cavallari
 23:55 Very Cavallari



00:15 The Middle
 01:05 Seinfeld
 01:55 My Boys
 02:20 Til Death
 02:45 Suburgatory
 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 Suburgatory
 06:30 Speechless
 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 Life In Pieces
 10:40 Mom
 11:05 Suburgatory
 11:30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
 12:20 Speechless
 12:45 Fresh Off The Boat
 13:10 The Middle
 14:00 Seinfeld
 14:50 Mom
 15:15 Baskets
 15:40 Life In Pieces
 16:05 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
 17:00 Speechless
 17:30 Fresh Off The Boat
 18:00 The Middle
 19:00 Seinfeld
 20:00 Baskets
 20:30 Life In Pieces
 21:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
 22:00 Vice Principals
 22:35 Crashing
 23:05 You're The Worst
 23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers



01:30 The Game Plan
 03:30 Beauty And The Beast
 05:15 The Lone Ranger

08:00 The Game Plan
 10:00 Finding Dory
 12:00 The Muppets
 14:00 Wreck-It Ralph
 16:00 Cars
 18:00 Maleficent
 20:00 The Princess Diaries
 22:00 Wreck-It Ralph



00:15 Stag
 01:45 No Stranger Than Love
 03:30 Memories Of Me
 05:30 Angus Thongs And Perfect Snogging
 07:30 Family Weekend
 09:30 Memories Of Me
 11:30 Angus Thongs And Perfect Snogging
 13:30 Family Weekend
 15:30 Madhouse
 17:15 Taco Shop
 19:00 Are We Done Yet?
 20:45 The Female Brain
 22:30 Duets



01:10 The Secret Of Kells
 02:40 Funny Little Cars
 04:00 Dinofroz - An Island In The Sky
 05:20 Last Wizard
 06:45 The Adventures Of Scooter The Penguin
 08:15 The Adventure Club
 09:50 Emilie Jolie
 11:15 Nur And The Dragon's Temple
 12:35 The Secret Of Kells
 14:05 Funny Little Cars
 15:25 The Kids From 62-F
 17:20 Emilie Jolie
 18:45 A Doggone Hollywood
 20:15 Operation Arctic
 21:55 The Kids From 62-F
 23:50 The Adventure Club



00:05 Boyz In The Hood
 02:00 The Salesman
 04:05 Summer Villa
 05:35 Chitty Chitty Bang Bang
 08:00 Sleepless In Seattle
 09:45 Big Momma's House 2
 11:25 Alvin And The Chipmunks: Chipwrecked
 12:55 Dragonheart
 14:40 Guess Who
 16:30 Sully
 18:10 Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them
 20:25 Eagle Eye
 22:25 Aliens



00:05 Food Factory
 00:30 Man Made Marvels China
 01:20 Mysteries Of The Missing
 02:10 Science Of The Movies
 03:00 How It's Made
 03:24 How It's Made
 03:48 Mythbusters
 04:36 Man Made Marvels China
 05:24 How Do They Do It?
 05:48 Food Factory
 06:12 Mysteries Of The Missing
 07:00 How Do They Do It?
 07:26 How It's Made
 07:50 How It's Made
 08:14 Man Made Marvels China
 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 Mythbusters
 12:14 Man Made Marvels China
 13:02 Mysteries Of The Missing
 13:50 Science Of The Movies
 14:38 How Do They Do It?
 15:02 Food Factory
 15:26 How It's Made
 15:50 How It's Made
 16:14 Mythbusters

Stars



Aries (March 21-April 19)

In the future when you sit back and reminisce on some of the best times in your life, today will come to mind. Love and friendship comes naturally to you today. Your world is filled with both. Special times are to be spent with love ones today and lasting memories will be made. You may find an unbelievable opportunity will come your way. Lady luck is smiling at you today. This day will find you in the right place at the right time. It seems as if a financial matter is resolved with an unexpected cash flow. Accept gifts and good fortune with much gratitude today. Do not resist what was meant to be, Aries. Enjoy the smile you are unable to wipe off of your face.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This is a time when lovers, children, and people and things dear to your heart take center stage. You have your priorities in order. You know where your bread is buttered. Without these things you may feel as if you would never know what happiness truly is. You find that those close to you shower you with affection and attention. It feels wonderful to be loved and needed. You may find that you are extremely sensitive to the needs of those close to you. In return you are receiving the nurturing and affection your heart has been desiring. Enjoy this wonderful time.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Sex, power, and money, are what you are drawn to today. Secrets and mysteries draw you in. All that is taboo is fascinating to you today. You have a desire to know what makes people tick. What makes people do the things they do? You start to realize what an impact your own past can have on your future. You are able to have some time to reflect and realize each stumbling block in your past has been successfully turned into stepping stones by you.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

This is a great time to stop and really think about how you feel about your life and yourself. This is a nice time for you. Your emotions and the feelings of those around you may be very clear to you now. A time of understanding and a time of love is what this day may bring. You may start to focus your energy on learning more about your peers. Learning what makes people tick is a turn on for you. People seem to fascinate you and you are curious and want to get to the root of who they really are. Secrets, drama, and all that is considered taboo, is where you find your focus has drifted.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

When speaking you may find others are captivated by what you have to say. You may find yourself bringing a group together with your words and ideas. Others may find they are swept away to the day and time you are speaking of. This is a true talent. This is a great day for job-related events. You may shine in your job. You could be offered a promotion coming your way. You may find you are asked to speak on behalf of your company or represent your company in some way. You are the voice others long to hear.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Today you may feel as though you have hit a bump in the road. There may even be one person you feel is standing in your way. Aquarius, you will be able to be understanding and cut right through the smoke and mirrors to get to the root of the problem with this individual. You will be admired for your leadership skills. You may find yourself focusing on your sexual needs today. This may be an area you desire dominance and control, Virgo. Relationships are very important to you. You seem to see the beauty in all that surrounds you. Enjoy this day.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You may be feeling drawn and even turned on by that which is taboo. Sex, power, and the pursuit of wealth are beginning to be a driving force behind your emotions. You are fascinated by people. What makes them do the things they do? What makes them tick? You desire a fresh start in your life and major changes. You know this may only be accomplished by turning your back on all you believed and starting over with an open mind and a new outlook on life in general, Libra. Sometimes a fresh start is just what we all need to succeed.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Whether it is sexual, the desire for power, or the desire for wealth, these are all areas that seem to turn you on and set you in motion today. You may find yourself in a very sensual mood at this time. Things seem to affect you on a much deeper level now. The mysterious, secretive, and even that which is taboo seem to call to you and draw you in. You may desire to learn people on a deeper level. You want to know them from the inside out. You may also desire to do some soul-searching of your own and learn yourself in the same manner.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Today you may feel as though you have hit a bump in the road. There may even be one person you feel is standing in your way. Aquarius, you will be able to be understanding and cut right through the smoke and mirrors to get to the root of the problem with this individual. You will be admired for your leadership skills. You may find yourself focusing on your sexual needs today. This may be an area you desire dominance and control, Sagittarius. Relationships are very important to you.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

People are creatures of habit. You seem fascinated today by learning what makes people tick. Why do certain people act certain ways. You have asked yourself, "what in the world is wrong with people," on more than one occasion today. This suddenly becomes a mission for you. You want to get to the root of the issues that make people close to you make the choices they have been making. Taking time to open up to others and have them open up to you may give you a much greater understanding of this problem. Keep an open mind and you may have great understanding of the differences you are seeing in people.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

You may find that you not only have a greater appreciation for things of value but for value itself today. You may find this to be a period of great material gain. It is a time that material things have a great importance to you. You may find yourself in an unrealistic and dreamy mood. You seem to be at odds with your responsibilities. Your friends are used to a more disciplined side of you. You may find that do not like the way you are behaving. Do not be surprised if you find your friends avoiding you at this time, Aquarius. This may make you feel as if you do not have the support you need.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Every action has a consequence. You seem to be one that tends to have to learn this the hard way. This may be a time wiping the slate clean may be in order. Set your goals. Start over from scratch. If things do not work out the first time, roll up your sleeves and try again. Eventually you will accomplish your goals. Stay focused and determined, you may find great reward awaits you.

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

'Devastating' dolphin loss in Florida red tide disaster

SARASOTA, United States: A state of emergency has been declared in Florida as the worst red tide in a decade blackens the ocean water, killing dolphins, sea turtles and fish at a relentless pace. More than 100 tons of dead sea creatures have been shoveled up from smelly, deserted beaches in tourist areas along Florida's southwest coast this month alone. In just the past week, 12 dolphins washed ashore dead in Sarasota County, typically the toll seen in an entire year.

"It is physically and mentally exhausting," said Gretchen Lovewell, who is in charge of a skeleton crew at Mote Marine Laboratory that collects dead or distressed sea turtles and marine mammals. She and two colleagues "have been literally working around the clock," Lovewell added. On Sunday, near the fluffy sands of Siesta Key, one of America's top-ranked beaches, Lovewell recovered the remains of a decomposing dolphin. A faint number, 252, was visible, freeze-branded onto its dorsal fin. It was a 12-year-old male named Speck, who had been spotted more than 300 times by researchers monitoring generations of bottlenose dolphins in the Sarasota Bay.

"It was devastating," said Randall Wells, director of the Chicago Zoological Society's Sarasota Dolphin Research Program, the world's longest-running study of a wild dolphin population, under way since 1970. Wells pulled out a map showing where researchers have seen Speck over the years. He often swam in

waters right near Wells' own home. Researchers had also tracked Speck's mother and grandmother before they died from swallowing fishing gear. "Speck is somebody we have known from the time he was born," said Wells, who began studying dolphins when he was 16. "He was named after my dad."

How red tide kills

Red tide is suspected as the cause of Speck's death, but researchers won't know for certain until lab results come back in the next few weeks. A natural phenomenon, red tide is caused by a microscopic single-celled organism called *Karenia brevis*, unique to the Gulf of Mexico. It releases a powerful neurotoxin that can become airborne, causing headaches, watery eyes, coughing and asthma attacks in people. Ecologists say the organism acts like a forest fire, clearing out weeds and allowing the landscape to start anew.

Karenia brevis is found year-round at low levels. But once it multiplies, sea turtles and manatees may inhale it, or die from eating too much neurotoxin-laced fish and sea grass. Symptoms include disorientation, lack of coordination, and seizures. Red tide has been documented as far back as the 1500s by Spanish explorers. "But the question now is what might we be doing to enhance it and make it stay longer?" said Richard Pierce, a senior scientist at Mote Marine Laboratory and expert in ecotoxins.

Florida's current spate of red tide began in



SANIBEL: (FILES) In this file photo fish are washed ashore the Sanibel causeway after dying in a red tide in Sanibel, Florida. — AFP

October 2017, but grew considerably worse in recent weeks. Sometimes expanding and other times ebbing, it has descended on the west coast of Florida from Tampa to Naples, a nearly 200-mile (320-km) span. Industrial farming and improper waste treatment can foster the growth of toxic blue-green algae, or cyanobacteria, another problem plaguing

Florida waters. The same may hold true for red tide, experts say.

