



## Eid Greetings

Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan wishes HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Cabinet members, heads of states around the world, Kuwaitis, expatriates and our valued readers Eid Mubarak. Due to the Eid holidays, Kuwait Times will not be published from August 22 to 24.



Kuwait Times  
The First Daily in the Arabian Gulf

عيد مبارك

Eid Mubarak



# Pilgrims seek forgiveness on Mount Arafat in hajj climax

## More than 2 million faithful have gathered for five-day ritual



MAKKAH: Muslim pilgrims pray at Mount Arafat, also known as Jabal Al-Rahma (Mount of Mercy), during the climax of the hajj pilgrimage yesterday. — AFP

**MOUNT ARAFAT, Saudi Arabia:** A sea of pilgrims ascended Mount Arafat in Saudi Arabia yesterday to pray and repent, the climax of the annual hajj bringing together more than two million Muslims from around the world. Carrying brightly colored umbrellas under the blazing sun, worshippers scaled the rocky hill southeast of the holy city of Makkah to atone for their sins. Arms raised, pilgrims repeated "There is no God but Allah" and "Allahu Akbar" (God is Greatest). "The feeling is indescribable," said Umm Ahmad, 61, who made the journey from Egypt.

Nearly 2.4 million Muslims made the trip to western Saudi Arabia, home to Islam's holiest sites, according to the kingdom's statistics authority. Some of the pilgrims - men in white seamless garments and women in loose dresses - pushed elderly relatives in wheelchairs on the second day of the hajj, one of the world's largest annual gatherings. Jai Saleem, a 37-year-old Pakistani, said he cried when he and his wife arrived on Mount Arafat, where Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) delivered his final sermon. "It feels great," he said. "I have always seen this area, since my childhood, in photographs and on television."

After sunset prayers, pilgrims made their way down Mount Arafat to Muzdalifah, another holy site where they will sleep under the stars to prepare for the final stage of hajj, a symbolic "stoning of the devil" ritual. Buses could be seen parked around the hill as workers hurriedly picked up empty water bottles near a yellow sign that read "Arafat starts here" in both English and Arabic. "We know that it's a difficult task," said Amna Khan, a 35-year-old American Muslim pilgrim.

"That's why we are all here. We're doing this to get closer to Allah, to be absolved," Pakistani pilgrim Mohamed Forqan, 30, said it was a great day to be a Muslim. "Here in Arafat we feel that we are born today asking Allah to forgive our sins," he said.

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## Turkey, Qatar ink deal to boost trade; shots fired at US embassy

**ISTANBUL:** Turkey and Qatar have signed a swap deal to facilitate trade between the two allies as the Turkish currency is battered by a deepening spat with Washington, the Turkish central bank said yesterday. The agreement was signed in Doha on Friday before the markets closed for a one-week holiday for the feast of Eid Al-Adha, it said in a statement. "The swap agreement has been signed over Turkish lira and Qatari riyal and concluded with an overall limit of three billion USD," it added. "Core objective of the agreement is to

facilitate bilateral trade in respective local currencies and support financial stability of the two countries."

Gas-rich Qatar last week promised to make a \$15 billion direct investment in Turkey during a visit to Ankara by Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has thanked the amir and the people of Qatar for "standing by Turkey" while saying relations with Doha, which he described as a "friendly and brotherly country," would be boosted in many areas. Turkey and Qatar - which is also a very close US ally - have become economic and political partners in recent times.

Meanwhile, gunshots were fired at the US embassy in Ankara early yesterday, without causing any casualties, Turkish and American officials said as tensions spiked between the two NATO allies. Six shots were fired at the embassy with three bullets hitting the iron gate and exterior wall, the

Ankara governor's office said, indicating there were "no casualties". Turkish police detained one suspect in connection with the attack, the state-run Anadolu news agency, without providing any details.

Speaking to AFP, spokesman David Gainer confirmed the embassy was investigating a "security incident". "We have no reports of any injuries and we are investigating the details," he said, thanking the Turkish police for their "rapid response". A bullet mark could be clearly seen in the window of the security booth, an AFP journalist at the scene said. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu condemned it as a "provocative attack" in a posting on Twitter. "We will make sure that this incident is investigated quickly and the perpetrators are brought to justice," he said. The Turkish foreign ministry said measures were taken to "ensure the security of the US embassy in Ankara, other US

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ANKARA: A car passes by a security booth with a bullet hole in a window at the entrance of the US Embassy yesterday. — AFP

## Cairo looking to curb street sheep slaughter on Eid

**CAIRO:** Faced with scenes of blood flowing in rubbish-strewn roads and of streets littered with animal entrails, authorities in the Egyptian capital say they aim to crack down on the outdoor slaughter that marks one of Islam's main holidays, Eid Al-Adha, or the festival of sacrifice, is marked by Muslims sacrificing animals according to religious traditions at the end of the hajj annual pilgrimage to Makkah and Madinah.

Ahead of the holiday, which this year starts today, temporary sheep markets have sprung up amid the exhaust fumes and garbage heaps of the sprawling metropolis. But the governor's office in Cairo insists it is on a "cleanliness" drive to stop the widespread slaughter of animals in the distinctly unhygienic surroundings of the city's streets. To prevent the "barbaric and unacceptable" spectacle, officials in each neighborhood have been ordered to "strictly" enforce laws prohibiting the practice, city spokesman Khaled Mostafa told AFP. Offenders risk a fine of at least 5,000 Egyptian pounds (\$280), a hefty sum that exceeds the average monthly wage in the country.



CAIRO: An Egyptian vendor feeds sheep as he waits for customers at a market on Aug 16, 2018, ahead of the Eid Al-Adha feast. — AFP

In the crowded Sayeda Zainab neighborhood near central Cairo, local merchants keep the sheep up for sale for the feast down muddy alleyways. Traders like Hussein Abul al-Aziz say they welcome the push to eliminate the killings in the streets and claim they don't engage in the practice. "It is unacceptable to slaughter in the street, it must be done in an

abattoir with a veterinarian who examines the animal and under the supervision of the health ministry," Aziz said, standing among his well-fed beasts. But it's clear that the message from the authorities has not reached most people. Local resident Ahmed Ragab shops around for a sheep for Eid al-Adha.

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## Joy as Korean families meet after decades

**SOKCHO, South Korea:** With tears and cries, dozens of elderly and frail South and North Korean family members met yesterday for the first time since the peninsula and their relationships were torn apart by war nearly 70 years ago. Clasp one another, they tried to bridge the decades of separation through precious physical contact and by showing each other pictures of their relatives. Many of the North Korean women were clad in traditional dresses, known as hanbok in the South and joeson-ot in the North, and all had the ubiquitous badges of the North's founder Kim Il Sung or his son and successor Kim Jong Il, while the Southerners wore their best suits.

As soon as 99-year-old South Korean Han Shin-ja approached their table, her two daughters - aged 69 and 72 - bowed their heads deeply



**MOUNT KUMGANG, North Korea:** South Korean Ham Sung-chan (right), 93, hugs his North Korean brother Ham Dong Chan, 79, during a family reunion meeting at this resort on the North's southeastern coast yesterday. — AFP

towards her and burst into tears. Han also broke down, rubbing her cheeks against theirs and holding their hands tightly. "When I fled during the war..." she began, choking back tears as if she were about to apologize for leaving them behind. Millions of people were swept apart by the 1950-53 Korean War, which separated brothers and sisters, parents and children and husbands and wives.

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## Local

# Amir exchanges Eid greetings with leaders of Arab and Muslim nations

## Amir receives cables of congratulations from top state officials

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday exchanged cables of congratulations with leaders of Arab and Islamic states on advent of Eid Al-Adha. His Highness the Amir addressed heartfelt greetings to the leaders, hoping for prosperity, security and stability for the Arab and Muslim nations.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received a cable of congratulations from His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on the advent of Eid Al-Adha. His Highness the Amir also received cables of Eid greetings from National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, National Guard Chief His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Constitutional Court Youssef Al-Mutawa and First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, all wishing His Highness the Amir good health and for Kuwait glory, progress and prosperity. His Highness the Amir replied in cables, thanking them for their kind feelings and wishing everyone in Kuwait and the Arab and Muslim nations a happy Eid.

### Comprehensive renaissance

In his cable to His Highness the Amir, His Highness

the Crown Prince prayed to Almighty Allah to protect the dear homeland from any harm, help His Highness the Amir achieve the comprehensive renaissance and maintain security and safety of the country, wishing His Highness the Amir good health. His Highness the Amir replied with a note, thanking His Highness Sheikh Nawaf for the sentiments. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received a cable of congratulations from Speaker Ghanem on Eid, wishing him good health and Kuwait progress and prosperity under the leadership of His Highness the Amir. His Highness the Crown Prince offered congratulations to His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali and Sheikh Mubarak Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on the same occasion, wishing Kuwait further security and safety.

His Highness the Crown Prince also received similar cables from His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad and Deputy Chairman of the National Guard Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Crown Prince also received Eid greeting cables from top Sheikhs, ministers, diplomatic figures, governors and a number of Kuwaiti citizens and expatriates. His Highness the Crown Prince sent reply cables, thanking them for their kind feelings and wishing everyone in Kuwait and the Arab and Muslim nations a happy Eid.



### Interior Minister greets state officials



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

### Interior Minister sends greetings

In the meantime, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Lt Gen Sheikh Khalid Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah sent cables of congratulations to His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince on Eid Al-Adha. Sheikh Khalid Al-Jarrah also sent cables of congratulations to Speaker Ghanem, Chairman of the National Guards, Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Deputy Chief of National

Guards Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah on this occasion. Sheikh Khalid sent cables of congratulations to the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on the blessed occasion. — KUNA

## Activities people can enjoy during Eid Al-Adha break



360 Mall



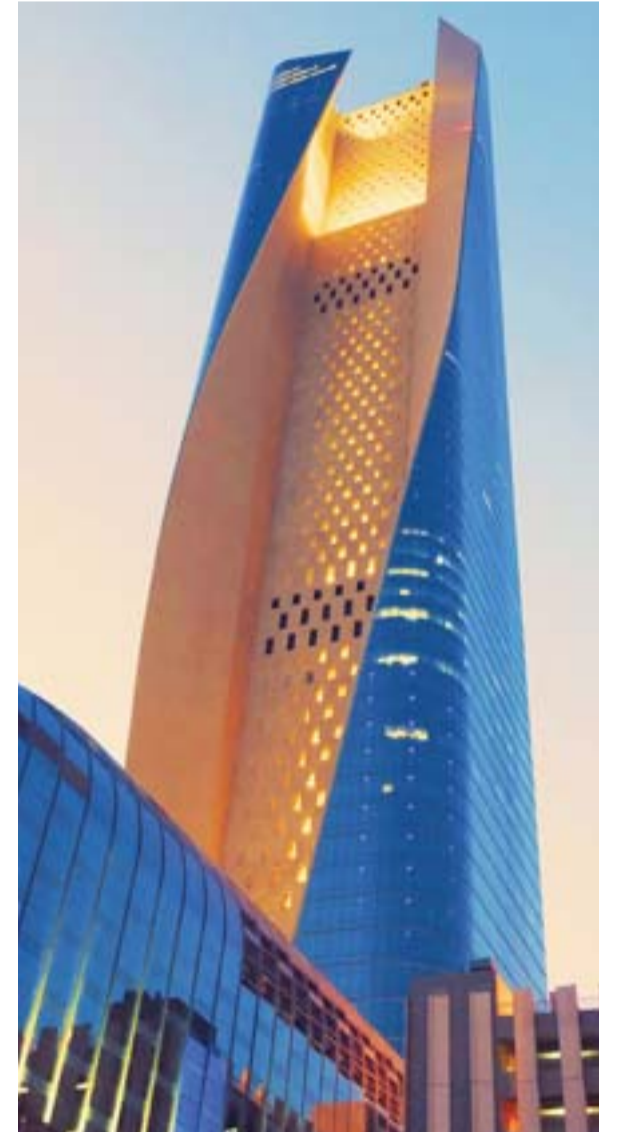
Kout Mall



Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre



360 Mall



Al-Hamra Tower

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: For those who are not travelling during the Eid Al-Adha break, here are some activities they can enjoy doing during the holidays.

### 360 Mall

Enjoy beautiful live music at 360 Mall. People can enjoy summer jazz, a live music show by The Juke. Experience jazz and blues in the main atrium on Aug 22 to 24 from 2 pm to 11 pm, lounge and soul at the food lounge from Aug 22 to 31 from 6 pm to 10 pm and other surprises during the second, third and fourth days of Eid.

### Kout Mall

In celebration of Eid Al-Adha, Kout mall has the most colorful event of the season! 'KolorFest' will be held from Aug 21 to 24 from 4 pm to 10 pm in Al-Kout Mall. The show includes an aerialist cube show, hula-hoop show, speed painting show, rainbow show, and paper blast game.

### Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre

Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural

Centre will present a concert, an unprecedented experience in contemporary Arabic music, with musical ensembles without microphones, either for singers or instrument players - an experience that requires a special method of performance to deliver the idea and the music successfully with minimal barriers.

In this concert, the audience will listen to a collection of classical Arabic songs and melodies, written by leading composers including Sayed Darwish, Mohamed Al-Qasabi, Riad Al-Sunbati, Mohamed Abdel Wahab and Zakaria Ahmad. Their songs will be presented by the talented voices of Iman Baqi and Tarek Bashir.

### Al-Hamra Tower and Luxury Center

Al-Hamra Tower has invited people to attend the Ghasaq art exhibition from Aug 20 to 30 on the ground floor. It also offers half-price tickets to Equalizer 2 and Christopher Robin with Eidyat Al-Hamra. People can visit the Grand Cinema box office at Al-Hamra Luxury Center and book their tickets.



Al-Hamra Tower



Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre



Kout Mall

Local

# 'Barayeh Salem' project opens with modern designs



**KUWAIT:** The 'Barayeh Salem' project in Salmiya opened with newly-developed and modern designs to attract more visitors in Salem Al-Mubarak Street. The project is home to booths for owners of small projects. It also contains spacious walking areas, children playground, exhibitions' yard and water fountains.' Barayeh Salem' aims to boost the Kuwaiti economy, attract tourists and provide job opportunities to Kuwaiti youth. — KUNA

## Clear skies in the next five days

By Ben Garcia

**KUWAIT:** According to Fintas Astronomical Observatory Director Adel Al-Saadoun, the next five days will not experience significant sandstorms since the wind will be stable over Kuwait. "It will not be very windy in the next five days, so good weather is forecast, except for a few open areas that may experience sandstorms. So people can plan to go out in the night and walk by the seaside. The temperature will fluctuate between 42 to 46 degrees Centigrade with a maximum of 48 C," he said.

The Meteorological Department of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation posted on their website yesterday that today's weather is expected to be very hot with light to moderate freshening at times north



Adel Al-Saadoun

westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 45 km/h with a chance for rising dust over open areas.

Saadoun advised people who want to enjoy the sun and the sea to take extra precautions. "If you want to go out and enjoy the sea, always put on sunscreen and avoid direct sun contact - this will lower the chances of getting sunburn and other skin problems," he said. "If you want to enjoy the desert and want to visit areas like Muttlaa Ridge, I advise to stay only for a few minutes or an hour at most. Cover your face as wind could bring some insects. Bring water and stay hydrated," he said.

Thursday morning will be cloudy, so the temperature will stay a bit longer at 42 C even until about 10 am. Wind speed will be of 15 to 45 kilometers per hour and humidity at 24-32 percent, which will increase on Friday to be at 45 percent.



## Limitations facing expat lawyers in Kuwait

By Nawara Fattahova

**N**on-Kuwaiti lawyers can practice in Kuwait, but with certain limitations. Foreign lawyers can work in companies, law firms and even the public sector, but they can't own a legal agency or even be partners in them. "Expat lawyers can stand in front of the judge only in certain fields of the law and in certain instances. Practically, they can only defend rental cases, which have only two instances, except for a few special cases when they reach the cassation court," attorney Mubarak Mijzea told Kuwait Times.

"In civil or commercial cases, a foreign attorney can stand in front of the judge in cases that have a financial claim of below KD 1,000. In these fields, he can attend the court session and defend the case, but only in the first instance and not in the appeals phase," added Mijzea.

Expat lawyers can't hold the title of "lawyer" as they are not registered at the Kuwait Bar Association, whose membership is only open to Kuwaiti lawyers.



"Expat lawyers are not allowed to practice the profession officially at the court, but they can be consultants, legal assistants or have other related titles," he pointed out.

A law firm or agency can be owned only by a Kuwaiti lawyer. "An expat lawyer can't own a law firm - even a Kuwaiti citizen who is not a lawyer can't do so. An expat lawyer can unofficially own the law firm by registering it in a Kuwaiti attorney's name and have a sub-contract with him to ensure his rights. He can't even be a partner in the same way expats are in commercial companies, in which they can be partners with shares up to a maximum of 49 percent," concluded Mijzea.

Expat attorneys can work in private companies in a wide range of fields - mostly commercial. Expat lawyers working at law firms usually do most of the consultation work and write defense notes which the Kuwaiti lawyer will present at the court. If there is a shortage of Kuwaiti lawyers in a law firm and they have a lot of cases, then the expat lawyer takes the file to the court and gives it to any Kuwaiti lawyer at there to represent him in front of the judge.

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## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: The osprey, also called the sea hawk, possesses specialized physical characteristics and exhibits unique behavior to assist in hunting and catching its prey, which mainly consists of fish. — Photo By Jassem Al-Motar (KUNA)

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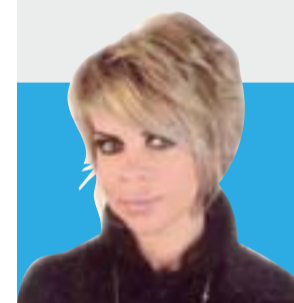
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## Fifth Ring Road west project nearly complete

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Director of the western side of the Fifth Ring Road project Abdellatif Shamsah said only 28 percent remains of the project that costs KD 108.8 million. He said the project aims at increasing the current road's capacity and reduce accidents. He said the project includes an 11-km-long road of four lanes in each direction, in addition to 11-km-long service roads with four flyovers to link Ardiya, Andalus, Ferdous, Nahda, Sulaibiya and Qairawan, besides linking Fifth Ring Road with Doha Spur in all directions.

## Environmental police and smoking violations



By Nawara Fattahova

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Recently, environmental police forcefully entered the office of the head of the Cooperative Society Union during a business meeting. The director described the actions of the environmental inspectors as provocative, adding they overreacted and barged in without introducing themselves. The inspectors claimed they were on a sudden inspection tour to search for smoking violations.

Ever since environmental inspectors were given authority and power, they have got into conflicts in various locations. It's true that they are doing their job, but they should behave with respect. It seems that many of them do not act properly, especially over minor violations that are not really serious or important for the community.

In March, environmental police had a problem at a high school in Jabriya, when they arrested the principal of the school after he refused to let them into the school when they claimed there were smoking violations in his office. In fact there are many more serious violations and crimes happening than smoking in the offices of some officials. In the end, an official has the freedom to choose whatever type of decor he likes, even an ashtray. If he is smoking in his office, he will only harm himself and the guests sitting with him.

Many people throw garbage in the street, which was sanctioned even before the environmental law was issued in 2015. Kuwait Municipality was in charge of giving tickets to those littering in public places, but the inspectors didn't have any power and the police only rarely gave tickets. Littering doesn't only cause visual pollution, but it may also be dangerous if it is a glass bottle that may injure pedestrians or damage the tires of vehicles.

After the environmental law was approved, inspectors and the environmental police got the authority to issue tickets to violators who litter in public places, yet this is not happening and people are still littering. People are avoiding some negative and harmful behaviors that were badly affecting the environment, such as grilling on the seaside and public beaches. This only happened when tough penalties were announced, which stopped people from this activity. Also, the practice of hanging clothes to dry in balconies has almost disappeared after violators were fined. Stop abusing smokers and focus of those who are destroying the environment with garbage and other harmful behaviors that affect the whole community and not just one person!

## CBK's Hashel among top 10 bank governors for 2018: Report

NEW YORK: Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) Mohammad Al-Hashel was listed among the top 10 of Global Finance's Central Banker Report Cards 2018. In a report published recently by Global Finance, Hashel was rated 'A' grade; first in Gulf region, fourth place among Middle East and North Africa bankers.

"Central bankers are confronting a perfect storm of challenges, from unwinding quantitative easing to shielding economies from political upheavals," said Global Finance publisher and editorial director Joseph Giarraputo. "Our scorecards for this public finance leader's show who is maintaining control and moving forward, and who is struggling against slippery political or economic changes," Giarraputo was quoted as saying.

The annual report by Global Finance evaluates the performance of more than 85 key countries' central bank governors. Grades are based on an 'A' to 'F' scale for success in areas such as inflation control, economic growth goals, currency stability and interest rate management. 'A' represents an excellent performance down through 'F' for outright failure. — KUNA



Mohammad Al-Hashel

Local

# Six fire squads battle tent market blaze

Workers, firefighters injured; investigations underway



**KUWAIT:** Firefighters have extinguished a massive blaze at a tent marketplace at Al-Rai in Farwaniya Governorate, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFS)

Directorate (KFS) said yesterday. Six fire squads were involved in the efforts to put under control the fire that left some casualties and engulfed an area of 5,000 square

meters, the KFS said in a press statement. Two workers were injured in the fire, while several firefighters were wounded while trying to extinguish it, according

to the statement. Immediate investigations were underway in order to find the exact causes of the incident, it pointed out. — KUNA

## No injuries in aluminum warehouse fire



By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Firemen from the Shuwaikh Industrial and Shuhada fire stations

put out a blaze reported in an aluminum warehouse in Shuwaikh. The fire was contained in a 320 sq m area. No injuries were reported.

## Man arrested on visa forgery charges

**KUWAIT:** Residency detectives arrested a policeman for forging entry visas for Arab and Asian laborers, and found forged transactions and seals with him. He was sent to the public prosecution. The suspect used a car with forged license plates and was charging KD 1,000 per transaction, a security source said.

### Fugitives flee

Two individuals wanted by authorities departed illegally from Nuwaiseeb border outlet along with four others, and they were not discovered until they entered Saudi borders. A Saudi man and his Kuwaiti wife, who are wanted on financial cases, along with a relative of the Saudi and three children left without documentation, only to be discovered by Saudi authorities, who returned

the two women and detained the Saudi man. Investigations are underway to find out how they were able to leave.

### Abnormal condition

An employee at an apartment hotel accused a bedoon man of destroying the door of his room while being in an abnormal condition. Ahmadi police responded and arrested the suspect.

### By mistake

A citizen held two Vietnamese men who mistakenly entered his house and handed them to police. The two are in Kuwait on visit visas. They were released as the house owner refused to press charges.

### Sexual harassment

A female citizen became very scared of a harasser who stopped her in Jahra, before escaping. The woman could not note down the man's license plate numbers. The woman got lost as she entered Jahra from Sixth Ring Road and found herself in the stables area, where a man chased and blocked her. When she called police, he escaped. — Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai

## Manpower authority reviews work permits

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** The Public Authority for Manpower is reviewing work permits to cancel those that have expired or are unused. Sources said the employment sector started cancelling permits after making sure about the data from the residency affairs department at the interior ministry.

### Four percent

Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf justified the ministry's non-compliance with appointing four percent handicapped staff by saying that the Civil Service Commission did not nominate any qualified person. He said when the commission nominates someone, they are sent to the departments for a trial period.



بيت التمويل الكويتي  
Kuwait Finance House



# Eid Mubarak

Wishing you a peaceful and blessed Eid Al-Adha



Multiple quakes hit Indonesia's Lombok

## Spanish police treating knife assault as 'terrorist attack'

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KERALA: Photo shows a view of a flooded area in the north part of Kochi, in the Indian state of Kerala. Rescuers waded into submerged villages in southern India in a desperate search for survivors cut off for days by floods that have already killed more than 400 people. — AFP

# Death toll nears 400 in flood-hit Kerala

## Dozens also missing in worst flood in a century

KOCHI: The death toll in India's southern state of Kerala rose yesterday to nearly 400 after its worst flood in a century, as authorities handed out medicine and disinfectants to ward off disease in thousands of relief camps. Dozens of people are missing and 1.2 million are sheltering in the camps, state officials said, as water receded and a huge clean-up gathered pace. "The death toll has risen to 373," an official of the state's disaster management authority told Reuters.

Kerala received rainfall more than 40 percent greater than normal for the monsoon season, which runs from June to September. Torrential rain in the last 10 days forced officials to release water from dozens of dangerously full dams. The Indian government classified the floods as a "calamity of severe nature." Kerala has pitched it as a national disaster, which if accepted by the federal government, is likely to prompt greater commitments of funds for relief and rebuilding efforts. But, without a yardstick for such a declaration, it could be an uphill task, state officials involved with disaster management said.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan called the flood one of the worst in India's history, displacing more than half a million people. Federal health minister JP Nadda said more than 3,500 medical camps were set up across a

region roughly the size of Switzerland, where rains since Aug 8 have swelled rivers and triggered landslides.

"There is a requirement for 90 different medicines and the first installment has reached," he added. "The biggest



**Over 3,500 relief camps sheltering 1.2 million**

challenges immediately ahead are cleaning of the flood-hit houses, rehabilitation, and prevention of water-borne diseases," said Mahesh P, a village official in Rayamangalam, about 45 km from Kerala's financial capital of Kochi.

Mahesh oversees four relief camps in his village, which

itself escaped flood damage. The camps accommodate people rescued from neighboring areas, which were among the worst affected. The villagers had all pulled together to rescue people and prevent an even bigger disaster, Mahesh said. "The flood has bonded the people like never before, sharing whatever they had." Chlorine powder to disinfect water and other cleaning material are distributed by the camps Mahesh oversees, along with a basic survival kit consisting of a five-day supply of rice and food, toiletries and clothing.

### Long queues

Light to moderate rain was expected across Kerala yesterday, promising respite to rescue workers, who have battled rising waters and mudslides to reach tens of thousands of stranded villagers. In one of the worst-hit areas, Chengannur, about 100 km from Kochi, a long queue of women snaked out of a medical camp at the main relief centre. As a helicopter hovered overhead, doctors checked elderly men and women lying on wooden benches in an engineering college. "People are being screened for respiratory infections," said a camp doctor, Rajesh Parameshwaran, adding that another infection doctors were

targeted was leptospirosis, which can strike people wading through stagnant water. Those returning home from the camps as the waters recede face a difficult clean-up. The insides of many homes will have about 60 cm of mud, officials said. Wells, commonly used in Kerala, are contaminated and few places have electricity to pump water. Kochi's airport has suspended operations until Sunday. National carrier Air India yesterday began flying turboprop planes from the city's naval airport to the cities of Bangalore and Coimbatore in neighboring states. To assist passengers, India's aviation regulator asked domestic airlines to cap maximum fares to and from Kerala and nearby airports.

