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Minister refutes MP's claims of obstructing T4 operations

Lawmaker says amnesty gateway to Assembly-govt cooperation

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Minister of State for Housing and Services Affairs Jenan Bushehri yesterday denied allegations by opposition MP Mohammad Al-Mutair that the government was obstructing the work of a Korean company that won a contract to operate a new Kuwait airport terminal used by Kuwait Airways. Mutair had alleged that the company was unable to operate Terminal 4 properly because ministries were refusing to issue the necessary visas and residence permits, claiming this was done under pressure from a competing domestic airline. The lawmaker also threatened to file to grill the prime minister over the claims and accused the government of being weak.

Kuwait Airways was exclusively given the new terminal in a bid to reduce the rush of passengers at the main terminal as a Turkish company is due to complete the

new airport project by the end of 2021. Bushehri insisted that the civil aviation authorities and other officials have held meetings regularly with the South Korean company to discuss facilitating operations and the company did not raise any complaints about visas and residencies.

She said that the ministries of interior and social affairs and labor have been providing the company with all the assistance needed for the recruitment of employees to ensure smooth operations. Bushehri however asked the lawmaker to submit any evidence regarding his claims and promised she would take the necessary legal measures. The minister stressed that operations at T4 are proceeding according to schedule in cooperation between the civil aviation, Kuwait Airways, the interior ministry, the customs and other authorities. She said this is being done gradually and in phases to reach full operations soon.

The minister said that the claims by the lawmaker that three Kuwait Airways jets were deliberately involved in accidents to prevent their operation need to be sent to the public prosecution if true. She however recalled that in 2017 and this year, two KAC planes met with accidents and the two cases were investigated and sent to court. A third plane was involved in an accident by mistake and the case is under investigation.

Separately, opposition MP Nayef Al-Merdas said yesterday cooperation between the government and the National Assembly over the issue of granting a general amnesty to convicted opposition MPs and activists is the gateway for solid cooperation between the two bodies. He said that after the conviction of MPs Waleed Al-Tabtabaei and Jamaan Al-Harbash over the storming of the Assembly building, their membership in the Assembly should be decided by the Assembly itself.



Jenan Bushehri



Mohammad Al-Mutair



Nayef Al-Merdas

The lawmaker said that the storming of the Assembly is a purely political case in which opposition MPs and activists protested against corruption and the bribery case in the Assembly, and accordingly the mem-

bership of the two lawmakers must not be revoked. Merdas called for putting an end to this issue by issuing the general amnesty law to defuse a political crisis that has continued for years and has exhausted the country.

Amir commends athletes as another karateka medals

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah congratulated Sunday Kuwaiti shooter Mansour Al-Rashidi and karateka Ali Al-Shatti for winning gold medals at the 2018 Asian Games held in Indonesia. He also congratulated Kuwaiti karateka Ahmad Mohammad Al-Misfir yesterday for winning a silver medal. Misfir defeated Mahmoud Sajjan of Jordan, Ma Zyon of China and Zabiollah Poorshab of Iran before losing his final game against Japan's Ryutaro Araga after a tough match. The Amir, in cables to the athletes, commended their achievements and wished them best and more medals in the future. HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also congratulated ath-



JAKARTA: Japan's Ryutaro Araga (left) competes against Kuwait's Ahmad Al-Misfir during their men's 84-kg category final karate event at the 2018 Asian Games yesterday. — AFP

letes for their achievements. HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables too. — KUNA

Iran claims full control of Gulf; Israel working on new missiles

TEHRAN/JERUSALEM: Iran has full control of the Gulf and the US Navy does not belong there, the head of the navy of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, General Alireza Tangsiri, was quoted by Tasnim news agency as saying yesterday. Tehran has suggested it could take military action in the Gulf to block other countries' oil exports in retaliation for US sanctions intended to halt its sales of crude. Washington maintains a fleet in the Gulf that protects oil shipping routes.

Tangsiri said Iran had full control of the Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz that leads into it. Closing the strait would be the most direct way of blocking shipping. "We can ensure the security of the...Gulf and there is

no need for the presence of aliens like the US and the countries whose home is not in here," he said in the quote, which appeared in English translation on Tasnim. He added, "All the carriers and military and non-military ships will be controlled and there is full supervision over the...Gulf. Our presence in the region is physical and constant and night and day."

Separately, the head of the Revolutionary Guards, Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari, said Iran's enemies would not prevail in a conflict. "The enemies are strictly avoiding any conflict with Iran because they know that it will not be beneficial for them," Jafari said, according to Tasnim. Tension between Iran and the United States has escalated since President Donald Trump pulled out of a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers in May and reimposed sanctions.

Senior US officials have said they aim to reduce Iran's oil exports to zero. Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the most senior authority in the Islamic Republic, said last month that he supports the idea that if Iran is not allowed to export oil then no country should export oil from the Gulf.

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News in brief

Monsoon rains kill over 1,200

NEW DELHI: More than 1,200 people have been killed across South Asia in monsoon storms so far this year, as India counts the rising toll from floods that have devastated southern Kerala state. Kerala has reported 445 deaths with more bodies discovered each day as a massive cleanup gets underway. Kerala accounted for nearly half of the more than 1,000 deaths reported across India, with over 160 killed in neighboring Karnataka, more than 200 fatalities in Uttar Pradesh, and 195 in West Bengal. The monsoon also battered Nepal, with 87 people killed since June. But in Sri Lanka, where authorities organized the early evacuation of 750,000 people in threatened areas this year, the death toll from monsoon floods fell to 24 from 224 killed in May and June last year. In Bangladesh, floods and landslides killed at least 29 people. — AFP

Canada holds firm in dispute

BERLIN: Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland refused to give ground in a dispute with Saudi Arabia yesterday, saying her country would "always stand up for human rights around the world". While she did not cite the kingdom by name, Freeland told a gathering of German diplomats in Berlin that "Canada will always stand up for human rights around the world, very much including women's rights". That would hold true "even when we are told to mind our own business, or that matters such as these should only be discussed in private, between leaders, behind closed doors. And even when speaking up brings consequences," she said. Earlier this month the Saudi government expelled Canada's ambassador, recalled its own envoy and froze all new trade and investments after the North American nation denounced a crackdown on rights activists there. "We count on and hope for Germany's support" in defending human rights, Freeland added. — AFP

UN slams Myanmar army for 'genocide', Facebook slaps bans

GENEVA: UN investigators called yesterday for Myanmar's army chief to resign and for him and five other top military commanders to be prosecuted in an international court for genocide against the country's Rohingya minority. The call prompted Facebook, which has been criticized for allowing hate speech against the Rohingya to flourish, to ban the army chief and remove other pages tied to the country's military.

Some 700,000 Rohingya Muslims fled northern Rakhine state to Bangladesh after Myanmar launched a brutal crackdown in August last year on insurgents amid accounts of arson, murder and rape at the hands of soldiers and vigilante mobs in the mainly Buddhist country. Myanmar has vehemently denied allegations of ethnic cleansing, insisting it was responding to attacks by Rohingya rebels.

But yesterday, a UN-backed fact-finding mission into violations in Myanmar said the country's "top military generals, including Commander-in-Chief Senior-General Min Aung Hlaing, must be investigated and

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Half the world's schools lack clean water, toilets and hand washing

LONDON: Nearly half the world's schools lack clean drinking water, toilets and hand washing facilities, putting millions of children at risk of disease, experts warned yesterday. Almost 900 million children have to contend with



GENEVA: Members of the UN Independent International Fact-finding Mission on Myanmar Christopher Sidoti, Chairperson Marzuki Darusman and Radhika Coomaraswamy present the final report during a press conference yesterday. — AFP

a lack of basic hygiene facilities during their education, putting their health at risk and meaning some have to miss school. "You can't have a quality learning environment without these basics," said Dr Rick Johnston of the World Health Organization, a lead researcher on the project. "Children may not come to school at all if there's no toilets... Then, when they are at school, they are not going to at their very best if they are not able to use a decent toilet or if they are not properly hydrated."

World leaders have signed up to global pledges to provide safe water and hygiene facilities for all and ensure every child gets a comprehensive education by 2030 under the UN's sustainable development goals. A lack of safe water and sanitation facilities can cause dehydration, illness, and even death. But many children

are forced to risk their health to take part in classes, according to the report produced jointly by the United Nations Children's Fund UNICEF and the WHO, the first to look specifically at provision in schools.

It found nearly a third of primary and secondary schools lacked a safe and reliable drinking water supply, affecting nearly 570 million children. Nearly 20 percent of schools had no safe drinking water at all. Just over a third of schools lacked adequate toilet facilities, affecting more than 620 million children. Almost one in five primary schools and one in eight secondary schools were considered to have no sanitation. Nearly half lacked proper hand washing facilities, essential for helping prevent the spread of infections and disease.

Continued on Page 24

Govt assigns departments to bring back Kuwaitis stranded abroad

KD 2,000 set for 400-square-meter lot in South Sabah Al-Ahmad City

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti government assigned yesterday the Foreign and Finance ministries, and Directorate General for Civil Aviation (DGCA) to help bring back Kuwaiti citizens, whose flights on Wataniya Airways were cancelled. The cabinet, meeting at Seif Palace under chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, assigned the three departments to facilitate the return of citizens, said Anas Al-Saleh, Deputy Premier, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Interior Minister.

Minister of State for Housing and Minister of State for Services, Jenan Bushehri, briefed the cabinet about measures taken to help citizens stranded abroad after their flights on Wataniya Airways were cancelled, as school year was about to start. Kuwait Airways announced on Sunday that it would operate a Charter airplane to bring back the passengers.

Meanwhile, the cabinet expressed gratitude for King Salman of Saudi Arabia and the Saudi government for the successful Hajj season, as well as services provided for the pilgrims which contributed to smooth performance of rituals.

South Sabah Al-Ahmad City

The government, on housing issues, decided to set KD 2,000 (\$6,600) as the price for a 400-square-meter lot in South Sabah Al-Ahmad City. The government also assigned the public transport authority, public-private partnership authority and planning and development council to carry out feasibility study over investment of islands linked to Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad causeway.

The cabinet, said Saleh, praised the Saudi security authorities for thwarting a terrorist attack in Bukairiya area, condemned a terrorist explosion in northern Sinai, Egypt, that killed and wounded a number of services. The cabinet also condemned a terrorist attack on headquarters of the electoral commission in Afghanistan, and an attack in Paris which killed two persons and injured others. The government expressed deepest sorrow over passing away of former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, and paid tribute to his achievements towards international peace and security. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah (center) chairs the cabinet's meeting yesterday. — KUNA



(From left) The ministers of health, housing, public works and justice attend the meeting.



(From left) The ministers of National Assembly affairs, education, oil and information attend the meeting.

Zain strategic partner of traffic awareness campaign

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced its strategic partnership of the Ministry of Interior's (MOI) latest traffic awareness campaign, which extends throughout the new school year and is organized by MOI's General Department of Public Relations and Media Security.

Zain participated in the opening ceremony of the campaign's awareness exhibition at the Avenues mall, which witnessed the attendance of Deputy General Director of MOI's General Department of Public Relations and Media Security Brigadier Tawheed Al-Kandari, Director of MOI's Media Security Department Lieutenant Colonel Nasser Boslaib, as well as a number of Zain officials and the ministry's representatives.

Zain's strategic partnership of this awareness campaign comes as part of its Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy that aims at serving the community. The company will always be keen on shouldering initiatives that work towards enhancing the society's welfare in partnership with the various ministries and public authorities, including the Ministry of Interior.

Zain's support to this campaign will extend throughout the new school year of 2018-2019. The campaign aims at spreading positive awareness about traffic safety among students of all age groups, ranging from kindergarten to college, with the goal of enriching traffic safety values within them from an early age.

The campaign's exhibition held at the Avenues Mall mainly aims at spreading positive awareness among visitors, especially young people, about traffic safety through a number of activities that contribute to delivering a positive message in a creative way. The activities include a coloring section for children to introduce traffic signs, a mini-village with streets and roads where children can simulate driving and learn basic traffic laws such as wearing seatbelts, following road lines, respecting special needs parking, and more.

The exhibition also includes a Virtual Reality (VR) section to showcase the dangerous consequences of using mobile phones while driving, where visitors can simulate a lifelike situation of a driver using their mobile phone while driving and experience the negative results of this reckless behavior. The campaign's program will also include a number of visits to schools and universities to spread traffic safety awareness among students.

As part of its partnership with the Ministry of Interior, Zain sponsored the National Drug Abuse Prevention Campaign during June 2018. The campaign mainly aimed at spreading awareness among young



KUWAIT: Brigadier Tawheed Al-Kandari and Lieutenant Colonel Nasser Boslaib pose for a group photo with Zain officials during the exhibition.



people about the various types of illegal drugs, their dangers, and how to prevent them.

Zain will continue to find ways to serve the community as to foster a better world and be a productive member of the society, being a leader in the Kuwaiti private sector. The company is proud to be one of the first organizations to partner with the Ministry of

Interior to make this campaign a success and contribute to saving lives. Zain's solid Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy primarily focuses on the wellbeing of the entire nation. For this reason, the company has maintained its support of numerous initiatives that spread awareness and help make a difference in people's everyday lives.

News in brief

Crown Prince receives National Security chief

KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Seif Palace the National Security Bureau Chief Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. — KUNA

Amir congratulates presidents

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent yesterday a cable of congratulations to the newly elected President of Zimbabwe, Emmerson Mnangagwa, wishing him everlasting health and wellness, and further progress and prosperity to his country. His Highness the Amir also sent a cable of congratulations to Mali's President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita on his re-election. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to the two presidents. — KUNA

Consumer Price Index up 0.80 percent in July

KUWAIT: Consumer Price Index (CPI) in Kuwait increased by 0.80 percent last month, compared to July 2017, The Central Statistical Bureau said Sunday. It also noted CPI increased by 0.18 percent in July when compared to the month before. It said prices of cigarettes and tobacco increased by 13.71 percent year-on-year (YOY), alongside prices of food and beverages which rose by 1.21 percent YOY. The Bureau said communication group prices increased by 4.61 percent, prices of miscellaneous goods and services also increased by 3.06 and prices of household furniture rose by 1.82 percent. Prices of education increased by 1.71 percent, said the Bureau, while prices of housing services dropped by 0.94 percent. Restaurants and hotels' prices edged higher by 1.34, similar to transportation prices which increased by 1.44 percent, said the Bureau. Health services realized an increase by 3.3 percent, contrary to clothes and footwear which dropped by 1.59 percent. — KUNA

Local

Back to business: Long queues after holidays at government agencies, offices

Hundreds wait for hours in lines to renew driver's licenses



KUWAIT: People lined up at a traffic department in Kuwait. — Photos by Ben Garcia

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Kuwait returned to work on Sunday after a nine-day holiday to celebrate Eid Al-Adha. The typical rush at government departments and ministries was in full display only two days into the working week. Kuwait Times visited the General Traffic Department in Jabriya (Hawally governorate) and the General Traffic Department in Dajeej (Farwaniya governorate) and found long queues at both places. As expatriates are allowed to process paperwork only during the afternoon, hundreds of people queue up before offices open at 4 pm till the last minute of closing time.

Hundreds of expats wait for hours in lines to renew driver's licenses or complete other paperwork. Even when the line moves quickly and officers at the counter process hundreds of applications, the crowds barely diminish.

In 2014, the interior ministry implemented a number of

restrictions on expats in a bid to reduce the number of drivers on the road - and the number of applications for



Massive increase in delivery-based business

salary of KD 600. Several categories of foreign workers are exempt including judges, members of the diplomatic corps, journalists, imams, nurses, domestic drivers, widows and divorcees of Kuwaiti men, some students and others. Other categories like expat stay-at-home moms are mostly barred from obtaining a driving license, even if they have school-age children that need daily transport.

Massive increase

The bid to reduce the number of cars on the road, however, has been stymied by an explosion in the demand for delivery services. From fast-food to Instagram businesses, Kuwait has in the last few years seen a massive increase in delivery-based business, further aggravating the situation and adding to the number of cars on the road and the numbers of expatriates in need of driving licenses.

"I came on the last working day on August 16. It was completely the same. We queued and were lucky to get

close to the counter, but they shut for the day and we were told to come back after Eid. It is the same again today - they told us again to come back tomorrow," said a Pakistani truck driver standing in the queue. He had been waiting for more than an hour. An Egyptian man in the queue complained that some individuals pass much quickly through the line. "I found out there are some people who go inside (the processing area) without standing in line. It is unfair, but what can we do in this matter?" he asked.

Always apply for renewals several weeks before the expiry of your important documents. Long queues are unavoidable and some departments are so overwhelmed that they simply cannot handle the demand. Several government offices are only taking papers of what they can process for the day. "We are sorry - please come back later," said a police officer manning the door at the traffic department.

898 liquor boxes busted at Wafra farm

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

KUWAIT: The Drugs Control General Department (DCGD) foiled an attempt to sell around 898 cartons of imported liquor in the local market after they raided a farm in Wafra and arrested two citizens. A third is being sought. Criminal detectives learned that some people succeeded in smuggling a truck loaded with liquor into the country and stored it in Wafra. DCGD men confirmed the information was true, so a warrant was obtained and the farm raided. The estimated value of the liquor is KD 750,000.

Municipality campaign

Kuwait Municipality's public relations department said Riggae and occupational Ardhiya cleaning centers carried out a campaign to remove all abandoned vehicles, debris and roaming vendors from the

area. The department said the campaign resulted in removing 20 vehicles and issuing 17 citations for public cleanliness violations. Director of Farwaniya public cleanliness department Saad Al-Khraiej said the campaigns will continue to raise the cleanliness level in the governorate.

'Lion keeper' arrested

Police arrested a man suspected of owning the lion that escaped in Kabd, before it was tranquilized and taken to the zoo, Al-Anbaa reported. Information was received that the citizen keeps several wild animals, and that he brings them young and raises them. The suspect denied that the runaway lion was his.

Swindling

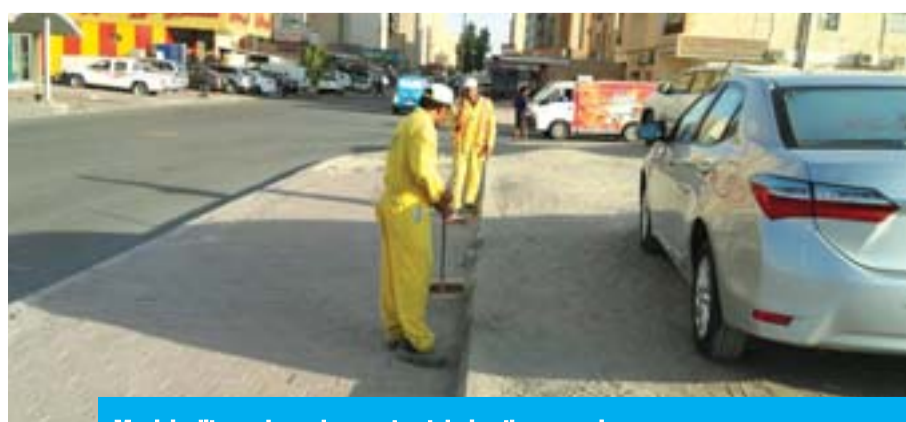
The criminal court sentenced a young man to three years in jail for swindling a girl out of KD 84,000 after claiming he was a Gulf "VIP". He set up a bogus account on social media under the name of a VIP family, and made the girl believe he traded in profitable investments, and convinced her to transfer the money to his account. The victim lodged a complaint through a lawyer.



KUWAIT: This handout photo shows cartons containing liquor bottles busted at a Wafra farm.



A municipality truck is loaded with debris during a recent campaign.



Municipality workers clean a street during the campaign.

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Local

Turkish day crash course held at Salwa's public library

Eman Al-Salem learned Turkish starting from the beginner level all the way to fluent

By Jeri Al-Jeri

KUWAIT: Salwa's public library hosted a Turkish course Sunday evening. Instructor Imrah Orhan offered attendees an introductory lesson on the Turkish alphabet and basic grammar. Turkish is a popular language to learn in Kuwait, with many locals and expatriates traveling to the nearby Middle Eastern country for holidays all year round. Turkish entertainment, especially serials, are widely popular with Arab audiences and knowing a bit of the language helps further that enjoyment.

During the workshop, I had the pleasure of meeting a young, tenacious Kuwaiti woman named Eman Al-Salem who has assiduously worked her way up the six levels of Turkish - from beginner to fluent. She attended the Salwa library event, arriving before anyone

else to get a good seat and prepare for the lesson. The young lady even enrolled herself in a special language course in Turkey in order to improve her skills and earn certification officially as a Turkish speaker. The following are excerpts from my interview with her:

Kuwait Times: What attracted you to learn Turkish?

Eman: The language is beautiful! It is so close to Arabic ears. It is not far from our language. We share a lot of common words and phrases. Given the fact that it is very much used in social media, I can say that learning it will be a piece of cake.

KT: Was learning Turkish in Turkey a difficult challenge?

Eman: No, it is quite the opposite. It was really fun and educational at the same time.

And I would like to thank my teacher and my colleagues from all different ethnicities. We all

“

Turkish is so close to Arabic ears

”

had a common goal and that it is to learn Turkish. Also, I am grateful for the hospitality of the Turkish people.

KT: Did your view of the Turkish society change after you learned the language?

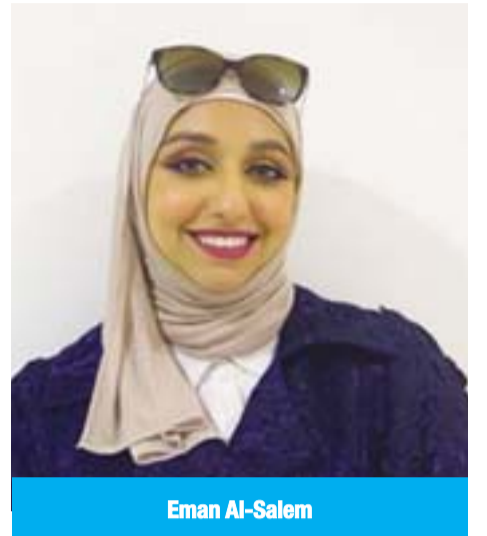
Eman: They are highly educated and civilized and very proud of their language, that they will assist everyone who wants to learn their mother tongue.

KT: Do you advise Kuwaiti women to learn in Turkey? Or is it enough that they learn it in Kuwait?

Eman: Kuwait's education is no less important than Turkey's, however it is more powerful to learn a language in its own country of origin.

KT: What is your response to the stereotypical views about racism in Turkey for Arabic ethnicities?

Eman: As I have said before, everyone is responsible for their action and attitude. There is no country that is a utopia.



Eman Al-Salem

Education Ministry ready for academic year 2018-19

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Ministry of Education and Higher Education expressed its readiness yesterday to commence the new academic year, with its administrative and education staffs.



Haitham Al-Athari

The Ministry's Undersecretary Haitham Al-Athari said that basic and fundamental preparations were conducted, as the country's six educational administrations and school principals are completely ready for the new academic year. Athari conducted many field tours lately to various schools to deal with any possible obstacles, like some maintenance issues in a number of schools, added.

Meanwhile, Athari stated that the schools are ready at all levels, guaranteeing a high level of hygiene, adding that all conditioning units are functioning well. On the other hand, the Ministry is awaiting a batch of new teachers to arrive to the country, while the current teaching and administrative staffs are at full readiness, Athari noted. Three schools were closed: one in Hawally and other two in Al-Ahmedi educational regions, for safety reasons, and students were transferred to other schools, Athari affirmed. — KUNA

NBK launches last session of Summer Internship Program

KUWAIT: The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) launched recently the fourth and last session of the 2018 Summer Internship Program. The program is custom-made for high school and college students aged between 14 and 21 years. Mohammad Al-Kharafi, NBK General Manager, Operations Group attended the opening ceremony and welcomed the students.

Yaqoub Al-Baqer, NBK Public Relations Team Leader said, "NBK Summer Internship Program is specially designed for high school and college students as an extension of NBK's education outreach services. The program demonstrates NBK's long-standing social involvement as well as its national commitment towards providing the young generations with the appropriate opportunities to experience firsthand how the actual professional banking issues and transaction are handled and processed."

"We are proud of the outcome of the 2018 Summer internship pro-



gram," Baqer added. "We are looking forward to welcome the students who couldn't register this year in our next year program."

The five-hour daily sessions of two-

week internship featured a mixture of theoretical and practical training dedicated to providing the interns with invaluable knowledge on a variety of subjects such as: the team work, cre-

ative thinking, means of self-expression and modern banking work procedure, in addition to helping interns to have greater exposure to daily banking work procedures.

KIB celebrates Eid Al-Adha with children

KUWAIT: In line with Kuwait International Bank's (KIB) ongoing commitment to social responsibility by supporting various initiatives, a group of employees from the Public Relations Department at the bank organized a special visit to Amiri Hospital's Pediatrics Department on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha. The initiative was organized in cooperation with the Kuwait Association for Care of Children in Hospital (KACCH).

During the visit, the team distributed the annual Eid money, known as eideya, to children. The visit aimed at celebrating this special occasion with children to spread joy and happiness by putting smiles on the faces of sick children and bringing hope to their hearts.

This initiative came as part of KIB's continuous dedication to increasing its visits to patients at hospitals, which falls under its social responsibility program aimed at contributing to the welfare of all segments of the



community. Sharing moments of joy and happiness with patients and their families is a cherished initiative that is carried out by the bank every Eid. KIB always strives to participate in these social events as a means to strengthen the spirit of unity, closeness, and enhance the lines of communication across the entire community.

KIB also noted the key role that KACCH plays in providing necessary psychosocial support to sick children and their families, as well as reducing the negative impact of hospitalization and stressful healthcare experiences. Additionally, the bank urged all private and public institutions to seek the support and care of these impactful associations.



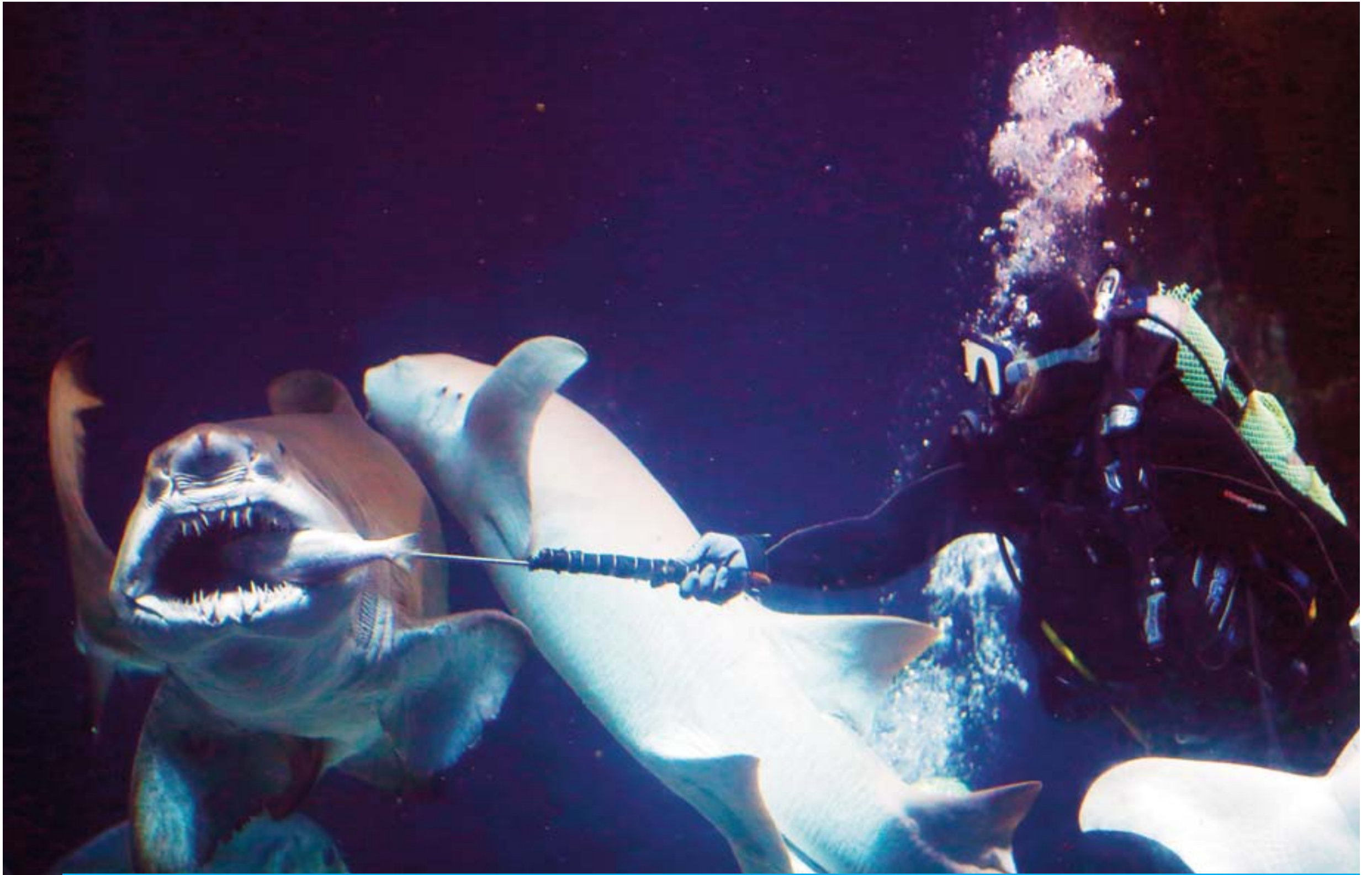
KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) staff welcomed pilgrims at Terminal 4 of Kuwait International Airport upon their return back from Saudi Arabia, where they performed Hajj.



KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) sponsored a campaign launched by the Farwaniya Governorate during Eid Al-Adha to distribute brand new clothes to cleaning workers and people in need.

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A diver feeds sharks inside the shark tank at the aquarium in the Scientific Center in Salmiya yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Proposals call for adding more commercial activities at gas stations

Request to turn Dasma Co-op into mall

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: An informed source at Kuwait Municipality said the organization sector is discussing proposals by Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) to develop the locations of gas stations. He said a letter from KNPC mentioned the decision of the Municipal Council on March 24, 2008 approving the development of gas stations on major roads and within residential areas which belong to KNPC, Al-Oula and Al-Soor fuel companies.

He said the proposals include a review of the stations' categorization (residential, main

roads and travel roads) and expansion of allowed activities in them and increasing the size of the market in each station by a maximum of 500 sq m. The proposals called for allowing the addition of activities like money exchange, car inspection, insurance, payment of fines and fast food joints at gas stations.

Dasma Co-op

Head of the cooperative facilities at the Social Affairs Ministry Mansour Haji sent a letter to Kuwait Municipality with regards to refurbishing the old supermarket building of Dasma Co-operative Society and use it as a mall. This is to boost the financial status of the society and pro-

vide the public with more services.

Fiber optics

Assistant Undersecretary for Communications and Allied Services at the State Ministry for Services Affairs Rashid Al-Othaina said that telephone service applications are being received from citizens living in areas where the second phase of the fiber optics project is completed. Othaina asked owners of residential lots and multistory buildings as well as commercial stores who wish to obtain telephone services to go to telephone exchanges covering their areas with their civil IDs and proof of address with them.



KUWAIT: A gas station run by Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC).



CAIRO: This photo shows cows kept inside a barn before they were sacrificed during Eid Al-Adha as part of a Kuwait-funded charity project in Egypt. —KUNA

Kuwait distributes livestock in Egypt

CAIRO: Kuwait charitable office in Egypt said Sunday it sacrificed and distributed cows' meat in 15 provinces nationwide, part of its Eid Al-Adha campaign in the North African country. This campaign is part of the office's program, according to which it sacrificed 117 cows in a campaign funded by Kuwait Zakat (Alms)


House and General Endowment Secretariat, Ismail Al-Kandari, office director, said in a statement. He said meat was distributed to orphans and poor families in 40 areas in the 15 provinces. These philanthropic acts, added Kandari, cemented social bonds between Kuwaiti and Egyptian people. —KUNA

Biometric system limits engineers' productivity: Society

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Kuwait Society of Engineers (KSE) asked the Ministry of Public Works (MPW) to cooperate and urge the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to hasten the amendment of the biometric access control system for ministry engineers who work in various areas. It said the society is receiving increasing complaints from engineers who struggle daily as they register their access at their offices before driving for long distances to construction sites located in remote places. The society said that it hopes the minister will intervene to stop the suffering of engineers, because the current fingerprint system and long distances limit the engineers' productivity.