The smell of rotting fish has been a gut punch to Florida's economy, sapping millions in revenue from fishing and tourism in peak season. "Our life is tourism here in southwest Florida," said Omar Botana, owner of Bay Water boat rentals in Bonita Springs. — AFP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
248 33 199

DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM

Consultant Pediatrician

Consultant Pediatrician-Canadian & American
Board in Pediatrics-Canadian
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DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED

Consultant of General Surgery
Laparoscopic and Bariatric Surgery



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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 35 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

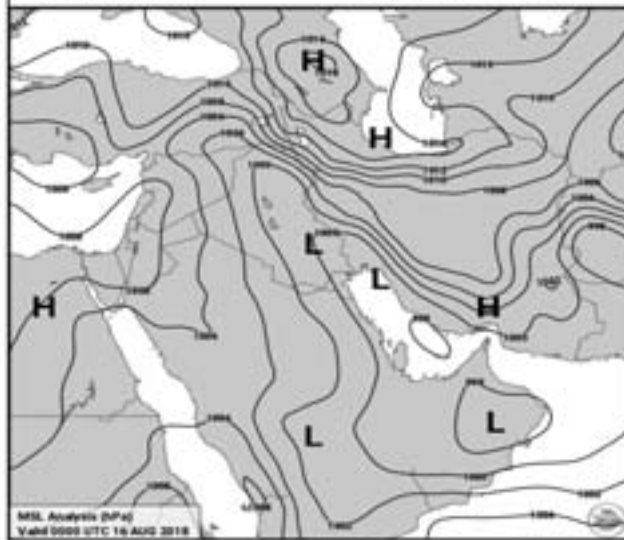
WEATHER WARNING

No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	44 °C	34 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	46 °C	27 °C
ABDALY	45 °C	28 °C
BUBYAN	-- °C	-- °C
JAHRA	46 °C	32 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	45 °C	28 °C
SALMIYAH	44 °C	34 °C
AHMADI	40 °C	34 °C
NUWAISIB	45 °C	30 °C
WAFRA	45 °C	27 °C
SALMY	42 °C	28 °C

SFC. CHART

16/08/2018 0000 UTC



4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	08/17	Very hot and some scattered clouds will appear	48 °C	31 °C	NW	12 - 38 km/h
Saturday	08/18	Very hot and some high clouds will appear	47 °C	32 °C	NW	20 - 38 km/h
Sunday	08/19	Hot	46 °C	29 °C	NW	15 - 35 km/h
Monday	08/20	Hot	45 °C	27 °C	NW	10 - 32 km/h

PRAYER TIMES

Fajr	03:51
Sunrise	05:16
Zuhr	11:52
Asr	15:28
Sunset	18:28
Isha	19:50

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

MAX. Temp.	46 °C
MIN. Temp.	28 °C
MAX. RH	22 %
MIN. RH	08 %
MAX. Wind	NW 36 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

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Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

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Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
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Business

FRIDAY, AUGUST 17, 2018

38 If rupee slump persists, it can hurt India's Modi



39 World shares fight to regain their footing



41 No Canadians: Air France unions want French CEO



ANKARA: People shop at a market in the center of Ankara. Customers and shopkeepers say the diplomatic spat with Washington and the crash of the Turkish lira have strongly affected their daily lives. — AFP

Turkey will emerge stronger: Minister

Turkish banks are healthy and strong - Albayrak

ISTANBUL: Finance Minister Berat Albayrak assured international investors yesterday that Turkey would emerge stronger from its currency crisis, insisting that the country's banks were healthy and strong. In a conference call with thousands of investors and economists, Albayrak - who is President Tayyip Erdogan's son-in-law - said Turkey fully understood and recognized all its domestic challenges but was dealing with what he described as a market anomaly. The Turkish lira hit a record low of 7.24 to the dollar this week, down 40 percent this year, as investors fretted over Erdogan's influence over monetary policy and a bitter dispute with the United States.

Facing Turkey's gravest currency crisis since 2001 in his first month in the job, Albayrak has the daunting task of reassuring the investors that the economy is not hostage to political interference. Albayrak, a 40-year-old former company executive with a doctorate in finance, said Turkey would not hesitate to provide support to the banking sector.

The banks were capable of managing the volatility, and there had been no major flow of cash out of deposits lately, he added. Before he spoke, the Turkish lira strengthened more than 3 percent, despite signs that a rift with the United States is as wide as ever.

However, the currency market's reaction to his conference call - in which he also said Turkey had no plans to seek help from the International Monetary Fund or impose capital controls to stop money from flowing abroad - was measured. After he finished speaking, the lira was little changed from beforehand, meaning it remains down around 34 percent against the dollar this year. Earlier in the day, the currency had shrugged off US comments ruling out the removal of steel tariffs on Turkey even if it frees an American pastor who lies at the centre of the complex feud between Washington and Ankara.

Qatari pledge

The currency gained some support from the

announcement late on Wednesday of a Qatari pledge to invest \$15 billion in Turkey. JP Morgan said moves by Turkish authorities to curb the lira's fall showed they were committed to stabilizing the currency with technical measures such as restricting foreign exchange swaps and cancelling repo auctions to push up the average cost of bank funding. "Yet at the same time (Turkish authorities) are reluctant to adopt orthodox policy frameworks," JP Morgan said. The White House said on Wednesday that it would not remove steel tariffs on Turkey, appearing to give Ankara little incentive to work for the release of Andrew Brunson, a pastor on trial in Turkey on terrorism charges.

Washington wants the evangelical Christian freed but Turkish officials say the case is a matter for the courts. President Donald Trump doubled tariffs on Turkish metals exports to the United States last week prompting Ankara, which says it will not bow to threats, to raise tar-

iffs on US cars, alcohol and tobacco by the same amount on Wednesday. The pastor row is one of several between the NATO allies, including diverging interests in Syria and US objections to Ankara's ambition to buy Russian defense systems, that have contributed to instability in Turkish financial markets.

Erdogan has repeatedly told Turks to exchange gold and hard currency into lira, saying the country was involved in an economic war with enemies and a presidential official gave a similar message yesterday. "We are a fending off this economic coup attempt with the wisdom of the Turkish nation and the leadership of our president," Fahrettin Altun, the president's communications director wrote on Twitter. Erdogan has called for a boycott of US electronic goods and Turkish media have given extensive coverage to anti-US protests, including videos on social media showing Turks apparently burning dollar bills and destroying iPhones. — Reuters

Business

If rupee slump persists, it can hurt India's Modi

Rupee hits all-time low of 70.40 against dollar

NEW DELHI: The rupee's plunge to a record low has worried a wide cross-section of India's society: companies, importers, those going on vacation and students planning to study overseas. But if the weakness persists, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's job could become a lot harder just before big state and national elections. India is a big buyer of everything from crude oil and electronics to gold and edible oil, and its import bill was expected to cross \$600 billion in the fiscal year ending in March 2019, from about \$565 billion in the previous year.

The 9.3 percent fall in the rupee this year has already led to a surge in local prices of goods with an imported component. July was the ninth straight month in which India's inflation was higher than the central bank's medium-term target of 4 percent. The currency fell to a fresh low of 70.40 to the dollar on Thursday. "The sharp rupee depreciation has come as a shock for us," said Kamal Singh, 50, a senior government official in Delhi visiting family in the United States. "Now I will have to spend at least 10,000 rupees (\$143) more on travel."

Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) considers urban middle-class Indians a key voting bloc, the segment most affected by the rupee depreciation. The opposition Congress party has blamed the government's policies for the rupee slump and called it an indication of weakness in the economy. Most political analysts agree that Modi does not yet face a significant challenge, but believe he will be hard put to repeat the BJP's sweep of the 2014 general election. Be-

sides the next general election due by May, three big BJP-ruled states in India's heavily populated northern plains go to the polls over the next four months. Satish Misra, senior fellow at the Observer Research Foundation in New Delhi, said



Inflation could rise because of costlier imports

although the rupee slide was a result of several factors, it was affecting the image of the Modi government. "As prices shoot up and products become costlier, the middle class will begin to get angry," Misra told Reuters. "Since the middle class is the opinion maker, the BJP will suffer electorally." The government has said the depreciation is due to the economic woes in Turkey that has dragged down currencies of emerging market countries around the world.

"Recent developments relating to Turkey have generated global risk aversion towards emerging market currencies and the strengthening of the dollar," said senior cabinet minister Arun Jaitley. "However, India's macro fundamentals remain resilient and strong. Developments are being monitored closely to address any situation that may arise in the context of the un-



NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets schoolchildren after his speech as part of India's 72nd Independence Day celebrations, which marks the 71st anniversary of the end of British colonial rule, at the Red Fort in New Delhi. — AFP

settled international environment." The rupee fall, however, benefits exporters such as software companies. The Thomson Reuters India IT Services & Consulting share index, which includes top Indian firms such as Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services, Wipro and HCL Technologies Ltd, has risen about 31 percent this year. Indian

companies which have raised funds overseas are worried about the rise in servicing costs. The country's external debt rose to \$530 billion at the end of March, out of which nearly 42 percent constituted debt maturing by March 31. Several companies have said the rupee's slide will hit their margins. — Reuters

In Chinese port city, Toyota lays foundation to ramp up sales

BEIJING: Toyota Motor Corp is likely to make 120,000 more cars a year in the Chinese port city of Tianjin as part of a medium-term strategy that's gathering pace as China-Japan ties improve, said four company insiders with knowledge of the matter. The Japanese auto maker's plan to boost annual production capacity by about a quarter in the port city will lay the foundation to increase sales in China to two million vehicles per year, a jump of over 50 percent, the four sources said. The Tianjin expansion signals Toyota's willingness to start adding significant manufacturing capacity in China with the possibility of one or two new assembly plants in the world's biggest auto market, the sources said. Car imports could also increase, they said.

The move comes at a time when China's trade outlook with the United States appears fraught and uncertain. Toyota plans to significantly expand its sales networks and focus more on electric car technologies as part of the strategy, the sources said, declining to be identified as they are not authorized to speak to the media. Toyota sold 1.29 million vehicles in China last year and while sales are projected at 1.4 million this year, "capacity constraints" have restricted stronger growth, the sources said.

Toyota's manufacturing hub in Tianjin currently has the capacity to produce 510,000 vehicles a year, while Toyota as a whole, between two joint ventures, has overall capacity to churn out 1.16 million vehicles a year. Manufacturing capacity numbers provided by automakers are called straight-time capacity without overtime. With overtime, a given assembly plant can produce 20 to 30 percent more than its capacity. According to two Tianjin government websites last week, Toyota has been given regulatory approval by the municipal government's Development and Reform Commission to pursue its expansion.

The two websites - including the official website for the Tianjin development district where Toyota's production hub is based - said the Japanese automaker plans to expand its Tianjin base to be able to manufacture 10,000 all-electric battery cars and 110,000 so-called plug-in electric hybrids annually.

It wasn't immediately clear when Toyota will be able to start producing those additional cars. A Beijing-based Toyota spokesman declined to comment. The Tianjin facilities, which produces cars such as the Toyota Corolla and Vios cars, are owned and operated by one of Toyota's joint ventures in China. The venture with FAW Group Corp in Tianjin plans to invest 1.76 billion yuan (\$257 million) for the expansion, according to the two Tianjin websites. China is sometimes a market difficult to operate for Japanese companies because of historical reasons. In 2012, cars sold by Toyota and other Japanese automakers were battered when protests erupted across China after diplomatic spats over disputed islets known as Diaoyu in China and Senkaku in Japan. Since then, Toyota has emphasized steady growth rather than taking on risky expansion projects. According to the four sources, Toyota's attitude towards China began changing markedly after an official visit to Japan by Chinese Premier Li Keqiang in May. — Reuters

China to widen foreign access to A-shares

SHANGHAI: China's securities regulator said it will allow individual foreign investors working in the country to buy and sell yuan-dominated Chinese A-shares, the latest incremental step by Beijing to widen access to its long-cloistered equities markets. The change would go into effect on September 15 and also applies to foreign employees of Chinese-listed companies who are working for those firms outside the country, the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) said in a statement issued late Wednesday.

Previously, foreign access to Chinese stocks has been largely through B-shares, which are denominated in foreign currencies and geared toward international investors, while only qualified foreign institutional investors could buy into the larger pool of A-shares. But a number of steps in recent years have widened the door, including the establishment of programs under which international investors on Hong Kong's more open stock market can buy some shares on China's exchanges in Shanghai and Shenzhen, and vice-versa.