Kerala faces no shortage of food, at least. Traders had stocked up before the Hindu harvest festival of Onam on Saturday, the chief minister said. Kerala has cancelled all official celebrations of what is usually its biggest festive event. Rahul Gandhi, the leader of the opposition Congress party, urged Modi not to discriminate between states controlled by his Bharatiya Janata Party and those such as Kerala, which it does not rule. The state, ruled by the communist party, has received just a third of the immediate assistance of 20 billion rupees (\$285 million) it sought from the federal government. — Reuters

## 'Junior jihadis' march sparks outrage in Indonesia

PROBOLINGGO: An Indonesian kindergarten apologized yesterday after images of its pint-sized students marching in niqab veils and carrying cardboard cutouts of assault rifles sparked outrage. Organizers were left red-faced after a torrent of criticism suggested the Islamic State-style outfits promoted jihadist violence in a country that has long struggled with militant attacks. The group of about 15 students were taking part in a parade for Indonesia's independence day Friday near the country's second-biggest city Surabaya. The Kartika kindergarten, which is located inside a military complex in Probolinggo town, said the costumes were resurrected from storage to save parents the cost of buying new ones.

It denied that the gun replicas and full-body veils promoted extremism. "I never meant to teach violence to my students," said school principal Subhartatik, who like many Indonesians goes by one name. "We only used the props that we already had to cut costs for parents. I deeply apologize." The costumes had been used in previous parades to teach students about the prophet Muhammad's faith and beliefs, she added. But the principal's explanation was met with derision on Indonesian social media. "Nobody carried assault rifles in the prophet's time—is this teacher that clueless about history or was she just trying to dodge the blame?" one user posted on Twitter.

Another tweeted: "Obviously the seeds of ISIS are being nurtured early on." Indonesian parliamentary speaker Bambang Soesatyo also lashed out at what he dubbed a "very concerning case". "Parents and teachers should protect children from damaging their way of thinking," he told news site Detik. Parade organizers said they were embarrassed for failing to notice the provocative outfits. "I really apologize—I did not check beforehand," said chief organizer Supini. "This was supposed to be a cultural parade."

The incident came as Indonesia looks to promote itself as host of the 18th Asian Games, the world's biggest multi-sport tournament after the Olympics. Indonesia has endured a spate of deadly militant violence in recent years. The 17,000 island archipelago, which has the world's biggest Muslim population, suffered its worst attack in a decade in May after IS-inspired suicide bombers attacked several churches. Indonesia's deadliest terror attack was the 2002 Bali bombing which killed over 200 people. — AFP

## Kerala floods give way to stench and uncertainty

ALUVA: The overpowering stench that fills the air in the towns and villages of Kerala is an inescapable reminder that while the filthy flood waters may be subsiding, the full toll of the devastating monsoon deluge will take time to emerge. In Aluva, on the outskirts of the southern Indian state's main city Kochi, the rain had barely stopped and abandoned cars, sodden furniture and mattresses filled the streets while dirty black water still flowed above knee-level. A foul smell greeted arrivals at the town's Union Christian College, where classrooms and halls have become a relief camp for some 4,000 people. Residents speculated that the stench was from rubbish and dead cats, dogs and rats - or worse. "Maybe it's human," said one survivor. More than 400 people have died since heavy rain hit Kerala, triggering deadly landslides and submerging entire villages as rivers burst their banks. "This smell is of five days without a bath," said Savita Saha. There are long queues at the school's few toilets and no bathroom to wash in.

"Everyone here is wearing the clothes they had when they escaped," she said, squeezed onto a jute mat with her husband, who works at a cashew factory in Kochi. In one classroom, Rasitha Sojith, from the nearby town of Kaprassery, sobbed as she told of how she escaped through chest-high waters carrying her two-month-old son. Sojith said water had burst into her home without warning last Wednesday while her father and sister with her three children were visiting to see the new baby.

"With water rising fast, we only grabbed a few clothes for the baby and went to the first-floor terrace of the neighbor's house," she said. Torrential



KERALA: An Indian man is being winched up to an Indian Air Force helicopter as he is evacuated from a flood affected area in the southern state of Kerala. — AFP

rain fell for hours as their fear of being trapped mounted, until local fishermen rowed the family to safety the next day. "Everything is lost. Everything! We don't even have money to go back to our neighborhood," said Sojith. "I don't think we will be leaving this camp any time soon."

### Muddy rubble

An estimated 725,000 people are crammed into similar makeshift camps across Kerala. Authorities have given a provisional damage toll of \$3 billion but the extent of the destruction is likely to prove much greater, some officials and legislators say. In the Malikampedika area of Kochi, Mumthaz, who goes by one name, found the smell waiting for her when she returned to her home. "This muddy rubble and stench is all that is left of our memories," Mumthaz said, as

she dragged out mud-caked mattresses and a sofa set, damaged utensils and even her daughters' school awards. As word spread of flood warnings, Mumthaz had taken her two daughters on Thursday to the home of her parents-in-law, in another neighborhood.

But floodwaters soon surged through their house as well and the whole family had to be rescued. "It was surreal. The water was close to the knees at one point and within a few minutes it was touching five feet, with a current so strong that we saw big cars floating like tin cans," she said. With her husband searching for work in Dubai, Mumthaz knows she will struggle to look after her daughters, with the family facing an uncertain future after the nightmare of the floods. "There is no kitchen, electricity and water here. I don't know how long it will take before I will be back... (in) my home," she said. — AFP

## International

# Israel and US call on Europe to pressure Iran; Nuke row rages

## Iran's foreign minister says US has 'addiction to sanctions'

**JERUSALEM:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and US President Donald Trump's national security adviser met in Jerusalem yesterday and called on European nations to do more to pressure Iran. John Bolton arrived in Israel on Sunday for three days of talks expected to focus mainly on Iran and its presence in Syria. Netanyahu strongly urged Trump to withdraw from the nuclear deal between Israel's main enemy Iran and world powers, and the US president did so in May, resulting in the reimposition of sanctions.

Israel and the United States have been closely aligned on their approach to Iran since Trump took office. "I frankly believe that all countries who care about peace and security in the Middle East should follow America's lead and ratchet up the pressure on Iran," Netanyahu told journalists.

"Because the greater the pressure on Iran, the greater the chance that the regime will roll back its aggression. And everybody should join this effort."

The comments were a veiled reference to European countries, which are seeking to save the nuclear deal and have vowed to keep providing Iran with the economic benefits it received from the accord. They argue that the nuclear deal is working as intended in keeping Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons for now. Bolton said "it's a question of the highest importance for the United States that Iran never get a deliverable nuclear weapons capability."

"It's why President Trump withdrew from the wretched Iran nuclear deal," he said, speaking alongside Netanyahu. "It's why we've worked with our friends in Europe to convince them of the need to take stronger

steps against the Iranian nuclear weapons and ballistic missile program." The United States and Israel argue the deal was too limited in scope and timeframe while also allowing Iran to finance militant activities in the region due to the lifting of sanctions. Bolton's trip will also take him later in the week to Ukraine and Geneva, where he will meet with his Russian counterpart Nikolai Patrushev on Thursday.

The meeting in Geneva is a follow-up to Trump's highly controversial July summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki, according to the White House. Iran is backing Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad in his country's civil war along with Russia and Lebanese Shiite militant group Hezbollah. Netanyahu has pledged to prevent Iran from entrenching itself militarily in neighboring Syria.

and a series of recent strikes that have killed Iranians there have been attributed to Israel. He has also pressed Putin to guarantee that Iranian forces in Syria and their allies, such as Hezbollah, will be kept far away from the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

### 'Addiction to sanctions'

Meanwhile, Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in an interview with CNN yesterday that United States has an "addiction to sanctions." "I believe there is a disease in the United States and that is the addiction to sanctions," Zarif told the US broadcaster. "Even during the Obama administration the United States put more emphasis on keeping the sanctions it had not lifted rather than implementing its obligation on the sanctions it lifted."

“ I believe there is a disease in US ”

## Israel soldiers and Palestinian militia exchange gunfire

**JERUSALEM:** Israeli soldiers and a Palestinian militant exchanged gunfire on the Gaza border yesterday, the army said, despite efforts to reach a long-term truce between the two sides. Israel also kept its only crossing for people into the blockaded Gaza Strip closed for a second day in response to weekend border clashes. "A terrorist shot at IDF troops in the northern Gaza Strip, in response IDF troops shot towards the terrorist," the army said in a statement, referring to the Israel Defense Forces.

No soldiers were wounded. On Sunday, Israel had closed the Erez crossing with the Gaza Strip except for humanitarian cases after weekend border clashes. A spokeswoman for the Israeli defense ministry unit that oversees the passage said that Erez remained closed yesterday and would be so "until further notice". The closure and border incidents occurred despite attempts by Egypt and UN officials to reach a long-term truce between Israel and Hamas, the Islamist movement that runs the Gaza Strip.

The two sides have fought three wars since 2008. Israel has enforced an air, land and sea blockade on the Gaza Strip for more than a decade, but grants permission to a limited number of people to cross for various reasons. An average of around 1,000 Gazans cross through Erez each day, mostly those in need of medical care but also businesspeople, students and others, Israeli authorities say. Israel had just last week reopened its only goods crossing with Gaza after closing it to most deliv-



**GAZA:** Smoke from a fire rises as Palestinians protest near the border with Israel east Gaza City. — AFP

eries for more than a month over border tensions. Gaza's only other border is with Egypt but the Rafah crossing with the enclave had largely been kept closed in recent years. Cairo opened it in mid-May and it has mostly remained so since.

UN officials and Egypt have been seeking to secure a long-term truce between Hamas and Israel to allow for



**JERUSALEM:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (right) speaks during a press conference with visiting US national security adviser John Bolton at the Prime Minister's office in Jerusalem yesterday. — AFP

It was Zarif's first interview with Western media since US President Donald Trump walked out of the 2015 nuclear deal in May, leading Washington to reimpose sanctions earlier this month. "We felt that the United States had learned that at least as far as Iran is con-

cerned, sanctions do produce economic hardship but do not produce the political outcomes that they intended them to produce," he said. "I thought that the Americans had learned that lesson. Unfortunately I was wrong," he said. — Agencies

## Iran's nuke deal: Developments since US walkout

**TEHRAN:** Key developments since the United States quit the 2015 Iran nuclear deal three months ago and reimposed sanctions:

### US walks away

Donald Trump pulls the United States out of the landmark nuclear pact between world powers and Iran on May 8, reinstating Washington's sanctions on Iran and companies with ties to the Islamic republic. "The Iran deal is defective at its core," he says. Washington warns other countries to end trade and investment in Iran and stop buying its oil or face punitive measures, and threatens foreign companies from dealing with Tehran. Iran's regional rivals Saudi Arabia and Israel applaud the decision. But other parties to the deal - Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China - say Iran has abided by its commitment and that they are determined to save the agreement and ensure continued economic benefits for Iran.

### Threats to resume enrichment

On May 12 Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says Iran is preparing to resume "industrial-scale" uranium enrichment, which is limited by the accord, unless Europe provides solid guarantees to maintain trade ties reinstated under the deal. Washington warns on May 21 that Iran will be hit with the "strongest sanctions in history" unless it capitulates to a series of demands aimed at curbing its missile program. On May 30 the US places several Iranian state groups on its sanctions blacklist, accusing them of serious human rights abuses and censorship. On June 4 Iran notifies the International Atomic Energy Agency of the launch of a plan to increase its uranium enrichment capacity.

### Five powers back deal

A top US official says on July 2 that Washington is determined to force Iran to change behavior by cutting its oil exports to zero, confident the world has enough spare oil capacity to cope. President Hassan Rouhani responds

on July 3, saying the United States can never prevent Iran from exporting its oil. On July 6 Tehran's five remaining partners in the nuclear accord vow in Vienna to back "the continuation of Iran's export of oil and gas". On July 16 EU countries reject the US demand that they economically isolate Tehran and move to give European firms legal cover to operate in Iran. Iran calls on the UN's top court, the International Court of Justice, to order the United States to immediately lift sanctions, claiming they are causing "irreparable prejudice".

### War of words

On July 22 Rouhani tells the US it should not "play with the lion's tail" and warns any conflict with Iran would be the "mother of all wars". Trump responds with an all-caps Twitter tirade warning against making threats to the United States. "OR YOU WILL SUFFER CONSEQUENCES".

On July 30, however, Trump says he is ready to meet Iranian leaders "anytime they want" and promises "no preconditions". "Threats, sanctions & PR stunts won't work," Iran's foreign minister says on Twitter.

### Sanctions and repercussions

On August 7 Washington reimposes sanctions on Iran, which Trump describes as the "most biting ever". Within hours German carmaker Daimler says it is halting its business activities in Iran. On August 14 British group Quercus, an investor in renewable energy, says it too will cease all its activities in the country. On August 20 Iran's oil minister announces Total is quitting its multi-billion dollar gas project in the country. It makes the French energy giant the latest in a string of major international companies to pull out, including Deutsche Telekom, Deutsche Bahn and Air Liquide. — AFP

## News in brief

### Iran journalist jailed

**TEHRAN:** An Iranian journalist has been sentenced to 10 years in prison for "insulting" an imam from the ninth century on Twitter, his lawyer told local media yesterday. Mir Mohammad-Hossein Mir-Esmaili, a journalist for the Jahan-e Sanat daily, was arrested while trying to leave the country in April 2017. It followed a Twitter post in which he said Imam Reza, one of the 12 revered figures in Iran's dominant strand of Shiite Islam, was "one of us", implying that he would have allowed young people to enjoy themselves. He made the statement as a criticism of Friday prayer leader Ayatollah Ahmad Alamolhoda, who has banned concerts in the holy city of Mashhad which is home to the Imam Reza shrine. — AFP

### Missing radioactive material

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysian police are hunting for an industrial device containing radioactive material that went missing from the back of a pick-up truck earlier this month, reports and an official said yesterday. The radiography device disappeared on August 10 as it was transported outside the capital Kuala Lumpur, the New Straits Times newspaper reported. Authorities fear the device, which contains the radioactive isotope iridium-192 and, could fall into the hands of militants and be used to make a dirty bomb, the paper said. Local police chief Mazlan Mansor said an investigation had been launched without giving further details. Deputy Home Minister Azis Jamman confirmed the incident had taken place but insisted "everything is under control". — AFP

### Keita declared 'winner'

**BAMAKO:** Mali's constitutional court yesterday confirmed President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita's re-election in a run-off ballot, rejecting fraud accusations by the opposition candidate. The decision clears the way for Keita to be inaugurated next month for a second five-year term, at a time when Malian authorities are contending with rising violence by jihadist groups and ethnic militia. Challenger Soumaila Cisse had contested the electoral commission result of the Aug 12 vote, which showed Keita winning 67 percent. The election was tainted by armed attacks in the centre and north, where hundreds of polling stations remained closed, and a turnout of only 34 percent reflected fears of violence as well as voter apathy. — Reuters

### Egypt officer killed

**CAIRO:** An Egyptian army captain has been killed by an improvised explosive device blast in North Sinai during a campaign to eliminate jihadists, medics said yesterday. The officer died Sunday evening after an explosion hit his vehicle west of the coastal city of El-Arish, a local medical source said. The Egyptian army has since February been conducting a major operation focused on the Sinai Peninsula to wipe out jihadists from the Islamic State group. The military says that over 250 suspected jihadists and at least 35 soldiers have been killed in its "Sinai 2018" operation. Jihadists launched an insurgency in Sinai after the 2013 military overthrow of Egypt's Islamist president Mohamed Morsi, who was forced out by the military in the face of mass protests against his rule. — AFP

### Five kids fight for life

**PARIS:** A fire in a residential building near Paris on Sunday left seven people with serious injuries including five children who were in a "life-threatening" condition, firefighters said. Some 16 people including 10 police officers and a firefighter were also slightly hurt in the blaze in Aubervilliers, northeast of Paris, which was later brought under control, the fire service said. In the same town less than a month ago, a fire in a housing complex killed a mother and her three children aged 18 months to six years, and left nine others injured. — AFP

## International

# Spanish police treating knife assault as 'terrorist attack'

## Suspect identified as 29-year-old Algerian

**BARCELONA:** A police officer shot dead a man armed with a knife as he tried to attack a police station in Catalonia yesterday, just days after the one-year anniversary of a twin attack in the northern Spanish region that killed 16 people. "We are treating it as a terrorist attack. The officer used her gun to save her own life," Rafel Comes, a commissioner with the Catalan regional police, told a news conference in Cornellà de Llobregat where the attack took place.

The man arrived at the police station in the town near Barcelona at 5:45 am with a knife and "a clearly premeditated desire to kill an agent of our force," he added, saying security was being reinforced at police stations across Catalonia. Anti-terrorism police sources had earlier told AFP that the man was a 29-year-old Algerian who lived in the area, and had shouted "Allahu akbar" (God is greatest) as he entered the station.

But Comes said the agent who shot the man dead can only recall hearing him invoking the name of "Allah" and the rest of what he said was incomprehensible. The commissioner would not confirm the attacker was Algerian, saying police still needed to confirm that the Algerian identity papers he carried with him were in fact his. The police station was cordoned off and funeral home employees removed the attacker's body from the building, an AFP photographer at the scene said.

Officers searched the man's home, which was located just a few hundred meters from the site of the attack. The incident occurred just days after the first anniversary of

a deadly jihadist rampage in Catalonia. Sixteen people were killed on August 17, 2017 when a van drove into crowds on Barcelona's popular Las Ramblas boulevard and in a knife attack in the nearby resort of Cambrils. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attacks, Spain's worst since the Madrid train bombings in 2004 when 191 people died and more than 1,800 were injured.

### IS targets police

Spain has kept its terrorist alert at the second-highest level since 2015. Catalonia, which is home to a significant number of second-generation North African immigrants, has had a long history of Islamic militant activity. Spain's first Muslim extremist - a member of the Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA) - was

uncovered in Catalonia in 1995.

Mohammed Atta, the pilot who slammed a passenger plane into one of New York's World Trade Center towers on September 11, 2001, spent time in Catalonia shortly before the attacks. And in 2008, a plot targeting Barcelona's underground trains was foiled when it was already in advanced stages. One in four people detained in Spain in relation to extremist Muslim-linked terrorism come from the Catalan province of Barcelona, according to a study published last year by the Real Instituto Elcano, a Spanish think-tank, which called the province the country's "main centre of jihadist activity".

There have been a string of similar incidents in neighboring France targeting police and soldiers, including

“ Officer used her gun to save her life ”



**CORNELLA DE LLOBREGAT:** The body of a man who tried to attack a police station is wheeled into a van in Cornellà near the northeastern Spanish city of Barcelona yesterday. — AFP

one in January 2016 in which police shot dead a man wielding a cleaver and yelling "Allahu akbar" as he tried to attack a police station in northern Paris. That incident came on the one-year anniversary of the terrorist attack

on satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo. The Islamic State group has frequently called on their followers to attack soldiers and police in France, who they see as a legitimate target because they represent the French state. — AFP

## South Africa inquiry opens into alleged graft under Zuma

**JOHANNESBURG:** A public inquiry opened in South Africa yesterday, probing alleged corruption under scandal-tainted former president Jacob Zuma, who is accused of overseeing widespread graft during his nine-year reign. The inquiry, which could take two years to deliver its findings, is set to hear evidence of allegations that Zuma let ministries and government agencies be plundered for private gain in a scandal known as "state capture". Much of the probe is expected to focus on Zuma's relationship with the Guptas, a wealthy Indian family accused of wielding undue political influence.

An earlier report by a watchdog detailed allegations that Zuma ensured the Gupta family won preferential contracts with state companies, including huge mining deals, and were even able to choose cabinet ministers. Zuma himself appointed the inquiry in January on the orders of a high court, weeks before he was forced to resign from office as criticism grew from within the ruling ANC party. Zuma's alleged involvement in multiple graft scandals damaged the party's image ahead of elections next year.

His successor President Cyril Ramaphosa has vowed to tackle corruption. The inquiry will in part establish whether official appointments were "disclosed to the Gupta family or any other unauthorized person before such appointments were formally made," said inquiry head Raymond Zondo, the country's deputy chief justice. Although the inquiry does not have powers to arrest or prosecute, it can refer matters for possible criminal investigation. "At the heart of the investigation is whether outsiders influenced government or state-owned enterprises for selfish gain," said the commission's lead lawyer Paul Pretorius on the inquiry's opening day.

### State funds looted

Pravin Gordhan, a former finance minister now responsible for state companies, has estimated that around 100 billion rand (\$6.8 billion) of state funds may have been looted through corrupt awarding of government tenders. Gordhan is among those expected to give evidence, along with his former deputy Mcebisi Jonas.

Jonas has alleged he was taken by Zuma to the Guptas' home in Johannesburg where Ajay Gupta said he would be appointed finance minister. When Jonas refused, Ajay allegedly offered him 600 million rand and asked if Jonas had a bag to take away 600,000 rand in cash immediately. Pretorius said the commission would probe whether Zuma violated the constitution "by facilitating the unlawful awarding of tenders of state-owned enterprises." Zondo vowed a thorough investigation and called for members of the public to submit their own evidence, but he expressed disappointment at the lack of cooperation from government officials.

The local Sunday Times said Zuma has been invited to appear, but the commission's spokesman declined to comment. Zuma and the Guptas deny any wrongdoing. "I hope that the inquiry gets to the bottom of how the South African state was captured in the way it was and what can be done to prevent this from happening again," David Lewis, executive director of South Africa's non-profit organization Corruption Watch said. Zuma, 76, was forced to resign in February when ANC lawmakers turned against him. The former president also has been charged with 16 counts of graft linked to an arms deal from before he became president. — AFP

## Pope condemns 'atrocities' of US clerical abuse

**VATICAN CITY:** Pope Francis condemned yesterday the "atrocities" revealed by a far-reaching US report into clerical child sex abuse in the state of Pennsylvania issued last week. "In recent days, a report was made public which detailed the experiences of at least a thousand survivors... the abuse of power and of conscience at the hands of priests," the pope said in a letter made public by the Vatican.

"Even though it can be said that most of these cases belong to the past, nonetheless as time goes on we have come to know the pain of many of the victims," he said. "We have realized that these wounds never disappear and that they require us forcefully to condemn these atrocities and join forces in uprooting this culture of death," he added. A devastating US grand jury report published last week decried a systematic cover-up by the Catholic Church. The grand jury said that more than 1,000 child victims were identifiable, but that the actual number was "in the thousands".

The report is thought to be the most comprehensive to date into abuse in the US church since The Boston Globe first exposed paedophile priests in Massachusetts in 2002. Calling for "solidarity" with the victims and a fight against "spiritual corruption", Pope Francis said "no effort to beg pardon and to seek to repair the harm done will ever be sufficient". "With shame and repentance, we acknowledge as an ecclesial community that we were not where we should have been, that we did not act in a timely manner, realizing the magnitude and the gravity of the damage done to so many lives," he said.

The Vatican had already expressed its "shame and sorrow" after the publication of the US report, but Pope Francis's letter yesterday went further. "No effort must be



**LONDON:** Catholic Agency For Overseas Development's (CAFOD) Sister Clara from Zambia, walks through shoes displayed outside Westminster Cathedral. The display promotes Pope Francis' refugee campaign, which is calling for world leaders to back global agreements aimed at assisting refugees and migrants. — AFP

spared to create a culture able to prevent such situations from happening, but also to prevent the possibility of their being covered up and perpetuated," he said. Pope Francis ended the letter by exhorting Catholics to "fasting and prayer", in order to "open our ears to the hushed pain felt by children, young people and the disabled".

It's not the first time that Francis, who became pope in 2013, has had to react to the scandal of child abuse within the Church. At the end of July he accepted the resignation

of prominent US cardinal Theodore McCarrick, who has been accused of sexually abusing a teenager nearly five decades ago. Among senior church members in the US forced to resign for protecting paedophile priests were the late cardinal Bernard Law in Boston and cardinal Roger Mahony in Los Angeles. The case of cardinal Law was the subject of a huge investigation by the Boston Globe, which won the newspaper a Pulitzer Prize and was subsequently turned into an Oscar-winning film, "Spotlight". — AFP

## Venezuelans defy Ecuador's passport rules

**IPIALES:** Dozens of furious Venezuelan migrants fleeing economic misery in Venezuela for a new life elsewhere on Sunday defied rules requiring they hold a valid passport to cross the border from Colombia into Ecuador, and authorities appeared to be allowing it. Hundreds of desperate people who traveled days from Venezuela, mostly by bus but some on foot, were prevented from passing the checkpoint near the southwestern town of Ipiales by a regulation set by Ecuador's President Lenin Moreno that kicked in on Saturday.

But as tension mounted in the frigid Colombian mountain town, migrants decided to risk being detained and simply walked across the ungated and loosely guarded border, having spent days in freezing conditions at the Rumichaca crossing. "We have no money, we need to move on now and get our lives back," said Mayerly Isaguire, out of breath from dragging her belongings up the steep hill at the Ecuadorian border.

The primary school teacher, 37, was traveling with her boyfriend and had planned to cross legally with her Venezuelan national ID card en route to find work in Peru, where other family members successfully arrived weeks ago. But they were stopped by the new regulation. After more than 24 hours shivering from the cold at the border, she took the chance.



**PASTO:** Venezuelan citizens travel on a truck's car carrier trailer, on the Pan-American highway, in a rural area of Pasto, Colombia, on their way to the border with Ecuador. — AFP

"They haven't told us anything - we are just waiting around like idiots," she said, wheeling her fuchsia colored suitcase across the open check point as guards looked on.

Peru's government announced immigration measures similar to Ecuador's on Friday, with passport requirements for Venezuelans beginning on Aug 25. Ecuador on Sunday said children and adolescents traveling with their parents could cross without passports. "They're in limbo," said Gustavo Salvador, a Red Cross Ecuador worker. "Many people who are crossing illegally are going to be hit by fines at Peru's border, and these people don't have money." Ecuador's foreign and interior ministries declined to comment. A spokesman for Colombia's migration office could not immediately be reached for comment.

On Sunday morning, arguments broke out between migrants - those rallying for people to move on into Ecuador in groups while others argued they should stay and do things

"the right way." More than a million Venezuelan migrants have entered Colombia over the last 15 months, according to official estimates, but Ecuador, Peru and Brazil also have received many. Over the last two years, especially, many Venezuelans have struggled to obtain passports amid the OPEC nation's political and economic chaos. This year alone, 423,000 Venezuelans have entered Ecuador through the Rumichaca border.