The call was made during a meeting between the society's Chairman Faisal Al-Atel and MPW Undersecretary Awatif Al-Ghunaim. Atel said the meeting also discussed employing Kuwaiti engineers in the ministry and training them so as to reduce their waiting period to work after graduating. He lauded the undersecretary's cooperation to approve expat engineers who work in projects or consultation offices that design and study ministry projects by the society.



condolences

The Management and Staff of
EQUATE Petrochemical Company
wish to offer their heartfelt
condolences to

Mr. Amitkumar Dolatray Desai

RMD-External Shared Services Team
On the sad demise of his

Father

May his soul rest in peace and may
God grant comfort and strength to the
bereaved family members during this time

International

TUESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2018



China 'may scrap' limit on the number of kids

Burning in hell: Russia press sheds few tears for McCain

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JACKSONVILLE: Law enforcement cars fill downtown after a shooting at Jacksonville Landing on August 26, 2018 in Jacksonville, Florida. A shooting rampage during a Madden 19 video game tournament at the site claimed three lives, with several others wounded. — AFP

Tragedy hits eSports; three killed

Mass shooting at US video game tournament

MIAMI: Two people were killed and 11 others wounded Sunday when a video game tournament competitor went on a shooting rampage before turning the gun on himself in the northern Florida city of Jacksonville, local police said. Sheriff Mike Williams named the suspect of the shooting at a Madden 19 American football eSports tournament as 24-year-old David Katz from Baltimore, Maryland.

"There were three deceased individuals at the scene, one of those being the suspect, who took his own life," Williams told reporters. He said local fire and rescue transported nine victims—seven of whom had gunshot wounds—to local hospitals, while another two people who were shot took their own transportation to hospital. Williams said Katz was a competitor in the eSports tournament and used "at least one handgun" to carry out the shooting.

Madden is a hugely popular multi-player video game based on the National Football League, which in a statement said it was "shocked and deeply saddened by the horrific tragedy." The tournament at The Landing entertainment and shopping complex—a regional qualifier for

finals in Las Vegas with a \$25,000 prize—took place at the GLHF Game Bar. Sheriff Williams said the shooting occurred inside the Chicago Pizza restaurant in the complex around 1:30 pm. Earlier on Twitter, the Jacksonville



Videogamer shoots 2 dead, kills himself

Sheriff's Office had urged people hiding in locked areas of The Landing to stay in place and call 911 to make their location known.

'Traumatized, devastated'

In disturbing footage apparently captured as part of a livestream on video gaming website Twitch, several gunshots could be heard in the background, before the stream disconnected. Twitch removed the video, but it remained available on social media. Police said they were in possession of footage capturing the incident. "This is a horrible situation, and our deepest sympathies go out to all involved," Madden's creator, EA Sports, said in a statement. CompLexity Gaming, one of the gaming teams, said its player Drini Gjoka was grazed on the hand. "We're obviously shocked and saddened by this afternoon's events. Our player, Drini, was hit in the thumb but is going to be fine. He managed to escape and run down the street to a nearby gym," director Jason Lake said.

Gjoka tweeted: "I will never take anything for granted ever again. Life can be cut short in a second." Another player, "DubDotDUBBY," said a bullet had grazed his head. "I feel fine, just a scratch on my head. Traumatized and devastated," he tweeted. Germany-based SK Gaming also confirmed their player known by the handle "JoelCP_" was

safe. "Our thoughts are with everyone that had to be part of such a horrendous event," it said. The professional gamer known as "oLARRY2K," of Bucks Gaming, was said to have been shot in the chest, according to several social media users, including one describing herself as his mother.

'We cannot accept this'

Survivors of February's high school shooting in Parkland, Florida, expressed sorrow at news of another mass shooting in the state. "Once again, my heart hurts and all of me is so angry. We cannot accept this as our reality," said Delaney Tarr, one of the organizers of the student-led March for Our Lives movement. Florida has suffered multiple shootings in recent years: 49 were killed in a June 2016 attack on a gay nightclub, while 17 were killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School earlier this year. Florida Senator Marco Rubio said that the FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives were investigating Sunday's shooting. Florida Governor Rick Scott said he had offered state support in the aftermath, and that President Donald Trump had offered "any federal resources needed." — AFP

Moroccans mobilize for gang-raped teen

RABAT: Hundreds of Moroccans have signed a petition urging authorities to provide urgent medical and psychological care to a teenage girl who says she was gang-raped. Khadija Okkarou, in a video posted online Tuesday, said she was abducted in mid-June outside the home of a relative in central Morocco by young men alleged to belong to a "dangerous gang." "They held me for about two months, and raped and tortured me," the 17-year-old said, showing what appeared to be scars from cigarette burns and tatoos carved into parts of her body.

"I will never forgive them. They have destroyed me," she said. Her testimony has sparked anger in Morocco with social media users launching the "we are all Khadija" hashtag and a petition urging King Mohammed VI to provide her with medical and psychological care. More than 3,400 people had signed the petition by Sunday night. The girl's father, Mohammed Okkarou, said three suspects had been arrested on Saturday in connection with her abduction and that a trial was set to begin on September 6.

Naima Ouahli, of the Moroccan Association of Human Rights, told AFP that a total of 12 suspects had been rounded up. Moroccan authorities were not immediately available for comment. Sexual harassment is commonplace in Morocco, despite the adoption of a new constitution in 2011 that enshrines gender equality and urges the state to promote it. And in January 2014, Morocco scrapped a controversial law that allowed child rapists to escape punishment if they marry their victims. Last year 1,600 cases of rape were heard by Moroccan courts, twice as many as previous years. — AFP

Suspect in 1998 murder appears in court in Spain

THE HAGUE: A survival expert wanted over the brutal 1998 rape and killing of a young Dutch boy appeared in court in Spain yesterday after one of the most extensive murder investigations to date in the Netherlands. Joseph Brech, 55, was arrested near Barcelona Sunday over the murder of eleven-year-old Nicky Verstappen who vanished two decades ago on August 9 at a summer camp in southern Limburg province, near the German border. Brech had worked at the camp at the time, according to Spanish police.

Verstappen's body was found a day after his disappearance close to the camp site, with authorities later confirming he had been sexually abused before his death. Police at the time mounted a massive search closely followed by Dutch media and the public, but the killer remained on the loose—until advanced DNA testing earlier this year led officers to Brech. Spanish police yesterday escorted the suspect to a tribunal in the city of Granollers where he will be interviewed by video conference by judges from Madrid's High Court, which decides on extradition requests, a spokeswoman for Catalonia's High Court of Justice said.

His arrest follows a public appeal on Wednesday, during which Dutch detectives shared photographs of the suspect. A Dutchman living in Spain recognized the man in the photos and sent a tip-off to Dutch newspaper the Telegraaf, which contacted police. Brech was living "in a tent in the woods" near an abandoned and isolated house where several homeless people live, the unidentified man told the newspaper. "He told me he liked living in nature and that was why he was there," the man said.

Answers

The suspect - an experienced mountain climber who had scaled Mount Everest - was detained on Sunday afternoon in a mountainous area near the town of Castellertercol some 50 kilometers from Barcelona while he



UNKNOWN: This handout picture shows Jos Brech (right) - the suspect in the brutal 1998 killing of young Dutch boy Nicky Verstappen as he was arrested in Spain on August 26, 2018. — AFP

was going out to cut wood, Spanish police said in a statement yesterday. He had extensive survival gear at the time of his arrest, including fishing rods, a book on edible wild plants, batteries and dehydrated foods.

In a picture shared by Spanish police, Brech appears face down on a dirt road with his hands handcuffed behind his back as police stand over him. The boy's mother, Berthie Verstappen, said the family did not expect the arrest would come so soon after last week's police appeal. "We feared he would hide so well that he would not be found for months. We would love to have answers to the questions we have, even if we dread hearing what happened," she told Dutch public television on Sunday night.

'Relieved'

Brech could be extradited to the Netherlands later this week if he cooperates with the authorities, otherwise the process could take 60-90 days, the chief prosecutor in Limberg, Jan Eland, told Dutch news agency ANP. "We are relieved that it went so quickly. Now we can enter into a

new phase of the investigation," he added. The case regularly returned to the public eye in the Netherlands over the past two decades. Police said new digital techniques helped them to develop a DNA profile in 2008, from traces found on Verstappen's clothing, but there had been no match. As time ran out to catch the suspect, police in February appealed to 21,500 men to donate DNA samples in a bid to close in on the perpetrator.

Some 16,000 men living in the area where Verstappen was murdered volunteered to hand over DNA samples. But Brech, a former scout worker who was 35 at the time of the murder, was not among the volunteers, and as he was previously interviewed as a witness, police became suspicious. When his family reported him as missing in April, Dutch and French police searched his cabin in France's mountainous eastern Vosges region, where he owns a chalet. They found traces of DNA on his personal belongings which matched samples taken from the slain boy's clothes. A European-wide warrant for Brech's arrest was issued on June 12. — AFP

International

Tehran urges UN court to halt 'economic strangulation' by US

Iran demands an end to US nuclear-linked sanctions

THE HAGUE: Iran yesterday demanded the UN's top court suspend US nuclear-linked sanctions against Tehran, accusing Washington of plotting its "economic strangulation". The Islamic Republic launched a suit at the International Court of Justice over US President Donald Trump's decision to reimpose the sanctions that had been lifted in a 2015 accord. Iran says Trump's move breaches a 1955 treaty.

Trump says the sanctions are needed to ensure Iran never builds a nuclear bomb. But Iran's representative Mohsen Mohebi branded them "naked economic aggression". His team of lawyers told the court in The Hague the measures were already devastating Iran's economy and threatening the welfare of its citizens. "The United States is publicly propagating a policy intended to damage as severely as possible Iran's economy and Iranian nationals and companies," Mohebi said. "Iran will put up the strongest resistance to the US economic strangulation, by all peaceful means."

'Irreparable prejudice'

The US measures have added to Iran's economic woes, fuelling strikes and protests across the country and political spectrum. The sanctions target financial transactions and imports of raw materials, cars and aircraft among other things. A second wave of punitive measures is due to hit Iran in early November, targeting its vital energy sector including oil exports. Iran's lawyers said the sanctions would cause it "irreparable prejudice".

They urged the court to order the suspension of the

sanctions pending a definitive ruling. British lawyer Samuel Wordsworth, for Iran, told the court the sanctions were threatening Iranians' access to medicines as well as disrupting business deals. Jean-Marc Thouvenin, law professor at University of Paris Nanterre, added: "It is urgent that the court indicate provisional measures that



International firms suspend Iran operations

safeguard Iran because the purpose (of sanctions) is to strangle the Iranian economy within a few months."

'One-sided deal'

The ICJ is expected to take a couple of months to decide whether to grant Tehran's request for a provisional ruling. A final decision could take years. The 2015 deal was signed by Iran and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council plus Germany. Sanctions were lifted in return for Iran committing not to pursue nuclear weapons. Trump, who took office in 2016,

called it a "horrible one-sided deal". He said it "failed to achieve the fundamental objective of blocking all paths to an Iranian nuclear bomb." To the horror of the other signatories, he pulled out of the accord and announced in May that he would reinstate sanctions.

'Neither war, nor negotiations'

Iran's lawyers said the US sanctions threatened tens of billions of dollars' worth of business deals with foreign companies. Iran's currency the rial has lost around half its value since April. International companies including French oil firm Total and Germany's Siemens have suspended operations in Iran since Trump announced the US withdrawal in May. Trump said the sanctions would turn up the financial pressure on Tehran to come to a "comprehensive and lasting solution" regarding its activities such as its "ballistic missile program and its support for terrorism".

The case is the second brought by Tehran against Washington since 2016. That year it brought a suit at the ICJ against the freezing of around \$2 billion of Iranian assets abroad which US courts say should go to American victims of terror attacks. Hearings in that case are due to start on October 8. Despite the 1955 Treaty of Amity and Economic Relations between Iran and the United States, the two countries have not had diplomatic ties since 1980. The court adjourned after yesterday's hearing, with Washington's lawyers scheduled to present their case on Tuesday. Experts expect them to challenge the ICJ's jurisdiction. A second round of arguments follows on Wednesday and Thursday. — AFP



TEHRAN: Iranian MPs gesture while the Economy Minister speaks during a parliament session in the capital Tehran before a vote which saw him impeached. Karbasian is the second minister in President Hassan Rouhani's cabinet to be impeached this month, following the removal of Labor Minister Ali Rabbani on August 8. — AFP

4 questions on Iran's challenge to US sanctions

THE HAGUE: Iran's legal challenge against renewed sanctions by the United States went before the UN's International Court of Justice yesterday. Here are four key questions regarding the case:

What is the case about?

Iran's attempt to block the reinstatement of sanctions, announced by US President Donald Trump earlier this year, is the latest in a series of court battles that Tehran and Washington are fighting at the ICJ. Trump announced on May 8 that he was pulling out of a landmark deal between Iran and major powers aimed at preventing Tehran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. The deal agreed with the UN's five permanent Security Council members and Germany in 2015 limits Tehran's stockpile of enriched uranium until 2031 in exchange for sanctions relief. Blasting the accord as a "horrible, one-sided deal", Trump reimposed a wave of tough, unilateral sanctions. Tehran now accuses Washington of "besieging" its economy and wants the Hague-based court - which rules in disputes between countries - to order the US to temporarily halt punitive measures, while the judges mull the deeper merits of the case.

Does Tehran have a case?

The case has two elements, said Eric De Brabandere, professor of international dispute settlement at Leiden University in the Netherlands. Firstly, "Iran genuinely considers the re-imposition of sanctions a violation of international law." Secondly, "Iran has the support of many European states on the question of sanctions, politically speaking," De Brabandere argued. Iran's representatives need to convince the ICJ that its 15 permanent judges indeed have the jurisdiction to hear the case. Tehran bases its arguments on a little-known 1955 treaty between Iran and the United States. The treaty provides for "friendly relations" between the two countries, encourages mutual trade and investment and regulates consular relations. However, there have been no formal diplomatic ties between Tehran and Washington since the regime of the US-backed Shah was deposed by Iran's Islamic revolution in 1979.

What will Washington argue?

"My guess is that for this case they will argue that the court has no jurisdiction, as they did in a separate case launched against the US two years ago," said De Brabandere. Washington could invoke two arguments. One is that the 1955 treaty is no longer in force, because it is a "treaty of friendship" between two nations which have been adversaries for the last four decades. Secondly, US representatives could say that the dispute was "not about the treaty, but about sanctions and Iran's alleged terrorist activities," De Brabandere said. "The US is likely to argue that the dispute is about something much broader than a treaty," for instance Tehran's nuclear ambitions, the expert said. Furthermore, there is a clause in the 1955 treaty which allows the states to take "any measures to protect essential security interests."

Can Iran's case succeed?

"I think it's very likely that the ICJ will, based on the 1955 treaty, decide to hear the case," said De Brabandere. However, whether the case will be successful on its own merits - in other words whether the United States indeed breached its obligations - is more difficult to establish. "For one, the 1955 treaty is relatively narrow in scope. It means that the ICJ can only rule whether the US violated its obligations under the specific treaty," De Brabandere said. This means that the ICJ's judges will not rule in what they may consider any broader dispute between Iran and the United States. The outcome of the case - which could still take years before being handed down - "is very difficult to predict," said De Brabandere. — AFP

Assad staying in power would be 'grotesque error'

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron said yesterday that a "return to normal" in Syria that left its leader Bashar Al-Assad in power would be a "grotesque error", in comments seemingly directed at his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin. "We can see those who would like to return to normal as soon as the war against Daesh (the Islamic State group) is finished: Bashar Al-Assad would stay in power, the refugees... will return and Europe and few others would help with reconstruction," Macron said. But "such a scenario would be a grotesque error", he added.

After coming to power in May last year, Macron shifted French policy towards prioritizing the destruction of the Islamic State group rather than ousting Assad, warning of a "failed state" if the leader were forcibly removed. But he has previously called the Syrian leader an "enemy of the Syrian people" who should ultimately face a war crimes court. Macron's latest comments during a major foreign policy address to French ambassadors appeared to be a rebuke to Putin, who is Assad's biggest backer. On August 18, Putin called on Europe to financially contribute to the reconstruction of Syria to allow millions of refugees to return home.

After more than seven years of brutal war, Macron warned in yesterday's speech that Assad was on the verge of creating a fresh humanitarian crisis in Idlib province.

The regime says it is determined to retake the northwestern province on the Turkish border-Syria's last major rebel stronghold-amid speculation of a looming Russian-backed assault. "The situation is alarming because the regime is threatening to create another humanitarian crisis in Idlib province and until now has shown no desire to negotiate the slightest political transition," Macron said.

"This means reinforcing pressure on the regime and its allies, and I expect Russia and Turkey to take account of their roles and the commitments they have made," he added. "Since day one I have considered Daesh to be our principal enemy, and I have never made the ousting of Bashar Al-Assad a condition of our diplomatic or humanitarian action in Syria," he said. But he accused Assad of "creating thousands of refugees" and "massacring his own people".

Syria summit

Meanwhile, the presidents of Iran, Russia, and Turkey will meet on September 7 in Iran for their third tripartite summit on seeking to end the conflict in Syria, Turkish state television said yesterday. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will travel to Iran to meet with his Russian and Iranian counterparts Vladimir Putin and Hassan Rouhani, state-run TRT Haber television said. Private NTV television added the summit would be held in the northern Iranian city of Tabriz.

A Turkish presidential official contacted by AFP could not immediately confirm the reports. However, the presidency has invited Turkish journalists to cover a trip by Erdogan to Iran on September 7. Erdogan had previously indicated that he planned to host a summit on September 7 in Istanbul on Syria with Putin and also French



IDLIB: A picture shows worshippers entering and exiting from Al-Rawda mosque in the rebel-held northern Syrian city of Idlib. — AFP

President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

But press reports over the last weeks have suggested that such a meeting was increasingly unlikely and was set to be replaced by the latest three-way summit between Iran, Russia and Turkey. The three leaders have previously held summits in the Russian resort city of Sochi and the Turkish capital Ankara. Ankara, Moscow and Tehran are backing peace talks based in the Kazakh capital Astana which they insist are aimed at reinforcing, rather than undermining, a UN peace process in Geneva.

Iran and Russia are the main allies of

Syrian President and their military interventions in Syria are widely seen as tipping the balance of the seven year civil war in the regime's favor. Turkey has backed rebels seeking to oust Assad but since late 2016 has been working increasingly closely with Iran and Russia to bring peace to Syria. A major item on the agenda at the summit is expected to be the rebel-held northwestern Syrian province of Idlib which Assad wants to re-capture, to crown a string of military successes. But Turkey has said a military operation to take Idlib risks provoking a humanitarian "catastrophe", warning that 3.5 million people are crammed into the region. — Agencies

Turkish mothers' protest banned

ISTANBUL: Turkey banned a weekly rally staged since the mid-1990s by mothers protesting against the disappearance of their sons and relatives on the grounds that it had been exploited by a terror group, the interior minister said yesterday. In an unexpected move, Turkish police used water cannon, tear gas and plastic bullets to disperse the 700th protest by the Saturday Mothers in central Istanbul this weekend, causing consternation among rights activists. Almost 50 people were detained, including leaders of the Saturday Mothers movement such as 82-year-old Emine Ocak, although all were later released.

"We didn't let them (protest) because we want an end to this exploitation and deceit," Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu was quoted as saying by the state-run Anadolu news agency. "Should we have turned a blind eye to motherhood being abused by a terror organization?" he added. Soylu did not specify further but Istanbul authorities had said that the rally was banned after calls to attend were made through social media channels linked to the outlawed

Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). The protest, held every Saturday since May 27, 1995, remembers the disappearance of relatives in the 1980s and 1990s - allegedly at the hands of the state - in one of modern Turkey's most turbulent periods.

The disappearances happened at the peak of the PKK insurgency demanding self-rule in the Kurdish-dominated southeast. Tens of thousands have lost their lives in the conflict that began in 1984 and continues to this day. The country was also wracked by political instability and violence following the 1980 military coup, with many detained for political activism. Activists say the state has never properly investigated the fate of those who disappeared after being detained by the authorities.

The Saturday Mothers group were unable to hold their protests from 1999 to 2009 due to repeated police interventions but they then resumed and Saturday was the first time in recent years that officers stepped in. The rally's forceful dispersion came two months after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan won a new mandate with enhanced powers, which activists fear will be used to squeeze freedom of expression in Turkey. The Saturday Mothers group is said to have been inspired by the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, a group of Argentinean mothers who hold rallies after their children disappeared during Argentina's military dictatorship. — AFP



ISTANBUL: Turkish riot police detains protesters of Saturday Mothers group demonstration in Istanbul. Istanbul police break up a regular demonstration by Turkish mothers remembering the disappearance of relatives in the 1980s and 1990s - detaining dozens as they marked holding the 700th such weekly protest. — AFP

'Stressed, weeping' pilot caused deadly Nepal plane crash

KATHMANDU: An investigation into a deadly plane crash at Nepal's international airport has blamed the captain who wept and suffered an emotional breakdown during the flight after his skills had been questioned, according to a draft of the report leaked yesterday. The March 12 flight from the Bangladeshi capital Dhaka crash-landed at Kathmandu airport and skidded into a football field where it burst into flames, killing 51 people in the deadliest aviation accident in the Himalayan nation for decades. The draft copy of the final investigation report, seen by AFP, concludes the US-Bangla Airlines captain was "under stress and emotionally disturbed" after a female co-worker had "questioned his reputation as a good instructor".

"This mistrust and stress led him to continuously smoke in the cockpit and also suffer an emotional breakdown several times during the flight," it says. Captain Abid Sultan was "crying and sneezing on several occasions during the flight", it adds. During the short flight from Dhaka to Kathmandu, Sultan - a former Bangladesh Air Force pilot who was also an instructor for the airline - talked non-stop as he tried to impress upon the junior co-pilot his competence and proficiency.

The captain's constant monologue led to the "total disorientation" of the co-pilot, who was flying the plane when it crashed. Prithula Rashid had only recently qualified and had never previously landed at Kathmandu airport. Nepal's only international airport lies in a narrow bowl-shaped valley with the Himalayas to the north, making it a notoriously challenging place to land. As the Bombardier Dash 8 Q400 turboprop approached the runway it made a last-minute change of direction, failed to sufficiently reduce its speed and did not carry out the necessary landing checks, investigators said. The report revised the final death toll up to 51, including both pilots. Twenty passengers miraculously escaped the burning wreckage but sustained serious injuries. — AFP

International

Burning in hell: Russia press sheds few tears for McCain

Trump nixes statement praising McCain

MOSCOW: Russian pro-Kremlin media pulled no punches yesterday in condemning John McCain, who died of a brain tumor at the weekend, as Washington's "chief Russophobe". McCain, who died aged 81 on Saturday, irked Russia with his support for pro-Western leaders in ex-Soviet Georgia and Ukraine as well as his strong backing for sanctions over Moscow's annexation of Crimea. "McCain became the chief symbol of Russophobia," Rossiya 1 television said, adding that he "couldn't stand Russia's independent foreign policy".

McCain "adored war. If you haven't been killed yet, that's not McCain's fault. He tried," wrote pro-Kremlin tabloid Komsomolskaya Pravda in a biting editorial. Accusing the former Navy pilot of lying about being tortured while being held prisoner during the Vietnam War, the popular tabloid concluded with the hope that McCain is now burning in hell. "Senator McCain loved the flames of war. Let's believe he'll have enough flames where his soul is resting now," it wrote.

Life News, a pro-Kremlin tabloid news site, mocked the "chief Russophobe" for his decision to publish a 2013 op-ed aimed at Russians on an obscure news site called Pravda.ru. He apparently believed the website to be connected the once-powerful Soviet newspaper Pravda. "Evidently no one told the senator that there had been certain changes in Russia since his time in captivity in Vietnam," it wrote. McCain was "a convinced hawk who pecked at Russia out of principle," Rossiya 1 reported on its main news show on Sunday evening, devoting more than four minutes to the senator's life.

McCain "firmly supported all the military operations and wars that America unleashed-Kosovo, Iraq, Libya-if

he had not twice lost presidential campaigns, everything could have been even more catastrophic," it reported. The high-rating show included the detail that McCain "was shot down in Vietnam by a Soviet SA 75-Dvina missile complex". While stressing McCain's contempt for President Donald Trump, the show predicted that US "attempts to restrain and isolate Russia with harsh sanctions will continue-just now without John McCain". Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko issued a message of condolences, but none was forthcoming from Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Konstantin Kosachev, the head of the Senate's international affairs committee, wrote on Facebook that McCain's "only ideology" was "protect your own and beat up the others". However some Russian politicians showed their respects. Leonid Slutsky, head of the lower house of parliament's foreign affairs committee, told the RIA Novosti state news agency that McCain was a "courageous and principled person". Oleg Morozov, a member of the Senate's foreign affairs committee, on Facebook praised McCain's frankness. "An enemy died, salute him for honest enmity, for honest hatred, for refusal to reconcile. Others dissemble. He said what he thought."

Trump nixed statement

Donald Trump rejected a statement prepared by his aides that praised John McCain, according to the Washington Post, underscoring the US president's enduring scorn for the late senator and war hero. While tributes have poured in highlighting the Arizona Republican's lifetime of service, Trump issued a single, terse tweet on



WASHINGTON: This undated handout photo shows John S. McCain III (lower right) during flight training. He was a hero, a statesman who cut a towering figure in Washington. But for many in the increasingly angry world of American politics, John McCain will be missed for a far humbler virtue-simple civility. — AFP

Saturday that sent his "deepest sympathies and respect" to the bereaved family, without any words for McCain himself. The absence of a formal communique from the White House has raised eyebrows and was all the more conspicuous after Vice President Mike Pence along with most of the cabinet, Press Secretary Sarah Sanders and all the living former presidents had issued their own statements

over the weekend. Citing unnamed current and former White House aides, the Post said Sanders, Chief of Staff John Kelly and other senior staff had advocated for a statement that called McCain a "hero." The statement was prepared and given to Trump for his approval, but according to the paper the president told aides he preferred to tweet instead, and it was ultimately not released. — Agencies



McCain - the chief symbol of Russophobia

News in brief

Tourists face death penalty

KUALA LUMPUR: Two Chilean tourists facing the death penalty in Malaysia for allegedly murdering a man in a hotel are innocent and acted in self-defense, their lawyer said yesterday. Felipe Osiadacz and Fernando Candia are on trial over the killing of a Malaysian in the lobby of the Kuala Lumpur hotel in August last year, less than 24 hours after they arrived in the country on holiday. The young men have pleaded not guilty. Malaysia has a mandatory death penalty for murder, and if convicted the pair will be hanged. "It was all an accident. A person went into the hotel and demanded money from them," their lawyer Venkateswari Alagendra told reporters at the Kuala Lumpur High Court after a hearing. The Malaysian man then attacked the Chileans and they fought back in self-defense, before calling the police, she said. — AFP

May to visit Africa

LONDON: Prime Minister Theresa May will make a three-nation visit to Africa this week, her first to the continent since becoming British leader in 2016, aimed at boosting post-Brexit trade ties. May, joined by several ministers and 29 business representatives from various industries, will visit South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya during the three-day trip. Downing Street said yesterday. She will be the first British prime minister to set foot in Kenya since Margaret Thatcher in 1988. "As we prepare to leave the European Union, now is the time for the UK to deepen and strengthen its global partnerships," May said in a statement. "Africa stands right on the cusp of playing a transformative role in the global economy," she added. — AFP

Austria asylum seekers

VIENNA: Austria will no longer allow asylum seekers to take up apprenticeship opportunities while their claims are being assessed, a policy reversal by the country's anti-immigration government criticized by the opposition. The government is working on a new regulation to fill vacant training places with laborers from third countries, but will no longer open them to asylum seekers, government spokesman Peter Lausky-Tieffenthal told the Austrian news agency APA late Sunday. The decision reverses a 2012 policy aimed at integrating refugees. — AFP

N Korea to free Japanese

SEOUL: A Japanese tourist detained in North Korea will be released "on the principle of humanitarianism", Pyongyang's state media reported as Tokyo seeks a summit with the North amid a diplomatic thaw on the peninsula. "Tomoyuki Sugimoto, who visited the DPRK as a Japanese tourist recently, was kept under control by a relevant institution to be inquired into his crime against the law of the DPRK," the KCNA news agency said. Little is known about Sugimoto but Japanese media reports have said he was a videographer visiting the North on a tour arranged by a foreign travel agency. — AFP

Uganda's MP gets bail

KAMPALA: Ugandan singer-turned-politician Robert Kyagulanyi, better known as Bobi Wine, was released on bail yesterday after two weeks in detention. Kyagulanyi and 33 others, including two fellow serving MPs, are facing treason charges in a case that has triggered an international outcry. They were arrested after stones were thrown at President Yoweri Museveni's convoy, breaking a car window, as he visited the town of Arua to support the ruling-party candidate during a by-election. Yesterday, judge Stephen Mubiru at the high court in the northern town of Gulu released Kyagulanyi and some of his co-accused on bail. Two serving opposition MPs, one former MP and the winner of the by-election, Kassiano Wadri, were also granted bail. — AFP

EU security must no longer depend on US, France says

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron said yesterday that he would put forward new proposals for the European Union to boost its security, saying the bloc must stop depending on American might. "Europe can no longer rely on the United States for its security. It is up to us to guarantee European security," he said in a speech to relaunch his diplomatic agenda.

His proposals will be unveiled "in the coming months", Macron told an audience of some 250 diplomats, lawmakers and international relations experts gathered to mark the return from the summer break. "I want us to launch an exhaustive review of our security with all Europe's partners, which includes Russia," he added. Macron's comments came after a string of gestures from US President Donald Trump distancing himself from traditional NATO allies.

Trump has repeatedly called into question the Western alliance's core commitment to mutual defense, while complaining that the US spends too much on military support for Europe. Macron came to power last year vowing to overhaul the EU and has pushed for deep political reforms - including a separate budget for the euro-zone - which have so far met with lukewarm support. The French president, who will head to Denmark and Finland for a three-day trip from today hoping to shore up support for his EU shake-up, called for redoubled efforts to reform the bloc.

"We need to take new initiatives, build new alliances," he said. "France wants a Europe which protects, even as extremism has grown stronger and nationalism has awoken," he said. EU powerhouse Germany has given only muted backing to Macron's ambitious plans, but his call for greater European military cooperation echoes recent comments by German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas. Writing in the Handelsblatt newspaper, Maas called last week for Europe to "take an equal share of the responsi-

German far-right protesters seek to 'hunt down' foreigners

BERLIN: Chancellor Angela Merkel yesterday condemned far-right protesters for seeking to "hunt down" foreigners after the killing of a German man allegedly by a foreigner. The far-right movement PEGIDA called for demonstrations for a second straight day after a gathering of around 800 people in the ex-communist city of Chemnitz degenerated into chaos, forcing police to call in reinforcements. Several national media outlets, including the Bild tabloid, reported that some demonstrators shouted "We are the people" and "Get lost" at those they thought appeared to be migrants.

Freelance journalist Johannes Grunert, who reports frequently on the far-right scene, told Spiegel Online he witnessed some protesters using bottles to attack foreign-looking people. "Such riotous assemblies, the hunting down of people who appear to be from different backgrounds or the attempt at spreading hate in the streets, these have no place in our country," said Merkel's spokesman Steffen Seibert, stressing Berlin's strong condemnation of the violent protests. Asked about an apparent call by an MP from the far-right AfD party for vigilante action, Seibert warned that it is the legal system that delivers justice in a constitutional democracy.

AFD lawmaker Markus Frohnmaier had written on Twitter: "If the state can no longer protect the citizen, then people will go on the streets and protect themselves." Sunday's violent demonstration was triggered by the death of a 35-year-old German national following a "dispute between several people of different nationalities" in Chemnitz. Two other men, aged 33 and 38, were



PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron delivers a speech during the annual French ambassadors' conference at the Elysee Palace in Paris yesterday. — AFP

bility" and "form a counterweight" to Washington as Europe-US relations cool.

Syria warning

In a typically expansive overview of his vision of France's role in the world, Macron also blasted Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad, warning his regime was on the verge of creating a fresh humanitarian crisis in Idlib province. The regime says it is determined to retake the northwestern province on the Turkish border - Syria's last major rebel stronghold - amid speculation of a looming Russian-backed assault.

"The situation is alarming because the regime is

threatening to create another humanitarian crisis in Idlib province and until now has shown no desire to negotiate the slightest political transition," Macron said. "This means reinforcing pressure on the regime and its allies, and I expect Russia and Turkey to take account of their roles and the commitments they have made," he added. "Since day one I have considered Daesh (the Islamic State group) to be our principal enemy, and I have never made the ousting of Bashar Al-Assad a condition of our diplomatic or humanitarian action in Syria," he said. But he accused Assad of "creating thousands of refugees" and "massacring his own people". — AFP



SAXONY: Riot police cross the street as a city festival was cancelled after a 35-year-old German national died in hospital following a "dispute between several people of different nationalities", according to the police. — AFP

hospitalized with severe injuries, police added. Police did not give further details of the dispute, but local media reported that a knife was used in the fight that took place on the sidelines of a street festival.

Protest, counter-protest

"If I look at what has happened here on Sunday, I'm horrified," Chemnitz mayor Barbara Ludwig told regional broadcaster MDR. "The fact that people can agree to meet... run through town and threaten people is bad." As outrage grew over the scenes of xenophobic violence by the mostly male protesters, left-leaning activists called for a counter-protest yesterday in the city, hours before PEGIDA supporters were due to gather. In its call for a demonstration at 6:30 pm, PEGIDA's Chemnitz and West

Saxony regional chapter said: "Muster strength from anger and sadness! Only together can we ensure that his death was not pointless."

Saxony state has become a hotspot for racist hate crimes, as misgivings run deep in the region against the arrival of more than a million asylum seekers since 2015. The state is also the birthplace of the Islamophobic PEGIDA movement, which is linked to the AfD-a party that has scooped up voters who blame Merkel for the migrant influx. Surveys suggest the AfD is on track to become the second biggest party in Saxony when regional elections are held there next year. Results of last year's general election show that in Chemnitz itself the AfD has as many voters as Merkel's centre-right CDU. — AFP

International

China targets rumors, religion in updated party regulations

Beijing may scrap limit on number of children

BEIJING: China's ruling Communist Party has issued a revised set of regulations governing members' behavior, threatening punishment for spreading political rumors and recommending those who cling to religious beliefs be asked to leave the party. President Xi Jinping's on-going crackdown against deep-rooted corruption, begun six years ago when he took office, has shaken up the party, with Xi warning, like other leaders before him, that the party's very survival is at stake. Xi has accrued more power than any of his immediate predecessors and has intensified efforts to ensure cadres are loyal, disciplined, upright and honest.

The updated discipline rules, released late on Sunday by the graft watchdog the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection but in effect from Aug 18, put into written form many orders that are in practice already in effect. In the most serious cases where a law has been broken, party members can be prosecuted, but in many cases the most severe punishment that can be meted out is expulsion from the party. Xi's name has also been written into the revised rules, as it is already in the party and country's constitution, putting him at the very centre of party life.

Party members are not allowed to speak out against central party policies or decisions, and nor can they spread "political rumors or damage the party's unity", the new rules say. "Party members and officials must correctly exercise the power granted them by the people, be clean and upright, and oppose any abuse of power or behavior that seeks personal benefit," one new clause says. Another new clause takes aim at party members who are also religious. While the country's constitution guarantees freedom of religion the party is officially atheist and party members are supposed to be too.

"Party members who have religious belief should have strengthened thought education. If they still don't change after help and education from the party organization, they should be encouraged to leave the party," the new rules say. Those who attend "activities that use religion for incitement" will be expelled, according to the rules. Another new clause calls for punishment who "distort" the history of the country, rather than just party or military history as before. History is a sensitive subject in China as so much of the party's legitimacy rests on its position as claiming great historical achievements, such as leading China to victory over Japan before and during World War Two.



China scrambles to rejuvenate its graying population

Number of children

China appears poised to scrap the limit on the number of children couples can have, with a state-run newspaper yesterday citing a draft civil code that would end decades of controversial family planning policies. The wide-ranging code would get rid of a policy that has been enforced through fines but was also notorious for cases of forced abortions and sterilization in the world's most populous country. The Procuratorate Daily said the code omits any reference to "family planning"—the current policy which limits couples to having no more than two children.

The draft code would go to a vote at the rubber-stamp legislature, the National People's Congress, in 2020. The Communist Party began enforcing a one-child policy in 1979 to slow population growth. The limit was raised to two children in 2016 as the nation scrambled to rejuvenate its greying population of some 1.4 billion. Concerns are mounting that an ageing and shrinking workforce could slow down its economy, while gender imbalances could lead to social problems.

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SHANGHAI: A woman pushes a child in a stroller, adorned with colors of the US national flag, along a street in Shanghai. China appears poised to scrap its two-child policy, with a state-run newspaper yesterday citing a draft civil code that would overhaul decades of controversial family-planning rules. — AFP

Childbirths have not increased as much as forecast since the two-child policy came into force, and there has been rising speculation the government will further ease restrictions. The draft code was discussed at a meeting of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, a powerful body of lawmakers headed by President Xi Jinping, that will run till Friday. Other proposed changes include a one-month cooling off period before a divorce, during which either party can withdraw their application. News of the proposed changes lit up social media. "So they want us to have more babies and less divorces?" wrote one

user on the Twitter-like Weibo platform.

Speculation about a change grew this month after a government-issued postage stamp for the Year of the Pig in 2019 showed a porcine family complete with three piglets. Under the one-child restrictions those with multiple children were heavily fined. Some women were forced to undergo abortions while others were subjected to forced sterilizations. Exemptions were given to ethnic minorities like Uighurs and Tibetans and those living in rural areas if their first child was a girl. Couples who themselves were only children could apply to have additional children. —Agencies

Hair-raising! Japan train staff made to sit by tracks

TOKYO: A Japanese rail company has defended a safety exercise that requires employees to sit beside tracks in tunnels as bullet trains speed by at 300 kilometers an hour. JR West told AFP it has no plans to alter the exercise despite complaints from some employees. About 190 staff working on safety maintenance for Japan's famed shinkansen bullet train have undergone the training, a company spokesman said. "The training aims to teach our maintenance staff the importance of every part of their jobs," he said.

"We pay close attention to safety while doing the

training," he added, while acknowledging complaints from some staff members. "We will continue this training while ensuring it serves a purpose and is done safely." JR West introduced the training in 2016 after an accident in August 2015 in which part of the bullet train's exterior fell off, the spokesman said. The purpose of the drill was reportedly to impress on the staff how fast the train moved and therefore how seriously they needed to take their jobs.

But it has proved unpopular with some employees, local media reported. "It was a horrible experience," the Tokyo Shimbun newspaper quoted one employee as saying. Another described the experience as "just like a public flogging," the Mainichi daily reported. Japan's ultra-efficient shinkansen train network connects cities along the length and breadth of the country. Despite the huge volume of passengers it serves, the network operates with an enviable punctuality rate. It also has an unparalleled safety record, with no one ever having been killed in a crash in its half-century of service. — AFP



OSAKA: Passengers pass next to a bulletin board with operations information of 'shinkansen' bullet trains at Shin-osaka Station in Osaka. — AFP

Search after boat runs aground in croc-infested waters

SYDNEY: An asylum-seeker boat has reached Australia for the first time in almost four years, the government said yesterday, with many of those on board the Vietnamese vessel fleeing into a crocodile-infested mangrove rainforest after running aground near the coast. Locals said passengers from the rickety vessel disappeared into the dense forest near the Daintree River, north of popular tourist city Cairns, in the tropical far north of Queensland state on Sunday. They will have to avoid crocodiles, venomous snakes, ferocious sandflies and giant cassowaries — one of the world's deadliest and most aggressive birds — that all call the ancient Daintree rainforest home.

Queensland Police Minister Mark Ryan told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation 15 passengers had been found so far. The ABC added that two others, including the boat's captain, were still missing. The Brisbane Courier Mail reported that up to 20 were unaccounted for. It said those detained were well dressed and in good health. State Emergency Service area controller Peter Rinaudo said earlier his crews were searching through the mangroves and near the mouth of the river, reportedly with dogs.

"It'll be a hard slog, it's still quite warm in there and it'll be tough conditions for the guys," he told the ABC. "I hope the people, however many there are, get located — it's not a nice area for them to be in." A fisherman who spotted two asylum-seekers hiding in the mangroves said he took the pair on a tour of the Daintree River. "We gave them a ride up the river and had a few laughs and we got them to help us pull in the crab pots", fisherman Justin Ward told television broadcaster Channel Nine, adding that they were taking photos and selfies. He later broke it to the men that he would hand them over to the police.

Tough policy

Home affairs minister Peter Dutton said the partially sunk vessel had come from Vietnam and was the first boat of asylum-seekers to reach the country since 2014. "Australia, we believe, has received the first... people-smuggling venture in over 1,400 days," he told reporters. "We will work with the agencies to make sure we can repatriate these people back to their country of origin, once we understand the facts of the matter." Dutton did not confirm how many passengers were on board or their nationalities. Under Canberra's tough immigration policy, asylum-seekers who try to reach Australia by boat are either turned back or sent to remote Pacific camps where conditions have been widely criticized. They are blocked from resettling in Australia.

The United Nations and human rights advocates say the policy violates the 1951 Refugee Convention of which Australia is a signatory. Dutton reaffirmed the government's stance yesterday, saying the boat's arrival was "a reminder that people-smugglers have not gone out of business." "We've had a very proud record, over the course of the last few years, and we aren't going to take a backward step. The people-smugglers... will not succeed in putting people on to boats to get to Australia." Most asylum-seeker boats that have arrived in Australia in recent years embarked from Indonesia, though some originated in Sri Lanka. Former Border Force chief Roman Quaedvlieg tweeted Monday that Vietnamese fishing boats "have been illegally fishing in fleets" off the far north Queensland coast in the past two years due to their own depleted fishing stocks. "Possible the Daintree vessel & crew have used this activity as a staging point to make Oz landfall & avoid returning to VN (Vietnam)," he added. — AFP

Indonesia drops abortion charge against teenager raped by brother

JAMBI: A 15-year-old Indonesian girl who was raped by her older brother and then sentenced to jail for having an abortion has been freed, a court spokesman said yesterday. The case drew international headlines and was slammed by rights groups, which have frequently criticized the nation's restrictive abortion laws. The teenager from Jambi province on Sumatra island was sentenced to six months' jail last month alongside her 17-year-old brother, who was given a two-year term for sexually assaulting a minor. But the Jambi High Court yesterday agreed to drop the abortion charge against the teenager following an appeal by her lawyers. "The panel of judges said (the defendant) was proven to have had an abortion, but it was done under forced circumstances," said court spokesman Hasoloan Sianturi.

Abortion is illegal in Indonesia unless a woman's life is at risk or under certain circumstances if she is raped. The law requires that an abortion must be performed by a registered professional no later than six weeks into a pregnancy, and the woman must undergo counseling. The girl, who was raped repeatedly by her brother, had the abortion about six months after becoming pregnant. Mirna Novita Amir, one of the teenager's lawyers, welcomed the decision, saying jail was not the place for a rape victim.

"I see a teenager that should not have been charged, but had to go to jail even though she was a victim of her older brother," she said. The girl will receive counseling for psychological trauma and eventually resume her schooling, Amir added. Police arrested the siblings in June after a male foetus was discovered at a local palm oil plantation. Critics say Indonesia's abortion laws restrict women's rights to reproductive health and lead many to undertake dangerous abortions at illegal clinics. Abortions account for between 30 and 50 percent of maternal deaths in the country, according to a 2013 World Health Organization report. — AFP



HONG KONG: Siti Maesarah (left), the domestic helper working for the family of Malaysian national Khaw Kim-sun who is accused of murdering his wife and daughter, leaves after testifying at the High Court in Hong Kong. — AFP

Daughter testifies in Hong Kong 'yoga ball' murder trial

HONG KONG: The daughter of an anaesthetist accused of gassing his wife and another daughter to death using a yoga ball filled with carbon monoxide described her dead sister as her "soulmate" in a Hong Kong court yesterday. Prosecutors have accused Khaw Kim-sun of leaving the inflatable ball in the boot of a car where the gas leaked out and killed his wife and 16-year-old daughter Lily. Khaw, 53, was having an affair and his wife would not grant him a divorce, prosecutors said.

They accused him of hatching a deliberate plot to murder her, but said it was likely he had not intended to kill his daughter. Khaw's eldest daughter May-ling, 19, spoke of her sister at the High Court trial yesterday. "Lily was two-and-half years younger than me. She was probably my soulmate. We were very close and we had a lot in common," she told the court. She described her sister as brave and a "free spirit" but

also said she was impulsive and quick to anger, without giving further details.

May-ling said she was aware of her father's affair with Shara Lee, who was her Chinese tutor and also taught Lily. "At first I felt slightly betrayed but at the same time my parents hadn't been getting along well. I could understand my father would find someone and I felt bad for my mum," she told the court. Khaw's wife Wong Siew-fung and Lily were found on a roadside in a locked yellow Mini Cooper in 2015, in a case which initially baffled police. The pair were certified dead at the same hospital where Khaw worked and a post-mortem concluded they had died from inhaling carbon monoxide.

Police found a deflated yoga ball in the back of the car. A professor from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, where Khaw was based, told the court yesterday that he had seen the anaesthetist fill two yoga balls with carbon monoxide, saying he was taking them to the chemistry department for tests. The court heard earlier in the trial that Khaw had told colleagues he planned to use the gas on rabbits, but later told police that he had taken it to get rid of rats at home. Asked by the defense whether there were animals in the family home in Sai Kung, a largely rural area in the north of Hong Kong, May-ling said there had been mosquitoes, cockroaches and rats. The case continues tomorrow. — AFP

Analysis

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First Daily in The Arabian GulfTHE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYANEditor-in-Chief
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E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
Website: www.kuwaittimes.netDriven from home,
White Helmets start
over in north Syria

Syrian rescue worker Samir Salim found his mother's body under their collapsed house, but there was no time for a funeral. "We buried her and went back to work. There were a lot of people under the rubble," he said. Months later, he can no longer even visit her grave. When Syrian government forces clawed back his eastern Ghouta hometown, near the capital Damascus, Salim followed hundreds of thousands of others who had fled to the northwest under rebel surrender deals.

Now, he and "White Helmet" workers driven from different parts of Syria have come together in the rebel-controlled town of Azaz to try to rebuild their lives near the Turkish border. Their work has changed drastically: with no warplanes cruising overhead, they help the opposition authorities put out fires, clean the streets, and plant trees. Azaz falls within a de facto buffer zone which Turkey has carved out since 2016. The northwest corner remains Syria's last major insurgent stronghold and is now in President Bashar al-Assad's crosshairs.

The White Helmets have often said they worried about reprisals as government forces defeated rebel enclaves with Russian and Iranian help. The civil defense service, which receives funding from Western governments, pulls people from the rubble of air strikes in rebel territory. Assad has accused it of being a Western-sponsored front for Al-Qaeda's branch in Syria.

'New life, foreign place'

Salim said many comrades stayed behind in eastern Ghouta. Before leaving, he helped burn down the emergency center he had once helped establish in his town, where his three brothers also worked. As buses shuttled evacuees out through government territory, including Salim's wife, five children, and relatives, some people cursed and threw stones at them, he added. "We arrived with great misery," said Salim, 45. "Our peers gave us an exceptional welcome."

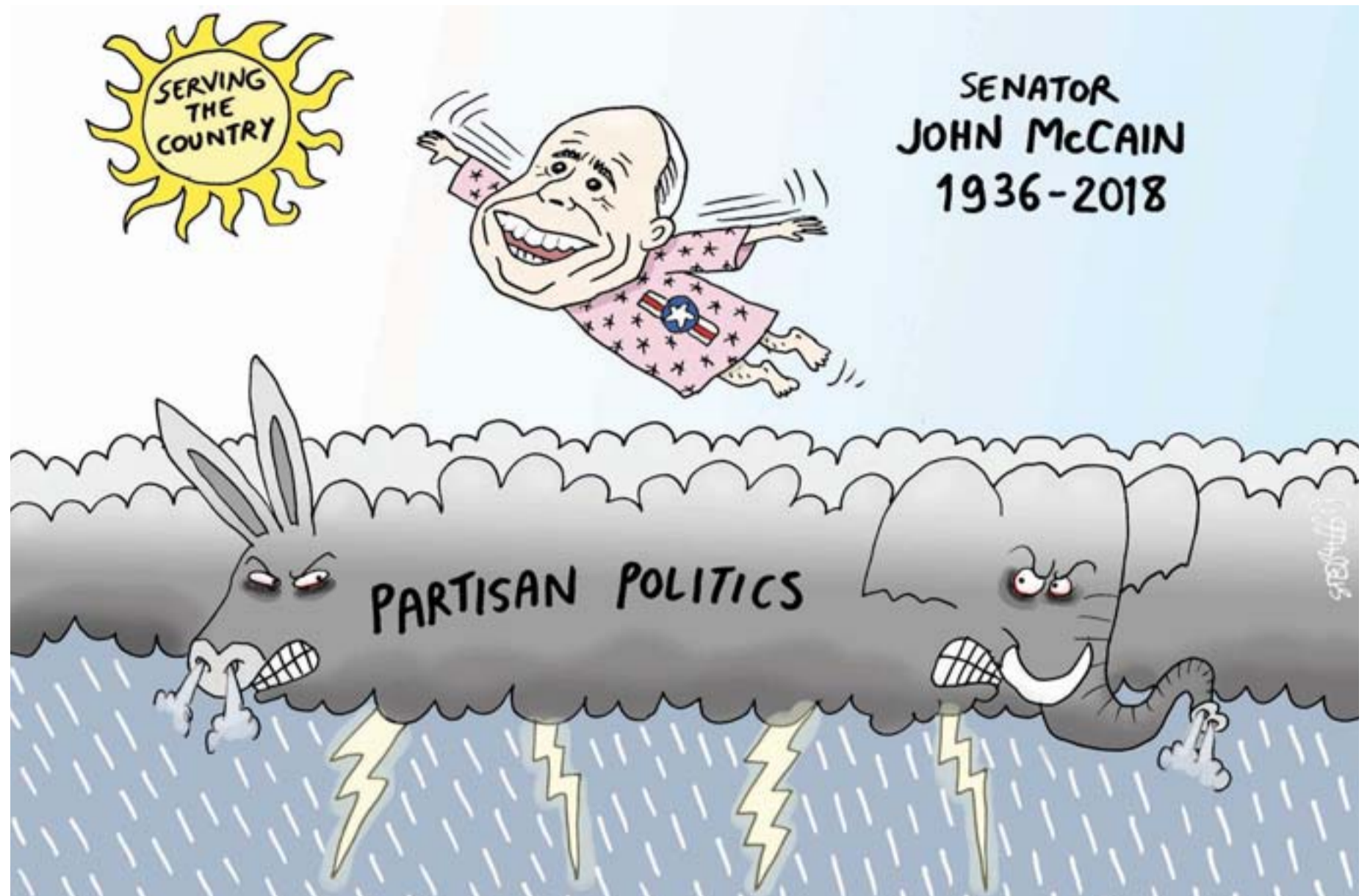
Azaz is worlds apart from Ghouta, which lived through years of bitter siege and air strikes - far from the Turkish influence of the northwest. Salim recalled a sarin gas attack that killed hundreds of people in 2013 in the rebel enclave. "People were running down the streets screaming 'chemicals' and there were a lot of civilians lying in the streets foaming at the mouth."

He said he injured his spleen during an air strike on a market in 2016 and had part of his intestines removed. The White Helmet first responders say Damascus has specifically targeted them during the more than seven-year conflict. The government says it only targets militants. "We fear building a new life in a foreign place and then having to leave once again," Salim said. "I fear northern Syria will face what we did in Ghouta." His family now lives in the nearby Afrin region, where a Turkish assault earlier this year ousted Syrian Kurdish fighters. Those forces have accused Turkey of expelling Afrin's residents to resettle other people, which Ankara denies.

'Harsher times'

Salim's new team includes Ahmed Rashid, 30, who was bussed out of eastern Aleppo two years ago after fighter jets levelled entire districts. The bloody battle for Aleppo in northern Syria marked a turning point in the war as pro-government forces swept through the insurgent half of the city. Rashid said 12 friends from his center in Aleppo were killed. "Nobody expected me to persevere, especially since my parents are in Turkey. But I cannot leave the civil defense," the former shoe designer said. "In Aleppo, the bombing was so heavy we couldn't sleep. Here (in Azaz), there is no such pressure."

Nayef Al-Aboud, also part of the same team, said they largely work on services like helping with car accidents. "Today, our center has workers from the displaced populations," said Aboud, 22, who is from Azaz. "Our strength has grown because they are here, we learn from their experiences, they lived through harsher times." — Reuters



With McCain passing, voice for civility is lost

He was a hero, a statesman who cut a towering figure in Washington. But for many in the increasingly angry world of American politics, John McCain will be missed for a far humbler virtue - simple civility. As Americans and others paid tribute to the late Republican senator, who died Saturday of cancer aged 81, some cited a 2008 interaction with a voter as symbolizing his famous insistence on fair and civil discourse.

As McCain was campaigning against Barack Obama for the presidency, a gray-haired woman in a red McCain T-shirt told the senator at a town hall meeting that she could not trust Obama because he was an "Arab". McCain politely but firmly corrected her. "No, ma'am," he said, taking the microphone back from her. Instead, McCain described Obama as a "decent family man (and) citizen that I just happen to have disagreements with on fundamental issues".

The video has gone viral, a seemingly quaint reminder in today's famously combative political world that opponents can clash fiercely on policy while remaining respectful, collegial, even friendly. "This voice for civility, to put the country above your party, these are things he taught for years, and never more important than the last year," his fellow Arizona Senator Jeff Flake said on CNN, fighting back tears. As one commenter put it on Twitter: "McCain's passing feels like the end of a far from perfect, but more stable and civil era in American politics."

Smackdowns and insults

The decline in civility - with the endless political smackdowns and full-throated insults - is not entirely new. Nor can it be pinned on Donald Trump alone, although he seems to take pride in coining unflattering descriptions of political foes. McCain himself was known occasionally to snarl at rivals or to tell off-color jokes. He could be snippy, telling reporters, "that's a dumb question" - but then taking the time to offer a full

and thoughtful response. McCain "had a temper the size of a volcano", said Larry Sabato, director of the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia. But "you almost always got an apology, followed by quality time with him". And, while voting most often with his fellow Republicans, he "didn't hesitate a minute to work with Democrats", Sabato added. "A large part of civility is the ability to admit when you are wrong... McCain never held back on that score."

McCain acknowledged in his recently published memoir, "The Restless Wave", that he had "disagreed,

Trump tested
the limits of
his courtesy

sometimes too heatedly, with all of" the six presidents with whom he had served. Still, he added, if Americans lose all humility, "we will tear our society apart". The increasingly poisonous discourse has left a mark across the political landscape. In a CBS News poll last year, a lopsided 68 percent of voters said the "tone and civility of US political debate" was growing worse, against only seven percent saying it was getting better. It was a rare result upon which people across the political spectrum agreed.

Feeding the gridlock

If incivility - with the political gridlock that it fuels - is nothing new, analysts say it is amplified by the angry

talking heads of cable television, radio and the Internet who make a living by provocation. McCain targeted that group in July 2017, when, in a rousing speech from the Senate floor, he urged his colleagues to "stop listening to the bombastic loudmouths on the radio and television and the Internet. To hell with them!"

More than anyone, Trump tested the limits of McCain's civility. It was Trump who once said McCain was a "war hero (only) because he was captured," adding, "I like people that weren't captured". The fact that McCain suffered broken bones and was bayoneted after his US Navy jet was shot down over North Vietnam was not relevant, Trump said later. McCain largely shrugged off the insult, while saying Trump did owe an apology to the families of those lost or captured. But the senator's exasperation with Trump erupted in full view over the president's appearance in July in Helsinki with Russian president Vladimir Putin.

Just 'show up'

"The damage inflicted by President Trump's naivete, egotism, false equivalence and sympathy for autocrats is difficult to calculate," the senator said in a blistering statement. Even plans for McCain's funeral brought reminders of the two men's profound differences. As McCain fought the ravaging brain cancer that ultimately killed him, he asked two former political rivals - ex-presidents George W Bush and Barack Obama - if they would speak at his funeral.

According to reports, he explicitly asked that Trump not be invited. Trump's tweeted condolences on Saturday were notably terse. But in his memoir, McCain said the fault for incivility reaches beyond Washington. It is up to voters, he said, to elect people of integrity. "If you want politics to be more civil," he wrote, "if you want Congress to argue less and get more done, then show up. Represent... It's important." — AFP

Rouhani under
attack from all sides

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani is clinging to power but finds himself under attack from all sides - conservatives, reformists and the street - as he prepares for a grilling in parliament today. The US withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers and Washington's reimposition of sanctions have already battered the Iranian economy, and critics say it has exposed the failures of Rouhani's five years in power.

For the first time, lawmakers have summoned Rouhani to parliament to face questions over the collapsing value of the Iranian currency, over stubbornly high unemployment and corruption. Lawmakers have already impeached his labour and economy ministers this month, and are seeking further scalps. They have the power to impeach Rouhani himself, though he is protected by the fact that Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said he should see out his term to 2021, despite his own harsh criticisms of the president's policies.

Conservatives

Despite his dim prospects, Rouhani still has the backing of moderate conservatives, including powerful parliament speaker Ali Larijani. But many in the hard-line establishment opposed his negotiations with the West and feel vindicated by the unravelling of the nuclear deal. They have led the charge against Rouhani's cabinet, and were on Monday seeking enough votes for impeachment proceedings against his industry and transportation ministers. "The best outcome for them is a lame duck president, as their chances will go up for (the next election) in 2021," said political journalist Fereshteh Sadeghi.

Reformists

As for the reformist faction, it was key to Rouhani's election successes in 2013 and 2017, seeing him as its



best option after the movement was suppressed in the wake of mass protests in 2009. But Rouhani has failed to deliver on his promises of easing civil liberties, particularly his vow to release political prisoners and reduce censorship. Reformists now fear being tarnished by their association with Rouhani and some have broken ranks to slam the government's performance.

"What have we done with this nation? We made them miserable and wretched," said reformist MP Elias Hazrati as he voted in favor of impeaching Economy Minister Masoud Karbasian on Sunday. "No one

believes Rouhani will reform anything anymore. He was just a tool for the system, appearing to address people's demands for change without really changing anything," said Clement Therme, Iran research fellow for the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS).

The street

On the back of popular support, Rouhani won emphatic victories in the past two presidential polls. Even with the Guardian Council barring almost all candidates, there was genuine enthusiasm for his plans to rebuild Iran's foreign standing and attract investment. With the key part of that strategy - the nuclear deal in tatters, the sense of disillusionment on the streets of Tehran is now palpable. Many wealthier Iranians are trying to leave, while poorer areas have seen regular, low-level strikes and protests that have occasionally turned violent.

The prices of essential goods are rising rapidly, and worse pain is to come when US sanctions on Iran's vital oil sector return in November. "Look at my breakfast. I can't afford fruit anymore," a motorbike delivery man told AFP, holding up a can of lemonade and a piece of bread. "We are afraid of this government, but there will be more protests."

What next?

Rouhani's problems reflect a basic contradiction of the Islamic republic, said Therme of IISS: Elections are crucial to its legitimacy, but the Iranian people vote for reforms that cannot be delivered. "The supreme leader supports Rouhani going to the end of his second term because he wants stability," said Therme. "But he thinks that if Rouhani delivers on his policies, it will mean the end of the system," particularly by opening the country to Western cultural "invasion".

There had been talk of Rouhani as a possible successor to the ageing Khamenei, but he looks increasingly likely to follow the path of his two predecessors in the presidency, Mohammad Khatami and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who have been effectively silenced by the establishment. "There's nothing he can do. His hands are tied. All the focus will now go on 2021," said political journalist Sadeghi. — AFP

Business

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12 Yuan hits 4-week high as China CB revives X-factor for fixing**13** Mahathir bars foreigners from country's Forest City project**14** Air Arabia signs agreement with SAP for cloud-based HR system

WASHINGTON, DC: Mexican Foreign Minister Luis Videgaray (left) and Jared Kushner (center), senior adviser to US President Donald Trump, walk to the White House in Washington, DC, yesterday. — AFP

Trump flags 'big deal' as NAFTA talks progress

Mexican source says announcement 'almost certain'

WASHINGTON: Mexico and the United States are close to agreement on bilateral issues in the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), a top Mexican official said yesterday, as US President Donald Trump tweeted a "big deal" was "looking good."

When asked by reporters if a deal had been reached, Mexican Economy Minister Ildefonso Guajardo said an announcement was "probably on the agenda," but that he still had to conclude a "very important" issue. The White House said Trump would make an announcement on trade later.

Separately, a Mexican source familiar with the talks said it was "almost certain" there would be an announcement yesterday. Guajardo was speaking on his way into the office of US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer for talks.

An agreement between Mexico and the United States would open the door for Canada to return to the negotiations to rework the 1994 trilateral trade deal. The NAFTA talks have dragged on for more than a year. US, Mexican and Canadian stocks opened higher yesterday on optimism about a trade deal. The Mexican peso gained more than 1.2 percent against the US dollar. The Mexico-US discussions

have focused on crafting new rules for the automotive industry, which Trump has put at the heart of his drive to rework the pact he has repeatedly described as a "disaster" for American workers. Still, Trump, who on Saturday had suggested that an agreement could be imminent, tweeted yesterday morning: "A big deal looking good with Mexico!" However, Guajardo once again stressed that efforts to revamp the North American Free Trade Agreement would not be complete until a final agreement is reached with Canada.

He told reporters "we are not going to disclose anything because a lot of these things imply Canada. Until we finish with the position of Canada, we'll not be able to disclose all the elements." The negotiations are aimed at ironing out bilateral issues and calling on Canada, the third NAFTA partner, to rejoin the now year-old

discussions. Guajardo and Mexico's Foreign Minister Luis Videgaray have been shuttling back and forth to Washington for more than a month for meetings with US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer to try to iron out the bilateral stumbling blocks, including rules for the auto market, before the end of August.

Talks ground to a halt in May, in part due to the July 1 presidential elections in Mexico. The trilateral treaty has been a key target in Trump's aggressive trade strategy and he has repeatedly threatened to scrap it altogether, branding it a "disaster." But after a year of intense negotiations to salvage the 25-year-old pact, the United States and Mexico appear close to a point where Canada—which had been waiting for US-Mexican agreement on auto industry rules—can rejoin the talks.

US and Mexican negotiators are keen to seal a new deal

before Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto hands power to president-elect Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador on December 1. For that to happen, the US Congress must be notified 90 days in advance, which means the administration must send the notice by the end of the week.

Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland of Canada said earlier she was encouraged by the progress and would rejoin the talks once bilateral discussions concluded. She currently is on a European trip, but Guajardo said last week Freeland had indicated she would be available as soon as the United States and Mexico were ready to move to the next phase. A key element of the US-Mexico talks has been content requirements for autos, which Mexico reportedly agreed to increase to 75 percent from North America to get duty free NAFTA treatment.

The sides also have reached agreement on the portion of cars made at "high wage" factories that can receive duty-free treatment, according to reports. That requirement would deter US auto manufacturers from moving production to Mexico, where labor costs are lower, something central to Trump's attacks on NAFTA. — Agencies

Dollar weakens after Powell speech suggests slower tightening pace

NEW YORK: The dollar fell for a second straight session yesterday, still weighed down by comments from Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell on Friday that seemed to suggest a slower pace of monetary tightening.

Since hitting a more than one-year high in mid-August, the dollar has fallen more than 2 percent amid remarks from US President Donald Trump criticizing the Fed for raising interest rates at a time when the government was trying to stimulate the economy. At a symposium in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, Powell on Friday emphasized the central bank's push to raise interest rates despite Trump's criticism of higher borrowing costs.

But he also said the Fed sees no clear sign of inflation accelerating above 2 percent. His comments did little to change market expectations for rate hikes in September and December and disappointed some dollar bulls hoping for a more hawkish message. "The takeaway from Jackson Hole is that the Fed may not look to tighten much more

than is currently priced into markets," said Mark McCormick, North American head of FX strategy at TD Securities in Toronto. "It is clear the Fed cycle is close to nearing the end-game," he added. Interest rate hike expectations have supported the dollar this year as the US economy tracked a stable growth path. The Treasury yield curve yesterday reached its flattest since 2007 - a factor seen as reducing support for the dollar - in the wake of Powell's speech.

In mid-morning trading, the dollar index, which measures the greenback against a basket of six major currencies, was down 0.2 percent at 94.97 after slipping more than 0.5 percent in the previous session.

The euro rose 0.2 percent to \$1.1647 after climbing as high as \$1.1654, its strongest since Aug 2. The currency advanced more than 0.7 percent on Friday. Overall, financial markets showed a healthier appetite for risk as US stocks rose, curbing the US currency's safe-haven appeal. Adding to the risk-on mood, US and Mexican trade negotiators appeared close to reaching a common position on NAFTA, with Mexico's economy minister saying an announcement was "probably on the agenda."

The Mexican peso rose 1 percent against the dollar, which traded at 18.703 pesos. In emerging markets, the Turkish lira weakened more than 2 percent against the dollar yesterday after a week-long holiday, hit by persisting concern about a diplomatic rift with Washington over a detained US pastor. — Reuters



Wall Street jumps on positive deal

United States and Mexico appear close to a point where Canada—which had been waiting for US-Mexican agreement on auto industry rules—can rejoin the talks.

US and Mexican negotiators are keen to seal a new deal

Turkish lira slides nearly 5% again

ISTANBUL: The Turkish lira tumbled nearly 5 percent against the dollar yesterday after a week-long holiday, hit by persistent concern about a diplomatic rift with Washington over a US pastor on trial in Turkey.

The slide left the lira down about 40 percent this year, driven by worries over President Tayyip Erdogan's grip on monetary policy and the stand-off with the United States over the fate of evangelical Christian Andrew Brunson. He is being tried in Turkey on terrorism charges that he denies. With the dollar stronger globally, the lira weakened as far as 6.2960 from 6.00 on Friday, when a holiday to mark the Muslim festival of Eid Al-Adha came to an end. It stood at 6.2100 at 1156 GMT.

"The exchange rate sensitivity created by the tension between us and the United States continues," said Seda Yalcinkaya Ozer, an analyst at brokerage Integral, adding that emerging market currencies were generally weaker against the dollar. The United States and Turkey have exchanged tit-for-tat tariffs on each other's

exports over the Brunson dispute. The NATO allies are also at odds over diverging interests in Syria and US objections to Ankara's ambition to buy Russian defense systems. Investors are set to turn their attention to a meeting between Finance Minister Berat Albayrak and his French counterpart in Paris, after which they are scheduled to make a statement at 1330 GMT. In a conference call before the holiday, Albayrak told investors that Turkey would emerge stronger from the crisis, insisting its banks were healthy but that the authorities were ready to provide support to the sector if needed. Turkey's central bank and banking watchdog have taken steps to underpin the lira in recent weeks, including cutting limits for Turkish banks' swap transactions. Yesterday, the Istanbul stock exchange said it had started work on setting up a swap market as part of efforts to make the city an international finance center.

Investors remain concerned about the lira given Erdogan's opposition to high interest rates and with inflation near 16 percent in July, its highest in more than 14 years. August inflation data will be released next today and the central bank will hold a policy-setting meeting on Sept. 13, having left rates on hold at its last meeting, contrary to expectations. — Reuters

Business

Yuan hits 4-week high as China CB revives X-factor for fixing

POBC halts a record 10-week slide that rattled global markets

SHANGHAI: China's yuan finished yesterday afternoon trade at a near 4-week high to the dollar after the central bank revived a "counter-cyclical factor" in its daily fixing to support the currency, halting a record 10-week slide that rattled global markets and irritated Washington.

The announcement was seen as the latest signal from the People's Bank of China (PBOC) that is not comfortable with further depreciation in the yuan which could spark capital outflows from the cooling economy. The move late on Friday came a day after the latest Sino-US talks aimed at resolving the trade dispute ended with little progress, with tougher US measures expected to kick in next month that could add more pressure on the Chinese currency.

President Donald Trump, in an interview with Reuters last week, had accused China of manipulating its currency to help cushion the blow from US tariffs on Chinese imports.

Yesterday's domestic closing price was the strongest since Aug. 1. Spot yuan opened onshore trade at 6.8080 per dollar and closed domestic trade, at 0830 GMT, at 6.8171, or 19 pips firmer than the previous late night session close. "Given China has drawn the line in the sand clearly, the outlook of the yuan may depend on China's economic fundamentals other than the dollar trajectory," Tommy Xie, economist at OCBC in Singapore, said in a note.

"Should China's economy decelerate more than expected, the pressure on RMB weakness may come back again. Otherwise, we expect the USD/CNY to stay below 7 comfortably," he said.

The PBOC said it was adjusting how the yuan's official midpoint was calculated to keep the currency more stable amid dollar strength and trade tensions, but gave no details as to how the new "X" factor is derived. With little sign of compromise in the trade talks, most market

watchers had predicted it was only a matter of time before the yuan tested the closely watched and psychologically important support level of 7 to the dollar.

The PBOC's move "validates our views that yuan devaluation is not a weapon of the trade war," Mizuho Bank analysts said in a note. "It also resonates with our '7-3' stability threshold hypothesis, which refers to not breaching 7 for dollar-yuan and FX reserves not falling below \$3 trillion."

Intraday swinging

Prior to the market opening yesterday, the PBOC lifted its official yuan midpoint more than expected to 6.8508 per dollar, 202 pips, or 0.3 percent, firmer than the previous fix of 6.8710 on Friday.

The guidance rate was 127 pips higher than Reuters' estimate of 6.8635 per dollar. The currency firmed initially in spot trade before swinging between gains and losses. The offshore counterpart rose to a high of 6.7818, its strongest since July 31. It traded at 6.8047 as of 0830 GMT.

Traders said the policy move had triggered some dollar selling since Friday night, but gains in the Chinese currency were capped by bargain hunting for cheaper dollars yesterday as many saw strong resistance at 6.8 per dollar for now. The PBOC introduced the "X" factor in May 2017 when the yuan was firming against a weaker dollar. But Goldman Sachs said it has been used in both direction at various times: to slow yuan gains and to curb yuan losses.

Testing the waters

Traders suspect the PBOC may already have been testing the waters in recent weeks for a re-activation of the measure as the dollar continued to climb. It was last believed to have been used early this year, when the yuan was firming.



SHANGHAI: A trader watches the stock market monitor in Shanghai in this file photo.

US policymakers look set to continue raising interest rates well into next year, supporting the dollar for a while longer, while China recently started shifting to easier conditions to shore up slowing economic growth. "How the factor works per se is much less important than the clear signal sent by the PBOC that it would defend 7.0 at least in the next couple of months," said Larry Hu, head of greater China economics at Macquarie in Hong Kong.

The yuan had appreciated rapidly in the six months after the counter-cyclical factor was first introduced, Hu said. Late gains in offshore markets after the announcement on Friday spared the currency from an 11th consecutive weekly loss. But it had already posted the longest such losing streak since the exchange rate was unified in 1994. As of 0830 GMT, the onshore yuan had weakened 4.6 percent against the dollar this year. — Reuters

EU-US trade truce boosts German business confidence

FRANKFURT: Confidence among German business leaders swelled again in August after the European Union and United States backed off an escalating trade showdown, a regular survey showed yesterday.

The Munich-based Ifo institute's monthly barometer based on a survey of 9,000 firms rebounded to 103.8 points this month, its highest level since February. In July, the Ifo index had stood at 101.7 points.

"Confidence in German firms has improved noticeably... in addition to a robust domestic economic situation, the truce in the trade conflict with the US contributed," Ifo president Clemens Fuest said in a statement. Furthermore, "the German economy is growing robustly," he added, with the latest data suggesting that third-quarter growth in the eurozone's economic powerhouse could match the 0.5 percent quarter-on-quarter it booked between April and June.

Companies' assessments of both their present economic situation and future expectations improved, while firms in the manufacturing, services, trade and construction sectors were all more confident.

A major reason for the sunnier outlook is a deal struck between European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and US President Donald Trump last month to back down from a mounting trade confrontation, initially sparked by Trump's decision to impose levies on steel and aluminium imports.

But while the trade battle appears to

on ice for now, tensions could flare up again in future if the mercurial US leader threatens to impose duties on vital European products like cars.

Bond yields rise

Germany's benchmark 10-year bond yield rose to its highest level in more than two weeks yesterday, reversing early falls after a stronger-than-expected German business sentiment survey added to signs of an improving outlook for the euro zone economy. The Munich-based Ifo economic institute said its business climate index jumped to 103.8 in August after 101.7 in July, suggesting that concerns about a global trade war among company executives in Europe's largest economy have eased.

The August reading beat a Reuters consensus forecast of 101.9. "The Ifo survey confirms the picture that the slowdown in leading indicators is a temporary blip," said Commerzbank rates strategist Michael Leister. "If we get more evidence that the data flow is improving, markets will have to reassess whether an (ECB) rate hike that is priced in for only December next year is justified."

Euro zone bond yields were broadly higher in the wake of the Ifo data, having reversed earlier falls on the back of reassuring comments from US Federal Reserve chief Jerome Powell at the Jackson Hole symposium on Friday.

Germany's benchmark 10-year bond yield rose 2 basis points to 0.367 percent, its highest level in more than two weeks. That left the gap with US



BRUSSELS: In this file photo, Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel (right) speaks to Greece's Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras as they attend a European leaders summit at the European Council in Brussels. —AFP

Treasury yields at around 245 bps — close to its narrowest since early June as investors bet that perhaps the divergence in the US and eurozone monetary policy outlooks is not as stark as it appeared just a few months ago.

On Friday, Powell defended the Fed's push to raise rates as healthy for the economy and signalled more hikes were coming. "Powell's speech was interpreted as dovish, although I think there were some hawkish elements to it," said Jan von Gerich, chief analyst at Nordea in Helsinki.

Analysts said news that Finland plans to sell a new 10-year government bond via a syndicate of banks also came as a

surprise to markets and added to upward pressure on bond yields.

Ten-year bond yields across the euro area were 1-2 bps higher on the day, although trade was subdued due to a public holiday in Britain. Bond supply in the euro area picks up this week after a summer lull. An Italian bond auction on Thursday could prove a key barometer of sentiment given concerns about the policies of the new anti-establishment coalition. "The resumption of BTP auctions after the summer hiatus will serve as a key test this week but should be cushioned by sizable coupons," analysts at Commerzbank said in a note. — Agencies

Ethiopia ousts state firm from Nile dam project

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopia has ousted state-run Metals and Engineering Corporation (METEC) from a \$4 billion dam project on the River Nile due to numerous delays in completing the project.

The Grand Renaissance Dam is the centerpiece of Ethiopia's bid to become Africa's biggest power exporter. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said at the weekend that the government had cancelled the contract of METEC, which is run by Ethiopia's military, and would award it to another company.

Italian firm Salini Impregilo remains the main contractor building the dam, while METEC was the contractor for the electromechanical and hydraulic steel structure divisions of the project.

The government has touted the 6,000-megawatt dam project, which is 60 percent finished, as a symbol of its economic reforms. "It is a project that was supposed to be completed within five years, but seven or eight years later not a single turbine is operational," Abiy said during a news conference in Addis Ababa on Saturday.

"Salini has even demanded compensation because of the delays. We decided to cancel a contract with METEC and offer companies with experience. Otherwise, it will take even longer," he said. Abiy has presided over a series of reforms since coming to power in April, releasing political prisoners, relaxing state control of the economy and dramatically improving relations with Ethiopia's neighbor Eritrea. The government had previously said the dam would be completed within two years, but recently Abiy said it may face a lengthy delay. — Reuters

Noble shareholders back \$3.5bn deal in fight for survival

SINGAPORE: Commodities trader Noble Group's shareholders backed a \$3.5 billion restructuring deal yesterday, in a major boost for the embattled company's efforts to stay afloat. The deal is aimed at pulling the company back from the abyss of a three-year crisis sparked by a fall in commodity prices, allegations of irregular accounting practices and a ratings downgrade.

Once one of the world's top commodity trading houses, Noble has been reduced to a shell of its former self as the company sold off assets while battling creditors and shareholders in a bid to survive.

Shareholders overwhelmingly backed the plan, which calls for 70 percent of the restructured company to be held by creditors, with 20 percent going to shareholders and 10 percent to management.

The vote went ahead after key investor Goldilocks Investment Co in June agreed to a revised restructuring plan that raised shareholders' equity in the company from 15 percent.

Abu Dhabi Financial Group, with which Goldilocks is affiliated, will also form a strategic partnership with



HONG KONG: In this file photo, Noble Group founder Richard Elman poses at his office in Hong Kong. —Reuters

Noble to explore opportunities in the Middle East. "We are now moving into the final phase of the restructuring," Noble chairman Paul Brough told investors before the vote, according to Bloomberg News. Noble, which is headquartered in Hong Kong and listed in Singapore, saw its market value plunge from \$6.0 billion in February 2015 to just \$114 million currently after being accused of inflating its assets through irregular accounting practices.

The allegations marked the start of the crisis that engulfed the company. Yesterday's deal still needs a formal endorsement by senior creditors—which it is likely to get—and approval from the courts but this could run into a roadblock as a legal challenge is planned, according to Bloomberg. —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY BUY SELL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
British Pound	0.382916	0.396816
Czech Korune	0.005668	0.014968
Danish Krone	0.043199	0.048199
Euro	0.345086	0.358786
Georgian Lari	0.116763	0.116763
Hungarian O.000997	0.001187	0.001187
Norwegian Krone	0.032327	0.037527
Romanian Leu	0.059050	0.075900
Russian ruble	0.004494	0.004494
Slovakia 0.009067	0.019067	
Swedish Krona	0.029219	0.034219
Swiss Franc	0.301942	0.312942

Australasia

Australian Dollar	0.214008	0.226008
New Zealand Dollar	0.196616	0.206116

America

Canadian Dollar	0.227737	0.236737
US Dollars	0.299600	0.304900
US Dollars Mint	0.300100	0.304900

Asia

Bangladesh Taka	0.003044	0.003845
Chinese Yuan	0.043124	0.046624
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036599	0.039349

Indian Rupee	0.003862	0.004634
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002647	0.002827
Korean Won	0.000262	0.000277
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070815	0.076815
Nepalese Rupee	0.002626	0.002966
Pakistan Rupee	0.001949	0.002719
Philippine Peso	0.005663	0.005963
Singapore Dollar	0.216946	0.226946
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001561	0.002141
Taiwan 0.009760	0.009940	
Thai Baht	0.008978	0.009528

Arab

Bahraini Dinar	0.790468	0.806968
Egyptian Pound	0.014341	0.020059
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000200	0.000260
Jordanian Dinar	0.424048	0.433048
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000150	0.000250
Moroccan Dirhams	0.022432	0.046432
Omani Riyal	0.782513	0.788193
Qatar Riyal	0.079129	0.084069
Saudi Riyal	0.079900	0.081200
Syrian Pound	0.001287	0.001507
Tunisian Dinar	0.106808	0.114808
Turkish Lira	0.046158	0.057658
UAE Dirhams	0.081261	0.082961
Yemeni Riyal	0.000987	0.001067

Business

Mahathir bars foreigners from country's Forest City project

Forest City seeks an image that is more Malaysian, less Chinese

FOREST CITY/KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad yesterday declared that foreigners will not be granted visas to live in the giant Forest City real estate project on the country's southern tip, a major threat to the marketing strategy for the development. It is not his first broadside against the plan by Chinese developer Country Garden Holdings Co to create a new city that was envisaged to eventually house 700,000 people on reclaimed land near Singapore, but it could be his most damaging. The company has been targeting foreigners more than Malaysians for sales of the apartments.

A top official at the project told Reuters last week that in the weeks immediately after 93-year-old Mahathir came back into power, through a shock election victory in May, demand for the apartments had weakened, and that the uncertainty remained a concern.

Mahathir's latest comments are likely to exacerbate those concerns. "One thing is certain, that city that is going to be built cannot be sold to foreigners," Mahathir said at a news conference yesterday in Kuala Lumpur in response to a question from Reuters. "We are not going to give visas for people to come and live here."

Mahathir, who was Malaysia's leader from 1981-2003, said the government's

objection was "because it was built for foreigners, not built for Malaysians. Most Malaysians are unable to buy those flats."

Country Garden Pacificview Sdn Bhd, the joint venture between Country Garden and the Johor state government that is developing Forest City, said in a statement it is in touch with Mahathir's office as it seeks clarification. It said it believed Mahathir's comments "may have been taken out of context in certain media reports" as they do not correspond with the content of a meeting between the prime minister and Country Garden Holdings Chairman Yeung Kwok Keung.

In that meeting on August 16, Mahathir "reiterated that he welcomes foreign investments which could create employment opportunities, promote technology transfer and innovations that could benefit Malaysia's economic growth and job creation," Country Garden Pacificview said.

It also said that it has complied with all Malaysian laws and regulations concerning approvals to sell to foreign purchasers. Shares in Hong Kong-listed Country Garden, which rose as much as 3.9 percent yesterday morning, trimmed their gains to 2.5 percent after Mahathir's comments.

Country Garden Chinese buyers now make up about two-thirds of the owners of the Forest City apartments that have been sold so far, with 20 percent from Malaysia

and the rest from 22 other countries including Indonesia, Vietnam and South Korea.

Mahathir had capitalized on popular disquiet about Chinese investment pouring into Malaysia during his election campaign. He even suggested in a speech last December that he hoped Forest City would become an actual forest with baboons and monkeys as residents, according to local media reports.

Since becoming prime minister he has put the brakes on a number of China-backed projects, including the \$20 billion East Coast Rail Link project and a natural gas pipeline project in Sabah. Plans for a high speed rail link from Kuala Lumpur to Singapore, which was expected to be a big boost to the Forest City project, have also been suspended.

"Ghost town" questions

Forest City's sales have picked back up in recent weeks, and the developer has been seeking to change the project's image. Country Garden is trying to make it appear more Malaysian and less Chinese, according to the official, Ng Zhu Hann, who is head of strategy for Country Garden Forest City.

Country Garden is also willing to acknowledge for the first time that if demand does falter it will have to slow down the building of the development. It is eventually intended to be a \$100 billion city, with



JOHOR, Malaysia: Residential buildings are seen at Forest City in Johor, Malaysia. — Reuters

apartment blocks, houses, office towers, hotels and shopping centers on four man-made islands.

"If the demand is there, we will build. If it's not there, we will slow down," Ng said in an interview at the gleaming Phoenix Hotel, one of the finished new structures on the first of the reclaimed islands. "So there's no worry of a ghost town, oversupply - If the

demand is not there, we won't be building."

Mahathir's victory is the second big threat that the development - which is a partnership between Country Garden and the Sultan of Johor - has faced in the past couple of years. Beijing's moves to stem capital outflows imposed after the yuan plummeted in late 2016 hurt mainland Chinese demand for the apartments. — Reuters

S&P, Nasdaq hit records as Wall St rises on NAFTA optimism

NEW YORK: US stocks posted strong gains yesterday with the benchmark S&P 500 and the Nasdaq hitting all-time highs, as news that the United States and Mexico were closing in on a trade deal added to optimism about the economy. A Mexican source familiar with the talks told Reuters "it's almost certain" that there will be an announcement about the North American Free Trade Agreement later in the day and US President Donald Trump tweeted, "a big deal looking good with Mexico!" Also helping sentiment was Washington pressing the European Union to speed up trade negotiations.

Nine of the 11 major S&P 500 sectors were higher. The top gainer was the materials sector with a 1.38 percent increase, as prices of metals and gold rose. The trade-sensitive industrials sector was up about 0.82 percent.

Boeing and Caterpillar rose 1.5 percent and 2.5 percent, respectively. Shares of automakers Ford, General Motors and Fiat Chrysler were up between 1.86 percent and 2.26 percent.

"What we are seeing is optimism that there is going to be some resolution to trade difficulties and then there's the news of the



NEW YORK, NY: Traders and financial professionals observe a moment of silence for the late US Senator John McCain prior to the opening bell on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), yesterday in New York City. — AFP

US and Mexico closing in on the NAFTA deal," said Scott Brown, chief economist at Raymond James in St. Petersburg, Florida.

"Easing trade and NAFTA are probably the biggest things today but I think it's more fundamental than that, because we're still seeing a lot of signs of strength in the domestic economy and earnings stories have been very robust."

Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell said on Friday that the central bank's gradual interest rate hikes were the best way to protect the economic recovery, maintain strong job growth and keep inflation under control.

At 10:01 am EDT the Dow Jones Industrial

Average was up 213.17 points, or 0.83 percent, at 26,003.52, the S&P 500 was up 18.15 points, or 0.63 percent, at 2,892.84 and the Nasdaq Composite was up 54.28 points, or 0.68 percent, at 8,000.25.

The defensive utilities sector dropped 0.29 percent, and the real estate sector dropped 0.01 percent. Chipotle Mexican Grill slipped 3 percent, the most on the S&P, after Wedbush downgraded its shares, citing higher risks to the burrito chain's near-term same-store sales and margin estimates. Tesla Inc dropped 1.9 percent after abandoning a plan to take the electric carmaker private. — Reuters

Hellenic Petroleum workers battling selloff block suitors from refineries

ATHENS: Workers at Hellenic Petroleum yesterday physically prevented suitors eyeing a majority stake in Greece's biggest oil refiner from entering two of its sites in protest at plans to privatize the utility, a union spokesman said. While privatizations have been a key part of successive bailout agreements Greece has struck since 2010, they have been met with strong political resistance.

Greece still has a series of deals to complete under the terms of its latest bailout which ended last week, including the sale of a 50.1 percent stake in Hellenic jointly held by the state and Paneuropean Oil and Industrial Holdings.

The country's privatization agency has shortlisted Anglo-Swiss Glencore Energy and Switzerland's Vitol Holding for the stake in Hellenic. Glencore was scheduled to visit Hellenic's refineries in Aspropyrgos and Elefsina, about 12 miles outside

Athens, yesterday.

However, representatives arriving at the sites failed to gain entry after workers walked off the job for four hours to picket the entrance to the facilities, the union and another source close to the privatization process said. The union said they planned more work stoppages for Tuesday and next week to protest the sale. "Workers didn't let them in because they want to cancel Hellenic Petroleum's fire-sale", Panagiotis Othlalmides, the head of their labor union representing about 2,000 workers, told Reuters. Hellenic is strategically important for the country's national interests and should remain under state control, Othlalmides said.

Hellenic Petroleum and Greece's privatization agency both declined to comment on the action. Glencore could not immediately be reached for comment. — Reuters

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Business

Air Arabia signs agreement with SAP for cloud-based HR system

'SAP SuccessFactors' to use cutting edge human capital software solutions

SHARJAH: Air Arabia - the Middle East and North Africa's first and largest low-cost carrier (LCC), has announced yesterday that it has signed an agreement with SAP - a global market leader in enterprise application software for a new cloud-based Human Resources system.

The new system "SAP SuccessFactors" will provide Air Arabia with advanced capabilities across all HR functions using some of the latest technologies and cutting edge human capital management software solutions.

Adel Al Ali, Group Chief Executive Officer, Air Arabia, said: "Since its launch, Air Arabia has always adopted smart and cutting-edge technologies that supports that carrier's ever growing operations with reliability and efficiency. The new agreement with SAP is in line with this strategy and we look forward to working together to make this project a success."

Julien Bertin, Managing Director, SAP said: "We have developed the SAP Model Company for Human Resources service to support digital HR transformation. We are confident that Air Arabia's human capital function will considerably benefit from a ready-to-run, pre-configured SAP SuccessFactors solution based on leading practices for end-to-end HR business processes. We are proud to have partnered with Air Arabia and we look forward to a successful collaboration."

Through this agreement, Air Arabia will acquire advanced capabilities across all its Human Capital functions via the use of the latest technologies provided by SAP SuccessFactors scope, which include core employee management functions, the payroll system, employee self-service, recruitment and onboarding, performance and goal management, learning management, manpower planning and many additional features.



Adel Al Ali, Group CEO, Air Arabia and Julien Bertin, Managing Director, SAP during the signing ceremony

Oriental Insurance chairman visits Kuwait

KUWAIT: The Chairman and Managing Director of India's State-owned Oriental Insurance Company (OIC), A V Girija Kumar and the General Manager of OIC, Anil Srivastava, who are on a two-day official visit to Kuwait, expressed their appreciation at the long and successful partnership with their Chief Agents in Kuwait, the Al Mulla Group.

"Since 1985, when Al Mulla Group was appointed as our Chief Agent, the two companies have enjoyed an excellent relationship," Girija Kumar said.

The officials met the Al Mulla group officials along with Hormuzda Davar, Director of Financial Services at Al Mulla Group and Siddhartha Mukherjee, the Resident Manager Oriental Insurance in Kuwait and held various meetings with their sponsor Al Mulla group in Kuwait. Oriental Insurance, which specializes in non-life and general insurance in Kuwait offers a wide spectrum of insurance coverage, including marine, fire, engineering and motor. Oriental Insurance Company, with over 1,000 offices spread across the country is the third largest general insurance provider in India.

Enjoy gentle and efficient one-stroke hair removal with Panasonic's ES-EL8A

KUWAIT: Flawless, smooth skin in one stroke is now possible, thanks to Panasonic's new breakthrough ES-EL8A epilator! A harmonious fusion of innovative features makes the ES-EL8A a versatile, highly-effective hair-removal solution for today's busy women of Kuwait. This wet/dry epilator also features a completely new design with core improvements to head shape disc structure and motor performance, thus enabling efficient yet comfortable hair removal.

Furthermore, users, in just a single stroke of the ES-EL8A, can remove more unwanted hair, allowing them to take back some of their precious time. The head, which is 30 percent wider than conventional epilator models, measures 32.4mm and can also be flexed through 90°, making it possible to cover uneven contours of the body for a totally fuzz-free skin.

The ES-EL8A is equipped with a Double Disc system to ensure that any hair missed by the first disc is neatly caught by the second disc. To further ensure hair-removal efficiency, Panasonic built the epilator with 60 tweezers onto its pivoting head, thus it is able to catch more hair in one stroke. What's more, the two tweezer tips that grip the hair have been created longer and given wider openings, yet they align perfectly so that hair as short as 0.5mm

gets caught and removed from the root completely.

Osama Slim, Whole sale manager at Al-Yousifi company said, "The ES-EL8A is a brilliant beauty gadget to help you pamper even more of your body. It is unmatched in features and efficiency, and Panasonic engineers developed this premium epilator to fit into the busy lifestyles of Kuwaiti women. With a water-resistant design for both wet and dry epilation, you can use the ES-EL8A in the bath or shower to warm and soften your skin for even gentler hair removal. Its ingenious design also lets you pour shower gel directly onto the epilator head to create fine foam so that you can softly and gently remove unwanted hair from the roots. Another amazing thing about the ES-EL8A is it can be your multi-function beauty tool with its various deluxe attachments for optimal body care."

The ES-EL8A is a nine-piece kit. In addition to its leg/arm epilation head, carry pouch and cleaning brush, the epilator comes with other functional attachments for total pampering bliss: an underarm/bikini epilation head, shaver head, pop-up trimmer, bikini comb, a gentle cap for epilation beginners and a foot care attachment included for smoother feet.

Consistent with Panasonic's high-quality Japanese craftsmanship, the ES-EL8A is a solidly built piece of technology with other key features you will love: a full-hour charge that offers 30 minutes of cordless operation; a waterproof enclosure design for easy cleaning; a user-centric shape that makes the handle easy to grip and to steer for maximum control; a three-speed setting so you can choose the ideal operating power depending on the part of body to be treated; and, an LED light to illuminate hard-to-see areas further ensuring that every strand of unwanted hair is removed. The ES-EL8A Epilator is now available in Kuwait at all Best Al-Yousifi Electronics Showrooms as well as all authorized distributors.

Panasonic



26 new winners in Al-Hassad Islamic account this week

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank recently conducted its Al-Hassad Islamic account weekly draw, Kuwait's leading sharia-compliant rewards program that offers a broad range of prizes to the largest number of winners, on the 22nd of August 2018. The account provides 26 weekly prizes that are comprised of KD 25,000 as a grand prize and 25 other prizes valued at KD 1,000 each. AUB also offers four quarterly prizes that are valued at KD 250,000 to each winner allowing them to achieve their dreams of travelling, studying abroad, or owning their dream home or car.

On this occasion Ahli United Bank announced, "With this draw, we are adding 26 new winners and prizes to the Al-Hassad Islamic account whereby, the total number of winners annually will include more than 1300.

The weekly grand prize winner of KD

25,000 Fatema Ahmed Ebrahim. 25 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and are as follows: Fahad Hamad Al-Dasmah, Abd Al-Rasoul Khan, Khalid Mohamed Alokaili, Abdullah Muhawesh AlDeweesh, Antoun Tawfiq Fakhoury, Khalid Iafi Al Otabi, Anyukourn Chanphirom, Mohammad Khaled AlRubaiaan, Bader Sulaiman Al Saqoubi, Nourah Saud Al-Muhanaa, Faisal Ebrahim Al-Azmi, Tahani Hamad Al-Enezi, Mahmoud Mohammad Ahmad, Ahmad Mazyad Al-Otaibi, Anwar Othman Al-Anjery, Mekhled Matar Al-Hurajji, Nawaf Sulaibani Al-Harbi, Saleem Mohd Kalid, Radhi Rafhan Al-Sulaimani, Zahra Abdulla Khazna, Helmy Elsayed Elshaer, Mona Ebrahim Jassim, Ali Ebrahim Khamis, Khairiya Abdulla Dashty and Jaffar Ahmed Al Mughharher.

Al-Hassad Islamic account's customers in Kuwait and Bahrain are eligible to participate in the draw in line with the program's terms and conditions.

Ahli United Bank added, "There are increased opportunities that await our current customers and those who are interested in opening an Al-Hassad Islamic account to benefit from the wide range of prizes and opportunities offered this year." Individual customers can open their accounts with a minimum deposit of KD 100, qualifying them to enter the draw.

ages state assets and is in charge of privatization of state firms.

Before that he worked at a university as a professor of management after holding top positions in two pharmaceutical companies previously. He will replace the outgoing finance minister Mateja Vranicar Erman. Earlier in August parliament elected Sarec as the next prime minister following a June 3 election in which the center-right anti-immigrant Slovenian Democratic Party got most votes but lacked coalition partners to form a government.

Sarec, who heads the The List of Marjan Sarec (LMS) party, formed a coalition with four other center-left parties - the Social Democrats, the Party of Modern Centre, the Party of Alenka Bratusek and pensioners' party Desus. The five parties hold 43 out of 90 parliamentary seats but have agreed with the left-wing party the Left, which holds 9 seats, that it will support the government in its key projects although it will not join the coalition.

Some analysts say the minority government will find it hard to complete its four year mandate due to differences between the coalition partners.

One of the first tasks of the new government will be to sell a majority in Slovenia's largest bank Nova Ljubljanska Banka (NLB). Slovenia has committed itself to selling the bank in exchange for European Commission's approval of state aid to the bank in 2013. — Reuters

Europe's new data law upends global online advertising

LONDON: Europe's new data privacy law has put a small army of tech firms that track people online in jeopardy and is strengthening the hand of giants such as Google and Facebook in the \$200 billion global digital advertising industry. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) brought in by the European Union in May is designed to protect personal information in the age of the internet and requires websites to seek consent to use personal data, among other measures.

The ability to track internet users has attracted hundreds of companies that harvest and crunch user data from websites - with or without the consent of the site owner - to form very specific individual consumer profiles.

GDPR poses a challenge to those groups because they all need consent to use the data. While sites often request consent on behalf of the ad tech firms they use directly, uncertainty over whether every link in the supply chain is GDPR-compliant is pushing some to leave Europe altogether.

Concerns about GDPR should, however, benefit Alphabet's Google and Facebook as their loyal customers are more likely to give consent to carry on using sites, allowing the US giants to keep amassing and analyzing vast amounts of GDPR-compliant data that advertisers will pay to use.

Big publishers such as national newspapers are also likely to keep their readers and believe they can benefit by eventually charging advertisers more for online slots in the knowledge they are compliant with the new EU rules. "It's challenging for the digital ecosystem," said Mark Read, joint boss at the world's biggest ad agency, WPP.

"But if consumers feel confident that their data is being protected and they understand how it is being used and it's done with permission, ultimately that should be a good thing for clients and for us," he told Reuters.

Tangled web

From a standing start nearly 30 years ago, the internet has become the largest advertising medium in the world because it allows firms to target consumers with ads based on anything from their browsing history, comments, spending power to location. Within the tangled ecosystem are multiple firms that help brands and ad agencies connect to sites that fund content with targeted ads. For every dollar spent by an advertiser, about half may go to ad tech groups, according to industry estimates.

When an internet user pulls up a page multiple bid requests are sent into the advertising

ecosystem touting facts about the person such as demographics and interests, as well as the nature of the site they are viewing.

That personal data can then pass through a dozen or more ad tech firms before a company or ad agency bids at an auction for space on the website and an advert is loaded. It is that spread of personal data that risks breaking the new EU privacy law.

For example, a firm that provides ads for a website viewed on a mobile phone may use other partners not included in the compliance chain to provide information about a user's location. That doubt about compliance is threatening the myriad ad tech middlemen and is also prompting advertisers and publishers to rethink how they share their user data. "In a world where we are putting the consumer first, there are only going to be so many opportunities for the very colorful ecosystem of companies to obtain consent," said Andrew Casale, head of ad group Index Exchange <http://www.indexexchange.com>.

Uncertain times

In the midst of the disruption, some ad tech groups are pulling out of Europe. Harry Kargman, founder of mobile ad firm Kargo <https://www.kargo.com>, told Reuters the company had withdrawn for now because it did not know how GDPR would be applied.

"There is too much uncertainty," he said. "And I don't think (that will change) until they apply it in specific cases." Verve <https://www.verve.com>, a company that helps advertisers target consumers on mobiles based on location, and Drawbridge <https://www.drawbridge.com>, a cross-device user data firm, have both stopped operating ad businesses in Europe.

Factual <https://www.factual.com>, another company that provides consumer data based on their location, also temporarily scaled back its operations in Europe after realising the mobile apps it relies on "could not safely claim they were compliant".

Others groups higher up the food chain have also been hit. France's Publicis, one of the world's top five advertising companies, said it had felt the effect. "Advertisers were cautious about spending money in supply chains that they weren't absolutely sure they could target safely or legally," said Steve King, CEO of Publicis Media.

Kargo's Kargman expects Facebook and Google to benefit from the uncertainty. The two companies are likely to receive a high ratio of user consent given their loyal customer base while both own high-quality data because users post likes, dislikes and location, or search for areas of interest on Google or YouTube. The companies also have deep pockets so can ensure they are compliant, throwing engineers and lawyers at the problem and reassuring brands at a time of uncertainty.

But they too have had to make changes. Facebook lost about 1 million European monthly active users after GDPR and it said a desire by some users to avoid targeted ads is

likely to lead to a modest revenue hit. In response to GDPR, it has asked advertisers to certify they have the proper consent to use any data from third-party brokers, potentially shedding itself of some liability.

Google is also requiring publishers to secure consent when using its ad products on their properties. Marketers and partners also need to now use more of Google's own services. It has stopped providing easy access to lists that helped companies evaluate the success of their ads by showing which users clicked on them. Advertisers must now use Google's Ads Data Hub application to measure the effectiveness of campaigns.

Google declined to comment for this article. It has previously said GDPR is a big change and is working with partners on compliance.

Good news for publishers?

Of the more than 20 executives spoken to by Reuters, from ad bosses to publishers, tech groups, brands, lawyers and consultants, all expect the supply chain to thin out - leaving publishers to potentially receive a greater slice of ad revenue. "Given the number of actors it could take some time though," said Phil Smith, head of UK advertiser trade body ISBA <https://www.isba.org.uk>.

Leading British sports website GiveMeSport <https://www.givemesport.com> is one publisher hoping the biggest overhaul of data privacy laws in more than 20 years will challenge the system. "There are too many middlemen and they've been eating the cake," General Manager Ryan Skeggs said. "We're hoping GDPR will help weed them out. The sites that do well, theoretically speaking, should then make more money."

Three of the leading UK newspaper groups - Rupert Murdoch's News UK <https://www.news.co.uk>, The Guardian <https://www.theguardian.com> and The Telegraph <https://www.telegraph.co.uk> - have joined forces in the Ozone Project to sell their online inventory, or ad space, together, offering advertisers access to 39 million users.

Project leader Damon Reeve said publishers had lost control of their data to tech vendors. By compiling only quality inventory, he hopes marketers and publishers will start sharing user data directly - making them less reliant on third parties. That should provide a boost to the newspaper industry which is still grappling with the shift online, where ad rates are far lower than those charged for a space in a physical edition.

"By 2020, Ozone could add circa 30 million pounds (\$38 million) per annum - not a trivial contribution to a national newspaper newsroom," said analysts at consultancy Enders Analysis <https://www.endersanalysis.com>. Adam Smith, a director at WPP's media buying arm GroupM <https://www.groupm.com>, agreed the focus on user compliance was likely to cut the amount of available inventory. "That feeds into price inflation for the sought after inventory," he said. — Reuters

Economist to become Slovenian finance minister

LJUBLJANA: Economist Andrej Bertoncelj is to become Slovenia's finance minister in the minority centre-left government of Prime Minister designate Marjan Sarec, a spokeswoman for Sarec's party said yesterday. Bertoncelj's main task will be to keep a lid on public spending in the small Alpine country and reduce public debt which reached 73.6 percent of GDP last year, down from 78.6 percent in 2016, but was still well above the 60 percent of GDP level allowed for European Union members.

Outgoing Prime Minister Miro Cerar will become foreign minister, replacing Karl Erjavec who shifts to defense, while Economy Minister Zdravko Pocivalsek will retain his portfolio, the spokeswoman, Nika Vrhovnik, told Reuters.

Parliament is due to confirm the new government in the first half of September after ministers have presented themselves to parliamentary hearings. Bertoncelj, who is an independent, is a member of the management board of state investment fund Slovenian Sovereign Holding, which man-

Technology

Forget about portrait mode, Huawei introduces AI selfie

Smartphone with a front camera that doesn't blur the background



KUWAIT: It's either me or the background; never both. That's the choice we're always stuck with when deciding which way to set our smartphone cameras.

Being the star of your selfie, as you rightly should be, is all about capturing every glam detail right down to those perfect lashes as you strike a pose. But using the average portrait mode comes at a price, so just forget about showing off the beautiful scenery around you and leave it to a blur.

For once, why can't we have it all? For those who dared to ask, Huawei has the answer with its latest HUAWEI nova 3 - the game-changing device that bids goodbye to the smartphone selfie and upgrades users to the era of the Artificial

Intelligence (AI)-powered selfie.

The 24MP front AI-camera of the HUAWEI nova 3 is able to distinguish a human face from the background. The camera instantly recognizes more than 200 scenarios across eight categories including Blue Sky, Beach, Plants, Night, Stage and Flower. After it processes what scene the cameras are pointing at, the device will apply beautification on the subjects and also optimizations on the background. Meanwhile, the 2MP secondary sensor works in sync to capture depth and automatically sets to enhance the best of the background in a way that truly gives both you and your audience an opportunity to relive the moment all over again. Its powerful algorithm also knows to apply beau-

tification to your face, making sure the light falls in just the right places to accentuate contours and conceal imperfections, as well as adjust skin tones and facial details by age and gender.

An AI selfie mode

An AI-selfie mode acts much like your very own professional robot photographer and automatically adjusts all the settings to snap your most flattering selfie on first go. It knows to focus on your face - but it's also simultaneously calibrating settings to bring out the best of your background, creating not just a self-portrait but a living moment that tells the story of your selfie. This is important. Imagine returning from that dream holiday in Switzerland with a

selfie that's blurred out the beauty of the stunning snow-covered Swiss Alps. Or if you're lying on a beach in the Maldives only to capture a blue blur as your background instead of the crystal clear turquoise blue waters reflecting the rays of the sun at dawn.

The harsh truth is that while a portrait mode is great for your face, what's to really differentiate one selfie from another when it's all just a blur of hues in the background? Powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI), the HUAWEI nova 3 boasts not one, not two, but four cameras - 24 MP + 2 MP dual AI selfie cameras on the front and 24 MP + 16 MP rear dual cameras. But unlike other smartphones in portrait mode that create a bokeh effect where a subject

remains in sharp focus while the background is blurred, the HUAWEI nova 3 just knows to enhance not just your beauty but also the beauty of your moment as a whole.

Whether you're five or 50, selfies have become an innate form of expression and sharing in today's time. Not only do they reflect our confidence, passion and bravery, but also empower us to show our own unique superstar traits. So it's about time there's a phone with a camera that's intelligent enough to allow for both subject and background to be captured in perfect harmony to save the most stunning digital record of your moment. Just as we always aspire to soar towards our own personal growth, so must our selfies from just-a-portrait to AI-powered superstar status.

New Canon EMEA President & CEO visits Canon's regional HQ



DUBAI: Yuichi Ishizuka, President and CEO of Canon Europe Middle East and Africa (EMEA), a global provider of imaging technologies and services, visited Canon's regional headquarters for the Middle East and Central and North Africa located in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE). Ishizuka's visit comes just four months into his new leadership role and emphasizes the region as a priority for Canon EMEA.

The visit reinforced Canon EMEA's commitment to the growth of the region's imaging industry by providing the latest technologies in business and consumer imaging products and solutions. The Middle East and Central and North Africa are fast-developing markets for Canon, especially with the rise of the local tech and start-up scenes driven by the entre-



Yuichi Ishizuka

preneurial endeavors of the youth that make up the majority of the population across the region.

Various industries in the private sector are also seeking to adopt digitization as a policy for seamless and efficient business operations, and imaging technologies are an integral part of this operational transformation.

"The Middle East and Africa are important growth markets for Canon. We are expanding in these regions rapidly because businesses

and governments understand how imaging technologies can enhance their global competitiveness in a fast-evolving, digital world," said Ishizuka.

During his visit, Ishizuka toured Canon's newly opened Space360, an innovation-led, collaborative space that connects minds and drives creativity within the organization, and also acts as an idea generation hub between other like-minded entities. He also visited Canon's Innovation Centre which opened last year as an evolved showroom concept to provide businesses and other entities with a live demonstration of Canon's latest technologies. Canon EMEA contributes around one third of Canon's global sales revenue and employs in the region of 17,000 people in 118 countries.

Musk's U-turn on Tesla deal could intensify his legal, regulatory woes

WASHINGTON: Tesla Inc Chief Executive Elon Musk's decision to abruptly abandon a plan to take his electric carmaker private will not resolve his mounting regulatory and legal woes, and may even make them worse, some securities lawyers said.

Explaining his reversal in a late-night blog post on Friday, the billionaire CEO said that taking the company private "would be even more time-consuming and distracting than initially anticipated," and that "most of Tesla's existing shareholders believe we are better off as a public company."

It was on Aug. 7 that Musk first surprised investors with his plan by tweeting that he had "funding secured" for a go-private deal, which would have had a value of \$72 billion. In a separate tweet, he wrote: "Investor support is confirmed."

Musk and Tesla are facing investor lawsuits and a US Securities and Exchange Commission investigation into the truthfulness of the CEO's Aug. 7 tweets, according to an Aug. 8 report by the Wall Street Journal. The SEC declined to confirm that report to Reuters. A Tesla spokesman declined to comment.

"The SEC will continue its investigation until it's satisfied that it is on top of the facts," said Stephen Crimmins, an attorney with Murphy & McGonigle who spent 14 years at the SEC, where he prosecuted hundreds of securities cases.

"What happened on Friday will be of interest to the SEC because it will allow them to probe whether Musk's pulling back from the go-private somehow indicates that he did not have a reasonable basis for his statement. They will be asking questions of him and others involved in



SpaceX, Tesla and The Boring Company founder Elon Musk attends the 2018 SpaceX Hyperloop Pod Competition, in Hawthorne, California. — AFP

the decision as to why he reversed course."

Musk has stuck to his original statement that he believed a deal was possible, and one person familiar with the discussions told Reuters that Musk was serious about taking the carmaker private.

But acting in good faith may not be enough to help Musk escape the regulator's gaze. US securities law requires public company executives to have a "reasonable basis" on which to make representations to the investing public, and that would likely be the focus of an SEC probe, said three securities lawyers. — Reuters

Chinese bitcoin mining rig makers aim to raise billions in HK IPOs

HONG KONG: Three of the world's largest bitcoin mining equipment makers plan to raise billions of dollars with initial public offerings in Hong Kong, even as other companies report plunging demand for the chips needed to make bitcoin and a halving in the price of the cryptocurrency.

Soaring cryptocurrency prices last year triggered a boom in demand for specialist mining chips and in developing "mines" - facilities with thousands of machines that create the coins by solving complex mathematical puzzles.

Yet the US chipmaker Nvidia Corp said this month that second-quarter sales to crypto miners totalled just \$18 million, compared with \$100 million expected by analysts. Nvidia's chief financial officer, Colette Kress, said she anticipated "no contribution" to revenues from cryptocurrency in coming months. That has raised concerns about the upcoming Hong Kong listings by three Chinese manufacturers of bitcoin mining equipment.

Bitmain, Canaan Inc and Ebang International Holdings.

"The companies all design high-end computer chips intended for mining cryptocurrencies, particularly bitcoin, and sell mining equipment containing the chips. In addition, Bitmain mines cryptocurrencies on its own account. Companies like Nvidia also sell specialty chips used for mining."

"The marked decline in the price of bitcoin since the start of the year is likely to weigh on investors' interest in these companies," said Benjamin Quinlan, chief executive of financial services consultancy Quinlan & Associates. But, he added, "the fall in the price of bitcoin from its peaks has not been matched by an equivalent fall in the numbers of people mining it."

Bitcoin is currently trading at \$6,699, down 64 percent from its December 2017 peak of \$18,690. Daily mining revenue was 77 percent lower than in December, according to Blockchain.info, a data analytics and wallet provider.

"As the bitcoin price decreases, so does the profitability of mining itself, which decreases demand for mining chips and miners," said Wang Leilei, a consultant at financial services consultancy Kapronssia.

It is not just the price of bitcoin that is causing worries. People close to the IPOs said regulatory scrutiny and a patchy performance by Hong Kong offerings this year were additional concerns. — Reuters

Facebook to pull VPN app from App Store over data worry

SAN FRANCISCO: Facebook will pull Onavo Protect virtual private network application from the App Store after getting word that it violates Apple's data collection rules. The Wall Street Journal reported.

The free application creates an encrypted VPN connection that routes internet activity through computer servers managed and secured by Facebook. The app also alerts users when sites they visit might be malicious. Facebook is able to gather information about how people use smartphones outside of the leading social network's services, potentially gleaned insights about rivals or internet trends.

"We've always been clear when people download Onavo about the information that is collected and how it is used," a Facebook spokeswoman said. "As a

developer on Apple's platform we follow the rules they've put in place." Facebook did not comment regarding whether it is removing Onavo from the App Store.

The Journal cited an unnamed person close to the matter as saying the VPN could be gone from the Apple digital content shop by tomorrow.

Onavo has been in the App Store for several years. Apple recently let Facebook know that the app violated updated data collection rules that bar gathering information beyond that relevant to the program or what was needed to provide advertising, the Journal reported. Discussions between companies last week led to Facebook agreeing to voluntarily remove Onavo Protect rather than have it booted from the App Store by Apple, according to the report.

Onavo Protect's description at the App Store included saying that it "helps keep you and your data safe when you browse and share information on the web." Versions of the app installed on iPhones will continue to work, but Facebook will no longer be able to update the program. Onavo Protect was to remain available on smartphones powered by Google-backed Android software. — AFP

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

Scope of clinical Practice.

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

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Health & Science

Bulgaria's mentally ill battle for dignity

Patients live in dire conditions, two toilets for every 20 patients



KURILLO, Bulgaria: A medicine dose box with pills for patients is pictured at the psychiatric hospital in Kurilo, near Sofia. — AFP photos



KURILLO, Bulgaria: Medical workers look on during an inspection of the European Psychiatric Association (EPA) in the psychiatric hospital.



KURILLO, Bulgaria: This picture shows a painting on a wall in the dining room of the psychiatric hospital.

KURILLO, Bulgaria: At the psychiatric hospital in Kurilo in the mountainous countryside near the Bulgarian capital Sofia, around 100 patients languish on their beds in dilapidated surroundings. For hospital director Tsveteslava Galabova, the facility is "representative" of the state of psychiatric hospitals across the country. Of the 12 public hospitals treating people with psychiatric disorders, 11 are in remote locations like Kurilo, in a legacy of the communist era when patients were hidden away lest they mar the image of a socialist paradise portrayed in official propaganda.

Almost 30 years after the fall of the communist regime, Bulgaria remains the European Union's poorest country and still struggles to provide adequate mental health care. The country's psychiatric hospitals have 2,300 beds in total, while another 13 asylums offer space for around 1,000 patients—with another 900 on a waiting list. Built in the early 20th century, Kurilo's hospital is the biggest in the Sofia region, but the facility offers little respite from the bitterly cold winters or from the sweltering heat of summer. It may be situated in a lush green park but, as Galabova drily notes, that alone "can't treat schizophrenia".

Pervasive prejudice

Inside, the conditions are dire, with two toilets for every 20 patients, three patients per room and the metal beds they sleep on as their only personal space. As well as

material privation, those suffering from mental health issues also have to deal with widespread prejudice. Interior Minister Valentin Radev recently sparked controversy after a high-profile murder case by saying "the mentally ill should be brought under control and locked up".

"The attitude of stigmatization is pervasive in society, even among doctors," says Professor Drozdostoy Stoyanov, a senior adviser on psychiatry to the ministry of

to be located in remote locations"—a fact not lost on Galabova. "We asked for the hospital to be transferred to Sofia but the city authorities said that a referendum would have to be held first," she says, indicating that the idea was eventually dropped.

No funds for rehabilitation

"It is extremely dangerous for physical and mental health to spend hours and hours doing nothing," visiting EPA president Silvana Galderisi said. One of the main problems in Bulgaria is the fact that "this kind of institution (still) exists: they are very isolated, are very large and very understaffed, are very large and very understaffed for the number of people they have." With few facilities located near the patients' communities, their families tend to leave them at the mercy of such institutions, often for years on end. Under the communist regime, there was a farm at Kurilo where the patients could work but it didn't survive the transition to a market economy. And now there are no funds for any form of rehabilitation.

Political will is crucial

"Our budget is ridiculous and absurd," says Professor Maya Stojmenova, director of the psychiatric clinic at the Medical University of Plevin in northern Bulgaria. Like many others, her clinic struggles to afford the wages of basic personnel to supervise patients and distribute medicine, let alone provide any further therapy. The

**Patients were hidden away**

health, who invited experts from the European Psychiatric Association (EPA) to Bulgaria to advise on reforming the system. In a 2017 report, the UN's Committee Against Torture expressed concern over "the high incidence of inappropriate or unnecessary non-consensual institutionalization" in Bulgaria while noting a lack of "independent inspection or monitoring mechanism for mental health institutions".

It also noted the ongoing problem of isolation, saying such institutions "continue



KURILLO, Bulgaria: Representatives of the European Psychiatric Association (EPA) inspect the facilities.

average wage of a health worker specialized in rehabilitation is 630 leva a month, compared with 450 for a psychiatrist and 250 euros for a nurse.

In other European countries "they can earn at least two-and-a-half times as much," Galderisi says. It will remain difficult for Bulgaria to compete with other EU states in terms of salaries for specialist workers, with only around two percent of the country's health budget earmarked for mental health. The EPA recommends this portion should rise to 10 percent. As for reforming the sector, experts note that Bulgaria even lags behind other former

communist countries such as Poland and the Czech Republic.

Under pressure from the EU and the United Nations, the government has outlined some steps to improve care for those suffering from mental disorders and disabilities. This year, it launched a three-year action plan which includes the closure of 10 understaffed and inadequate institutions and replacing them with day centers offering care within the community, as well as a smaller number of residential homes. But there is still a long way to go, and as Galderisi says, "political will is crucial". —AFP

'Missing link' sheds light on mystery of turtle evolution

TOKYO: How did the turtle get its shell? It sounds like the start of a fable, but it's something scientists have wondered for years, and new fossil research is providing some clues. The way that turtles evolved into their modern form, with a shell fused to their skeleton and a beak-like face without teeth, has been described as "one of evolution's most enduring puzzles." Relatively few fossils of early turtles have been found, leaving it a mystery how the creature developed its unique features, and even which ancestors they evolved from.

But new research published Thursday in the journal *Nature* fills in some gaps by examining a turtle fossil discovered in China that dates back 228 million years. The skeleton has a beak, but also some teeth, suggesting it may be a "missing link" in the evolution from an earlier toothy turtle to today's form. "This is the first early fossil turtle with a beak," said Chun Li, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing and co-author of the paper on the fossil dubbed *Eorhynchochelys*.

"The interesting thing is that although a beak had developed, the teeth were preserved, so it is a half-beak, half-toothed jaw—an excellent transitional characteristic," he told AFP. The fossil is also large, at 2.5 meters long, with a lengthy tail and broad and flat ribs along its back that appear to have formed a disc-like precursor to a shell. With so little evidence to go on, one of the great debates over turtle evolution is just which animals they evolved from.

One theory holds that they share the same common ancestor as most reptiles, but some experts argue the shape of a modern turtle's skull means this is unlikely. Chun said the shape of the bones in the new fossil lends weight to the idea that turtles evolved from the same ancestors as most reptiles, calling the specimen "an important missing link in the early evolution of the turtle." It follows a handful of other discoveries in recent years, including a 220-million-year-old specimen with a fully-formed underbelly covering but no shell on its back and a 240-million-year-old fossil with no shell at all.

Chun has spent the last 20 years studying reptile fossils in China's Guizhou province, where the 220-million-year-old turtle was also found. But he stumbled upon this latest fossil by chance, when a local

CHINA: A handout photo shows a complete articulated skeleton of a *Eorhynchochelys sinensis*, from Upper Triassic rock (about 228 years ago) of Guizhou province, China, as preserved. — AFP

museum asked him in 2015 to examine their marine reptile fossils. It was still in the rock, displayed in the collection. "Nobody knew what it was," he said. —AFP

Scotland provides free tampons to students

LONDON: Every student in Scotland will be offered free sanitary products in a drive to tackle "period poverty" in a country where almost one in two girls has resorted to using alternatives such as toilet roll, socks or newspapers, the government said on Friday. Scotland said it was the first nation in the world to make tampons and pads free for all school pupils, college and university students - estimated to number about 395,000.

"In a country as rich as Scotland, it's unac-

ceptable that anyone should struggle to buy basic sanitary products," Communities Secretary Aileen Campbell said in a statement as the project was announced ahead of the start of the academic year. "Our 5.2 million pound investment will mean these essential products will be available to those who need them in a sensitive and dignified way, which will make it easier for students to fully focus on their studies," Campbell added.

About 45 percent of girls in Scotland had to use toilet paper or other alternatives during their periods because they could not afford to buy sanitary products, according to research published in March by the children's charity Plan International. Across Britain, the problem affects one in 10 and has grown in line with the number of poor and the use of food banks, Plan said. A British maker of sanitary

products - social enterprise Hey Girl - this month placed adverts in newspapers featuring a cut-out "make your own" pad in a push to raise public awareness. "By funding these products and putting them alongside other everyday items ... in public toilets, like toilet roll and hand wash, it takes away the shame that girls tell us they often feel," Plan UK spokeswoman Lucy Russell said.

"We now need to see governments tackle the third part of the toxic trio that causes period poverty - lack of education," Russell added. "Investment in teaching girls how their bodies work and what a healthy period looks like is absolutely key." Scotland's North Ayrshire Council last week became the first local authority in Britain to make sanitary products free in public buildings - via vending machines in toilets. —Reuters

Naughty dolphin causes French beach ban

RENNES, France: A love-lorn dolphin has prompted a French coastal town to ban bathing on its beaches, fearing people may be hurt by the antics of the over-excited mammal. Roger Lars, mayor of Landevennec, on the western tip of Brittany, issued a ban on voluntarily approaching within 50 meters of the dolphin and outlawed bathing and diving from the district's beaches whenever the animal is spotted in local waters.

The move was made on the basis of advice from marine specialists after the visibly excited three-meter dolphin-nicknamed Zafar-bumped against boats and bathers, he said. "I

issued the decree to ensure safety... Several bathers were really afraid-he even lifted up a woman bather with his snout," Lars told the local newspaper Ouest France. The ban took effect on August 20. Sami Hassani, a specialist in marine mammals at the Oceanopolis sea park, said the dolphin could accidentally cause "serious injuries" with its tail fin. But the ban has run into legal problems.

Lawyer Erwan Le Cornec said he plans to file a petition to overturn the restrictions on the grounds of administrative over-reach. "How many accidents involving a dolphin and a human have occurred in the region of Finistere since the two species have lived side-by-side?" he asked scornfully. "None." "With this decree the mayor is trying to make out that the dolphin is almost like a ferocious beast, something that is completely unpredictable, able to drown people." The mayor, he said, "will overturn the rightly positive approach that people have towards dolphins into a fear of these intelligent animals." —AFP

Austria allows shooting wolves with rubber bullets

VIENNA: Austria has authorized shooting wolves with rubber bullets to deter attacks on livestock, a regional authority said Wednesday. The wolf population is rising rapidly in many European countries, which has led to an increase in the number of attacks on farm animals. Farmers in three districts of Lower Austria will have the right until the end of the year to shoot wolves with rubber bullets to deter attacks but not to kill them, deputy governor Stephan Pernkopf said.

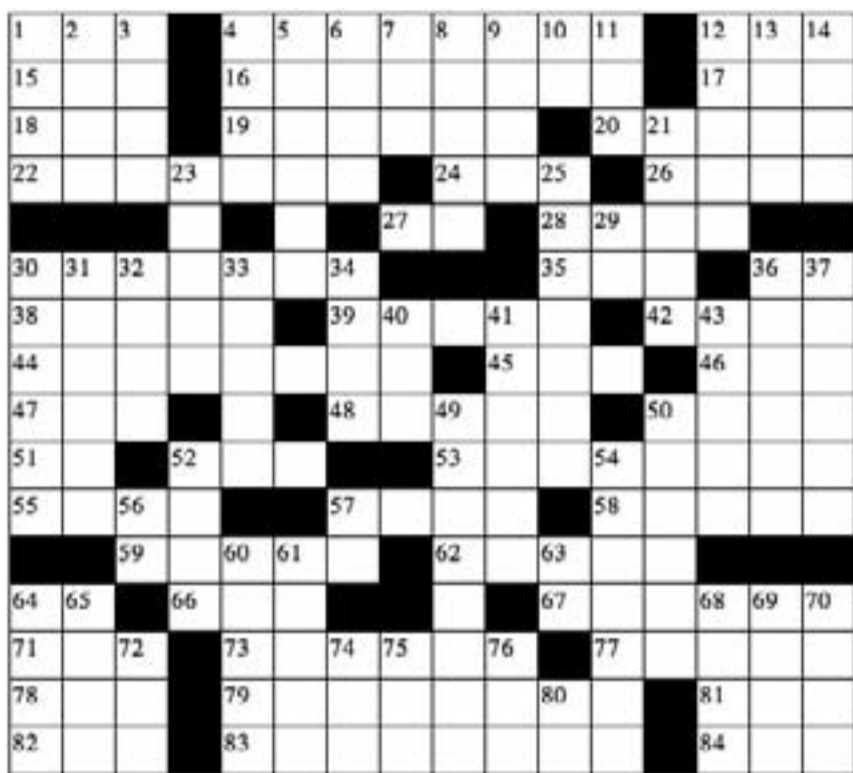
He also called for the European

Union to reconsider its legislation giving protection to wolves, which he said are "no longer under threat". Thirty-one sheep have been killed by wolves in recent weeks in Lower Austria near the Czech border, according to the local authority. The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) conservation group—which puts the number of wolves in Europe at about 12,000 — accused Austrian authorities of failing to help farmers protect their livestock.

"It is not wolves that are dangerous but the creation of a climate of fear," it said. "The Lower Austrian region has failed to protect flocks for years, by for example building fences and teaching farmers to live alongside wolves." The Lower Austrian Hunting Federation praised the relaxation in the rules, saying the move would "instill fear of man" in the wolf. It also called for the use of live bullets to be considered in due course. —AFP

Stars

CROSSWORD 1994



ACROSS

1. Annual grass of Europe and North Africa.
4. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
12. Counting the number of white and red blood cells and the number of platelets in 1 cubic millimeter of blood.
15. 100 pyas equal 1 kyat.
16. Freetail bats.
17. A tool with a flat blade attached at right angles to a long handle.
18. The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.
19. Lacking vigor or energy.
20. An anti-inflammatory drug that does not contain steroids.
22. Strong feelings of embarrassment.
24. The 22nd letter of the Greek alphabet.
26. Large sweet juicy hybrid between tangerine and grapefruit having a thick wrinkled skin.
27. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
28. The battle in 202 BC in which Scipio decisively defeated Hannibal at the end of the second Punic War.
30. A state in southwestern Germany famous for its beer.
35. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
38. A yellow pungent volatile oil (trade name Agene) formerly used for bleaching and aging flour.
39. United States physician who specialized in diseases of the intestines.
42. One of a set of small pieces of stiff paper marked in various ways and used for playing games or for telling fortunes.
44. Or family Polypodiaceae.
45. An awkward stupid person.
46. A container.
47. A room or establishment where alcoholic drinks are served over a counter.
48. (computer science) A read-only memory chip that can be erased by ultraviolet light and programmed again with new data.
51. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
53. A group of bracts simulating a calyx as in a carnation or hibiscus.
55. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
58. Squash bugs.
59. A region of Malaysia in northeastern Borneo.
62. The large trunk artery that carries blood from the left ventricle of the heart to branch arteries.
64. A small pellet fired from an air rifle or BB gun.
66. To make a mistake or be incorrect.
67. A landlocked principality in the Himalayas northeast of India.
71. The act of slowing down or falling behind.
73. Of or relating to or characteristic of Yemen or its inhabitants.
77. (Hindu) A manner of sitting (as in the practice of Yoga).
78. The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
79. Subject to change or variation especially in behavior.
81. Having undesirable or negative qualities.
82. The cry made by sheep.
83. A great raja.
84. North American republic containing 50 states - 48 conterminous states in North America plus Alaska in northwest North America and the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific Ocean.

DOWN

1. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
2. An Indian nursemaid who looks after children.
3. A village in eastern Ireland (northwest of Dublin).
4. Indicating the most important performer or role.
5. Indian grammarian whose grammatical rules for Sanskrit are the first known example of descriptive linguistics (circa 400 BC).
6. Chief port of Yemen.
7. The most common computer memory which can be used by programs to perform necessary tasks while the computer is on.
8. Any plant of the genus Erica.
9. Possessing material wealth.
10. A state in the Rocky Mountains.
11. A decree that prohibits something.
12. A Bantu language spoken by the Chaga people in northern Tanzania.
13. A painful sore with a hard pus-filled core.
14. The basic unit of money in Ghana.
21. Wood of a sumac.
23. A republic in West Africa on the Gulf of Guinea.
25. Sister and consort of Izanami.
29. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
31. (Greek mythology) One of the three Graces.
32. Turn sharply.
33. Income from capital investment paid in a series of regular payments.
34. A unit of area (4840 square yards) used in English-speaking countries.
36. Shrubs and trees of southern hemisphere having aromatic foliage.
37. An accessory or adjoining anatomical parts or appendages (especially of the embryo).
40. A reproach for some lapse or misdeed.
41. Any of several crested Old World birds with a slender down-curved bill.
43. A promontory in northern Morocco opposite the Rock of Gibraltar.
49. A fee charged in advance to retain the services of someone.
50. Type genus of the Danaidae.
52. (Scottish) Bluish-black or gray-blue.
54. Chinese evergreen conifer discovered in 1955.
56. A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
57. A gonadotropic hormone that is secreted by the anterior pituitary.
60. Type genus of the Bryaceae.
61. A particular environment or walk of life.
63. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali metal group.
65. A small cake leavened with yeast.
68. Forbidden to profane use especially in South Pacific islands.
69. Type genus of the Anatidae.
70. A quantity of no importance.
72. Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
74. A hormone secreted by the anterior pituitary gland that controls the degree of pigmentation in melanocytes.
75. The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.
76. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
80. A person who announces and plays popular recorded music.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

If you take care of your body, your body will take care of you. This applies to your mental well-being also. Once your mind is set to becoming a better you, things will seem to fall into place in your world. You will have a greater appreciation for life and a renewed love of self. Happiness begins at home and your health is the root of this happiness. If you will stick to a new lifestyle you will find great reward will come to you from choices you make today. Today is the first day of the rest of your life. You will be a new confident you and find that you can truly love who you are. Take the leap.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may have heard, "You can't have it all." This is not true for you, Taurus. You can "bring home the bacon and cook it up in the pan" and still feel like enjoying a night on the town. Keep your work day stress-free by handling crises with humor. Be sure to take a break today and step out for a breath of fresh air. Save your energy to enjoy time with your friends and family this evening.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Get out and be heard. This is a wonderful time in your life and what you have to say will be heard. This is a great day for public speaking. It seems to have a knack for knowing what people want and being able to provide it. It seems your popularity may be at an all time high now. You are charming and pay close attention to the needs of others. Who could ask for a better friend? You may find a profitable deal come your way concerning real estate. Playing the middle man may be the way to go.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may make mistakes today. Fortunately, you learn from your mistakes. A small setback will not diminish what you accomplish. You will dwell on the slip-ups just long enough to make sure they don't happen again. Then you will focus on the good you have done. You will be applauded for your work. Others will notice and appreciate your efforts.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Close relationships are where your focus is placed now. As independent as you seem to appear, you need to feel the love and support of those closest to you. This alone makes your life feel complete. You are beginning to truly feel needed and cared for. You may feel as if a fresh start is what you need. You are beginning to develop new habit patterns. Out with the old and in with the new. Make sure new habits are good ones. These will set the tone for years to come. The new you is the best you.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

There is a problem out there that can be solved with a simple new product. And you are capable of creating that product. Put your inventive mind to work. Look around and see what is needed. Then set about to provide it. The solution will bring you more than financial success. It will provide the satisfaction of knowing you made someone's life easier. You are a kind friend and a good person.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You are always quick to gather all the information possible on new friends and new acquaintances. You have been known to be quite the detective. Today finds you fascinated with gaining all the information and insight you can. But, your focus today is on you! You desire to have a better self-understanding. What exactly led you down the path you took. You have put some thought into this before, but today you are determined to figure it out. Finding yourself is a mission you are on. You not only want to know who you really are but what exactly caused you to be this way. Libra? The answers are held in your heart. Today could be a great day to make amends.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You have learned to appreciate and love yourself and all you stand for. It is rare that you are not your own worst critic but today, through clear eyes, you are able to appreciate who you are and what you have accomplished. You exude self-respect and self-confidence. Those around you sense this and are drawn to you today. You are able to truly identify all in your life that is important and of lasting value. You feel driven and motivated and can offer much assistance to friends and family today. You feel deep connections with your family today and place much value on these relationships. You may find that today is a great day to reach out to someone close to you that you have lost touch with. Reconnect with this someone special.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You have begun to search for beauty in all that surrounds you. Life takes on a different meaning to you. You seem to see a new depth to the meaning of life. Your ability to analyze your situation and the situations of others are at high point. You are able to really get to the root of all problems that present themselves and provide those around you with solutions. You are able to express yourself and communicate with ease. A long deep conversation with someone may be just what you need to stay grounded and focused. This may be a great time to refrain from spending and beginning focusing your goals on a budget and organizing your finances.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Reach for the stars. You feel as though you are invincible. Today that may be true. If it can go your way, it does. What a wonderful feeling! You are full of optimism and faith. Your self-confidence is at an all-time high. You may desire to make a change in your living situation. Leave this decision for a later date when your head comes down from the clouds.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You may be faced with a difficult decision this week. You may feel led to pass up a very profitable career opportunity because it truly conflicts with your morals and values. This is a road to success you may choose to take a detour around. The easy way is not always the right way. You may find in the long run you will reap great reward from doing the right thing.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Expect to feel much admiration and recognition from those close to you today. You may feel support and able to relate to anyone and any situation. You may find yourself to be the center of attention in a social setting today. It seems everyone is able to relate to you and you may find that someone turns to you for help today. Feel flattered that you are trusted with such a delicate situation that your peer is experiencing. Through sharing life experiences of your own you may be able to assist this person and appreciated your own hardships as lessons learned. This is a great time of reflection in your life. Pisces, live, learn, and love.

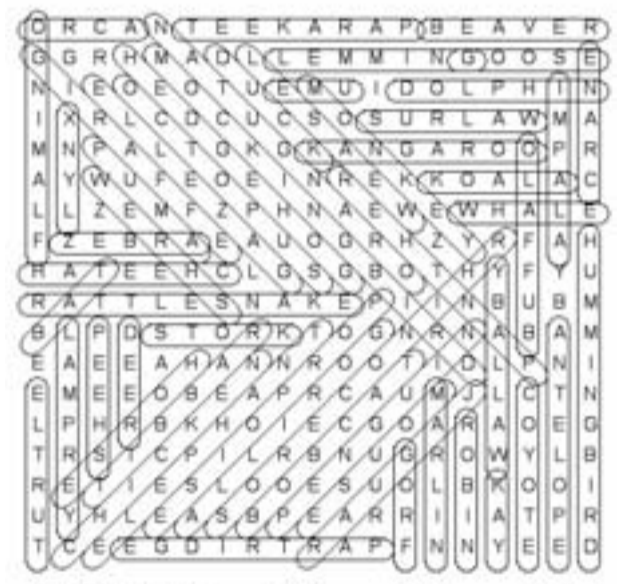
Wordsearch Puzzle

Animals 3

Find and circle all of the animals that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of an additional animal.

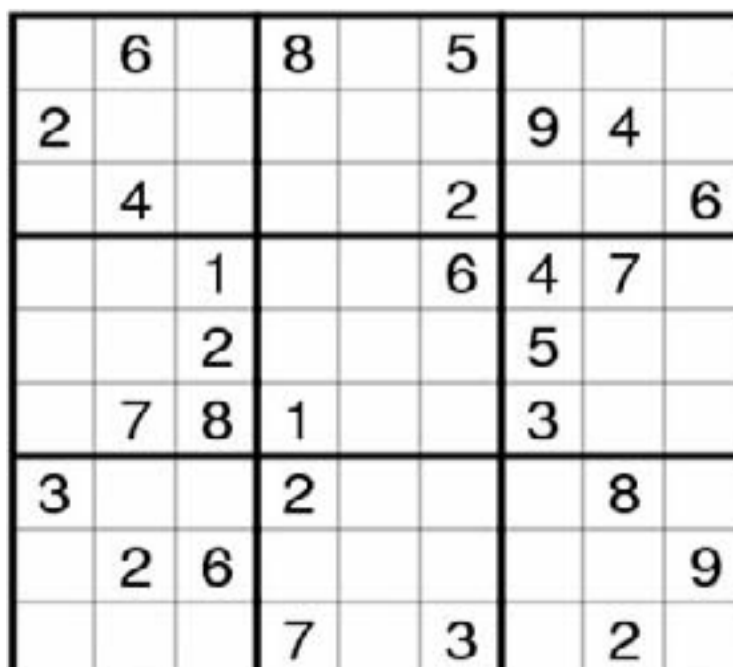


Animals 2



The hidden animal is: GRIZZLY BEAR

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

TUESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2018



This aerial photo shows a view of Wucaitan, also known as Rainbow Beach, in Burqin county in China's northwestern Xinjiang region. — AFP

New generations sustain South Korean church's mass weddings



Couples attend a mass wedding ceremony entitled the 'Hyojeong Holy Blessing Ceremony' organized by the Unification Church at the church's Cheongshim Peace World Center in Gapyeong yesterday. — AFP photos



A couple arrives for a mass wedding ceremony entitled the 'Hyojeong Holy Blessing Ceremony'.



Couples gesture during celebrations at the end of a mass wedding ceremony entitled the 'Hyojeong Holy Blessing Ceremony'.

Twenty-five years after her parents were married, Iasmin Lumibao travelled from Macau to South Korea to follow in their footsteps and marry alongside thousands of others in a mass wedding that has come to exemplify the South Korea-based Unification Church. Yesterday, about 1,000 couples were married at a ceremony in Gapyeong, northeast of Seoul, while another 3,000 couples renewed vows. In all, 64 nationalities were represented. Lumibao, 23, is a second-genera-

tion member of the movement, and said times have changed since her parents married at a mass ceremony in 1992.

From the early 1960s until he died in 2012, the church's founder and self-declared messiah, Sun Myung Moon, played matchmaker, pairing couples who had never met and sometimes did not even speak the same language. Lumibao's parents, and those of her 22-year-old husband from New York, Dentew Learey, were among those who were complete

strangers when Moon, who said he was chosen by Jesus Christ to establish an ideal world of peace and harmony, matched them up.

"It used to be that we get blessed (with) strangers but now it's quite different because we get to make the decision by ourselves, we get to know the person and if we want to continue we would take the step and create the future together," Lumibao said. Learey's parents are from Germany and Canada, and Moon paired them up using

only their photographs. They met a few days before the mass wedding in 1992. The second generation couple decided to get married in 2017 after they met at a church program in Austria in 2014.

But they came to the decision by themselves, rather than having their parents or the church decide, which become more common for young people in the church after Moon died. Critics have for years vilified the movement as a heretical and dangerous cult and

questioned its murky finances and how it indoctrinates followers, known in derogatory terms as "Moonies".

But Lumibao, who said she never considered finding a husband outside the church, said the new generations should continue the marriage traditions. "I believe that the values and our movement are important. And I think our future generation should inherit that because it's healthy for individuals, the family and the society," she said. — Reuters

With new album, Soares celebrates status as an 'incredible woman'

Time seems to run at a different pace for Elza Soares. The Brazilian samba legend is 81 but on the eve of a Rio de Janeiro concert for her recent album "Deus e Mulher" ("God is a woman"), you wouldn't think so. "Let me tell you, my age has nothing in common with the way I feel," she told AFP by telephone ahead of today's show in her native city. In her unmistakable tone, Soares described herself as excited as ever to be going on stage, even if she now sings seated. "I consider this a good moment, an extraordinary one in my career. I don't know if it's the best. The best was when I started. Things are always marvelous when you start," she said.

Soares's powerful voice is an integral part of Brazilian music. She embodied samba and went on to play a major role in cutting edge modern interpretations of the sensual, rhythmic Brazilian sound, mixing in everything from bossa nova to

jazz, Afrobeat and funk. Her sheer longevity and extraordinarily dramatic personal life—including multiple tragedies and a turbulent marriage to the much-loved footballer Garrincha—have made her nothing less than a national figure. The self-confidence and dedication to music making that have carried her along that epic road clearly remain intact. Asked if there were any love interests in her life now, she joked: "I'm dating Elza Soares." "I'm in love with her, this incredible woman. I'm going to ask to marry her," she said.

'Hurricane of life'

Her latest album, released in May, draws on a recent surge in debates about the role of women in Brazil, where rapes and femicide—the intentional killing of women—are growing. As a black woman in a Brazil where about half the population identifies as non-white, but power and

wealth is concentrated among whites, she carries even more moral authority. "We live in a country with horrendous prejudices," she said. "It's my country, my land and I love it so much, but we almost have no rights. Poor, black, female—what rights are there?" One of the songs on the album, "What is Silent," is dedicated to those fighting for society's least powerful.

"God is Woman" follows success with "A mulher do fim do mundo" ("The Woman from the End of the World") in 2015, which won a Latin Grammy for Best Album of Popular Brazilian Music. The albums have been widely praised for their inventiveness. Her producer Guilherme Kastrup said that musically Soares hasn't lost a beat, with a "way of thinking that is very contemporary." "She's a hurricane of life," he said. Soares agreed. "I was always very daring, I was never afraid of anything and I'm going forward."



In this file photo Brazilian singer Elza Soares performs at the Town Hall theater in New York. — AFP

she said. "I think that's my triumph. It's not possible to stay put in one place. If things are bad, then go forward. It's what I always do." Soares said she was cheered by the rise of Brazilian feminism and LGBT activism. "I see women becom-

ing more open, with greater ability to express themselves, to demand more, to ask for their rights," she said. "The enslavement of women is over. Without women, you have no world... That's why God is a woman, God is mother." — AFP

Lifestyle | Gossip



Jade Thirlwall teases Little Mix's new album

Little Mix's Jade Thirlwall says the band's upcoming album is her favorite to date. The 25-year-old pop star has revealed that the chart-topping girl group - which also features Perrie Edwards, Jesy Nelson and Leigh-Anne Pincock - have been given more freedom than ever before on their as-yet-untitled record. She shared: "This is definitely my favorite album, you can tell it's come from us. "There's a lot of female empowerment, lots of songs give a nod to being yourself." And Jade revealed she can't wait for Little Mix fans to hear their new material. Speaking to the Manchester Evening News newspaper, she admitted: "I'm really excited for this album. We're definitely ready to release something,



we're missing having our music out there." Little Mix were first formed on the UK 'X Factor' and have since established themselves as one of the world's most successful girl groups. However, Leigh-Anne previously acknowledged that the group cannot afford to take things easy. She said back in 2017: "This year we've all bought houses, and none of us have slept in them." Jesy added that the girls feel the need to release new music regularly in order to maintain their position within the industry. She explained: "In the pop industry, it's hard to pause. With pop music if you go missing for more than a year, they've forgotten about you."

Linkin Park's Mike Shinoda teases band's comeback



Mike Shinoda says he's in talks with his Linkin Park bandmates about their comeback. The 41-year-old musician took to the stage at Leeds Festival on Sunday to pay tribute to the 'Numb' group's late frontman Chester Bennington - who tragically took his own life last July - and he also revealed that he's been discussing what their plans for the future are shaping up like, though nothing has been set in stone yet. The Fort Minor star told The Sun newspaper's Bizarre column: "We've been talking. As soon as there's something to announce, we'll announce it." Mike remembered Chester - who was just 41 when he died - as he joined pop punk stars Sum 41 on stage for a second time, after appearing at sister festival Reading the day before, for a performance of 'Faint'. The amazing moment came on the same afternoon he led the audience through an emotional solo rendition of 'In The End', with the crowd singing Chester's parts. The late frontman's influence was clear throughout at the festival, as The Pit headliners Papa Roach also performed part of the song during their own show. Elsewhere, Panic! At The Disco stunned a huge crowd with an energetic and anthemic live show before Kendrick Lamar took to the stage to bring the festival to a close. Fans of Pharrell Williams were surprised to see the 'Happy' hitmaker grace the main stage earlier in the day as he joined his N.E.R.D bandmates for a standout set, which was revealed just before the weekend got underway. Bring Me The Horizon treated fans to their second surprise set as did Frank Carter & The Rattlesnakes, who powered through an exciting gig as they prepare to work on a new record. Carter teased the crowd: "It's weird to think some of those songs may never be played live again. Never again. You know why? Because our new album is going to be absolutely banging." Post Malone, The Courteeners, Travis Scott, The Kooks, The Vaccines and Saturday night headliners Fall Out Boy were amongst the stand-out bands over a varied and thrilling three days of live music at Leeds' Bramham Park.

No reunion talks for The Saturdays

Rochelle Humes says The Saturdays never discuss reuniting. Although all five members - Frankie Bridge, Vanessa White, Una Healy, Mollie King and Rochelle - have remained close friends, the quintet never talk about a professional reunion when they meet up. Rochelle, 29, told MailOnline: "We never talk about it, we're so happy that we're doing what we're doing and that we're all friends and when we get together it's more about catching up on everyone's lives and the kids, so it's never really on the agenda." And she revealed that all five members of the group are so busy with solo projects that they find it difficult

to schedule in time to meet up. She said: "We speak on the phone a lot, we're in the process of organizing a get together but it's so hard because before we had the same diary, but now we're doing our own thing. It's harder to get together and takes a bit longer, but I can't wait to do it." Una, 36, recently revealed she would love a reunion but said it had become a "taboo" topic amongst them all since going on indefinite hiatus in 2014. She said: "I hope there will be [a reunion]. I'd certainly like to be part of it and hope it would be all five of us. "I don't know how the others feel because we never bring it up. "We chat about

everything else, but it's a bit of a taboo subject for us because it's not on the cards. "Everyone is busy doing something else and it requires commitment from everyone and I don't think everyone is ready for that just yet." The 'Never See Me Cry' singer also insists she doesn't feel pressure to do better than her bandmates in her solo efforts and there's no competitiveness between them. Asked if she feels under pressure to be most successful, Una said: "Absolutely not! People almost put you under pressure when they ask that. [Are we in competition?] No, we're five individuals who support each other."



ARIANA GRANDE 'SO GRATEFUL' AFTER SWEETENER TOPS BILLBOARD CHART

Ariana Grande's 'Sweetener' has debuted at number one on the Billboard chart. The 25-year-old singer hit the top spot on the US chart, knocking Travis Scott's 'Astroworld' off the top spot and sending Nicki Minaj's 'Queen' to third place. After the record hit number one, Ariana tweeted a link to a news article about her achievement and wrote: "hellooo i am so grateful." This is Ariana's third album to reach number one, following 'Yours Truly' in 2013 and 2014's 'My Everything'. 'Sweetener' sold 231,000 copies in total, including 127,000 traditional sales, to reach number one. The record was also the second-highest sales for a female artist in 2018, behind Cardi B's 'Invasion of Privacy', Drake's 'Scorpion' and Post Malone's 'Beerbongs & Bentleys' complete the US top five. Meanwhile, Ariana previously revealed Pharrell Williams "forced" her to write about the Manchester terror attack for the record, as a tribute to the victims. The singer was left devastated last May when a suicide bomber unleashed an explosion shortly after her concert at the Manchester Arena - killing 23 people, including children, and injuring 139 - but, although her anxiety was through the roof afterwards, the 'Happy' hitmaker encouraged her to pen 'Get Well Soon' for those who were affected.

She said: "Overall, [Pharrell] kind of forced it out of me because I was in a really bad place mentally. I've always had anxiety, I've had anxiety for years. But when I got home from tour it reached a very different, intense peak. "[Pharrell] was like, 'You have to write about it. You need to make this into music and get this sh*t out, and I promise it will heal you.' And it definitely helped." 'Sweetener' also features a love song she penned for her fiancé Pete Davidson, whom she got engaged to in June after a few weeks of dating, and she has admitted she wrote the track just a week after they started getting to know one another. She said recently: "'Pete Davidson' is obviously inspired by my fiancé, I wrote this song like a week after we started hanging out. Sometimes when you feel a certain way about something and you can't express it with words as well as you can with music, then I sent it to him. I want this song to live forever as music lives forever." And the LP contains a collaboration with her "big sister" Nicki Minaj. She explained: "So 'The Light is Coming' features Nicki Minaj who is my big sister and one of my best friends that I've met through this industry. I love the message behind it, it's about people who can be so close minded or to blind-sided by their own opinion to find the truth."

Spice Girls agree reunion deal



The Spice Girls have signed a deal for a UK tour next year - without Victoria Beckham. The 'Say You'll Be There' hitmakers have reportedly agreed a contract that will see Mel B, Mel C, Geri Horner and Emma Bunton land around £12 million each for 13 British shows, including three nights at London's iconic Wembley Stadium, but their fashion designer bandmate won't be joining them on stage. A source confirmed to the Sun on Sunday newspaper: "After much to-ing and fro-ing, a deal has been signed, and an official announcement will be made soon. "The girls can't wait to go back on tour, perform to the fans and sing some of their greatest hits." It was claimed in June that a deal for a tour had collapsed after Victoria pulled out. A source said at the time: "The Spice Girls are in disarray. While Victoria has always insisted she'd never tour, the others believed manager Simon Fuller would get her on board. "They had a £150million proposal in the offing-with a headline performance at Wembley-and even Mel C, who had previously been reluctant,

was signed up. "With things still up in the air, there were a few heated debates between the girls and Victoria. "Simon [Fuller, former manager] was brought in to convince her to take the offer but now he's failed they feel he's used them to put his name back on the map." But just a month before, Mel B had revealed the group had signed a comeback contract. She said: "We are in the process of figuring stuff out, all five of us have signed with Simon Fuller. I don't know what is going to happen or when but it is all very exciting. There's going to be a bit of everything. "If it was up to me we would go on tour immediately. Maybe we will, soon ... I've always said we're definitely touring. I think I've just been nagging them too much and once I stopped nagging them they all said yes, I just need to shut my mouth." The Spice Girls last toured after reuniting in 2007, with their greatest hits shows wrapping up in 2008. The final time they performed as a five-piece, was at the 2012 London Olympics closing ceremony.

ROBERT PLANT MOURNS WITH MUSIC

Robert Plant's music lets him "cry" about his late son. The former Led Zeppelin rocker's five-year-old boy, Karac, passed away from a stomach virus in 1977 while he was on tour in the US and though the 70-year-old musician has channeled his grief into his songs, he admits he'll never

what he puts his survival down to, he told Event magazine: "I don't put it down to anything. "There's a myth that surrounds artists and writers who don't spend their time refuting, denying things. I don't care whether I did or didn't do too much stuff. "Some of the greatest work that's ever been created, the greatest projection and delivery of music, has come from stoners, but I had nothing to do with all this things, not since I lost my boy." Despite his advancing years, Robert has no plans to retire until he stops finding playing music "magnificent". He said: "Jimmy [Page] did an interview for the NME in the early Nineties, and the title was Help The Aged. "But people don't clock off at 65 if they're doing what they love to do. "Maybe in the end. None of it's worth a dime, but you can have a great time in the middle of it all. If you don't think it's magnificent to do this, then you really need to change the cassette and get off the bus quick." Meanwhile, the veteran rocker insists he doesn't regret any of his lewd lyrics.



Banks wanted to be like Cobain

Interpol's Paul Banks was drawn to being a rock star because of Kurt Cobain. The 40-year-old frontman wanted to be a musician from a young age, but says it wasn't the wild lifestyle and being a celebrity that drew him to the role, but the "authenticity" of the late Nirvana star's music. Asked what age he decided he wanted to be a 'rock star', he told MusicFeeds.com.au: "From 15! He continued: "But I will say, my

friend, it wasn't at all the 'rock star'. I would say it for shock value when I was 15. If the guidance counselor would say, 'What do you want to be when you get older?' I'd say, 'rock star! And it was Nirvana - the one, the band that solidified the dream for me. But I will say in all honesty I never envisioned tour buses and private jets and celebrity. It was never about that. I think it was something in - there was a such a pure form of expression coming off of Kurt Cobain. I think it was that sense of like... I don't know, it felt like, 'That's the job! That's the most honest thing that anyone can do. "It seemed so cathartic and full of energy and authenticity. I think it was more that the aspiration was to be a professional musician. "I had no concept of the trappings of stardom. So that wasn't something that drew me to it." Paul admits that he doesn't see him performing with a full band in the next 30 years time, and will likely be retired or just doing the odd stripped back gig. Asked if he sees himself rocking into his 70s, he replied: "When I'm 70?! I think I'll probably be retired when I'm 70! Or maybe, maybe a wooden stool and an acoustic.



get over losing the youngster, who he had with first wife Maureen Wilson. He said: "I've written four songs about my boy who passed away. It lets me cry. You know, with pain like that, it's never gone." The 'Whole Lotta Love' hitmaker also suggested he gave up taking drugs after the death of his son. Asked

Lifestyle | Gossip



Ezra Miller's Hogwarts disappointment

Ezra Miller was devastated to miss out on the chance to film in Hogwarts. The 25-year-old actor reprises the role of Credence Barebone for 'Fantastic Beasts' sequel 'The Crimes of Grindelwald' but admitted he was really upset when he had a few weeks off from shooting and his co-stars got to film at the fictional wizarding school from the Harry Potter movies. He told Collider: "I had a couple weeks off to do some other work. I was in the United States and around different parts of Europe, and I came back and I was asking what they'd been up to, and how it'd been. And they said, oh, it's been pretty much the same except for we did have that week where we were in Hogwarts. And I was like so deeply devastated, trying to cover it up, play it cool. I was like, 'oh, that's - that's fine. What chocolate frog are you talking about?' Nobody called me. Nobody even thought to send a text." Despite his disappointment over missing out on Hogwarts, Ezra admitted he can't believe his luck that he gets to be part of the movie franchise. He said: "What's really

great and what I find really wonderful is the way that this environment facilitates expression, it's really special. It's a very particular feeling on this set. It's immense. It's also more quieter than a lot of smaller sets I've ever been on. There's a real sense of collaboration in the process of finding each scene. We take time to rehearse, which is a rare gift when you're on a studio schedule making an enormous movie. We have a lot of really considered conversations in which everyone's voice is heard who's participating in the scene. We work really intimately with these various devoted departments, like the puppeteers and the visual effects department, the props department, you know, various people who are enabling us to fall deeper and deeper into a world of imagination, and so that is a delight. "I haven't had any specific requests for things to happen in the story. I'm very, very, very pleased with all of the material. I find a lot of depth and meaning in it. I still do, I still relate and connect to it as directly as I did when I was first interacting with the material as a young person."

Wan reveals his ambitions for The Conjuring

James Wan has always had ambitions to turn 'The Conjuring' into something bigger. The 41-year-old director helmed the first movie in the movie-spinning franchise, which includes a sequel and an upcom-

ing third film, and James has spoken about his long-term ambitions for the series ahead of the release of 'The Nun', a spin-off of 'The Conjuring 2'. In a new featurette, he shared: "One of the things that occurred to us early on is, 'They have a superhero universe, why can't we do that in the horror world?' "When we were making the first 'Conjuring', it became very apparent to us that there could be a bigger universe. So many other stories that would be awesome to look into." Earlier this month, meanwhile, it was revealed that James stepped behind the camera for 'The Nun' as second unit director for Corin Hardy. The mastermind behind 'The Conjuring' franchise - who directed the first movie and its sequel before taking on a producer role for 'Annabelle' and 'Annabelle: Creation' - helped out the filmmaker at the helm of the upcoming horror flick. Corin said: "Very excitingly, James Wan was my second unit director in a little bit of additional photography. "It is funny, but we did some additional photography, and you're always pushing for double what you really can afford, time - or budget-wise. I said, 'I want to do all of this, but if we're going to do it, we really need to run two units.'" James is a full-on, hands-on guy and he was like, 'Anything I can do of service!' It was like, 'I really want to take you up on that.' So, there were nights when he was shooting a section in the forest and I was shooting interiors."



ing third film, and James has spoken about his long-term ambitions for the series ahead of the release of 'The Nun', a spin-off of 'The Conjuring 2'. In a new featurette, he shared: "One of the things that occurred to us early on is, 'They have a superhero universe, why can't we do that in the horror

Wilson has three movies coming in 2019

Rebel Wilson will star in three movies in 2019. The 'Bridesmaids' actress revealed she has been secretly working away "behind the scenes" this year to focus on the projects she has coming up. She told her 2.88 million followers: "Ooooo. Been working so hard behind the scenes this year. Can't wait for you guys to see the 3 movies I'm in next year. (sic)" Those movies are believed to be 'The Hustle', which is complete, and 'Isn't It Romantic' and 'Jojo Rabbit', both of which are in post-production. Meanwhile, in June it was revealed the 38-year-old filmmaker is to star in and produce an adaptation of the comic book 'Crowded'. The Australian comedienne is developing the project and will produce it via her Camp Sugar production banner. The Hollywood Reporter reported. 'Crowded' is set in the near future when the world's economy is largely based on job sharing and apps. At the same time, a crowdfunding platform that funds assassinations has become extremely popular among members of the public. The movie really gathers pace when a woman named

Charlie suddenly finds herself in the midst of an assassination attempt. Christopher Sebela, who is the author of the original comic books, is set to act as a consulting producer, while a search for a writer to help adapt the material is already underway. In recent years, it's been suggested that power and influence has moved from the movie business towards the TV industry. But Rebel - who is currently developing a movie with the help of music mogul Simon Cowell - has insisted she remains committed to making films. She said: "It's still where the power is. We are making a film about K-pop, because he is very musical. It will star primarily an Asian cast. "And I just sold one to Universal about bi-racial twins. It was in the National Geographic recently and I thought it was very interesting; especially considering race relations in America, and to do a comic storyline with overt themes about race in it but that isn't overtly about race ... it's a very rare phenomenon. "We are writing the script now. It's in the early stages but it's a big commercial comedy."



McBride ruled himself out of Halloween role

Danny McBride didn't cast himself in his new 'Halloween' film because he didn't want his appearance to be "distracting" for the audience. The 41-year-old actor has teamed up with director David Gordon Green and writer Jeff Fradley to pen a new story in the slasher film franchise and although he was tempted to be in it he thought his past comedy roles could detract from the horror on screen. Speaking to Collider about the project, he said: "I intentionally didn't want to be in it. I thought it would be too distracting. When we were really looking at the aesthetics of that first 'Halloween', there was no stunt casting in there. Besides Donald Pleasence, that was a cast of all new faces, so we felt that was very important in this, as well." The film has been made as a direct sequel to the first two 'Halloween' movies and McBride and the creative team have simply discarded all the other follow-ups in the franchise which have focused on psychopathic killer Michael Myers. McBride admits it was a bit daunting to be offered to the opportunity to create a new chapter in the revered franchise but he knew that he and Green had to be brave and take it on. The 'Arizona' star explained: "Look, it was a complete career surprise. For David Green and myself, it was something that we never would have imagined, in a million years. That's why, when the opportunity came across, we were like, 'How do you not do this? What's cooler - the story that we did this, or the story that we were too chickens**t to do it?' So, we put our thinking caps on and tried to figure out how we would crack it and what we would do. We both have interests, outside of comedy. David has directed movies that are very serious and dark, and he has strong dramatic sensibilities. That's also stuff that I'm interested in, as well. So, this was the perfect opportunity to spread our wings and put our minds on something creatively, that is well outside of what people would expect from us." In 'Halloween', Jamie Lee Curtis is back as Laurie Strode - the babysitter who escapes Myers' murderous clutches in the original 1978 film - for her final outing as the character. The franchise's creator John Carpenter is also back as the composer for the horror and his return means that the new installment is the first film in the canon with his direct involvement since 1982's 'Halloween III: Season of the Witch'.

Emma Watson joins Little Women

Emma Watson has joined the cast of 'Little Women'. The 'Harry Potter' actress will star alongside the likes of Meryl Streep, Laura Dern and Saoirse Ronan in Greta Gerwig's adaptation of Louisa May Alcott's classic novel, replacing Emma Stone, who was unable to commit to the project because of her promotional obligations to 'The Favorite'. According to Variety, roles in the film are still being worked out so it is unknown which of the March sisters will be played by Emma. The movie - which is also being written by Greta - tells the story of four sisters as they transition from childhood to womanhood and will also feature Florence Pugh and Timothee Chalamet. The novel has been adapted for the big screen several times before, including the 1994 version directed by Gillian Armstrong. That movie featured Winona Ryder as the main character, Josephine 'Jo' March, an ambitious young woman, who longs to become a successful author. The all-star cast also included Gabriel Byrne, Kirsten Dunst, Claire Danes, Christian Bale and Susan Sarandon. The upcoming Gerwig-directed adaptation would be a reunion for Gerwig, Ronan and Chalamet, after Greta directed the pair in her directorial debut 'Lady Bird'. And Saoirse recently revealed that she continues to be mentored by her idol Greta. She said: "I was a huge fan of Greta Gerwig before I worked with her on 'Lady Bird'." Meeting Greta and knowing that she knew who I was and wanted to talk to me about the script was so exciting. We Skyped before we met and we were so giggly, like two kids in high school. She's been very supportive since. "She's everything I want to be as an actor and as a filmmaker. I could feel myself going from being like, 'Maybe one day I'll direct, to looking at Greta and going, 'I really want to do this.' — Bang Showbiz



Quaid, Gad and Gilpin for A Dog's Journey



Dennis Quaid and Josh Gad will be joined by Betty Gilpin for the 'A Dog's Purpose' sequel. The pair will reprise their roles from the original 'A Dog's Journey', which will be released on May 17, 2019, and they will co-star alongside 'Glow' actress Betty. Both movies are based on the best-selling books from author W. Bruce Cameron, while the screenplay has been written by Cameron, Cathryn Michon, Wally Wolodarsky and Maya Forbes. The original movie told the story of a devoted dog (Josh Gad) who discovers the meaning of its own existence through the lives of the humans it teaches about love. Amblin Partners is developing the movie, which will be co-financed and co-produced by Walden Media and Alibaba Pictures. Alibaba Pictures president Wei Zhang said: "Our mission is to be a gateway for Hollywood into China and help great universal stories with positive energy maximize their potential with audiences in China and around the world. 'A Dog's Purpose' was embraced by audiences globally with great storytelling and a heartwarming message."

at Walden Media and Alibaba Pictures to produce 'A Dog's Journey', the follow-up to our successful 'A Dog's Purpose'. With director Gail Mancuso at the helm, we can't wait to share another beautiful story about the special bond between humans and their treasured dogs." Walden Media's Frank Smith added: "'A Dog's Purpose' beautifully conveyed the unconditional love dogs bring to our families and lives, and we are excited to be portraying this unbreakable bond once again with 'A Dog's Journey', produced together with Amblin Partners and Alibaba Pictures." Alibaba Pictures president Wei Zhang said: "Our mission is to be a gateway for Hollywood into China and help great universal stories with positive energy maximize their potential with audiences in China and around the world. 'A Dog's Purpose' was embraced by audiences globally with great storytelling and a heartwarming message."

Winslet's new movie to be shot in her Sussex home

Kate Winslet is reportedly welcoming movie cameras into her home for her next film. The 42-year-old actress has always been guarded about her family life, but the British actress has decided to break with tradition by opening the doors of her £3.25 million house in Sussex, South-East England, for her new movie 'Blackbird'. A source told the Mail on Sunday newspaper: "Kate wants to stay close to home for the sake of her family. She's been joking about how she won't have to go to work - work will come to her." The upcoming movie is a remake of the Danish drama 'Silent Heart', which tells the story of a family who are gathered together to say farewell to a dying woman. Meanwhile, Kate - who has been married three times - previously admitted that despite being one of Hollywood's best-known stars, she's largely managed to keep her private life out of the limelight. The actress - who has kids Mia, 17, Joe, 14, and Bear, four - shared: "No one really knows what has happened in my life. No one knows why my first marriage didn't last; no one knows why my second didn't. I'm proud of those silences." Kate's first marriage to film director Jim Threapleton lasted from 1998 until 2001. The Oscar-winning star subsequently married moviemaker Sam Mendes, but they divorced in 2011. And Kate is now married to Ned Rocknroll, who is the nephew of the billionaire businessman Sir Richard Branson.



The Ingenuity Department at Ulysse Nardin puts the tourbillon at center stage!



Marinetourbillon
(blue light)

In 1846, Ulysse Nardin took up the challenge of designing, drawing, and producing the absolute best of time-measuring instruments. The Manufacture has carried on that vision for 172 years, creating watches with the same unbroken passion and garnering more than 4,500 prizes and 18 gold medals in timekeeping-accolades which earned the Manufacture a place amongst the world's top watch-makers. While the Ulysse Nardin Manufacture claims an illustrious position in the history of on-board watches and marine chronometers, the brand has also made waves with its tourbillons. At Ulysse Nardin, tourbillon chronometers are derived from an art that traces back to the end of the 19th century. The tourbillon contributed to the quest for ultimate precision with its primary function being to compensate for errors due to the effects of Earth's gravity on a movement in vertical position.

The Ulysse Nardin 'Watchmaking Artists': Precision Fanatics

Albert Pellaton Favre (1834-1914), renowned "watchmaking artist" working in the Ulysse Nardin workshops, built the first tourbillon entirely by hand in 1899. This constituted a stunning feat of design and manufacturing, as well as demonstrated an absolute mastery over an art form that is by turns technical, architectural and aesthetic. His son James-Cesar Pellaton (1873-1954) was the heir to this watchmaking talent. Brought on by Paul-David Nardin, James worked at the Manufacture for one year, where he became a connoisseur of escapements and a specialist of tourbillons. Working alongside the expert watchmakers Paul-David Nardin chose to surround himself with at the Manufacture, James helped develop the art of precision through research on mechanisms and materials.

In 1903, James left Ulysse Nardin to become director of the watchmaking school in Le Locle. He would go on to design tourbillons for a variety of other watchmakers. Ulysse Nardin would go on to deliver nine pocket chronometers equipped with tourbillons. This precise number of chronometers was most likely limited due to practical reasons as the renown of the Ulysse Nardin manufacture was yielding multiple orders, including watches with grand complications such as minute repeaters and grande sonneries. The Manufacture was already taking a quality-over-quantity approach at the time. Each timepiece was handcrafted with multiple tests and controls every step of the way.

Ulysse Nardin: Master of Grand Complications

Since 1983, with Rolf Schnyder serving at the head of the company for over 30 years, Ulysse Nardin today carries on the tradition of its legacy. The watchmaker endlessly develops new rotating cages and adds to the long list of accomplishments, whether it be a flying tourbillon that resembles a "mysterious mechanism" in the Royal Blue Tourbillon in 2013 or the extremely impressive Imperial Blue released the following year featuring flying tourbillon, minute repeater, and grande sonnerie. The Freak Phantom, also released in 2013, brings together state-of-the-art technology with a one-minute tourbillon atop a one-hour carousel tourbillon. In 2015, Ulysse Nardin presented the Constant Ulysse Anchor Escapement, a breathtaking mechanism housed inside a 60-second tourbillon, an innovation that was awarded by the GPHG of Geneva. In 2016, the Marine Grand Deck Tourbillon shined as a true feat of technical prowess, with its patented device complemented by a majestic... flying tourbillon! More recently, other examples of Ulysse Nardin's mastery have been brought to life, such as the Marine Tourbillon equipped with the Manufacture Caliber UN-128 and a flying tourbillon which completes one rotation per minute. The Freak Vision debuted at SIHH 2018, featuring an iconic carousel-style tourbillon that completes one rotation per hour.

Now, Ulysse Nardin once more pays homage to its rich history by launching The Executive Skeleton Tourbillon, a flying tourbillon on a skeleton base boasting an aesthetic that's both spidery and poetic, in a pink gold version-made for Chief Executive Officers only! This timepiece is the essence of grand complications, reminding us that a sober facade does not rule out great complexity within.



Nanami 'Seven Seas' Nagura from Japan celebrates winning the Air Guitar World Championships final.

Plucky air guitarists chase stringless glory at world titles in Finland

Air guitar enthusiasts gathered in the Finnish city of Oulu on Friday to shred and strum their imaginary instruments in pursuit of the world championship of the bizarre dance form. Under grey, wet skies, this year's 15 finalists appeared on the open air stage on Oulu's central square, twanging, jangling, riffing, screeching and plucking the air. This year's title was taken by Japan's Nanami Nagura, who performed under the artist name Seven Seas in the contest's 23rd edition.

She started her performance dressed as a modest cleaning lady before transforming into a heavy metal guitarist as her song kicked in. Her prize was a hand-carved guitar called the Flying Finn. "I'm really, really happy, I cannot believe it now!" she said after the contest. Nagura was one of the seven performers who had entered the final through qualifiers in other parts of the world. The other eight finalists qualified through a "dark horse" round that took place in the host city the night before.

This year's oldest participant Bob Wagner, known as "Mr Bob", travelled from Canada to celebrate his 75th birthday on stage at the dark horse contest. "I believe it's their desire to perform and to vent their artistic visions...The Japanese take this quite seriously, training to their heart's content. It's a combination of drive to compete and artistic delivery," assistant producer Anssi Ikonen said. — Reuters



Nanami 'Seven Seas' Nagura from Japan celebrates winning the Air Guitar World Championships final.



Nanami 'Seven Seas' Nagura from Japan performs during the Air Guitar World Championships final in Oulu, Finland. — AFP photos



Rachel 'Agnes Young' Sinclair from USA performs during the Air Guitar World Championships final.



Lyrae 'Lily Rockroll' Frerichs from Australia performs during the Air Guitar World Championships final.



Andrew 'Flying Finn' Finn from USA from the United Kingdom from Australia performs during the Air Guitar World Championships final.



Brittany Georgia Lunch' Diaz, from the USA performs during the Air Guitar World Championships final.



Sven 'Sven Spandex' Smith from the United Kingdom from Australia performs during the Air Guitar World Championships final.



Kate 'KitKat' Rose from USA performs during the Air Guitar World Championships final.



Kado 'Shariten Kd' Toshio from Japan performs during the Air Guitar World Championships final.

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h .

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas with light to moderate variable wind changing to north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 27/08/2018 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	45 °C	34 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	46 °C	28 °C			
ABDALY	45 °C	29 °C			
BUBYAN	--- °C	--- °C			
JAHRA	47 °C	33 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	37 °C	28 °C			
SALMIYAH	38 °C	33 °C			
AHMADI	39 °C	34 °C			
NUWAISIB	40 °C	28 °C			
WAFRA	43 °C	26 °C			
SALMY	46 °C	29 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Tuesday	08/28	Very hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	47 °C	29 °C	N-NE	10 - 30 km/h
Wednesday	08/29	Very hot and rising dust over open areas	48 °C	32 °C	SE-N	15 - 40 km/h
Thursday	08/30	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	46 °C	30 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 30 km/h
Friday	08/31	Very hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas and some high clouds will appear	47 °C	34 °C	NW-SE	08 - 30 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:00
Sunrise	05:22
Zuhr	11:50
Asr	15:24
Sunset	18:16
Isha	19:36

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	46 °C
MIN. Temp.	32 °C
MAX. RH	47 %
MIN. RH	09 %
MAX. Wind	N 43 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

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	22924455
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FlyDubai	22423888
Qatar Airways	22425747
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Royal Jordanian	22425635
British Airways	22430224
Air France	22921555
Emirates	22438184
Air India	22424444
Sri Lanka Airlines	22421578
Egypt Air	22421516
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DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Tuesday 28/8/2018				Departure Flights on Tuesday 28/8/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15	SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
WAN	886	Sarajevo	00:20	MSC	412	Asyut	13:30
KAC	102	London	00:50	THY	767	Istanbul	13:40
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	JZR	144	Doha	13:55
WAN	976D	Baku	00:55	JZR	124	Bahrain	14:00
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	JZR	552	Alexandria	14:05
RJA	642	Amman	01:35	JZR	562	Sohag	14:05
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	WAN	713	AGP	14:10
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00	FEJ	343	Sohag	14:50
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	WAN	415	Beirut	15:00
QTR	8511	Doha	02:00	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
JZR	267	Beirut	02:10	KNE	234	Riyadh	15:00
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
THY	768	Istanbul	02:40	SVB	501	Jeddah	15:45
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	KAC	775	Istanbul	15:55
JZR	553D	Alexandria	02:50	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:00
JZR	607	Kochi	02:55	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
KAC	418	Manila	03:05	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KAC	619	Doha	16:15
MSR	606	Luxor	03:05	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:40
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:25	MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:55
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	SAW	706	Damascus	17:00
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	FDB	052	Dubai	17:20
LMU	5510	Cairo	04:00	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	QTR	0425	Dubai	17:40
KAC	152	Istanbul	04:20	FEJ	858	Alexandria	17:45
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	KAC	381	Delhi	17:50
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30	NIA	362	Alexandria	17:55
MSC	403	Dubai	05:00	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	KAC	283	Dhaka	18:00
THY	1414	TZU	05:05	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	KAC	511	Riyadh	18:15
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15	JZR	184	Dubai	18:20
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:20	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
JZR	603	Mumbai	05:25	JZR	608	Hyderabad	18:25
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	JZR	240	Amman	18:30
JZR	561	Sohag	05:55	JZR	512	Sharm el-Sheikh	18:30
KAC	362	Colombo	06:00	JZR	538	Cairo	18:35
BAW	157	London	06:10	JZR	266	Beirut	19:15
RUN	6376	Istanbul	06:10	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:25	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:25	WAN	135	Doha	19:30
KAC	204	Lahore	06:30	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
KAC	678	Dubai	06:45	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50	RJA	641	Amman	20:00
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
JZR	561D	Ahmedabad	07:05	RBG	556	Alexandria	20:20
JZR	143	Doha	07:20	JZR	602	Mumbai	20:30
JZR	529	Asyut	07:30	NIA	0162	Cairo	20:30
KAC	358	Kochi	07:35	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
KAC	122	AGP	07:35	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:45	KAC	153	Istanbul	20:45
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	DLH	624	Dammam	20:50
JZR	123	Bahrain	08:00	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00
KAC	384	Delhi	08:05	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:35
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
IRA	675	Lar	09:40	KAC	205	Islamabad	21:55
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:05
SYR	341	Damascus	10:00	JZR	1540	Cairo	22:10
SVB	512	Riyadh	10:00	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:10
SAW	703	Damascus	10:30	KAC	543	Cairo	22:15
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
JZR	531	Asyut	10:40	THY	1403	AYT	22:25
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	383	Delhi	22:25
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KAC	860	Dubai	22:35
JZR	541	Cairo	11:05	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
JZR	165	Dubai	11:45	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:50
WAN	134	Doha	12:20	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:00
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:20	KAC	795	Madinah	23:00
MSC	411	Asyut	12:30	KAC	411	Bangkok	23:15
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
WAN	542	KTM	12:40	PIA	240	Sialkot	23:35
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	WAN	337	Alexandria	23:40
THY	766	Istanbul	12:45	JZR	560	Sohag	23:45



Camels belonging to Palestinian bedouins are seen walking in the Judean desert in the West Bank on Sunday. — AFP

Lebanon cannabis farmers hoping legalization may bring amnesty

BEKAA, Lebanon: The contrast between the vibrant green of a cannabis field and the arid land nearby in Lebanon's Bekaa valley has for years raised a dilemma for the area's impoverished farmers. Cannabis is hardier, less thirsty and cheaper to grow than the region's other main crops like apples and potatoes, but it is also illegal - for now. Parliament will consider legalizing its growth for medicinal use, the speaker said last month, but in the Bekaa, some people are unconvinced there will be a meaningful change.

"It is like giving a dog a bone because people are hungry and can't bear it anymore," said cannabis farmer Abu Mohammad, 52. "But whether they legalize it or not, the most important thing is to give an amnesty," he said, echoing a common complaint in the region. Farmers faced prison terms of five years, he said.

Talal Shreif, mayor of the town of Yammouneh in the northern Bekaa, said that about 35,000 people in the

region were being sought by the police for cannabis farming. What angers some people in the Bekaa is a feeling that they have little choice but to grow an illegal crop. Abu Abdo, 40, a resident of the nearby town of Brital who spent years in prison for a cannabis offence said it was high local unemployment that pushed farmers to grow a few square kilometres of the narcotic. "They bring some money in now, but it is not a solution. People are poor," he said.

The mayor, Shreif, raised the possibility that if legalized cannabis farming might be regulated in the same way as tobacco, with the government buying the crop at a set price. Around his town, Yammouneh, there are about 1,500 sq km of land used for cannabis farming, owned by about 150 local people who employ hundreds of casual Syrian labourers, he said. For now, there is little likelihood of a rapid move towards legalisation. Nearly four months after a general election, Lebanon's political parties are still squabbling over the formation of a new coalition government.

But in Bar Elias, a nearby town, farmers say they are struggling. One farmer, Khaled Araj, said his recent crop of vegetables had suffered catastrophically from drought. The river that watered it has gone dry. "Not even a bird can drink from it," he said. He said he would grow cannabis instead if the government allowed it. "The farmers here don't want to be rich. They just want to be able to live through the winter and afford the school fees for their children." — Reuters

Middle East and believed to be the only country in the region to possess nuclear weapons. Foreign military experts say it has several batteries of its Jericho ballistic missile, capable of delivering nuclear warheads. IMI said in 2004 that it had produced a cruise missile, the Delilah, with a range of 250 km. It also has an array of anti-missile rocket systems but yesterday's statement quoted IMI chairman Yitzhak Aharonovitch saying that the new armament would "reflect the company's technological capabilities, which specialize in the ability to fire accurately, to strike at a variety of ground targets".

Israel faces a variety of threats and considers Iran its most dangerous foe in the region. It is regularly targeted by rockets and mortar fire from the Gaza Strip, ruled by Islamist movement Hamas. Another of its enemies is the Iran-backed Shiite group Hezbollah based in neighboring Lebanon. Israel also shares a border with Syria, where Iran and Hezbollah are fighting alongside President Bashar Al-Assad in his country's civil war.

Netanyahu has pledged to prevent Tehran from further entrenching itself in Syria and a series of recent strikes that have killed Iranians there have been attributed to Israel. Lieberman did not reveal details of the planned new system or its potential targets and his office did not respond to AFP requests for information. — Agencies

Half the world's schools lack clean...

Continued from Page 1

Nearly 900 million children were affected, the report found. Sub-Saharan Africa, East and Southeast Asia had some of the worst facilities.

"It's deeply shocking," Tim Wainwright, the chief executive of charity WaterAid, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "The consequences are very broad in terms of children's access to education, general

health and state of nutrition." Adolescent girls in particular are often forced to miss classes when they are on their periods if there are no proper cleaning and sanitation facilities, he said. More than a third of girls in South Asia miss school during their periods, often because they lack access to toilets or pads, according to a WaterAid and UNICEF study earlier this year.

The World Bank last year warned countries needed to quadruple spending to \$150 billion a year to deliver universal safe water and sanitation. However, experts say they are optimistic the situation can be quickly improved if leaders treat water, sanitation and hygiene as a priority. "With political will, it really is possible to deliver good quality services," said Johnston. — Reuters

UN slams Myanmar army for 'genocide'...

Continued from Page 1

prosecuted for genocide in the north of Rakhine State". They should also be investigated and prosecuted for "crimes against humanity and war crimes" against the Rohingya in Rakhine, as well as against other minorities in the northern Kachin and Shan States, the mission said in a report. The army tactics have been "consistently and grossly disproportionate to actual security threats," it said.

Speaking to journalists in Geneva, the head of the mission, Marzuki Darusman, insisted that "the only way forward is to call for (Min Aung Hlaing's) resignation and stepping down immediately". The mission, which was created by the UN Human Rights Council in March 2017, concluded in its report that "there is sufficient information to warrant the investigation and prosecution of senior officials in the Tatmadaw (Myanmar army) chain of command". "The crimes in Rakhine State, and the manner in which they were perpetrated, are similar in nature, gravity and scope to those that have allowed genocidal intent to be established in other contexts," it said.

The investigators named six of the country's top military commanders, adding that a longer list of names could be shared with "any competent and credible body pursuing accountability in line with international norms and standards". Criticism was also directed at Myanmar's civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate who has been widely attacked for a perceived failure to stand up for the stateless minority. The report found that she had "not used her de facto position as head of government, nor her moral authority, to stem or prevent the unfolding events". While acknowledging that the civilian authorities had little influence on military actions, it said they "through their acts and omissions ... have contributed to the commission of atrocity crimes."

The investigators, who were never granted access to Myanmar, said they based their findings on interviews with 875 victims and witnesses, as well as satellite imagery and authenticated documents, photographs and videos. The report detailed a horrifying list of atrocities committed against the Rohingya, including murder, enforced disappearance, torture, as well as sexual violence "perpetrated on a massive scale". The investigators said their information suggested that an estimate by Doctors Without Borders that up to 10,000 Rohingya had been killed in the 2017 crackdown was "conservative".

They also found that soldiers had carried out "large-scale gang rape", sometimes of as many as 40 girls and women at once, in at least 10 Rakhine villages. "The scale, brutality and systematic nature of these violations indicate that rape and sexual violence are part of a deliberate strategy to intimidate, terrorize or punish a civilian population, and are used as a tactic of war," the report said. The investigators warned that the latest wave of violence was part of a "history of abusive military conduct going back at least half a century".

"The Rohingya are in a continuing situation of severe, systemic and institutionalized oppression from birth to death," Darusman told reporters. Pointing to

"deeply entrenched" impunity in Myanmar, the investigators said the only chance to obtain accountability was through the international justice system. They called on the UN Security Council to refer the Myanmar situation to the International Criminal Court (ICC), or for the creation of an ad hoc international criminal tribunal. They also recommended an arms embargo and "targeted individual sanctions against those who appear to be most responsible." The Security Council has repeatedly urged Myanmar to halt military operations and to allow the Rohingya to safely return home, but its initiatives have been limited by council member and top Myanmar ally China, who could also thwart efforts to refer the case to the ICC.

The investigators also highlighted Facebook's role, describing it as "a useful instrument for those seeking to spread hate". The social media platform has been widely used to spread inflammatory content against the Rohingya and has scrambled in recent months to show that it is taking the issue seriously. "Although improved in recent months, Facebook's response has been slow and ineffective," the report said, urging an independent probe of whether posts and messages on the platform had "led to real-world discrimination and violence".

Shortly after the UN report appeared, the tech giant announced it was "banning 20 Burmese individuals and organizations from Facebook - including Senior General Min Aung Hlaing". It stressed that it wanted to prevent them from using the service to "further inflame ethnic and religious tensions". "We've taken this step in Myanmar following findings by international experts, including a recent UN-commissioned report, that many of these officials committed serious human rights abuses in the country," Facebook spokeswoman Ruchika Budhraj said. As to whether this could set a precedent, the spokeswoman said: "We recognize that people in other parts of the world face devastating violence on a daily basis, and we will continue to investigate and take action when we have enough facts to do so."

UN investigators lambasted the platform earlier this year, saying it had morphed into a "beast" in Myanmar. In recent months, the tech giant has embarked on a huge public relations campaign, admitting it has often been too slow to take down inflammatory posts. It blacklisted two firebrand Buddhist monks and an Islamophobic group notorious for spreading anti-Muslim propaganda. But this is the first time it has touched the country's military.

Facebook has some 18 million accounts in the country of 51 million people and is also relied on heavily by the government to make announcements. Army chief Hlaing had two active Facebook accounts, one boasting 1.3 million followers and the other 2.8 million. Posts in both English and Burmese would refer to the Rohingya as "Bengali", implying they are illegal immigrants from Bangladesh and helping reinforce the idea they do not belong in mainly Buddhist Myanmar.

His pages also featured denials of atrocities during the crackdown, which was justified by the army as a legitimate means of rooting out Rohingya militants. Both accounts were taken down immediately as the explosive UN report circulated. In Yangon, government spokesman Zaw Htay said it was asking Facebook for more information on the blocking. "Community standards must be balanced," he told local media, referring to the company's content guidelines. "The government would like to know the exact reason." — Agencies

Iran claims full control of Gulf...

Continued from Page 1

Separately, Israel is working on a new missile system capable of hitting targets anywhere in the Middle East, Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman said yesterday. State-owned arms manufacturer Israel Military Industries (IMI) would deliver "within a few years" an advanced integrated system "allowing precise hits by remote launching", he said in a statement. Lieberman added that the contract with IMI was budgeted at "hundreds of millions of shekels". The Israeli shekel is currently trading at 3.63 to the US dollar.

"The project for setting up a precision rocket and missile system is underway," Lieberman said in the statement. "Part of it is already in production and part is in the final phases of research and development. We are acquiring and developing precision fire systems that will allow... the Israel Defense Forces to cover within a few years every point in the region."

Israel is considered the leading military power in the



The August full moon rises behind the Cape of Sounio near the archaeological site of the Temple of Poseidon on Sunday as archaeological sites across Greece remain open until midnight as part of the Full Moon 2018 event. — AFP

Sports

Yankees tighten American League East gap with sweep of Orioles

Nationals snap 32-inning scoring drought, rout Mets 15-0

NEW YORK: Luke Voit hit a two-run homer, his third long ball of the series, and the visiting New York Yankees defeated the Baltimore Orioles 5-3 Sunday night to complete a four-game series sweep. The Yankees pulled within six games of first-place Boston in the American League East. The last-place Orioles lost their eighth game in a row. Handed an early lead, New York starter Luis Severino posted his major-league-best 17th win of the season. Severino (17-6) allowed three runs (two earned) on four hits in 5 2/3 innings. He struck out eight and walked two.

RAYS 9, RED SOX 1

Blake Snell became the majors' fourth 16-game winner, and Tampa Bay became the first team this season to sweep a three-game series from Boston with a blowout at St. Petersburg, Fla. Matt Duffy scored twice, had three hits and drove in two runs, spearheading a 12-hit attack that propelled the Rays to their second eight-game winning streak of the season. Snell (16-5) limited the Red Sox to one run on two hits in six innings. He walked two and struck out eight.

PHILLIES 8, BLUE JAYS 3

Rhys Hoskins, Carlos Santana, Maikel Franco and Wilson Ramos hit home runs to help Philadelphia avoid a three-game sweep at Toronto. Ramos was 4-for-5 and had three RBIs as the Phillies won for only the second time in their past eight games. Kendrys Morales extended his homer streak to a club-record seven games when he hit a two-run blast for the Blue Jays. Morales has hit eight home runs during the streak. He also has a 10-game hitting streak.

NATIONALS 15, METS 0

Juan Soto's RBI groundout in the sixth inning snapped Washington's 32 1/3-inning scoreless drought, and the Nationals added their most prolific inning of the season, an eight-run, eighth-inning outburst that lifted them to a rout of host New York. The Nationals, who tied a franchise record by being shut out in their previous three games, salvaged the finale of the three-game series. The Mets have won 14 of 23. Adam Eaton had four hits and Anthony Rendon had three hits for the Nationals, and Mark Reynolds hit a grand slam.

BRAVES 4, MARLINS 0

Five pitchers combined on a two-hit shutout as first-place Atlanta broke a two-game losing streak with a win at Miami. Braves starter Kevin Gausman (9-9) allowed one hit—a single by opposing pitcher Pablo Lopez—one walk and no runs in five innings. He struck out five. Gausman is 4-1 with a 1.69 ERA since Atlanta acquired him from the Baltimore Orioles in a July 31 trade. Jesse Biddle, Dan Winkler, Brad Brach and A.J. Minter each pitched one scoreless inning to complete the shutout. Ronald Acuna Jr., Ender Inciarte and Tyler Flowers had two hits each to lead Atlanta's offense.

INDIANS 12, ROYALS 5

Jason Kipnis hit an inside-the-park home run, collected four hits and drove in four runs as Cleveland won

at Kansas City, Mo. Kipnis lined a shot off the top of the wall in the right field corner in the top of the ninth inning as outfielder Alex Gordon crashed into the fence and then tumbled to the warning track. The ball bounced toward center field, allowing Kipnis to score standing up. Edwin Encarnacion added a two-run homer for the American League Central-leading Indians, who snapped a four-game losing streak and avoided a three-game sweep against the last-place team in the division.

BREWERS 7, PIRATES 4

Mike Moustakas and Manny Pina hit two-run homers during a six-run third inning as Milwaukee downed visiting Pittsburgh. Jonathan Schoop also homered for the Brewers, who took two of three games in the series and remained 4 1/2 games back of the first-place Chicago Cubs in the National League Central. Adam Frazier and Gregory Polanco homered for Pittsburgh, which has lost five of six.

CUBS 9, REDS 0

Kyle Hendricks threw seven scoreless innings, David Bote homered and drove in three runs, and Jason Heyward had four hits and drove in two runs as host Chicago completed a four-game sweep of Cincinnati. Hendricks (10-10) gave up just two hits—both singles by Tucker Barnhart—while walking one and striking out five. Hendricks faced just two batters over the minimum. It was the fifth straight win for the Cubs, who maintained a four-game lead over the second-place St. Louis Cardinals in the National League Central. The last-place Reds have lost five straight.

WHITE SOX 7, TIGERS 2

Michael Kopech collected his first major league victory in his second career start, and Daniel Palka homered, leading Chicago to a win at Detroit. Kopech, 22, lasted six innings and gave up one run on seven hits. He walked none and struck out four. He pitched two scoreless innings against Minnesota in his debut Tuesday before exiting following a rain delay. Avisail Garcia had two hits and drove in two runs, and Adam Engel supplied two hits and two runs for Chicago. The White Sox won the last three games of the four-game series.

CARDINALS 12, ROCKIES 3

Matt Carpenter had a career-high four doubles—two in the first inning—and St. Louis routed Colorado in Denver. Tyler O'Neill homered, and Austin Gomber went six solid innings as St. Louis continued its strong play on the road. The Cardinals have won 10 of their past 11 away from home, and they maintained a half-game lead on the Milwaukee Brewers for the top spot in the National League wild-card standings. Carpenter's four doubles tied the franchise record set by Joe "Ducky" Medwick on Aug. 4, 1937, against the Boston Bees. St. Louis finished with 16 hits.

A'S 6, TWINS 2

Matt Chapman hit two home runs and scored three times, and Jed Lowrie homered, doubled and drove in three runs to lead Oakland to a victory over Minnesota



BALTIMORE: Luke Voit #45 of the New York Yankees scores on a passed ball against the Baltimore Orioles during the sixth inning at Oriole Park at Camden Yards on Sunday in Baltimore, Maryland. — AFP

in Minneapolis. Stephen Piscotty also homered and joined Chapman and Lowrie with three hits. Oakland hit 10 home runs in the series while winning three of the four games. The A's, who remain 1 1/2 games behind first-place Houston in the American League West, begin a three-game showdown series with the Astros on Monday night at Minute Maid Park.

ASTROS 3, ANGELS 1

Carlos Correa provided some early offense, and the bullpen locked down the final four innings for Houston, which completed a three-game weekend sweep of Los Angeles in Anaheim, Calif. Roberto Osuna posted his second save with Houston and 11th of the season overall by striking out pinch hitter Shohei Ohtani. The Astros extended their winning streak to five games and capped a nine-game road trip against American League West foes at 6-3. The Astros played 22 of their past 31 games on the road, going 15-7 in those games away from Minute Maid Park. The Angels have lost six consecutive games.

GIANTS 3, RANGERS 1

Steven Duggar broke a fourth-inning tie with a two-run triple, sending host San Francisco past Texas. Derek Holland (7-8) beat his old team for the first time, limiting the Rangers to one run in 6 1/3 innings, helping the Giants take the series 2-1 and finish interleague play for the year at 8-12. The Giants scored first when Evan Longoria tripled off Rangers starter Yovani Gallardo (7-3) with two outs in the bottom of the first and raced

home on a passed ball. The Rangers got even in the third on Elvis Andrus' RBI double.

DODGERS 7, PADRES 3

Justin Turner drove in five runs, and Hyun-Jin Ryu went an effective 5 2/3 innings and added two hits at the plate as Los Angeles completed a three-game sweep of visiting San Diego. Turner had a two-run double in the fifth inning, a two-run single in the sixth and an RBI double in the eighth as the Dodgers overcame an early 2-0 deficit. Turner's five RBIs tied a career high. Manny Machado hit a two-run home run in a four-run fifth inning that put the Dodgers in front for good. Ryu started the four-run uprising in the fifth with a two-out single that was followed by a Brian Dozier walk and the hits from Turner and Machado.

DIAMONDBACKS 5, MARINERS 2

Paul Goldschmidt hit his 30th home run of the season to cap a five-run third inning. Zack Greinke broke a four-game winless streak, and Arizona regained sole possession of first place in the National League West with a victory over Seattle in Phoenix. Greinke (13-8) gave up five hits and one unearned run in 6 2/3 innings, with six strikeouts and two walks. He had received seven runs of support while on the mound in his four previous outings. Goldschmidt has hit safely in 16 of his last 17 games, during which he is batting .394 with six doubles, six homers and 16 RBIs. Mitch Haniger had two hits Sunday and was 6-for-14 with two homers and four runs in the series for the Mariners. —Reuters

Anxious athletes from quake-hit Lombok hope to spread smiles back home

PALEMBANG: For athletes from quake-hit Lombok competing at their own country's Asian Games, the pressure is far greater than the usual quest for gold.

Competitors from the picturesque island have anxiously followed news of deadly earthquakes that killed more than 500 people, hundreds of miles from Indonesia's host cities Jakarta and Palembang—and hope their performances can bring a few smiles to faces back home. "I was so worried about my family—it was a little hard to sleep," said 18-year-old sprinter Lalu Muhammad Zohri, who hails from the worst-affected northern part of the island.

"They called me to tell me not to worry, to just focus on my race. I tried my best," he added, after reaching the men's 100m final, where he finished seventh. "Now I can't wait to go to Lombok to see my family."

Bronze-winning beach volleyball duo Dhita Juliana and Putu Dini Jasita Utami, who are also from Lombok, have captured the hearts of the home fans cheering for them across the country and from the sidelines of Asia's regional Olympics.

They can barely walk a few metres in Palembang without being asked for a selfie yet always oblige, hoping their smiles and strength will resonate back home. "We hope all Lombok people are okay, and we are trying our best here to at least share some happiness with them when we win," said Dhita Juliana, adding that they have been touched by the backing they have had from home throughout the competition.

"There has been a lot of support from Lombok—from relatives, friends, everyone there. We're just so grateful." Some 555 people have been killed and hundreds of thousands left homeless on the beautiful island of Lombok, around 700 miles (1,100km) from Games host cities Jakarta and Palembang.

Juliana, 25, and Utami, 24, said their friends and family all managed to get to safety in time when the two main quakes hit on July 29 and August 5. But everyone has been touched in some way on the island—and the aftershocks and tremors continue to terrorise an already fearful population.—AFP



AUCKLAND: New Zealand's TJ Perenara and Australia's coach Michael Cheika (R) shake hands after New Zealand's victory in the second rugby Test match between New Zealand and Australia at Eden Park in Auckland on August 25, 2018. — AFP

Perseverance will see Wallabies turn corner, says Cheika

MELBOURNE: Under-pressure Australia coach Michael Cheika has dismissed calls for major changes to the Wallabies set-up after back-to-back thrashings by the All Blacks but said he needs to build more squad depth through the rest of the Rugby Championship.

Belted 38-13 in the opener in Sydney and 40-12 in Auckland on Saturday, the Wallabies have come under fire after conceding the Bledisloe Cup with a match to spare. The trans-Tasman trophy, won back by the All Blacks in 2003, will remain in New Zealand hands for at least another 12 months. "A few little tweaks but perseverance definitely (is what we need). It's not always instant gratification," Cheika told local media in Sydney.

"In the modern world, I know that's what everybody wants. "Sometimes you've got to use these ones, the harder times, as watershed moments to make some changes in a certain direction because they were hard games to lose but we've been here before and we've bounced back and will again."

Australia will have two weeks to lick their wounds before facing South Africa in Brisbane on Sept. 8. They will hope attacking weapon Israel Folau is fit enough to return after the fullback rolled his ankle in the Sydney opener. Injured tighthead prop Taniela Tupou may also be available to reinforce the front row.

Cheika has blooded over 30 test debutants since the Wallabies' run to the final of the 2015 World Cup and suggested he would need to do more tinkering in the leadup to next year's global showpiece in Japan.

"We've done a lot of work in building the team, building the depth of the team," he said. "We're going to continue to build that going forward, like we have in all the Rugby Championships. "I think in '16 and '17 we lost both games first up and we've come back to finish well in those championships and that's what we want to be targeting."

Rugby writers on both sides of the Tasman sea have called on Cheika to quit or be fired in the wake of the Bledisloe failure but a string of Wallabies players have backed the 51-year-old as the best man for the job.

Cheika lashed out at reporters who questioned his job security during the post-match media conference at Eden Park but he was more measured upon his return home.

"I'm my own harshest critic," he said. "None of the questions that I get asked about that stuff are ever going to affect me or hurt me in that way." —Reuters

Asia athletics chief says Doha 2019 a chance for unity

JAKARTA: The head of Asia's athletics governing body said he hopes the political crisis gripping the Gulf region will be resolved before next year's Doha world championships, telling AFP the competition could be a chance for unity.

Qatar's Dahn Al-Hamad was speaking at the Asian Games amid concerns over countries potentially boycotting the competition in the oil-rich state next September. "We hope that things will pass before we embrace the 2019 world championship," the head of the Asian Athletics Association (AAA) told AFP in Jakarta.

"Qatar said since the beginning of the crisis that everyone is most welcome." Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, along with Egypt, cut off diplomatic ties with Qatar in June 2017, accusing Doha of supporting terrorism, which it denies.

The countries imposed punitive measures including preventing Qatar Airways from using its airspace, and closing Qatar's only land border, with Saudi Arabia. Qatar claims the Saudi-led countries are seeking regime change in Doha.

Hamad's comments come after world athletics chief Sebastian Coe dismissed concerns over a boycott, saying he expected all the national athletics federations to take part in the competition beginning on September 28, 2019.

"We, as the organising committee, have no restrictions, and Qatar is open to all," said Hamad, adding that it was "very important not to mix politics with sports". "Sports is the unifying activity that brings together the world despite their political and economic matters ... We hope that sport will not enter the political arena."

Other concerns plaguing the build-up to the championships include the stifling heat and humidity athletes will be forced to contend with during the nine-day event. Track and field's governing body, the IAAF, has made a number of changes to the championship's timetable including a midnight marathon and scrapping morning sessions. — AFP

Sports



N Korea win eighth weightlifting gold, celebrate alongside South

Salimikordasiabi only third weightlifter in history to complete hat-trick

JAKARTA: Kim Kuk Hyang extended North Korea's record tally to eight Asian Games weightlifting golds yesterday before there were remarkable scenes as they were joined in celebration by their South Korean neighbours. The two countries are technically still at war but it did not stop their weightlifters exchanging warm greetings and posing for photos together as eight days of competition at the Jakarta International Expo drew to a close. South Korea finished a distance behind their neighbours from across the fortified border with three silvers and two bronzes. "Although our rankings were different in the medals table, I think we have shown the world that the people of Korea are the greatest as one," Kim said. "I was worried I would be the only one not to do it, but since I won the gold medal I am very happy," said Kim after completing North Korea's record haul of eight of the 15 golds on offer. They also bagged a silver and a bronze.

Kim enjoyed a comfortable win in the heaviest women's class of +75kg with a total of 291kg as the secretive nation doubled their previous highest Asian Games weightlifting best of four golds set at Incheon 2014. South Korea's Son Young-hee took the silver on 282kg and Thailand's Duangakorn Chaidee the bronze with 280kg.

GIANT HAT-TRICK

Earlier Behdad Salimikordasiabi became only the third weightlifter in history to complete a hat-trick of Asian Games wins. Salimikordasiabi, the 2012 Olympic champion in the men's superheavyweight (+105kg) class, vanquished controversial doping cheat Saied Alihosseini in a battle of the Iranian giants. Salimikordasiabi, who won gold at Guangzhou 2010 and Incheon 2014, battled his country-

man lift-for-lift in a two-horse race for gold.

In claiming his third gold Salimikordasiabi matched South Korean superheavyweight Kim Tae-hyun, who won in the 1990, 1994 and 1998 Asian Games, and Iranian great Mohammad Nassiri, who won lightweight categories in the 1966, 1970 and 1974 Asiad.

"I'm so happy that after Mohammad Nassiri I am only the second man from Iran to win three gold medals in the Asian Games," he told AFP after his winning total of 461kg. The pair could not be separated after both opened with a snatch of 208kg, but it was Salimikordasiabi who prevailed with his final clean and jerk of 253kg, removing his shoes and belt and kneeling to kiss the stage in thanks.

Alihosseini controversially took silver ahead of Salimikordasiabi in the 2017 world championships in Anaheim in his first competition after returning from an eight-year doping ban. The 2012 Olympic champion Salimikordasiabi revealed he been hampered by a leg injury that required surgery after last year's Worlds in the Californian city. "After my operation I've had a very bad feeling here," he said pointing to his left knee.

"It had been very hard to train. I don't know how I won. I was determined to do my best. That's why I give thanks to God." Alihosseini failed with his final attempt at 254kg on Monday and had to settle for silver on 456kg. Alihosseini was originally banned for life from weightlifting for repeated positive tests for anabolic steroids. He was reprieved in 2017 when his suspension was changed to 12 and then cut to eight years. Rustam Djangabaev of Uzbekistan, fourth in last year's world championships, was edged into bronze after a lifetime best clean and jerk of 252kg took him to 455kg, just 1kg adrift of Alihosseini. — AFP



JAKARTA: Gold medallist North Korea's Kim Kuk Hyang (C) celebrates with teammates during the awards ceremony for the women's +75kg weightlifting event during 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta yesterday. — AFP

DAY NINE OF THE ASIAN GAMES

JAKARTA: Highlights of day 10 of the 18th Asian Games in Jakarta and Palembang yesterday.

CHINA WIN MIXED AND WOMEN'S DOUBLES TITLES

China won gold in the women's doubles and mixed doubles badminton competitions after failing to win a singles medal at the Games for the first time since 1970. Japan's Olympic champions Misaki Matsutomo and Ayaka Takahashi gave up leads in both games to lose the women's doubles final 22-20 22-20 to Chinese duo Chen Qingchen and Jia Yifan. In the mixed doubles final, China's Zheng Siwei and Huang Yaqing thrashed Hong Kong pair Tang Chun Man and Tse Ying Suet 21-8 21-15.

SAMBA SECURES 400M HURDLES GOLD FOR QATAR

Abderrahman Samba secured Qatar's third gold of the meet with a victory in the 400 metres hurdles. The 22-year-old crossed the line in 47.66 seconds, a new Games record. Dharun Ayyasamy of India finished in second, and Japan's Takatoshi Abe completed the podium with a third-place finish.

SINGAPORE CLAIM BRIDGE GOLD

Singapore men's bridge team outplayed Hong Kong to claim their third gold of the meet, after swimmer Joseph Schooling's double at the Jakarta pool last week.

INDONESIA NOTCH EIGHTH PENCAK SILAT GOLD

Abdul Malik won Indonesia's eighth gold in Pencak Silat, beating Muhammad Faizul M Nasir of Malaysia 5-0 in the 50 to 55kg final.

HOSTS INDONESIA SURPASS PRE-GAMES GOLD TARGET

Indonesia won two more gold medals in the local martial art of pencak silat to reach a total of 17, one more than their pre-Games goal. Aji Bangkit Pamungkas won in the men's 85-90kg event while Komang Harik Adi Putra won in the men's 65-70kg category.

JAPANESE ARCHERS WIN MIXED TEAM RECURVE GOLD

Japanese archers Tomomi Sugimoto and Takaharu Furukawa won gold in the mixed team recurve competition with a 6-0 victory over North Korea's Kang Un Ju and Pak Yong Won in the final.

KAZAKHSTAN'S GAFUROVA WINS KARATE GOLD

Kazakhstan's Guzaliya Gafurova successfully defended her title in the karate 68kg women's event. China's Tang Lingling claimed silver.

TAIWAN'S MEN WIN TEAM RECURVE ARCHERY GOLD

Taiwan's male archers avenged the defeat of their women's team by South Korea earlier on Monday, winning the recurve team gold with a 5-3 victory in the final.

SOUTH KOREAN WOMEN CONTINUE ARCHERY DOMINANCE

South Korean archers claimed gold in the women's recurve team event to extend their winning streak to six Games. The trio of Chang Hye-jin, Kang Chae-won and Lee Eun-gyeong beat Taiwan 5-3 at the GBK Archery Field. Japan claimed bronze. — Reuters

Vocal volleys part of the job for India's hockey goalie

JAKARTA: Most athletes are happy to let their performance do the talking but India's hockey goalkeeper PR Sreejesh sees strenuously exercising his vocal cords a key part of his job. The 30-year-old was at his best in Sunday's 5-3 win against South Korea at the Asian Games as India chalked up their fourth successive victory in Pool A to secure a place in the semi-finals.

But with the reigning champions conceding their first three goals of tournament after a hat-trick of clean sheets, it was little surprise that his team mates came in for a particularly animated harangue from the man between the posts. Sreejesh, though, explained that it was not just a matter of personal frustration on his part. "That's my job actually," he said with a smile, his voice

still hoarse from more than an hour of constantly cheering and chiding team mates.

"It's very important for a goalkeeper to be vocal. Usually players go quiet under pressure. As a goalkeeper, it's your duty to bring them back into the game. I'm the goalkeeper of this team, which makes me the second coach, who can see the entire field and tell where mistakes are happening. It's my responsibility to talk to my defenders and my midfielders."

A sore throat is often the price he ends up paying for unleashing his verbal volleys and Sreejesh said he had come prepared. "In our training camp in Bangalore, I did a lot of chattering, which sort of helped me prepare," he said. "But yes, sometimes you end up with a sore throat when you're too much into talking."

It was more than just talking against South Korea though. Sreejesh snarled and grumbled from behind the grill and, on several occasions, took his helmet off to lambast his wayward team mates. "See, that's a normal reaction, when your expectations are really high from your team mates," he added, mopping the sweat from his brow. "When they make silly mistakes, there's bound to be some anger. They also know that and they always

react in a positive way." In four matches in Jakarta, continental powerhouse India have racked up 56 goals - 26 alone in a rout of Hong Kong - to remain on course for a successful title defence which would secure them a place at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Their form means Sreejesh has been the least busy member of the squad - Hong Kong managed no shots on goal - but the player from Kerala said such lopsided matches did test a goalkeeper's focus.

"In a 60-minute match, maybe you get one ball but you have to concentrate full 60 minutes just for that ball," he said. "Matches like that can put you into a switch-off mode. That's when you need to talk even more to stay involved." Against South Korea, India raced to a 3-0 lead before taking their foot off the pedal and allowing their opponents successive goals to get back into the contest. "We suddenly put ourselves under unnecessary pressure and retreated into a defensive shell," Sreejesh said. "In times like that, you need to communicate well from behind, reminding everyone their duty - to mark rivals and not leave gaps which they can exploit." India play neighbours Sri Lanka today. — Reuters

Jakarta silver erases nightmares for tormented Indian sprinter Chand

JAKARTA: India's Dutee Chand has gone through some pretty dark days over the last few years as she battled to compete in athletics despite her hyperandrogenism but all that was forgotten once she had her Asian Games 100 metres silver medal in her hands.

The 22-year-old from Odisha has long lived with the condition which naturally produces high testosterone levels and for a year saw her unable to run in International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) competition.

It was her appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) that saw the IAAF ban struck down for two years in 2016 and yesterday she finished two hundredths of a second behind Edidiong Odiong in the blue riband sprint.

"I'll tell you how I feel," she told reporters. "When a mother gives birth to a child, she goes through a lot of pain. But she forgets everything the moment she sees the baby. I'm having the same feeling. It has erased all my nightmares. It's a big moment for me."

Chand thanked the legal team who fought her case at CAS, which paved the way for athletes with hyperandrogenism to compete in 100m and 200m. Despite being the first Indian woman since 1980 to compete in the 100m at the Olympics in Rio two years ago, Chand has been subject to abuse for being "unfeminine" by some in her homeland.

No Bolt, no cry for Coe after Su wins sprint crown

JAKARTA: Su Bingtian's Asian Games gold in the 100 metres came as little surprise to many, including athletics boss Sebastian Coe, long an admirer of the pint-sized Chinese sprinter. The 28-year-old streaked to victory in a competition record of 9.92 seconds in Jakarta at the weekend, missing the continental record by the tiniest of fractions. Su edged out Nigeria-born Qatari Tosin Ogunode-younger brother of Femi Ogunode, with whom the Chinese star shares the continental best of 9.91 — on a night when six African-born athletes bagged six track and field golds at Asia's showcase sports event.



JAKARTA: (L-R) China's Liang Xiaojing, India's Dutee Chand and Kazakhstan's Olga Safronova compete in the women's 100m athletics event during the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta. — AFP

She was unable to reach the final in Brazil but won two bronze medals at last year's Asian athletics championships in Bhubaneswar before going one better in Jakarta yesterday. "Those memories troubled me a lot," she said. "People used to say a lot of things about me. I ignored everything and focused on training, and I never lost faith in God.

"I worked six hours a day, every day ... I gave every-

Ryota Yamagata-part of the 4x100m Japan team that took silver behind Usain Bolt's Jamaica at the 2016 Rio Olympics, took bronze, underlining Coe's confidence in the future of Asian sprinting. "You could argue Japan and China are two of the most improved athletics nations over the last six or seven years," the Briton said in an interview with news agencies.

"For me it's very clear-they're making very good progress. If we'd been sitting here a decade ago, talking about potential here for a China athlete to run 9.8, you'd have probably taken quite long odds on that."

Coe, president of track and field's governing IAAF, pointed to China's willingness to embrace overseas coaches after years of fostering suspicion of state-sponsored doping. Su is coached by American coach Randy Huntington, while swim star Sun Yang's partnership with Australian Denis Cotterell has helped turn him into a world-beater.

"If you look at the Chinese federation, they've been quite global," said Coe. "They've recognised there are

gaps in their own coaching structures and said 'hey, let's bring that talent to the table'. "It's a pragmatic approach. There's been a greater clarity around the importance of coaching." Coe is aware of the massive void left by athletics mega-star Bolt after the Jamaican legend's retirement last year. But he also wants athletes to be personalities who can connect with fans. "I'm a boxing fan," said Coe, twice an Olympic 1,500m champion.

"If we'd been sitting in the 70s, you'd probably be saying to me what on earth are we going to be doing after Muhammad Ali? But actually, Floyd Mayweather, Hagler, Hearns come along. "Do they suddenly replace Muhammad Ali? No. Should we suddenly expect these athletes to replace him? No," he added.

"Because Usain is not simply thought about at the status that he's thought about because he's got a sack full of world records and he's got a clutch of Olympic titles. "It's actually because he's a personality. It's performance plus personality. We've got to help the athletes tell their stories." —AFP

Sports

Inter Milan lose ground in Serie A with Torino stalemate

Genoa beat Empoli 2-1 amid scenes of high emotion

MILAN: Inter Milan, considered among the Serie A title challengers this season, lost further ground by letting a two-goal lead slip to draw 2-2 with Torino on Sunday meaning Luciano Spalletti's side have taken a single point from their first two games.

Champions Juventus beat Lazio 2-0 and last season's runners-up Napoli came from two goals down to rally past AC Milan 3-2 on Saturday to both start their campaigns with the maximum six points. Inter Milan—who returned to the Champions League after finishing fourth in Serie A last season—had fallen to a shock 1-0 opening defeat to Sassuolo.

The northerners looked in control in the San Siro with their Argentine top scorer last season Mauro Icardi setting up Croatian World Cup finalist Ivan Perisic for the opener after six minutes with Stefan de Vrij heading the second after 32 minutes.

But Spalletti's side lost their way after an hour with Andrea Belotti pulling one back for Torino after a goal-keeping error by Samir Handanovic. New French signing Souhalho Metie earned the point on 68 minutes.

Salvatore Sirigu denied Perisic late on to give Torino their first point after last week's 1-0 loss to Roma. Inter now trail Juventus and Napoli by five points while Roma, third last season, will bid for their second win today against Atalanta. "It's difficult to explain how we conceded those goals, but the reality is that the team is struggling with pressure," said Spalletti.

Meanwhile, surprise package SPAL, playing their

second season in the top flight, are also riding high after their second win, a 1-0 victory over promoted Parma. A Mirco Antenucci volley four minutes after the break gave SPAL all the points against the former two-time UEFA Cup winners, who are back in the top flight after three consecutive promotions saw them climb back through the divisions when bankruptcy led to automatic relegation to Serie D.

'GENOA IN THE HEART'

Meanwhile, Genoa beat Empoli 2-1 amid scenes of high emotion in their first match since the bridge tragedy in the city which killed 43 people two weeks ago. Supporters observed 43 minutes of silence in memory of the victims whose names were flashed up on large screens in the stadium as the crowd applauded at the 43-minute mark. "Today we were heavy in the head and in the legs, but it didn't stop us from playing a good game against a great, well-organised team," said Genoa coach Davide Ballardini. Before all Italian top-flight games players wore T-shirts that read "Genoa nel cuore" - "Genoa in the heart" - with a design featuring a heart in the middle of the bridge.

Sampdoria, Genoa's other club, were beaten 1-0 at Udinese in their opener, after their first match had also been postponed. Fiorentina crushed Chievo 6-1 with Giovanni Simeone scoring the final goal three minutes into injury time with his father, Atletico Madrid coach Diego Simeone, watching from the stands. — AFP



MILAN: Inter Milan's Italian defender Danilo D'Ambrosio (L) and Torino's French midfielder Souhalho Meite go for the ball during the Italian Serie A football match Inter Milan vs Torino on Sunday at the San Siro Stadium in Milan. —AFP

Mourinho insists Man United come before his future

MANCHESTER: Jose Mourinho insists he is only interested in the future prosperity of Manchester United rather than his own position at the troubled club. Mourinho has found his future as United manager the subject of much discussion after a tempestuous period, dating back to a frustrating close-season transfer window. That led to conjecture that Mourinho was not happy with the efforts of executive vice-chairman Ed Woodward, who handles player signings at Old Trafford. Equally damaging has been Mourinho's relationship with star player Paul Pogba, which has come under close scrutiny after comments made by the France midfielder.

Mourinho was in particularly dour and uncooperative mood ahead of his team's Premier League meeting with Mauricio Pochettino's Tottenham yesterday,

although, in one of his few talkative moments, he did reveal his gratitude for the support shown by fans over the first two games of the season.

"The supporters were fantastic in both matches," said Mourinho. "Not for me, for the team which is the only thing that matters. In my career I was never selfish and thinking about myself, I was always a club man. That's what I am. I am really happy when the supporters they support the team. Against Leicester, you can say in a normal situation because the team was playing well and was winning."

"But to be supportive of the team against Brighton, where we didn't play well and lost the match, it gives you a fantastic feeling. I hope that feeling, the players also feel it and the players they are ready to give them everything they have."

WINNING STYLE

Mourinho refused to discuss even the most banal of topics with the media, other than to claim that he was not left frustrated by the defeat at Brighton last weekend. "No, it is not a frustration because it would also be a frustration if we win every match against the non top-six team and don't win against the top six, that would also be a frustration," he said.

Bale and Benzema in the goals as Real survive scare

MADRID: Karim Benzema netted twice and Gareth Bale scored a trademark goal as Real Madrid overcame an early scare at Girona to win 4-1 on Sunday. Seeking their second win of the new La Liga season, the European champions went behind after Borja Garcia opened the scoring for Girona with a superb goal after 17 minutes.

Real briefly looked rattled as Girona probed and Marcelo was continually exposed in the Real defence. But the inevitable comeback started when Marco Asensio was sent tumbling to the turf by a clumsy challenge and captain Sergio Ramos scored with an audacious 'panenka' penalty on 39 minutes.

Asensio won his side's second spot kick as Pere Pons lunged at the Real forward. This time it was Karim Benzema who stepped up to stroke home the penalty for his first goal of the season. Bale produced a typical finish for Real's third goal, sprinting away from the Girona defence after being released by a wonderful pass from Isco and calmly steering the ball home.

Benzema scored his second on 80 minutes as he collected Bale's tempting cross and had time to turn and power the ball home. The referee referred the goal to VAR for suspected offside but the goal was allowed to stand. — AFP



GIRONA: Real Madrid's French forward Karim Benzema (L) shoots against Girona's Moroccan goalkeeper Yassine Bounou during the Spanish league football match between Girona FC and Real Madrid CF at the Montilivi stadium in Girona on Sunday. — AFP

VAR grumbles blight German league's opening weekend

BERLIN: The opening weekend of the Bundesliga season was blighted by a barrage of complaints about the video assistant referees (VAR) with Bayern Munich boss Karl-Heinz Rummenigge calling for a task force to improve the system.

"It must be remedied as soon as possible, a task force should be formed to finally take care of things," said Bayern's chairman. "Basically, I am a big proponent of the VAR. It makes the game fairer, but I have the impression that the DFB (German Football Association) should implement professional structures."

The VAR enjoyed a largely successful debut at the World Cup in Russia, but continues to be the source of much debate and disgruntlement in Germany. The system has just started its second Bundesliga season "and yet does not work as desired," Rummenigge fumed. "It

leads to repeated discussions and criticism - the referees are being let down here."

His outburst comes after the VAR stole the limelight for all the wrong reasons. The VAR was not called into play on Friday after defending champions Bayern were awarded a late penalty, although replays showed Franck Ribery had jumped over a tackle and was not actually brought down in the area.

'STAY AT HOME'

"Where was the video assistant?" fumed Hoffenheim coach Julian Nagelsmann, but even Bayern's new head coach Niko Kovac admitted he would not have given the penalty. Robert Lewandowski eventually converted the subsequent spot-kick in the 3-1 win over Hoffenheim—but only after a delay caused by the VAR insisting the penalty was retaken.

"There is no need for 14 screens in Cologne (where VAR decisions in the Bundesliga are made) - they could stay at home and we'd just have extra screens in the stadium," suggested Nagelsmann.

"It would cost less and save all this back and forth." More VAR-generated chaos followed on Saturday as Schalke, last season's runners-up, crashed 2-1 at Wolfsburg amid unruly second-half scenes.

The video assistant upgraded a yellow card to a red

for Schalke defender Matija Nastasic for a bad tackle. Then three minutes later, he downgraded a red card against Wolfsburg striker Wout Weghorst, who had shoved over a Schalke player.

The two reversals sparked heated exchanges on the sidelines. Schalke coach Domenico Tedesco claimed he had been "insulted" by match referee Patrick Ittrich, who refuted the allegation, but admitted it had been a difficult afternoon, adding: "You cannot always do everything right."

More irritation with VAR decisions came in the capital from Nuremberg, who lost 1-0 at Hertha Berlin. In the build-up to Vedad Ibisevic's match-winning goal on 27 minutes for Hertha, the Berlin captain tripped Nuremberg defender Georg Margreitter.

Match referee Tobias Welz checked the VAR replay, but did not disallow the goal—which left Nuremberg coach Michael Koellner incredulous. "It's a tactical problem when the defender goes to ground, which has an impact on the whole defensive network," he complained. "He (the ref) can look at that ten times and still rates it differently, because he thinks it has no tactical influence, but for me it's a tactical move." However, the future boss of the VAR in Germany admitted having sympathy for Ittrich's plight in Wolfsburg and said the system remains a work in progress.—AFP

Salah's goal run continues

PARIS: Egyptian Mohamed Salah continued to be the star African performer in the major European leagues, scoring the goal that gave Liverpool victory over Brighton at the weekend. It was his second goal this season for the Reds and 29th in 29 matches in home games at Anfield since joining them at the beginning of last season from Roma. Gabon striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang is much less successful at Arsenal this season, failing to score for a third consecutive English Premier League match.

England

MOHAMED SALAH (Liverpool)

The 2017 African Footballer of the Year fired Liverpool to the top of the Premier League with the only goal in a win over Brighton. Salah netted in the 23rd minute with a clinical finish, superbly steering a left-foot shot inside the far post from Senegalese Sadio Mane's pass.

WILFRIED ZAHA (Crystal Palace)

Despite scoring, the Ivory Coast forward endured another frustrating trip to Watford, as Palace crashed to a 2-1 defeat. Vicarage Road has been a house of horrors for Zaha, who has been booked on his last two visits for diving. He was memorably taunted by Watford mascot Harry the Hornet in 2016 when he threw himself in front of Zaha after the final whistle to ridicule the Palace player's diving.

PIERRE-EMERICK AUBAMEYANG (Arsenal)

His goalless start to the season extended to three games as he failed to find the net in a 3-1 win over West Ham at the Emirates Stadium. Aubameyang was superb in his first few months with Arsenal following a January move from Borussia Dortmund, but he has struggled under new boss Unai Emery, who declared last week that his forward is lacking confidence.

Italy

CHRISTIAN KOUAME (Genoa)

Ivorian Kouame scored on his Serie A debut with the second goal in a 2-1 win for Genoa over Empoli in his team's first match since the bridge tragedy in the city two weeks ago. The 20-year-old beat the offside trap to run onto a through ball and scored from an angle after 18 minutes as the crowd observed 43 minutes of silence, one for each of the victims of the bridge collapse.

KEVIN-PRINCE BOATENG (Sassuolo)

Germany-born Ghana forward Boateng converted a penalty with the last kick of the game to snatch a point for Sassuolo after Leonardo Pavoletti's Cagliari brace. VAR judged Filippo Romagnoli to have handled the ball and Boateng converted the penalty to equalise for a 2-2 draw. It was the 31-year-old former AC Milan player's first goal for his new club since moving back to Italy from Eintracht Frankfurt in Germany this season.

KALIDOU KOULIBALY (Napoli)

Senegalese defender Koulibaly's Napoli suffered an early scare after going two goals down before fighting back to beat AC Milan 3-2 at their San Paolo Stadium. But the 27-year-old said he was pleased with how the Serie A runners-up reacted to turn it around for the second week in a row. "It's a pity that we conceded those two goals, but we'll learn from the experience and improve," said the Senegalese. "We know that we can turn situations around, and will go far with this mentality."

Germany

NABIL BENTALEB (Schalke 04)

The Algeria midfielder came off the bench to convert a late penalty for Schalke to cancel out John Anthony Brook's first-half goal before Daniel Ginczek scored a dramatic 94th-minute winner in Wolfsburg's 2-1 shock win. Former Tottenham Hotspur midfielder Bentaleb, 23, made just 12 league starts for Schalke last season and only came on after 83 minutes as last season's runners-up crashed on the opening day of the season.

ANTHONY UJAH (Mainz)

The Nigeria striker came off the bench to score Mainz's late winner in a 1-0 victory over Stuttgart. The 27-year-old was sent on in the 66th minute and grabbed the winner 10 minutes later after a mistake by Stuttgart's ex-Germany defender Holger Badstuber for his first goal since returning to Germany from Chinese side Liaoning FC in January.—AFP

25 Yankees tighten American League East gap with sweep of Orioles

26 N Korea win eighth weightlifting gold, celebrate alongside South

27 Inter Milan lose ground in Serie A with Torino stalemate



Indonesia smash Asian Games record

Farmer's son Chopra strikes javelin gold for India



JAKARTA: (L-R) Silver medalist China's Liu Qizhen watches as gold medalist India's Neeraj Chopra shakes hands with bronze medalist Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem during the victory ceremony for the men's javelin throw athletics event during the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta yesterday. — AFP

JAKARTA: Asian Games hosts Indonesia smashed their record gold medal haul yesterday on a day tainted by referee controversy, while Son Heung-min's hopes of a military service reprieve were kept alive by a penalty deep in extra time.

Indonesia dominated its homegrown ancient martial art of pencak silat, scooping all eight gold medals as they doubled their previous best tally at the regional Olympics. But there were controversial scenes as a Malaysian athlete withdrew in protest two seconds before the end of his final, accusing judges of bias.

Mohd Al-Jufferi Jamari, the 2016 world champion, punched a hole in the wall of the warm-up area, but officials told AFP he was unlikely to face sanctions.

There were also golds for Indonesia in both the men's and women's speed climbing events. The suc-

cesses brought their gold count for the day to 10, and their total for the Games to 22 — double their previous best, when they last hosted the regional Olympics in 1962. And there was more reason to cheer for local fans in Jakarta as homegrown badminton star Jonatan Christie stormed into the men's final with a 21-15, 15-21, 21-19 victory over Kenta Nishimoto of Japan.

The world number 15, who began his route to the gold medal match by knocking out top-seeded Shi Yuqi of China, said he was "overwhelmed" by the support in badminton-mad Indonesia. He will face off against Taiwan's Chou Tien-chen today, who ended the dream run of fellow Indonesian shuttler Anthony Sinisuka Ginting in the other semi-final. Earlier, a farmer's son Neeraj Chopra skewered India's first-ever Asian Games javelin gold medal, despite recently learning of the

death of his former coach.

Spurs forward Son Heung-min's bid to avoid career-threatening military service by winning gold came perilously close to disaster in South Korea's thrilling clash with a hotly tipped Uzbekistan side.

The South Koreans were trailing with 15 minutes to go before hat-trick hero Hwang Ui-jo equalised to force extra time. A late Hwang Hee-chan penalty was enough to send the Koreans through.

"I didn't see where he put the penalty but I'm proud of him," admitted the relieved Korea captain.

While Son's campaign continues, NBA star Jordan Clarkson is on his way home after his Philippines side lost out to South Korea in the basketball.

The remnants of Japan's basketball team — after four players caught buying sex were sent packing in

disgrace — were also eliminated in a 93-67 thrashing by Iran. A day after a joint Korean team, symbolising this year's rapprochement on the Korean peninsula, won their first Asian Games gold in the women's dragon boat racing, their men's team took a bronze in the 1,000m race. And the South's weightlifters joined their Northern neighbours in celebration as Kim Kuk Hyang secured North Korea's eighth gold on the last day of the sport these Games — doubling their previous record. "I think we have shown the world that the people of Korea are the greatest as one," Kim said.

In the medal standings China's haul continued to rocket, claiming eight more golds including wins in both men's and women's cycling team sprints.

The Asian Games giant now has 86 golds, followed by Japan on 43 and South Korea on 28. — AFP

World number one Halep stunned by Kanepi in US Open

NEW YORK: The US Open started with a bang as world number one Simona Halep christened the newly renovated Louis Armstrong Stadium with a shock 6-2 6-4 loss to unseeded Estonian Kaia Kanepi yesterday, becoming the first top seed to lose an opening match at Flushing Meadows.

It was the second consecutive year the Romanian French Open champion exited in

the US Open first round. On a hot and humid day, Halep failed to sustain any kind of service rhythm and her usually stout defence proved no match for the powerful Kanepi's bruising groundstrokes and deft drop shots.

"I have always loved being in New York," said the 33-year-old Kanepi, twice a quarter-finalist at the tournament who has been ranked as high as world number 15. "I like the atmosphere. I like being here. I love the courts and the climate, and I think that the courts suit my game really well."

Kanepi, world number 44, earned the first break when she launched a back-hand lob over Halep's head to jump out to a 2-1 lead. Kanepi broke again in the fifth game and never looked back as Halep won just 59 percent of her first-serve points compared to 80 percent for Kanepi in the set.

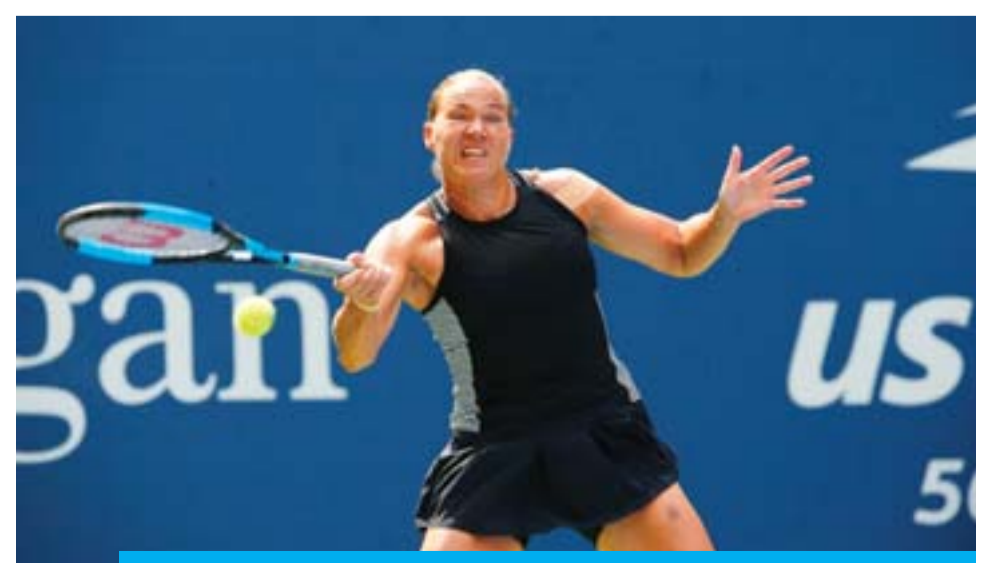
Frustration for Halep boiled over in the second game of the second set when she

smashed her racket on the court, earning a racket abuse warning from the chair umpire.

Halep recovered and it appeared a comeback was on when she broke Kanepi to love to level the second set at 4-4. But Kanepi completed the upset when Halep sent a service return long on match point.

It was the sixth time in the Open era that the number one seed has lost in the first round of a Grand Slam tournament and the first at the US Open. Halep had looked ready for a long run in New York after she won the Rogers Cup this month and narrowly missed out on back-to-back titles after losing to Kiki Bertens in the Cincinnati final. She pulled out of last week's Connecticut Open with an Achilles injury.

The Romanian can take small consolation from the fact she has amassed enough ranking points to remain world number one after the two-week tournament ends. — Reuters



NEW YORK: Kaia Kanepi of Estonia hits a return to number 1 seeded Simona Halep of Romania at the 2018 US Open Women's tennis tournament yesterday in New York. — AFP