A similar connection between London's exchange and the mainland Chinese bourses also has been proposed. In June more than 200 Chinese companies debuted on the emerging market index compiled by MSCI, which is expected to lead to billions of dollars of new investment in those Chinese shares by global funds that match their portfolios with MSCI's indices. The CSRC said the move was being taken to "deepen the opening up of the capital market, enrich the investment sources in the capital market, broaden channels for capital access, and optimize the structure of the capital market." — AFP

Business

Bruised world shares, currencies fighting to regain their footing

FTSE hits record high to lift Europe

LONDON: Bruised world shares and emerging market currencies fought to regain their footing yesterday, after China said it will hold trade talks with the United States later this month and Turkey's lira continued its recovery run. Asian equities had hit one-year lows overnight as they tracked Wednesday's global falls and Tencent results disappointed, but a fresh high for London's FTSE and modest gains elsewhere pulled Europe and Wall Street futures up.

At the same time a dip in the dollar, the sight of the lira moving back to 5.8 per dollar and a higher Chinese yuan also steadied emerging market currencies such as South Africa's rand, Russia's rouble and Mexico's peso. Emerging market stocks did nudge lower again, though, after they had crossed the 20 percent peak-to-trough threshold that defines a 'bear' market. Metals markets also clawed higher, however, after copper had also entered 'bear' territory.

"The Chinese are heading to Washington and yuan bounced, the Qataris are heading to Ankara and the lira bounced and that has left everything else floating around really," said Societe Generale's global head of currency strategy Kit Juckes. He added that it was still too early to sound the all clear around Turkey - its new finance minister and son-in-law of President Tayyip Erdogan was about to hold a global conference call - and that the broader worries were still around the extent of China's economic slowdown.

China yesterday said a delegation led by its vice commerce minister would travel to the United States for talks in late August at the invitation of Washington. Hopes that it could ease trade ten-

sions helped Chinese stocks pare losses, with both Shanghai Composite Index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index each down 0.8 percent. Earlier in the day, Shanghai was down as much as 1.9 percent while Hong Kong was off 1.7 percent. Japan's Nikkei average closed 0.1 percent lower in choppy trade, with the benchmark falling as much as 1.5 percent before a brief swing into positive territory on China news.

The euro rose 0.2 percent from a 13-1/2 month low and the offshore Chinese yuan gained 0.8 percent following the Sino-U.S. trade talk news. US stock futures jumped 0.5-0.8 percent. "The news (of the China-US trade talks) triggered short-covering but I think fundamentally it is of limited significance," said Yasuo Sakuma, chief investment officer at Libra Investments. He said Turkey's market swings reflect the fact that it is one of the more vulnerable parts of the global economy at this stage in the interest rate cycle, as the Federal Reserve seeks to normalize US monetary policy.

Video game nasty

However, Sakuma noted there were arguably larger risks for investors, such as the weak earnings from Tencent Holdings. The Chinese tech giant reported its first quarterly profit fall in nearly 13 years on weak gaming revenue. It holds a 40 percent stake in the US firm that makes cult game Fortnite. While that may be booming, China's regulator this week has signaled it is clamping down on some of these types of games.

That had knocked other Asian tech firms with South Korea's Samsung Electronics, Asia's third largest firm by market capitalisation, down to a



KARACHI: Pakistani stockbrokers monitor share prices during a trading session at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) in Karachi yesterday. — AFP

one-year low. Back in Europe, Italy's stock market sank 1.6 percent to its lowest level since April 2017 as motorway operator Atlantia fell 20 percent. The Italian government said it could be heavily fined or stripped of its contracts following the deadly collapse of a bridge in Genoa.

Though metals strengthened, oil prices were also left flat after data showed a surprise weekly increase in US crude stockpiles, compounding worries about a weaker global economic growth.

Brent was at just over \$71 a barrel and US crude oil last stood at \$65.17, having fallen to two-month lows of \$64.42, following Wednesday's 3.2 percent fall. On the bond market, the tentative recovery in risk appetite also saw yields on German Bunds and US Treasury, regarded as safe investments in times of trouble, nudge up. "The overnight news that the Chinese are sending a delegation to the US is helping support risk sentiment," said ING strategist Martin van Vliet. — Reuters

Walmart shares surge on strong US sales growth

NEW YORK: Walmart shares surged in pre-market trading yesterday after it reported the strongest US comparable sales in more than a decade as e-commerce investments paid off in a strengthening American economy. The world's biggest retailer said rising online sales and investments in keeping prices low had boosted store traffic at its name-sake US business, the most critical unit for earnings.

Comparable US store sales rose 4.5 percent in the second quarter, the best growth in more than 10 years and a component in a 3.8 percent rise in overall revenues to \$128.0 billion compared with the year-ago period. But Walmart reported an \$861 million loss following pre-tax costs of \$4.8 billion on a majority stake in its Brazil business. The company also had lower profit margins compared with the year-ago period, as it didn't pass on the hit from higher costs for shipping goods.

Shares surged 10.8 percent in pre-market trading to \$99.95. The company, competing hard for customers with Amazon and other e-commerce companies, has been adding grocery pickup at US stores and now offers the program in more than 1,800 locations, or nearly 40 percent of the overall US network. — AFP

Digital payment companies fight for HK market

HONG KONG: Hong Kong's (HK) shopping districts are well known for their fierce competition. Now, a new battleground is forming as digital payments firms fight for retailers and shoppers. Chinese tech giants like Tencent and Alibaba are bringing their payment platforms to a city that has long thrived on cash and credit cards, putting them into competition with the likes of Google, Apple and Samsung, as well as local players like HSBC.

"Hong Kong is probably a little behind other places when it comes to digital payments, so we are seeing a rush to establish a first mover advantage," said Fergus Gordon, who leads Accenture's Asia-Pacific banking practice. The city has become an important testing ground for Tencent's WeChat Pay, and Alibaba's Alipay, dominant rivals in mainland China, as they look to establish themselves overseas.

AlipayHK, a joint venture between Ant Financial, Alibaba's payments arm, and the Hong Kong conglomerate CK Hutchison, says the number of its users have jumped 50 percent to 1.5 million since March. WeChat Pay

does not disclose its user numbers in Hong Kong. Visa says that as of last April, one in 10 Visa payments in Hong Kong were made using ApplePay, SamsungPay or GooglePay, doubling from a year earlier. HSBC said in July that it reached one million users for its peer-to-peer payments app PayMe.

Hong Kong has been slow to embrace mobile payments partly because of the ubiquity of Octopus, a once ground-breaking stored-value card that is accepted by 22,000 businesses like convenience stores and small restaurants, and is widely used on public transport.

Despite the growth of mobile payments, current spending habits will be hard to change. A Hong Kong Productivity Council survey published in July found that the most widely used mobile payment methods were Alipay and WeChat Pay, but they were used by just 22 percent and 19 percent of respondents respectively.

However, 97 percent of respondents said they used Octopus cards. Lack of familiarity and worries about data leakage were the most common reasons given for not adopting the new mobile payment systems. Octopus cards were first launched in 1997. Twenty years later, there were 34.4 million cards in circulation - almost 5 per Hong Kong resident, according to the company. But even Octopus is feeling the heat from competition. Net profit fell by one-third in

2017 to HK\$272 million (\$34.66 million). However, Sunny Cheung, Octopus' chief executive, told Reuters that the numbers were a one off, since the company had been spending heavily, particularly on technology and cybersecurity. He added that the company still had an edge over the newcomers, particularly with small businesses long used to Octopus payments. "Acceptance is key, especially in the 'mom and pop' shops." An AlipayHK spokeswoman said the company was trying to attract users by offering special discounts. "At the same time, we are seeking cooperation with various merchants to increase the penetration of AlipayHK to change consumers' habits little by little," she said.

Battleground

Merchant cooperation is hard to get right though, due to the differing tastes of consumers. Edward Ho, who owns a shop selling luxury bags in Hong Kong's teeming Causeway Bay shopping district, signed up for Alipay last year but gave up on it after customers showed little interest. "Unless these systems are as popular as Octopus, I won't consider them," Ho said. However, James Lam, who runs the watch shop next door, installed Alipay after one visitor from mainland China would only buy a timepiece using Alipay or WeChat Pay. Lam now encourages local customers to use the digital wallets too. — Reuters

Business

Euro rebounds as dollar eases on US-China talks

Investor appetite for riskier assets recovers

LONDON: The euro recovered yesterday from its weakest since late June 2017 and the dollar fell after news that a Chinese delegation will travel to the United States for trade talks, with investors buying back into currencies hit hard in the recent sell-off. Many emerging market currencies also rose, clawing back some of Wednesday's losses thanks to easing fears over the knock-on effects from a slide in the Turkish lira.

Global equity markets were mixed, however, underlining how nervous investors remain. "That China and the US are beginning to talk again is supporting the market," said Commerzbank currencies strategist Thu Lan Nguyen. "As the (Turkish) lira did not depreciate further, that has taken out some tension from the market." She also emphasized that the currency crisis in Turkey is far from over because authorities have yet to tackle the root causes. More important for major currencies yesterday were developments in the months-long trade conflict between the United States and China.

China's Ministry of Commerce said it had received an invitation from the United States for talks to be held with US Under Secretary of Treasury for International Affairs David Malpass. The euro rose 0.2 percent to \$1.1367, away from Wednesday's low of \$1.1301. The dollar, which

has gained on bouts of investor jitters as traders seek safety in the higher-yielding and most liquid currency, fell after a recent strong run. The dollar index slipped 0.1 percent to 96.613. China's yuan, which has fallen in recent months on concerns about the impact on its economy of the trade conflict with the United States, gained 0.7 percent in offshore markets to 6.9005.



Emerging market currencies rebound, lira strengthens

Apparent calm
Emerging market currencies bounced across the board, including the South African rand, the Mexican peso and Russian rouble. Turkey's lira rallied about

3 percent to 5.7923 before a presentation by Finance Minister Berat Albayrak to investors, but is still down 34 percent against the dollar this year. Despite yesterday's calm, analysts remain cautious about the outlook for markets, particularly those outside of the United States that have looked vulnerable whenever investors get nervous. Simon Derrick, chief currency strategist at BNY Mellon, said "a seeming disconnect between US markets and those elsewhere is becoming increasingly obvious", given the performance of US equities and the dollar in 2018. "The risk is that the apparent calm in US markets may be giving US investors a false read about how volatile the next few months might prove for global markets," Derrick said. The yen



HONG KONG: A man walks past a display showing bank notes of different currencies in Hong Kong. Hong Kong's de facto central bank said yesterday it had bought up more than US\$2 billion worth of local currency to maintain a long-held peg to the US dollar.— AFP

paused after its recent run, with the dollar gaining 0.1 percent to 110.84 yen. Norway's crown fell slightly against the euro after the Norwegian central bank kept interest rates on hold and reiterated it planned to hike in September. It was largely un-

moved against the dollar, up 0.6 percent on the day. The Australian dollar, seen as a proxy for China-related trades, climbed 0.4 percent to \$0.7265 after falling to \$0.7202 on Wednesday, its weakest since January 2017.— Reuters

Italy bridge collapse: The financial facts behind the fury

MILAN: Italy's anti-establishment government, outraged at the deadly collapse of a 50-year-old bridge, has presented the disaster as a warning to Brussels to give it more leeway to upgrade the country's ageing infrastructure. But the political anger generated by Tuesday's tragedy in Genoa, in which at least 38 people died, could instead end up piling even more financial pressure on the state - from nervous holders of its 2 trillion euros (\$2.3 trillion) in bonds.