In Ipiales, Venezuelan migrants who said they had hitchhiked for days were huddled under blankets in tents. Exhausted and hungry, they scraped their last few pesos together to buy food. Many like Jorge Luis Torrealba, who traveled with 12 friends and family members, including two small children, were unable to find space in the tents and were sleeping on the freezing concrete pavement. "We are from the Caribbean, we can't handle this cold," he said, shivering despite wearing four t-shirts, two sweaters, two pairs of socks and two pairs of jeans. — Reuters

## UK govt steps in to run privately-run prison in 'crisis'

**LONDON:** The British government yesterday took back control of a privately-run prison after a watchdog found "a dramatic deterioration" and "appalling" conditions. The justice ministry assumed control of HMP Birmingham from private security company G4S, following a damning inspection that found "squalor, violence and the prevalence of drugs and looming lack of control".

In a first since Britain began contracting the running of some prisons to private companies in the early 1990s, it will run the jail in central England, one of the largest in the country, for an initial six-month period. "What we have seen at Birmingham is unacceptable and it has become clear that drastic action is required to bring about the improvements we require," Prisons Minister Rory Stewart said. "If conditions have not returned to what we want... we would continue to run that prison," he told BBC Radio. The ministry has appointed a new prison governor and management team, deployed 30 extra officers and begun reducing the jail's population by 300 inmates to tackle the problems.

The moves follow a scathing critique from Britain's Chief Inspector of Prisons Peter Clarke, who warned Birmingham had "slipped into crisis". He found problems ranging from widespread drug-use and associated violence, to vermin, uncollected rubbish and dilapidated buildings, with staff found asleep or locked in offices during an inspection. Among the incidents of violence reported: an arson attack during the week of the probe that destroyed nine staff vehicles, including two being used by the inspection team. "I was astounded that HMP Birmingham had been allowed to deteriorate so dramatically," Clarke wrote in an August 16 letter to Justice Secretary David Gauke calling for urgent action. — AFP



International

# Why multiple earthquakes are rattling one Indonesian island

## Multiple quakes rock Indonesia's Lombok island, 10 dead

**JAKARTA:** The Indonesian holiday island of Lombok has been hammered by a series of powerful earthquakes in the past three weeks that have killed more than 500 people and left hundreds of thousands homeless. The archipelago nation sits on the so-called Pacific "Ring of Fire", where tectonic plates collide and many of the world's volcanic eruptions and earthquakes occur. But it is rare for one island to be hit so hard and so often. Here are some questions and answers:

### What caused Lombok quakes?

The earthquakes on the island since late July are the result of a collision between the Australian and Eurasian tectonic plates just below the archipelago, geologists say. Compression of the two plates is triggering activity along a specific geological fault known as the Flores back arc thrust, which sits north of Lombok and runs roughly from the eastern end of Java island to Timor. "Clearly there are different parts of the fault that are moving at the moment, releasing those stressors," said Chris Elders, an expert in plate tectonics and structural geology at Curtin University in West Australia.

### Why so many strong quakes?

Lombok was hit by two deadly quakes on July 29 and August 5. On Sunday it was rattled by a series of deadly fresh quakes and aftershocks, with the strongest measuring 6.9

magnitude. Elders said seismic activity picked up as different parts of the fault slipped and moved. However, pinpointing exactly what is causing the ruptures is more difficult - other than the fact that it shows an accumulation of stress. "The fault will move periodically when tension builds up," Danny Hilman Natawidjaja, senior geologist at the Indonesian Institute of Sciences said.

It is not unusual for strong earthquakes to be accompanied by scores of aftershocks, but a

after a major one... There may still be some imbalances and shifts."

### Multiple earthquakes

At least 10 people are dead after a string of powerful quakes rocked the Indonesian holiday island of Lombok, authorities said yesterday, in a fresh blow just weeks after earlier tremors left hundreds dead and thousands more homeless. The latest quakes struck Sunday, with the first measuring 6.3 shortly before midday. It triggered landslides and sent people fleeing for cover as parts of Lombok suffered blackouts. It was followed nearly 12 hours later by a 6.9-magnitude quake and a string of powerful aftershocks.

The picturesque island next to holiday hotspot Bali was already reeling from two deadly quakes on July 29 and August 5 that killed nearly 500 people. Ten people were killed in the strong quake Sunday evening, mostly by falling debris, including six people on the neighboring island of Sumbawa, according to the national disaster agency. Some two dozen people were injured in Lombok and more than 150 homes and places of worship damaged, the agency said. Tens of thousands of homes, mosques and businesses across Lombok had already been destroyed by the quake earlier this month.

Most people caught in the latest tremor had been outside their homes or at shelters when it struck which kept casualties low, said

### What caused a string of quakes on Lombok?

succession of quakes with a similar magnitude is more unusual. Adang Surahman, an earthquake engineering expert at Indonesia's Bandung Institute of Technology, described the series of tremors as "quite extraordinary"-and they may not be over.

"Usually it would take a long time for another major quake to hit because the energy has been alleviated," Surahman said. "But in Lombok we had an even bigger earthquake



**MATARAM:** A man jumps over a crack in the ground in Mataram on Indonesia's Lombok island yesterday after a series of earthquakes were recorded by seismologists. — AFP

national disaster agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho. "The trauma because of the earlier quake on Sunday (morning) made people prefer to stay outside," he added. Aid agencies vowed to boost humanitarian assistance on the island as devastated residents struggle in makeshift displacement camps.

Indonesia's disaster agency said it was accelerating efforts to rebuild destroyed homes, hospitals and schools, while Save the Children pledged to escalate its humanitarian response. "We are gravely concerned about the repeated distress caused to children by the multiple shocks," the relief agency said. — Agencies

## Model claiming Trump secrets pleads not guilty in Thailand case

**PATTAYA:** A Belarusian model who sparked global intrigue after claiming she had evidence of Russian efforts to help Donald Trump win office pleaded not guilty yesterday to charges of running an illegal "sex training" class in Thailand. Anastasia Vashukevich, better known by her pen name Nastya Rybka, has been detained in Thailand since February when police raided a risqué seminar in the seaside resort city of Pattaya.

Vashukevich had travelled to Thailand after becoming embroiled in a political scandal with Russian aluminium tycoon Oleg Deripaska, a onetime associate of Trump's now-disgraced former campaign director Paul Manafort. She set off a scramble for details after she promised in an Instagram video to reveal "missing puzzle pieces" on claims the Kremlin aided the US President's 2016 election victory. No material has been released to substantiate her claims, and critics have accused her of a publicity stunt. Vashukevich and her seven co-defendants arrived at the Pattaya court yesterday for a pre-trial hearing on the charges that include unlawful assembly and conspiracy.

Police initially charged the group with work permit violations but later alleged the seminar, led by self-styled Russian seduction

guru Alex Kirillov and ostensibly a course training participants to be better lovers, was actually intended to arrange paid sex for participants. Photos of course participants in detention after the February raid showed them wearing t-shirts that said "sex animator". Kirillov, who has served as a spokesperson for the mostly-Russian group because he speaks English, told the court that all eight defendants were pleading not guilty.

"We did not commit any crimes," he said. "What we do is training on how to seduce men and women. We do not make any sexual activity." Vashukevich cried after the prosecutor showed a photo of several of her co-defendants hugging at a nightclub after a training session. "Why was I arrested? Why am I here?" she said. The next hearing has been set for August 27. Pattaya, on Thailand's southern coast, is a party town with a reputation for vice and a sizeable Russian expatriate community. Both Washington and Moscow have publicly shrugged off Vashukevich's story, which US State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert described as "bizarre".

Additional legal troubles are also awaiting Vashukevich and Kirillov back in Russia, where Deripaska won an invasion of privacy lawsuit against the duo last month. They were ordered to pay \$8,000 each to Deripaska, who sued them after a video apparently filmed by Vashukevich surfaced which appeared to show the tycoon vacationing with Sergei Prikhodko, an influential Russian deputy prime minister at the time. Kremlin-connected Deripaska and Manafort did business together in the mid-2000s. The New York Times reported last year, but their relationship broke down into legal wrangling. — AFP

## India, Pakistan leaders call for peace talks

**ISLAMABAD:** Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called for dialogue with Pakistan in a letter to its newly elected leader and Pakistan also saw talks with its old rival as the "only way forward". Pakistan's foreign minister said yesterday, New Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan offered an olive branch to India after his election victory last month, proposing talks to resolve a long-standing dispute over the Kashmir region. The two leaders spoke by telephone late last month.

"The Indian prime minister has sent a letter in which he congratulated Imran Khan and ... he has sent a message to open talks," Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi told reporters in the capital, Islamabad. An Indian foreign ministry official confirmed Modi wrote to Khan on Saturday and "expressed India's commitment to build good neighborly relations between India and Pakistan and pursue meaningful and constructive engagement for the benefit of the people of the region".

The nuclear-armed neighbors have fought three wars since the end of British colonial rule in 1947, two of them over the disputed Muslim-majority Himalayan region of Kashmir, where their two armies face off other and occasionally exchange fire. India has long accused Pakistan of encouraging separatist Muslim militants fighting Indian rule in the Indian part of Kashmir. The militants occasionally launch bloody attacks in Indian towns and cities.

Afghanistan has also for years accused Pakistan of supporting Taliban militants fighting the Indian- and Western-backed Kabul government. Pakistan denies aiding insurgent groups in



**QUETTA:** Pakistani men watch a television broadcasting the speech of newly appointed Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan as he addresses the nation. — AFP

both Kashmir and Afghanistan. Khan, in his offer to India last month, said Pakistan was ready to respond positively to any effort on dialogue. "If India comes and takes one step toward us, we will take two," said Khan, who had been bellicose towards India while campaigning for last month's election.

Qureshi repeated a call for a resumption of talks, which have made little progress in recent years. "We need a continued and uninterrupted dialogue. This is our only way forward," he said. But Pakistani security policy is largely determined by its powerful military, not by civilian governments.

Pakistan's former civilian government, led by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, also sought better ties with India. Hopes soared following a sur-

prise visit by Modi to Sharif in the eastern Pakistani city of Lahore in December 2015, the first such visit by an Indian prime minister in more than a decade.

But the hopes unraveled weeks later when militants attacked an Indian army base in Indian-controlled Kashmir. India blamed Pakistan for the attack. Pakistan denied that. Sharif's efforts to improve ties with India were seen as undermining his relations with his army. Qureshi, who served as foreign minister in a previous civilian government, from 2008 to 2011, said his ministry would be in charge of foreign policy, but would take advice from "national security institutions", drawing a comparison to the way the US Central Intelligence Agency advises the US government. — Agencies

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## Analysis

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E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net  
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resistance on  
Asian farms with  
apps, dictionary

In his first 12 years working as a vet in Bangladesh, Bikash Chandra Saha routinely prescribed antibiotics. Then he learned of the devastating impact of antimicrobial resistance on human health - and it revolutionized his treatment choices. The growing resistance of deadly diseases to antimicrobial drugs such as antibiotics is seen as one of the biggest threats to human health, but awareness of the dangers of overuse remains low, particularly in developing countries.

Now the United Nations is educating workers on the front lines of the battle against this global scourge - among them Saha, who works for one of Bangladesh's biggest poultry companies. "It definitely changed my attitude and my antibiotic selection," Saha, who attended a recent training course, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone. "Before, my focus was on what is the best option (for the animal). After the training, I know the threat of antimicrobial resistance, even for my family, for my children. This is a new thing."

Lethal bacteria are showing more and more resistance to antimicrobials, and a 2016 report found drug-resistant infections could kill 10 million people a year by 2050. Livestock is a large part of the problem - especially in Asia, where rising incomes have led to a growth in the consumption of fish and meat. Most countries require prescriptions for antibiotics in humans, but less than half limit their use to promote growth in agriculture, according to a report published last month.

## Phone app

Saha said colistin, once a livestock-specific antibiotic but now a drug of last resort that can save human lives when others have failed, was commonly used on animals in Bangladesh but since the training he and the other vets were more careful about using it. The course was run by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), which has trained nearly 150 vets and doctors in Bangladesh since February on the globally accepted guidelines for antibiotic use.

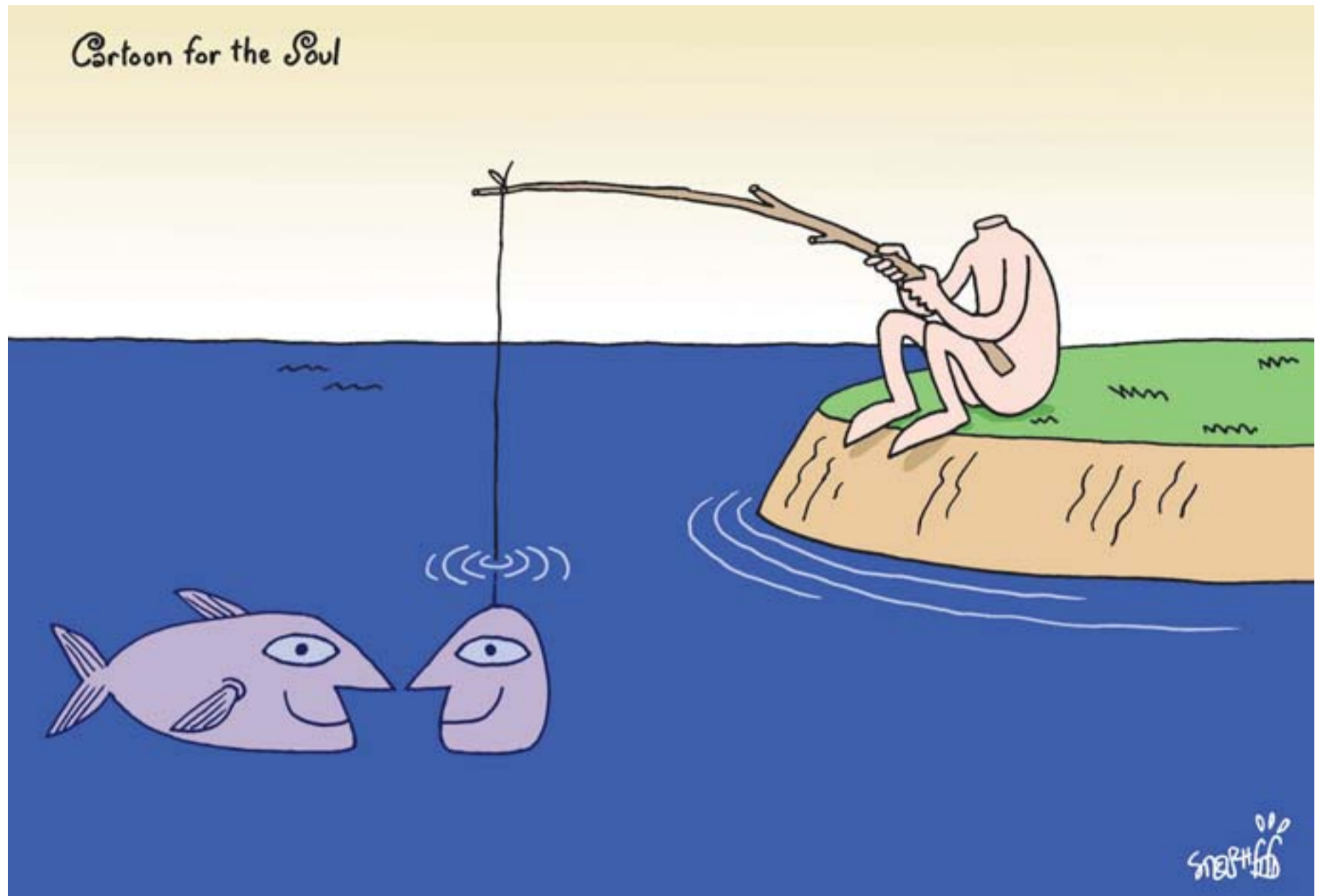
Those guidelines are now available as mobile phone app - one of a number of innovative ways in which international organizations are seeking to educate people working with antimicrobial drugs about the dangers of overuse. Thailand, where antimicrobial resistance causes 19,000 additional deaths a year, is working on an online dictionary in English, Thai, Vietnamese, Lao and Burmese to cut through the jargon surrounding the issue.

"In the Mekong region, people don't clearly understand the difference between bacteria and virus," said Direk Limmathurotsakul, assistant professor at Bangkok's Mahidol University, who is leading the project. "People still commonly use antibiotics for common cold, which is caused by virus. Even the word antibiotic can be called different ways. In Thailand, sometimes it is called anti-inflammatory or antiseptic drug."

## Blanket bans

Simply banning antibiotics would not work, experts say, with farmers unlikely to comply. Instead, they hope improved knowledge of drugs will help reduce antimicrobial use on Asian farms - seen as the low-hanging fruit because it is currently so high. In Vietnam, 120 poultry farmers are to receive training on how to prevent and control diseases as well as free veterinary advice as part of a pilot project aimed at reducing drug use. "We're improving the knowledge base of farmers and vets rather than a ban on antibiotics, which would be unlikely to be complied with," said Juan Carrique-Mas, the project's principal investigator.

"The baseline shows very high level of usage, so I think it would be relatively easy to reduce it by 30 to 50 percent with even better productivity and health," added Carrique-Mas, of the Oxford University Clinical Research Unit in Ho Chi Minh City. Data on antibiotic use on farms in the region remains sparse, but is starting to be collected, said Suzanne Eckford, a British specialist who works with the FAO. Eckford advocated against blanket bans on antibiotics - not least because they could have unintended consequences on food production. "You can't just say, 'don't do something,'" she said. "You have to say, 'this is what you need to do instead and you'll be still able to have a productive, economically viable system.'" — Reuters



## Khan raises Pakistani hopes sky high

From creating 10 million jobs to building an Islamic welfare state and restoring Pakistan's tattered image abroad, new premier Imran Khan is facing a problem of his own making: runaway expectations raised by his lofty rhetoric. A cricket legend and firebrand nationalist who is hero-worshipped by supporters, Khan swept to power in last month's election on a populist platform vowing to root out corruption among a venal elite and lift people out of poverty.

But he inherits control of a volatile nation facing mounting problems at home and abroad, including a looming economic crisis and a fracture with historic ally the United States over Pakistan's alleged links to militants. Ties are also fraught with neighbors Afghanistan and nuclear-armed rival India. Opponents in parliament talk of forming a grand coalition against Khan, dubbing him a "puppet" and accusing him of entering into a Faustian Pact with the powerful military, which has a history of ousting prime ministers and clashing with civilian governments over control of foreign policy.

Khan denies all accusations that the military covertly helped him win the election. And in his victory speech, Khan offered an olive branch to India and called for mutually beneficial ties with the United States. Whether Khan can become the first Pakistani prime minister to complete a full five-year term in office will depend on his relationship with influential generals, analysts say. If his ideas on foreign policy differ from theirs, analysts say Khan would suffer a similar fate to other civilian leaders who have failed to see out their term. "Then his future will be the same as anybody else's," political commentator Aamer Ahmed Khan said.

## Great expectations

Forced to rely on smaller parties for a razor-thin

## Looming economic crisis

But Khan's campaign pledges are likely to be

checked by a worsening economic outlook, analysts say, especially his vow to build a welfare state. The central bank has devalued the rupee four times since December, but the current account deficit is still carrying the currency towards a crisis, while the fiscal deficit has ballooned to 6.8 percent of GDP. Economic growth is running at nearly 6 percent, but given the unsustainability of these deficits it is easy to predict Pakistan's growth is heading for a fall.

Khan's government must urgently decide whether to request more loans from China, deepening Islamabad's economic reliance on its neighbor, or ask the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for what would be its 15th bailout since 1980. Both lenders are likely to ask for more fiscal discipline, requiring drastic spending cuts.

Shafqat Mahmood, Khan's new education minister, said the economic woes pose a major problem but the party is determined to deliver a welfare system and enact badly-needed reforms. "Everyone in the party realizes we will have to work overtime to meet these huge expectations," Mahmood said. Mahmood said Khan's image as a politician untainted by corruption could boost faith in the government and convince more people to file taxes in a nation where less than 1 percent of the population pays income tax.

Khan has touted his "100 Day Plan" but many of the reforms PTI is proposing, from turning around loss-making state-run enterprises to reforming the tax collection bureau, will take far longer to accomplish. Ending government corruption outright, or repatriating plundered wealth, is also unlikely. "(Khan's supporters) have a simplistic idea that if there is a clean man on top, the entire machinery becomes clean. That's never the case anywhere in the world," said Rumi. — Reuters

With recession  
looming, Macri  
lacks options  
to defend peso

With interest rates sky-high and the economy heading for recession, Argentina's President Mauricio Macri is running short of options to stem a slide in the peso, economists say, leaving the battered currency at the mercy of volatility in emerging markets. Macri's government has already taken a series of measures to restore confidence in the peso since it came under pressure in May, reviving memories of a painful 2002 economic crisis in Latin America's third-largest economy.

The peso, which has fallen around 40 percent so far this year, rivals the Turkish lira as the world's worst performing currency in 2018. Argentina's central bank hiked interest rates to 40 percent in May, and Macri sealed a \$50-billion deal with the International Monetary Fund in June - removing the need for outside funding and briefly steadying the peso. His government has since announced more than \$2 billion in budget savings.

But jitters returned in recent weeks as Turkey's financial crisis roiled emerging markets, after Turkish leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan clashed with US President Donald Trump. Emerging market investors were already unnerved by the US-China trade tensions and the Federal Reserve's tightening. Confidence in Argentina was also shaken by a major corruption scandal in the construction sector, expected to damage economic

growth already hit by a drought that crippled vital agricultural production.

The peso has tumbled 8.5 percent against the dollar in the past two weeks despite Argentina's central bank again hiking rates to 45 percent. On Wednesday, the bank was forced to sell \$781 million in reserves to support the peso, before tightening reserve requirements a day later. Such dizzying interest rates and the fiscal measures would normally be enough to halt a currency run but sentiment was being dictated by global events, said Alberto Bernal, chief strategist at XP Investments in New York.

"Seventy percent of the problems facing Argentina are external in nature," Bernal said. "Macri needs luck ... He needs Trump to go easier against China and Europe. He needs Erdogan to come to his senses and he needs a weaker dollar, which means he needs the US Federal reserve to be a little less aggressive in its policy guidelines."

While economists are urging Turkey's Erdogan to adopt a series of policy measures to restore confidence in the economy - including strengthening central bank independence, raising interest rates and fiscal tightening - business-friendly Macri has already announced many of these. A major challenge for Argentina is that interest rate rises have limited impact in fighting inflation because consumers and businesses use little credit after years of financial crises, economists say. Inflation jumped to 31 percent in June.

Last year, private sector credit made up just 16 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in Argentina, compared to 113 percent in neighboring Chile, according to World Bank figures. Similarly, on the fiscal front Macri's options are limited. He has already suspended a reduction in soy export taxes



Argentinian President Mauricio Macri speaks during the opening of the annual meeting of the Argentinian Entrepreneurial Association (AEA) in Buenos Aires on Aug 16, 2018. — AFP

and unveiled other fiscal measures worth around \$2.2 billion in savings. Yet a weakening economy leaves Macri with few policy levers to pull without inflicting further damage. Despite high expectations at the start of 2018, the currency crisis and drought have slammed Argentina's \$640 billion economy into reverse.

After growing 3.6 percent in the first quarter, the economy shrank 5.8 percent in May when the crisis struck, according to official statistics. It is due to re-enter recession in the third quarter, economists say, only two years after it returned to growth. With Macri expected to seek a second four-year term next year, major spending cuts and tax rises are politically unpalatable. Diego Ferro, partner and portfolio manager at Greylock Capital in New York, said that until recently investors had been happy with Argentina's gradualist approach, but market turmoil had made them impatient

for results from Macri's government. "They have shown that they are on the right path and under normal circumstances this would be enough," said Ferro. "But after the disappointments they have suffered and the overall concern about emerging markets, it might not yet be enough to prompt a turnaround in the market."

## Political pressures

Some investors are also concerned that political pressures in Argentina will make it difficult to implement reforms. The changes to soy taxes have already proven unpopular with the farm lobby, a key base of his support. Riot police were needed to control demonstrators in December when Congress passed pension changes. Unions have protested over planned labor reforms that have now stalled in the legislature, where there is resistance to the fiscal tightening required by the IMF deal. — Reuters

## Business

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TEHRAN: In this file photo, Ali Kardor (left), Managing Director of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) exchanges documents with French oil giant Total Chief Executive Officer Patrick Pouyanné (second left), in the presence of other officials after signing an offshore gas field agreement in Tehran. — AFP

# France's Total quits Iran after sanctions

## Zanganeh underlines the dire state of Iran's oil and gas facilities

TEHRAN: French energy giant Total has officially quit its multi-billion-dollar gas project in Iran, Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said yesterday, following the reimposition of US sanctions. "Total has officially left the agreement for the development of phase 11 of South Pars (gas field)," he told parliament's news agency ICANA, adding that it had been more than two months since the French firm announced it would leave.

Zanganeh also appeared before parliament to underline the dire state of Iran's oil and gas facilities, which he said were "worn out" and in need of renovation that Iran could not afford. The United States said in May that it was abandoning the 2015 nuclear deal and reimposing sanctions on Iran in two phases in August and November, with the second target-

ing the country's vital oil and gas sector. The other parties to the nuclear deal—Britain, France, Germany, China and Russia—have vowed to stay in the accord but their companies risk huge penalties if they keep doing business in Iran. Total had already said it would be impossible to remain in Iran unless it received a specific waiver from Washington, which was not granted.

The French firm signed up in July 2017 for the \$4.8 billion (4.1 billion euro) project to develop the field off Iran's southern coast, as the lead partner alongside the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and Iran's Petro Pars. It was due to bring state-of-the-art technology to create the pressure needed to tap the gas field, which Iran could then replicate for surrounding fields where pressure has

been declining. Total was due to make an initial \$1 billion investment, but the company said in May that it had spent less than 40 million euros on the project to date, as uncertainty over US actions mounted.

The company would have been highly vulnerable to US penalties for remaining in Iran. It has \$10 billion of capital employed in its US assets, and US banks are involved in 90 percent of its financing operations, Total said in May.

### Technology needed

Zanganeh said the process to find a replacement for Total was underway. But it is unlikely that CNPC or Iran's own firms can take over the project, said Homayoun Falakshahi, an energy analyst for Wood

Mackenzie in London. "The technology Total was hoping to implement would have been world-first, using electricity to compress the gas," he told AFP. "The other complication is that it needs huge platforms. Iran can build 5,000- to 7,000-tonne platforms. This would have been 20,000 tons," he added. CNPC was suspended from the project once before, in 2011, for failing to make progress. The urgent need for investment to upgrade Iran's dilapidated energy infrastructure was a key motivator behind its decision to join the 2015 nuclear deal. Zanganeh appeared in parliament yesterday to answer questions on safety concerns following a number of recent fires at refineries.

"A big part of the oil industry has been worn out and the necessary renovation has

not taken place," he told parliament, according to the official IRNA news agency.

He said there were 10 cases per day of tubes perforating in Iran's southern facilities, and that some refineries were up to 80 years old, "whereas the useful life of an industrial unit is 30 years".

"We have no resources for renovating them," he added. But some conservatives in Iran oppose foreign involvement in the strategic energy sector, and have frustrated plans to develop attractive investment contracts. As a result, the Total deal was the only major investment project finalized after the nuclear deal came into force. The only other deal was a smaller project with Russia's Zarubezhneft, worth 600 million euros, to develop two oil fields in western Iran. — AFP

## Greece on post-bailout 'new chapter' but doubts remain

ATHENS: Greece turned a page on eight years of spending cuts and three straight international bailouts yesterday as experts warned that the country's economic challenges are far from over.

"The conclusion of the stability support program marks an important moment for Greece and Europe," said European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, hailing "a new chapter" in the country's "storied history". The European Union, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund loaned debt-ravaged Greece a total of 289 billion euros (\$330 billion) in three successive programs in 2010, 2012 and 2015.

The economic reforms the creditors demanded in return brought the country to its knees, with a quarter of its gross domestic product (GDP) evaporating over eight years and unemployment soaring to more than 27 percent. But Greece has now returned to growth, its once vast public deficit has been turned into a solid budget surplus—before interest payments are made—and the jobless rate has fallen below 20 percent, officials say. "For the first time since early 2010 Greece can stand on its own feet," added Mario Centeno, who heads the Eurogroup of eurozone finance ministers that monitored the bailout deals.



THESSALONIKI: A woman walks past closed shops and a shop displaying a poster reading "we close", in Thessaloniki, yesterday. — AFP

"This was possible thanks to the extraordinary effort of the Greek people, the good cooperation with the current Greek government and the support of European partners through loans and debt relief," Centeno said. "It took much longer than expected but I believe we are there," he added.

The Athens stock exchange's general index was 1.0 percent higher in early afternoon trade. The left-led government, at loggerheads with the creditors just three years ago, also hailed the move as a turning point. "The economy, the society and the country as

a whole are now entering a new phase," government spokesman Dimitris Tzanakopoulos told Greek media yesterday. He added that Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras would give a televised address today. Greek households, however, continue to feel the effects of unpopular and damaging austerity. "Greece has many rivers to cross," read Monday's front page of the English edition of the Kathimerini newspaper. It warned the country emerges from the bailout "with a shrunken economy and highly vulnerable to market turmoil". — AFP

## Bullish oil bets fall to 11-month low

LONDON: Hedge funds have cut their bullish position in crude oil and refined fuels to the lowest level for almost a year, as fund managers continued to close out former long positions. Hedge funds and other money managers cut their net long position in the six most important petroleum futures and options contracts by 69 million barrels in the week to Aug. 14.

Net length has been cut in 12 out of the last 17 weeks with a total reduction of almost 460 million barrels since April 17. Portfolio managers now hold a net position of just 952 million barrels, down from a peak of 1,484 billion in January, and the lowest since September 2017.

Fund managers are becoming less bullish on the outlook for prices but few have dared to bet on substantial price falls. Gross long positions across the six major contracts have fallen by 464 million barrels since late April, while short positions have also fallen by 10 million barrels over the same period. Last week, as in most previous weeks, the reduction in net length was led by crude, with Brent down by 17 million and WTI by 41 million.

By contrast, US gasoline positions were down by 14 million barrels, but US heating oil was unchanged and European gasoil rose by 4 million. And as in previous weeks, the reduction in net length was driven by the liquidation of former long positions (-67 million barrels) rather than the creation of new short ones (+2 million).

### Crude unwinds

Hedge fund managers continue to exit from their former bullish positions in Brent and WTI, according to regulatory and exchange data.

Portfolio managers have cut their net long position in Brent in 13 of the last 18 weeks, by a total of 296 million barrels. Net length in Brent has fallen to its lowest level for 55 weeks, unwinding most of the increase since prices started to rise in July 2017.

Brent long positions are very close to their lowest level 24 months; it is only the comparative absence of short positions that gives the hedge fund community a bullish position overall. The liquidation of so many former long positions has mitigated one source of downside risk hanging over oil prices. But with so few short positions, the hedge fund community's positioning remains stretched, with almost 10 long positions for every short.

If the outlook for the global economy and oil consumption deteriorates, there is still scope for funds to add short positions and push prices lower. — Reuters



## Business

# China, US to hold lower-level trade talks on August 22-23

## New tariffs to take effect on August 23

**BEIJING/WASHINGTON:** China and the United States will hold lower-level trade talks this month, the two governments said, offering hope that they might resolve an escalating tariff war that threatens to engulf all trade between the world's two largest economies.

Still, White House Economic adviser Larry Kudlow warned Beijing not to underestimate President Donald Trump's resolve in pushing for changes in China's economic policies.

A Chinese delegation led by Vice Minister of Commerce Wang Shouwen will meet US representatives led by Treasury Under Secretary for International Affairs David Malpass, China's Ministry of Commerce said in a statement on its website.

The Wall Street Journal reported that the talks in Washington would take place on Aug 22 and 23, just as new US tariffs on \$16 billion of Chinese goods take effect, along with retaliatory tariffs from Beijing on an equal amount of US goods.

While the engagement was seen by analysts and business officials as positive, they cautioned that the talks were unlikely to lead to a breakthrough, given they involve lower-level officials, led on the US side by the Treasury Department, not the US Trade Representative (USTR).

There also remains a wide gap between the two sides over Washington's demands that Beijing improve market access and intellectual property protections for US companies, cut industrial subsidies and slash a \$375

billion trade deficit with China. Kudlow, who heads the White House Economic Council, declined to comment on the specific goals of the Malpass-Wang talks.

"It is a good thing if they're sending a delegation here. We haven't had that in quite some time," Kudlow told CNBC television.

"The Chinese government in its totality must not underestimate President (Donald) Trump's toughness and willingness to continue this battle, to eliminate tariffs and non-tariff barriers and quotas, to stop the theft of



### First talks since June amid trade war

intellectual property and to stop the forced transfer of technology," Kudlow added. News of the meeting boosted the Chinese yuan and helped cap losses in China's stock markets.

It had little effect on US stocks, which retreated on reports Trump had disclosed classified information to Russia's foreign minister about operations in Syria, after the S&P 500 and Nasdaq Composite hit record intra-

day highs. The world's two largest economies have been locked in escalating rounds of tit-for-tat tariffs, with \$34 billion in goods targeted by each country and another \$16 billion slated to go into effect on Aug. 23. Trump has threatened to impose duties on virtually all of the more than \$500 billion of Chinese goods exported to the United States.

The meeting would end a drought in talks since early June, when US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross met Chinese Vice Premier Liu He in Beijing, but returned with no agreements. US Treasury officials declined to comment on the talks, referring Reuters to Kudlow's remarks on CNBC. In a White House cabinet meeting, Kudlow said the decline of the yuan currency in recent months showed that the United States had an upper hand in the trade war. "There may be some manipulation but mostly I think investors are moving out of China because they don't like the economy, and they are coming to the USA because they like our economy... Their economy looks terrible," he said. The upcoming meeting will be held at a lower level compared with four earlier rounds of talks. Having made little progress in the previous meetings, the White House said on Aug. 3 that the United States was open to further talks with China on resolving the festering trade dispute.

Four US and Chinese sources in the business community said they had low expectations for the discussions, particularly if officials from USTR were not involved. The invi-



WASHINGTON: A Chinese delegation led by Vice Minister of Commerce Wang Shouwen will meet US representatives led by Treasury Under Secretary for International Affairs David Malpass, on August 23.

lation for the talks may have been intended to steady markets, they said. After negotiations in Washington in May, Beijing believed it had assurances from the US that tariffs were off the table, with Mnuchin saying the trade war and tariffs were "on hold." But less than 10 days later, the White House said it would push forward on planned tariffs on \$50 billion of Chinese imports and curbs on investments

by Chinese companies in the United States. "This looks like it will be a waste of time for the two govts (esp China's)...Who thinks US Treasury Dept is empowered to make THE deal to end the trade war?", Scott Kennedy, deputy director of the Freeman Chair in China Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, wrote in a post on Twitter. — Reuters

## US firms warn China tariffs to cost Americans from cradle to grave

**WASHINGTON:** A broad cross-section of US businesses has a message for the Trump administration: new tariffs on \$200 billion of Chinese imports will force Americans to pay more for items they use throughout their daily lives, from cradles to coffins.

Six days of public hearings on the proposed duties of up to 25 percent will start on Monday in Washington as part of President Donald Trump's and the US Trade Representative's efforts to pressure Beijing for sweeping changes to its trade and economic policies.

Unlike previous rounds of US tariffs, which sought to shield consumers by targeting Chinese industrial machinery, electronic components and other intermediate goods, thousands of consumer products could be directly hit with tariffs by late September.

The \$200 billion list targets Chinese seafood, furniture and lighting products, tires, chemicals, plastics, bicycles and car seats for babies. "USTR's proposed tariffs on an additional \$200 billion of Chinese imports dramatically expands the harm to American consumers, workers, businesses, and the economy," the US Chamber of Commerce said in written testimony for the hearing. The top US business lobbying group said the Trump administration lacks a "coherent strategy" to address China's theft of intellectual property and other harmful trade practices and called for "serious discussions" with Beijing.

Mid-level Trump administration officials and their Chinese counterparts are expected to meet later this week in Washington to discuss their trade dispute. But it is unclear

whether the talks will have any effect on the implementation of US tariffs and retaliation by China. In more than 1,400 written comments submitted to USTR that will be echoed in the hearings, most businesses argued that the tariffs will cause harm and higher costs for products ranging from Halloween costumes and Christmas lights to nuclear fuel inputs, while a small number praised them or asked that they be extended to other products.

Graco Children's Products Inc, a unit of Newell Brands Inc, said tariffs "will have a direct negative impact on our company, American parents and most importantly the safety of American children."

The company said higher prices may prompt more parents to buy car seats, swings and portable play yards on the second-hand market. "The proposed tariffs may force parents to use unsafe sleeping environments or let children dangerously co-sleep with parents," Graco wrote. The tariff "only causes a children safety issue; it will not convince China to change its policies."

Evenflo Feeding said the tariffs will hit manual breast pumps "and would cause disproportionate economic harm to US interests." At the other end of the life cycle, Centennial Casket Corp President Douglas Chen said his Plano, Texas-based company relies exclusively on Chinese-made caskets and the tariffs would cause "great loss" and raise costs for "grieving families purchasing caskets for their loved ones at one of the worst times of their life." The Internet Association, representing companies including Facebook Inc, Amazon.com Inc and Alphabet Inc, said the tariffs "would cause disproportionate economic harm to American internet companies. The list includes products that impact how internet companies function."

Westinghouse Electric Co LLC, the leading US nuclear fuel producer, said it relies on China for zirconium and zirconium powders - key inputs for tubes used in nuclear fuel assemblies that it uses at plants in Utah, Pennsylvania and South Carolina. — Reuters

## Stock experts differ on market cycles

**NEW YORK:** As Wall Street prepares yesterday to celebrate the current US bull stock market becoming the longest in history, some investors are keeping corks in their champagne bottles. Not all stock experts will honor the milestone because they use different definitions of bull and bear markets. While one group is widely recognized for determining US economic cycles - the National Bureau of Economic Research - no such body is uniformly accepted for defining bull and bear markets.

Bank of America Merrill Lynch, research firm CFRA and S&P Dow Jones Indices are among the Wall Street organizations that will recognize the current bull market becoming the longest tomorrow. On that date, in their view, the bull market that began on March 9, 2009 will surpass the run from 1990-2000 in

terms of calendar days. But another group of market watchers - including experts at Yardeni Research, Bespoke Investment Group and SunTrust Advisory Services - observe a bull market from 1987-2000 as the longest. By that standard, the S&P 500 needs to last almost three more years to set the record for longevity. Both groups generally find that bull markets end upon a 20 percent decline from a peak. In this case, but a sticking point is a 19.9 percent decline on a closing basis from July to October of 1990.

Investors eyeing this tomorrow as the record-setting date call that decline a bear market, which interrupted the 1987-2000 bull run, while others do not. CFRA classified the 1990 decline as a bear market because the S&P 500 fell 20 percent when rounded and because it surrendered more than 50 percent of what was gained in the prior bull market, chief investment strategist Sam Stovall said in a recent note. "However, we respect the opinions of those who don't agree," Stovall said. The differences in defining bull and bear markets don't stop there. To Michael Batnick, director of research at Ritholtz Wealth

Management, a bull market begins once the previous bull market highs are broken not when a when a bear market ends. Ned Davis Research, which the Stock Trader's Almanac relies on for defining bull and bear markets, says that a cyclical bull market requires a 30-percent rise after 50 calendar days or a 13 percent rise after 155 calendar days.

The investment research group, which uses data from the Dow Jones Industrial Average to define its cycles because there is more historical data, defines the current bull market as starting on February 11, 2016, while the longest bull run lasted from 1990-1998.

"We do not subscribe to the arbitrary 20 percent rule for bears," said Jeff Hirsch, editor of the Stock Trader's Almanac. Willie Delwiche, investment strategist at Baird in Milwaukee, who also adheres to the Ned Davis Research definitions, said that determining cycles is useful for historians because it "allows you to place a certain market move in context of past market moves."

But, Delwiche said, "it doesn't give you much of a real-time edge, regardless of which definition you use." — Reuters

## Cautious optimism for US-China trade talks lifts shares

**LONDON:** Shares rose worldwide yesterday on hopes of a resolution to the US-China trade row at talks this week, while Turkey's lira fell after cuts to the country's credit ratings and shots were fired outside the U.S. embassy in Ankara.

The pan-European STOXX was up 0.6 percent and the broad-based gains in Europe and Asia helped lift the MSCI All-Country World index, which tracks shares in 47 countries, by 0.2 percent. The gauge has nearly recouped the losses from last week caused by the plunge in Turkey's lira.

China and the United States will hold trade talks this month, the two governments said last week. The Wall Street Journal reported that the talks would take place on Aug. 22 and Aug. 23 - just before new US tariffs on \$16 billion of Chinese goods take effect, along with retaliatory tariffs from Beijing on an equal amount of US goods.. MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan climbed nearly 0.8 percent and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index added 1.4 percent. Shanghai blue chips rose 1.2 percent and Japan's Nikkei ended 0.3 percent lower. Futures for the S&P500 indicated a higher open on Wall Street.

Analysts gave a more lukewarm reception. "Trade talks between the US and China are to be resumed this month, and traders are cautiously optimistic, but just because the meeting has been lined up doesn't mean anything will come of it," CMC Markets chief markets analyst David Madden said. "Some traders view the (recent) weakness in the Chinese stock market and currency as a sign that Beijing will be more accommodating when it comes to negotiations," he said.

Turkey's lira fell as much 1.8 percent, more than 6 lira per dollar. The currency was last



NEW YORK: Traders work on the floor at the closing bell of the Dow Industrial Average at the New York Stock Exchange in New York. — AFP

down 1.4 percent. Turkish sovereign dollar bonds fell across the curve on Monday and the cost of insuring exposure to Turkish debt rose after Moody's and S&P Global lowered their sovereign credit ratings on Friday.

In addition, shots were fired at the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, compounding tensions between Turkey and the United States as a dispute over Turkey's detention of an American pastor simmered.

### CBs in spotlight

In a week light on economic data, investors are turning their attention to central banks. Minutes of the Federal Reserve's August policy meeting are due on Wednesday and should show policy makers are upbeat on the economy and committed to further interest rate increases.

US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell and other central bankers meet at Jackson Hole, Wyoming, from Friday to discuss stubbornly low inflation, slow wage growth and lethargic pro-

ductivity gains. "The question is not only whether the Fed acknowledges the EM market volatility, but also the fact that its own policy signals are playing a part in the broader deterioration in global risk appetite," ING currency strategist Viraj Patel wrote in a note to clients.

The dollar index, which tracks the greenback against a basket of currencies, was up 0.2 percent. The euro was down 0.2 percent, while the dollar gained 0.2 percent to 110.65 yen and just above recent lows at 110.11/31. In commodity markets, gold was 0.3 percent higher at \$1,187.51 an ounce after its largest weekly loss since May 2017. It hit a 19-month low at \$1,159.96 last week.

Brent oil stabilized after several weeks of decline, weighed down by concern over slowing global economic growth but supported by an expected fall in supply from Iran caused by US sanctions. Brent was 0.3 percent higher at \$72.06 a barrel. US crude was down 0.1 percent at \$65.85. — Reuters



CURACAO: The logo of Venezuelan oil company PDVSA is seen on a tank at Isla refinery in Willemstad on the island of Curacao. — Reuters

## ConocoPhillips settles with Venezuela's PDVSA to recover \$2bn

**NEW YORK:** US oil producer ConocoPhillips will recover about \$2 billion under a settlement with Venezuela's state-run oil company, PDVSA, ending a long-running dispute over the fallout of the nationalization of the country's oil industry.

The dispute heated up in May when Conoco moved to seize the Caribbean assets

of PDVSA, after the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) ruled that the Venezuelan state oil driller violated several contracts. PDVSA has agreed to make an initial payment of around \$500 million within a period of 90 days from the time of signing the agreement, ConocoPhillips said in a statement.

The remaining amount is to be paid quarterly over a period of 4-1/2 years. ConocoPhillips declined to say if the PDVSA payments would be made in cash or crude oil, saying details of the agreement are confidential.

Venezuela's economy, almost completely dependent on oil exports, is in deep recession with hyperinflation and severe shortages of basic needs like medicine and food. The country's ability to pay has also been hurt by US sanctions. — Reuters

## Chinese investors protest in Shanghai's financial district over P2P woes

**SHANGHAI:** Investors in Chinese online peer-to-peer (P2P) lending platform PPMiao protested at the offices of one of the company's shareholders in Shanghai's financial dis-

trict yesterday, in the latest manifestation of problems facing the industry. At least 243 P2P companies have collapsed in China since June, precipitating the withdrawal of funds from many firms in the industry and sparking protests by investors across the country.

About 300 investors in PPMiao crammed into the lobby of Shanghai's International Finance Centre (IFC) shopping mall, which also houses the office of HuaAn Future Asset that was registered as a shareholder in PPMiao's former operator, Hangzhou Fuqian Network Technology.

PPMiao, which on its website says it has 4.9 billion yuan (\$713 million) in funds and

about 360,000 users, said in an Aug. 6 statement that it was unable to continue operating because investors were withdrawing funds and some firms it had lent money to had suspended payments.

It said it would return funds to investors over a 36-month period. However, investors protesting at the IFC, some of whom were carrying small national flags, told Reuters they were worried they would not get their money back. Many tried to enter HuaAn's offices but police told them to leave. Protesters said they then sent representatives to speak to the firm. Police for Lujiazui district, where IFC is located, declined to comment. — Reuters



## Technology &amp; Science

## US tech giants to fight India's data localization requirements

## Push comes amid rising global efforts to protect user data

**NEW DELHI:** US technology giants plan to intensify lobbying efforts against stringent Indian data localization requirements, which they say will undermine their growth ambitions in India, sources told Reuters. US trade groups, representing companies such as Amazon, American Express and Microsoft, have opposed India's push to store data locally. That push comes amid rising global efforts to protect user data but is one that could hit planned investments by the firms in the Indian market, where the companies currently have limited data storage.

The issue could further undermine already strained economic relations between India and the United States. Technology executives and trade groups have discussed approaching Prime Minister Narendra Modi's office to appraise him of their worries. Separately, the industry is considering pitching the issue as a trade concern, including at the India-US talks in September in New Delhi, according to two sources familiar with the matter.

Though a final decision hasn't been made, the deliberations come while the United States and India are locked in a dispute over US tariff increases and on the Indian policy of capping prices of medical devices, which hurts American pharmaceutical companies. "This issue is important enough to be discussed at the India-US trade level," said Amba Kak, a global public policy adviser at the Internet company Mozilla Corp.

"Data localization is not just a business concern, it potentially makes government surveillance easier, which is a worry." Stricter localization norms would help India get easier access to data when conducting investigations, but critics say it could lead to increased government demands for data access. Technology firms worry the mandate would hurt their planned investments by raising costs related to setting up new local data centres.

“Data localization is not just a business concern”

Greater use of digital platforms in India for shopping or social networking have made it a lucrative market for technology companies, but a rising number of data breaches have pushed New Delhi to develop strong data protection rules.

Shamika Ravi, a member of Modi's economic advisory council, said data localization was a global phenomena and India wasn't an outlier. "It's in the long term strategic and

economic interest," said Ravi, who is also a research director at Brookings India.

## Extensive meetings

The main government committee on data privacy last month proposed a draft law, recommending restrictions on data flows and proposing that all "critical personal data" should be processed only within the country. It would be left to the government to define what qualifies as such data. Global companies are coming together to push back. In a meeting last week organized by lobby group US-India Strategic Partnership Forum, executives from Facebook, Mastercard, Visa, American Express, PayPal, Amazon, Microsoft and others discussed plans to approach Indian lawmakers, including Indian parliamentary panels on information technology (IT) and finance, five sources said. The industry also discussed approaching media and internet groups to explain why data localization would be bad for India's booming IT, e-commerce and payments landscape, the sources said. "People are fairly stressed and scared," said an executive working for a multinational technology firm.

The US-India lobby group said it was "nearly impossible" to implement "industry-specific regulations in our global data environment without the ripples being felt". It didn't comment on its recent meeting, but said it will continue facilitating policy discussions. Mastercard, American



Express and Amazon didn't respond to a request for comment, while Facebook, Microsoft, Visa and PayPal declined to comment.

The Indian bill, which was opened for public comments this week, will later go to parliament for approval. The US-India Business Council, a lobby group that is part of the US Chamber of Commerce, has brought in the Washington-headquartered law firm Covington & Burling to suggest submissions on India's data protection law. The firm's 43-page draft recommendations,

seen by Reuters, listed removing data localization requirements as a top priority and called New Delhi's proposed move a "protectionist approach". The US-India Business Council didn't comment on how it would act on the recommendations of Covington & Burling, which declined comment. The lobby group's president, Nisha Biswal, however said India's draft privacy law was of "great importance," and that the group would share its concerns with the government directly. — Reuters

## US govt seeks Facebook help to wiretap Messenger

**SAN FRANCISCO:** The US government is trying to force Facebook Inc to break the encryption in its popular Messenger app so law enforcement may listen to a suspect's voice conversations in a criminal probe, three people briefed on the case said, resurrecting the issue of whether companies can be compelled to alter their products to enable surveillance. The previously unreported case in a federal court in California is proceeding under seal, so no filings are publicly available, but the three people told Reuters that Facebook is contesting the US Department of Justice's demand.

The judge in the Messenger case heard arguments on Tuesday on a government motion to hold Facebook in contempt of court for refusing to carry out the surveillance request, according to the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity. Facebook and the Department of Justice declined to comment. The Messenger issue arose in Fresno, California, as part of an investigation of the MS-13 gang, one of the people said.

US President Donald Trump frequently uses the gang, which is active in the United States and Central America, as a symbol of lax US immigration policy and a reason to attack so-called "sanctuary" laws preventing police from detaining people solely to enforce immigration law. Trump called members of the gang "animals" this year when the Sheriff of Fresno County complained that California laws limited their co-operation with federal immigration enforcement targeting gang members.

The potential impact of the judge's coming ruling is unclear. If the government prevails in the Facebook Messenger case, it could make similar arguments to force companies to rewrite other popular encrypted services such as Signal and Facebook's billion-user WhatsApp, which include both voice and text functions, some legal experts said.

Law enforcement agencies forcing technology providers to rewrite software to capture and hand over data that is no longer encrypted would have major implications for the companies which see themselves as defenders of individual privacy while under pressure from police and lawmakers. Similar issues came into play during a legal fight in 2016 between the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Apple Inc over

access to an iPhone owned by a slain sympathizer of Islamic State in San Bernardino, California, who had murdered county employees. In the Apple case the company argued that the government could not compel it to create software to breach the phone without violating the company's First Amendment speech and expression rights. The government dropped the litigation after investigators got into the phone with a contractor's help. Unlike the San Bernardino case, where the FBI wanted to crack one iPhone in its possession, prosecutors are seeking a wiretap of ongoing voice conversations by one person on Facebook Messenger.

Facebook is arguing in court that Messenger voice calls are encrypted end-to-end, meaning that only the two parties have access to the conversation, two of the people briefed on the case said. Ordinary Facebook text messages, Alphabet Inc's Gmail, and other services are decrypted by the service providers during transit for targeted advertising or other reasons, making them available for court-ordered interception.

End-to-end encrypted communications, by contrast, go directly from one user to another user without revealing anything intelligible to providers. Facebook says it can only comply with the government's request if it rewrites the code relied upon by all its users to remove encryption or else hacks the government's current target, according to the sources. Legal experts differed about whether the government would likely be able to force Facebook to comply.

Stephen Larson, a former judge and federal prosecutor who represented San Bernardino victims, said the government must meet a high legal standard when seeking to obtain phone conversations, including showing there was no other way to obtain the evidence. Still, the US Constitution allows for reasonable searches, Larson said, and if those standards are met, then companies should not be able to stand in the way. A federal appeals court in Washington DC ruled in 2006 that the law forcing telephone companies to enable police eavesdropping also applies to some large providers of Voice over Internet Protocol, including cable and other broadband carriers servicing homes. VoIP enables voice calls online rather than by traditional circuit transmission.

However, in cases of chat, gaming, or other internet services that are not tightly integrated with existing phone infrastructure, such as Google Hangouts, Signal and Facebook Messenger, federal regulators have not attempted to extend the eavesdropping law to cover them, said Al Gidari, a director of privacy at Stanford University Law School's Center for Internet and Society. "A messaging platform is excluded," maintains Gidari, who is not involved in the Fresno case. — Reuters

their therapies over time to preserve their business. The Trump administration has been receptive to that argument. Azar, in an interview with Reuters on Friday, said rebates created a perverse incentive to continuously raise drug prices.

Azar, a former top executive at drugmaker Eli Lilly & Co, is trying to deliver on President Donald Trump's promises to lower the cost of prescription drugs for Americans, which Trump made a major priority during his 2016 presidential campaign. The Department of Health and Human Services last month proposed regulations that would scale back protections for rebates that might otherwise be illegal under a federal anti-kickback law.