Within hours of the viaduct giving way and sending vehicles plummeting, Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini said the EU must allow Rome to include in its next budget all the funds needed to ensure the country's infrastructure was safe. Salvini said Italy's civil protection department estimated that at least 40 billion euros was needed to improve the country's defenses against events such as floods or landslides. Any investment, to be calculated after an emergency

audit of bridges and tunnels nationwide, comes on top of plans by the two-and-a-half-month-old government to spend tens of billions of euros on tax cuts, easing pension rules and a basic income for the poor.

It also wants to avoid triggering a planned rise in value-added tax (VAT), agreed with Brussels by the previous government to meet budget goals. For Italy's creditors, the fiscal gap is a growing worry. A sell-off sent Italian bond yields rising sharply on Wednesday morning after Salvini used the bridge disaster to question EU limits on Italy's deficit. The bonds later rallied but their yields continued on Thursday to offer a historically high premium over safer German debt.

Gustavo Piga, economics professor at Rome's Tor Vergata University, said regardless of EU rules, Rome had not always demonstrated that infrastructure was at the top of its agenda. "Italy sorely needs higher and better public investments but they haven't been a priority for politicians in recent years," Piga said, noting that the previous administration had even appeared to divert some funds away from infrastructure after winning some budgetary leeway from Brussels for investments.

Total investment and maintenance spending on Italian transport infrastructure fell by 58 percent between 2008 and 2015, according to data by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.—Reuters

Serbia turns to tech industry to fight stagnation

BELGRADE: Serbia, a country that claims inventor Nikola Tesla as one of its most famous sons, is looking to technology to help lift itself out of decades of economic stagnation following the Balkan wars of the 1990s. While a small player in global or even Western European terms, Serbia now generates 10 percent of its gross domestic product from information technology.

Technology exports are worth 1 billion euros (\$1.2 billion) so far this year, up from around 900 million euros in 2017, putting it in the top three export sectors beside cars and agriculture, according to Finance Minister Sinisa Mali. Serbian companies are producing software for industries ranging from agriculture to medicine as well as Uber-type trucking and cloud applications, online games

and testing. They are also running call centers and customer helplines.

But it's a competitive market with many countries scrapping for a share of the cash being invested by foreign tech companies. Under Prime Minister Ana Brnabic, a 42-year-old with a background in promoting entrepreneurship, Serbia is stepping up support for the start-up scene and wooing multinationals to set up operations in Serbia. As part of its strategy, Serbia is attracting foreign investors with its low-wage status, as well as subsidies of up to 10,000 euros per employee.

"Information and high-end technologies and the digital agenda are the future of our economy," Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said. "Serbia's IT sector is the product of our own intelligence...we have to continue to train as many people as possible to work in this sector," he added. Major companies including Microsoft, IBM and Intel have either established development centres in Serbia or have outsourced work to local firms, offering wages that are more than three times higher than the country's monthly average take-home pay of 420 euros, but still lower than that in European Union countries.—Reuters

Business

No Canadians: Air France unions want French CEO

Canada's Ben Smith named new chief executive

PARIS: Air France-KLM was tipped to name Canada's Ben Smith as its new chief executive yesterday, whose mooted nomination has run into immediate resistance from the group's powerful unions. It was "inconceivable that the Air France company, French since 1933, falls into the hands of a foreign executive whose candidacy is being promoted by a competitor," said a statement from nine out of ten Air France unions yesterday.

The foreign competitor appeared to be Delta Airlines, the US airline which owns 8.8 percent of the capital of Air France-KLM, the parent group formed out of the merger of Air France and KLM of the Netherlands in 2004. The union statement added that the new boss needed "intimate knowledge... of the French social model", which often results in confrontations between employees and management.

Widely tipped in the French media to be unveiled as the new CEO later on after a board meeting, Smith won approval from the French government which retains influence over the group through its 14.3-percent shareholding. "I think he's an excellent candidate," Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire said during a press conference in southwest France. One of Smith's



The Air France shares plunge

biggest tasks would be negotiating a new pay deal with the French labor groups behind a series of strikes between February and June that forced out former boss Jean-Marc Janaillac.

He has experience of sensitive labor negotiations, having led talks with pilots' and flight attendants' unions at Air Canada ahead of the launch of low-cost operator Air Canada Rouge. But his proposed salary, reported to be several times higher than that of Janaillac, could also undermine goodwill towards him from employees, who have suffered years of cut-backs and job losses. The union representing pilots at KLM, the Dutch arm of the group, has also made fresh pay demands and threatened strikes unless a new deal is offered to its members.

Management shakeup

The Franco-Dutch airline has been searching for a new boss since Janaillac resigned in May, having gambled his job on getting Air France staff to accept a new pay deal after months of strikes. Smith's nomination could also be accompanied by a shake-up of the company's governance, with the splitting of the roles of chairman and chief executive, which were previously held

already supplies the most marine fuel of any port in the Mediterranean and aims to do the same with LNG, said Manuel Tirado, chief executive of the Gibraltar Port Authority. "The GPA's aim is to be the number one LNG bunker port in the Med, however, this is something that will not happen overnight," he told Reuters.

The shipping industry is under pressure to cut its emissions of the main greenhouse gas which causes global warming - carbon dioxide (CO₂) - by at least 50 percent by mid-century from 2008 levels, after the IMO agreed on a target in April after years of debate. Although still a fossil fuel, LNG emits 10 to 20 percent less CO₂ than even low-sulphur fuel oil. A period of low oil prices slowed the take-up of LNG as a marine fuel. But over the past year, as the oil price has risen, appetite has grown in the cruise ship industry as well as in the container, cargo and tanker sectors.

There are currently 125 ships around the world using LNG, according to ship certification experts DNV GL, with between 400 to 600 expected to be delivered by 2020. That is a still small fraction of a world fleet of more than 60,000 commercial ships. Valuation company VesselsValue said 78 ships with dual-fuel engines capable of using LNG would be delivered in 2018, the largest annual number to date. "Over the last year or so there is a growing consensus among shipowners that LNG is a reasonable next step. It is gaining traction," said Martin Wold, a senior consultant at DNV GL.

But the transition to LNG will take time, with



ROISSY: An Air-France aircraft takes off from Roissy-Charles de Gaulle Airport, north of Paris. Air France-KLM names its new chief executive during a board meeting yesterday. — AFP

by the same executive at the company. Les Echos business daily, which reported the change, said the new management structure would bring the company into line with American and British practice.

Air France shares have plunged more than 35 percent since the start of the year, although they have stabilized since Janaillac's departure. The group this month estimated the cost of the 15

low-sulphur oil-based fuels also used to replace heavy oil. By 2050, DNV GL forecasts that only 47 percent of energy for shipping will come from oil-based fuels. Gas fuels will account for 32 percent, and the rest will be provided by carbon-neutral energy sources, such as biofuels and electricity. The global shipping fleet now consumes about 4 million barrels per day of high-sulphur fuel oil. Thomson Reuters Research estimates show fuel accounts for about half of a ship's daily operating cost.

Constraints

One of the challenges in using LNG to power ships has been the investment needed to build the required refuelling facilities. In addition, commercial vessels powered by LNG cost around \$5 million more than regular ships. Retrofitting is also costly as existing ships require space to install much bigger fuel tanks to keep the super-cooled gas from evaporating. For Gibraltar, the construction of the new LNG power plant by Royal Dutch Shell will help to create some of the required ship refuelling infrastructure.

"The LNG for the power plant will be used solely for the power plant. However, the same marine infrastructure that provides the LNG for the power plant will also be able to be utilised to supply LNG to vessels. The current focus is to deliver LNG by barge," said Tirado, the Gibraltar Port Authority chief. Tirado said authorities in Gibraltar were working on a legal framework that would allow ships to be refuelled with LNG in the near future. A Shell spokeswoman said the

days of French strikes between February and June at 335 million euros (\$391 million). After years of losses and restructuring, the company has returned to profit, leading to the increased pay demands from unions. It reported net profits of 109 million euros for the second quarter-down sharply from 593 million for the same period last year, although that figure was boosted by new accounting rules. — AFP

supply of LNG to Gibraltar "opens up the possibility for other future LNG applications in Gibraltar, such as the use of LNG as a cleaner burning maritime fuel".

Malta is studying the provision of LNG refuelling facilities at its ports and other places such as Barcelona are working on providing LNG bunkering. Zeebrugge and Rotterdam are already supplying LNG via barges. Elsewhere, several LNG bunkering vessels, from which merchant ships can refuel, have been delivered to operate in locations such as the Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Antwerp region, the North Sea, the Baltic Sea and the coast of Florida. "We are reaching a tipping point where shipowners are starting to commit to LNG-fired ships at scale," said Maarten Wetselaar, head of integrated gas and new energies at Shell.

Planning for the long-term

To meet the sulphur rules in 2020, shipping companies can use low-sulphur fuel, install a scrubber and continue to use heavy fuel oil, or switch to LNG. Sulphur scrubbers can cost up to \$10 million per ship and will not help lower CO₂ emissions in the longer term, according to analysts at UBS. In the future, ships could be fuelled by methanol, biofuels, fuel-cell systems or hydrogen, but these are not technologically advanced enough and very costly. Since demand will inevitably shift to compliant fuels - low sulphur in the short-term, as well as LNG - the main losers will be refiners unless they adjust their production mix. — Reuters

New rules push shipowners to go green with LNG

LONDON: Tough new rules on marine fuel are forcing shipowners to explore liquefied natural gas as a cleaner alternative and ports such as Gibraltar are preparing to offer upgraded refuelling facilities in the shipping industry's biggest shake-up in decades. From 2020, International Maritime Organization rules will ban ships from using fuels with a sulphur content above 0.5 percent, compared with 3.5 percent now, unless they are equipped to clean up sulphur emissions.

This will be enforced by fines levied by the IMO's member states. Using LNG to power ships instead of heavy fuel oil or the lighter marine gasoil can reduce polluting emissions of nitrogen oxides and sulphur oxides by 90 to 95 percent, according to industry estimates. The stakes are high. Analysts at Swiss bank UBS estimate that the green shipping market could be worth at least \$250 billion over the next five years.

To scoop up some that market, the British territory of Gibraltar is in the process of launching an LNG-fuelled power station whose accompanying storage tanks will also be able to be used to refuel cargo ships via barges. Gibraltar

Sports

From bamboo shack to running track, sprinter buoys Asian Games hosts

Zohri facing biggest test as he competes against faster athletes

JAKARTA: Rags-to-riches teenage sprinter Lalu Zohri has given Indonesia an unexpected confidence boost as the Asian Games hosts look to pull off their first top-10 medals in decades. Zohri, 18, won the hearts of Indonesians last month with a shock 100-metres victory over two favoured American rivals at the world junior championships in Finland.

It was the first medal for an Indonesian athlete at the under-20 tournament and capped a heady rise for Zohri, who was raised in a bamboo shack and trained barefoot on the beach as a youngster.

Now, Zohri is facing his biggest test as he competes against a field of older and faster athletes at the world's second-largest multi-sports event. "My goal is to give my best for Indonesia," Zohri, who clocked 10.18sec to win world gold, said after a training session in Jakarta. "But I'm not targeting a medal in the 100 metres."

Still, his unlikely rise has given Indonesia a glimmer of hope that it too can manage a surprise showing-and overcome a history of middling performances at international tournaments. Badminton, weightlifting, Indonesian martial art pencak silat and even paragliding are all potential medal sports for the hosts at the August 18-September 2 Games in Jakarta and Palembang.

Despite a population of more than 260 million, Indonesia frequently trails smaller Southeast Asian nations like Malaysia and Thailand at the Asian Games. Indonesia has ranked no better than 13th at the past four Asiad and last placed in the top 10 in 1990. They were 17th at the 2014 Games in Incheon.