The PBM industry has challenged that move, saying HHS cannot eliminate rebates on its own and would need Congress to change the federal statute. The ultimate responsibility for high drug prices, those companies say, lies with the manufacturers who set those prices. Azar contends that the current rebates are a product of previous HHS regulation. "What one has created by regulation, one could address by regulation," he added. He did not say when such new regulations, which are being reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget, might take effect. "The question of rebates may very well be fundamental to

the issue of how you reverse these constant incentives to higher list prices (for medicines)."

## Campaign issue

The cost of healthcare, and prescription drugs specifically, is expected to be a major campaign issue ahead of November elections, in which Democrats are seeking to take control of the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate from Trump's Republicans. In May, Trump unveiled a "blueprint" comprising dozens of proposed policies to give the government greater leverage over drug prices, but did not support changes to give the federal government's Medicare health plan for seniors direct negotiating power with drugmakers. Critics say that has spared the pharmaceutical industry any real challenge to its pricing practices. Azar defended the administration's actions, noting that more than a dozen leading drugmakers, including Pfizer Inc, Merck & Co and Celgene Corp, had pledged to hold off on further price increases this year. "They are seeing where this is going, they are seeing that we are ticking off the blueprint items one by one," Azar said. "We are not dependent on the voluntary action of pharmaceutical companies. We are not counting on their goodwill or their altruism. ... They're just changing because they see that's the future."

## Under-fire Apple removes 25,000 apps in China

**BEIJING:** Apple said yesterday it had removed many gambling-related apps from its Chinese app store as the US giant comes under scrutiny amid trade tensions between Beijing and Washington. Apple removed 25,000 apps suspected of facilitating gambling and illegal lotteries, state broadcaster CCTV reported on Sunday, emphasizing there was still work to be done.

"Reporters have discovered even after the Apple company's large-scale repairs, loopholes still exist," said CCTV anchor Chang Xiao. A CCTV report last month accused the company of allowing illegal gambling apps to proliferate. "We have already removed many apps and developers for trying to distribute illegal gambling apps on our App Store, and we are vigilant in our efforts to find these and stop them from being on the App Store," the company said in a statement.

With the rhetoric between Washington and Beijing heating up, China's state media has probed for deficiencies in Apple's China operations. Another state media report last month tore into Apple for what it claimed was inadequate filtering of messages sent through its iMessage service. The app store clearance did little to abate the criticism from CCTV.

"With the help of the Apple platform, the

## Heatwaves, rains may become more severe as weather stalls

**OSLO:** Scorching summer heatwaves and downpours are set to become more extreme in the northern hemisphere as global warming makes weather patterns linger longer in the same place, scientists said yesterday. They said there was a risk of "extreme extremes" in North America, Europe and parts of Asia because manmade greenhouse gas emissions seemed to be disrupting high-altitude winds that blow eastwards in vast, looping "planetary waves".

"Summer weather is likely to become more persistent - more prolonged hot dry periods, possibly also more prolonged rainy periods," said Dim Coumou, lead author of the study at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. "Both can lead to extremes" such as heat, drought, wildfires or flooding, he told Reuters of the find-



BEIJING: Women pose for a selfie in front of an Apple Store undergoing renovation at a mall. — AFP

(gambling app operators) can directly profit," a law professor was quoted as saying in the latest CCTV segment, adding it was Apple's responsibility not only to remove the apps from the store but to cut off access from phones to which they have been downloaded. China is one of Apple's largest markets, accounting for roughly 20 percent of its revenue last year. CEO Tim Cook has spent much time in recent years courting authorities.

But Apple's major market presence as the trade battle rages has placed its products front and centre for criticism. Apple has taken

several steps to satisfy Chinese regulators, including this summer transferring control of Chinese user data to a state-owned company. The move was met by criticism from some rights groups and even Chinese users worried about data privacy.

Apple also upset rights groups last year when it restricted its Chinese customers' access to Virtual Private Networks, which allow users to circumvent China's Great Firewall and to access blocked websites such as Facebook, Twitter and The New York Times. — AFP



This aerial picture shows a giant roll of more than 2500 laminated postcards displayed for an exhibit test of an action against climate change, in the Aletsch Glacier near the Jungfrauoch in the Swiss Alps. — AFP

ings in the journal Nature Communications, based on a review of existing scientific literature.

Many parts of the northern hemisphere have experienced baking heat this summer, with wildfires from California to Greece. Temperatures topped 30 Celsius (86 Fahrenheit) even in the Arctic Circle in northern Europe. The stalling of weather patterns could threaten food produc-

tion. "Persistent hot and dry conditions in Western Europe, Russia and parts of the U.S. threaten cereal yields in these breadbaskets," the authors wrote.

They linked the slowdown in weather patterns to the Arctic, which is heating at more than twice the global average amid climate change. — Reuters

## US health secretary says agency has power to eliminate drug rebates

**WASHINGTON:** US Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said it was within his agency's power to eliminate rebates on prescription drug purchases, a key element of the Trump administration's plan to lower prescription medicine costs. Such rebates are negotiated in the United States by pharmacy benefits managers (PBMs) to lower the cost of medicines for their clients, including large employers and health plans that cover tens of millions of Americans.

Drugmakers say they are under pressure to provide rebates to the few PBMs that dominate the market and that those payers do not pass on enough of those savings to patients - a contention the PBMs dispute. The drugmakers say the rebates force them to raise the price of

Critics say the drug price pledges by major drugmakers are largely window dressing. Since May, HHS has given Medicare Advantage health plans, which are administered by private-sector health insurers, new tools to lower prescription drug costs. The agency's Food and Drug Administration has unveiled a plan to boost the use of biosimilars, which are cheaper versions of expensive biotech medicines. Azar has directed the FDA to establish a working group to study how to import drugs safely from other countries if a drugmaker dramatically raises prices.

The actions have already sparked concerns. Last week, a leading group of rheumatologists met with Azar to discuss changes to Medicare Advantage that could force some patients to try a less effective, cheaper medication for a period of time before their health plan would cover a more expensive therapy. HHS said Azar emphasized the agency's interest in lowering drug prices but expressed openness to alleviating burdens that could be placed on physicians as a result of the new rule. Azar said he spoke with Trump every few days, either in person or over the phone and that in every conversation, the president wanted to hear about progress on lowering prescription medicine costs. "I have never once had a meeting or phone call with the president where we have not talked about drug pricing," Azar said. — Reuters

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- ◆ Gallstones & Abdominal Hernias Surgery
- ◆ Colonic Hydrotherapy & Fecal Incontinence Treatment
- ◆ Laparoscopic mini bypass
- ◆ Transanal minimally invasive surgery

**Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:**

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

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

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**DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM**  
Consultant Pediatrician

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

**Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368**  
Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St.1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B

**DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED**  
Consultant of General Surgery  
Laprosopic and Bariatric Surgery

**Academic Certificates - Training**

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

**Scope of clinical Practice.**

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

email: wbuhaimed@gmail.com **Tel.: 965 22269411/ Mob.: 965 99212228** Jabriya, 4th Ring Road, Block 1A Floor 9 - Clover Center Mazaya Building



What's On

# Loyac green journalism program



Loyac performance academy is preparing to launch the green journalism program on August 27th at Loyac's premise in Al-Qibliya school. This is within Loyac's #our native language campaign, that

was adopted by Loyac in two consecutive years. The green journalism program teaches writing skills and dialogue in the Arabic language for those 12-17 year old. It also involves educating youngsters on the basics

of journalism, and how to create audio-visual media by specialists from KUNA. Those who wish to join the course can register online or visit Loyac at Al-Qibliya school.

## PAINTBALL: Ready for adventure lovers in Eid holidays

PAINTBALL Company which is specializing in peaceful war games, has announced that it has completed the development and modernization of its facilities, including provision of a new tools and equipments for the first time in Kuwait. Ahmed Singab, the marketing and sales manager of the company, said in a press statement that "the company's modernization and development included gun games and toys that are modern, exciting, environmentally friendly and harmless. The company also aims to provide new and renewable services to meet the needs of amateurs of interesting and exciting peaceful games. He added that the games "Paintball" are games that combine the excitement in the game and the art of shooting and hunting by special military games tools that launch colored balls.

He added that; the company has since the beginning of its activity to provide modern devices and tools to keep pace with everything that is modern and sophisticated, in addition to the renewal and development of its facilities such as stadiums, barriers, castles and fortresses, which consists of the "Field of PAINTBALL Games", in addition to bringing modern games weapons and sophisticated military equipment and friendly.

He added also, that the stadiums were equipped with standards that match the style of the Global PAINTBALL stadiums. New castles were installed around all sides of the stadiums to protect the player, also increasing the number of referees to referee the matches between the competitors. Also, we provided trainers to train customers on playing skills and competition. As well as the addition of new air tools with higher features and better in terms of speed and accuracy so that the player can control them easily. In addition to the multiplicity of air weapons to suit all age groups from the age of 7 years and above, referring to the allocation of playgrounds for families to exercise family members in this kind of competitive games.



He went on to add that the city of games of the company is ready to receive enthusiasts and lovers of adventures during the days of feast (Eid al-Fitr) and battle and competitive rounds in the stadiums with modern equipments, which allows players to discover their talents and their own abilities and strive to win over competitors on the battlefield.

Ahmed Sinjab said that "what is impressive in such games is that they need intellectual skills through which players can plan and use their skills in dribbling and the trick to defeat the opposing team and win. This is where the challenge and participation in the team comes together in a team whose members agree on a plan to beat the opposing team. He invited adventure enthusiasts to the competition in

the company's stadiums alongside the Kuwait Towers.

Ahmed Sinjab says that PAINTBALL, the leader company in competitive and unique games in Kuwait, has proved to be an ideal place for individuals and groups to discover their own skills and ability to plan, compete and face many challenges to win the game in a lively and stimulating environment that makes competition interesting. PAINTBALL Company has confirmed its readiness to receive an increasing numbers of pleasure seekers and self-discovery through games that young and old persons can share with each other, where the challenge is limitless to compete as long as the game will be a winning team and a defeat one.

## Congratulations



Happy wedlock Chimaobi and Chinemerem! May God guide, protect and shower you with his blessings. Greeting from Life Abundant International Fountain Church, family, friends and well-wishers.

# Turn yellow squash or zucchini into ribbons for a fun side

By America's Test Kitchen

Quick-cooking and delicately flavored, yellow summer squash and zucchini are favorites in Mediterranean cuisines and perfect for a light side dish. To create a fresh, simple recipe, we started with very thinly sliced squash, using a peeler to make even "ribbons" and discarding the waterlogged seeds. The ultrathin ribbons browned and cooked so quickly that they didn't have time to break down and release their liquid, eliminating the need to salt them before cooking.

The cooked squash needed little embellishment: a quick, tangy vinaigrette of extra-virgin olive oil, garlic, and lemon and a sprinkle of fresh parsley rounded out the flavors. We like a mix of yellow summer squash and zucchini, but you can use just one or the other. The thickness of the squash ribbons may vary depending on the peeler used; we developed this recipe with a peeler that produces ribbons that are 1/32 inch thick. Steeping the minced garlic in lemon juice mellows the garlic's bite; do not skip this step. To avoid overcooking the squash, start checking for doneness at the lower end of the cooking time.

### SAUTEED ZUCCHINI RIBBONS

**Ingredients:**  
Servings: 4-6  
Start to finish: 20 minutes  
1 small garlic clove, minced

1 teaspoon grated lemon zest plus 1 tablespoon juice  
4 (6- to 8-ounce) zucchini or yellow summer squash, trimmed  
2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil  
Salt and pepper  
1 1/2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

#### Preparation:

Combine garlic and lemon juice in large bowl and set aside for at least 10 minutes. Using vegetable peeler, shave off 3 ribbons from 1 side of summer squash, then turn squash 90 degrees and shave off 3 more ribbons. Continue to turn and shave ribbons until you reach seeds; discard core. Repeat with remaining squash.

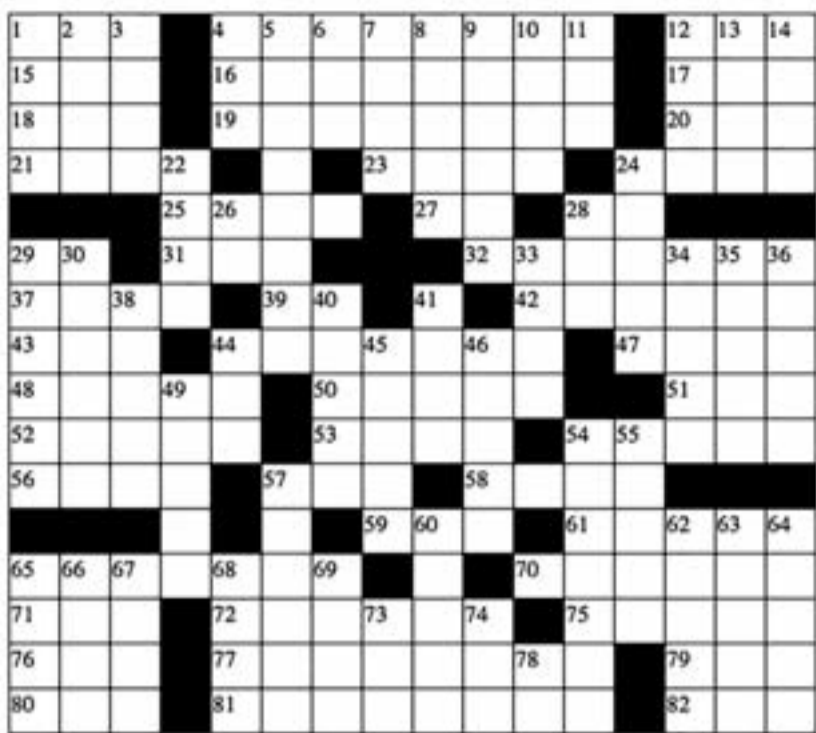
Whisk 2 tablespoons oil, 1/4 teaspoon salt, 1/8 teaspoon pepper, and lemon zest into garlic-lemon juice mixture. Heat remaining 1 teaspoon oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add summer squash and cook, tossing occasionally with tongs, until squash has softened and is translucent, 3 to 4 minutes. Transfer squash to bowl with dressing, add parsley, and gently toss to coat. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve.

Nutrition information per serving: 132 calories; 83 calories from fat; 9 g fat (1 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 0 mg cholesterol; 318 mg sodium; 11 g carbohydrate; 3 g fiber; 7 g sugar; 4 g protein.



Stars

CROSSWORD 1991



ACROSS

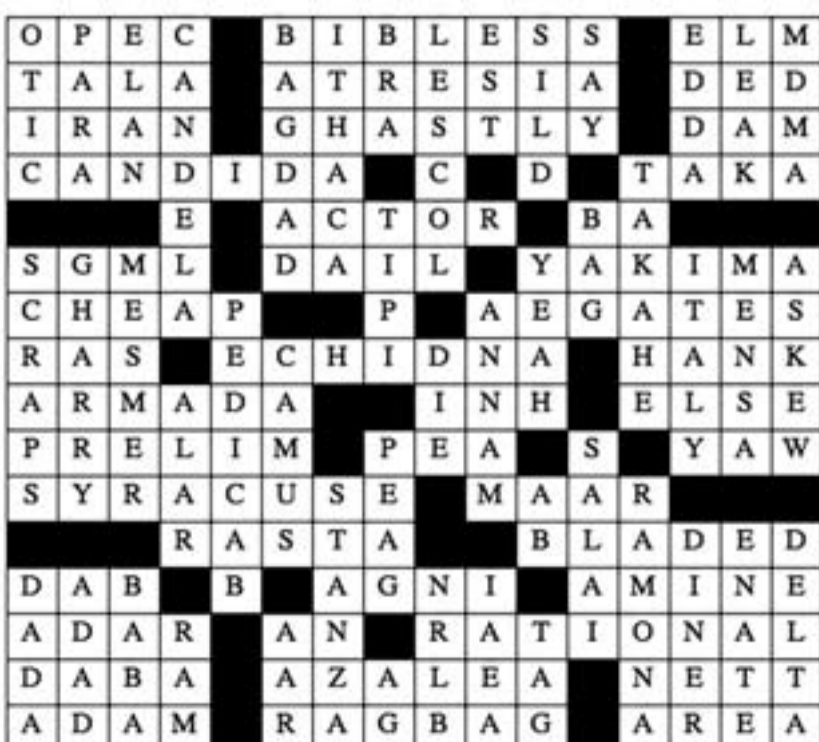
1. Edible tuber of any of several yams.
4. The direct method of cell division characterized by simple division of the nucleus without formation of chromosomes.
12. Inquire about.
15. A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
16. Thread used by surgeons to bind a vessel (as to constrict the flow of blood).
17. Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
18. The residue that remains when something is burned.
19. Lacking a centromere.
20. The most common computer memory which can be used by programs to perform necessary tasks while the computer is on.
21. A collection of objects laid out on top of each other.
23. Family based on male descent.
25. Highly excited.
27. A state in New England.
29. A metric unit of length equal to one hundredth of a meter.
31. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
32. The trait of lacking restraint or control.
37. A Tibetan or Mongolian priest of Lamaism.
39. A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
42. Away from the right path or direction.
43. The compass point midway between east and southeast.
47. An impudent or insolent rejoinder.
48. Jordan's port.
50. A small Asian country high in the Himalayas between India and Tibet.
51. (prefix) Bad or erroneous or lack of.
52. A member of the Mongolian people of central Asia who invaded Russia in the 13th century.
53. In bed.
56. An infection of the sebaceous gland of the eyelid.
58. Made of fir or pine.
59. The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.
61. A dialect of Chinese spoken in southeastern China.
65. Covered with paving material.
70. (informal) Very tired.
71. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
72. Favoring one person or side over another.
75. Jordan's port.
76. The 22nd letter of the Greek alphabet.
77. A dress crepe.
79. An adult male person (as opposed to a woman).
80. Imperial dynasty that ruled China (most of the time) from 206 BC to 221 and expanded its boundaries and developed its bureaucracy.
81. White Southerner supporting Reconstruction policies after the Civil War usually for self-interest.
82. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. Not only so, but.
2. A domed or vaulted recess or projection on a building especially the east end of a church.

3. A member of the Siouan people formerly living in the Missouri river valley in NE Nebraska.
4. A flat wing-shaped process or winglelike part of an organism.
5. Typically having large ears and feeding primarily on insects.
6. One of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
7. The taste experience when a savoury condiment is taken into the mouth.
8. The fur of an otter.
9. A genus of hawk-like owls.
10. Plants with sword-shaped leaves and erect stalks bearing bright-colored flowers composed of three petals and three drooping sepals.
11. (of champagne) Moderately dry.
12. A city in northern India.
13. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
14. God of love and erotic desire.
22. Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
24. (usually in the plural) A garment extending from the waist to the knee or ankle, covering each leg separately.
26. A rare silvery (usually trivalent) metallic element.
28. Any of several small ungulate mammals of Africa and Asia with rodent-like incisors and feet with hooflike toes.
30. A port on the Gulf of Oman and capital of the sultanate of Oman.
33. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
34. A dramatic work intended for performance by actors on a stage.
35. A fertile tract in a desert (where the water table approaches the surface).
38. Like or containing meat.
40. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
41. A strip of land projecting into a body of water.
44. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
45. English clergyman who (with John Henry Newman and Edward Pusey) founded the Oxford Movement (1792-1866).
46. A genus of Ploceidae.
49. English monk and scholar (672-735).
54. Chinese ephedra yielding ephedrine.
55. A region of central Europe rich in deposits of coal and iron ore.
57. Hard greenish-brown wood of the lignum vitae tree and other trees of the genus Guaiacum.
60. A case or sheath especially a pollen sac or moss capsule.
62. Botswanan statesman who was the first president of Botswana (1921-1980).
63. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
64. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
66. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
67. (Old Testament) Cain and Abel were the first children of Adam and Eve born after the Fall of Man.
68. A software system that facilitates the creation and maintenance and use of an electronic database.
69. God of death.
73. A colloid that has a continuous liquid phase in which a solid is suspended in a liquid.
74. Common black-and-gray Eurasian bird noted for thievery.
78. A state in midwestern United States.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

It seems as if your sexual needs are one of the issues you seem to place great focus on today. You desire power and control. These desires may lead to greater interest in healing and investing. The great mysteries of life and death seem to intrigue you. You may feel much support and harmony in your life now. Surrounded by friends and loved ones is the place for you. You may find yourself having a great time this evening surrounded by the children and younger people in your life. It seems these younger people look at you with much admiration and strive to be more like you. Continue to set a good example for these children, Aries. Great reward could come from investing in the lives of others.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Something seems to be leading you toward a healthier lifestyle. You are ready to take life seriously. You know you are what you eat, or so they say. You are ready to feel better about your health. Today finds you getting serious about making some major lifestyle changes. You may want to join the gym, or start counting calories. You know you are ready to get up and get moving. Life will not pass you by. Your high energy and positive attitude will be determining factors in your quest for health. This is a great time for you, Taurus. You will succeed.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Don't be surprised if you find someone challenging your values or your good taste. To each his own. This is why they make chocolate and vanilla. Do not take offense to this. You are unique and the only person you are responsible for pleasing is yourself. You may find you are being too strict on yourself. Loosen up and let your hair down. Life is short and you should remember to take time to relax and enjoy yourself every now and then. It seems the nature of time is something you have really had on your mind. You are starting to see just how short life is.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Your stubbornness could be an asset today. You know what you want and you are willing to work to get it. Compromise is not your strength, but you find it is a need when it comes to a romantic issue. Find a middle ground that you can learn to live with. This may restore the peace and happiness you have been longing for.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

We are not promised tomorrow. This is weighing heavy on your mind. Time is ticking. You are fully aware that time seems to be passing by at a high rate of speed. This is a day you decide to live each day to the fullest. To live, love, and laugh. From this point on you will live your life to the fullest and spread joy in every direction you can.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You have a reputation for not offering information unless you know it to be true. If you argue, which is rare, you are sure of your premise. You present your case as facts, leaving little room for disagreement. Most people trust you because they know what you say is true. Some may see this as arrogance. But, in most cases you are able to make your point without offending. You have a knack for telling people what they don't want to hear, but in most cases making them like it.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You may not find much excitement in this day. You may feel as though you are just going through the motions and find yourself quite bored with your surroundings. An escape is in order and you may find yourself to be quite content with getting lost in a good book or it may be a great time to sit back and relax while watching a movie. We all need an escape from reality from time to time and today seems just the day for this. You will feel much love and support from those closest to you today. You will know your efforts have not gone unnoticed and you are special to those close to you. Relax and clear your mind today.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may need to loosen up a bit. You seem to be taking life extremely serious now. You are too strict with yourself. All work and no play isn't a good thing. Sure you are getting a lot accomplished but at what cost? You will burn out. You will not be the person others want to spend time with. You have to realize there is more to life than money and sometimes your health is not worth the price. Take some time for you. Sit back and learn to relax, Scorpio. This will help you more than being overworked.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 18)

No one likes to be stood up. This may be the action you take that puts strain on your relationship with friends. Though you would love nothing more than to be out with friends socializing and have some fun, your more responsible side knows where your priorities lie and are unable to go through with plans you have made. Your mind is sharp, and you find yourself very productive which is the reward you need to make up for having to miss out and play adult today. You may find your experience leaves you with a great sense of sympathy for those close to you.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

This is a wonderful time for a quiet evening spent alone with your special someone. Keep to yourself today. This is not a great day for getting your point across to others. You may find your mind lost in your own memories. A great escape for you. This could be a very emotional day as you think back on lost love and lost loved ones. A walk down memory lane may bring your own mortality into focus. Life is short, Capricorn. Live it to the fullest. Live, laugh, and love hard. We are not promised tomorrow, so make today count.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

It seems as if you have a greater understanding of time and the fact life is short. Facing the day with this attitude, gives you inspiration to accomplish your goals. You are more passionate about all you do. You are making a decision to live as if each day is your last and enjoy all this world has to offer. This is a drastic change for you as you have been too strict on yourself in the past. You have no tolerance for anyone or anything that doesn't contribute to your long-term goals. You are full of ambition and will not allow anyone to stand in your way.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Are loving and sensitive when it comes to others. Even though you tend to give from your heart with no expectations, you may be longing to feel some sense of appreciation for what you do for others. Taking a chance now could bring great rewards in the future.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Adverbs

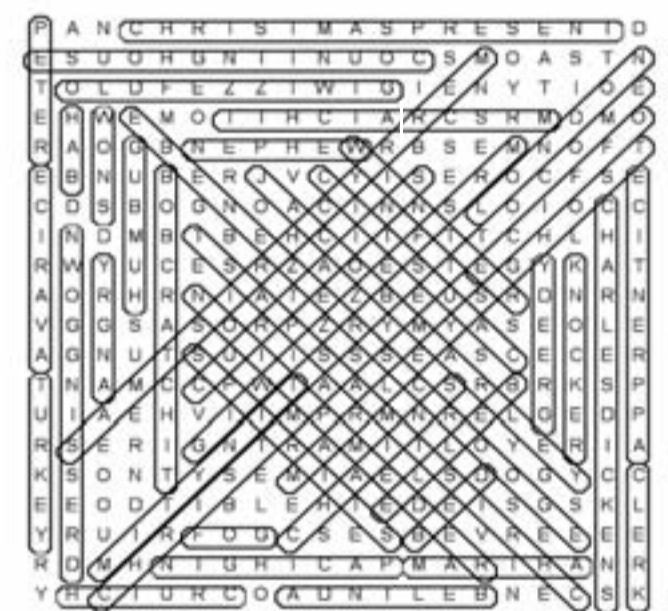
Find and circle all of the adverbs that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.



- |          |         |          |           |           |
|----------|---------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| ACROSS   | BEHIND  | HENCE    | ONCE      | SOMETIMES |
| AGAIN    | BELOW   | HIGH     | PRESENTLY | SOMEWHERE |
| AHEAD    | BRISKLY | HOMEWARD | QUICKLY   | SOON      |
| ALMOST   | DOWN    | HOWEVER  | QUIETLY   | THEN      |
| ALREADY  | EARLY   | LITTLE   | QUITE     | THERE     |
| ALSO     | EASILY  | LONG     | RARELY    | TODAY     |
| ALWAYS   | FAST    | LOUDLY   | RATHER    | TOMORROW  |
| ANYWHERE | FIRST   | MONTHLY  | REALLY    | UPWARD    |
| APART    | FOREVER | NEARBY   | SHORTLY   | WEEKLY    |
| AWAY     | FORWARD | NEVER    | SLOWLY    | WISELY    |
| BACK     | GENTLY  | NOWHERE  | SOFTLY    | YESTERDAY |
| BEFORE   | GREATLY | OFTEN    |           |           |

Yesterday's Solution

A Christmas Carol



- |                 |                       |                 |              |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| ANGRY           | CHRISTMAS PAST        | HUMBURG         | NIGHTCAP     |
| APPRENTICE      | CHRISTMAS PRESENT     | JACOB MARLEY    | OFFICE       |
| AVARICE         | CHRISTMAS YET TO COME | KNOCKER         | OLD FEZZIWIG |
| BAH             | CLERK                 | LONDON          | PETER        |
| BED             | COUNTING HOUSE        | MARLEY'S GHOST  | REDEMPTION   |
| BELINDA         | CRUTCH                | MARTHA          | SNOW         |
| BELLE           | CURTAINS              | MERRY CHRISTMAS | SPIRITS      |
| BOB CRATCHIT    | DRESSING GOWN         | MRS CRATCHIT    | TINY TIM     |
| CAUSTIC         | EBENEZER SCROOGE      | MRS FEZZIWIG    | TURKEY       |
| CHAINS          | FOG                   | NEPHEW          | WINTER       |
| CHARLES DICKENS | GREEDY                |                 |              |

The hidden message is: AND SO, AS TINY TIM OBSERVED, GOD BLESS US, EVERY ONE!

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



# Lifestyle

TUESDAY, AUGUST 21, 2018



Muslim pilgrims gather on Mount Arafat, also known as Jabal Al-Rahma (Mount of Mercy), southeast of the Saudi holy city of Makkah, on Arafat Day which is the climax of the hajj pilgrimage early yesterday. Arafat is the site where Muslims believe the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) gave his last sermon about 14 centuries ago after leading his followers on the pilgrimage. — AFP



Camels for sale are seen at the Berqash camel market northeast of Cairo.

## For some Egyptians, camels make a bigger and better Eid sacrifice

Muslims often slaughter sheep at the annual Eid Al-Adha "feast of the sacrifice" which falls next week, but some Egyptians are thinking bigger. Wealthier customers are flocking to the Birqash market, northwest of Cairo, where traders from across east Africa bring animals for auction - not sheep, but camels. "This camel market is the biggest in the world ... it is the only one that still operates by word of honor, without paper," said camel trader Faraj Al-Gammal, 50. "Any businessman who comes from abroad, bringing in ... camels, knows he is safe and secure here." Buyers inspect camels that limp around on three hoofs, the fourth tied at the knee to restrict their movement.

Many are sold at prices ranging from 15,000 Egyptian pounds (\$840) to 40,000 pounds, while some fetch as much as 65,000. Sheep sell for as little as 3,000 pounds. One trader pointed out that camels were reared more naturally than cattle or sheep. "Cattle get



An Egyptian boy holds a camel at the Berqash camel market northeast of Cairo. — AFP Photos

hormone injections to increase their weight, but camels don't," said Azmi Mansour. Used mostly for desert transport, camels also provide Bedouin with milk, meat and hair to weave into clothing. Eid Al-Adha commemorates Islam's version of the biblical story of God's testing of Abraham's faith by commanding him to sacrifice his son. Meat from the animals slaughtered for Eid is traditionally shared with the poor. — Reuters

## Once upon a time... preserving folk tales in Benin

Dusk settled on Sainte-Cecile square and the oil lanterns cast a soft yellow light as a storyteller took to the stage and bound the audience with a magic spell of words. The tale was about a naughty little girl who disobeys her parents and whistles at night—a way of summoning evil spirits. She is attacked by fierce beasts but is saved from death thanks to the courageous intervention of her neighbor, a hunter. Djimada, a teenage high-school student, was among those who were captivated by the centuries-old story. "I was always told never to whistle at night but never understood why," she said. "Now I know."

The tiny African state of Benin is perhaps best known to the world as the cradle of voodoo. But this is only part of a rich cultural history that includes a seam of folk tales, many of them handed down from generation to generation by walking storytellers known as "griots." Each year, a festival is held in Cotonou, the capital, to honor the proud tradition. For two nights in mid-August more than 30 communities from across Benin held the event organized by a Franco-Beninese association, Memories of Africa, that is now two decades old.

Amelie Armao, a professional storyteller from France, came to steep herself in Benin's oral treasures—an extraordinary but vanishing catalogue of spirits, talking animals, magical creatures, kings and queens, heroes and villains and witches.

"I started my career telling African stories," Armao said. "I find them steeped with meaning, humor and philosophy". Like Djimada, this was the first time many people in the audience were hearing the stories, a sobering reflection of the reality that oral storytelling has been losing its cultural prestige. Chris-Mael Tonoukouin, a private school

teacher in Cotonou, came to the square to relive his childhood memories. "In the good old days, we sat on the floor around a kerosene lamp," said Tonoukouin. "We were listening to our grandparents tell these funny stories between humans and animals."

### 'African wisdom'

Tonoukouin can be forgiven for feeling nostalgic. The oral tradition is being lost little by little, said Raoul Atchaka, a representative of Memories of Africa. "We must act so that the African wisdom is not forgotten in the tombs of the old people who die," said Atchaka. The point of the festival, whose tales are recounted in French and a

local language, Fongbe, is get younger people to hear them, "and then teach their children," he said. To do this, the association held a storytelling contest in 2000. More than 1,000 young people took part in the contest to help create several books containing over 1,500 stories.

Getting the stories on paper is critical for Beninese author Carmen Toudonou, who says the future of African fairy tales is not under trees but on pages of books. "I encourage writers here to be more interested in this genre, to be able to offer our children stories through which they can identify," Toudonou said. "We must create African heroes to stand alongside Snow White and Little Red Riding Hood," she said.

"Then the parents have to read to them very early to make them later lovers of beautiful stories, lovers of reading." Transferring this knowledge is important to preserving Africa's heritage, said Patrice Toton, a Benin storyteller based in France. "Storytelling is for us a perpetuation of the knowledge, languages, practices and history of peoples," Toton said. "It plays a role of conservation of heritage, history, knowledge and perpetuates the identity of peoples." He hopes that 100 years from now a child in Benin will still know not to whistle at night, when wild creatures are lurking in the dark. — AFP



Professional storyteller Agbanglanon Cosme Patrice to the public gathered in Sainte Cecile Square in Cotonou during a night of tales. — AFP photos



A presenter addresses public gathered in Sainte Cecile Square in Cotonou during a night of tales.



A man paints a mural of Aretha Franklin on a wall down the street where the Rev Jesse Jackson spoke celebrating the life of singer Aretha Franklin at her father's church, New Bethel Baptist, during a Sunday morning service in Detroit, Michigan. — AFP photos



A man listens to Rev Jesse Jackson speak at New Bethel Baptist Church.



Rev Jesse Jackson speaks at New Bethel Baptist Church, the church where Aretha Franklin's late father Rev C.L. Franklin was a minister and where she began her singing career.

## ARETHA CELEBRATED AT SUNDAY SERVICE AT FATHER'S BAPTIST CHURCH

Fans and worshippers celebrated the life of Aretha Franklin at her father's Baptist church in Detroit on Sunday, with her powerful voice again ringing out within its walls in tribute to her spectacular career. Civil rights activist Jesse Jackson, greeted by a standing ovation, sent the several hundred parishioners into raptures with his eulogy and rousing prayers for his old friend, the "Queen of Soul." The New Bethel Baptist Church-located in a down-at-heel, quiet neighborhood of Detroit-has been the focus of tributes to Franklin, who passed away from advanced pancreatic cancer on Thursday at age 76. "On Thursday morning, Earth lost her music. Heaven gained her music," Jackson told the congregation.

"Right now, the gospel choir in heaven has a lead singer. Detroit lost something, but heaven gained something," Franklin's recording of "Precious Lord (Take My Hand)"-one of Martin Luther King Jr.'s favorite gospel tracks which she sang at his funeral in 1968 — filled the church as a woman dressed in black and red danced. The high-energy service was packed with music belted out by chief Pastor Robert Smith Jr. "We are sad that Aretha has gone," Smith said. "We're happy that she's free from the shackles of time."

In his lengthy address, the now frail Jackson recounted

Franklin's life in the context of the civil rights movement, from her birth into the segregation of the American south to singing at Barack Obama's inauguration. Jackson, a Baptist minister and former Democratic presidential candidate, told the church that during the year of Franklin's birth "in a shack on the Mississippi River" in Tennessee, "225 blacks were lynched."

Her father, C.L. Franklin, was a prominent Baptist preacher and civil rights activist, who in June 1963 helped King organize the Walk to Freedom through downtown Detroit, only two months before King's historic March on Washington and "I Have a Dream" speech. "I remember one time Dr King was facing bankruptcy... and Aretha did an 11-city tour and gave all the money to Dr King," said Jackson, who was a close aide to the slain activist. "She was a rose that grew tall in a garden of weeds."

### 'A mighty tribute to the Queen'

Franklin recorded the album "One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism" at the church, where she performed over the years, and also served dinners to worshippers and the homeless at Thanksgiving and Christmas. Talking about his final visit with Franklin last Wednesday, Jackson told the church that he walked into the room

calling out "Re, Re, Re." "She opened her eyes and pressed my arms, and we began to pray," he said. His eulogy had worshippers on their feet. Smartly dressed women raised their arms into the air and swayed to the music, as a few wiped away tears, with Jackson leading them in prayers and song.

Worshippers spilled out of the service, invigorated by what they called a celebration of the music icon's life and legacy. "It was beautiful and it spoke to all of us," said Denise Redmon, a 57-year-old Indiana bus driver on a weekend coach trip to Detroit. "I thought it was excellent. A mighty tribute to the Queen," agreed Esther Birden, 60, on the same two-day "Aretha Franklin soul weekend, joining in all the festivities and being a part of history." "I remember listening to Aretha when I was eight years old and dancing to her music," she said. "We have nothing to be sad about because she gave us so much. She gave us secular, she gave us gospel, she gave us opera... and you don't find too many that can fit in every arena like that."

### 'Freedom fighter'

Ralph Godbee, a former Detroit police chief turned pastor, led the congregation in a rousing hand clap for

Franklin. He recalled how she had once called to complain about a relative who had been mistreated by the police department, telling him that no one-regardless of their family-should be treated in such a way. "There's something about when the queen calls," he said, hailing her as a "freedom fighter" and "demanding justice for everybody from the back row to the front pew."

He said the revival of the Motor City-the home of the US auto industry that has turned a corner after years of economic depression and high crime-was "on the back of the spirit of the Queen of Soul." Outside the pale brick church, mourners have left helium balloons, bouquets of flowers, teddy bears and hand-written tributes.

"Aretha Will Always be My Queen. Nothing But Respect!!!" read one home-made poster adorned with cut-out, black-and-white newspaper pictures of the musical icon in her prime. "You will always be in my heart," said another. "Your voice will always ring in my heart and soul. I hear it all of the time, soothing me." — AFP

## BEMUSED BANKSY SAYS 'NOTHING TO DO WITH' MAJOR RUSSIAN EXHIBITION



The reclusive British street artist Banksy has said in a bemused social media post he was not involved in a major exhibition of his works currently on display in Moscow. The Banksy exhibition has been running at the capital's Central House of Artists since the start of June and boasts around 100 original works, on loan from galleries and private collectors. But the artist himself said he had no idea the display was taking place, after he was sent a picture of a banner advertising the event in Moscow.



"I saw this and thought of you," a contact of Banksy told the artist in a conversation posted to his verified Instagram account. "What the hell is that?" the artist replied. "I wish I could find it funny. What's the opposite of LOL?" he said after being informed guests were being charged about 22 euros (\$25) to visit. Ticket prices in fact range from 550-1400 rubles (7 euros, 8 dollars - 18 euros, 21 dollars). "You know it's got nothing to do with me, right?" he asked, the screenshot of the exchange showed.



People visit a Banksy exhibition at Moscow's Central House of Artists. — AFP photos





Micro engraver Graham Short works to engrave a pin head in his studio in Birmingham, central England. — AFP photos



Micro engraver Graham Short works to engrave a pin head in his studio.



Micro engraver Graham Short works to engrave a pin head in his studio.



Photograph taken by micro-engraver Graham Short, and released in London shows a spec of gold in the eye of a needle, with a Bible verse engraved on it, reading "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God".



Photograph taken by micro-engraver Graham Short shows an image of Britain's Queen Elizabeth II engraved onto the head of a gold pin, to commemorate her becoming the longest reigning monarch.



Photograph taken by micro-engraver Graham Short shows an image of Britain's Queen Elizabeth II engraved into the eye of a needle.

## DRUGS AND LATE NIGHTS: MICRO-ENGRAVER CARVES OUT NICHE

Using Botox, beta-blockers and the stillness of the night, Graham Short produces miniature engravings like nobody else. Often dubbed "the world's smallest engraver", he hand-carves phrases and symbols onto the tiniest of surfaces, from pinheads to the edge of a razor blade. Selling for increasingly large sums, the master craftsman goes to "ridiculous lengths" to achieve the required precision. Short takes beta-blockers to slow his heartbeat to get the steadiest possible hand, and injects his eyelids with Botox to relax their muscles. The 72-year-old works from midnight to dawn to minimize vibrations from outside. "I know it's a bit extreme... I'm so obsessed with it," he told AFP at his home-studio in the suburbs of Birmingham, central England. "I don't think anybody else would go to these lengths." He claims he's the only person doing miniature engraving and says "that's what drives me on."

Once complete, often after months of work, his pieces are displayed in a lit case under a microscope, illuminating intricacies invisible to the naked eye. They are typically bought by art investors with one piece, a collection of works fusing English, Arabic and calligraphy, fetching £200,000 (223,000 euros, \$254,000). He sold an engraving of Queen Elizabeth II's head on a piece of gold lodged in the eye of a needle to a Scottish dairy farmer for £100,000. He also engraved "nothing is impossible" on the sharp edge of a razor blade, which sold for £50,000 to a gallery in northern England.

### 'Love' on a grain of salt

Short left school aged 15 with no academic qualifications, but got an apprenticeship with an engraving company before starting out on his own. He spent decades as a stationary engraver for clients including the royal family and department store Harrods. In his spare time he tried his hand at miniature engraving, first working under two magnifying glasses and now using a microscope. His first project, carving the Lord's Prayer onto the head of a two-millimetre-wide gold pin, took decades to complete as he juggled his business and family life. "When I finished that I couldn't stop looking at it," the father-of-two recalled. "It had taken over my whole life."

As traditional engraving work dropped off in the digital age, Short began to devote himself entirely to his miniature craftsmanship. He has created 48 works over the last 15 years, he estimates, some made to order.

Among the most eye-popping was engraving the word "love" onto a grain of salt, which was then balanced on an eyelash plucked from

the eye of the client's wife. The customer, a Russian oligarch in London who wanted a novelty Valentine's Day gift, had made his fortune in the salt mines of Siberia.

### Harry Kane's face

Short rose in prominence in Britain after engraving miniature portraits of "Pride and Prejudice" author Jane Austen onto four £5 banknotes in 2016. He gave them away in a Willy Wonka-style treasure hunt, spending the notes randomly across the country. One of them was later auctioned for £6,000, while two others were kept by their finders and another remains in circulation. "I couldn't believe the interest, to be honest," he said.

Short repeated the stunt this summer, carving England's World Cup goal-scoring hero Harry Kane onto six more £5 banknotes. Four are still waiting to be found, another will be presented to the Football Association and he wants to give the sixth to the player himself. "They've asked me to go to a football match in London and present it to him," Short said.

### '20 beats a minute'

Short pushes himself to engrave on ever-smaller surfaces, hitting the limits of the human body. "The smaller I go, the stiller I need to be. I need to be absolutely motionless," he explained. He tried meditation and breathing techniques but found them insufficient, so he turned to a regime of exercise-swimming 10,000 meters daily-and beta-blockers. "When I'm working, I eat them like sweets and I can get my heart rate down to 20 beats a minute," he said. "Then I try to engrave when I'm absolutely dead-still between heartbeats."



A normal resting heart rate for adults is 60 to 100 beats. Short injects his eyelids with Botox every three months to ensure there is "no distraction from eye nerves and muscles". Perhaps unsurprisingly, he does not enjoy creating his artworks but revels in the outcome. "The best part for me is when it's finished and it's in the gallery under the microscope and somebody comes in... and they're absolutely knocked out," he said. "I absolutely love it, because I know I've done something that no-one else can do." — AFP

Photograph taken by micro-engraver Graham Short shows an image of Britain's Queen Elizabeth II engraved into the eye of a needle.



Photograph taken by micro-engraver Graham Short shows a spec of gold in the eye of a needle, with a Bible verse engraved on it, reading "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God".

## Bob Mackie designs, including Cher outfits, to hit auction block

From Cher's colorful caped outfit for the 1974 Oscars to a coral gown and bolero worn by Carol Burnett on her television show, creations by fashion and costume designer Bob Mackie will be up for grabs this November at a Los Angeles auction. The 79-year-old, who has dressed some of the biggest names in entertainment, will preview a selection of his gowns, jumpsuits and costumes on a transatlantic cruise to New York which sets sail from Southampton on Sunday, during which Mackie will also talk about his work.

"We're going to talk and answer questions and auction off...a sketch every day, and usually they're drawings of a star in a costume that

I designed," the Emmy-award winning designer told Reuters of the cruise on the Queen Mary 2 ship. Items offered for sale include a black gown worn by Lauren Bacall, a pink satin dress worn by Julia Louis-Dreyfus and several ensembles created for pop star Cher, with whom Mackie has collaborated for several decades. These include a marigold jumpsuit and spaghetti strapped gown the singer wore for "The Sonny and Cher Comedy Hour" in the early 1970s. Each are estimated in the \$3,000 - \$5,000 range.

There are also custom-made outfits worn by actress Raquel Welch and rock star Tina Turner on sale. "When you do thousands you don't have favorites," Mackie said when asked if he had a preferred creation. "I could say they are like my children. I love them all, but they're not and I don't love them all." Julien's Auctions will hold the "Property from the collection of Bob Mackie" sale on Nov 17. — AFP

## US actor DeVito to get lifetime achievement award in Spain



Danny DeVito

US comic actor Danny DeVito, the star of "Twins" and "Batman Returns", will receive a lifetime achievement award at the San Sebastian film festival in Spain next month, organizers said yesterday. The 73-year-old will also attend the festival to promote his latest film, "Smallfoot", a 3D animated comedy adventure in which he provides the voice for a yeti. In a statement, San Sebastian festival organizers said DeVito has "led a versatile career" in theatre, film and television spanning almost five decades, in which he was worked with top directors such as Tim Burton and Francis Ford Coppola. DeVito will receive the festival's Donostia Award on September 22.

The Donostia Award has been given out each

year at the festival since 1986 to "a great film personality in recognition for their work and career." Past recipients include Gregory Peck, Robert De Niro, Bette Davis, Susan Sarandon and Meryl Streep. The 66th edition of the San Sebastian festival, the oldest and most prestigious in the Spanish-speaking world, takes place from September 21 to 29 in the picturesque coastal city in northern Spain. DeVito, who won an Emmy for his turn as the despotic dispatcher in "Taxi" in the late 1970s and early 1980s, currently stars in the hit television comedy "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia". His film credits include 1975's "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest", 1988's "Twins", "Batman Returns" in 1992 and "LA Confidential" in 1997. — AFP



This picture shows stone engraving in the sacred grove of Osun-Osogbo during the Osun-Osogbo Festival in Osogbo, southwestern Nigeria. — AFP photos



Devotees and participants offer sacrifices and prayers to the Osun river goddess and collect water from the sacred river during the Osun-Osogbo Festival in Osogbo.

## IN NIGERIA, THOUSANDS CELEBRATE OSUN, GODDESS OF FERTILITY AND WATER

"I'm dressed like a river," says priestess Osundele Okugbesan as she shows off her flowing white strapless dress and long beaded necklaces cascading down her chest. This year, as she has done for the past 35, she has come to the Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove in southwestern Nigeria to celebrate Osun, the great Yoruba goddess of fertility and water. Others have tattoos of fish on their bodies or have sewn seashells onto their dresses.

Every year, the festival attracts thousands of Yorubas, an ancient ethnic group in West Africa that numbers around 40 million, the vast majority living in Nigeria. According to UNESCO which named the area a World Heritage site in 2005, the dense forest of the grove and "its meandering river is dotted with sanctuaries and shrines, sculptures and art works in honor of Osun and other deities". "You do not decide to become an Osun priest," says one mother holding the hand of her little girl, whose face his half black, half white.

"It's the spirit that chooses you. Look at my daughter, she was chosen too, one day she will become a

great priestess," she says enigmatically before retreating. Elsewhere, priestesses prepare offerings and sacrifices to the great goddess: a heady mixture of sacrificed chickens, ochre powder, potato chips and gin. Beating drums and the sound of shots from colonial-era rifles build to a crescendo. Soon tens of thousands of people are marching past.

### Trances and kola nuts

Crowds accompany the Arugba, a virgin whose face is covered with a scarlet cloth embroidered with shells, to the river where the spirit of the water goddess lives. The wife of Sango, god of fire and thunder, once demanded a sacrifice to bring prosperity to the community, but today the virgin is just tasked with giving the offerings to the sacred river. On the riverbank, in the shade of century-old trees, a woman reads the future in kola nuts. One after another, women fall into a trance and have to be held back so that they do not drown in the river. It could all be a scene from another lifetime,

were it not for the billboards advertising mobile phone services and other 21st-century wares.

And yet belief in the Yoruba gods persists, unstilled by either successive Muslim jihads in the Sahel, Christian colonialists from Europe or, more recently, by evangelical pastors from Nigeria's mega-churches. These Nigerian women will turn to the beautiful Osun to give them children.

### Many gods

"Traditional religion has not been killed by modern religion because it is too deeply rooted among the Yoruba people to be destroyed," said researchers Saskia Cousin and Jean-Luc Martineau in the academic journal *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*. "I'm Christian, Muslim and a traditionalist," said Ayodele Folasade, an employee of the Osogbo museum. "I pray to Allah five times a day, I pray to the Lord Jesus Christ, but I also go to worship Osun by the river," Folasade said. "Yoruba people say that if your prayers don't work with one God try the other

ones," she said with a smile.

"Pastors or imams say it's not good to have many gods, but almost everybody turns to Osun when they need her," said Folasade. Omitola Babaosha, a visitor to the festival, said he believed in the traditional gods but unlike others did not hide it. "I'm very proud of my heritage and I don't care what people say about me," said Babaosha, wearing a large white tunic. "Whoever you believe in, whatever your religion, at the end of the day you need water to survive," he said. "There is no one on this earth who isn't a child of Osun," he said, hand in hand with his wife, walking in the crowd. "Going to the river to celebrate her spirit is like saying 'thank you' for the creation of nature." — AFP



A man makes a rolex during the Kampala Rolex festival in Kampala. — AFP photos



A woman eats a rolex during the Kampala Rolex festival.



Men eat a rolex during the Kampala Rolex festival.



A man makes a rolex during the Kampala Rolex festival in Kampala. — AFP photos



A man buys a rolex during the Kampala Rolex festival.



A person makes a rolex during the Kampala Rolex festival.

## In Uganda, 'Rolex' means time-for an eggy snack

When people talk about a "Rolex" in Uganda, one of the last things they probably have in mind is a luxury watch. So at Kampala's third annual Rolex festival on a hilltop in the Ugandan capital on Sunday, there were no stalls to be seen selling pricey wrist wear. In Uganda, the Rolex is the country's favorite snack, a sandwich made up of an omelette and chapati bread, and it derives its name from a play on the words "rolled eggs". Organizers hope the festival will turn what many regard as a poor man's supper into a tourist attraction. "Rolex is a delicacy in Uganda," Tourism Board official Patrick Muhire told AFP. The dish, which originated in the eastern town of Busoga, quickly became popular among stu-

dents at Makerere University in Kampala: at around 1,000 Ugandan shillings (26 US cents, 23 euro cents), it was not only nourishing, but very affordable as well.

Its appeal spread rapidly from there. "Most people took it to be a poor man's food. But with the festival, it is being accepted by the elites as ... a national delicacy," Muhire said. "Ever since we started the annual Rolex festival, there are restaurants which have started doing the Rolex and some hotels have embraced it, too," he continued. There are already many regional variants of the "Rolex". In eastern Uganda, for example, bamboo sprouts are mixed in with the chapati, while in the north, cooked vegetables are added. It comes in various sizes, too, with

the super-sized "Swazneggar Rolex"—cheekily named after Hollywood muscleman Arnold Schwarzenegger—using between six and 10 eggs and big enough to feed an entire family. At the festival, Indian, Mexican and Kenyan chefs all offer their own special takes on the sandwich.

There's also a whiff of politics in the air, with the music of Bobi Wine blaring from the loudspeakers as the queueing customers wait for their food. Wine is the stage name of Robert Kyagulanyi, a popstar-turned-politician who is a fierce critic of President Yoweri Museveni. Kyagulanyi is currently in jail for the illegal possession of firearms. — AFP





An aerial view shows Muslim pilgrims praying at Mount Arafat, also known as Jabal Al-Rahma (Mount of Mercy), southeast of the Saudi holy city of Makkah yesterday. — AFP

## Malaysia makes record \$12 million rhino horn seizure

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia has seized rhinoceros horns worth nearly \$12 million bound for Vietnam, in its largest haul of such contraband, officials said yesterday. Wildlife experts say Malaysia is a major transit point for the illegal trafficking of endangered species to other Asian countries. Officials acting on a tip-off seized 50 horns, weighing about 116 kg, at the cargo terminal of Kuala Lumpur airport on Aug 13, a wildlife official said in a statement.

The shipment also included nine carcasses of what are believed to be tigers and bears, weighing about 200 kg. "All the wildlife items confiscated were to be exported out of Malaysia without a proper permit," Abdul Kadir Abu Hashim, the director-general of the Wildlife and National Parks Department, said in the statement. The department will run DNA tests to identify each wildlife species involved, he added.

The shipment, valued at 48 million ringgit (\$11.7 million), was bound for Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam. Investigations showed the consignment had been shipped with false documents, and efforts were being made to identify its true owner, Abdul Kadir said. Vietnam is a hot market for rhino horn, which is believed

to have medicinal properties and is in high demand among the communist nation's growing middle class.

TRAFFIC, a group which monitors the illegal wildlife trade, said the case highlighted links between Malaysia and Vietnam, which are both in southeast Asia. "This was a very unusual mix of wildlife parts found - rhino horns which were clearly not from Asia and carnivore carcasses which could have originated from the country," TRAFFIC's acting Southeast Asia director Kanitha Krishnasamy said in a statement. "This discovery raises questions about how criminals are accumulating wildlife parts and using a multitude of routes and methods to traffic them onwards to destination countries."