Although the Asian Games allow the host nation to tailor the sporting programme to suit its strengths, some remain sceptical that Indonesia can finish in the top 10. "Last year we had a very

poor performance at the Southeast Asian Games with the same athletes, so I think it is really difficult to achieve," sports analyst Fritz Simanjuntak told AFP. The country ranked fifth at the Southeast Asian Games in Kuala Lumpur last year behind hosts Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam and Singapore.

HIGH FLIERS AND MINIONS

Indonesia's poor results at multi-sport events can be explained by a dearth of youth development programmes, according to Simanjuntak, who was a member of the Indonesian Olympic Committee (IOC) between 1995-2004.

"We don't have a good structure for athlete development in Indonesia," he said. "The government needs to focus on the community level and the school level." Even so, many Indonesian athletes will be hell-bent on proving they're gold medal-worthy in front of passionate home crowds. Paragliding-along with bridge and pencak silat-will feature for the first time in the Asian Games, and there are sky-high expectations for Indonesia's team, which includes four top-10 fliers in both the men's and women's accuracy discipline.

Hening Paradigma, who is aiming for gold in the men's accuracy and cross country events, said the Indonesian team has been training for a year-and-a-half. "The possibility of gold is quite high for accuracy and for cross country we have a 50/50 chance," said Paradigma, who is ranked world number seven for paragliding accuracy.

"We know Korea and Japan are more experienced... but we will do our best to achieve a gold medal." While Indonesia's stranglehold on world badminton has loosened since the 1990s, it stands a strong chance resurrecting some past glory at the showpiece tournament.

"drug cheat" and Frenchwoman Camille Lacourt sniffed that Sun "pees purple".

Sun then escalated the war of words by accusing Horton of "dirty tactics" after losing his Olympic 400m title to the Australian. Prowling the pool deck in bling gold headphones before his races, the Chinese star could face less resistance in his bid to win a fistful of gold in Jakarta with Hagino failing to qualify for Japan in the 200m free. "I can't relax for a second," admitted the 26-year-old Sun, who completed a hat-trick of 400m world titles last year in Budapest. "If you stop pushing, that's when the problems start," he told Chinese media. "Rest and recuperation can wait."

China's support cast is led by teenager Li Bingjie, who medalled in the women's 400m and 800m freestyle in Hungary, and charismatic backstroker Fu Yuanhui, a double Asian Games winner in 2014. Wang Shun, bronze medallist behind Michael Phelps and Hagino in the 200m individual medley at the Rio Olympics, will have hopes of upsetting his Japanese rival.

But Hagino, who captured Olympic gold in the 400m medley, will be favourite to complete another Asian Games double, despite having countryman Daiya Seto breathing down his neck. Japan also have high hopes for Rikako Ikee, who swept to gold in the women's 100m butterfly at last week's Pan Pacific championships.— AFP



JAKARTA: This photo taken on July 27, 2018 shows Indonesian sprinter Lalu Zohri (C) taking part in a practice session with his teammates at the Senayan sport complex in Jakarta, ahead of the 2018 Asian Games. — AFP

Diminutive duo Marcus Gideon and Kevin Sukamuljo-affectionately dubbed the "Minions" after the little yellow characters featured in a popular 2015 animated film—are the world's top-ranked men's doubles pair and will be tough to beat. Team manager Susi Susanti, a former Olympic gold medallist and world champion,

said Indonesia's shuttlers were ready to go. "Indonesia has a chance of getting a gold medal in several divisions like men's doubles and mixed doubles," Susanti told AFP.

"This is one of the most important competitions and we hope that we can contribute a gold medal for the overall Indonesian team." — AFP

Hot stuff: China swim king Sun eyes Asian sweep

JAKARTA: Brash, belligerent and often painted as swimming's big, bad wolf, Chinese giant Sun Yang will be looking to savage his rivals at the Asian Games. The triple Olympic champion is poised to swim the men's 200m, 400m, 800m and 1500m freestyle in Jakarta—and it would take an astonishing upset to deny him a gold medal sweep.

No shrinking violet, Sun triggered a diplomatic row at the 2014 Asian Games by slamming Japan's national anthem as "ugly" after being ambushed by Kosuke Hagino in the 200m free in Korea.

Sun was banned for three months in 2014 for taking trimetazidine, prescribed for a heart condition and which had only been included on the World Anti-Doping Agency's list of illegal substances four months earlier. Rival swimmers tore into Sun at the Rio Olympics in 2016, where Australian Mack Horton labelled him a

Chinese sprinter Xie out of Asian Games with injury

SHANGHAI: Chinese sprinter and medal hope Xie Zhenye said yesterday that he is not taking part in the Asian Games because of an ankle injury, just two days before they open.

The 24-year-old set a new Chinese record over 200m of 20.16sec in May to underline his electric form heading into the Games in Indonesia's Jakarta and Palembang. Xie was also expected to push friend and rival Su Bingtian all

the way in the 100m for Games gold and the unofficial title of China's fastest man. But with the Games opening on Saturday, Xie wrote on Weibo, China's version of Twitter: "The path of life is always bumpy and looks like this time I'm not that lucky person. "After long-term research and discussion, we decided I'm not going to this Asian Games out of long-term considerations." Xie, who ran 9.97sec in the 100m in June to set a new China record—which was swiftly bettered by Su—added that he was "very sorry" and posted a doctor's letter confirming a right-ankle injury. Reports in Chinese media said that Xie suffered the problem at the London Diamond League meeting last month. Xie had also been scheduled to race in the 4x100m relay in Indonesia so his absence is a blow to him personally and to China's hopes on the track. — AFP

Sports

India mourns cricket 'renaissance man' Ajit Wadekar Sir

'Sad moment for Indian cricket to lose one of its most successful captains'

MUMBAI: Indian cricket heroes yesterday paid tribute to Ajit Wadekar, who led the country to their first series triumphs in England and the West Indies, following his death at the age of 77. "He will always be remembered as the 'renaissance man' of Indian cricket," said Board of Control for Cricket in India chief executive Rahul Johri, after it was announced that Wadekar had died in hospital in Mumbai following a long illness.

"The West Indies and England were two extremely strong teams and beating them in their backyard was almost impossible." The batsman led India to their famous victories in 1971 and overall scored 2,113 runs in just 37 Test matches, including one century.

Wadekar was the first captain of India's one-day team and he went on to become a power-broker as coach, manager and chairman of the Indian selectors and mentor to future stars.

Indian legends from Sachin Tendulkar to Mohammed Azharuddin and Anil Kumble all paid tribute to Wadekar's influence in India's rise to become a cricket superpower. "He was someone who was instrumental in bringing out the best in us during the 90s. We'll always be grateful for his advice and guidance," said Tendulkar.

"Wadekar Sir," as he was known, was man-

ager of the Indian side in which Tendulkar flourished as an opener. Azharuddin also thrived as India's captain from 1993 to 1996 under Wadekar's guidance.

Azharuddin said that Wadekar had been "iconic" and a "father figure for me.. May his soul rest in peace." Kumble, who made his comeback to the Indian team in a 1992-93 tour of South Africa, said that Wadekar "was more than a coach to the entire team—a father figure and a shrewd tactician."

"Thank you Sir for the confidence shown in my ability!" Kumble added. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed Wadekar's efforts for leading Indian "to some of the most memorable victories in our cricketing history." India coach Ravi Shastri paid tribute with a Twitter photo of Wadekar during his heyday as a cricketer.

"Sad moment for Indian cricket to lose one of its most successful captains. Shrewd to the core. Condolences to the entire family #TeamIndia #RIPAjitWadekar," Shastri tweeted.

Bishan Bedi, the spin bowler and contemporary of Wadekar, admitted that he had "differences of opinion" with the great batsman but hailed Wadekar as a "fine batsman" who served Indian cricket with "aplomb." Wadekar's funeral is to be held in Mumbai today. —AFP



MUMBAI: In this file photo taken on November 28, 2003, former Indian cricket captain Ajit Wadekar stands poised with a clapper board at the Muhurat (opening shot) of the film 'Silence Please...The Dressing Room' at the Brabourne Stadium in Mumbai, on November 28, 2003. Indian cricket heroes yesterday paid tribute to Ajit Wadekar, who led the country to their first series triumphs in England and the West Indies, following his death at the age of 77. —AFP

England still to decide if Stokes plays in third Test

NOTTINGHAM: England have yet to decide if Ben Stokes will make his return to international action in the third Test against India at Trent Bridge later this week. The all-rounder was acquitted of affray at a trial in Bristol on Tuesday, having missed England's innings and 159-run win in the second Test at Lord's last week because it clashed with his court case.

England coach Trevor Bayliss welcomed Stokes's return to the squad yesterday. But neither England nor India are obliged to confirm their XIs until the toss which, weather permitting, should take place before Saturday's first day in Nottingham. Given they are 2-0 up in a five-match series, England face a more than usually tricky decision over whether to change a winning side. "It's good to have him back around the squad. I'm happy for Ben and glad it's all over," Bayliss told reporters at Trent Bridge yesterday.

"I haven't actually spoken to him since...but I've got the next two days to assess where he's at." The Australian added: "It's a good position to be in. Whether he plays or not we've got some guys in good form in the team. "It's a difficult decision whoever misses out, whether it's Ben or anyone else. It's a position we've been trying to get into for a while.

"We have some good young players coming in." Explaining how Stokes was added to the squad after the not guilty verdict, Bayliss said: "It was a collective decision. Myself, the management, the captain, Andy Flower, the board—everyone had a bit of a say and basically thought for his (Stokes's) own wellbeing it was good to get him back around the cricket.

"There's nothing automatic about selections, we'll see how he is mentally as well as physically. He's not played for a couple of weeks. It's a difficult decision to make." Although cleared by the court both Stokes and England team-mate Alex Hales remain subject to a Cricket Discipline Commission investigation.

Stokes was not selected for any of the 2017/18 Ashes in Australia, which England lost 4-0 in his absence while attracting some unwanted off-field headlines regarding player behaviour. "Since the (Stokes) incident we've done a lot of work with team culture with the two captains (Test skipper Joe Root and white-ball counterpart Eoin Morgan) — and that's ongoing," said Bayliss.

"Changes with curfews and that type of thing. "In the past all the other teams I've been involved with and this one, when I arrived, would treat teams like adults and they (players) will respond like it," the former Sri Lanka coach added.

"For a team on the road 11 months out of 12, we had an incident we'd rather have not happened to a degree and we've thought we needed to do something different. "There were a couple of small indiscretions in Australia after that incident and I think the players have finally woken up. They've learnt their lesson and the way they go about their profession has been top class." — AFP

Bulgarian ace Pulev terminates contract with promoter Team

SOFIA: Bulgarian Kubrat Pulev, who will meet Briton Hughie Fury in October in a fight to decide the challenger for the International Boxing Federation's (IBF) world heavyweight title, has terminated his contract with German promoter Team Sauerland.

"Everything happened 10 days ago," the 37-year-old Pulev, will make his much-anticipated comeback after an absence of a year and a half in Sofia on Oct. 27, said on Thursday. "I paid \$150,000 because of the early termination of the contract."

The fight against Fury, which will decide the challenger for the IBF title held by Briton Anthony Joshua, will be Pulev's first since April 2017 when he beat American veteran Kevin Johnson in Sofia. "We pursue different interests and we have a different ideology," Pulev said. "I think every-

one should pursue his goals in his own way and that's good for all. And I had to pay for it."

Team Sauerland, founded in 1978, signed a contract extension with Pulev in early 2015, which was due to expire at the end of the year. Team Sauerland's office said it could not confirm the contract termination when contacted by Reuters.