Global trade in rhino horn is banned by a United Nations convention, but it is prized in some Asian countries as an ingredient in traditional medicines to treat everything from fever to cancer. Last year, Malaysia seized about \$3.1 million worth of rhino horns flown in from Mozambique via Qatar.

Separately, authorities arrested a man on July 13 for illegal possession of three baby Sumatran orangutans, Abdul Kadir said. "The suspect was believed to have been trading wildlife online and was arrested while dealing with a buyer," he said. Malaysia will return the animals to Indonesia, he said. Orangutans live in lowland forests on Borneo, an island shared by Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia, as well as on Indonesia's island of Sumatra. They are endangered, with populations declining due to rampant deforestation and hunting. — Reuters



**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysian wildlife enforcement division director Salman Bin Haji Saaban displays seized rhino horns and other animal parts at the Department of Wildlife and National Parks headquarters yesterday. — AFP

## Cairo looking to curb street sheep...

Continued from Page 1

The father in his fifties confides that he has not heard of the official sanitation drive and was planning to slaughter his animal in the street outside his house. "But it is true that it's dirty and dangerous," he concedes.

It is not just Cairo officials who are seeking to dissuade people from street sacrifices. Egypt's state-sponsored Islamic religious authorities, which rule on sharia law, have also come out against the practice. The Dar al-Ifta institution published a speech this month condemning street sacrifices as a "great sin and serious crime". A

potential cause of diseases and epidemics, leaving behind the remains of the animal is also considered "impure" by the Holy Quran, the government body said on its website.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization recommends strict guidelines for the slaughter of animals. It says abattoirs should be "situated away from residential areas" and calls for "a well-planned, well-executed and controlled cleaning and sanitation program". However, the aspirations of the authorities and advice of experts seem at odds with the reality in the marketplace. On the outskirts of Cairo, makeshift pens hold sheep close to an open sewerage drain. Local butchers complain of financial woes they face as the cost of living soars in Egypt. Most did not want to answer questions but it was clear they would meet customers' demands - including butchering animals in the streets - to make ends meet. "We'll do anything," one of them said. — AFP

## Pilgrims seek forgiveness on...

Continued from Page 1

Hilal Issa, 70, from Algeria, said he was praying for God to pardon all Muslims and save the Arab world from its afflictions.

A hot wind blew across the hill, also known as Jabal al-Rahma (Mount of Mercy), and the surrounding plain after a downpour late Sunday. Many faithful could be seen sipping from bottles of water throughout the day. "I knew it would be a little hard to climb Mount Arafat," said Nigerian pilgrim Saidou Boureima. "So I prepared for this challenge by working out. And God willing, we can see it through." The hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam which every Muslim is required to complete at least once in their lifetime if they are healthy enough and have the means to do so.

The hajj has at times been a point of controversy.

Iran boycotted the hajj in 2016, following a deadly stampede the year before which left some 2,300 dead, hundreds of them Iranian. Tehran sent its pilgrims to Makkah in 2017, and the hajj this year includes 86,000 Iranians, according to Makkah governor Prince Khaled Al-Faisal. Prince Khaled has also said this year's hajj includes 300 pilgrims from Qatar, a neighboring state hit by a major Saudi-led boycott. In a midday sermon, senior Saudi cleric Sheikh Hussein bin Abdulaziz Al-Sheikh urged pilgrims to come together with their coreligionists but cautioned: "Hajj is not a place for slogans and parties."

Muslims today observe the first day of Eid Al-Adha, or Feast of Sacrifice, which marks the end of the hajj. They traditionally slaughter sheep for the three-day Eid Al-Adha, a tribute to Prophet Abraham's (PBUH) sacrifice of a lamb after God spared Ismael (PBUH), his son. They will consume some of the meat and give the rest to poor people unable to buy food. A new kiswa, the cloth embroidered with verses from the Holy Quran, was placed over the Kaaba in Makkah's Grand Mosque late on Sunday. Pilgrims will return to pray there at the end of hajj. — Agencies

## Joy as Korean families meet...

Continued from Page 1

Hostilities ceased with an armistice rather than a peace treaty, leaving the two Koreas technically still at war and the peninsula split by the impenetrable Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), with all direct civilian exchanges - even mundane family news - banned. The three-day reunion at Mount Kumgang, a scenic resort in North Korea, is the first for three years and follows a diplomatic thaw on the peninsula. According to pool reports, the event began with a popular North Korean song "Nice to meet you" - also well known in the South - blaring out from speakers.

Lee Keum-seom, now tiny and frail at 92, met her son for the first time since she and her infant daughter were separated from him and her husband as they fled. At the time Ri Sang Chol was aged just four. Lee shouted his name when she saw the now 71-year-old, before hugging him as both were overcome with emotion. Her son showed her pictures of his family in the North - including her late husband - telling her: "This is a photo of father." Before leaving for the meeting, Lee told AFP: "I never imagined this day would come. I didn't even know if he was alive or not."

With time taking its toll, such parent-child reunions have become rare. Since 2000 the two nations have held 20 rounds of reunions but most of the more than 130,000 Southerners who signed up for a reunion since the events began have since died. More than half the

survivors are over 80, with this year's oldest participant Baik Sung-kyu aged 101. South Korean Park Ki-dong, 82, met his two North Korean siblings, who had brought dozens of family photos with them. Pak Sam Dong pointed at one of the images, telling his brother: "This is you." The older man stared at the picture silently, deep in thought, while his North Korean sister quietly wiped tears from her eyes.

The reunions are resuming after a three-year hiatus as the North accelerated its pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles and relations worsened. But after a rapid diplomatic thaw the North's leader Kim Jong Un and the South's President Moon Jae-in agreed to restart them at their first summit in April in the DMZ. The two Koreas have since discussed cooperation in various fields at meetings between officials.

But while Kim and US President Donald Trump held a landmark summit in Singapore in June, Pyongyang has yet to make clear what concessions it is willing to make on its nuclear arsenal, while Washington is looking to maintain sanctions pressure on it. Families at previous reunions have often found it a bittersweet experience, with some complaining about the short time they were allowed together and others lamenting the ideological gaps between them after decades apart. Some of those selected for this year's reunions dropped out after learning that their parents or siblings had died and they could only meet more distant relatives whom they had never seen before.

Over the next three days, the 89 families will spend only about 11 hours together, mostly under the watchful eyes of North Korean agents. They will have only three hours in private before they are separated once again on Wednesday, in all likelihood for the final time. — AFP

## Turkey, Qatar ink deal to boost...

Continued from Page 1

missions and their personnel" across the country. The attack took place to the backdrop of a bitter diplomatic spat between Ankara and Washington, with presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin also blasted the attack as an attempt to "create chaos". "Turkey is a safe country and all foreign missions are safeguarded by law," he wrote on Twitter.

The highly-fortified embassy was also hit by a suicide bombing five years ago that killed a Turkish security guard and injured several other people. That attack was claimed by the Revolutionary People's Liberation Front (DHKP-C), a radical Marxist group. Ankara and

Washington have been locked in an increasingly acrimonious diplomatic dispute over Turkey's detention of an American pastor on terror-related charges.

US President Donald Trump has doubled the tariffs on aluminium and steel tariffs from Turkey, prompting Ankara to impose similar measures on several US products. On Friday, Turkey threatened to respond in kind if Washington imposed further sanctions as a court rejected another appeal to free pastor Andrew Brunson. The diplomatic stand-off has sent the Turkish currency into free fall against dollar although Erdogan has vowed to lead the country out of the crisis.

In a statement ahead of the Muslim feast of Eid Al-Adha, Erdogan remained defiant over the US sanctions. "The attack aimed at our economy has no difference from an attack aimed at our call to prayer or flag," he said. Those who thought they could bring Turkey to its knees through the foreign currency exchange rate "will soon see they are mistaken", Erdogan added. — Agencies



## Sports

# Astros hit 5 homers, Verlander records his 200th career victory

## LeMahieu homers again, leads Rockies to 4-game sweep of Braves

OAKLAND: Martin Maldonado finished a single shy of hitting for the cycle, and the visiting Houston Astros slugged five home runs to salvage the finale of their show-down series with the Oakland Athletics with a 9-4 victory on Sunday. The Astros moved back ahead of Oakland by one game in the American League West after the Athletics pulled even by claiming the opening two games of the three-game weekend set. Houston rallied from an early two-run deficit with a four-run third inning. After Oakland pulled even in the bottom of the third, the Astros moved back on top in the fourth. Yuli Gurriel, Evan Gattis, Maldonado, Alex Bregman and Marwin Gonzalez went deep for Houston. Justin Verlander (12-8) was the beneficiary of the power surge, recording his 200th career victory. Verlander allowed three home runs, two to Khris Davis, and gave up four runs in 5 1/3 innings, but the run support he received was ample.

### ROCKIES 4, BRAVES 2

DJ LeMahieu homered for the second consecutive game, and visiting Colorado beat Atlanta to complete a four-game series sweep. The second baseman, who delivered what turned out to be the winning homer in the 10th inning on Saturday, started a decisive two-run rally in the third inning with another solo shot, his 11th, into left-center field. The Rockies tacked on another run on Nolan Arenado's RBI single for a 3-1 lead. The win gave Colorado its first four-game sweep in Atlanta and its first four-game sweep over the Braves since 2016 at Coors Field.

### METS 8, PHILLIES 2

Amed Rosario hit three RBIs, including a two-run single that capped a four-run second inning and catapulted the New York to a win over Philadelphia in the Little League Classic at Williamsport, Pa. Winning the annual game at the site of the Little League World Series gave the Mets a series win in an unusual five-game set between the teams, who played the first four games at Philadelphia. The Mets have won eight of 12. The Phillies have lost six of 10. Jason Vargas (3-8) gave up two runs in 5 1/3 innings for the win.

### DODGERS 12, MARINERS 1

Clayton Kershaw pitched seven strong innings to earn the 150th win of his career as visiting Los Angeles defeated Seattle. Enrique Hernandez and Justin Turner hit home runs for the resurgent Dodgers, who took two of three games in the interleague series. Kershaw (6-5), the three-time National League Cy Young Award winner who has struggled with injuries this season, allowed one run on four hits. He walked one and struck out seven.

### PIRATES 2, CUBS 1 (11 INNINGS)

Adam Frazier hit a two-out, walk-off homer in the 11th inning to give Pittsburgh a split of its four-game series against visiting Chicago. Frazier's third career walk-off hit and fifth homer of this season came against Cubs reliever Brandon Kintzler (1-3). In each game of the series, the Cubs scored one run on solo homers by Ian Happ, Ben Zobrist and Kyle Schwarber, who got his second of the series Sunday. They won the first two games 1-0 before dropping the last two by scores of 3-1 and 2-1.

### INDIANS 8, ORIOLES 0

Melky Cabrera hit a grand slam during a six-run fourth inning that broke the game open for Cleveland against visiting Baltimore. The Indians won two of three in the series and finished the season with a 5-2 record versus the slumping Orioles, who fell back to 50 games under .500 at 37-87. Cleveland starter Mike Clevinger (9-7) continued to be a riddle that the Baltimore offense couldn't solve. He threw six shutout innings, extending his streak of scoreless frames against the Orioles to 24, dating back to 2017.

### DIAMONDBACKS 4, PADRES 3

A.J. Pollock homered with one out in the top of the ninth as Arizona rallied to defeat host San Diego and take three of four games in the series. Daniel Descalso had tied the game at 3 with his career-best, 11th homer of the season in the top of the eighth inning against Padres rookie reliever Trey Wingenter. Descalso's drive to right just cleared the leap of Padres right fielder Travis Jankowski. The win kept the Diamondbacks a half-game ahead of the Colorado Rockies in the National League West. Arizona completed a nine-game road trip with a 5-4 record.

### RANGERS 4, ANGELS 2

Rougned Odor had four RBIs, including a three-run home run through a driving rain shower in the seventh inning, to rally Texas over visiting Los Angeles. Matt Moore (3-6) pitched an inning of scoreless relief to pick up the victory in a game twice delayed by rain. Rangers starter Yovani Gallardo gave up two runs on six hits over six innings with a walk and six strikeouts. Shin-Soo Choo had three hits for the Rangers, who won three of four games in the series and are 14-8 since July 27.

### BREWERS 2, CARDINALS 1

Jhoulys Chacin went six innings to defeat St. Louis for the first time in eight career decisions as visiting Milwaukee held on for a narrow victory. Mike Moustakas, whom the Brewers acquired near the trade deadline, hit a two-run double in the third inning to supply the offense, as Milwaukee ended a three-game losing streak. The Brewers also climbed back over St. Louis for second place in the National League Central standings. It was only the second loss in the Cardinals' last 12 games.

### YANKEES 10, BLUE JAYS 2

Greg Bird capped a six-run first inning with his second career grand slam as New York completed a three-game sweep of visiting Toronto. The Yankees lost shortstop Didi Gregorius to a bruised left heel that could send him to the disabled list. Gregorius was injured when he collided with Toronto first baseman Kendry Morales after hitting an RBI single in the first inning. Blue Jays manager John Gibbons was ejected for arguing a play at first base. Toronto has lost four in a row and 10 of 14.

### MARLINS 12, NATIONALS 1

Jose Urena, pitching while appealing a suspension issued by Major League Baseball, tossed a two-hitter as Miami defeated host Washington. Urena hit red-hot



OAKLAND: Jonathan Lucroy #21 of the Oakland Athletics is forced out at second base by Carlos Correa #1 of the Houston Astros during the seventh inning at the Oakland Coliseum on Sunday in Oakland, California. The Houston Astros defeated the Oakland Athletics 9-4. — AFP

Atlanta Braves left fielder Ronald Acuna Jr. with the first pitch of Wednesday's game, drawing a six-game ban from MLB. However, while on appeal, Urena held Washington to a pair of doubles and two walks while pitching the first complete game of his career. Miami's Starlin Castro went 5-for-6 with three runs for the first five-hit game of his career. Teammate J.T. Realmuto went 2-for-5 with a homer and three RBIs, and 28-year-old rookie Isaac Galloway went 3-for-5 with a single, double and his first major league homer.

### RAYS 2, RED SOX 0

Joey Wendle and C.J. Cron hit home runs, and five Tampa Bay pitchers combined for a two-hitter against host Boston. It was just the fifth time the Red Sox were shut out this season and the first time since being blanked 5-0 at Detroit on July 21. The loss snapped a 13-game win streak in day games for Boston and also was just the second loss in 12 games at Fenway Park for the Red Sox. Rays rookie Jalen Beeks (2-1) took over with two outs in the second for fellow rookie reliever Diego Castillo, who was making his first career start. Beeks pitched four innings of one-hit shutout relief to pick up the win, walking two and striking out three. Castillo became Tampa Bay's 16th starting pitcher this season, extending the team's single-season record.

### TWINS 5, TIGERS 4

Eddie Rosario blasted a go-ahead solo homer in the eighth, Max Kepler and Jake Cave also homered as host

Minnesota edged Detroit. Rosario drove in two runs for the Twins, who took three of four in the series. Tyler Austin had two hits and scored a run. Rosario jumped on a high 0-2 fastball from Alex Wilson (1-4) leading off the inning. His 22nd long ball of the year made a winner out of Trevor Hildenberger (3-3), who recorded the last four outs.

### REDS 11, GIANTS 4

Cincinnati completed a winning homestand with a three-game sweep of San Francisco. Eugenio Suarez and Jose Peraza belted home runs while Billy Hamilton smacked two triples, helping the Reds win the season series 4-2 over the Giants and wrap up a 5-4 homestand. The Giants, meanwhile, saw their hopes of making a late run at a National League wild-card berth dim a bit with a fourth consecutive loss. San Francisco infielder Chase D'Arnaud made his major league pitching debut in the eighth inning, allowing no runs and one hit.

### WHITE SOX 7, ROYALS 6

Omar Narvaez delivered the tiebreaking single and also hit a solo homer to help Chicago edge visiting Kansas City and take two of three games in the series. Avisail Garcia belted a three-run homer and Tim Anderson added a two-run blast as the White Sox won for the fourth time in their past five games. Whit Merrifield hit a three-run shot, Ryan O'Hearn smacked a two-run blast and Alex Gordon hit a solo homer for the Royals. Jorge Bonifacio went 3-for-4 but Salvador Perez struck out in all five at-bats—the last time to end the game. —Reuters

## Wickens lucky to be alive after scary IndyCar crash

LOS ANGELES: Canadian rookie Robert Wickens was in hospital with "orthopedic injuries" after a frightening airborne crash on the seventh lap of the IndyCar Pocono race won by ex-Formula One racer Alexander Rossi.

Wickens, of Guelph, Ontario, was rushed to hospital by air ambulance on Sunday after he collided with Ryan Hunter-Reay's IndyCar at Pocono Raceway in Long Pond, Pennsylvania. The collision caused Hunter-Reay's car to careen into the wall, and Wickens' car was pulled along with it.

Wickens launched over Hunter-Reay's car and sailed into the catchfence, where the main body of his IndyCar spun several times before landing back onto the track in pieces. IndyCar spokesman Curt Cavin said the rookie driver was "awake and alert" as he was transported to a nearby hospital.

IndyCar released a statement after the race saying the 29-year-old suffered "orthopedic injuries" but declined to go into detail. (Wickens has been admitted to Lehigh Valley Hospital-Cedar Crest in Allentown, Pennsylvania, with orthopedic injuries. He is still being evaluated.

"IndyCar will provide medical updates as they become available," the statement said. Fellow drivers said Wickens was lucky to be alive. "He is hurt but hopefully not too bad. At least he is alive," said French driver Sebastien Bourdais. Hunter-Reay was also among those treated for injuries after a crash that also swept up Pietro Fittipaldi, James Hinchcliffe and Takuma Sato.

The race was restarted after a two-hour delay while race workers cleared the track and fixed the busted fence. Hunter-Reay said he felt fortunate to have come out of it without more serious injuries. He was one of the five who was treated at the race track medical facility and released.

"I was lucky to get out of that one," said Hunter-Reay. Fittipaldi wasn't involved in the initial collision but was right behind the others in a tight pack and ran head long into smoke and debris.

"I am a little sore," said Fittipaldi, who was knocked out of the race. "I saw all the smoke ahead. When I saw I was going to hit Hinch head on I had to slam the breaks and get low. —AFP

## Spikeball: US sport coming to a beach or backyard near you

NEW YORK: For a game still in its infancy Spikeball—a beach sport which looks like the love child of volleyball and tennis—is already making global waves. The rules are simple: each team of two must bounce a ball slightly larger than a tennis ball on a flat trampoline-type net 36 inches (91 centimeters) in diameter: about the size of a hula hoop. Like in volleyball, a side can touch the ball a maximum of three times. There are no boundaries, and a point is won when the opposing team fails to hit the ball back to the net. In May, and again in July, the US sports channel ESPN2 even broadcast Spikeball tournaments and the game has also spread to Europe and Canada. It was created in the 1980s and original called Roundnet though its precise origins are unclear. The concept was reborn in 2007 when a young Chicago entrepreneur named Chris Ruder began to sell gear for the game from his company named Spikeball.

Last fall he said he sold his millionth net and claims the company, which generated \$15 million in sales in 2017, has since sold hundreds of thousands more. "It's definitely taken off like crazy in the past couple years," said Steve Halek, a player at an official USA Spikeball tournament in late July at Point Pleasant, a seaside resort in New Jersey.

No fewer than 150 teams were registered for this year's tournament, founded by Spikeball in 2013.

### 'ANYONE CAN PLAY IT'

Spikeball is a game "accessible to everyone. Anyone

## Farah bids for record ahead of Chicago Marathon

LONDON: British athletics legend Mo Farah is hoping to win a record fifth Great North Run when he competes in the half marathon event in Newcastle on September 9.

The 35-year-old Somalia-born quadruple Olympic gold medalist—who retired from championship track running after last year's world championships in London—is also using it as a prep race ahead of October's Chicago Marathon.

Farah is targeting taking possession of the Great North Run record which he presently shares with Kenya's Benson Masaya, who won the last of his quartet in 1996. The race has grown in importance since the inaugural

can play it," said Halek. "There are people that are ridiculously good but you can also play it in your backyard with your family." Halek said that Spikeball is "closer to tennis" than any other sport he knew, but others have said it also has a dash of Basque pelota and squash.

More than 2,500 teams signed up this season to play in official tournaments, with the grand finale scheduled for October in Santa Monica, California, said Jack Scotti, director of USA Spikeball. Aside from the official tournaments there are hundreds of local tournaments organized this year with the support of Spikeball, which often contributes with gear and awards for the winners.

What separates Spikeball from other companies that make the same equipment is that "we have a community," said Scotti. "It's... exposure and getting people to play the sport," he said. "We're pushing the sport."

USA Spikeball has even created a "pro" division, though the winner of a tour event typically walks away with a few hundred dollars of prize money. USA Spikeball wants to preserve the popular side of sport, maintaining the festive and informal atmosphere that evokes a holiday camp for young adults—even though at this point most players are men. "It's a game that you can pick up really quickly," said Scotti. "In one day, you could be addicted to it."

Matt Pereira, who competed at the Point Pleasant tournament, described the game as "really unique," and marveled that it had "no boundaries. So wherever the ball goes, the games goes. It's very free."

### STILL EVOLVING

In Spikeball the angle the ball hits the net and coordination with your teammate are more important than speed or strength, players say. Now that the game is starting to spread the globally, the challenge is to make sure it is more than just a passing fad. To this end Ruder is busy organiz-

one was won in 1981 by Britain's Mike McLeod—the women's race going to fellow Briton Karen Goldhawk. It draws legends of track and field such as Paul Tergat and Haile Gebrselassie, emerging triumphant in 2001 and 2010 respectively.

"I can't wait to come back to Newcastle and race again," said Farah, who also won six outdoor world titles. "It's something I look forward to every year, the crowds are always unbelievable and it's a good course for racing."

"To be the best in the world you have to beat the best and it's going to be no different here. I'm looking forward to the challenge."

Kenya's 2016 Olympic and 2009 World champion in the 5000 metres Vivian Cheruiyot bids to make it two victories in three years and give herself an early birthday present as she turns 35 two days after this year's edition.

She won on her debut over the distance in 2016, and finished second to compatriot Mary Keitany last year. "It was a magnificent race when I won here for the first time in 2016 and I want to be on top of that podium again next month," said Cheruiyot. —AFP



NEW JERSEY: People compete in a Spikeball tournament at Point Pleasant Beach, New Jersey, on July 28, 2018. For a game still in its infancy, Spikeball — a beach sport which looks like the love child of volleyball and tennis — is already making global waves. — AFP

ing tournaments. He is having success at the college level, and is developing the game in high schools by sending kits and training PE teachers around the world. For Scotti, with Spikeball "there's always this next level, and the game is still evolving."

Several players have been calling for the sport to be tweaked to prevent it becoming just a game dominated by powerful serves, a problem once suffered by tennis and something that Ruder acknowledges is "not very fun" to watch on TV. Rule changes could include loosening the net. If somehow the game can be played a bit slower, "it could be a sport that sticks around for a long time," opined Spikeball veteran Jim Swanson. — AFP



Mo Farah

## Sports



# Four Japan athletes kicked out of Asian Games for buying sex

## 'Athletes should always be a good symbol of society'

**TOKYO:** Four Japanese basketball players yesterday apologised for bringing "disgrace" to their nation after they were kicked out of the Asian Games for paying prostitutes for sex. The regional Olympics was hit by scandal after the players were spotted in a notorious red light district of the Indonesian capital Jakarta wearing their national jerseys last week. The expulsion of Yuya Nagayoshi, Takuya Hashimoto, Takuma Sato and Keita Imamura will come as a major embarrassment for Japan, who will host the Tokyo Olympics in two years' time. "I deeply apologise for our careless act that has brought disgrace on not only basketball fans but also all of the Japanese people," Sato told a news conference after the players returned to Tokyo yesterday. Nagayoshi, wearing a black suit and tie, said he "can't imagine" playing basketball again.

Japan Basketball Association chief Yuko Mitsuya said it will wait for a report from a special committee of lawyers before formally punishing the four. "I just feel a sense of shame," said Yasuhiro Yamashita, the head of the Japanese delegation to the Asian Games, the world's second-largest multi-sport event.

"We deeply apologise and intend to give the athletes thorough guidance from now on," he told reporters in Jakarta. The basketball players had dinner after leaving the Games village last Thursday and are believed to have been solicited by a pimp to go to a hotel with women. Yamashita added they "paid for the services of prostitutes". Yamashita said, according to Japan's Kyodo news agency. The story broke after the four, who play in Japan's B-League, were

spotted in the red light district by a reporter for Japan's Asahi Shimbun newspaper.

At the last Asian Games in 2014, Japan were forced to send home swimmer Naoya Tomita after he was caught on video stealing a journalist's camera from the pool deck.

Sheikh Ahmad al-Fahad al-Sabah, president of the Olympic Council of Asia, the Games' governing body, said the latest incident would serve as a warning to other athletes. "I'm sorry for this story but in the sports field you are hearing this kind of story in each Games," the sheikh said. "Athletes should always be a good symbol of society because there's a big generation" that follows them, he added. "At the end of the day, representing your country isn't only about winning medals."

The players visited the prostitutes after Japan beat Qatar 82-71 to go top of Group C. Japan were bronze medalists at the 2014 Asian Games in Incheon, South Korea. It is far from being the first case of sexual misconduct at major multi-sport events, which typically draw thousands of athletes, officials and fans from around the world. At the 2014 Asian Games, an Iranian official was kicked out for the verbal sexual harassment of a female volunteer, and a Palestinian footballer was accused of groping a female worker at the athletes' village. In April, at the Commonwealth Games in Australia, a Mauritian official was accused of sexually assaulting a female athlete during a photo shoot. Major events around the world are believed to trigger a boom in prostitution and athletes' villages are often stocked with free condoms—about 225,000 at the Commonwealth Games.—AFP



**TOKYO:** (L-R) Japanese basketball players Yuya Nagayoshi and Takuya Hashimoto, head of the Japan Basketball Association Yuko Mitsuya, technical chairperson Tomoya Higashino, and players Takuma Sato and Keita Imamura stand at attention at a press conference in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

## Quake survivor Singh puts Nepal on Asian swim map

**JAKARTA:** Having survived a killer earthquake and an embarrassing wardrobe glitch at the 2016 Rio Olympics, Nepali swimmer Gaurika Singh is not your typical 15-year-old. The bubbly schoolgirl made waves as the youngest athlete at the Olympics but is happy to shed that tag and reveals that she has come out of her shell since her baby-faced appearance in Brazil. "A lot of my friends say I'm really loud, which is fair enough because I am," Singh told AFP at the Asian Games yesterday. "I sometimes think in my head 'oh just shut up, Gaurika—you're so annoying!' I'm a social person."