Tensions had built up between Pulev and Team Sauerland over the last year as the Bulgarian strongly criticised the promoter for the way it has handled his challenge with Joshua. Pulev pulled out of fighting Joshua in October last year after suffering a shoulder injury. Joshua, who also holds the WBA, IBO and WBO titles, went on to beat his replacement Carlos Takam.

Hughie Fury is a cousin of former world heavyweight champion Tyson Fury. The IBF has ordered Pulev to face Briton Dillian Whyte and American Jarell Miller to decide a title challenger but the two turned down the fights, angering the Bulgarian.

Known as The Cobra, he previously challenged for the IBF world heavyweight title in 2014, losing to Wladimir Klitschko in Hamburg on a fifth-round knockout. Since then, Pulev has won five fights in a row. — Reuters

Sports

Spanish driver Carlos Sainz to replace Fernando Alonso at McLaren from 2019

'I've been a McLaren fan for as long as I can remember'

LONDON: Spaniard Carlos Sainz will drive for McLaren in next season's Formula One championship, filling the vacuum left by the retirement of Fernando Alonso, the team announced yesterday. The 23-year-old-son of the legendary Rally driver who bears the same name has signed a "multi-year deal" with McLaren. He is presently 11th in the championship this year driving for Renault.

"McLaren Racing today confirms that Carlos Sainz will race for the team in Formula 1 from the 2019 FIA Formula One World Championship," said a statement on team's website. "Carlos, 23, from Madrid, Spain, has signed a multi-year deal with the team, replacing Fernando Alonso."

Sainz, who in almost four years on the circuit has yet to feature on the podium, said he had been eyeing a seat at McLaren for a while. "I'm delighted to finally be able to confirm that I'll be a McLaren driver from the 2019 season," said Sainz, whose best finish was fourth in the 2017 Singapore Grand Prix for previous team Toro Rosso.

"It's something I've been looking at for a while and I'm very excited about this next chapter in my career. I've been a McLaren fan for as long as I can remember. It's a great name in the sport with an incredible heritage, and the list of drivers that have raced for McLaren over the

years are among the heroes of Formula 1."

Sainz, whose best overall finish in the championship is ninth in the 2017 season with 54 points, said it is special to be following in the footsteps of his 37-year-old compatriot and two-time world champion Alonso. "Fernando is of course one of them (heroes), so it's particularly special that I'll be taking his seat as part of the next generation of Spanish racing drivers behind the wheel of a McLaren," said Sainz.

Zak Brown, CEO of McLaren Racing, said the team had been looking at Sainz as a potential recruit for some time. "Carlos brings with him the perfect blend of youth and experience," said Brown.

"Although he's just 23, he'll be starting his fifth season in the sport with us and will bring with him a huge amount of racing experience, both in Formula 1 and with our partner Renault.

"It's no secret that Carlos is a huge admirer of Fernando's, and it's fitting that he will be stepping into his seat as a Spaniard with a legendary name in motorsport." Alonso announced he would be retiring from Formula One on Tuesday once the chequered flag has come down on the final race of this season.

He had become increasingly disenchanted with the once dominant McLaren's failure to re-discover their competitiveness. Whilst he left the



BUDAPEST: In this file photo taken on July 26, 2018 Renault's Spanish driver Carlos Sainz Jr gestures during the drivers press conference ahead of the Formula One Hungarian Grand Prix at the Hungaroring circuit in Mogyorod near Budapest, Hungary. — AFP

door slightly ajar about a return his focus is on new challenges largely thought to be the Indy Car circuit in the United States. He is hoping to add

Indy success, especially the Indy 500, to his Formula One achievements as well as the Le Mans 24 hour title he won earlier this year. — AFP

Rugby star Danny Cipriani fined for assault

LONDON: England rugby star Danny Cipriani was fined £2,000 (\$2,500) yesterday after pleading guilty to common assault following an incident at a nightclub on the island of Jersey.

The mercurial 30-year-old utility back—who had revived his international career in June with a first start for over a decade against South Africa—also pleaded guilty to resisting arrest during the incident late Wednesday which took place on his club Gloucester's pre-season training camp on the island.

Three other charges were dropped. A female police officer suffered bruising to her neck in the incident at the Royal Yacht Hotel in St Helier, the court was told. Cipriani was fined £1,500 for resisting arrest and £500 for assault. He was also ordered to pay £250 compensation to the police officer.

Gloucester chief executive Steve Vaughan said the club was "very disappointed" to be associated with such episodes. "We will deal with it in a robust but balanced way but based purely on the facts," the club added in a statement posted on their website.

"The incident in question was over in a matter of seconds and was a reaction to the conduct of other parties involved. He knows his responsibilities and is aware of the impact of this type of incident on the club.

"However, Danny is a Gloucester Rugby player and will receive our full support as we focus on the exciting

season ahead." Cipriani signed for Gloucester earlier this year after a successful spell with their rivals Wasps which had sparked both a nomination for Premiership player of the season and a surprise recall to the national squad.

Cipriani said he could have moved abroad but wanted to see if he made Eddie Jones's squad for the South Africa tour. In June he started for England for the first time in a decade, playing a key role in a magical try that ensured victory over the Springboks and ended a six-match losing streak.

He had been expected to make his first appearance for Gloucester in a pre-season friendly against Ulster tomorrow. Cipriani's career has been littered with off the field sagas that have damaged his reputation with the powers that be and restricted his international career since making his Test debut against Wales in the 2008 Six Nations tournament.

Just a month later he was dropped for the clash with Scotland after being caught coming out of a night club in the early hours in the week leading up to the game. Seeking a fresh start away from England two years later he joined the Super Rugby franchise The Melbourne Rebels but again he got on the wrong side of the bosses by breaking a curfew and was given a one-game suspension.

He returned to England for Sale in 2012 but a year later in April 2013 he ended up in hospital after a night out with the team resulted in him being struck by a bus, escaping relatively lightly with concussion and bruising.

More recently he was convicted of drink-driving after he crashed his black Mercedes into a taxi in London in June 2015. He was ordered to pay a total of £7,620 in fines and costs and banned from driving for 18 months. — AFP

Thomas, Froome to compete in Tour of Britain

LONDON: Tour de France champion Geraint Thomas and the man whose crown he took in July, Chris Froome, will compete in next month's Tour of Britain rather than the final Grand Tour of the season, the Vuelta a Espana.

Both riders have rarely graced their home Tour in the past decade, Thomas finishing seventh last year in what was his first appearance since 2011 and Team Sky team-mate Froome last competing in 2009 when he finished 50th for his previous team Barloworld. Thomas, 32, was only drawn to compete last year because the race finished in his home city of Cardiff and has been lured back for what will be his first major race since the Tour de France as this year's edition begins in Pembrey Country Park, Carmarthenshire, Wales, on September 2. The Vuelta gets underway on August 25.

"As soon as I'd finished the Tour I knew I wanted to ride the Tour of Britain and race on home roads," Thomas told the Team Sky website. "It starts in Wales which will be special, and then I get to go and race across the whole of the United Kingdom. I can't wait. I want to go to the race in the shape to compete and enjoy it. We'll have to see how the next few weeks go but I'm looking forward to it and I know we will have a strong team there." Four-time Tour de France champion Froome, who finished third behind Thomas in this year's Tour, said he had focussed on the Vuelta in the past four years finally winning it in 2017.

"It's been a long time since I've raced the Tour of Britain," said Froome. "The Vuelta a Espana has always been such a big goal and sadly coincided with the Tour of Britain, but not doing La Vuelta this year gives me the chance to come back to the UK and race on what looks like a great parcours. I'm really looking forward to riding. I always remember there being a great atmosphere at the Tour of Britain and the race has only got bigger over the years. I'm really looking forward to coming back," added the 33-year-old Kenyan-born star. Surprisingly given their dominance especially of the Tour de France, Team Sky has only won the Tour of Britain once when Bradley Wiggins prevailed in 2013. — AFP

Sports

Acuna hurt in testy affair as Braves, Marlins managers condemn plunking

ATLANTA: Red-hot rookie Ronald Acuna Jr. departed early due to injury after getting drilled by an opening pitch, but the Atlanta Braves still finished a four-game sweep over the visiting Miami Marlins with a 5-2 win Wednesday. Acuna, who had led off the previous three games with home runs and had gone deep in five straight, was hit by a 97 mph fastball on the first pitch of the contest, setting off a benches-clearing incident that led to the ejection of Miami starter Jose Urena and Atlanta manager Brian Snitker. Both teams' managers later expressed their disapproval of Urena's pitch. Acuna ran the bases and took his position in the outfield in the second inning, but he was subsequently removed. After the game, Snitker said Acuna exited due to cramps in his arm but that the team would know more about the 20-year-old's condition today. After falling behind 2-0, the Braves came back to win their fifth straight game. Atlanta (68-51) is a season-best 17 games over .500 and two games ahead of the Philadelphia Phillies in first place in the National League East.

ANGELS 3, PADRES 2

Rene Rivera homered with one out in the top of the ninth to break a 2-2 tie and give visiting Los Angeles a victory over San Diego and a sweep of the three-game series. Rivera, who was the Padres' team Most Valuable Player in 2014, pulled the first pitch he saw from San Diego closer Kirby Yates 407 feet into the left field stands to snap a 2-2 tie for the Angels, who have won seven of their past nine. Cory Spangenberg hit his seventh homer for the Padres, who have dropped four of their last five immediately after winning four of five.

PHILLIES 7, RED SOX 4

Wilson Ramos had three extra-base hits in his Phillies debut, helping Philadelphia end visiting Boston's five-game winning streak. Ramos had two doubles, a triple, three runs and three RBIs as the Phillies split the two-game series. The 31-year-old catcher, acquired from the Tampa Bay Rays on July 31 despite nursing a hamstring injury, was activated off the 10-day disabled list before the game. He had been out since July 15. Nick Williams and Justin Bour each added two hits for the Phillies. Brock Holt had a pair of hits for the Red Sox.

CARDINALS 4, NATIONALS 2

Austin Gomber pitched six shutout innings, and St. Louis extended its season-best winning streak to eight games in beating visiting Washington. Matt Carpenter, who extended his streak of reaching base in 33 straight games, was hit on his right hand in the seventh inning by a Matt Grace pitch and departed early. The Cardinals later announced that X-rays were negative and that Carpenter was removed for precautionary reasons. St. Louis improved to 19-9 since interim manager Mike Shildt replaced the fired Mike Matheny. Washington has dropped four straight games and seven of its past nine.

ASTROS 12, ROCKIES 1

Gerrit Cole posted his seventh double-digit strikeout start of the season, and Houston bashed five home runs in snapping its nine-game home losing skid with an interleague victory over Colorado. The Astros salvaged the finale of their six-

game homestand with an offensive eruption, producing their highest scoring output at home since a 12-6 win over the Chicago White Sox on July 7. Houston had dropped five games in a row. Evan Gattis and Tyler White blasted two home runs apiece, and Yuri Gurriel also went deep for the Astros. With his 12 strikeouts on the mound, Cole (11-5) recorded the Astros' 25th double-digit strikeout game of the season, a franchise record that ranks tied for second all-time in American League history.

DODGERS 4, GIANTS 3

Brian Dozier hit a game-ending sacrifice fly in the 12th inning as Los Angeles beat visiting San Francisco to end a five-game losing streak. Yasmani Grandal doubled to open the 12th inning against Giants reliever Casey Kelly (0-1). Grandal took third on Max Muncy's single and scored on Dozier's second career game-ending RBI. The Dodgers' recent bullpen issues surfaced once again in the late innings as Andrew McCutchen crushed a game-tying, three-run home run to center field in the eighth inning off Caleb Ferguson.

METS 16, ORIOLES 5

Kevin Plawecki hit a grand slam, Todd Frazier homered and drove in four runs, and Brandon Nimmo went 5-for-5 with three RBIs as visiting New York crushed Baltimore. The Mets scored early but broke the game open with a nine-run sixth inning, sending 12 batters to the plate. Plawecki's grand slam, off rookie right-hander Evan Phillips, was the inning's big blow. The Mets' nine-run inning included four walks, a hit batter, two doubles, a triple and Plawecki's slam. The sixth-inning explosion let New York manager Mickey Callaway pull starter Zack Wheeler after five innings. Wheeler (8-6), who has won six consecutive starts, allowed one run on five hits. He walked two and struck out three.

RAYS 6, YANKEES 1

Mallex Smith hit a two-run homer in the fourth inning and fell a triple shy of the cycle as Tampa Bay beat host New York. Smith helped the Rays even the three-game series at one win apiece when he lifted a first-pitch breaking ball from Luis Cessa (1-3) into the right field seats. Smith's homer made it 5-1, and the Rays cruised to their seventh win in their past nine meetings against the Yankees. Brandon Lowe drove in the first two runs of his career with run-scoring singles in the second and fifth innings. Kevin Kiermaier added an RBI single in the third for the Rays.

TWINS 6, PIRATES 4

Bobby Wilson homered and hit an RBI single, and Logan Forsythe drove in three runs with two singles to lead Minnesota past visiting Pittsburgh for a sweep of a two-game series. Jose Berrios, in his first career start against the Pirates, allowed four runs (three earned) and seven hits in 3 2/3 innings. Gabriel Moya (3-0), the third of six Minnesota pitchers, tossed a scoreless 1 1/3 innings for the win, and Trevor Hildenberger pitched the ninth for his third save. Elias Diaz homered, and Gregory Polanco had a two-run single for Pittsburgh, which ended its road trip 4-5 after losing the last three games. Chris Archer, making his



ATLANTA: Ronald Acuna Jr. #13 of the Atlanta Braves is hit by the first pitch of the game against the Miami Marlins at SunTrust Park on Wednesday in Atlanta, Georgia. — AFP

third start for Pittsburgh, allowed four runs and six hits in five innings. He struck out seven and walked none.

INDIANS 4, REDS 3

Melky Cabrera smacked a two-run homer, and Cleveland took advantage of a strong bullpen effort to beat host Cincinnati in sweeping the three-game interleague series. The Indians won their fifth straight thanks to a bullpen that rescued starter Shane Bieber, who made it through only 4 1/3 innings, giving up three runs on seven hits. Cleveland's bullpen took over, with five relievers combining to give up just three hits and two walks with eight strikeouts in 4 2/3 scoreless innings. The Reds lost their fourth straight after scoring three runs in the bottom of the first inning to give starter Robert Stephenson a 3-0 lead. Cincinnati was held scoreless with six hits in the game's final eight innings.

BLUE JAYS 6, ROYALS 5

Curtis Granderson hit a grand slam in a five-run fourth inning, Kevin Pillar had a pair of RBI singles, and visiting Toronto held on to defeat Kansas City. Marco Estrada (6-9) allowed four runs, six hits and one walk while striking out three in 6 2/3 innings for the Blue Jays, who have won two in a row after dropping the opener of the four-game series. Salvador Perez had three hits, including two home runs, and drove in three runs for the Royals, and Ryan O'Hearn added a pinch-hit homer. Jorge Lopez (0-2), making his first start for the Royals after being obtained in a trade with Milwaukee, allowed six runs and eight hits in 4 2/3 innings.

CUBS 8, BREWERS 4

Anthony Rizzo homered, stole two bases and drove in three runs, and Jason Heyward had three hits, including a pair of doubles, and drove in two runs to lead Chicago to a win over visiting Milwaukee. Albert Almora Jr. also homered for Chicago, which increased its lead over the Brew-

ers to three games in the NL Central with the victory. David Bote had two hits and scored two runs while Javier Baez tripled and had two hits and also scored a run. Brewers left fielder Ryan Braun left the game in the fifth inning with what the club announced as right ribcage tightness. Braun, who hit two homers in Milwaukee's 7-0 win over the Cubs on Tuesday, apparently was hurt attempting to make a sliding catch on Heyward's RBI double in the third inning.

MARINERS 2, A'S 0 (12 INNINGS)

Dee Gordon ended a scoreless deadlock with a two-run home run in the 12th inning, giving Seattle a victory over host Oakland to prevent a three-game sweep. Seattle's Mike Leake duelled Oakland's Brett Anderson in a 0-0 game for eight innings, and Edwin Diaz finished it with his 47th save of the season, allowing the Mariners to pull within 2 1/2 games of the A's in the American League wild-card race. Mike Zunino drew a one-out walk from Oakland's Yusmeiro Petit (5-3) in the 12th before Gordon hit the next pitch for just his second home run of the season. Nick Martini collected three hits while Matt Olson chipped in with a double and a single for the A's, who had won four in a row.

WHITE SOX 6, TIGERS 5

Matt Davidson and Jose Abreu hit two-run homers to back another solid outing by Carlos Rodon as Chicago held off host Detroit. Davidson had three hits and scored twice while Abreu delivered three hits and knocked in three runs. Yolmer Sanchez added three hits, a run and an RBI for the White Sox, who took the last two games of the three-game series after losing nine of their first 10 matchups with their division rival this season. Rodon (4-3) hadn't given up more than two earned runs in his previous six starts. He was touched for a three-run third but was otherwise stingy once again. He went eight innings, allowing five hits and a walk while striking out six. — Reuters

Sports

Halep under pressure as rain halts play in Cincinnati

Tsurenko stuns defending Cincinnati champion Muguruza

CINCINNATI: The women's draw took a beating on Wednesday in Cincinnati, where world number one Simona Halep's was still battling when rain halted play. The top-seeded Romanian stood 4-6, 6-3, 3-3 against Australian qualifier Ajla Tomljanovic when storms rolled in to bring the night session to an end on a day that had already seen one three-hour rain delay.

Halep had regained some momentum after falling two breaks down in the third set, with both women taking medical timeouts. Halep was just one of the top women to run into trouble in the combined WTA and ATP Masters hardcourt tournament—the last major tuneup for the US Open. Defending champion Garbine Muguruza, playing for the first time since losing in the second round of her Wimbledon title defense, fell 2-6, 6-4, 6-4 to Lesia Tsurenko. “It was a very ugly match, but I'm happy that I fought, even if the level wasn't very high,” said Muguruza, who got a late start to her buildup to the US Open because of an arm injury.

“At the end she managed to come back in the third set and play better and found a way to win the match,” said Muguruza, who was at least pleased to report that she played without any pain in her arm.

Second seed Caroline Wozniacki, however, retired with a left knee injury after surrendering the first set 6-4 to Kiki Bertens. The Dane also lost her opening match a week ago in Montreal, following a second-round defeat at Wimbledon.

Wimbledon champion Angelique Kerber, the fourth seed, claimed her 40th win of the season, but she had to recover from a set down and needed two chances to serve for a 4-6, 7-5, 6-4 victory over Russian Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova.

“This was really a match where I was fighting after the first set to coming back,” Kerber said. “It was an important match to get my rhythm, feel the ball, especially now after few weeks off.”

US Open champion Sloane Stephens bucked the upset trend, winning easily into the third round 6-3, 6-2 over German qualifier Tatjana Maria. Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus continued her successful tournament debut, beating ninth seed Karolina Pliskova 2-6, 6-3, 7-5. Australian 16th seed Ashleigh Barty defeated Estonian Kaia Kanepi 7-5, 6-3.

AILING DJOKOVIC ADVANCES

In the men's draw Novak Djokovic battled stomach issues to beat Adrian Mannarino and reach the third round. The Wimbledon champion called for the doctor during the second set but put aside his discomfort to progress 4-6, 6-2, 6-1 over the Frenchman before rain halted afternoon play for nearly three hours.

“I wasn't feeling well, I didn't have a great night and wasn't feeling that well for the first set and a half,” said Djokovic, who has won every Masters 1000 title except Cincinnati. “I made it through, and with the help of the doctor and God...I'm just, you know, happy



MASON: Lesia Tsurenko of Ukraine returns a shot to Garbine Muguruza of Spain during the Western & Southern Open at Lindner Family Tennis Center on Wednesday in Mason, Ohio. — AFP

that I managed to overcome the challenge.” Fifth seed Grigor Dimitrov launched his title defence with a 7-6 (7/5), 7-5 win over Mischa Zverev, the Bulgarian belting 33 winners in a match that started late. Marin Cilic, the

2016 men's champion, beat Romanian Marius Copil 6-7 (4/7), 6-4, 6-4, but third-seeded Alexander Zverev, younger brother of Mischa, was upset 5-7, 6-4, 7-5 by Dutch veteran Robin Haase. — AFP

Ozil's claims of racism in German camp are 'nonsense': Kroos

BERLIN: Germany midfielder Toni Kroos says Mesut Ozil was 'out of order' to make accusations of racism within the German set up as he retired from international football last month. “Basically Mesut is a long-serving national team player and deserved a better exit as a footballer,” Kroos, 28, told German daily Bild.

“I have played with Mesut for many years and know that he is a nice guy. But the way he retired was out of order. “The proportion of his statement which was fair and justified was unfortunately overshadowed by a much higher proportion of nonsense.

“I think he himself knows that racism does not exist within the national team and the DFB. “On the contrary, we are always committed to diversity and integration. “Mesut was a good example of that, like many of our team mates.”

Ozil, 29, created a furore last month when he retired from international football in an explosive three-part statement in which he accused German FA (DFB) president Reinhard Grindel of racism. “In the eyes of Grindel and his supporters, I am German when we win, but

I am an immigrant when we lose,” wrote Ozil, sparking a racism storm in Germany and triggering fierce debate about integration.

Ozil fell offside with German fans and was booed during pre-World Cup friendlies after he and fellow midfielder Ilkay Gundogan posed for pictures with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in May, raising questions about the pair's loyalty to Germany. Only a handful of Germany players have spoken about the saga, which captain Manuel Neuer described as 'stressful' while Thomas Mueller said there is “no question of racism within the team”. Head coach Joachim Loew has yet to comment.

Real Madrid star Kroos says Arsenal midfielder Ozil, who like Gundogan has Turkish roots, was wrong to meet with Erdogan and then wait two months before breaking his silence. “Mesut was criticised for the photo - and rightly so,” said Kroos. “And he missed the chance to explain himself. “Nevertheless, he was completely supported by the coaching staff and the (national) team. — AFP

Major Davis Cup shake-up approved

ORLANDO: World tennis chiefs yesterday approved a radical Davis Cup revamp that will overhaul the 118-year-old competition, condensing the annual worldwide showpiece into an 18-team, week-long event.

The shake-up for the men's team tournament received 71.43 percent support from about 120 delegates at the International Tennis Federation annual meeting in Orlando, well ahead of the two-thirds majority needed for approval.

ITF president David Haggerty supported the revamp proposed by Kosmos, a group led by Barcelona football star Gerard Pique—who flew in from Spain for the vote—and backed by Japanese billionaire Hiroshi Mikitani, that has vowed \$3 billion over 25 years to support the new event. Haggerty called the reform plan “key to ensuring that the ITF and its member nations will guarantee a bright future for the sport.” Also backing the reconstituted event is US billionaire Larry Ellison, who hopes his Indian Wells tennis facility would host the 2021 edition of the finals after the first two were played in Europe.

The current Davis Cup format is a knockout

event played February, July, September and November at home and away venues around the globe, best-of-five match ties following Grand Slam events until the final round.

Many top players have skipped it in recent years to ease their schedule load. The reform plan will create a November finals with 18 teams: 12 winners from 24-team home and away qualifying in February, the prior year's four semi-finalists and two wild-card nations.

Round-robin groups of three would send six group winners and two runners-up into knockout round playoffs. The finals would feature two singles matches and one doubles match each day, all cut to best-of-three sets.

Haggerty said the arrangement would provide about \$25 million annually for national tennis associations to invest in grassroots level support, with the United States, France and Spain among those thought to support the move.

Opponents of the plan include Tennis Australia and Britain's Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), with Aussie Davis Cup captain Lleyton Hewitt calling it a “money grab” and too great a departure from the current format.

“Unfortunately their plan is a recipe for the death of the Davis Cup as we know it,” Aussie legend John Newcombe said. The LTA cited concern over holding the event in November, stretching the schedule after the ATP season-finales into an already-thin off-season, risking top player attendance, fan support and telecaster interest. — AFP

Sports

Atletico come back to beat Lopetegui's Real Madrid 4-2 to win UEFA Super Cup

'To win this trophy is something great'

TALLINN: Saul Niguez and Koke scored in extra time as Atletico Madrid fought back to beat city rivals Real Madrid 4-2 and win the UEFA Super Cup in Tallinn on Wednesday, as Julen Lopetegui got off to a losing start with the European champions.

Real had earlier looked set to win the trophy in their first competitive game since the departures of Cristiano Ronaldo and coach Zinedine Zidane when a Sergio Ramos penalty put them 2-1 up in the second half.

That came after Karim Benzema cancelled out Diego Costa's first-minute opener in the Estonian capital, but Costa hauled Diego Simeone's side level again late on to force extra time.

Simeone's men then looked stronger in the extra period as they won this competition, the annual meeting of the Champions League and Europa League winners, for the third time in nine seasons. "I stayed at Atletico because the project is a good one. I have confidence in this club, in the coach and I saw tonight that I was not mistaken," said Atletico striker Antoine Griezmann who was linked with a move to Barcelona in the summer.

Atletico defender Lucas Hernandez added: "To win this trophy is something great but to do it against our eternal rival is even better."

Real had won the trophy under Zidane in each of the last two years, and emerged victorious against their neighbours in the Champions League finals of 2014 and 2016.

But this result comes after a close season in which Atletico have strengthened while Real look to have gone backwards, with no replace-

ment signed for Ronaldo after his move to Juventus. Griezmann starts, Modric on bench -

Griezmann started for Atletico at the compact Lillekula Stadium, fresh from helping France to World Cup glory last month.

In contrast, former Spain coach Lopetegui left Luka Modric on the Real bench at kick-off, seeking to ease the Croatian playmaker back after he led his country to the World Cup final.

Goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois did not feature at all following his recent arrival from Chelsea, while nine of Real's starting line-up also started May's Champions League final win over Liverpool in Kiev.

Atletico also had France winger Thomas Lemar making his competitive debut following his 72 million-euro (\$84 million) move from Monaco, and they took the lead after just 49 seconds. With Simeone watching from the stands as he serves a touchline ban, Costa met Diego Godin's long ball forward with his back to goal and nodded it over Ramos before turning to burst through and rifle a shot home from a tight angle. It was a superb finish, but Real were level just before the half-hour via a combination of the two men expected to step up following Ronaldo's departure.

Gareth Bale delivered a cross from the right and Benzema headed past Jan Oblak at the far post. Lopetegui sent on Modric for Marco Asensio just before the hour mark and Real took the lead shortly after, Ramos scoring a 63rd-minute penalty awarded for a Juanfran handball.

It looked like that would win it, yet Atletico showed great resolve to level the scores again in



TALLINN: Atletico Madrid's players celebrate with the trophy after winning the UEFA Super Cup football match Atletico de Madrid vs Real Madrid CF at the Lillekula Stadium in Tallinn, Estonia, on Wednesday. — AFP

the 79th minute as Juanfran and substitute Angel Correa combined to set up Costa to stab home.

Into extra time they went, and Atletico went ahead again in the 98th minute, Thomas Parthey pressing to win back possession before holding up a cross for Saul to thump a superb left-foot volley past Keylor Navas from 17 yards.

The powerful Costa and substitute Vitolo then set up Koke to make it 4-2, securing victory and giving Atletico their seventh trophy since Simeone took charge in late 2011. Now they will hope to push Barcelona and Real all the way in La Liga, with their opening game at Valencia on Monday, after Lopetegui's side host Getafe on Sunday. — AFP

IOC provisionally lifts Kuwait ban two days ahead of Asian Games

BERLIN: The International Olympic Committee (IOC) yesterday provisionally lifted a ban on Kuwait two days before the start of the Asian Games, allowing the country to participate under its own flag.

Kuwait's national Olympic committee (NOC) has been banned since October, 2015 after the government was accused of interference with a new sports law. As a result, Kuwaiti athletes had to compete under the Olympic flag at the Rio de Janeiro Games in 2016 and they have no access to IOC funds.

"In the interest of Kuwaiti athletes and as a gesture of goodwill to recognise the progress accomplished, the IOC Executive Board has decided to provisionally lift the suspension of the KOC with immediate effect," the IOC said in a statement.

The IOC said the reasons for the suspension remained valid, "in particular the need to protect the Olympic movement in Kuwait from undue government interference". But it noted progress in the discussions with Kuwait. The Asian Games in Indonesia start tomorrow. — Reuters

New signings to watch in La Liga

MADRID: Spanish football heads into the post-Cristiano Ronaldo and Andres Iniesta era as the 2018-19 La Liga season begins this weekend. With these two greats of the modern age having moved on, AFP Sport picks out six new signings to watch in the coming campaign.

THOMAS LEMAR (ATLETICO MADRID)

Age: 22
Position: Attacking midfielder/winger
Previous club: Monaco (FRA)

It is Atletico Madrid who have made the biggest signing of the summer in Spain, spending 72 million euros (\$84 million) on Lemar. The left-footed 22-year-old, who hails from the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe, is the latest member of Monaco's brilliant 2017 French title-winning side to move on. He comes fresh from winning the World Cup with France, although his involvement on the field in Russia was limited. Lemar's association with national team colleague Antoine Griezmann will be particularly interesting to watch.

MALCOM (BARCELONA)

Age: 21
Position: Winger
Previous club: Bordeaux (FRA)

Iniesta has gone to Japan and the biggest signing coming into the Camp Nou is the young Brazilian winger Malcom. The 21-year-old was a surprise arrival from French side Bordeaux, with Barca agreeing to pay 41 million euros to sign him on a five-year deal from right under the noses of Roma. The champions moved

for Malcom after giving up their pursuit of Chelsea winger Willian. Adept at coming in from the right wing onto his left foot, Malcom scored 12 goals in Ligue 1 last season. The player who began his career at Corinthians offers coach Ernesto Valverde a valuable extra option in attack.

ARTURO VIDAL (BARCELONA)

Age: 31
Position: Midfielder
Previous club: Bayern Munich (GER)

Barcelona's summer has also been notable for their failure to complete the signing of Griezmann, and for Paulinho's return to China. The decision to bring in Chilean midfielder Vidal gives Valverde another experienced option in midfield as the Catalans seek to retain the title and end Madrid's hegemony in the Champions League. Vidal, 31, has won league titles in each of the last seven seasons over spells with Juventus and Bayern, and he also played in the Juve team that lost to Barcelona in the 2015 Champions League final. — AFP

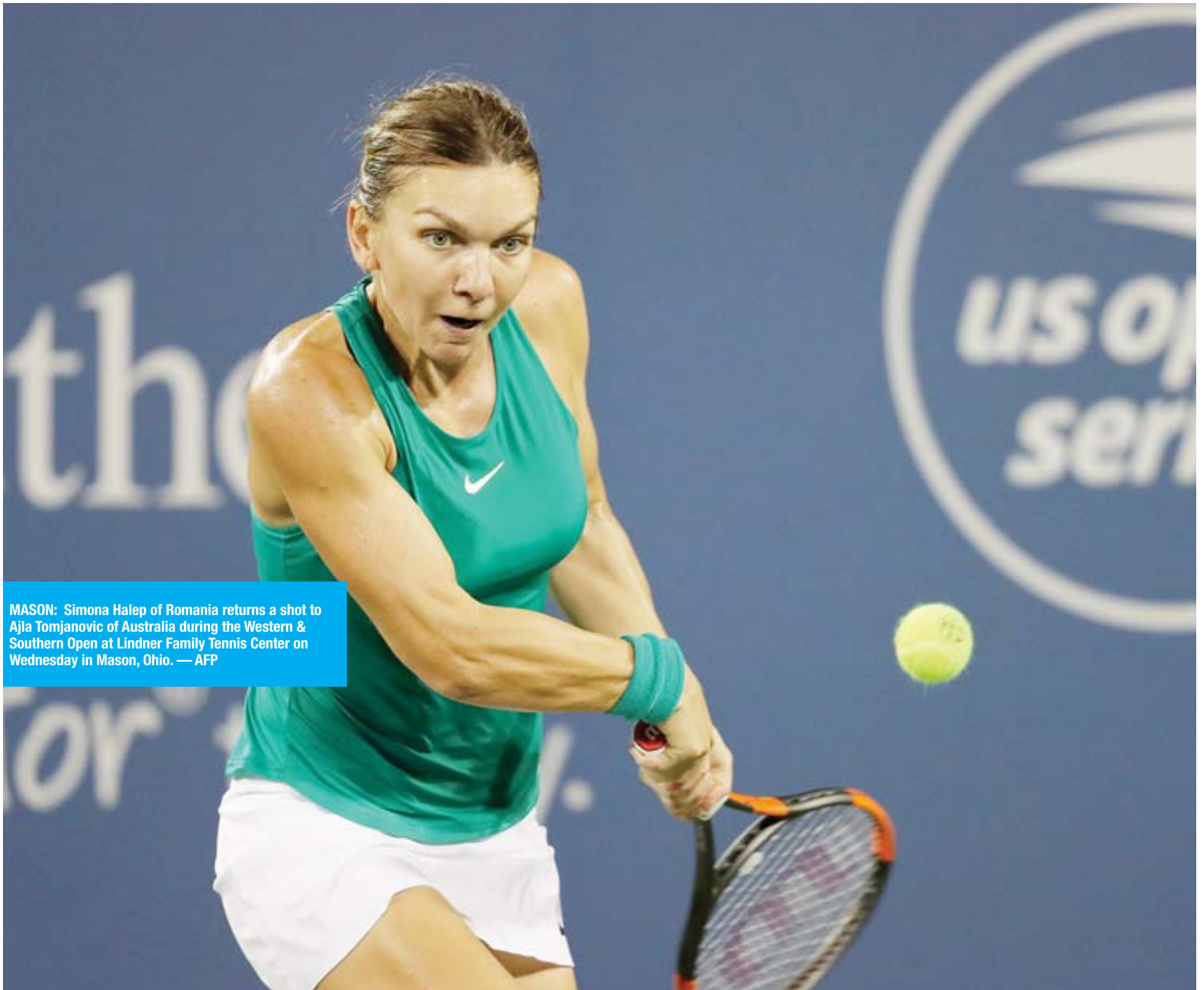
MATCHES ON TV LOCAL TIMING

SPANISH LEAGUE

Girona v Real Valladolid	21:15
beIN SPORTS HD 3	
Real Betis v Levante	23:15
beIN SPORTS HD 3	

FRENCH LEAGUE

Stade Reims v Olympique Lyonnais	21:45
beIN SPORTS HD 6	



MASON: Simona Halep of Romania returns a shot to Ajla Tomjanovic of Australia during the Western & Southern Open at Lindner Family Tennis Center on Wednesday in Mason, Ohio. — AFP

Halep under pressure as rain halts play in Cincinnati

See Page 46