Singh, who left Nepal as a toddler to move to London, got into a flap in Rio when she tore her swimsuit before her 100m backstroke heat before slipping on a new costume and winning the race. Fast forward two years and Singh is strolling around the Asian Games pool in Jakarta like a seasoned pro.

She is a whopping six years older than Indonesian skateboarder Aliqqa Novvery, who at nine is the youngest athlete at the Games. "I was only just starting to swim at that age," said Singh, who is no longer even the youngest member of Nepal's swim team.

Her destiny could have taken a tragic turn three years ago, however, after getting caught on the top floor of a five-storey building in Kathmandu when a magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck, forcing her to dive under a table for shelter.

The killer quake claimed 9,000 lives but has done nothing to keep Singh away from her native country. "It's kind of a blur," she said of that ordeal after swimming the 100m freestyle heats. "My mum was with me but it was still really scary. I was just lucky."

"But I still go to Nepal twice a year—not living there helps me appreciate it more. I love swimming for my country," Singh trains with her national team every summer but practices in Britain the rest of the time. Nepal has just one swimming pool after the other was destroyed in the quake and that freezes over in winter, ruling out anything other than gym work. "It's weird to think people in England are so ungrateful sometimes," she sniffed. "Moaning about having to swim in winter. People in Nepal would kill to." Singh, who swims in the 200m free on Wednesday, reveals that she gets regular messages of support from friends back in Nepal but that she is banned from spending too much time online. "My mum controls my Facebook," she laughed. "Some messages are not what a 15-year-old wants to hear—like 'will you marry me?' I don't think I want to be exposed to that at my age!" — AFP

## India suffer first kabaddi defeat

**JAKARTA:** India's men suffered their first ever kabaddi defeat at the Asian Games when they slumped 24-23 to South Korea in a group match yesterday. The seven-time champions beat both Bangladesh and Sri Lanka on Sunday to stamp their authority but they met their match in South Korea, ending a run of 32 straight wins.

India have only lost once before in the home-grown, breath-holding sport, after they went down to the same opponents at the 2016 World Cup. "What a massive upset. South Korea beats India in men's Kabaddi @asiangames2018 24-23. Indians looked a bit complacent," former India hockey captain Viren Rasquinha said on Twitter.

Kabaddi, an ancient sport rooted in Indian mythology, made its Asian Games debut in Beijing in 1990. The game requires yoga-like breathing skills as two seven-player teams send a raider into enemy territory to tag an opponent before returning to safety, all on one breath. —AFP

## N Korea's pint-sized stars sweep to golden weightlifting double

**JAKARTA:** North Korea's pint-sized weightlifters ruled the roost as the secretive nation bagged their first two gold medals of the Asian Games yesterday. Ri Song Gum pipped local favourite Sri Wahyuni Agustiani to open their account in the women's 48kg class then pocket rocket Om Yun Chol retained his Asian Games men's 56kg title with ease as he defeated his fierce rival Kim Tuan Thach of Vietnam.

Ri, who is just 4ft 7in (140cm) tall, hoisted a massive 112kg in her first clean and jerk attempt to power past Agustiani who had led after the snatch, raising hopes of a home success in the packed 2,000-capacity JI Expo arena. Om, who is not much taller at 4ft 11in (151cm), hauled 160kg above his head for a 287kg total, 7kg ahead of Thach, the reigning world champion, who also had to settle for silver behind Om in Incheon four years ago. London 2012 Olympic gold medalist Om, known for his usually exuberant celebrations, gave a reserved fist pump and departed the stage with just a wave. He returned for two unsuccessful 172kg attempts that would have beaten his own clean and jerk world record of 171kg and set a new Asian Games record total at 299kg. "It's pity that I couldn't set the world record," the Rio Olympics silver medalist Om told reporters after winning North Korea's 100th gold medal in summer Asian Games history.

Om stood to attention and saluted throughout the anthem on the podium with his country's flag wrapped around him to the delight of massed ranks of unified Korea supporters in the crowd.

"Their support gave me lots of energy," Om said. Earlier Olympic silver medalist Agustiani, aged 24 and known affectionately as Yuni, tearfully apologised to her country after failing twice to lift the 112kg she needed to take gold. Ri, with gold assured, twice attempted an Asian Games record 117kg but departed

## Sun scorches rivals to win historic Asian swim title

**JAKARTA:** Chinese battering ram Sun Yang smashed his rivals to create history yesterday as the swimming goliath scooped the first-ever Asian Games men's 800 metres freestyle gold with another monstrous performance. For once though he didn't have it all his own way. Greeted like a rock star by high-pitched squeals from excitable female fans in Jakarta, the three-time Olympic champion returned to the pool expecting to anchor China to victory in the 4x200m free-only for the pesky Japanese to tear up the script. Meanwhile, Japan's Olympic hope Rikako Ikee picked up her second and third Asian titles in the women's 50m butterfly and 100m freestyle.

But it was the talismanic Sun who sprinkled stardust on proceedings as ever, storming to victory in the 800m free in a Games record of seven minutes, 48.36 seconds—almost five seconds clear of Japan's Shogo Takeda. He also came agonisingly close to completing a relay fightback. But Japan's Katsuhiko Matsumoto clung on to seal a fingertip upset in 7:05.17 and dash Sun's hopes of winning five gold medals in Indonesia.

China and Japan finished day two of the six-day meet neck and neck on seven gold medals. Sun, who powered to the 200m title at the weekend, uncoiled his rippling two-metre frame to pull away over the second half of the 800m, leaving Takeda and Vietnam's Nguyen Huy Hoang flailing in his wake. "That gives me confidence for 2020 Tokyo Olympics," Sun told reporters.

"It was a pity we lost the relay but Japan swam a great race. Two finals in one night isn't a problem for me but I can still work on my endurance for sure."

Ikee crushed it in the 50m fly, breezing to victory in a Games best of 25.55 — almost half a second clear of China's Wang Yichun. The 18-year-old, who has become



**JAKARTA:** Ri Song Gum of North Korea competes in the women's 48kg weightlifting event during the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta yesterday. — AFP

in agony as her left knee buckled on both attempts and she had to be helped from the platform.

### TEARS AND CHEERS

A few moments later draped in the North Korean flag, the 20-year-old Ri's pain turned to ecstasy as she received the gold medal and belted out the anthem of the secretive nation with tears streaming down her cheeks and dribbling from her chin.

Ri's victory was watched by North Korea sports minister Kim Il Guk who told Korean media: "She did a great job." "I'm very happy that I won the first gold," said an emotional Ri.

The rising star, who came fourth as a teenager at the 2015 world championships, was cheered to the rafters

by the large phalanx of supporters clad in unified Korea T-shirts. "I felt good because many people supported me," Ri said.

It left an emotional Yuni with yet another silver medal to add to those she won four years ago at the 17th Asiad in Incheon and again at the Rio Olympics. "I have lifted 116kg in training but today never felt like I could repeat it, no," a still visibly upset Yuni told AFP about her elusive quest to top the podium.

"I apologise to all Indonesians, and I will try again to win gold in another championship." Thailand's Thunya Sukcharoen took bronze for the women while Indonesia won their second lifting medal of the day as Suramat Bin Suwoto Wijoyo secured bronze with 272kg in the men's event. — AFP



**JAKARTA:** Gold medalist Japan's Rikako Ikee (left) celebrates during the victory ceremony of the women's 100m freestyle swimming event during the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta yesterday. —AFP

the new face of swimming in Japan, is expected to be a force in the 100m free and 100m fly at the 2020 Olympics in her home city. And after setting a new meet best in the 100m free in helping Japan win the weekend's 4x100m relay, Ikee ducked under the record again in the individual race, touching in 53.27 after a brave fight from China's Zhu Menghui. "I achieved what I came to do tonight so I'm delighted," said Ikee. "The plan was to conserve energy in the first half of the race and finish strong—that's exactly what happened."

Defending champion Kosuke Hagino was stunned by China's Wang Shun in the men's 200m individual medley. Wang caught his Japanese rival over the last leg of freestyle to win in 1:56.52 as Hagino clocked 1:56.75. "I'm delighted," said Wang. "It gives me confidence to beat such a great swimmer."

However, there were some late crumbs of comfort for Olympic silver medalist Hagino, who swam a superb third leg in the 4x200m relay. "I kind of cramped up in the medley," he admitted. "There just wasn't enough in the tank." Former world champion Kanako Watanabe kept Japan in touch with medal-topping China by retaining her 200m breaststroke title in 2:23.05, producing a sinew-shredding late spurt to edge China's Yu Jingyao. — AFP

## Chinese hotshots reign supreme at Asian Games

**PALEMBANG:** China's sharpshooters reigned supreme at the Asian Games yesterday as they won both the men's and women's 10m air rifle titles and also secured top spot in the women's trap. Yang Haoran, 22, and Zhao Ruozhu, 20, were crowned champions in the men's and women's air rifle after shrugging off strong challenges from India and South Korea respectively.

It was a second medal in two days for both shooters after they combined to win silver in the mixed team event on Sunday. Yang, the 2014 world champion, notched up a Games record total of 249.1 in Palembang, ahead of India's Deepak Kumar at 247.7, while Taiwan's Lu Shao-chuan took bronze with 226.8.

Not to be outdone by her Chinese team-mate, Zhao also pulled off a Games record of 250.9. That put Zhao, who was runner-up in last year's Asian championships, narrowly in front of Korea's Jung Eun-hea on 248.6. Mongolia's Nandinzaya Gankhuyag secured bronze with 227.4.

Later, Zhang Xinqiu won the women's trap with a score of 45 points, narrowly beating Korea's Kang Gee-eun on 44 to claim China's seventh shooting gold on day two. Zhang, 23, broke into a huge smile and she jumped up and down, her fist pumping in the air after a miss by her 27-year-old opponent handed over victory.

"I felt like all my hard work had finally paid off," she said afterwards with a beaming smile. "I was so excited and emotional." In the men's trap, Taiwan's Yang Kunpi, 20, beat India's 19-year-old Lakshay Lakshay with a score of 48 to take gold—and afterwards revealed he hadn't even looked at the scores.

"I didn't check the score—I just concentrated on breathing," he said, posing for photos holding his gun above his head. Third place went to Korea's 27-year-old Daemyeong Ahn. — AFP

## Sports

# Bale shines in Real stroll over Getafe, Silva an instant hit for Sevilla

## 'Cristiano has left but we have a good team'

**MADRID:** Real Madrid got off to a winning start in La Liga on Sunday by comfortably beating neighbours Getafe 2-0 at home with an inspiring performance from Gareth Bale in the European champions' first league game in the post Cristiano Ronaldo era.

Bale crashed a diving header against the crossbar early on, then helped to set up Dani Carvajal's looping header which broke the deadlock in the 20th minute, wrapping up the points with a powerful first-time finish early in the second half. The Wales forward was given a standing ovation by the home supporters in his first competitive game back at the Santiago Bernabeu since scoring twice in the 3-1 win over Liverpool in the Champions League final.

The result lifts the pressure on new coach Julen Lopetegui after Wednesday's painful 4-2 defeat to Atletico Madrid in the UEFA Super Cup and sees Real join champions Barcelona on three points after one game, although Sevilla lead the standings on goal difference after their 4-1 win at Rayo Vallecano.

Sevilla forward Andre Silva became the first player since Romario in 1993 to bag a hat-trick in his La Liga debut, helping Sevilla to thrash Rayo and scoring the first goal to be awarded in the Spanish top flight with the use of video technology (VAR). Top-flight debutants Huesca sprang a surprise by winning 2-1 at Eibar.

"It was very important to make a strong start with good sensations and we played very well: we have to go little by little but this is the right way to start the league season," Real winger Marco Asensio told reporters.

"Cristiano has left but we have a good team. We are working hard, you saw that reflected on the pitch today and this is the way to continue."

Lopetegui again chose Costa Rica international Keylor Navas in goal ahead of 30-million-euro (\$34.31-million) signing Thibaut Courtois and fielded Spanish midfielder Dani Ceballos over Luka Modric, who was also left out of the starting line-up in the Super Cup game but came on in the second half.

### FREQUENT ATTACKS

Real monopolised the ball with a staggering 78 percent of possession and barely conceded a chance to Getafe, who picked up seven yellow cards as they desperately tried to halt Real's frequent attacks.

Real's first clear chance came when Marcelo picked out Bale with a searching cross and the Wales forward dived to meet it but could only head against the bar, missing the chance to score his side's opening goal of the season for a fourth year in a row. That honour fell to Spain defender Carvajal, who stayed with his feet on the ground to head the loose ball into the top corner after Getafe goalkeeper David Soria had flapped at Bale's cross. Spanish winger Asensio joined Bale in hitting the woodwork and was also the catalyst for Real's second goal, chasing down Getafe defender Djene Dakonam to win back the ball and cross for Bale to hammer it in off the post. Franco Vazquez had put Sevilla ahead at Rayo before Silva demonstrated the goalscoring prowess which convinced AC Milan to pay 38 million euros for the Portugal international last season.

Silva, 22, scored only two goals in 24 Serie A appearances before joining Sevilla this month but quickly matched that tally by netting twice before halftime and completed his hat-trick in the 79th minute with another close-range strike. — Reuters



**MADRID:** Real Madrid's Spanish defender Sergio Ramos (L) jumps for a header next to Getafe's Togolese defender Djene Dakonam and Getafe's Uruguayan defender Damian Suarez (R) during the Spanish League football match between Real Madrid and Getafe at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid on Sunday. — AFP

## Burnley's 'true club great' McIlroy dies

**LONDON:** Northern Ireland international Jimmy McIlroy, widely regarded as Burnley's finest ever player, has died aged 86, the club announced yesterday. An inside forward who was capped 55 times and helped the Northern Irish reach the 1958 World Cup quarter-finals, McIlroy was an integral part of the 'Clarets' team that won the 1960 league title.

With McIlroy's help the club also narrowly missed out on achieving the domestic double in 1962, finishing second in the league and losing in the FA Cup final. McIlroy-whose standing in the annals of the club's history is such they named a stand in his honour in the

1990s-scored 131 goals for Burnley in the 12 years he spent there after he joined from Northern Irish outfit Glentoran. He was part of the golden era for the club between 1956 and 1962 — the year he left for Stoke City for £25,000. During that spell they never finished worse than seventh in the First Division and reached the European Cup quarter-finals in 1961.

"Burnley Football Club is greatly saddened to hear of the death of Jimmy McIlroy-widely regarded as the club's finest ever player," read a statement from the club posted on their website. McIlroy helped Stoke win promotion to the top tier in his first season there and the 1964 League Cup final which they lost 4-3 to Leicester City.

McIlroy tried his hand at management-firstly at Oldham in 1965 having been hired by their chairman Ken Bates who was to go on to be the controversial owner of Chelsea and Leeds United.

But he never took to it with the same aplomb he had shown as a player and after a brief stint at Bolton in 1970 never sat in the dugout again. — AFP



**Jimmy McIlroy**

## Inter Milan shocked in Serie A opener, Dzeko hits stunner

**MILAN:** A late Edin Dzeko stunner got AS Roma off the mark in their Serie A campaign at Torino on Sunday but Inter Milan made the worst possible start with a 1-0 loss at Sassuolo. Roma's win meant the top three from last year's campaign all won their opening round of matches.

Champions Juventus, with new superstar signing Cristiano Ronaldo making his debut, won 3-2 at Chievo on Saturday with runners-up Napoli coming back to win 2-1 at Lazio. But Inter Milan-fourth last season-suffered an early upset after Domenico Berardi slotted in a 27th-minute penalty to give all three points to their rivals from Modena.

"This has complicated everything," said Inter coach Luciano Spalletti. "Sassuolo did well on the counter-attack, they were compact without giving anything. We lost the game because of a penalty and Sassuolo didn't create many chances."

Sassuolo dominated the first half, earning a penalty when Joao Mario brought down Federico Di Francesco in the penalty area. Inter Milan's top scorer last season Mauro Icardi came close twice, with Croatian Ivan Perisic also sending the ball over the top in the second half.

Earlier Roma's only goal came one minute from time following spectacular play by new Dutch signing Justin Kluivert, son of former Barcelona striker Patrick Kluivert. The 19-year-old came on as a second-half substitute, running down the right flank, dribbling past past three players to provide the crucial cross which Dzeko lashed into the far top corner.

"It was a great cross, and I scored even better goal!" Dzeko joked. "Last year I scored one that was maybe a bit better (against Chelsea), but this is among the best three. I saw Kluivert on the right and hoped he would cross it to the back post, which is fortunately what he did. He definitely changed the game."

Venezuelan Tomas Rincon had Torino's best chance as he rattled the crossbar on 39 minutes. Iago Falque thought he had scored for the hosts three minutes after the break but his attempt was ruled offside after a look at the VAR.

Former Paris Saint Germain player Javier Pastore missed a number of chances against his former teammate Salvatore Sirigu in the Torino goal. Lorenzo De Silvestri limped off after a knock and allowed Ola Aina to also get his first Serie A game just days after arriving on loan from Chelsea, with new Roma goalkeeper Robin Olsen making several saves.

"Edin maybe misses the easiest goals, but has accustomed us to these feats," said Roma coach Eusebio Di Francesco. "In the second half we suffered, I put Kluivert on to give a little freshness. He has important qualities, today he has shown it."

Parma-returning to the top flight after bankruptcy and three consecutive promotions-threw away a two-goal being held 2-2 at home after Udinese scored two goals in four minutes in the second half.

Empoli returned to the top flight with a 2-0 win at home against Cagliari as SPAL won their local derby at 10-man Bologna 1-0. The opening round of matches involving both Genoa teams were postponed because of the bridge collapse in the port city. Sampdoria had been due to host Fiorentina and Genoa to travel to AC Milan. — AFP

## Facing ban, Nigeria says recognises FIFA-approved soccer chief

**LAGOS/ABUJA:** Nigeria acknowledged a FIFA-approved appointee as the sole head of its national soccer federation yesterday, minutes before the world body was due to ban the country from international matches over political interference in filling the post.

FIFA had said it would suspend Nigeria at 1100 GMT - thereby excluding the team from next month's African Nations Cup qualifiers - over alleged state meddling in the running of the Nigerian Football Federation (NFF).

The NFF voted in FIFA's recognised leadership team, under Amaju Pinnick, in 2014. His long-standing rival Chris Giwa appealed against that result and, after a protracted legal battle, the High Court found in his favour in June.

Giwa was handed a five-year ban by FIFA for breaches of NFF statutes and the FIFA code of ethics in February 2017. But he appeared to have the backing of the Nigerian government. Sports minister Solomon Dalung included Giwa in a proposed list of delegates to meet FIFA president Gianni Infantino in Zurich last week - an idea FIFA rejected.

FIFA does not accept third party interference in its member federations and said the NFF must be led by Pinnick. It issued Nigeria with a final warning on 14 Aug. In a tweet posted at 1038 GMT, a spokesman for Vice President Yemi Osinbajo said Nigeria had "already conveyed to FIFA its firm position recognising Amaju Pinnick-led NFF as the current & only NFF Exco (executive committee)."

The government would work with all stakeholders "to resolve (the) dispute in a timely manner," he added. FIFA did not immediately respond to an emailed request for comment. Pinnick was in Lagos on Monday, rather than the capital Abuja where NFF's headquarters are located. He told Reuters by phone that FIFA would not be banning anyone and it was in talks with the government.

Mohammed Sanusi, NFF's general secretary under Pinnick's leadership, said "there are talks at the top level of government and I will confidently tell you there is no course for alarm." In Abuja, armed security agents were posted outside NFF's offices preventing people from entering. "The media is not allowed in until 3 p.m. Signed: Management," a sign read. Nigeria are due to play a qualifier for the 2019 African Nations Cup in the Seychelles on Sept 8. — Reuters



**MASON:** Kiki Bertens of the Netherlands holds the trophy after defeating Simona Halep of Romania during the women's final during Day 9 of the Western and Southern Open at the Lindner Family Tennis Center on Sunday. — AFP

## Bertens shocks Halep to win Cincinnati title

**Cincinnati:** Dutch challenger Kiki Bertens profited from a third-set collapse by Simona Halep to score the biggest win of her career Sunday, beating the world number one 2-6, 7-6 (8/6), 6-2 in the Cincinnati WTA final.

"This is the best day of my career, winning on a surface that you didn't really like. That's a great feeling," Bertens said. "I'm just so proud, and it's such a great feeling to hold the trophy at the end of the week."

Halep, who claimed the Montreal title a week ago and came into the final on a nine-match winning streak, ran out of reserves and was unable to stop the mounting Bertens momentum. "I've lost three finals here, but maybe I will be able to win one at this tournament because I love to play here," said Halep, who fell to Serena Williams in the 2015 final of the hardcourt US Open tuneup and to Garbine Muguruza in the title match last year.

"I had match ball, so I was there," Halep said. "I didn't take my chance. In the third set I was empty and I couldn't fight anymore." The upset took just over two hours and marked the 10th time this season that 17th-ranked Bertens has defeated a top 10 opponent.

"It was such a tough match, and after winning that second set I knew, anything is still possible-just keep on going," said Bertens, who claimed a sixth career

WTA title. "Winning a title like this, my first hard court title, and against number one of the world, getting my career high on Monday ... it's just coming everything together, I guess," she added.

Bertens saved a Halep match point in the second-set tiebreaker to stay alive. "I'm a little bit upset because I couldn't manage better today, but that's it. I'm like this, and I have to work more," Halep said.

Halep had looked like ending a quick afternoon with a victory after breaking Bertens twice to sweep the first set. But the 26-year-old Dutchwoman, who had considered retiring last season due to poor results, began to turn the tide in the second as she broke for a 3-1 lead.

Halep got that break back in the eighth game to make it 4-4, and took tighter control in the tiebreaker. But Bertens won four games in the decider to take a 4-2 lead and quickly seized the set seconds after saving the match point.

Halep seriously faded in the final set, going down two breaks to trail 1-4. Bertens kept up the pressure and advanced with a winner on her first match point, posting her second career win over Hale six years after beating her for the first time.

The depleted Halep is still entered as top seed in the upcoming WTA tournament in New Haven, which ends just two days prior to the start of the US Open in New York. While not specifying if she will actually play, Halep said she would travel to Connecticut on Monday.

"For sure I need a little bit of rest because I'm exhausted. But also I take the positive from these two weeks," she added. "It's a great confidence (builder), and I'm looking forward actually for the next one to be better on court." — AFP

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## Djokovic wins Cincinnati title

Djokovic: I finally won Cincinnati after six finals



MASON: Roger Federer (left) of Switzerland and Novak Djokovic of Serbia pose for photographers after their match during the men's final of the Western & Southern Open at Lindner Family Tennis Center on Sunday in Mason, Ohio. —

**CINCINNATI:** Novak Djokovic ended a career-long jinx, lifting the trophy in Cincinnati at last to complete a matched set of Masters 1000 titles. Djokovic, who came up empty in five prior Cincinnati finals, defeated seven-time winner Roger Federer 6-4, 6-4 in the final. The former world number one became the first man to win all nine of the ATP's Masters 1000 events in the elite series' current configuration.

Federer, meanwhile, lost a final in the hardcourt US Open tuneup for the first time. "I played five finals (here) before, and most of those finals I lost to this great man, Roger ... thank you for letting me win here once in Cincinnati," Djokovic joked.

"This is a dream come true," Djokovic said. "I finally won Cincinnati after six finals, some against the greatest ever, Roger." Federer, a 20-time Grand Slam winner,

said his game wasn't sharp—but he didn't want to take anything away from Djokovic's achievement.

"Novak is a great champion," Federer said. "This is about him making history." Federer's streak of 100 straight unbroken service games in Cincy was ended by Djokovic in the seventh game of the first set. The 37-year-old Swiss had been aiming for a 99th career trophy, but was unable to get over the line due in part to four double-faults at the most inopportune of times, but he said his return game was also lacking.

"It was definitely not my best day on the return - it was just awful," Federer said. "Missing every second serve on the forehand side, I don't know what that was about." "But I don't even want to look for reasons why it happened," he added. "Novak totally deserved to win today. This (effort) was not good enough.

"Good week, but I'm happy it's over and I need to rest," added Federer, his eye on the US Open starting in New York in eight days. Djokovic claimed the opening set in 37 minutes and came back from an early break in the second to overhaul his longtime rival as they played for the 46th time.

### 'WONDERFUL FEELING'

The Serb now leads Federer 24-22 and has won their last three encounters. The pair had not played since the 2016 Australian Open semi-finals more than two and a half years ago. Wimbledon champion Djokovic claimed his Masters record on his first match point and now heads to the US Open as a title favorite after a string of sub-par seasons and an elbow injury which required surgery.

"It's a wonderful feeling, it's been a couple of tough months for me with an injury and then winning Wimbledon and Cincinnati," Djokovic said. Federer started the match with three aces in the opening game, then added a pair of love games for a 3-2 lead.

But it began to unravel as the Swiss double-faulted to yield a break point, dropping serve as Djokovic moved ahead 4-3. Djokovic took advantage for a 5-3 lead and closed out the set after 37 minutes.

Federer broke for a 2-0 lead in the second set but gave the break back immediately as he double faulted to give Djokovic a break point which the Serb promptly converted. Djokovic broke again to lead 4-3, and after Federer held to close the gap to 4-5 Djokovic ended the afternoon in the next game on his first match point. —AFP

## OCA to analyse old results to punish dope-tainted sports

**JAKARTA:** The three sports which recorded the most doping cases in the last 12 years risk being trimmed or dropped altogether from the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) calendar, its president Sheikh Ahmed Al-Fahad Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah said yesterday.

Continental powerhouse China are not competing in weightlifting at the ongoing Asian Games after a one-year suspension on the lifters following multiple doping violations. The OCA reported 10 doping cases at last year's Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games in Ashgabat at its weekend meeting on the sidelines of its showpiece event in Indonesia.

Its executive body, Sheikh Ahmed said, has decided to analyse the doping results of the last 12 years to identify the serial offenders. "We want to see which three games have the highest number (of doping offenders)," the Kuwaiti told reporters.

"When we know that, we'll put those under pressure. They will not be in our sports programme, or there will

be fewer medals, just to make sure all federations in Asia work in the direction of clean athletes."

Like China, Kazakhstan are also serving a doping ban and are absent from the weightlifting competition in Jakarta. "We are very keen to have clean athletes," Sheikh Ahmed said, adding that it had become major concern for the governing body.

"We are working to have the best Games with our clean athletes as much as we can. Asia is one of the continents who have a problem with clean athletes. "It has increased (in) big number... we want to achieve our goals of having clean athletes. For that, we're working with WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency), and following their regulations..." — Reuters



Sheikh Ahmed Al-Fahad Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah