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9-storey Mahboula building collapses, 5 vehicles crushed

No people found under rubble • KFSD holds contractor responsible



KUWAIT: (Left) Security and rescue personnel are seen at the site of a building collapse yesterday. (Right) A car is seen crushed under the rubble. — KUNA

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A nine-storey building collapsed during its demolition in Mahboula yesterday, causing damage to five vehicles, the Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) said. No people were found under the rubble during the search operation that started immediately after firefighters and rescue teams from three different fire stations arrived at the scene, KFSD said in a statement.

The collapse caused a waste of emergency efforts due to searching under the rubble, as the contractor fled the site after the accident and there was no information about the number of people present before the demolition, KFSD's Director of Public Relations and Media Lt Col Khalil Al-Amir said. As an investigation was opened to determine the cause of the collapse, Amir called on relevant authorities to impose maximum penalties on contractors who fail to adhere to safety and security requirements during building demolitions.

News in brief

Azhar: Sexual harassment haram

CAIRO: Egypt's highest Sunni Muslim authority has said there can be no justification for sexual harassment, in a country where many people often blame women themselves for the widespread problems they face. Al-Azhar blasted all forms of harassment as "a forbidden act and deviant behavior" and said "the one who carries it out is a sinner". "Criminalizing sexual harassment must be absolute and free from any condition or context," a statement released Monday said. "Justifying sexual harassment with the behavior or clothing of the woman is a misunderstanding, for sexual harassment is an assault on the woman and her freedom and dignity," it said. — AFP

Israel razes Palestinian's home

JERUSALEM: Israeli forces demolished the home of a Palestinian who carried out a deadly knife attack in a settlement in the occupied West Bank, the army said yesterday. Minor clashes broke out between Palestinians opposed to the raid and soldiers in the West Bank during the early hours of yesterday morning, the military and witnesses said. The army said its forces "demolished the residence of the terrorist Mohammed Dar Youssef from the village of Kobar, north of Ramallah". Dar Youssef's uncle said the youth's parents, two brothers and two sisters had lived in the house razed in the night-time operation. "Why are they at fault? Israel's continued policy of collective punishment is merciless," he said. — Agencies

Saudis to complete Canada training

OTTAWA: More than 1,000 Saudi medical students ordered to leave Canada because of a diplomatic row have been granted an extension that would allow them to complete their training, Ottawa confirmed yesterday. According to medical and university officials, the 1,053 students received notice of the reprieve from the Saudi education ministry. Paul-Emile Cloutier, president of HealthCareCAN, which represents Canadian hospitals, said students were told on Monday they'll now "be able to continue their Canadian studies until such time as they're able to arrange a medical program posting in another country." — AFP

Londoners welcome water fountains

LONDON: Baked by a blazing summer and keen to reduce their use of plastic bottles, Londoners are welcoming a scheme to re-introduce drinking-water fountains across the British capital. Four have already been installed and one of them, off 1960s fashion hotspot Carnaby Street, has been used more than 10,000 times a month this summer, the office of London Mayor Sadiq Khan said yesterday. Now 16 more are planned this year for locations such as Windrush Square, Brixton; Paddington recreation ground; Guy's Hospital in Southwark and the Natural History Museum in Kensington. Public drinking fountains were common in London as long ago as the Victorian era but have long since made way for plastic bottles, with the average adult Londoner buying more than three a week. — Reuters

High-level US delegation met Syria spy chief

BEIRUT: A high-level US security delegation met Syria's powerful intelligence boss in Damascus two months ago, a pro-regime Lebanese daily newspaper reported yesterday. The visit, which AFP could not immediately confirm from official sources, could signify a new phase in the strained relations between the two countries. According to Al-Akhbar, a Lebanese newspaper close to the pro-Damascus Hezbollah movement, senior US security officials visited Damascus during the last week of June.

"The delegation held a meeting of four hours" with Ali Mamluk, the head of Syria's security services, said Al-Akhbar, which reported that the meeting was facilitated

After driving ban ends, Saudi women taste thrill of speed

RIYADH: Donning a helmet inside a pearl silver sports sedan, Rana Almimoni skids and drifts around a Riyadh park, engine roaring, tyres screeching and clouds of dust billowing from the back. For Saudi women, such adrenaline rushes were unimaginable just weeks ago. Speed-crazed women drivers are bound to turn heads in the deeply conservative desert kingdom, which overturned the world's only ban on female motorists in June as part of a much-hyped liberalization drive led by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Almimoni, 30 and a motor racing enthusiast, is defying the perception - or sexist misconception, depending on who you ask - that only dainty cars in bright colors are popular with women drivers. — AFP (See Page 19)

Crippling costs of investigative, war reporting

PARIS: The cost of war reporting and investigative journalism is becoming prohibitive for media outlets, campaigners have warned. With Internet giants like Google and Facebook soaking up advertising revenue while using the content of traditional media for free, quality journalism has been caught in a double bind, experts say. At the same time it had become more expensive and dangerous to cover conflict zones, said Jean-Francois Leroy, the head of Visa pour l'Image, one of Europe's most important photojournalism festivals. While many journalists were killed covering the Vietnam and Yugoslav wars, "journalists were not then actual targets. That has all changed," he said.

A total of 50 journalists have been killed so far this year, according to RSF (Reporters Without Borders). As well as setting out to kill reporters, insurgent groups and criminal gangs have also kidnapped them for ransom. "It has become more and more expensive to cover conflicts like Iraq," said Leroy. "Security costs have

exploded. You need fixers, bodyguards, translators and drivers. "A few years ago the New York Times estimated that it cost \$10,000 (8,600 euros) a day to cover a story in Baghdad," said Leroy, whose festival in Perpignan in southwestern France next week is covering topics from "Big Food" to the fate of Rohingya Muslims.

Investigative journalism has also been squeezed as the mainstream media's economic model has been crushed by tech giants, said Gerard Ryle, head of the Washington DC-based International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), the body behind the Panama Papers and Paradise Papers revelations. "Journalism is fighting for its life at the moment," Ryle told AFP. "It is dying. The advertising models that sustained reporting, never mind investigative reporting, are broken, and the media has not found a way to replicate them. Businesses are cutting back and the first thing that they cut is investigations because they are expensive. Not only are they time-consuming but they are also very risky," he said.

"You are not always going to get a story and even when you do it can be very expensive to defend legally, you can end up in court fighting" big corporations who don't want the truth to come out. With many fewer reporters doing more and more work, scandals are

Continued on Page 24

possible deal between Damascus and Washington. The US delegation reportedly offered to pull its troops from Kurdish-held territory if Iranian forces withdraw from areas near Syria's southern border with Israel, if US companies are guaranteed a share of Syria's oil and if Damascus agreed to share intelligence on foreign jihadists. According to the Lebanese daily, the Syrian officials suggested any such steps were premature but agreed to "keep communicating through the Russian-Emirati channel".

With Russian help, Assad's forces have recaptured nearly two-thirds of Syrian territory, and the lion's share of the rest is held by the US-backed Kurdish forces. Officially, the US and Syria have no diplomatic ties, but last year the New York Times reported contact between the two countries over an American journalist, Austin Tice, missing in Syria since 2012.

The Times said in June 2017 that a CIA back channel with Mamluk had rekindled hopes for Tice's release but that the talks were scrapped after a suspected chemical weapons attack on a rebel-held town in April. — AFP



RIYADH: Rana Almimoni, a 30-year-old Saudi motor racing enthusiast, poses with her helmet next to her car on the track in Dirab motor park on the southern outskirts of the capital on July 19, 2018. — AFP

After flooding, tourism in Kerala left mud-bound

NEW DELHI/ALAPPUZHA: More than a week after the floodwater began subsiding, animal carcasses are still floating in Kerala's backwaters, and in places a nauseating stench rises like a wall when the wake from a passing boat breaks the surface. These inland lagoons running parallel to the coast are one of the biggest tourist draws in India's most southwesterly state, but the stain of death and devastation wrought by Kerala's worst flood in a century will take longer than a season to wash away. The quaint towns and villages scattered between the lush forests and paddy fields bordering the backwaters are now communities in despair.

Houses in low-lying areas are still submerged, roads are waterlogged and the sewage from drains have washed into channels that are too slow-moving to effectively flush out the effluent.

Continued on Page 24

Local

Foreign Minister, GCC chief discuss council's IT strategy

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled meets outgoing Russian ambassador



KUWAIT: (From left) GCC Secretary-General Abdul-Latif Al-Zayani, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah attend a meeting at the Foreign Ministry yesterday. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah met yesterday with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary-General Abdul-Latif Al-Zayani, looking into the GCC General Secretariat strategy particularly in information technology.

Zayani, currently on a two-day official visit to the country with company of a delegation, examined with Sheikh Sabah Khaled the GCC General Secretariat's vision and strategy to overhaul its tasks, especially in the information technology sector. The discussions also

dealt with means to broaden inter-GCC cooperation through the council committees, in addition to cooperation and integration programs and the secretariat's relentless action to empower the youth in member countries to be successful at international quarters.

Also attending the meeting were Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Khaled Al-Jarallah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Bureau Affairs of the Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Arabian Gulf States' Affairs



Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Russian Ambassador to Kuwait Alexey V Solomatin.

Ambassador Nasser Al-Mzain, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Bureau Affairs Ambassador Saleh Al-Loughani, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for Arabian Gulf States Affairs Abdullah Al-Mawad and other senior officials.

Attending from the GCC side was GCC Assistant Secretary General for Legislative and Legal Affairs Ambassador Hamad Al-Meri, the Secretary General Media Advisor Hamad Al-Menae, Director General of the General Directorate for Information and Planning

Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, Director of the Secretary General's Bureau and Director of the Information Technology Department Abdullah Al-Jarbou and Director of Planning Department Shaimaa Al-Mazroui.

In other news, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled met yesterday with Russian Ambassador to Kuwait Alexey V Solomatin on the occasion of ending his tenure in the country. The Foreign Minister praised the Ambassador's work and his contribution to strengthen bilateral ties between the two countries. A number of ministry officials attended the meeting. — KUNA

News in brief

Crown Prince meets officials

KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace Sheikh Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince also received Sheikh Ali Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. His Highness also received Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri and Dr Saleh Al-Ujairi. Furthermore, His Highness received Dr Abdulaziz Al-Otaibi, where he presented a copy of his PhD thesis on the role of the constitutional court in Kuwait in the field of rights and freedoms. His Highness also received Dr Krooz Al-Ajmi as he represented a copy of his PhD thesis on the development of high schools' management in Kuwait and Dr Hussein Al-Hammadi, who presented a copy of a PhD thesis on business administration. In addition, His Highness received Dr Khalid Al-Mutairi, where he presented a copy of his PhD thesis on criminal law and Dr Abdulrazzaq Al-Mutairi, who presented a copy of his PhD thesis on computer science and forensic networks. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf thanked the doctors and wished them more success and progress.

Judicial MoU approved

AMMAN: The Jordanian government approved Monday a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Kuwait regarding exchange of legal and judicial expertise. The government approved the MoU during a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Omar Razzaz, official Petra news agency. The MoU, it added, would boost judicial cooperation between Jordan and Kuwait, as well as exchanging relevant technical expertise. — KUNA

Air force officers meet

DOHA: Air Commodore Adel Al-Hafedh, commander of the Kuwait Air Force, held talks in Doha Monday with commander of Qatar's Amiri Air Force Vice Air Marshal Hamad Al-Dawway on issues of mutual interest, the armed forces said in a statement. The two sides also discussed training and exchange of expertise in air force, it added. Senior officers from both sides attended the meeting. — KUNA

DRC elections

NEW YORK: Kuwait said Monday that working with the African Union (AU), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the development group in South Africa would contribute to success of elections in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). This came by Mansour Al-Otaibi, Kuwait's permanent representative to the UN, while addressing the UN Security Council's session on situation in DRC.

Otaibi welcomed registration of candidates for presidential and legislative elections, and DRC's President Joseph Kabila's respect of constitution and December 2016 political agreement. He reiterated commitment to UNSC's press release which called all political parties in DRC as well as institutions responsible for organizing elections to assure success of voting and thus a peaceful power transition. The release also called on all parties to participate in elections, build confidence among each other and respect basic rights, he said. — KUNA

Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad congratulates athletes on their medals



KUWAIT: Undersecretary of the Kuwait National Guard Lt Gen Hashem Al-Refai'ie held a reception yesterday for Kuwaiti shooter Mansour Al-Rashidi, who arrived to Kuwait, coming from Indonesia where he won a gold medal at the 2018 Asian Games.

KUWAIT: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent on Tuesday a cable of congratulations to Kuwaiti shooter Mansour Al-Rashidi for winning a gold medal at the 2018 Asian Games, held in Jakarta, Indonesia. In another cable, Sheikh Nasser also congratulated Kuwaiti Karate players Ali Al-Shatti and Ahmad Mohammad Al-Misfir for winning a gold and a silver medal at the

games, respectively. The First Deputy Premier hailed efforts made by the players, wishing for more success and achievements to all Kuwaiti athletes under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) recently celebrated the graduation of three batches of students from the CBK Academy in Faisha branch.

Legalese

Compromising in legal transactions

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

I hope everyone is doing well and that all my readers enjoyed their time with their families and had a week full of laughter, pretty outfits, good food, meaningful connections and more importantly kindness and forgiveness. Today I want to speak about forgiving or compromising in legal transactions. This world that we live in is changing at a very fast pace, yet we sometimes are stuck doing tasks or going about doing things the way the generations before us used to do, or worse, the way we are made to believe is correct. Not everything should or needs to go to court. We should learn how to settle or figure things out amicably with each other - although I cannot speak for all lawyers.

Legal argument

Question: I resigned last year but I still have not received any dues. Every time I visit a lawyer and tell them about my employment situation, they suggest that I file a lawsuit. Is this really necessary? I want to leave on good terms. What would you suggest?

Fajer: It depends what the legal argument is and what rights you are asking for, but more often than not, a negotiation may be more efficient in reaching better results without spending as much time and money. I would suggest you try talking to your previous employer first on your own. If this doesn't work, you can show them a legal opinion or seek legal advice from a lawyer. You can always get a lawyer to speak to them first too. If nothing works, the law in Kuwait requires you to enter into negotiations at what we call the shuon - the ministry of social affairs and labor.

Dismissing a lawsuit

Question: If I already filed a lawsuit and now want to forgive this person, how can I do it? Can I settle and get the lawsuit dismissed?

Fajer: This also depends on the case, but if it is a civil, employment or commercial case, you should be able to ask the court to dismiss the case. However, I would consider hiring a lawyer to do the process and ask them to have a settlement agreement - if necessary - drafted for both parties to sign.

For questions or queries, please email us at info@ftl-legal.com.

Local

Woman, child hurt in Sabah Al-Ahmad City fire

Teacher 'Tasered' in Sulaibiya school



KUWAIT: Firefighters take a break while tackling a blaze at a Sabah Al-Ahmad City home yesterday.



The kitchen as seen after the fire was extinguished.

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Meshal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Kout and Wafra fire stations responded to a call about a fire in building in Sabah Al-Ahmad City. A man, three women and three children were trapped in the bedroom on the first floor because of the fire, which started in the kitchen. The family was rescued and the fire put out. A woman and a child suffered smoke inhalation and were treated onsite. Separately, a fire broke out in a makeshift

structure at an Abdaly farm. Abdaly fire center responded and put out the blaze. No injuries were reported. In another case, a fire in a Jleeb building prompted Jleeb fire station to respond, backed by Ardiya fire station. The fire was put out quickly without injuries.

Teacher assaulted

The assistant principal of a Sulaibiya school Tasered a teacher and rendered him unconscious. No reason was given for this attack.

Employees questioned

The Ministry of Public Works (MPW) is set to question all employees who received bachelor's, master's and PhD degrees since 2008 without leaving Kuwait in order to recover the money they received. They will also be sent to the public prosecution.

Environmental law

The Environment Public Authority (EPA) said a man

was seen uprooting wild plants in Jahra protectorate. He was issued a citation according to article 105 of the environmental law.

Birds' import ban

The Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) banned the import of all live birds and day-old chicks from Malaysia and Germany due to bird flu.



KUWAIT: Farwaniya public cleanliness and road occupancy department carried out a campaign targeting debris and scrap, in which they hauled 5,168 cubic meters, washed 1,350 garbage dumpsters of various sizes, replaced 81 containers and removed nine abandoned cars. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

Efforts to increase Kuwaiti laborers in private sector

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Informed sources said the ministerial committee dealing with the demographic structure is set to hold a meeting next week to discuss views to start procedures to implement the executive roadmap that is seeking correction of the population imbalance in Kuwait and getting rid of marginal labor in Kuwait. Sources said that Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and State Minister for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh will chair the meeting, and recommendations will be sent to the Council



of Ministers for approval. Sources said the first results of this meeting is correcting percentages of Kuwaiti labor in the private sector, as the percentage of Kuwaitis will be raised to 90 percent in banks, communications and administrative jobs.

Saad Al-Abdullah Road

The Public Authority for Roads and Transport has completed 53 percent of the new segment of Saad Al-Abdullah Road. Project's manager Jaber Al-Qallaf said huge progress has been made in the project at a cost of KD 97.960 million.

Above 40? Wear glasses when renewing license

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: If you are above 40 and apply for a driver's license or its renewal, you have to provide a photograph with glasses. If not, you will be instructed to revisit the eye clinic to make sure you can see properly. You will be given an application form by the traffic department and the paper should be taken directly to the Qurtuba eye checkup center. The check-up is free of charge. Ophthalmologists agree that after reaching 40, the eyesight of a majority of people slowly deteriorates and wearing eyeglasses or contact lenses is necessary.

An eye checkup is part of the process to obtain a driver's license. A Filipino man renewing his driver's license had to

undergo an eye checkup once again because he is over 40. "I was told to go for an eye checkup because I was not wearing glasses in my photograph and I am 40," he said. "The doctor at the eye clinic told me maybe if I attach a photograph in the application wearing glasses, perhaps they will not ask to visit the eye clinic. So, he advised me to change my photo on the application form," the Pinoy applicant told Kuwait Times.

The applicant must go to the license section at the traffic department of the governorate in which they reside. The documents needed include the original passport, copies of the civil ID, two passport-size photographs, a letter of consent by the company if employed, the copy of the work permit issued by the ministry of social affairs and labor or a letter of employment from a ministry and eye and blood test reports. New applicants however are asked to submit not just the abovementioned documents, but also attested degrees and a salary certificate showing a minimum monthly salary of KD 400. Some professions are exempted from these tedious requirements.

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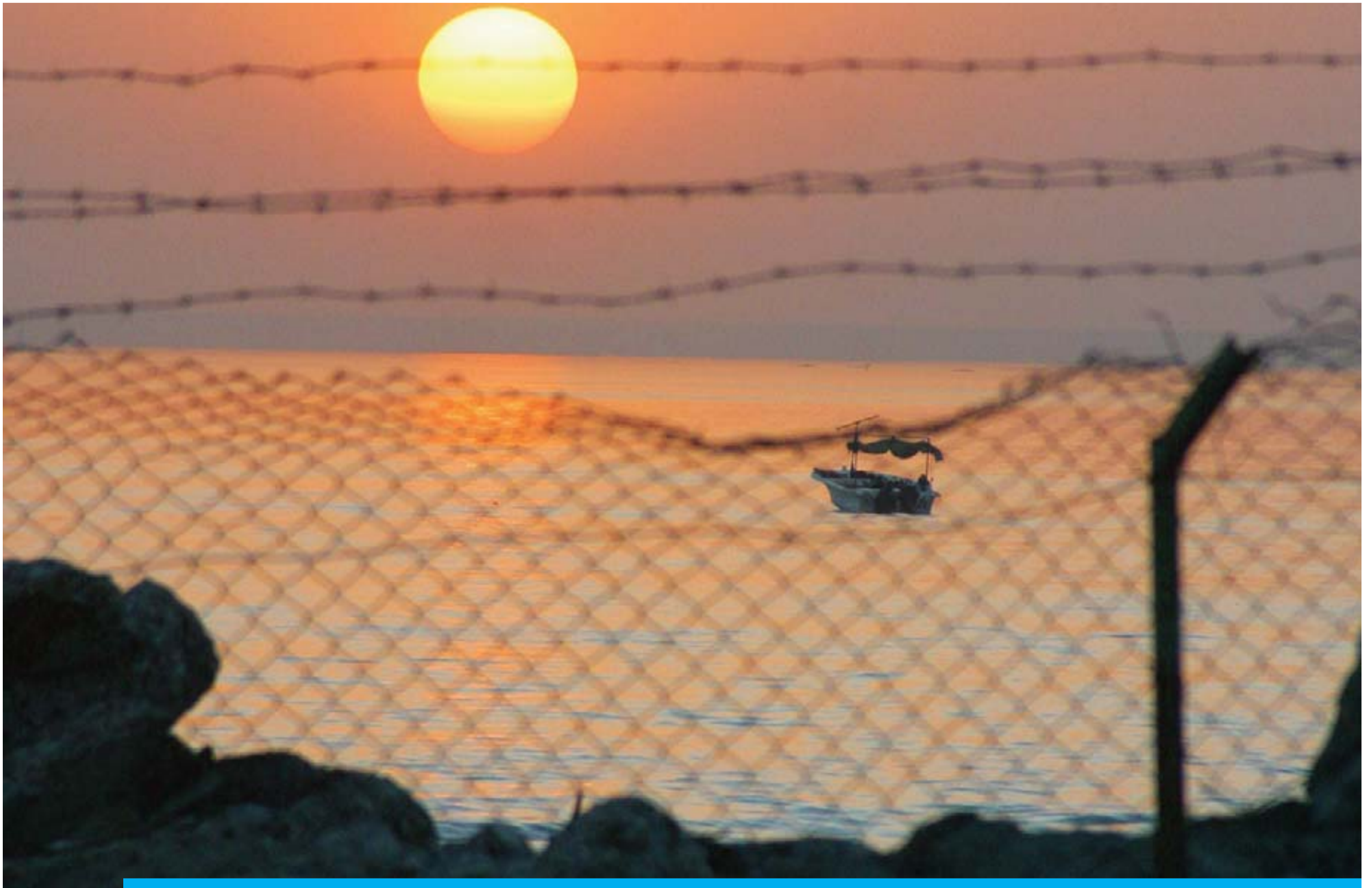
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Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: The sunset captured from Al-Watyya Beach in Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

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Fair Migration project, KUNA hold workshop on labor issues

KUWAIT: The Regional Fair Migration Project in the Middle East, an affiliate project to the International Labor Organization (ILO), held a workshop yesterday with Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) to train journalists for preparing specialized reports on expatriate workers with the help of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. During the launch of the workshop Deputy Director General of Editorial Sector, Editor-in-Chief of KUNA, Saad Al-Ali, acknowledged how important it is for journalists and media figures to know the rights and duties of expatriate workers when preparing their reports so they can convey their information accurately to the recipient.

Ali stressed journalists' ethical responsibility in convey-

ing facts and understanding legal terms on a regional level, and to communicate with the readers, especially when internationalized terms on this issue are used. It is crucial that foreign media or seekers of other languages take responsibility in education and clarification of the country's laws and the nature of its people, so expatriates are well aware, pointed out Ali.

Technical expert of the Fair Migration Project in the Middle East office, Eliza Marx, stressed on the cooperation with Kuwait and continued communication with the Kuwaiti Press to clarify the means of the organization. Marx also stressed the importance of communicating with the heads at work and also with the expatriate workers through the local press and make clear the rights of workers in Kuwait. The three-day workshop aims at training local journalists on preparing reports on the rights of the workers and to take into consideration their gender and nationality with the presence of journalists along print, audio and visual media. The workshop is holding sessions on international standards for qualified immigrant workers and fundamental principles for ethical information coverage, which is taking place at KUNA headquarters. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Director General of Editorial Sector, Editor-in-Chief of KUNA, Saad Al-Ali (left), and technical expert of the Fair Regional Project in the Middle East office, Eliza Marx, attend the workshop. — KUNA



A general view of journalists attending the workshop.

Sabah Al-Ahmad schools ready for students: Minister

Higher Education accepts 70 students for high school scholarship plan

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Hamed Al-Azmi confirmed that the schools in Sabah Al-Ahmad City, of the Ahmadi educational zone, are ready to receive students and workers in the area for the new school year.

Azmi said yesterday that following an inspection tour of the Sabah Al-Ahmad schools, it is officially definite the schools will be ready for this year and thanked all the workers in the Ahmadi educational zone on their efforts in the preparations to receive the academic year. Azmi assured the Ministry's interest, as the officials are keen on it, on continuing inspections tours on the educational areas to ensure the progress of the work and determine the readiness for the new academic year.

Teachers' courses

In the context of the ministry's preparations for the academic year, the new teachers' courses in the six educational areas organized by the department, which lasted two weeks, included administrative, technical and educational lectures to inform the new teachers about the working mechanism and the rules and regulations followed. In addition to the work environment and administrative aspects, the course informs the teachers about the financial affairs as well as their role in the educational activities in schools alongside getting acquainted with the nature of the Kuwaiti society and how to deal with students to build constructive relations with all parties in the process. The course also

includes many technical axes to introduce new teachers to quality standards by starting to familiarize them with the educational system in the country, inform them of the latest developments in the field of scholarly work, provide professional skills required to achieve the efficiency of work, and finally the success of the system. The teachers were chosen after passing the exams and the required qualifications by the concerned authorities at the Ministry of Education.

Scholarship plan

In other news, the Ministry for Higher Education announced yesterday the approval of 70 students as part of the English High school scholarship plan for the academic year 2018-19. In a press statement, the Assistant Undersecretary for Scholarships, Equations and Cultural Relations, Fatima Sinan said the English high school plan included all students applying who met the conditions and requirements for scholarship in the intended countries. The students were accepted to study in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, Sinan said.

Sinan explained that a student must complete their documents required in the electronic system here as well, noting that it is possible to see the requirements for each country on the ministry's website. She also stressed the need to adhere to the deadline set by the Ministry for students admitted so that they have time to be part of the scholarship. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Hamed Al-Azmi and other ministry officials are seen during a visit to a school in Sabah Al-Ahmad City. — KUNA

Souq Al-Mubarakiya remains Kuwait's most popular tourist hotspot



KUWAIT: In spite of the urban development that Kuwait has witnessed throughout the years, Souq Al-Mubarakiya has stood the test of time as one of the most popular destinations in Kuwait for locals and tourists alike. The unique traditional market, located in the heart of Kuwait City, houses shops selling vegetables, groceries, clothes, antiques, etc, in addition to restaurants, traditional cafes, and many others. In addition to shopping, many people go to the market to attend activities that are often held in its main square, or simply take a trip down memory lane while walking in its long aisles. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



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Save me! Kidnapped Nigerian schoolgirl pleads for freedom

Will Myanmar's military face justice over Rohingya 'genocide'?

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WASHINGTON: This combination of pictures shows the US flag above the White House in Washington, DC, as the US flag returned to full staff two days after the death at US Senator John McCain. — AFP

In U-turn, Trump lowers flag for McCain

US president under pressure to honor late senator

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump yesterday bowed to pressure to honor the late John McCain, ordering the lowering of flags across the country to half-staff, as the late senator fired a parting shot at the president in a farewell message to the nation. Trump's about-face came after he found himself mired in controversy over his rather conspicuous failure to pay tribute to McCain, who died Saturday at 81 after a year-long battle with brain cancer. When veterans' groups launched appeals for a more fitting salute to McCain, a Navy veteran who was imprisoned for more than five years in Vietnam, the Republican leader—who had no love lost for the Arizona senator—blinked.

"Despite our differences on policy and politics, I respect Senator John McCain's service to our country," Trump said in a statement as he ordered the flag atop the White House and elsewhere to fly at half-staff until McCain's burial on Sunday. The White House flag was lowered after McCain's death on Saturday—but it was once again at the top of the flagpole on Monday morning. Trump's initial silence about McCain underscored the isolation of the US leader and fueled criticism that he is incapable of bringing a divided nation together even as it mourns a man widely seen as an American hero and a political icon.

In Phoenix, where a week of tributes to McCain was soon to get underway, Rick Davis, the two-time presidential candidate's former campaign manager, confirmed that Trump would not be attending the funeral. The president himself

said Vice President Mike Pence would speak at a ceremony honoring McCain at the US Capitol on Friday. White House chief of staff John Kelly, Defense Secretary James Mattis and National Security Advisor John Bolton would represent the administration at his services, he added.

“Despite our differences, I respect McCain”

'Tribal rivalries'

In Phoenix, Davis read a posthumous statement from McCain that did not spare Trump. "We weaken our greatness when we confuse our patriotism with tribal rivalries that have sown resentment and hatred and violence in all the corners of the globe," McCain said. "We weaken it when we hide behind walls, rather than tear them down, when we doubt the power of our ideals, rather than trust

them to be the great force for change they have always been," he said - an apparent reference to Trump's plans for a border wall. "I lived and died a proud American. We are citizens of the world's greatest republic, a nation of ideals, not blood and soil," McCain continued. "Do not despair of our present difficulties but believe always in the promise and greatness of America, because nothing is inevitable here," he said, adding that the country "will get through these challenging times."

'Not a war hero'

McCain, who served as a senator from Arizona for more than 30 years, clashed repeatedly with Trump even though they were both Republicans, and the president initially paid scant tribute to the senator after his death. The Washington Post reported that White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders, Chief of Staff Kelly and other senior staff had urged a statement be released referring to McCain as a "hero"—but Trump opted to tweet instead. "My deepest sympathies and respect go out to the family of Senator John McCain," Trump tweeted. "Our hearts and prayers are with you!" That had been the extent of Trump's remarks on McCain's passing until the White House statement on Monday.

McCain's remains will lie in state at Arizona's capitol today, before a public viewing Friday in the rotunda of the US Capitol—an honor reserved for the likes of John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan and civil rights champion Rosa

Parks. The two men who defeated McCain in his White House campaigns, Republican George W Bush in 2000 and Democrat Barack Obama in 2008, are expected to deliver eulogies at a Saturday service at the National Cathedral in Washington. McCain will be buried Sunday at the US Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, in a private funeral service.

Bipartisan praise

In Washington, McCain's death has been a rare occasion for bipartisan praise for his lifetime in public service. Tributes have poured in from every living former president, honoring the former Navy aviator for his courage, integrity and decency. On Capitol Hill, his desk on the Senate floor was draped with a black cloth, and adorned with a bowl of white roses.

The enmity between Trump and McCain dates from the day the real estate tycoon announced his candidacy for the Republican presidential nomination with an attack on Mexican immigrants as criminals and rapists. During the 2016 campaign, Trump said of McCain: "He's a war hero because he was captured. I like people that weren't captured." In the years since, McCain was Trump's loudest Republican critic, especially as the president disrupted America's long-time alliances. After Trump met in Helsinki with Russian President Vladimir Putin, McCain called it "one of the most disgraceful performances by an American president in memory." — AFP

India manned space mission to cost \$1.4bn

NEW DELHI: India said yesterday it expected to spend less than 100 billion rupees (\$1.43 billion) on its first manned space mission to be launched by 2022, suggesting it is likely to be cheaper than similar projects by the United States and China. India is cultivating a reputation as a low-cost space power, after the 2014 launch of an unmanned Mars mission at a cost of \$74 million, or less than the budget of the Hollywood space blockbuster "Gravity" and a fraction of the \$671 million the US space agency NASA spent on its MAVEN Mars mission.

The Indian manned mission, announced this month by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and to be led by the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), will aim to send a three-member crew to space for five to seven days in a craft that will be placed in a low earth orbit of 300-400 km, the Department of Space said in a statement.

"ISRO has developed some critical technologies like re-entry mission capability, crew escape system, crew module configuration, thermal protection system, deceleration and floatation system, sub-systems of life support system etc required for this program," the statement said. ISRO Chairman K Sivan said the agency had "perfected the engineering aspects of the mission", although it was new to the field of bioscience - dealing with living beings.

Private agencies will also participate in the mission, and ISRO might consider collaborations with space agencies from "friendly countries with advanced space programs", the statement added. India's neighbor and old rival China first sent humans to space in 2003, becoming only the third country to have such capability after Russia and the United States. China's Shenzhou program is secretly run through military and government agencies and its budget is not public. In 2003, officials said it had cost 18 billion yuan (\$2.62 billion).

India's space program has a total budget of around \$4 billion, and Modi's government hopes recent satellite launches - many on behalf of foreign governments - would improve its prospects of winning a larger share of the more than \$300 billion global space industry. Earlier this month, NASA unveiled its analysis of data collected from lunar orbit by an Indian spacecraft. The findings marked the first time scientists confirmed by direct observation the presence of water on the moon's surface - in hundreds of patches of ice deposited in the darkest and coldest reaches of its polar regions. — Reuters

Germany reels as far-right 'mobs' go on rampage

BERLIN: Germany was reeling yesterday as xenophobia reared its head with far-right protests degenerating into attacks against foreign-looking people, adding fuel to an already explosive debate over migrants. After Sunday's fatal stabbing of a German man, 35, allegedly by a Syrian and an Iraqi, thousands of protesters descended on the streets of Chemnitz for two straight days, some bearing insignia of the far-right AfD and neo-Nazi NPD parties.

Six people were injured on Monday as pyrotechnics and other objects were hurled by the far-right camp as well as anti-fascist counter-protesters in the east German city. Police also reported assaults by extremists against at least three foreigners on Sunday, while investigations were opened in 10 cases of the protesters performing the Hitler salute.

"Of course history is not repeating itself, but that a far-right mob is on a rampage in the middle of Germany and the authorities are overwhelmed, is reminiscent of the situation during the Weimar Republic," noted Spiegel Online. The Weimar years were marked by the formation of paramilitary groups, such as the Sturmabteilung or SA, which eventually helped the Nazis to power. Josef Schuster, who chairs the Central Council of Jews in Germany, also voiced his alarm, saying it is "now the responsibility of citizens to counter the far-right mob".

"It must never be accepted in Germany again for people to be attacked because of their appearances or their backgrounds," Anetta Kahane of the anti-racism Amadeu Antonio Foundation told rolling news channel NTV that people have the right to demonstrate. But he added: "What happened in Chemnitz went beyond that - it was incitement to hatred and the propagation of pogrom sentiment." Noting that chatter among far-right sympathizers online is "extremely brutal, as calls are made blatantly for murder and killings", Kahane said authorities need to crack down.

'Nothing more dangerous'

Saxony state, where Chemnitz is located and which is the birthplace of the Islamophobic PEGIDA street movement, has repeatedly come under intense scruti-



SAXONY: Right wing demonstrators light flares in Chemnitz, eastern Germany, following the death of a 35-year-old German national who died in hospital after a "dispute between several people of different nationalities", according to the police. — AFP

ny as it is a hotbed for hate crimes. Misgivings run deep in the state against the arrival since 2015 of more than a million asylum seekers, many from war-torn Syria and Iraq. Railing against the newcomers, the far-right AfD party has made significant gains in the state and is poised to become the second biggest party in Saxony's regional elections next year.

With a new demonstration expected from 1300 GMT outside the Saxony state parliament in Dresden, criticism grew louder against the authorities' failure to keep the far-right in check. "The state can never allow our streets to be overrun by far-right mobs," said Bild daily, adding that at the same time, Berlin needs to promptly deport criminal foreigners. "For too long, nothing has been done. That's why confidence in the state is buckling. That's why racists like in Chemnitz

think they can do what they want. Nothing can be more dangerous for our country."

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung noted that "where such hunting down of foreigners is possible, the rule of law has abdicated," while Die Welt daily warned that "the rule of law and police now stand before a test". "There cannot be a zone of violence, there is no such thing as partial security," said Welt. Amid the alarm, criticism grew against Interior Minister Horst Seehofer for not making a public statement on the violence. "Could be that some of his voters in Bavaria are secretly pleased that people are running through Chemnitz shouting 'foreigners out'. But that can't mean that the interior minister and leader of the CSU party ducks under cowardly," said Spiegel. "It is time for Seehofer to take a stand." — AFP

International

UN court has no jurisdiction in Iran sanctions case, US says

Washington cites security concerns in its first legal response

THE HAGUE: The United States told UN judges yesterday they had no jurisdiction to rule on Tehran's demand for them to order the suspension of debilitating nuclear-related sanctions against Iran. Washington cited security concerns in its first legal response to a suit by the Islamic Republic, which is suffering increasing economic chaos. Iran has argued that US President Donald Trump breached a 1955 treaty with his decision to reimpose the sanctions after withdrawing from a multilateral nuclear accord.

But US State Department lawyer Jennifer Newstead told the International Court of Justice in The Hague that it "lacks prima facie jurisdiction to hear Iran's claims". She argued that the United States had the right to protect its national security and other interests. The treaty "cannot therefore provide a basis for this court's jurisdiction" in the case, she said.

Sanctions on Iran had been lifted under a 2015 accord with the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany. In return, Tehran made commitments not to seek to develop nuclear weapons. Trump said the 2015 accord did not do enough to curb the threat from Iran. He pulled out of the accord in May and began reimposing sanctions this month, alarming other signatories to the deal. In the first day of hearings at the ICJ on Monday, Iran's lawyers said the sanctions were threatening the welfare of its citizens and disrupting tens of billions of dollars' worth of business deals.

Oil sanctions coming

Trump says the sanctions are needed to ensure Iran never builds a nuclear bomb. He accuses it of supporting terrorists. The Islamic Republic's lead representative in the case, Mohsen Mohebi, branded the sanctions "naked economic aggression". "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." US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Monday dismissed Iran's claims as "meritless".

The US measures have added to Iran's economic woes, fuelling strikes and protests across the political spectrum.



Iran suffering increasing economic chaos

Iran's currency has lost around half its value since April. The sanctions target financial transactions and imports of raw materials, cars and aircraft among other sectors. International companies including French oil firm Total and Germany's Siemens have suspended operations in Iran since Trump's announcement in May. A second wave of punitive measures is due to hit the OPEC member state in early November, targeting its vital energy sector including oil exports.

History of litigation

Iran's lawyers have asked the court urgently to order the suspension of the sanctions pending a definitive ruling. Newstead argued that Iran had a broader aim to "reinstatement of sanctions relief" altogether - a matter she said was beyond the court's remit. The ICJ is expected to take several weeks to decide whether to grant Tehran's request for a



TEHRAN: Members of the Iranian Parliament gesture as President Hassan Rouhani (not pictured) speaks in the capital Tehran yesterday. It was the first time Rouhani had been summoned by parliament in his five years in power, with MPs demanding answers on unemployment, rising prices and the collapsing value of the rial, which has lost more than half its value since April. — AFP

provisional ruling. A final decision could take years.

ICJ judgments are binding, final and without appeal. However, whether any decision will be implemented remains unclear. Both Iran and the US in the past have ignored ICJ rulings against them. 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 Iranian assets abroad. Hearings in that case are due to start on October 8. Despite the 1955 Treaty of Amity and Economic Relations, the two countries have not had diplomatic ties since 1980. Iran routinely refers to the US as "the enemy" and its officials chant "Death to America" at official functions. — AFP

Save me! Kidnapped Nigerian schoolgirl pleads for freedom

KANO: A Nigerian Christian schoolgirl abducted by Boko Haram jihadists has called on President Muhammadu Buhari to secure her release, local media said yesterday, citing a purported audio recording of the hostage. Leah Sharibu, 15, was among more than 100 schoolgirls abducted from their hostel in the town of Dapchi in the restive northeast on February 19. The only Christian among the hostages, she remains in captivity months after all the other girls were released.

In an unverified recording Boko Haram sent to local media late Monday, Sharibu begged Buhari to work for her freedom. "I plead with... the government and the president to have pity for me and save me from my situation," Sharibu said in Hausa, a language widely spoken in the north. Sharibu faltered and repeated herself in the recording, suggesting she was reading from a prepared text. If verified, it would be the first evidence that Sharibu was alive since she was kidnapped. The audio was accompanied by a picture of Sharibu clad in a light brown hijab revealing only her face, sitting on a mat in an undisclosed location.

"The secret service is analyzing the voice. Our reaction will follow the outcome of the investigation," Buhari's spokesman Garba Shehu said on Twitter. "For President Buhari, nothing will be spared in bringing all our girls home. He will not rest until all of them are freed." Nathan Sharibu, Leah's father said yesterday. "The voice in the audio is no doubt that of Leah. As her father I can't mistake her voice. I'm delighted to have heard her voice because it proved beyond doubt that my daughter is still alive," he said. "The government has not contacted me to verify if the voice is indeed that of Leah," he said, urging the authorities to secure her release.

Fighters believed to be loyal to an IS-affiliated Boko Haram faction led by Abu Mus'ab Al-Barnawi abducted the girls after storming the Government Girls Science and Technical College in Dapchi in Yobe state. The incident evoked memories of the April 2014 kidnapping of 276 schoolgirls from the town of Chibok in neighboring Borno state. Although more than 100 Chibok girls have been freed or rescued, some 112 are still missing. The jihadists returned 110 Dapchi girls to the town on March 21, following negotiations with the government.

Both the government and the jihadists claimed no ransom was paid, but a UN report this month said Nigeria paid huge sums for the girls' release. Some of the released girls said five schoolmates died in captivity while Sharibu was retained for refusing to forsake Christianity for Islam. Sharibu's case has stoked tensions among Christians, who have accused the government of failing to do enough to secure her release. Nigeria is roughly evenly divided between Muslims and Christians and religious tensions lead to occasional flareups. Sharibu's captivity has become a political issue with Buhari seeking a second term in office in February elections. — AFP



Leah Sharibu

Terminator's troops slaughtered civilians with their machetes

THE HAGUE: Former Congolese warlord Bosco Ntaganda was a dreaded commander whose troops slaughtered civilians with machetes and disembowelled pregnant women, the International Criminal Court (ICC) heard yesterday. In their closing statements against the man nicknamed "The Terminator," prosecutors described how his rebel army conducted a reign of terror in Ituri, in north-eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, in 2002 and 2003. "A lot of people were executed by hand, with machetes," ICC chief prosecutor Fatou Bensouda told a three-judge bench at the Hague-based tribunal.

"Some of them were disembowelled, even pregnant woman as well. They took the foetuses out of the women," Bensouda said, quoting a witness's testimony during the trial. Ntaganda faces 13 counts of war crimes and five counts of crimes against humanity for his role in the brutal conflict that devastated the DR Congo's east more than 15 years ago. "The evidence has proven beyond all reasonable doubt that Bosco Ntaganda is indeed guilty of the crimes charged against him," Bensouda said.

Sex slaves

Ntaganda, dressed in a black suit, dark-blue shirt and striped black tie and with a pencil moustache, listened intently with his glasses perched on his nose and occasionally taking notes. The Rwandan-born former

The Russia-Turkey alliance surviving Idlib test - for now

ISTANBUL: Russia and Turkey are in intense negotiations to ensure the rebel-held province of Idlib does not become a breaking point in their alliance on Syria, but the long term fate of the area still risks provoking a rupture, analysts say. President Vladimir Putin and Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan have spearheaded an unlikely but so far sustained partnership to bring peace to Syria since late 2016, despite being in theory on opposite sides of the civil war. The cooperation now faces its biggest test over Syria's northwestern province of Idlib, bordering Turkey, which Syrian President Bashar al-Assad wants to recapture to complete a string of military successes.

Idlib has over the last years become an increasingly densely-populated region where problems in resolving the seven-year Syrian civil war were effectively dumped to be resolved at a later date. That moment is now drawing closer with expectations of a government offensive and fears over the combustible mix in the province of displaced people from other Syrian regions, moderate rebels and Islamist radicals. Erdogan has been a champion of the anti-Assad rebels and bitterly denounced Putin in the crisis that followed the shooting down of a Russian war plane by Turkey in November 2015.

But the burgeoning alliance with Moscow, which also includes cooperation in trade, energy and defense, is now of critical importance to Ankara at a time when a crisis in relations with the US has caused the Turkish lira to bleed value. "There is still a hope in Moscow to find an agreement with Ankara that could allow the Syrian regime to take control of Idlib without a new rupture with Turkey," Kerim Has, a Moscow-based analyst on Turkish-Russian relations said. He said Moscow was carefully watching Turkey-US ties and could launch a full operation at the "moment when the Turkish leadership is in most desperate need of the Kremlin's encouragement during a deepening Turkey-US crisis."

Limited offensive

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu on Friday led a delegation including Defense Minister Hulusi Akar and spy chief Hakan Fidan to Moscow to discuss the Idlib situation and also Moscow's planned delivery of S-400 missile systems to Turkey. Cavusoglu warned that a "military solution" in Idlib, which he said is now home to 3.5

million people, would be a "catastrophe" and provoke a new refugee influx into Turkey where three million Syrians already live.

But he also said "radical groups and terrorists" in Idlib should be "neutralized", in comments seen as indicating Ankara could support a limited intervention. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said a differentiation should be made between moderate rebels and extremists, like the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham group (HTS) who control much of Idlib. In a sign of the importance of the visit, Cavusoglu was received by President Putin, who praised the "deep cooperation" over Syria. Cavusoglu told Putin "your dear friend Mr Erdogan" expected him in Istanbul soon for dinner at a fish restaurant.

"Russia and Turkey are trying to find agreement with suitable terms for both sides," Timur Akhmetov, Ankara-based researcher at the Russian International Affairs Council said. He predicted Russia and the Syrian regime would launch a "limited offensive" against groups linked to former Al-Qaeda affiliate Al-Nusra Front—especially on factions that have irritated Moscow by launching swarm attacks with drones against its Hmeimim base, the heart of Russian operations in Syria. "Russia is trying to encourage Turkey to have the opposition contribute to the offensive

rebel chief pleaded not guilty to the charges at the start of his trial in September 2015. Yesterday, prosecutors said Ntaganda was central to planning operations for the Union of Congolese Patriots and its military wing, the Patriotic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (FPLC). Known as a charismatic commander with a penchant for cowboy hats and fine dining, prosecutors said Ntaganda used child soldiers and coerced women soldiers into sexual slavery while attacking civilians on ethnic grounds.

Ntaganda also "personally committed crimes," Bensouda said. "He persecuted and attacked civilians, he murdered them, pillaged their goods, destroyed their churches and hospitals," in a bid to rid Ituri of Lendu and other inhabitants who were not from the Hema ethnic group, he said. At least 800 people were killed by the FPLC as it battled rival militias for control of the mineral-rich area. Prosecutors in particular singled out Ntaganda for allegedly leading a November 2002 attack on the gold mining town of Mongbwalu that lasted six days and left 200 villagers dead.

"Soldier, not criminal"

The soft-spoken Ntaganda however during his trial balked at the "Terminator" nickname and told judges he was a "soldier, not a criminal". Ntaganda wants to present himself as a "human being", his lawyer Stephane Bourgon said. He said his client was likely to make a statement during the closing arguments. The first-ever suspect to voluntarily surrender to the ICC, Ntaganda walked into the US embassy in Kigali in 2013 and asked to be sent to the court. Ntaganda is also a founding member of the M23 rebel group, which was eventually defeated by Congolese government forces five years ago. More than 60,000 peo-

ple have been killed since violence erupted in the volatile Ituri region in 1999, according to rights groups. This week's hearings will run from Tuesday to Thursday.

It could take months, even years, before the ICC's judges hand down a verdict. The three-day hearing is set to be followed with interest after the surprise acquittal of another former Congolese leader, Jean-Pierre Bemba. Initially sentenced to 18 years for war crimes committed by his troops in the Central African Republic, Bemba was acquitted on appeal in June. He has since returned to Kinshasa. However, Ntaganda's former FPLC commander, Thomas Lubanga, was sentenced to 14 years' jail in 2012. That was the second conviction by the court since it was set up 16 years ago to try the world's most horrific crimes. — AFP

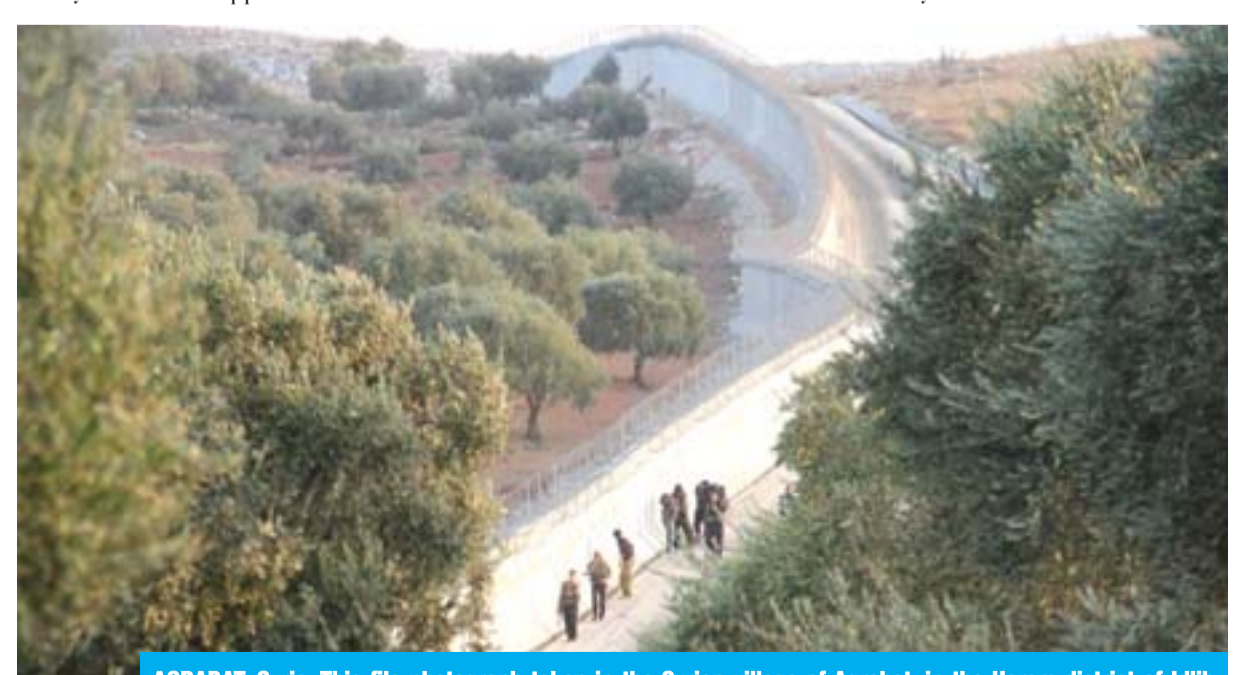


THE HAGUE: Former Congolese warlord Bosco Ntaganda arrives at the courtroom of the International Criminal Court (ICC) during the closing statements of his trial yesterday. — AFP

and in return, these groups will be spared from air attacks," Akhmetov added.

"Direct opposition"

Yet as has been the case repeatedly for Idlib, a limited offensive will only temporarily sidestep the key issue, namely who will control the province long-term and eventually post-war. And even if Russia can agree a compromise, it is not always the case that Assad automatically follows Moscow's line or that his other main ally Iran backs the Kremlin. "The Russians and the Turks will be hard pressed to reach a sustainable, long-term agreement acceptable to the regime in northwestern Syria," Elizabeth Teoman, Turkey analyst for the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) said. Turkey has set up 12 so-called observation points in Idlib staffed by its military, ostensibly aimed at monitoring a de-escalation zone but which also serve to protect Ankara's interests. Teoman said Erdogan could contemplate a possible limited offensive—with Russian and Turkish interests overlapping for now on limiting a refugee influx and promoting reconstruction in Idlib. She said the current discussions likely did not represent an "imminent breaking point" between Moscow and Ankara but warned: "Turkey's aspirations are in direct opposition to Assad's goals to crush the remnants of the Syrian rebellion." — AFP



AQRABAT, Syria: This file photograph taken in the Syrian village of Aqrabat, in the Harem district of Idlib province, on the border with Turkey, shows pro-Ankara rebels walking next to the three-meter high fortification, built by the Turkish government along its border with Syria. — AFP

International

Blow for French president as environment minister resigns

Hulot quits live on radio - without informing PM, Macron

PARIS: President Emmanuel Macron suffered a major political blow yesterday as his popular Environment Minister resigned live on radio-without informing the French leader beforehand. Nicolas Hulot, one of the most respected members of the cabinet among the French public, took even his interviewers by surprise on the France Inter radio station when announcing his move. "I am taking the decision to leave the government," Hulot said, adding that he felt "all alone" on environmental issues within the government.

The 63-year-old TV celebrity, who made his name as an environmental campaigner, was lured into government last year by Macron, but has repeatedly clashed with his cabinet colleagues over policy. "We're taking little steps, and France is doing a lot more than other countries, but are little steps enough?... the answer is no," he added. Hulot, whose future in the government has been a subject of speculation

for months, said he had not informed Macron or Prime Minister Edouard Philippe of his plans to resign. "It's an honest and responsible decision," he added. His departure adds to mounting problems for 40-year-old centrist Macron, who swept to power in May last year promising to solve decades of low growth and high unemployment in France and reform the European Union.

Due to slowing economic growth, his government is having difficulties drawing up the 2019 budget which saw Prime Minister Philippe announce at the weekend that he was dropping targets for reducing the deficit. At the diplomatic level, Macron is struggling to convince his European partners of the need for a more integrated EU as nationalist governments make gains across the continent. Over the summer, the former banker also suffered the first major political scandal of his 15-

month term when a senior security aide was filmed manhandling protesters while wearing a police helmet.

Anger in government

Hulot's announcement is likely to be received bitterly by Macron, who was starting a trip to Denmark to sell his EU agenda yesterday. "The most basic of courtesies would have been to warn the president of the republic and the prime minister," government spokesman Benjamin Griveaux told the BFM news channel. Hulot was formerly the star presenter of the hit Ushuaia environmental TV program in France and had repeatedly turned down offers to enter government by previous French presidents. He was widely reported to be close to quitting in February after media reports that the granddaughter of former French president Francois Mitterrand had accused him of rape in the 1990s.

Hulot furiously denied the claims and said they had been extremely hurtful for him and his family. He had also faced criticism from fellow green campaigners, who accused him of failing to influence the Macron government sufficiently after he lost battles with his colleagues in the agriculture and economy ministries. Hulot was left disappointed when the government backtracked on a target to reduce the share of nuclear power in the country's energy mix to 50 percent by 2025, while EU negotiations on pesticides were another source of frustration.

On Monday, the cost of a hunting license was cut in half to 200 euros-another bitter pill for the vegetarian. "Do you do an environmental revolution in one year? The response is no," government spokesman Griveaux added. "I prefer little steps to not moving." Macron's record on the environment is mixed.

Minister takes interviewers by surprise



PARIS: French Minister for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition Nicolas Hulot leaves the Elysee presidential Palace after a cabinet meeting in Paris. — AFP

He has made the battle against global warming one of his foreign policy priorities, organizing a major conference in Paris last year in an effort to compensate for Trump's skepticism about climate change.

He also led efforts at the EU level to reduce the use of the controversial weedkiller chemical glyphosate and he scrapped a proposed airport in western France, partly on

environmental grounds. Macron's political opponents immediately seized on the resignation. "I don't necessarily share the same opinions as Nicolas Hulot, but I can understand that he feels betrayed today, like a lot of French people, by the strong promises that were made and the sense that in the end they have not been kept," said Laurent Wauquiez, the head of the rightwing Republicans party. — AFP

News in brief

S Sudan's Machar rejects deal

KHARTOUM: South Sudan rebel chief Riek Machar yesterday refused to sign a final peace deal with the government that aims to end a brutal civil war, a Sudanese mediator said. "The main South Sudanese opposition groups, including the SPLM-IO (Machar faction), refused to sign the final document demanding that their reservations be guaranteed in it," Sudanese Foreign Minister Al-Dierdiry Ahmed told reporters. The warring South Sudanese parties have held weeks of talks in Khartoum in search of a comprehensive peace deal to end the conflict that has killed tens of thousands of people and displaced millions in the world's youngest country since it erupted in December 2013. — AFP

Caning lesbian women

KUALA LUMPUR: A Malaysian Islamic court postponed the caning yesterday of two women convicted of lesbian sex as activists hoped it would give them time to stop the punishment being carried out. The women, aged 22 and 32, were arrested in April by Islamic enforcement officers after they were found in a car in a public square in northern Terengganu state, one of the most conservative areas of the Muslim-majority country. They were brought before an Islamic court and admitted to breaking a sharia law that forbids sexual relations between women and sentenced to six strokes of the cane each and fined 3,300 ringgit (\$800). — AFP

Biggest military drills

MOSCOW: Russia will next month hold its biggest war games since at least the 1980s, with around 300,000 troops and 1,000 aircraft, the defense minister said yesterday. The Vostok-2018 exercises will be carried out from September 11 to 15 in the country's east with the participation of China and Mongolia. "This will be something of a repeat of Zapad-81, but in some senses even bigger," Sergei Shoigu said of the 1981 war games in Eastern Europe, in comments reported by Russian news agencies. He said "more than 1,000 aircraft, almost 300,000 troops and almost all the ranges of the Central and Eastern military districts" would be involved in the exercises. — AFP

Japan govt apologizes

TOKYO: The Japanese government yesterday apologized for routinely overstating the number of disabled people it employed to meet legal quotas in a "highly regrettable" scandal. Thousands of able-bodied employees at 27 ministries and government agencies were wrongly counted as disabled, Tokyo admitted. "We deeply apologize for something that should not have happened to the government, which has a responsibility to secure and stabilize employment of people with disabilities," government spokesman Yoshihide Suga told a regular news conference. He announced the creation of a working group headed by the labor ministry to investigate how the disabled employment figures were padded and urged regional authorities to conduct similar probes. — AFP

Cambodia frees 14

PHNOM PENH: Fourteen Cambodia opposition supporters jailed for insurrection were released yesterday, the largest pardon since Premier Hun Sen extended his grip on power in an election that turned the kingdom into a one-party state. The main opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) was dissolved months before the July election, giving Hun Sen's ruling Cambodia People's Party a clean sweep of seats in parliament, and many CNRP members and government critics were rounded up in a crackdown on dissent. The 14 released yesterday from Prey Sar prison in Phnom Penh were pardoned by the Cambodian king for convictions that carried between seven and 20 years behind bars. — AFP

North Korea still a 'serious threat'

TOKYO: North Korea still poses a "serious and imminent threat", Japan said yesterday in its first annual defense review since tensions eased on the Korean peninsula. Japan's 2018 defense white paper also took aim at China's rise as a military power, saying Beijing was sparking "strong security concerns in the region and international community, including Japan". Last year's defense review was published at the height of the tensions with North Korea, amid nuclear and missile tests and with US President Donald Trump threatening to rain down "fire and fury" on Pyongyang if it kept up its threats.

But since then, a spectacular diplomatic detente has taken place, culminating in the historic summit between Trump and the North's leader Kim Jong Un in Singapore on June 12. Nevertheless, Tokyo insisted yesterday: "There is no change in our basic recognition concerning the threat of North Korea's nuclear weapons and missiles." Pyongyang continues to post "an unprecedentedly serious and imminent threat to Japan's security and (to) significantly damage the peace and security of the region and the international community", according to Tokyo.

Japanese Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera acknowledged in the document that North Korea had begun dialogue with its former foes the US and South Korea. "But we cannot overlook the fact that, even to this day, it possesses and fully deploys several hundred missiles that put nearly all of Japan within range," the minister stressed. In response, Japan is steadily upgrading its capacity to shield the nation from the North's arsenal, including a plan to spend some \$4.2 billion over the next three decades on installing and operating US radar systems.

The defense ministry is expected later this week to request a record 5.3 trillion yen (\$47.6 billion) for the budget for the fiscal year starting from April. Despite the historic handshake in Singapore, there has been little progress in denuclearizing the Korean peninsula and Washington-Pyongyang relations appear to have taken a turn for the worse, with Trump abruptly scrapping a planned visit to the North by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

The white paper also reiterated Japan's worries about China's increasing military spending and expanding naval ambitions. It complained that Beijing was trying to "change the status quo by coercion", referring to such actions as building up disputed islands in the South China Sea and expanding naval activities around East China Sea islands disputed with Japan. Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman



TOKYO: Pedestrians walk in front of a large video screen in Tokyo broadcasting a news report showing North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un, following a North Korean missile test that passed over Japan. — AFP

Hua Chunying dismissed the white paper as containing "irresponsible" and "baseless accusations".

"We hope that the Japanese will not come up with all sorts of excuses to expand their military strength but instead look at the bigger picture of a stable relationship with China," she said. The white paper also drew ire from Seoul by repeating Tokyo's longstanding claim of sovereignty

over islands which Japan calls Takeshima. The islands are controlled by South Korea, which calls them Dokdo. "The Japanese government must bear in mind that repeating such unjustifiable and groundless allegations over Dokdo will not be helpful at all in building forward-looking relations between the two countries," the South Korean foreign ministry said in a statement. — AFP

Cardinals defend themselves over cover-up storm

NEW YORK: US cardinals defended themselves Monday against accusations of a Catholic Church cover-up on sex abuse detailed by a conservative bishop who has called on Pope Francis to resign. Cardinal Joseph Tobin of Newark, a progressive, expressed "shock, sadness and consternation" at the wide-ranging allegations, which he said "cannot be understood as contributing to the healing of survivors of sexual abuse."

"Together with Pope Francis, we are confident that scrutiny of the claims of the former nuncio will help establish the truth," Tobin said. Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, a former Vatican envoy to the United States, said Saturday he had told Francis of the allegations against prominent US cardinal Theodore McCarrick in 2013. Cardinal Donald Wuerl of Washington - who himself faces calls to resign for covering up abuse while formerly bishop

of Pittsburgh — denied any knowledge that his predecessor had been either sanctioned or accused of abuse.

"During his entire tenure as archbishop of Washington no one has come forward to say to him, 'Cardinal McCarrick abused me' or made any other like claim," said a statement from his archdiocese. Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, said the questions raised by Viganò "deserve answers that are conclusive and based on evidence."

DiNardo said he was "eager" to meet the pope "to earn his support for our plan of action" that would make reporting of abuse and misconduct by bishops easier, and improve procedures for resolving complaints against bishops. Viganò, who was a papal nuncio in Washington between 2011 and 2016, claimed Francis ignored his warnings about McCarrick and lifted allegedly previously imposed canonical sanctions. In July, the pontiff accepted the resignation of McCarrick, now 88. He has been accused of "gravely immoral" behavior with seminarians and priests. Viganò's claims have raised speculation of a campaign against the pontiff by conservatives in the Church. The United States is home to the fourth-largest Catholic population in the world, after Brazil, Mexico and the Philippines. — AFP



PHILADELPHIA: Ambassador to the Vatican Carlo Maria Viganò (left) and Vincenzo Paglia (right) listen to Pope Francis speaking at Independence Hall in Philadelphia. — AFP

Leading journos join call for EU copyright reform

PARIS: Leading journalists from more than 20 countries joined a call yesterday for European MPs to approve a controversial media reform aimed at forcing internet giants to pay for news content. European Parliament lawmakers return in September to discuss the proposal, a first draft of which was rejected last month after a fierce debate. The so-called copyright and neighboring rights law aims to ensure that producers of creative content - whether news, music or movies - are paid fairly in a digital world.

But the plans have been firmly opposed by big US tech firms such as Google and Facebook, as well as advocates of internet freedom. An open letter signed by more than 100 prominent journalists from major news outlets warned yesterday that "this fleecing of the media of their rightful revenue" was "morally and democratically unjustifiable". "We have become targets and our reporting missions cost more and more," said the letter written by AFP foreign correspondent Sammy Ketz and published in several European newspapers including France's Le Monde.

"Yet, even though (the media) pay for the content and send the journalists who will risk their lives to produce a trustworthy, thorough and diverse news service, it is not they who reap the profits but the internet platforms, which help themselves without paying a cent," the letter said. "It is as if a stranger came along and shamelessly snatched the fruits of your labor." The editorial urged the European Parliament to "vote massively in favor of neighboring rights for the survival of democracy and one of its most remarkable symbols: journalism". Major publishers, including AFP, have pushed for the reform - known as Article 11 - seeing it as an urgently needed solution against a backdrop of free online news that has wiped out earnings for traditional media companies. But opponents have called it a "link tax" that will stifle discourse on the Internet. Resistance has been especially heated to Article 13: The proposal to make online platforms legally liable for copyrighted material put on the web by users. — AFP

International

Philippine leader hit by new ICC complaint over deadly drug war

Group calls for Duterte indictment

MANILA: Activists and families of eight victims of the Philippines' "war on drugs" filed a complaint yesterday with the International Criminal Court (ICC), a second petition accusing President Rodrigo Duterte of murder and crimes against humanity. The 50-page complaint calls for Duterte's indictment over thousands of alleged extrajudicial killings during his crackdown on drugs, which the activists and families said included "brazen" executions by police acting with impunity.

Critics of the campaign were being "persecuted", they said, and cases filed by victims' families had gone nowhere. The latest move is led by a network of activists, priests, and members of the poor, urban communities that have borne the brunt of a fierce two-year campaign in which police have killed about 4,400 people, causing international alarm. "Duterte is personally liable for ordering state police to undertake mass killings," Neri Colmenares, a lawyer representing the group, told reporters.

Duterte insists he told police to kill only in self-defense and has lashed out at critics while demonstrating no remorse for the deaths. In a national address last month, he said the drugs war would be remain "relentless and chilling". Benigno Durana, a national police spokesman, said the only order Duterte gave to police was "to wage war on drugs and criminality within the bounds of the law".

The ICC petition, known as a communication, follows a similar complaint filed in April 2017 by a Philippine lawyer and backed by two opposition lawmakers, into

which the ICC in February started a preliminary examination. Human rights groups believe the death toll could be far higher than the one the police give, and accuse law enforcement of summarily executing suspected drug users and small-time dealers, using only cursory intelligence. Police reject that.

Petition 'doomed'

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said the latest petition was "doomed", because the Philippines' was no longer covered by the ICC's Rome Statute. Duterte unilaterally withdrew in March from the ICC's founding treaty, saying it skirted due process and presumption of his innocence and sought to portray him as a "ruthless and heartless violator of human rights". He even threatened to arrest ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda if she were to come to the Philippines to investigate him, and said he would convince other countries to follow him in quitting the ICC.

It was a stark contrast from the early days of Duterte's presidency, when he had routinely disparaged the ICC and dared it to go after him, expressing his readiness to go on trial in The Hague and "rot in jail". Opposition lawmakers maintain that Duterte's withdrawal from the treaty, which takes effect in March 2019, was illegal because it was done without Senate approval. They have challenged it at the Supreme Court, which started hearing oral arguments yesterday. Jurist groups say that regardless of how the court rules, Duterte is not protected from a possible indictment

Lawyers say ICC has jurisdiction due to immunity



some 6,660 civilians were among the dead, while more than 10,500 had been injured. The UN has meanwhile described the situation in Yemen as world's worst humanitarian crisis. The UN expert group, which was created by the UN Human Rights Council last September and which needs that body's permission next month to continue its work, detailed a long line of abuses committed by all parties to the conflict.

"There is little evidence of any attempt by parties to the conflict to minimize civilian casualties," Jendoubi said. The report concluded that "coalition air strikes have caused most of the documented civilian casualties," pointing to a large number of strikes on residential areas, markets, funerals, weddings, detention facilities, civilian boats and medical facilities. The report said there were "serious concerns about the targeting process applied by the coalition," pointing out that in many cases there were no apparent military targets in the vicinity of the attacks.

Child soldiers

The report covers the period from September 2014 through June 2018, and does not address the latest series of deadly strikes that have killed dozens of children in rebel-held areas and sparked international outrage. The coalition has not confirmed or denied it carried out two air raids last Thursday that the UN said killed at least 26 children and four women south of the flashpoint rebel-held city of Hodeida. Those deaths came after a coalition attack on a bus in the northern rebel stronghold of Saada early this month killed 40 children, prompting UN Secretary-



MANILA: Members of the Supreme Court of the Philippines, led by its newly-appointed Chief Justice Teresita de Castro (center), arrive to hear oral arguments on the petition to quit the International Criminal Court, at the Supreme Court in Manila yesterday. — AFP

because the alleged crimes took place while the Philippines was a member of the ICC, and therefore covered by its jurisdiction. Duterte also maintains the Philippines never actually acceded to the Rome Statute in 2011, because it was not published in the country's official gazette. The ICC is a court of last resort that can exercise jurisdiction if states are unable or unwilling to investigate

crimes, which Duterte's spokesman said was not the case in the Philippines. Kristina Conti, another lawyer backing the complaint, said it had been filed before the ICC because as a serving president, Duterte had immunity from legal action. The ICC prosecutor's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment and could not be reached out of normal office hours. — Reuters

UN points to possible 'war crimes' in Yemen

GENEVA: All sides in Yemen's bloody conflict may have committed war crimes, UN investigators said yesterday, highlighting deadly air strikes, rampant sexual violence, and the recruitment of young children as soldiers. In their first report, a team of UN-mandated investigators said they had "reasonable grounds to believe that the parties to the armed conflict in Yemen have committed a substantial number of violations of international humanitarian law."

Many of these violations may amount to "war crimes", the report said, pointing to widespread arbitrary detention, rape, torture and the recruitment of children as young as eight to take part in hostilities. Kamel Jendoubi, who heads the UN's so-called Group of Independent Eminent International and Regional Experts, said the investigators had identified a number of alleged perpetrators. "A confidential list of these individuals will be presented today to the (UN) High Commissioner" for Human Rights, he told journalists in Geneva.

The devastating conflict in Yemen has left nearly 10,000 people dead since March 2015, when a Saudi-led coalition intervened to fight Houthi rebels closing in on the last bastion of President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi's government. The UN human rights office said yesterday that

General Antonio Guterres to call for an independent investigation of attacks targeting civilians in the three-year war. Children have not only died in air strikes in Yemen. "Children are the most vulnerable. Poverty, coupled with violence and insecurity render them defenseless and exposed to exploitation and abuse by parties to the conflict," Charles Garraway, a member of the expert group, told reporters.

The experts said they had received "substantial information" indicating that Yemen's government, the coalition-backed forces and the rebels had all conscripted children, mainly aged 11 and up, but some as young as eight. The report also decried the devastating impact a blockade imposed by the Saudi coalition on Yemen's ports and the Sanaa airport had had on the civilian population. Jendoubi urged an end to "disproportionate restrictions on the safe and expeditious entry into Yemen of humanitarian supplies and other goods indispensable to the civilian population."

The experts did not delve into the complex web of countries supporting different parties to Yemen's conflict, including the United States, Britain and Iran, but did call on all nations to stop selling arms that could be used in the war. They also called on all sides to halt hostilities, and urged support for UN efforts to broker a peace deal. UN-backed talks between Yemen's government and the Houthis are to open in Geneva on September 6 - a first step toward resuming peace negotiations that broke down two years ago. "This crisis has reached its peak with no apparent sight of light at the end of the tunnel," Garraway said. — AFP

Chinese moves to combat an ageing population hit snag

BEIJING: China's moves to combat an ageing population by relaxing decades-old curbs on family size have hit an unexpected snag: many parents are no longer interested in having more babies. The government has indicated it will scrap its policy which limits the number of children per family through tough fines - and sometimes through forced abortions and sterilizations. The world's most populous country introduced its one-child policy in 1979 and last tweaked it in early 2016, raising the limit to two children as the nation scrambled to rejuvenate a greying population of some 1.4 billion.

But the pent-up demand for more children has ebbed, experts say. Couples have increasingly delayed having even one child as they devote more time to other goals, such as building their careers. The skyrocketing cost of raising children in booming China has also given many prospective parents pause. "Lots of people want to have a second child, but the biggest problem is the financial burden," said a mother in the northeastern city of Dalian, who wants a second and even third child but remains hesitant to bear the financial and career costs.

The proposed policy change was included in a new civil code being discussed by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress this week. The code is set to be completed in 2020. "Cancelling the family planning policy would mean that the right to decide how many children to have rests with couples and families," said Liu Hongyan of the China Population and Development Research Centre, a think tank under the National Health and Family Planning Commission. This is "a manifestation of human rights in the field of reproductive health".

Population trends

The official Xinhua news agency said regulations on family size were omitted from the draft law due to "changes in the country's demographic situation". China's working-age population fell by 5.5 million last year, maintaining a downward trend that began in 2012, according to the statistics bureau. Economists fear the nation will get old before it gets rich, leaving it trapped as a middle-income country burdened with too few workers to support an ageing populace.

By 2050, the World Bank forecasts the proportion of the population aged over 60 will jump from 15 percent in 2015 to 36.5 percent, with a median age of 49.6. To lesson the pain, Beijing wants its "high-quality" citizens to build larger families, experts say. There is "heavy propaganda aimed at urban educated Han women" urging them to "marry early and have children early," said Leta Hong Fincher, author of "Betraying Big Brother: The Feminist Awakening in China", referring to the majority Han community.

From the government's perspective, Qiu Chunjuan and Xu Jinhua, who are raising two children in Shanghai, would be ideal candidates for a larger family. But the parents are not considering it. "With the education environment in Shanghai, the economic environment, having two is just right," said the father, Xu. "We're saturated now," he said. His wife Qiu said that with the cost of private school and additional classes, the pressure was already "quite big". Hu Yanhua, a 38-year-old mother in Shanghai, said she had her hands full with just one six-year-old boy. "I need to work and I have limited energy, so I probably won't consider it," she said. — AFP

End of an 'era': Emperor's exit resets calendar

TOKYO: The abdication of Japan's Emperor Akihito next year will be quite literally the end of an era, the Heisei era of his rule, and behind closed doors, talks on the next era have begun. Japan is the only country in the world still using Chinese-style imperial calendars. It might be 2018 in much of the world, but in Japan it is Heisei 30, or 30 years into Akihito's reign. While the Gregorian calendar is widely used in Japan, imperial dates feature on government documents, newspapers, and commercial calendars.

"It is easier to imagine what the time was like if you have eras," said Kunio Kowaguchi, president of major calendar maker Todan. "For instance, we remember it was early Heisei that the bubble burst," he said, referring to the collapse of Japan's speculation-driven economy. The upcoming end of the Heisei period was even reportedly a factor in the government's decision to implement death sentences this year against 13 members of the Aum cult behind a 1995 sarin attack.

Government officials apparently wanted to draw a line under the cult's attacks before the Heisei era ends. All 13 executions were carried out in July, Japan has had nearly 250 eras or "genko" since adopting the system in the 7th century. In the past, emperors would switch era names mid-reign to make a fresh start after natural disasters or crises. But more recently, an era has run the entire length of a monarch's rule. With just months to go before Crown Prince Naruhito ascends the Chrysanthemum Throne in May 2019, speculation about the new name is growing. And calendar makers like Kowaguchi are particularly eager to hear.

A new 'Y2K'?

His company produces 10 million calendars a year, many featuring both Western and imperial dates. He starts printing products a year before release, so it's already too late for his 2019 run to feature the new name, but he's hoping for a decision in time for the 2020 batch. The new imperial era will be the first since the IT revolution, and the tech sector is also girding for the transition.

Will the Myanmar army face justice over 'genocide'?

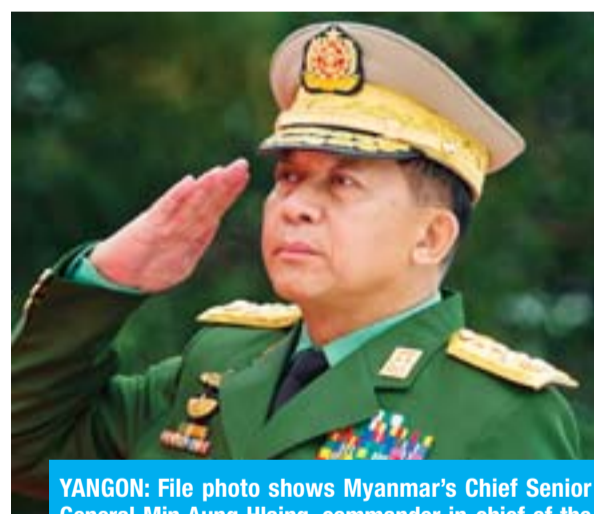
BANGKOK: A UN probe has called for Myanmar's military leaders to face justice for alleged genocide and crimes against humanity against the Rohingya, but the road to a tribunal will be long and complex, with China likely to block any prosecution of its ally at the International Criminal Court. On Monday a damning report by a UN fact-finding mission said members of Myanmar's armed forces, including military chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, should be prosecuted for their roles in violently expelling some 700,000 Rohingya Muslims into neighboring Bangladesh. Refugees have recounted widespread stories of rape, murder and arson by security forces as they were driven from their homes. The report was the most serious step towards accountability in the crisis to date but experts warn of major legal and diplomatic obstacles ahead.

The quickest route to justice

The International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague. For proceedings to begin, the United Nations Security Council needs to refer Myanmar to the court. But geopolitics is likely to get in the way with China and Russia - which last week hosted Min Aung Hlaing - able to veto any referral. China has consistently refrained from condemning Myanmar for its treatment of the Rohingya, describing it as an internal matter. "Rakhine State has very complex historic, ethnic and religious background," Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying told reporters yesterday. "So how to resolve this problem? Through negotiation and dialogue," she said, adding: "I think that blame on any side, or pressure, does not help resolve anything." The Security Council is set to discuss Myanmar later Tuesday in New York.

What about Plan B?

If legal moves for the ICC stall at the Security Council, it could consider an ad hoc or mixed tribunal similar to ones created for Rwanda, Yugoslavia, Lebanon and Cambodia. This would in theory require the cooperation of national authorities in Myanmar. Another possibility stems from an unprecedented request by the chief prosecutor at the ICC, Fatou Bensouda, to extend its jurisdiction to Myanmar, which has not signed up to the court. That's



YANGON: File photo shows Myanmar's Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, commander-in-chief of the Myanmar armed forces, saluting to pay his respects, during a ceremony in Yangon. — AFP

"uncharted territory", according to Kingsley Abbott of the International Commission of Jurists, who says the move may be possible because they crisis spilled over into Bangladesh, a member of the ICC. If the court agrees, the prosecutor could launch a preliminary investigation and ultimately issue arrest warrants for Myanmar nationals. But this would take time, requiring participation from Bangladesh in the investigation and - somewhat implausibly - Myanmar to hand over suspects.

Who could be prosecuted?

The court targets individuals, not countries. On Monday the UN probe named six senior members of the armed forces including military chief Min Aung Hlaing. Investigators argue they bear responsibility because of their direct command over troops that carried out "clearance operations" in northern Rakhine state. But the ICC cannot forcibly bring suspects from Myanmar, and would have to rely on member states to detain them in the event they travel abroad. This has been problematic in the past. In December 2017 war crimes judges criticized Jordan for failing to act on the Hague's warrant to arrest Sudanese leader Omar Al-Bashir.

Could Suu Kyi face trial?

Highly unlikely. The current calls are aimed at the upper echelons of Myanmar's security forces, and the Nobel laureate has no control over the military. But the UN probe did call her out for not using her position as leader of the civilian government or her "moral authority" to try to stem the violence. — 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
ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYANEDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
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CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163
ACCOUNTS : 24835619
COMMERCIAL : 24835618P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
Website: www.kuwaittimes.netWomen, suburban
Republicans key
to US midterms

Women and well-off suburban Republicans will play decisive roles in countering Donald Trump's loyalists in November's midterm elections, according to Ipsos pollsters who are armed with new tools to face their first big test after the billionaire's shock 2016 victory. Trump's capture of the White House took the entire polling industry by surprise, as election forecasters blew it by predicting a Hillary Clinton win. This year in order to obtain a more comprehensive view of a complex electorate, Ipsos is using an amalgam of three sources of information - traditional polls, expert analysis from the University of Virginia, and social media trends - in a new tool, available for free online and presented yesterday in Washington.

"It's really come out of our experience with the 2016 elections ... The market writ large got the elections wrong," Cliff Young, president of Ipsos Public Affairs, told AFP in an interview. There has been extensive debate over why so many polling organizations missed the mark two years ago, but in Ipsos's view it was because "the market, in general, depended on one single input and that was polls," Young said. "We overstated Hillary slightly" in crucial swing states and tended to "underestimate rural, white, under-educated individuals," he added.

Ipsos will be tracking more than 400 races scheduled for Nov 6, using its new tool to poll 10,000 likely voters per week, analyze the assessments of a dozen political science professors, and screen up to 5.5 million social media mentions per day. At stake in November are the 435 House of Representatives seats and about one-third (35 seats) of the 100-member Senate, both of which are currently controlled by Republicans. The governorships in 36 states, as well as numerous state and local seats, are up for grabs.

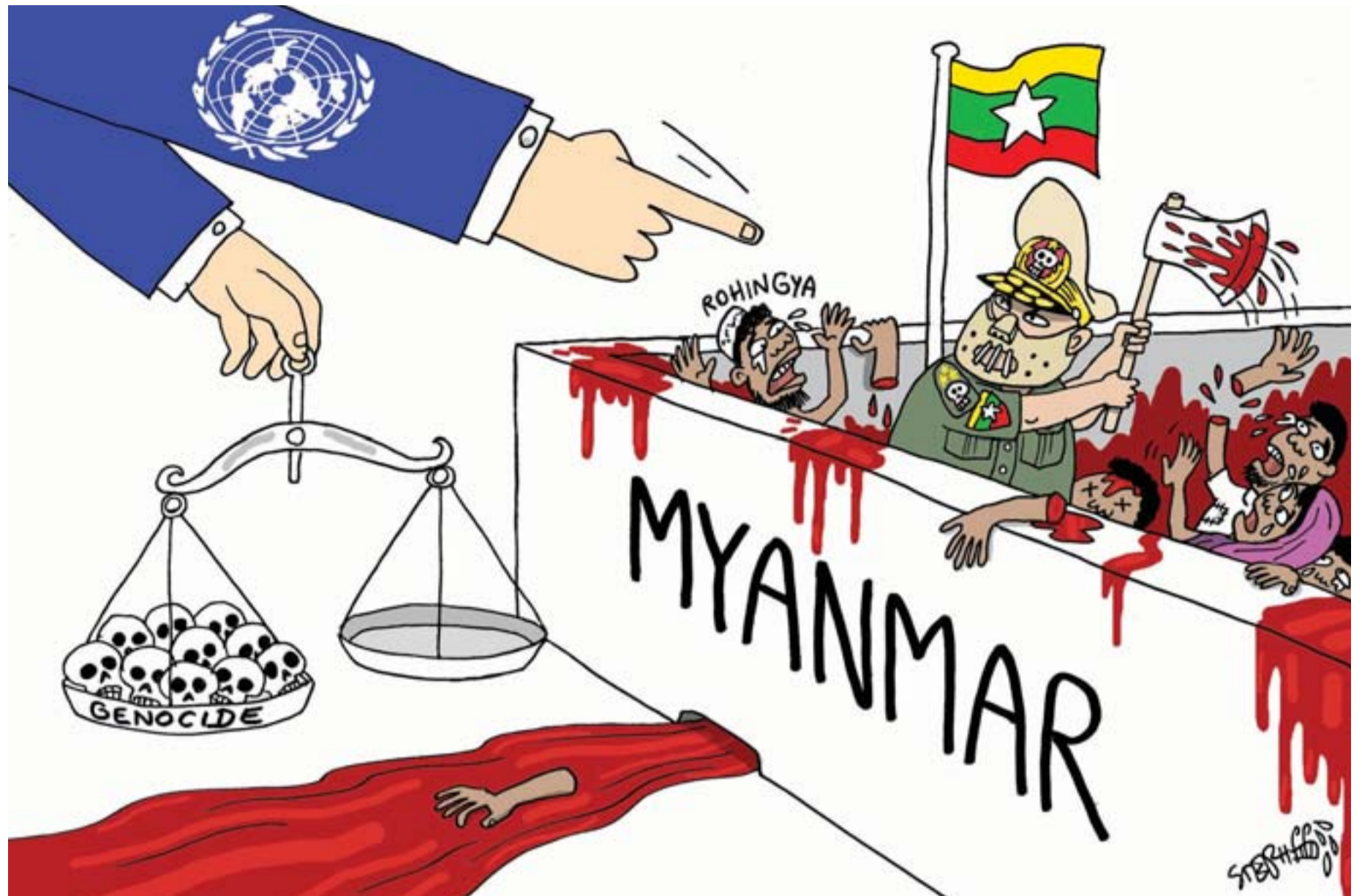
'Strong blue year'

Most signs point towards Democrats taking back the House, although it will be an uphill climb for them to do the same in the Senate, where the electoral map is tougher. "All three of the methods suggest it will be a strong blue year," Young said. "The question is how big will the wave be?" Another question is what to make of the president's prediction of a "red wave" instead. "That's fantastical," Young said, emphasizing that the party in power in the White House typically sheds seats in Congress in the midterms.

Three demographic groups are likely to play pivotal roles, according to Young. Women, who might be put off by the scandal-plagued Trump, "will be very important" in determining 2018 election outcomes, he said. "There is a huge differential in terms of support for women between Trump and the Democrats." Middle-class and upper middle-class voters living in America's residential suburbs will require close scrutiny, too. "These tend to be Republican strongholds" where voters favor lower taxes and pro-business policies, but who have become "very turned off by the conduct of the president" and might sit out the November election, Young said.

Finally, Trump's core supporters: Ignoring them would be a mistake. The president enjoys a high rate of popularity, some 80 percent, among Republicans. Minority voters, who lean Democratic, tend to mobilize less during midterm elections. "But who knows this year?" Young said, noting that traditional political patterns have been jolted since Trump's White House win. On the social media front, Ipsos - through the use of complex algorithms - is analyzing trends in online conversations that provide "very good insight" into understanding the key issues for voters in 2018, Young says.

Three topics, apart from the overarching figure of Trump himself, are at the fore: health care, immigration and jobs. Keenly aware of the Russian interference in the last US presidential election, including the spread of fake or inflammatory news reports on social media, Ipsos is taking care to detect and dismiss the "bots", or automated accounts, some from overseas, that have proliferated in the political realm. "What we really want to understand is what is the true human conversation going on," Young said. — AFP



Facebook Myanmar move raises questions

Facebook's ban of Myanmar's military leaders marks a new step for the leading social network against state "actors" - and raises thorny questions on how the company deals with repressive regimes using the platform. The move against Myanmar's army chief and other top military brass on Monday - which came on the heels of an explosive UN investigation - was the first time Facebook has barred members of the military or state actors, the company confirmed.

Facebook's actions came after repeated complaints that the platform was being used to spread hate and incite violence against the Rohingya. The UN report, which recommended that military leaders face prosecution for genocide over their crackdown on the Muslim minority, said Facebook had become "a useful instrument" for those seeking to spread hate. Facebook and other social networks have been under pressure to curb the spread of disinformation, especially when it can be seen as "hate speech" that may incite violence. Governments themselves can be the sources of such false information.

Jennifer Grygiel, a Syracuse University professor who studies social media, said while the move in Myanmar was "a significant development," the company "has a lot more work to do". She added that Facebook had to "find a balance" between addressing how state entities are using the platform - and making sure governments do not block the service. Several countries have already banned Facebook while others use the platform as part of efforts to reinforce control. Oxford University researchers said in a report this year they found "organized social media

manipulation" in 48 countries. "A range of government agencies and political parties are exploiting social media platforms to spread junk news and disinformation, exercise censorship and control," they said.

More 'proactive' move

Irina Raicu, director of the internet ethics program at Santa Clara University, said Facebook appeared to go further than in the past by banning 20 individuals and organizations even if they had no prior presence on the

Technology and Innovation Institute, a Washington think tank, said Facebook could face more questions on its approach to hate speech. "Social networks are getting better at enforcing their codes of conduct, but it is harder for them to make these distinctions when it comes to government leaders, since their use of violence may be seen as legitimate under certain circumstances," Castro said.

Castro said it was notable that Facebook relied on the report from the UN Human Rights Council's investigators rather than act on its own because "the average company is not well-suited to investigate each case for themselves," he said. "However, the downside is that (the Council) likely moves too slow for the digital era. But that suggests the UN, or some other body, should update its processes for the digital era, not that social networks should take on these additional roles."

Facebook said its move Monday was based on exceptional circumstances following the release of the report. "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," said Ruchika Budhraj, a Facebook spokeswoman. "And we believe that their use of Facebook may have fueled ethnic and religious tension in Myanmar." Budhraj said that because so many people rely on Facebook for information in Myanmar, the situation is "fairly unique". "That 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," she added. — AFP

First time site
has barred
members of
the military

network. "That seems to be a much more proactive stance than Facebook has taken before - and it raises the question about what criteria are applied in determining which individuals and groups are prevented from using the platform in the first place, rather than in response to terms of service or community guidelines violations," Raicu said.

Daniel Castro, vice president of the Information

Brussels gripped
by lobbying war
over copyright law

It has been dubbed one of the most brutal lobbying wars in Brussels history, pitting media firms and Paul McCartney on one side against Big Tech and internet freedom denizens on the other. The fight is over controversial copyright laws that the European Union says will drag the bloc into the 21st century and ensure creators of music, movies and news are paid fairly. "It was a very intensive and aggressive lobbying battle... definitely one of the most intense," Olivier Hoedeman, of the campaign group Corporate Europe Observatory, which studies the influence of lobbying groups on EU law, told AFP. "There is a huge amount of money at stake."

Brussels is one of the top lobbying centers on the planet after Washington, where everyone from corporations to unions and special interest groups try to influence EU policy. But the battle over the European Commission's proposed Copyright Directive has been particularly intense, reaching fever pitch as the European Parliament prepares to have a second vote on the issue on Sept 12.

The fight is over two parts of the planned law. The first is Article 13 - it would make platforms like Google-owned YouTube legally liable for copyrighted material to prevent content producers being ripped off. The second is Article 11 - it would create a so-called "neighboring right" meaning that newspapers, magazines and news agencies including AFP would have to be paid when Google or other websites link to their stories.

'Unprecedented violence'

The battle lines have now been drawn up. On one side are artists and the traditional media, the content providers in desperate search of revenue at a time when pretty much everything can be seen online for free. Critics including Silicon Valley say the change will lead in effect to blanket censorship by platforms that have become an online hub for creativity, especially YouTube - and also possibly result in the end of memes, the online jokes that often rely on a short clip or picture.

The proposal for neighboring rights has meanwhile been criticized as a "link tax" that will stifle discourse on the Internet. Wikipedia chief Jimmy Wales weighed in on their side and the online encyclopaedia went down in several European countries in protest. The tech industry won



round one of the fight in July when the 750 members of the European Parliament rejected the text in an initial vote.

Some MEPs hit out at what French center-right lawmaker Marc Joulaud called a "lobbying campaign of unprecedented violence orchestrated by GAFA (Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon)". "The only thing I can compare it to is the arms industry," socialist MEP Virginie Roziere told AFP, saying that the digital companies had used "huge resources" to create "pseudo citizens campaigns". Roziere said she received more than 40,000 emails against the law in the three weeks before the July vote.

But campaigners against the law played down the criticisms. "To be honest it's the only way to get hold of MEPs. What are you supposed to do, send them a post-it note?" said Caroline de Cock, coordinator of Copyright for Creativity (C4C). She said that C4C represented consumer groups, museums and libraries but conceded that it was "partly" financed by another key party: the CCIA, or Computer and Communications Industry Association, which lobbies for the digital industry. De Cock said Google was also a client of a PR agency that she runs but hit back: "People attack the messenger when they don't like the message."

'Low blows'

It is hard to put a figure on the sums spent by the tech industry, although the estimate by the British industry body UK Music that Google spent £31 million (\$36 million) is "very unlikely", said Hoedeman. Siada El Ramly, the director of EDiMA, a lobby group for the tech sector, said they had spent "much less than one million euros" on the "priority" dossier. She also criticized the lobbying methods used by the music industry, including using legendary electronic music artist Jean-Michel Jarre, president of the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers, to defend the law in front of MEPs.

McCartney meanwhile wrote to MEPs accusing some Internet platforms of refusing to compensate artists for their work "while they exploit it for their own profit". However German Green MEP Julia Reda, who has led efforts to sink the bill, has repeatedly railed against "low blows" by media companies and artists. Ahead of September's vote the lobbying campaign has stepped up again. C4C began emailing MEPs again on Monday while European newspapers are set to publish a letter by senior AFP reporter Sammy Ketz signed by dozens of European journalists. — AFP

Business

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29, 2018

12 Growth in consumer spending index eases to 6.5% y/y in July**13** World stocks at 6-month high as NAFTA deal eases trade war fears**14** May vows post-Brexit UK will be leading investor in Africa

VERACRUZ: Picture taken at the Port of Veracruz, in Veracruz State, Mexico, on Monday. Mexican President-elect Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador called Monday for a three-way trade deal with the United States and Canada, saying a two-way agreement reached with the US was just a first step. — AFP

US, Canada plan talks to revise NAFTA

Washington hopes to reach Canada trade deal 'quickly': Mnuchin

WASHINGTON: With a deal with Mexico out of the way, US trade officials were due to resume talks with Canada yesterday to try to salvage the North American Free Trade Agreement as a trilateral accord. After months of intense negotiations, the United States and Mexico announced an agreement Monday on a thorough overhaul of the 25-year-old free trade pact, but President Donald Trump suggested he could cut Ottawa out.

The United States hopes to strike a quick bargain with Canada after reaching an agreement with Mexico this week on continent-wide trade, US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said yesterday.

Canada's Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland was due in Washington to begin talks later, one day after US President Donald Trump suggested he could cut Ottawa out of any final deal if disagreements persist in the year-long efforts to rewrite the North American Free Trade Agreement.

"I think our objective is to try to get Canada aboard quickly," Mnuchin said on CNBC. "The US market and Canadian markets are very intertwined. It's important for them to get this deal and it's important for us to get this deal."

Washington and Mexico City on Monday announced that they had smoothed over disagreements, agreeing to a regular review process to reauthorize the trade deal and higher wages for certain auto workers, among other matters.

Mnuchin said he was optimistic that Canada could be won over-but, like Trump, he warned that absent an agreement with Ottawa, Washington could take a bilateral route. "I think we'll be successful but again, if we don't, we'll move forward with Mexico and then we'll reach a separate agreement with

Canada," Mnuchin said. Canadian officials say their country's signature is "required" for a successful outcome in the NAFTA talks and it remains unclear whether Washington lawmakers would cooperate with efforts to pursue bilateral talks instead. Canada "will only sign a new NAFTA that is good for Canada," a spokesman for Freeland said Monday. Senior Republican lawmakers and industry representatives have insisted this week that a final deal should include all three countries.

Mnuchin also said yesterday he believed a trade agreement could be reached quickly with Britain, which is in fraught negotiations to exit the European Union. "We are very much ready to do a free trade deal with the UK. So whenever they're ready, as President Trump has said, they're at the front of the bus, not the back of the bus," he told CNBC. "They're a great ally, they're a great trading partner in financial services and goods and we welcome more opportunities for US companies."

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stressed in a phone call with Trump that the aim is to reach a new NAFTA deal. The leaders "had a constructive conversation" on NAFTA, and "look forward to having their teams engage this week with a view to a successful conclusion of negotiations," Trudeau's office said. Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland interrupted a trip to Europe to rush back to Washington to begin

talks with US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer. And Mexican President-elect Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador called for a three-way trade deal, saying "it's important that Canada also be included." The outlines of a NAFTA 2.0 are now on paper, including provisions on auto trade, tougher worker protections and a provision to review the deal every six years.

"It's a big day for trade. It's a really good deal for both countries," President Trump said in announcing the agreement from the Oval Office, with Mexico's President Enrique Pena Nieto participating by telephone. Negotiators have worked for a year to update and rewrite NAFTA, but in the last five weeks Washington and Mexico City worked to resolve their bilateral issues without Ottawa. Trump stressed that he could go ahead without Ottawa in the new agreement. "We could have a separate deal or we could put it in the same deal," Trump said. He indicated he would take a tough line with Canada on autos and dairy tariffs, long a source of tension between the neighboring countries.

Not a sunset clause

There is some urgency as the US seems keen to have the issue resolved before the November midterm elections, and Pena Nieto wants to sign before handing the reins over to Lopez Obrador on December 1. But Canada may not feel the pressure to hurry.

Freeland's spokesman Adam Austen said in a statement Canada "will only sign a new NAFTA that is good for Canada and good for the middle class. Canada's signature is required." Mexican officials have insisted all along that the NAFTA must be a trilateral deal, but also acknowledged that either way it will have free trade commitments with both nations. Lighthizer said the administration would notify Congress by Friday of the new agreement, which would allow the required 90 days' notice to get the pact signed by December 1. However, it was unclear whether the administration has the authority to substitute NAFTA with a two-nation trade agreement. The Canadian team could be more amenable to the talks now that the United States has backed away from a controversial and strenuously-opposed provision to require the three nations to renegotiate NAFTA after five years.

Instead, senior US officials told reporters the agreement had been extended for 16 years but would be reviewed every six years. If the parties agree to continue with no changes, it will be renewed for another 16 years. However, if the governments want to make changes, they will negotiate while the agreement remains in place, giving them a longer time horizon of 10 years to make changes, which is less likely to spook investors and businesses. "It's an alternative to sunset which we think works," another senior official said. And in fact, financial markets were delighted by the news with the S&P 500 and the tech-dominated Nasdaq stock indexes hitting fresh records at the close Monday. Mexico's peso strengthened against the US dollar, as did the Canadian dollar, while the US dollar index weakened slightly. Asian markets welcomed the deal on Tuesday, with Tokyo 0.6 percent higher, Hong Kong up 0.5 percent and Shanghai rising 0.2 percent. — AFP

Dollar hits 4-wk low as risk appetite returns

NEW YORK: The dollar stuck to a four-week low yesterday, as the US-Mexico trade deal reached Monday aimed at overhauling the North American Free Trade Agreement prompted investors to continue unwinding their safe-haven bets on the greenback and boosted appetite for riskier assets. The US currency has fallen for three straight weeks, down nearly 2 percent.

"The weakness in the buck was the result of relief risk-on flows after the US completed a trade deal with Mexico, indicating that the Trump administration will be willing to negotiate with Canada and Europe as well," said Boris Schlossberg, managing director of FX strategy at BK Asset Management in New York.

The United States and Mexico agreed on Monday to overhaul NAFTA, putting pressure on Canada to agree to new terms on auto trade and dispute settlement rules to remain part of a three-nation pact. In mid-morning trading, the dollar was down 0.2 percent against a basket of

rival currencies at 94.637, after earlier hitting a four-week trough. Against the Canadian dollar, the greenback fell 0.2 percent to C\$1.2928.

The dollar last Friday and Monday was stung as well by comments from Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell at the Jackson Hole, Wyoming conference that seemed to suggest a slower pace of US interest rate increases. He did say the Fed will continue to raise interest rates but he noted that the Fed sees no clear sign of inflation accelerating above 2 percent. "Jay Powell is sounding like a dove, and I believe it is self-preservation," said John Taylor, president and co-founder of research firm Taylor Global Vision in New York.

"There are one or two hikes ahead: we bet it is one in December giving an open track over the election." US President Donald Trump in an interview with Reuters last week said he was "not thrilled" with the Federal Reserve under his own appointee, Powell, for raising interest rates. The greenback did pare losses after the US consumer confidence index came in higher than expected. In addition, the Chinese central bank allowed its currency to strengthen against the dollar via its daily fixings, further boosting risk appetite. — Reuters



US eyes trilateral accord after Mexico deal

US goods trade deficit rises as exports fall

WASHINGTON: The US goods trade deficit widened sharply in July as exports of agricultural products tumbled, suggesting trade will likely be a drag on economic growth in the third quarter.

The Commerce Department said yesterday the goods trade gap surged 6.3 percent to \$72.2 billion last month. Exports of goods dropped 1.7 percent to \$140.0 billion, weighed down by a 6.7 percent plunge in shipments of food, feeds and beverages. That likely reflected a continued reversal of soybean exports after farmers front-loaded shipments of the crop in April and May to China before Beijing's retaliatory tariffs came into effect in early July. The United States and China are embroiled in a trade war marked by tit-for-tat tariffs.

Last month, there were also decreases in exports of

capital and consumer goods, though motor vehicle exports rose. Imports of goods increased 0.9 percent to \$212.2 billion in July, boosted by imports of food, industrial supplies and capital goods.

There were also increases in motor vehicle imports, but imports of consumer goods fell.

The US government reported last month that trade contributed 1.06 percentage points to the economy's 4.1 percent annualized growth pace in the second quarter. Despite the anticipated drag from trade, economic growth in the July-September quarter is still likely to remain solid.

The Commerce Department also reported on Tuesday that wholesale inventories jumped 0.7 percent in July and stocks at retailers increased 0.4 percent, suggesting inventories could provide a boost to gross domestic product this quarter. There was an outright inventory liquidation in the second quarter. As a result inventories subtracted a full percentage point from GDP growth in the April-June quarter. — Reuters

Business

NBK Economic Report

Growth in consumer spending index eases to 6.5% y/y in July

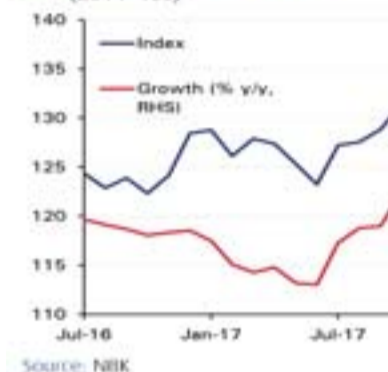
Softer demand for durable goods and services

Table 1: NBK Private Consumption Expenditure (PCE) index by sector

	Jul-18 index	Jun-18 index	Jul-17 index	Change	
				M/M %	Y/Y %
Durables	111.3	111.1	103.7	0.1	7.3
- Auto	84.0	88.2	80.0	-4.7	5.1
Non-durables	123.5	119.1	123.9	3.7	-0.3
Services	145.0	144.0	131.3	0.7	10.4
NBK PCE	135.4	133.7	127.2	1.3	6.5

Source: NBK

Chart 1: NBK PCE index (2014=100)



Source: NBK

Chart 2: NBK PCE index year-to-date (% change)



Source: NBK

KUWAIT: Growth in the NBK consumer spending index eased to 6.5 percent y/y in July, despite recording a strong rise in month-on-month terms. Signs of the summer lull were apparent, with softer demand for durable goods and services during the month. Meanwhile, spending on non-durables increased in July, but growth in that sector was close to flat relative to

last year. Year-to-date, the index is down 1 percent.

The consumption of durables was flat in July, with growth easing to 7.3 percent y/y from 10.8 percent in June, as the sector continued to feel the impact of seasonally lower demand during the summer months. Sales of cars, furniture, and luxury items were weaker, while spending on electronics picked up. With the travel sea-

son in full swing, service consumption was up slightly on the month, supported by spending on travel, but growth slowed to a still strong 10.4 percent y/y.

Meanwhile, consumption of non-durables witnessed its strongest monthly pick-up in a year, driven by clothing and cosmetics. Growth for the year was softer, however, contracting by 0.3 percent y/y, its

first time since December.

Consumer spending is projected to continue growing through 2018, albeit at a softer pace than originally expected. A steady expansion in national employment and expat employment (better than earlier expectations) should support spending, with further support from low inflation and higher public spending.

Venezuela orders banks to adopt cryptocurrency

CARACAS: Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro ordered banks to adopt the petro cryptocurrency as a unit of account Monday, as the country struggles to emerge from a severe political and economic crisis. Public and private banks must now reflect all financial information in bolivars and petros, according to a resolution of the Sudeban banking regulator.

The move is part of Maduro's desperate attempts to steer out of five years of recession and inflation the International Monetary Fund predicts will reach one million percent this year. More than two million people have fled the country in the wake of the crisis.

Venezuela has also drastically devalued the bolivar currency, issued banknotes stripped of five zeroes in new "sovereign bolivars."

The economic plan also includes a 3,400 percent increase in the minimum wage and a hike in gasoline taxes, which for years have been the world's cheapest. The socialist president, elected for another six-year term in May elections rejected by much of the international community as fraudulent, has fixed the currency to the country's widely-discredited cryptocurrency, the petro, which is in turn linked to the price of a barrel of Venezuelan oil (about \$60).

The value-added tax, or VAT, is also climbing from 12 percent to 16 percent. Maduro separately launched an offer of bonds backed by small gold bullion, he said would promote savings among Venezuelans, who see the local currency evaporating with hyperinflation.

"No one can say that gold loses its value," Maduro said on state TV, while showing two cards with the central bank emblem's and some golden rectangles that he called "lingotics" (little ingots).

The emission, backed in pieces of 1.5 and 2.5 grams (0.05 and 0.09 ounces) of gold, will begin September 11.



CARACAS: In this file photo, Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro gestures during a press conference to a new oil-backed cryptocurrency called "Petro", at the Miraflores Presidential Palace in Caracas. — AFP

Shutdown

About 100 workers protested outside tire manufacturer Pirelli's Venezuela plant on Monday after finding the gates locked, ten days after the country announced a broad set of reforms including a massive hike in the minimum wage. Employees were not told the plant would be shut, said union leader Luis Alvarez, who added it was not immediately known if it was temporary or if the operation had permanently closed its doors.

"Production was falling, but they always kept us on the job," said worker Nicolas Altomaris, who was waiting at a gate for information. "Now they've made this decision to send us out without knowing if we'll return."

Union leaders say about 700 employees work at the plant.

Pirelli and parent company China National Chemical Corp Ltd did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Venezuela's Information Ministry also did not immediately reply to an email seeking comment.

On Aug. 17 President Nicolas Maduro

ordered a 3,000 percent minimum wage increase while also requiring that companies leave prices of their products fixed amid a hyperinflationary crisis.

Business leaders say the package is unsustainable and would force many firms to close their doors.

In the past, Pirelli Venezuela has temporarily halted operations due to a lack of raw materials. Currency controls make it difficult to import such materials, while price controls can at times force companies to sell below production costs. The company, which supplies tires for Formula One, manufactures tires for cars, motorcycles, trucks and buses in Venezuela. It was acquired in 2015 by China National Chemical, known as ChemChina, which is owned by the Chinese government.

Multinational companies including Clorox Co and Kellogg Co have been steadily leaving the country amid shrinking demand caused by an economic collapse. Maduro has said the country is victim of an "economic war" led by political adversaries with the help of Washington. — Agencies

German, US firms concerned despite EU trade truce

BERLIN: Nearly three out of four companies doing business in Germany and the United States doubt that a US-European trade truce reached last month will be followed by a lasting agreement on large-scale tariff cuts, a survey showed yesterday.

US President Donald Trump agreed during a meeting with European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker in July to refrain from imposing tariffs on European cars while the two sides said they would negotiate to cut other tariffs.

The interim deal has reduced the risk of a full-blown transatlantic trade dispute, bringing relief especially for German carmakers and lifting busi-

ness morale in Europe's largest economy in August. A survey by the American Chamber of Commerce in Germany (AmCham) showed, however, that company executives on both sides of the Atlantic remain skeptical, with 71 percent doubting whether a lasting agreement to cut tariffs can be reached.

More than 40 percent of German companies doing business in the United States said the US market had become less important for them since the escalation of the trade dispute, the survey showed.

This compared with 20 percent of US companies doing business in Germany who said the German market had become less important for them. German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Trump agreed during a telephone call on Monday that they strongly supported ongoing discussions between Washington and Brussels to remove barriers to a deeper trading relationship, the White House has said. — Reuter

Bank of Cyprus in 2.7-bn-euro sale of bad loans

CYPRUS: Bank of Cyprus announced yesterday the sale of 2.7 billion euros (\$3.2 billion) of bad loans to a US investment firm in a "transformative" deal reflecting the island's recovery from a deep economic crisis. The bank's first sale of non-performing loans, to Apollo Global Management LLC, is part of steps to bounce back from the 2013 financial turmoil that pushed some of its rivals into bankruptcy.

Bank of Cyprus chief executive John Patrick Hourican described it as "a transformative sale" for the island's biggest lender. The portfolio comprises 14,024

loans secured against 9,065 properties. Cyprus's financial crisis left its banks saddled with bad loans and forced the eurozone member to negotiate a painful bailout with international creditors. On completion, the bank's gross bad loan exposure will be 65 percent lower than its peak in 2014.

The European Commission and European Central Bank have long urged the island's banks to make reducing bad loans a priority. Despite Cyprus enjoying robust economic recovery over several years, such loans still weigh on banks' profitability and have prevented significant improvement in the financial health of households and businesses, the International Monetary Fund said last month. Cyprus clinched a 10-billion-euro loan from the European Union and International Monetary Fund in March 2013 to bail out its troubled economy and oversized banking system. — AFP

Turkish lira drops, minister warns on sanctions

ISTANBUL: The Turkish lira weakened yesterday as investors weighed up Turkey's efforts to manage its rift with the United States after Finance Minister Berat Albayrak warned US trade sanctions against Ankara could destabilize the Middle East.

The row with Washington over an American evangelical Christian pastor detained in Turkey on terrorism charges has accelerated losses in the lira, which is down about 38 percent against the dollar this year. More broadly, investors are worried about the direction of monetary policy under President Tayyip Erdogan. The president, a self-described "enemy of interest rates" has repeatedly put public pressure on the central bank and picked Albayrak, his son-in-law, as finance minister.

The attendant sell-off in the lira has raised concerns about the impact on the broader economy - given Turkey's reliance on dollar-denominated energy imports - and a possible surge in bad loans in the banking sector. "At this point in time Turkey has become pretty much un-tradable," said Tim Ash of BlueBay Asset Management in emailed comments. "The market wants to see specific delivery on policy whether that is

monetary, fiscal or action to clear up problems in the banking sector."

At 1021 GMT, the lira stood at 6.2150 against the dollar, easing from a close of 6.1200 on Monday, when it weakened to near 6.3 before rebounding in its first day of trade after a week-long holiday.

European ties

After meeting his French counterpart in Paris, Albayrak highlighted Ankara's push for better ties with Europe and took aim at the United States, saying US sanctions could ultimately aggravate the region's terrorism and refugee crises. US President Donald Trump this month authorized a doubling of duties on aluminum and steel imported from Turkey, triggering retaliatory measures from Ankara.

Investors are also worried by a US Treasury investigation into state-owned Turkish lender Halkbank, which could face a potentially hefty fine over allegations of busting sanctions on Iran. The bank has said all its transactions were legal. Turkey and the United States are also at odds over their diverging interests in Syria and US objections to Ankara's plan to buy Russian defense systems. Separately, the government announced a new campaign yesterday to support the real estate sector, offering a 10 percent discount on some home sales. Under the campaign, any price increases due to rising exchange rates will be discounted from the cost of the residence, the environment and urbanization minister said. — Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.383329	0.397229
Czech Korune	0.005742	0.015042
Danish Krone	0.043384	0.048384
Euro	0.346456	0.360156
Georgian Lari	0.117157	0.117157
Hungarian	0.001000	0.001190
Norwegian Krone	0.032321	0.037521
Romanian Leu	0.059267	0.076107
Russian ruble	0.004489	0.004489
Slovakia	0.009060	0.019060
Swedish Krona	0.029237	0.034237
Swiss Franc	0.302936	0.313936
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.213959	0.225959
New Zealand Dollar	0.196410	0.205910
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.228401	0.237401
US Dollars	0.299450	0.304750
US Dollars Mint	0.299950	0.304750
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003042	0.003843
Chinese Yuan	0.043102	0.046602
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036579	0.039329

Indian Rupee	0.003845	0.004617
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002642	0.002822
Korean Won	0.000263	0.000278
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070866	0.076686
Nepalese Rupee	0.002624	0.002964
Pakistan Rupee	0.001955	0.002725
Philippine Peso	0.005630	0.005930
Singapore Dollar	0.217071	0.227071
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001560	0.002140
Taiwan	0.009758	0.009938
Thai Baht	0.008973	0.009523
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.790071	0.806571
Egyptian Pound	0.014332	0.020050
Iranian Ryal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000200	0.000260
Jordanian Dinar	0.423836	0.432836
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000150	0.000250
Moroccan Dirhams	0.022415	0.046415
Omani Ryal	0.782123	0.787803
Qatar Ryal	0.079088	0.084028
Saudi Ryal	0.079860	0.081160
Syrian Pound	0.001287	0.001507
Tunisian Dinar	0.106444	0.114444
Turkish Lira	0.044881	0.056181
UAE Dirhams	0.081220	0.082920
Yemeni Ryal	0.000987	0.001067

Business

World stocks at 6-month high as NAFTA deal eases trade war fears

Volatility slides as risk appetite picks up

LONDON: World stocks rose to a six-month high yesterday, lifted by investor optimism that a US-Mexico deal to overhaul the North American Free Trade Agreement will go some way to averting a global trade war.

Some of the previous day's buoyant mood was starting to ebb, however, on uncertainty over whether Canada would agree to the new terms of the three-nation pact. Pressure is heavy on Ottawa to join the agreement, with talks due for later yesterday. US stock indexes rose yesterday, with the benchmark S&P 500 and the Nasdaq indexes hitting fresh all-time highs, as a trade agreement between the United States and Mexico calmed fears of a global trade war. While the trade-sensitive industrial sector rose 0.24 percent, the gains were led by commodity-related stocks, with metal and energy companies gaining as prices of Brent crude and metals rose.

The United States and Mexico agreed to overhaul the North American Free Trade Agreement, putting pressure on Canada to remain part of the three-nation pact.

Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland is expected to travel to Washington for talks yesterday and US Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin told CNBC that he believed a deal could be reached this week.

Also helping sentiment was news from the White House that US President Donald Trump and German Chancellor Angela Merkel "strongly supported ongoing discussions" on trade.

"The markets have been on fire and are being fueled by economic optimism and



S&P, Nasdaq hit record highs

"Trump is getting things done like he had promised and the markets like that because it removes the uncertainty of a trade war," Bakhos added. At 9:50 am EDT the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 57.86 points, or 0.22 percent, at 26,107.50, the

S&P 500 was up 4.91 points, or 0.17 percent, at 2,901.65 and the Nasdaq Composite was up 11.95 points, or 0.15 percent, at 8,029.84.

Eight of the 11 major S&P 500 sectors were higher, led by the materials sector's 0.45 percent gain, followed by the energy sector's 0.49 percent rise. The defensive sectors dropped with the telecom services sector down 0.12 percent and the utilities sectors off 0.1 percent. Best Buy slid 8 percent, the most on the S&P, after the electronics retailer's quarterly online sales growth slowed and its current-quarter profit forecast missed estimates.

Coty rose 7.2 percent, the most on the S&P, and Estee Lauder gained 2 percent after Morgan Stanley upgraded the shares of the beauty products makers. Xilinx gained 2.9 percent, leading gainers on the Nasdaq 100, after Baird upgraded the chip-maker's shares on an expected ramp-up in 5G-related shipments later this year. Campbell Soup fell 2.3 percent after a New York Post report that the soup maker does not plan to sell itself.

Europe bullish

A pan-European share index enjoyed a third straight day of gains, though it gave



NEW YORK, NY: Traders and financial professionals work at the opening bell on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), yesterday in New York City. —AFP

up some of its early gains. Auto stocks continued to rally, adding 1.3 percent after enjoying their best day in a month on Monday - German carmakers rely on smooth trade between Mexico and the United States to sell Mexican-assembled

vehicles into US markets. An escalation in the US-China spat would reverberate across Asia, "given the region's intricate supply chains and that most of its economies still largely depend on exports", Oxford Economics told clients. — Reuters

Nestle seals deal to market Starbucks coffee

ZURICH: Nespresso maker Nestle yesterday said it has sealed a deal to market the products of US coffee giant Starbucks around the world, outside of its cafes.

Swiss food giant Nestle, which also produces Nescafe instant coffee, had announced in May it would pay \$7.15 billion (6.13 billion euros) for the rights to market Starbucks coffee globally.

Under the deal, some 500 Starbucks employees in the United States and Europe will join Nestle, the Swiss company said in a statement. "With Starbucks, Nescafe and Nespresso we bring together the world's most iconic coffee brands," Nestle CEO Mark Schneider said.

"The outstanding collaboration between the two teams resulted in a swift completion of this agreement, which will pave the way to capture further growth opportunities," he added.

According to the statement, the deal will significantly boost Nestle's portfolio in North America.

Bloomberg News said Nestle has struggled in the US for years. Under Schneider's leadership, Nestle has made coffee a key priority in its growth strategy, particularly in the US.

Since the CEO took over in January 2017, the group has bought a majority stake in California-based high-end brand Blue Bottle Coffee and acquired Texan brand Chameleon Cold Brew.

Starbucks CEO Kevin Johnson said his firm is also set for a major boost under the deal. "Bringing together the world's leading coffee retailer, the world's largest food and beverage company, and the world's largest and fast-growing installed base of at-home and single-serve coffee machines helps us amplify the Starbucks brand around the world while delivering long-term value creation for our shareholders," Johnson said. — AFP



The Starbucks store at 1912 Pike Place. This is the second location of the original Starbucks, which was at 2000 Western Avenue from 1971 to 1976.

US blocks renewal of WTO trade court judge as deadlock looms

GENEVA: The United States this week blocked the reappointment of a judge at the World Trade Organization, increasing the risk that the global body could soon find itself unable to fulfill its key role in arbitrating trade disputes.

At a time when US President Donald Trump's protectionist policies have sparked a wave of trade wars, the institution best placed to help settle international trade differences and avoid further escalation is facing a deepening crisis.

The WTO's Dispute Settlement Body is battling with the effects of Washington's long-time refusal to sign off on the appointment of new judges to the court's appellate chamber. And on Monday, the crisis worsened further when the US for the first time balked at even renewing the mandate of an existing judge. Shree Baboo Chekitan Servansing of Mauritius will see his term end at the end of September, leaving only three judges to handle the appellate body's large caseload.

Washington's refusal to join the consensus needed to hand him another term has pushed the WTO's dispute settlement system to the edge of the abyss.

The appellate body, which offers a last resort

to settle international trade disputes and avoid escalation between countries, normally counts seven judges.

But the number has gradually dwindled amid Washington's refusal to agree to fresh appointees.

Three judges is the bare minimum needed for the appellate body to function. Yet two of the three judges remaining once Servansing steps down next month will themselves see their mandates expire at the end of 2019. The 164-member WTO is confronting a long line of headaches linked to Trump's trade policies, but trade experts have said the DSB blockage may prove the most severe, since it could cripple the organization's ability to resolve disputes-one of its key functions.

'Persistent overreaching'

"For more than 15 years, across multiple US administrations, the United States has been raising serious concerns with the Appellate Body's disregard for the rules set by WTO members," the US envoy to the WTO Dennis Shea said during a meeting in Geneva Monday.

He charged that the body was guilty of "persistent overreaching" and of not respecting proper WTO procedures by "adding obligations that were never agreed by the United States and other WTO members". The US has complained that the 90-day limit for the judges to reach a verdict is consistently overstepped, while the appellate body allows judges to complete work on a case even after their mandate has lapsed, contrary to the US interpretation of WTO rules.

But Shea said "our concerns have not been addressed". — AFP

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Kettle

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12 دينار 17 دينار **SAVE 4 دينار**

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MK-17H05E5
Kettle

2200 دينار 1.7 لتر

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• Fry, Bake & Grill

21 دينار 33 دينار **SAVE 11 دينار**

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قائمة الأسعار من 2018/14/15

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Business

May vows post-Brexit UK will be leading investor in Africa

British PM begins 3-nation visit to drum up trade deals

CAPE TOWN: British Prime Minister Theresa May yesterday pledged to prioritize investment in Africa as she started a three-nation visit to the continent aimed at drumming up trade deals ahead of leaving the European Union.

Her tour of South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya-May's first to Africa since becoming premier in 2016 — is seen as an effort to reinforce Britain's global ambitions after Brexit.

"By 2022, I want the UK to be the G7's number one investor in Africa, with Britain's private sector companies taking the lead," May told business leaders in Cape Town.

The G7 groups major industrialized nations but does not include China, which has become a big investor on the African continent. "As prime minister of a trading nation whose success depends on global markets, I want to see strong African economies that British companies can do business with," she said.

"I want to create a new partnership between the UK and our friends in Africa built around shared prosperity and shared security," May is facing pressure at home from so-called Remainers skeptical of her ability to forge trade deals once Britain severs ties with the EU, as well as from Brexiters fearful she will not deliver a complete break. On her journey to South Africa, May suggested to travelling British press that a no-deal Brexit would not be a disaster for Britain and played down warnings of serious consequences for the UK economy.

Dance steps

Former foreign minister Boris Johnson, whose July departure from the cabinet brought May's government to the brink, said in his resignation speech that May's current Brexit policy would hamper London's ability to strike independent trade deals.

But May said Britain was well-placed and had many companies ready to invest in Africa. Yesterday, she announced a new four-billion-pound (\$5 billion/4.4 billion

euro) Africa investment program. There were no immediate details about the initiative. May added that Britain would also host an African investment summit next year, and would open new diplomatic missions across the continent.

The prime minister had earlier attracted mixed reviews for her tentative dance steps as she was greeted by singing pupils during a visit to a Cape Town school. May also presented President Cyril Ramaphosa with the bell from the troopship Mendi, which sank in the Channel in 1917 drowning more than 600 mainly South African troops who were set to join the Allied forces fighting in World War I.

It was the worst maritime disaster in South Africa's history, and became a symbol of its Great War sacrifice. The bell was given to a BBC reporter in 2017 following an anonymous tip. Ramaphosa described the gift of the bell as "like returning their souls back to the land of their birth."

S Africa calls for smooth Brexit

After talks with May, the president, who came to power this year, welcomed Britain's role in his efforts to secure \$100 billion of foreign investment to revive South Africa's sluggish economy and soaring unemployment. But he also added that he hoped Britain would soon conclude Brexit negotiations in a manner "that restores stability to economic and financial markets... as their exit also has an impact on our economy."

May was expected to later visit Robben Island where former president Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for decades to commemorate the 100th anniversary of his birth.

May will head to Nigeria today for meetings with President Muhammadu Buhari in the capital Abuja and with victims of modern slavery in Lagos.



CAPE TOWN: Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May (left) and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa take part in a ceremony to hand over the bell of the SS Mendi, yesterday in Cape Town, as part of a three-day, three-nation visit to Africa focused on post-Brexit trade ties. — AFP

Tomorrow she will meet Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, shortly after his return from seeing US President Donald Trump in Washington. The prime minister will also see British troops in training action and tour a

business school, before concluding the trip at a state dinner hosted by Kenyatta. London and Brussels have yet to reach an agreement on the terms of Britain's exit from the EU in March. — AFP

80% increase in impersonation or BEC attacks: Mimecast report

DUBAI: Mimecast Limited, a leading email and data security company, yesterday announced the availability of its latest quarterly Email Security Risk Assessment (ESRA), an aggregated report of tests that measure the efficacy of widely used email security systems.

A Mimecast ESRA helps participating organizations better understand the number and type of email-borne threats that are getting through their current defenses. As part of the cumulative assessments, Mimecast has inspected more than 142 million emails that have passed through organizations' incumbent email security vendors. Latest results revealed 203,000 malicious links within 10,072,682 emails were deemed safe by other security systems - a ratio of one unstoppped malicious link for every 50 emails inspected. The report also found an 80 percent increase in impersonation attacks in comparison to last quarters' report with 41,605 caught. Additionally, 19,086,877 pieces of spam, 13,176 emails containing dangerous file types, and 15,656 malware attachments were all missed by these incumbent providers and delivered to users' inboxes.

"Targeted malware, heavily socially-engineered impersonation attacks, and phishing threats are still reaching employee inboxes. This leaves organizations at risk of a data breach and financial loss," said Matthew Gardiner, cybersecurity strategist at Mimecast. "Our latest quarterly analysis saw a continued attacker focus on impersonation attacks quarter-on-quarter. These are difficult attacks to identify without specialized security capabilities, and this testing shows that commonly used systems aren't doing a good job catching them."

The report indicates the need for organizations to enhance their cyber resilience strategies for email with a multi-layered approach that includes a third-party service provider. This new ESRA report follows an SE Labs Independent Email Security Services Protection group test, which gave Mimecast the top score and a "AAA" rating. Other email security services SE Labs evaluated were from Microsoft, Forcepoint, Symantec and Proofpoint. "The SE Labs report highlights the need for multiple layers of protection to increase security efficacy and to address the rise of more advanced email attacks," added Gardiner. Mimecast is engineered to use multiple layers and types of detection engines, combined with high performance analytics and a diverse set of threat intelligence sources, overseen by the Mimecast SOC. This helps protect email data and employees from malware, spam, phishing, and targeted attacks - 100 percent from the cloud.



Yuan extends bounce after PBOC raises mid-point

SHANGHAI: China's yuan firmed against the US dollar for the third day in a row yesterday after the central bank moved to put a floor under the currency as the trade war with the United States grinds on. Prior to the market opening, the People's Bank of China (PBOC) raised its daily yuan midpoint by almost 0.7 percent, the most in nearly 15 months.

But the jump in the official mid-point fixing sparked corporate demand for cheaper dollars, capping the yuan's gains in the spot market. In onshore trade, spot yuan opened at 6.8128 per dollar. It finished domestic trade at 0830 GMT at 6.8070, 90 pips or 0.1 percent firmer than the previous late night session close. The domestic close was the strongest since Aug. 1.

Its offshore counterpart was trading at 6.7998 as of 0830 GMT. The PBOC confirmed market suspicions late on Friday by announcing it had started changing the way it calculates the mid-point earlier in August, in a further sign that Chinese authorities are wary of letting the yuan weaken further after a record 10 straight weeks of losses.

But market watchers say the yuan will face persistent depreciation pressure as the Sino-US trade battle deepens and China continues to ease policy to support its cooling economy. Early yesterday, the PBOC lifted the official yuan midpoint to 6.8052 per dollar, 456 pips firmer than the previous fix of 6.8508 and largely matching market forecasts. The move in the official guidance rate was the biggest one-day strengthening in percentage terms since June 1, 2017.

The guidance rate was 4 pips lower than Reuters' estimate of 6.8048 per dollar. Market watchers believe the re-introduction of the mysterious "counter-cyclical factor" in the PBOC's calculations is largely aimed at stabilizing the currency, not turning it around. The bank had already taken several steps in recent months to make it more expensive to short the currency.

"It does not make sense to see a much stronger CNY from both the economic and trade war perspectives. In our view, the CNY's weakness is justified as the economy is



BEIJING: The People's Bank of China (PBOC) yesterday raised its daily yuan midpoint by almost 0.7 percent, the most in nearly 15 months.

still struggling between growth, debt and leveraging," Zhou Hao, analyst at Commerzbank in Singapore said in a note. Recent easing measures in monetary policy also imply a weaker bias for the currency, he said, adding it would not be in China's interest to engineer a firmer yuan while the trade dispute with the United States drags on. Bargain hunting for cheaper dollars remained strong, traders said, as many saw strong resistance at 6.8 per dollar, which is an important psychological level for the market for now.

Many analysts including Commerzbank's Zhou expect the onshore yuan to finish 2018 at that level.

"The reinstatement of the 'counter-cyclical factor' has effectively dampened interest in being long dollars. But corporate dollar demand reignited when the dollar softened overnight," said a trader at a Chinese bank, noting

the yuan's short-term movements will remain at the mercy of progress in Sino-US trade talks.

The dollar steadied in global markets after falling to a four-week low overnight, after the United States and Mexico agreed to overhaul the North American Free Trade Agreement, boosting optimism for an easing of global trade tensions.

"The PBOC may have dodged a bullet by implementing the 'counter-cyclical factor' at a time of USD weakness, allowing the USD-CNY to slip lower without the additional resistance of broad USD strength. The key level to watch is now the 6.8000 handle," Terence Wu, FX strategist at OCBC Bank in Singapore, said in a note.

"At this juncture, a break lower from that level may give RMB (yuan) bulls greater confidence to push the spot levels down further." — Reuters

Eurozone loan growth pauses in July: ECB

FRANKFURT: The pace of lending to eurozone firms and households paused in July, official data showed yesterday, complicating the picture for the European Central Bank as it prepares to scale back its easy money policies. Credit to non-financial firms grew 3.0 percent year-on-year last month, adjusting for some purely financial transactions, the same rate as in June.

Growth in borrowing to households was also flat month-on-month at 4.1 percent, the ECB said in a statement. The pace of loan growth is a key indicator of financial health for the ECB as it prepares to withdraw its massive support for the eurozone economy.

Overall, credit to the private sector in the 19-nation single currency area increased 3.4 percent in July, a slowdown of 0.1 percent from June as financial firms like pension funds and insurance companies borrowed less.

Aiming to boost growth and stoke inflation to its target of just below 2.0 percent, the ECB has set interest rates at historic lows and buys 30 billion euros (\$35 billion) of government and corporate bonds per month.

The measures are designed to pump cash through the financial system and into the real economy, where it can power investments, hiring and consumer spending. The ECB has said that it will reduce purchases to 15 billion euros per month from October before ending them in December, saying the move is justified as inflation is on a solid path towards its goal.

A quarterly survey by the Frankfurt institution last month showed that between April and June, demand for credit remained strong among firms and households and banks were loosening conditions for issuing and repayment of loans. — AFP

Italian pilots approve deal with Ryanair

ROME: Italian pilots have approved an agreement over working conditions with Ryanair in the first such deal the strike-hit low-cost aviation giant has fully concluded.

The agreement, reached earlier this month following eight months of talks, gives Italy-based pilots working for Ryanair "protection and guarantees", according to the ANPAC union which negotiated the collective work contract. "The contract was submitted for approval by the more than 300 pilot members and after a tallying of the results (Monday night) the contract received a very large majority" of votes, said the union.

The agreement is the first that Ryanair has signed and which has been approved by union members since the Irish airline caved in last year and said it would recognize trade unions.

The reversal came amid rising discontent among the airline's staff, which have continued to strike as negotiations dragged on. Earlier this month, Ryanair pilots across Europe staged a coordinated 24-hour strike to push their demands for better pay and conditions, plunging tens of thousands of passengers into transport chaos at the peak of the busy summer season. In July, strikes by cockpit and



DUBLIN: A Ryanair plane lands at Dublin Airport. Ryanair is to introduce new charges for passengers who fly with a small suitcase. — AFP

cabin crew disrupted 600 flights in Belgium, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain, affecting 100,000 travellers.

Ryanair welcomed the first approval of a collective work agreement among its pilots, and said it hoped Irish pilots would also soon approve their agreement, which was concluded last week.

"We have invited our UK, German and Spanish unions to meet with us in the coming days so that we can negotiate and hopefully agree similar pilot collective labor agreements in these other larger markets," said Ryanair's Chief People Officer Eddie Wilson.

"These agreements demonstrate the real progress being made by Ryanair in its negotiations with its pilots and their unions across differ-

ent EU markets," he said in a statement. Ryanair staff have been seeking higher wages and an end to the practice whereby many have been working as independent contractors without the benefits of staff employees.

Another key complaint of workers based in countries other than Ireland is the fact that Ryanair employs them under Irish legislation.

Staff claim this creates huge insecurity for them, blocking their access to state benefits in their country.

Ryanair has meanwhile said previously that it has offered its pilots a 20-percent pay increase this year, adding that the carrier is committed to giving all its pilots in Germany permanent contracts by the end of the year. — AFP

Technology

Toyota pours \$500 million into driverless car tie-up with Uber

Deal to work together on mass-producing self-driving vehicles

TOKYO: Toyota will pump about \$500 million into ride-share firm Uber as part of a deal to work together on mass-producing self-driving vehicles, the Japanese car giant said yesterday.

The deal, which reportedly values Uber at about \$72 billion, aims at "advancing and bringing to market autonomous ride-sharing as a mobility service at scale", Toyota said in a statement. Analysts said the move showed Toyota was motoring full speed ahead towards a driverless car future, in a race involving the world's top auto firms as well as tech giants such as Google and Alibaba.

Technology from both companies will be integrated into purpose-built Toyota vehicles and deployed on Uber's ride-sharing platform, with the first pilot rollout set for 2021. "Hundreds of vehicles" would be involved in that first phase, a spokesman said.

"The deal is the first of its kind for Uber and signals our commitment to bringing world-class technologies to the Uber network," said CEO Dara Khosrowshahi. The agreement came after the smartphone-summoned ride service began to rein in its solo effort to develop autonomous vehicle technology. Uber suspended its self-driving car program after a crash in March, which killed a woman pushing a bicycle in a street in the US state of Arizona.

Last month, the San-Francisco-based firm took a tentative step towards restarting the program, putting self-driving cars back on the road in "manual mode", with a driver at the wheel at all times. The testing will enable Uber to gather data on different scenarios that will be recreated in computer simulations, and also develop more accurate mapping for the vehicles.

'Wide-open field'

Uber is among a number of technology and car companies racing toward what some say is an inevitable future in which vehicles drive themselves. The statement said the "mass-produced autonomous vehicles" would be owned and operated by "mutually agreed-upon third-party autonomous fleet operators". Hans Greimel, Asia editor for the specialist Automotive News publication, said Toyota was "gearing up big-time for autonomous driving".

"They are feeling the pressure and they are really turning their attention towards this field," he added.

"It is a wide-open field and everybody is scrambling to feel their way. Maybe Toyota feels a sense of crisis, maybe they had a rough start but I don't feel they are behind."

Traders appeared to welcome the news, pushing Toyota stock up 1.86 percent to 7.096 yen, outperforming the wider market which was 0.64 percent higher. Toyota had already invested an undisclosed amount in Uber in 2016 via its subsidiary Toyota Financial Services and Greimel said cash was the main attraction for Uber. "I think what they are after with Toyota is the money more than anything," he said.

However, he added that it was possible that the more conservative Toyota could end up slowing down the Silicon Valley firm. "Toyota is known for its safety and is more conservative but it could be a downside for a Silicon Valley company used to being very quick and nimble and making fast decisions."

"Toyota needs to double-check, triple-check everything and this might slow them down a little bit,"



PITTSBURGH: In this file photo Pilot models of the Uber self-driving car is displayed at the Uber Advanced Technologies Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Toyota will pump about \$500 million into Uber as part of a deal to work together on mass-producing self-driving vehicles, the Japanese car giant said yesterday. — AFP

he said. Khosrowshahi is also looking at shifting cars to scooters and electric bikes for shorter, inner-city trips, he said in an interview published this week.

While he admitted the move would likely cost the

firm financially in the near term, he told the Financial Times it made sense as a long-term strategy as "during rush hour, it is very inefficient for a one-ton hulk of metal to take one person 10 blocks". — AFP

India's top court seeks WhatsApp's response on petition on breach of law

MUMBAI: India's top court has asked WhatsApp to respond to a petition that alleges it breaches certain Indian regulations, creating another headache for the Facebook Inc-owned firm already facing pressure in India over fake news.

In an order seen by Reuters yesterday, India's Supreme Court asked the messaging service to respond to the petition, filed by a Delhi-based think-tank called the Centre For Accountability And Systemic Change (CASC), within four weeks.

WhatsApp does not comply with the Information Technology Act, 2000, which mandates "the appointment of Grievance Officer by all intermediaries," the CASC says in its petition a copy of which was reviewed by Reuters.

"It is also required to have a Grievance Officer for users in India. Yet, it is being allowed to continue with its Payments and other services, without any checks," the petition added.

The Indian IT Act mandates intermediaries or carriers of content like WhatsApp, to appoint a Grievance Officer, to handle any queries, concerns or issues that users of the platform may have that do not come under the purview of other authorities. WhatsApp declined to make a comment specifically about the litigation or their response to it but a spokesman for the messaging service said it has both an Indian corporate entity and a grievance officer for Indian users.

The grievance officer that the spokesman referred to is based in California, also handling India-related issues. WhatsApp is working on having a grievance officer based in India following talks with the technology ministry, the spokesman said.

India's technology, home, law and finance ministries as well as its telecoms regulator are also among the respondents named in the public interest litigation and will have to respond to the court notice in four weeks.



A man displays a WhatsApp logo on his smartphone. — Reuters

"To run Payments Service in India, WhatsApp is obligated to have its office and servers in India," the petition added. A lack of clarity over the Indian central bank's directive for storing data of Indian customer locally has delayed the launch of WhatsApp's inter-bank money transfer service, which is already in testing, a source told Reuters earlier.

Another source said India wanted WhatsApp to have a local head and team that manages local operations before it receives clearance for the formal launch of the payments service.

WhatsApp, which has more than 200 million users in India, has also had to battle the spread of rumors and false messages on its platform that have led to mob killings and sparked calls for action by authorities. In a meeting with the technology minister this month, WhatsApp pledged to do more to combat the spread of misinformation even though it has said it will not weaken encryption. — Reuters

In a posh Bangkok, residents trade energy with blockchain

BANGKOK: Residents in a Bangkok neighborhood are trying out a renewable energy trading platform that allows them to buy and sell electricity between themselves, signalling the growing popularity of such systems as solar panels get cheaper.

The pilot project in the center of Thailand's capital is among the world's largest peer-to-peer renewable energy trading platforms using blockchain, according to the firms involved.

The system has a total generating capacity of 635 KW that can be traded via Bangkok city's electricity grid between a mall, a school, a dental hospital and an apartment complex.

Commercial operations will begin next month, said David Martin, managing director of Power Ledger, an Australian firm that develops technology for the energy industry and is a partner in the project. "By enabling trade in renewable energy, the community meets its own energy demands, leading to lower bills for buyers, better prices for sellers, and a smaller carbon footprint for all," he said.

"It will encourage more consumers

to make the switch to renewable energy, as the cost can be offset by selling excess energy to neighbors," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Neighborhoods from New York to Melbourne are upending the way power is produced and sold, with solar panels, mini grids and smart meters that can measure when energy is consumed rather than overall consumption.

The World Energy Council predicts that such decentralized energy will grow to about a fourth of the market in 2025 from 5 percent today. Helping it along is blockchain, the distributed ledger technology that underpins bitcoin currency, which offers a transparent way to handle complex transactions between users, producers, and even traders and utilities.

Blockchain also saves individuals the drudgery of switching between sending power and receiving it, said Martin. For the pilot in Bangkok's upmarket Sukhumvit neighborhood, electricity generated by each of the four locations will be initially used within that building. Excess energy can be sold to the others through the trading system. — Reuters

A Special Report

Soy boom devours Brazil's fertile tropical savanna

CAMPOS LINDOS, Brazil: When farmer Julimar Pansera purchased land in Brazil's interior seven years ago, it was blanketed in tiers of fruit trees, twisted shrubs and the occasional palm standing tall in a thicket of undergrowth.

He mowed down most of that vegetation, set it ablaze and started planting soybeans. Over the past decade, he and others in the region have deforested an area larger than South Korea.

Permissive land-use policies and cheap farm acreage here have helped catapult Brazil into an agricultural superpower, the world's largest exporter of soy, beef and chicken and a major producer of pork and corn. This area has also lured farmers and ranchers away from the Amazon jungle, whose decline has spurred a global outcry to protect it.

The tradeoff, environmentalists say, is that while Brazil has slowed destruction of the renowned rainforest from its worst levels, it has put another vital ecological zone at risk: a vast tropical savanna that is home to 5 percent of species on the planet.

Known as the Cerrado, this habitat lost more than 105,000 square kilometers (40,541 square miles) of native cover since 2008, according to government figures. That's 50 percent more than the deforestation seen during the same period in the Amazon, a biome more than three times larger. Accounting for relative size, the Cerrado is disappearing nearly four times faster than the rainforest.

The largest savanna in South America, the Cerrado is a vital storehouse for carbon dioxide, the greenhouse gas whose rising emissions from fossil fuels and deforestation are warming the world's atmosphere. Brazilian officials have cited protection of native vegetation as critical to meeting its obligations under the Paris Agreement on climate change. But scientists warn the biome has reached a tipping point that could hamper Brazil's efforts and worsen global warming. By focusing on one problem, Brazil essentially created another, said Ane Alencar, science director of the non-profit Amazon Environmental Research Institute, known as IPAM.

"There's a high risk for the climate associated with this expansion," Alencar said. "Limiting and calling attention to deforestation in the Amazon, in a way it forced the agribusiness industry to expand in the Cerrado."

The toll can already be seen in the region's water resources. Streams and springs are filling with silt and drying up as vegetation around them vanishes. That in turn is weakening the headwaters of vital rivers flowing to the rest of the country, sci-

entists say. The imperiled waterways include the Sao Francisco, Brazil's longest river outside the Amazon, where water levels are hitting never-before-seen lows in the dry season. "The removal of vegetation can lead a body of water to extinction," said Liliana Pena Naval, an environmental engineering professor at the Federal University of Tocantins.

Wildlife, too, is under threat, including rare hyacinth macaws, maned wolves and jaguars that call the shrinking savanna home. So are thousands of plants, fish, insects and other creatures found nowhere else on earth, many of which are only beginning to be studied. "I compare it to the burning of the ancient Library of Alexandria," said Mercedes Bustamante, an ecologist at the University of Brasilia. "You lose the accumulated evolutionary record of thousands of years that never can be recovered."

Farmers see the Cerrado's development as critical to global food security and their nation's prosperity. Brazil's agriculture sector grew a sizzling 13 percent in 2017, while the overall economy barely budged. The nation's ability to keep producing new farmland cheaply has given it an edge over rivals and cemented its status as a vital supplier to the world's tables.

The green revolution

"Imagine, if not for Brazil's production, how much more hunger would there be," farmer Pansera said.

THE GREEN REVOLUTION Roughly the size of Mexico, straddling Brazil's mid-section from its far western borders with



A worker inspects soybeans during the soy harvest near the town of Campos Lindos, Brazil — Reuters

Paraguay and stretching northeast towards the Atlantic coast, the Cerrado has seen about half of its native forests and grasslands converted to farms, pastures and urban areas over the past 50 years.

Deforestation in the region has slowed from the early 2000s, when Brazil's soy boom was gaining steam. Still, farmers continue to plow under vast stretches of the biome, propelled largely by Chinese demand for Brazilian meat and grain. The Asian nation is Brazil's No. 1 buyer of soybeans to fatten its own hogs and chickens. China is also a major purchaser of Brazilian pork, beef and poultry to satisfy the tastes of its increasingly affluent consumers.

Rising trade tensions between China and the United States have only deepened that connection. Brazil's soybean exports by value to China are up 18 percent through the first seven months of the year as Chinese buyers have canceled tens of millions of dollars' worth of contracts with U.S. suppliers.

The trend bodes well for producers in the Cerrado's frontier region known as Matopiba, shorthand for the northeastern Brazilian states of Maranhao, Tocantins, Piaui and Bahia. Land here is cheap. Virgin plots near Pansera in the state of Tocantins can be had for \$248 an acre on average, according to agribusiness consultancy Informa Economics IEG FNP. — Reuters

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Hometown heroes: Iconic foods from around the world



Chicken Machboos in Doha



Smorrebrod in Copenhagen, Denmark

Every city around the world has a local food culture that embodies the unique essence of the place. While some have become iconic on the global stage - think Philadelphia's Philly cheesesteak or Tokyo's renowned ramen - others remain under the radar, tucked away in a backstreet trattoria or hidden in the pages of grandma's secret recipe book.

For curious connoisseurs looking for the best bite in town, we asked our team of Lonely Planet Locals to dish out the delicacies that they feel get to the heart of their hometown - from fish tagine in Tangier to Shanghai's steaming dumplings.

Chicken Machboos in Doha

It's often thought that the cosmopolitan capital of Qatar isn't able to lay claim to any distinctive dishes of its own: having 'borrowed' so many recipes and cuisines from the eclectic melting pot of cultures that have made this city their home over the decades. However, there is one Middle Eastern staple that Doha-dwellers vow has been rightfully theirs from the very beginning, and that is the delightful chicken Machboos.

Made from rice, laced with rich spices and cooked in a big pot with tomatoes, onions and chicken, this comforting dish is similar to a biryani (an Indian dish made with spicy rice and meat or veg) and a staple on the dinner table of many Qatari households.

Top spots to tuck in? There are a plethora of Arabic restaurants dotted around the city that offer an authentic and delicious Machboos, but two particular spots stand out amongst the crowd - the opulent Al Sufra Restaurant at the Marsa Malaz Kempinski Hotel and the cheaper and more traditional Damasca One in Souq Waqif.

Smorrebrod in Copenhagen, Denmark

If you only try one food when visiting this Scandinavian capital, it should be smorrebrod - the beloved open-faced sandwich. Smorrebrod is Denmark's favorite lunch food, and practically a way of life! It starts with a base of rye bread, slathered in butter and garnished with a variety of toppings, like pickled herring, crispy pork, or shrimp and egg. There are both traditional flavors and innovative creations to be had, with some restaurants serving up to 250 varieties. The toppings are piled so high that smorrebrod must be eaten with a knife and fork - you know it's good when you can't even see the bread!

Top spots to tuck in? For classic smorrebrod, try traditional Restaurant Kronborg or Torvehallerne Market stall Hallernes. For something more innovative, the stylish Kompasset or new kid on the block, Selma.

Hot wings in Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Whether you like them plain, seasoned or spicy, hot wings can be found at almost any casual dining spot in the ATL. Though not exclusive to Atlanta, anyone who grew up here can testify to hot wings being the ideal grab-and-go meal in the city. Specifically, lemon pepper wings - the favorite flavor of ATLiens - which can be served wet (in sauce) or dry, with the lemon pepper sprinkled on top. If you want to go full local, mix your lemon pepper with a hot or mild sauce.

Top spots to tuck in? Head to J.R. Crickets, American Deli and ATL Wings for a serving of some of the best wings in the city.

Fish kefta tagine in Tangier, Morocco

You can't go wrong with any dishes on a Moroccan menu, but visitors should adapt their taste to the local geography - and the seafood tagines of Tangier are the city's trademark within this flavorful country. As the only city that dips its toes in both the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, it's no surprise that fish is a staple here, and sardines in particular are the main ingredient in one locally adored dish: fish kefta tagine.

Unfortunately, it's not an option that you'll commonly see in restaurants because it takes immense time and patience to prepare, so it's usually cooked at home. Sardines are cautiously taken apart and molded into succulent meatballs, before being slow cooked, in the same way as the more well-known beef tagine you'll see elsewhere in the country.

Top spots to tuck in? If you haven't made friends with a local family yet, you can still sample an authentic fish tagine at Rif Kbdani, which sits inside the ancient medina just below Terrasse Borj Al Hajoui.

Xiaolongbao dumplings in Shanghai, China

Shanghai has so many unique and delicious cuisines traditionally known as Benbang cuisine that it's almost impossible to choose just one that captures the spirit of the city's food culture. That said, no visit to Shanghai would be complete without sampling its iconic and delectable dumplings: Xiaolongbao and

(the lesser-known, but no less delicious) shengjianbao.

Xiaolongbao - sometimes called soup dumplings - are thin, doughy parcels filled with ground pork and piping hot broth, and steamed in a small bamboo basket. Though popular around the world now, this dumpling originated in Shanghai. Shengjianbao have a thicker, doughier skin, and are pan-fried on the bottom to give them a satisfying crunch through to the juicy meat filling.

Top spots to tuck in? For an authentic taste of Xiaolongbao, try Jia Jia Tang Bao or Din Tai Fung. For shengjianbao, head to the touristy - but reliably tasty - chain restaurant Yang's Fry Dumplings.

Samoosas in Johannesburg, South Africa

South Africa has one of the largest populations of Indian diaspora; so, unsurprisingly, food from the subcontinent has long played a role in the South African culinary scene. Evolving over centuries, it now features its own unique combinations of ingredients and spices, complete with South African-influenced names. Samosas (with two o's, not one) are a perfect example. A South African take on samosas, samoosas tend to be smaller and feature a wider range of fillings - beyond traditional choices such as vegetable and chicken, you'll find everything from feta and corn to coconut.

Top spots to tuck in? For the best samoosas in Johannesburg, head to World of Samosas in the historic Oriental Plaza. It is the only place in town serving coconut varieties, and their spicy dipping sauce is divine.

Feijoada in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Cariocas (Rio's locals) like to take their time; if that means arriving late then so be it. Feijoada is the culinary embodiment of this attitude. The rich black bean stew, heaving with salted pork, beef and sliced sausage, takes hours to prepare and is enjoyed during long, lazy lunches that, like the cariocas, cannot be hurried. No coincidence that it is chiefly served on Saturdays (or on Fridays, when most workers have already switched to weekend mode). The official follow-up activity is often dancing to samba, but after all that heavy stew, first a leisurely snooze - what's the rush?

Top spots to tuck in? Bar do Momo doesn't look like much, but the packed tables tell the true story. Their superb feijoada is served on Friday and Saturday lunchtimes.—www.lonelyplanet.com



Xiaolongbao dumplings in Shanghai, China



Samoosas in Johannesburg, South Africa



Feijoada in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil



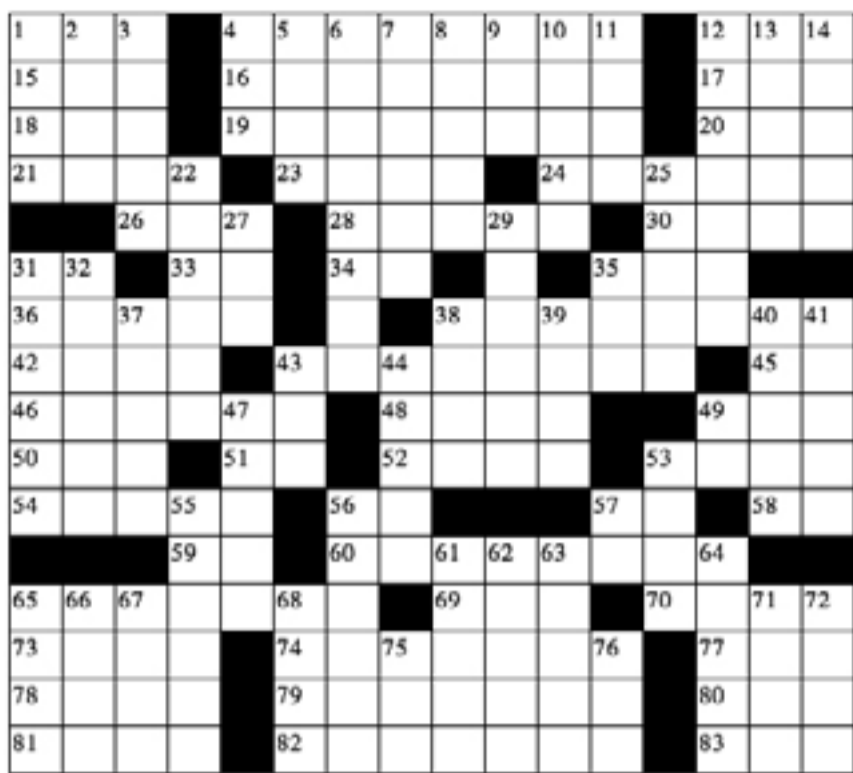
Hot wings in Atlanta, Georgia, USA



Fish kefta tagine in Tangier, Morocco

Stars

CROSSWORD 1995



ACROSS

1. (Judaism) Sacred chest where the ancient Hebrews kept the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments.
4. Overfull with water.
12. The 13th letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
15. Japanese ornamental tree with fragrant white or pink blossoms and small yellow fruits.
16. Lace bugs.
17. A metal-bearing mineral valuable enough to be mined.
18. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
19. An early symptom that a disease is developing or that an attack is about to occur.
20. A slippery or viscous liquid or liquefiable substance not miscible with water.
21. By bad luck.
23. Small buffalo of the Celebes having small straight horns.
24. A proud stiff pompous gait.
26. A bachelor's degree in theology.
28. The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
30. (Scottish) Bluish-black or gray-blue.
31. A gray lustrous metallic element of the rare earth group.
33. An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
34. A public promotion of some product or service.
36. Greek author of fables (circa 620-560 BC).
42. A Loloish language.
45. An informal term for a father.
46. Surveying instrument consisting of the upper movable part of a theodolite including the telescope and its attachments.
48. (old-fashioned) At or from or to a great distance.
50. Belonging to or on behalf of a specified person (especially yourself).
51. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
52. A telephone connection.
54. English economist noted for his studies of international trade and finance (born in 1907).
58. A very light colorless element that is one of the six inert gasses.
59. A state in midwestern United States.
60. A town in southeastern New Mexico on the Pecos River near the Mexican border.
65. A mountain peak in the Andes in Bolivia (20,870 feet high).
69. A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
70. A short labored intake of breath with the mouth open.
73. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semic peoples.
74. Of or pertaining to or affected by albinism.
77. Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
78. Law intended to eradicate organized crime by establishing strong sanctions and forfeiture provisions.
79. Any cold-blooded vertebrate of the class Reptilia including tortoises turtles snakes lizards alligators crocodiles and extinct forms.
80. A light touch or stroke.
81. A small amount of residue.
82. Small toothless ant eater with prehensile tail and four-clawed forelimbs.

83. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. Type genus of the Amidae.
2. Being or occurring in fact or actuality.
3. Deciduous South African tree having large odd-pinnate leaves and profuse fragrant orange-yellow flowers.
4. (computer science) Protocol that allows users to copy files between their local system and any system they can reach on the network.
5. The basic unit of money on Malta.
6. A member of the Iroquoian people formerly living between Lake Chaplain and the Saint Lawrence River.
7. The cardinal number that is the sum of seven and one.
8. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
9. An artificial language that is a revision and simplification of Esperanto.
10. A town in southwestern Idaho.
11. A toothed wheel that engages another toothed mechanism in order to change the speed or direction of transmitted motion.
12. Lighted by moonlight.
13. Any plant of the genus Erica.
14. A noisy riotous fight.
22. A line that suspends the harness from the canopy of a parachute.
25. Lower in esteem.
27. (Scotland) A small loaf or roll of soft bread.
29. Of or relating to or near the coccyx.
32. (South African) An ear of corn.
35. The cry made by sheep.
37. A Dardic language spoken in northern Kashmir.
38. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
39. Common black European thrush.
40. An ancient Hebrew unit of dry measure equal to about a bushel.
41. The amount a salary is increased.
43. A federal agency established to regulate the release of new foods and health-related products.
44. An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
47. At right angles to the length of a ship or airplane.
49. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
53. (informal) Exceptionally good.
55. A conversation between two persons.
56. Small spiny outgrowth on the wings of certain insects.
57. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
61. An Indian side dish of yogurt and chopped cucumbers and spices.
62. Russian founder of the Bolsheviks and leader of the Russian Revolution and first head of the USSR (1870-1924).
63. A burn cause by hot liquid or steam.
64. (Irish) Chief god of the Tuatha De Danann.
66. The habitation of wild animals.
67. A cord that is drawn through eyelets or around hooks in order to draw together two edges (as of a shoe or garment).
68. Relating to only part of a whole.
71. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
72. A metabolic acid found in yeast and liver cells.
75. (music) The pace of music measured by the number of beats occurring in 60 seconds.
76. The basic unit of money in Romania.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

This is your time for a new beginning and a fresh start. You have already started making many positive changes in your life. Make sure the new habit patterns you are starting are the best ones, as these will become habits you will keep for some time to come. Meal planning, a gym membership, and exercise in general will be come a new way of life for you. You have to work on your mental discipline and keep your level of determination strong. This is a great time to ask a friend to join you on this journey. We all need to be accountable to someone. This will be a great inspiration to you and you will be appreciated and admired for encouraging someone to be a part of your journey.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your hard work is paying off. You will soon see the results. Try not to be too hard on others who are not as careful as you. They can be helpful. Just be sure you check their input and see that it meets your standards. Don't settle for sloppy work.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

If at first you don't succeed... you know the old saying. It is true. Nobody ever won by giving up. Visualize what you want to happen. Make a plan to as to what you need to make it happen. If things to do go as planned on your initial effort then do it again. Repetition is a good thing. You will easily learn from your mistakes. Reach for the stars.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

A bad thing can have good consequences in life. The way you handled something unpleasant has enriched your life. You have come through the fire a stronger person. You are more beautiful than before. Your life may not always be easy. You can handle whatever comes your way. Keep you chin up and your eyes focused on the prize.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

A mentor is what you may find yourself becoming to a younger person in your life. You are admired for your strength. The choices you make in your own life are obviously good ones. You have become an inspiration for many. Be thankful you are admired.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You will experience success in the near future. It may not come in the form of money. Happiness is not measured in gold or dollars. That doesn't mean that happiness and financial success can't come in the same package. If you play your cards right, you can have both. Your world is ready for what you have to offer.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Your way is the only way. Or so you think. You are direct and may tend to be quite impulsive today. You may want to take time for a nice pedicure today. Because by day's end your foot is sure to be in your mouth. Bite that tongue. Libra. Out with the old, and in with the new. This may be your attitude concerning several aspects of your life today. New beginnings and starting fresh seems very appealing to you. New habits may come into play. Be sure these are good habits. The consequences of today's choices will be long lasting.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Use a bit of caution and thought today when it comes to major decisions. Today may find you impulsive and with an attitude you could conquer the world. This is not a great combination for you as you may find yourself taking risks that will not benefit you and may actually cause you harm. Find balance in your work place. Even though you feel as you could conquer the world, taking on too much at once could be setting yourself up for failure and leave you at an all-time low. Choose your battles wisely and just be sure to take a step back and take a deep breath before jumping in too deep.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

This is a great day for your career wise. You may be just the one for the job that is coming available. It is an awesome day of harmony with not only your friends but with your co-workers. Your ideas and input are greatly appreciated today. Stick to your routine and stay true to yourself and you will experience a great sense of admiration from others. Even though today may find you in a very impulsive mood, resist temptation and think long and hard about decisions you make today. You may be facing some life changing decisions. This is not only a great day to organize your thoughts but also work on organizing your affairs and surroundings.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Out with the old and in with the new. You are ready to develop new habit patterns and put to rest some of your old ways. New beginnings are on the horizon. This is a great time to get out and meet new people. A time of happiness and fresh starts. You only have one chance at a first date, first impression, or first kiss. Make it a good one. Today will be a day you will look back on and smile.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You are entering a phase of emotional directness and may find yourself to be very impulsive. Not putting thought into your decisions is a great way to get yourself in trouble. You are ready for a fresh start in life. Out with the old and in with the new is your motto. All that does not bring happiness to your world will be what you easily turn your back on now. Be sure and make wise decisions as the new habits you develop will set the tone in your life for a long time to come. With determination and focus you will become very successful.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You have always been one to say exactly what is on your mind. You may find yourself extremely outspoken and impulsive today. You may find yourself feeling very passionate today. You are ready for change. The changes you make today will have a great effect on your life for a great while so resist the urge to make impulsive decisions and put much thought into this. You may find yourself in a curious mood possibly paying close attention to and even taking part in a gossip session today. You feel not only the need to discover what drives and motivates others but are spending much of your time and focus trying to figure out the same about yourself.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Astronomy

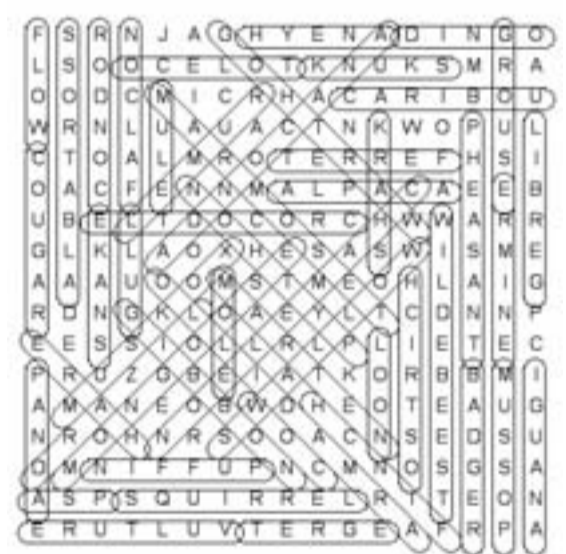
Find and circle all of the Astronomy related words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.



- | | | | |
|------------------|------------|------------------|---------------|
| ANDROMEDA GALAXY | DEEP SPACE | MOON | SOLAR SYSTEM |
| APOGEE | ECLIPSE | NEBULA | SOLAR WIND |
| ASTEROID | EQUINOX | ORBIT | SPACE SHUTTLE |
| ASTRONOMER | GALAXIES | PARSEC | SPACECRAFT |
| ATMOSPHERE | GALLILEO | PERIGEE | STARS |
| AURORA | GRAVITY | POLARIS | SUN |
| BINARY STAR | HUBBLE | PROXIMA CENTAURI | SUPERNOVA |
| BLACK HOLE | KEPLER | PULSARS | TELESCOPE |
| CONSTELLATION | LIGHT YEAR | QUASARS | TIDES |
| CORONA | METEOR | RED GIANT | UNIVERSE |
| CRATER | MILKY WAY | SATELLITE | WHITE DWARF |

Yesterday's Solution

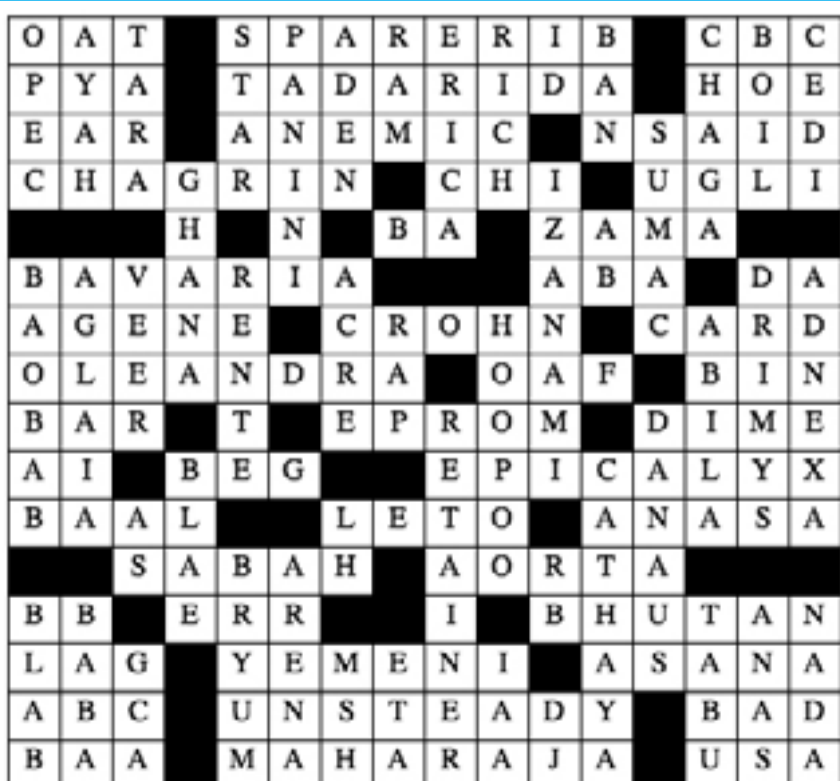
Animals 3



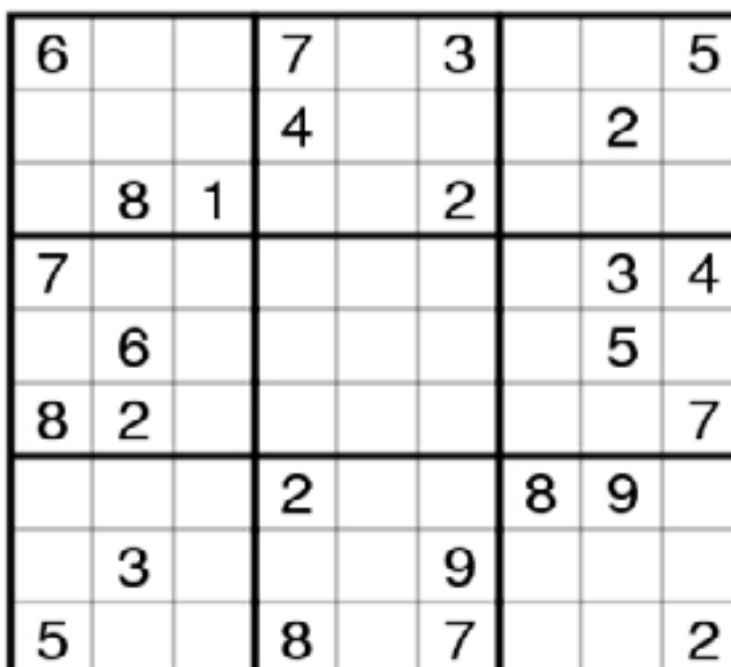
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|-----------|--------|----------|------------|
| ALBATROSS | EGRET | LIZARD | PUFFIN |
| ALPACA | ERMINE | LOON | PYTHON |
| ANACONDA | FALCON | MARMOSET | SHARK |
| ARMADILLO | FERRIS | MARTEN | SKUNK |
| ASP | FINCH | MOLE | SNAKE |
| BAOGER | GERBIL | MONGOOSE | SQUIRREL |
| CARBON | GIBBON | MULE | SWALLOW |
| CHAMELEON | GROUSE | MUSKIE | VULTURE |
| CONDOR | GULL | OCELOT | WARTHOG |
| COUGAR | HARE | OSTRICH | WILDEBEEST |
| COW | HYENA | PANDA | WOLF |
| CROCODILE | IGUANA | PHEASANT | |
| DINGO | LEMUR | POSSUM | |

The hidden animal is: JAMAICAN WOODPECKER.

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29, 2018



A combination of 12 file pictures shows (from top left) Jim, a 50 year old from USA, Li Xp, a 65 year old from China, Jafar, a 59 year old from Kuwait, Carnise, a 36 year old from USA, Phan Diu, a 25 year old from Vietnam; Andy, a 39 year old from Great Britain, Huda, a 53 year-old from UAE, Michele, a 50 year-old from Italy, Angel, a 49 year old from Mexico, Osi, a 50 year-old from Israel, Jop, a 67 year old from Germany, Besma, a 31 year old from Algeria, all are tourists visiting the French capital, pose in front of the Louvre museum in Paris, France on August 15, 2018. The city of Paris has reached a new tourist attendance record for the first semester of 2018, the Comite Regional du Tourisme (CRT - Tourism Committee) has announced on August 27, 2018. — AFP

After driving ban ends, Saudi women taste thrill of speed

Donning a helmet inside a pearl silver sports sedan, Rana Almimoni skids and drifts around a Riyadh park, engine roaring, tyres screeching and clouds of dust billowing from the back. For Saudi women, such adrenaline rushes were unimaginable just weeks ago. Speed-crazed women drivers are bound to turn heads in the deeply conservative desert kingdom, which overturned the world's only ban on female motorists in June as part of a much-hyped liberalization drive led by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Almimoni, 30 and a motor racing enthusiast, is defying the perception-or sexist misconception, depending on who you ask-that only dainty cars in bright colors are popular with women drivers. "I adore speed. I love speed... My dream car is more than 500 horsepower," said Almimoni, slamming the accelerator of her silvery sleek Kia Stinger inside Riyadh's Dirab motor park. "It's a myth... that Saudi women only choose pink and cute cars." Almimoni said she was awaiting an expected government decision that would permit women to obtain a "racing license", which would allow her to hone her passion in motor-sport competitions. That includes drifting-over steering the car to slip and skid or even spin, and other high-speed daredevilry-which is illegal in public but tolerated in the controlled environment of Dirab park, whose private owners insist on safety.

Need for speed
Author Pascal Menoret's acclaimed book "Joyriding in Riyadh" described the high-octane Saudi obsession for drifting, long seen as a symbol of revolt among legions of restless youth, as all "about being a real man". Now newly mobile Saudi women are embracing what was previously deemed a male entitlement-speed. "Most of our enquiries (from women) are about drifting-how to learn drifting, which cars



Rana Almimoni drifts a car on a track in Dirab motor park.

can they train on, how long will it take them" to drift, said instructor Falah Al-Jarba as he watched Almimoni zip around the park.

Auto showrooms tapping new women clients have rolled out a line-up of cherry red Mini Coopers, but sales professionals say many exhibit an appetite for muscle cars like the Camaro or the Mustang convertible. Many new drivers seek inspiration from Aseel Al-Hamad, the first female member of the kingdom's national motor federation, who got behind the wheel of a Formula One car in France in June to mark the end of the driving ban.

Clad in skinny jeans and Harley-Davidson T-shirts, a handful of women are also training to ride motorbikes at a Riyadh driving school, a scene that is still a stunning anomaly in the conservative petro-state. Transport authorities have rolled out racing simulators to help

first-time women drivers get a feel of being behind the wheel.

As a male traffic official demonstrated the importance of seatbelts by buckling up inside a car tethered to a flat platform and upturning the vehicle, some women zipped around twisted tracks in toy cars. Another sat down behind the wheel of a simulator and instantly floored the accelerator, sending the speedometer soaring. "I don't feel I'm in Saudi Arabia anymore," said Nagwa Mousa, a 57-year-old university professor in Riyadh.

"But I don't expect to see many women in Saudi Arabia overtaking and speeding in the streets anytime soon." The driving reform is said to be transformative for women, freeing them from dependence on private chauffeurs or male relatives, but many are keeping off the streets. "Congratulate me, finally saw a female



In this file photo Aseel Al-Hamad, Saudi Arabia's first female racing driver and board member of the Saudi Arabian Motor Federation (SAMF), poses for a picture as she holds a cell phone ahead of the Formula One Grand Prix de France at the Circuit Paul Ricard in Le Castellet, southern France.

driving! Although she is Bahraini but it counts as she is driving in Saudi land," comedian Yaser Bakr said on Twitter after the ban was lifted.

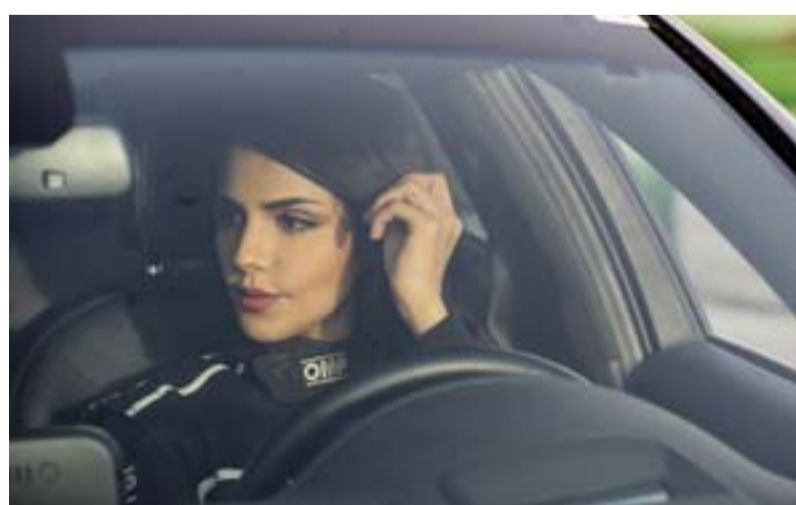
No 'free speech'
For now, most women drivers appear to be those who have swapped foreign licenses for Saudi ones after undergoing a practical test. Many complain that driving courses cost several times more than those available to men and that women instructors are in short supply. While no overt incidents of street harassment have been reported publicly, many women are also wary of pervasive sexism and aggression from male drivers despite warnings from authorities. Also testing nerves is the government's sweeping crackdown on women activists who long opposed the driving ban and a long-vilified system of male

"guardians"-fathers, husbands or other male relatives, whose permission is required to travel or get married.

"The Saudi government is expanding entertainment options for Saudi women but eliminating space for political expression," said Kristin Diwan, of the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington. "Lady drifters can feel the speed but not free speech." At least 12 leading human rights activists, including eight women, have been arrested in Saudi Arabia since May, according to Amnesty International. The crackdown triggered a diplomatic brawl with Canada after Ottawa demanded the "immediate release" of those detained. "It's a dubious advancement in gender parity: women are now coming under arrest for their rights activism just like the men," said Diwan. —AFP



Rana Almimoni, a 30-year-old Saudi motor racing enthusiast, poses with her helmet on the track in Dirab motor park, on the southern outskirts of the capital Riyadh. — AFP photos



Rana Almimoni sits in her car on a track in Dirab motor park, on the southern outskirts of the capital Riyadh.



Rana Almimoni poses with the thumbs-up gesture in her car on the track in Dirab motor park.



Aladdin cast recalled for reshoots?

The cast of Disney's live-action 'Aladdin' were reportedly recalled to London earlier this month for reshoots. The Guy Ritchie-directed film was supposed to finish shooting in January, but movie executives at Disney decided to ask for more shoots after they were unimpressed by an early cut of the film. An insider told The Sun newspaper: "Disney wasn't massively impressed with the first draft and had its cast return to London to reshoot parts of the movie." They are eager for it to do as well as last year's 'Beauty & The Beast', which made £1 billion at the box office. The studio bosses also called for more non-white actors to star in the movie, following criticism that white

actors were using make-up to look more Middle Eastern. The source added: "They want it to be respectful and feel authentic, so they cast more Middle Eastern extras for crowd scenes." Will Smith also came back for the reshoots because they decided to expand his role as the Genie. "Now they are a lot more confident with what they have." The live-action movie - which stars Canadian actor Mena Massoud as Aladdin and Naomi Scott as Princess Jasmine - is scheduled for release in May 2019. Despite being one of the film industry's best-known directors, Guy's two most recent efforts - 'King Arthur' and 'The Man From U.N.C.L.E.' - have both failed to turn a profit.

AVICII'S FAMILY CREATE DIGITAL MEMORIAL



Avicii's family have turned his website into a digital memorial. The 28-year-old DJ - whose real name was Tim Bergling - died by suicide on April 20 and his family have asked his fans to join with them in keeping his memory and legacy alive through his website Avicii.com. A message on the website reads: "Tim created music that brought people together with timeless memories from all over the world. We created this space so you could share your memories with us and let the world know what Avicii meant to you. His music and your memories are forever." Fans have been invited to share their personal stories of how the DJ touched their lives. Meanwhile, it was recently revealed that a posthumous Avicii track featuring Chris Martin called 'Heaven' will be released. Avicii's long-time collaborator, Carl Falk, revealed last month that he's working on a number of unreleased songs by the 'Wake Me Up' hitmaker, including one with the Coldplay frontman. The mixing process has been "emotional" for the studio wizard, who misses having his late pal with him "doubting ever little detail" of his work. Alongside a picture of the mix on his computer, Carl wrote on Instagram: "Yesterday was a strange and emotional day in many ways trying to finishing these songs. It's not the same producing without you by my side. I miss you hanging over my shoulder doubting every little thing and detail in the song. #avicii #heaven (sic)" Swedish site Aftonbladet previously reported that the EDM star left behind nearly 200 tracks when he passed away. According to a source, Avicii's family met with the star's record label, Geffen Records, to discuss the possibility of releasing a record of unreleased material. Commenting on the songs, Geffen manager Neil Jacobs said: "It was honestly Avicii's best music for many years." If an album is released, it will be the first since 2015's 'Stories'. Avicii retired from performing in 2016 citing health issues as his reason for calling time on his shows. He had been battling with acute pancreatitis - which is a potentially life-threatening inflammation of the pancreas - due in part to excessive alcohol consumption, and had his gallbladder and appendix removed in 2014.

Big Trouble in Little China 'will be a continuation of original movie'

Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson's upcoming 'Big Trouble in Little China' will be a continuation rather than a remake of the 1986 original. The 46-year-old actor has been attached to the project since 2015 and while some fans of the original movie were fearful about the prospect of a remake, it's now been confirmed that won't actually be the case. Hiram Garcia, the president of production at Seven Bucks Productions and one of the producers on 'Big Trouble in Little China', told Collider: "There's a lot of things going on with ['Big Trouble in Little China']. "We are in the process of developing that, and let me tell you, the idea is not to actually remake 'Big Trouble in Little China'. You can't remake a classic like that, so what we're planning to do is we're going to continue the story." The original movie featured Kurt Russell in the role of a truck driver called Jack Burton who becomes involved with an unusual conflict in San Francisco's Chinatown. Hiram explained where the upcoming film will fit in the context of the first movie. He said: "We're going to continue the universe of 'Big Trouble in Little China'. Everything that happened in the original exists and is standalone and I think there's only one person that could ever play Jack Burton, so Dwayne would never try and play that character. So we are just having a lot of fun. "We're actually in a really great space with the story that we've cracked. But yeah, no remake. It is a continuation, and we are deep into development on that as well, and I think you'll start hearing some things about that probably soon."



CAREY'S NEW MUSIC WILL COVER A RANGE OF EMOTIONS



Mariah Carey is ready to bare her soul in her new music. The 48-year-old singer - who has announced plans to extend her Las Vegas residency 'The Butterfly Returns' into 2019 - is currently working on new music and says it will cover the whole range of emotions she has been feeling. She told PEOPLE: "I've been working on my new album for a while. This is a labour of love and I'm really excited. This is me at this moment in my life being able to express myself as a writer and a singer. I'm just really in a good place. "My fans just want to hear me express myself and speak from the heart and sing from the heart. Some of the record is lighthearted and fun, and some [songs] I really went deep in terms of the lyrical content. There's a nice cross-section of things." Mariah is also excited about changing up the setlist of her

residency to surprise her fans. She said: "I've been loving it so much. A lot of the fans who have come out to see it were really happy having a little more diversity. I want to make it really impromptu and surprise the people who have come out again and again to see the show." Mariah's 'Butterfly Returns' Las Vegas residency shows, opened at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace in July and was originally set to finish in September. However, she has now added five new dates in February for her fans. Meanwhile, Mariah previously revealed she is thrilled to be back in the recording studio. She said: "It's really nice writing and collaborating. Writing is the best part of the process. "Most people may love performing more - I'm not saying I don't - but I love being in the lab and working on new material and pouring my heart into it."



Lauryn Hill hits back at claims she stole music

Lauryn Hill has defended herself against claims she stole music for her album 'The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill'. The 43-year-old star took to Medium to pen a lengthy essay defending herself after jazz musician Robert Glasper claimed earlier this month that Lauryn had "stolen all of [his] friends' music" during the making of the 1998 record. In 2001, Lauryn settled a lawsuit with four musicians from the album who claimed they had been denied writing credits. In her essay, she wrote: "I apologise for the delay in getting this posted. I was late in hearing about it. I understand this is long, but my last interview was over a decade ago. "The Miseducation was the first time I worked with musicians outside of the Fugees [whose] report and working relationship was clear. In an effort to create the same level of comfort, I may not have established the necessary boundaries and may have been more inviting than I should have been. "In hindsight, I would have handled it differently for the removal of any confusion. And I have handled it differently since, I'm clear and I make clear before someone walks in the door what I am and am not looking for. I may have been inclusive, but these are my songs." She also refuted Glasper's allegations that she was difficult to work with and she cut musicians' pay when she was displeased with them. Lauryn wrote: "Don't have the details or recollection of cutting the band's pay in half. If fees had been negotiated and confirmed without my knowledge, I may have asked for them to be adjusted. But I would never just cut a musician's pay arbitrarily unless I had a legitimate reason. There are artists who do cut pay though. James Brown was notorious for docking musicians if they did something he didn't like, I'm sure there are others. "Men often can say 'I want it done like this' and not be challenged. The same rules don't always apply for women who may be met with resistance. When this happens you replace that player with someone who respects you and the office you hold."

GOULDING SET TO WORK WITH DISCIPLES

Ellie Goulding looks set to collaborate with Disciples. The dance production duo - comprised of Nathan Vincent Duvall, Gavin Koolmon and Luke McDermott - have revealed they met the 'Still Falling For You' hitmaker at a festival and have been discussing working on a song together via email. Nathan told The Sun newspaper's Bizarre column: "We met last month. I went up to her and said, 'We should do something' and she went, 'Yeah, take my details'. "There have been emails ??? there are things in the pipeline." It appears Ellie could be heading in a dance direction, as producer Jax Jones recently revealed he's been in the studio with the pop star. The 'You Don't Know Me' hitmaker enjoyed the writing sessions they had and was even given lessons on protecting the planet during their time together, as Ellie is a Global Goodwill Ambassador for UN Environment. Jax recently BANG Showbiz: "I've been learning more about the environment from Ellie Goulding. "We did a session and she has been teaching me all about global warming. "She has taught me a lot about the work she does for the UN and humanitarian stuff. "I can now say it has become more of a passion." Jax doesn't know whether the stuff they've been working on will feature on Ellie's long-awaited follow-up to 2015's 'Delirium' though. He said: "We were in the studio together. We are writing and seeing how it goes. "She is a great person to work with. "We are just writing songs, whether it will be for her album or for me, we will just see what happens at the end." Ellie - who recently got engaged to art dealer Caspar Jopling - released just one song last year, 'First Time', which she recorded with tropical house DJ Kygo. But the 31-year-old star took to her Instagram account earlier this year, to let fans know she'll be unveiling fresh tracks in the next 12 months. Accompanying a funny video of a man frantically playing a piano complete with multiple instruments, she wrote: "Me in the studio after two vodkas #EG4 #ComingForYou2018 (sic)" The 'On My Mind' hitmaker has been writing and recording her fourth album in London, but admitted last year it had been a slow process. She previously said: "I've been writing my fourth album, which is quite insane to think that I'm on my fourth album, at this point. It's been coming together slowly. I'm writing a lot in London in a studio so watch this space."



Cary Fukunaga says he was ditched for It due to studio fears

Cary Fukunaga thinks he was ditched as the director of 'It' because the studio feared he would go rogue. The 41-year-old filmmaker wrote the script for the 2017 horror movie and he was also set to direct the project, but he exited the movie two weeks before filming began and Andy Muschietti was instead drafted in. He reflected: "I think it was fear on their part, that they couldn't control me." Asked whether the studio's perception of him was accurate, Cary told GQ magazine: "No, they thought they couldn't control me. I would have been a total collaborator. "That was the kind of ridiculous part. It was just more a perception. I have never



seen a note. No way. It's always been a conversation." Cary said that contrary to popular perception, he's actually open to compromise and has been willing to make sweeping changes to some of his earlier projects. The director - who helmed the 2015 war drama 'Beasts of No Nation', which starred Idris Elba - said: "I don't think I've ever been able to make something uncompromising. Like, someone commented on 'Beasts', 'Oh, how did it feel to make a movie that's uncompromising?' "Like, uncompromising? I had to rewrite my entire third act 'cause we didn't have the money to finish the film. We compromise all over the place."

Lifestyle | Gossip

Director teases themes of Fantastic Beasts 2: The Crimes of Grindelwald

F'antastic Beasts 2: The Crimes of Grindelwald' will be a "celebration of diversity", according to director David Yates. The 54-year-old filmmaker - who has helmed the sequel to 'Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them' - has given fans an insight into what they can expect from the latest movie, revealing that it will serve as a celebration of tolerance and "acceptance of the other". Asked whether the story of 'The Crimes of Grindelwald' is a response to what's going on in the world at the moment, David explained: "If you're making a movie, ultimately, you can't help but be sensitive to the world in which you create it. "It influences you every single day, influenced [J. K. Rowling] when she was writing the script, influences us as we put the whole story together. So we sort of, like - we're alive to



what's happening in the bigger world. "But the themes, I think, are kind of universal and archetypal and timeless, which is ultimately ... rather than a direct political sort of counterpoint or context, it's really about the values of tolerance and understanding and a celebration of diversity." David explained that the ideas explored in the new movie are typical of J. K. Rowling's career. Speaking to Collider, he added: "They're not just relevant to now. What's slightly scary is they're becoming more relevant now. "So what's wonderful is that we're making a movie that will be seen by millions of people and millions of young people, and we're making a story that celebrates tolerance, acceptance of the other, and sort of be cynical when people pretend they have all the answers at a simplistic level, because they probably don't."



Slayer extend farewell tour into 2019

Slayer have extended their last-ever tour until 2019. The thrash metal band have added one extra gig for next year, France's Hellfest Open Air festival on June 23, 2019, but admitted there will be "plenty more" shows planned after they were "blown away" by demand for their 'Final World Tour'. Guitarist Kerry King - who makes up the 'Raining Blood' hitmakers alongside Tom Araya, Paul Bostaph and Gary Holt - said in a statement: "We always knew this tour would take us into 2019. We've been blown away by the response we've been getting here in North America. "We've heard about fans who have driven five, six hours, or flown in from other cities or countries to see us, so we want to assure our fans that we'll be on the road through 2019 and will get to as many places around the world as possible to make it easier for everyone to come and see us one last time.

"There will be more - plenty more. 2019 is 12 months long and the world is a big place." Bassist Tom has thanked the group's "loyal and dedicated" fans for their support, and urged them to keep their "eyes and ears open" for the announcement of further tour dates. He said: "I just want to take the time out to say thank you to all our fans who have made this first part of this tour phenomenal. "You really are loyal and dedicated fans and we appreciate that so much from you. We still have quite a few places to play, so next year, keep your eyes and ears open so you can catch us live one last and final time. Again, thank you!" In January, Slayer announced they will quit touring when they finish their next run of gigs, and in May they announced their final UK and European shows, which will kick off at Dublin's 3Arena on November 1, before they head to London on November 3.

Alec Baldwin to star in The Joker



Alec Baldwin is set to star in 'Joker'. The 60-year-old actor is said to be in line to portray Thomas Wayne, the physician and philanthropist father of Bruce Wayne/ Batman, who will be played by Joaquin Phoenix in the holy-anticipated movie. According to Deadline, Baldwin's role is yet to have been announced by Warner Bros., but he is expected to take on the part of Thomas, who, along with his wife, is shot outside the theatre, a tragic event which Bruce witnesses, igniting his path to becoming a vigilante. Wayne's killer was initially hitman Joe Chill in the early 'Batman' comics, but in the superhero's 1989 movie the Joker was the aggressor. Filming is due to start on September 10 and Todd Phillips is to direct the motion picture, which will also star Robert De Niro, Marc Maron and Frances Conroy. Phoenix recently admitted his portrayal of the Joker would be "unique". He said: "I wouldn't quite classify this as like any genre. I wouldn't say it's a superhero movie, or a studio movie or a ... It feels unique, and I think more than anything, and probably the most important thing, is Todd seems very passionate about it and very giving, and so that's exciting. "I think, underneath the excitement of these films, and the size of them, there are these incredible characters that are dealing with real life struggles. And sometimes that is uncovered and exposed, and sometimes it isn't, and so I always felt, like, there were characters in comics that were really interesting and deserve the opportunity to be kind of studied. "And so I think that's what Todd sees appealing about this idea." 'Joker' is scheduled for release on October 4, 2019.



Screen legend Judi Dench to get honorary award in Spain

British screen legend Judi Dench, best known for her role as M in James Bond films, will receive a lifetime achievement award at Spain's famous San Sebastian film festival, organizers said yesterday. The 83-year-old actress who won an Oscar in 1999 for her role as Queen Elizabeth I in "Shakespeare in Love" will get the Donostia Award on September 25, they said. Dench, a veteran star of the stage and screen, made her cinema debut in 1964 and has worked with directors as varied as Stephen Frears, Kenneth Branagh, Clint Eastwood and Sam Mendes. Her subtle portrayal of complex characters such as Queen Victoria in "Mrs Brown" or author Iris Murdoch in "Iris" have earned her critical acclaim. A seven-time Oscar nominee and the recipient of several Bafta awards, Dench is perhaps best known worldwide for playing M, the head of MI6, in James Bond films. It will be her first visit to the film festival in the Basque Country, where her new film "Red Joan," directed by Trevor Nunn, will be screened. In the film inspired on a true story, she plays a tranquil retiree who is suddenly arrested by MI5 and exposed as a long-standing KGB spy. She will join US actor Danny de Vito and Japanese director Hirokazu Kore-eda, whose film "Shoplifters" won the Palme d'Or in this year's Cannes Film Festival, in receiving the Donostia Award. Past recipients include Gregory Peck, Robert De Niro, Bette Davis, Susan Sarandon and Meryl Streep.



Kesha teases artwork for her The Struts song

Kesha's next new music will be a feature on glam rock group The Struts' track 'Body Talks'. The 'Praying' hitmaker has recorded a new version of the British band's recent single, which is set to be released today. The 31-year-old pop singer shared the artwork which sees her stand next frontman Luke Spiller on her social media profiles. She simply captioned the post: "Body Talks." Whilst bassist Jed Elliott added to his profiles: "About 8 years ago I crashed my car listening to Tik Tok by Kesha. "Now we've got a song together. Coming Wednesday @iiswihoiis (sic)" Luke previously revealed what it was like working with the 'Die Young' hitmaker and how she loves The Rolling Stones, who they have supported in the past. He said: "When you talk to her about her music and stuff, she loves the Stones."She loves a

lot of great British bands. So I think we naturally connected and she heard the song, and that was it really. " Kesha's last song was a feature on Macklemore's 'Good Old Days' last year, following the release of her comeback LP 'Rainbow'. Meanwhile, The Struts have also been involved with Little Mix's next album. Band member Jade Thirlwall revealed earlier this year that she has been jamming with her rocker boyfriend Jed on new material for the British girl group's follow-up to 2016's 'Glory Days'. The brunette beauty said: "We've had three months off with the band so I've been doing some studio sessions with Jed for some Little Mix stuff." Singer Luke also shared how he's penned a track with Jade and bandmate Jed. He said: "We did a song together, the three of us, but I don't know what is going to happen with that."

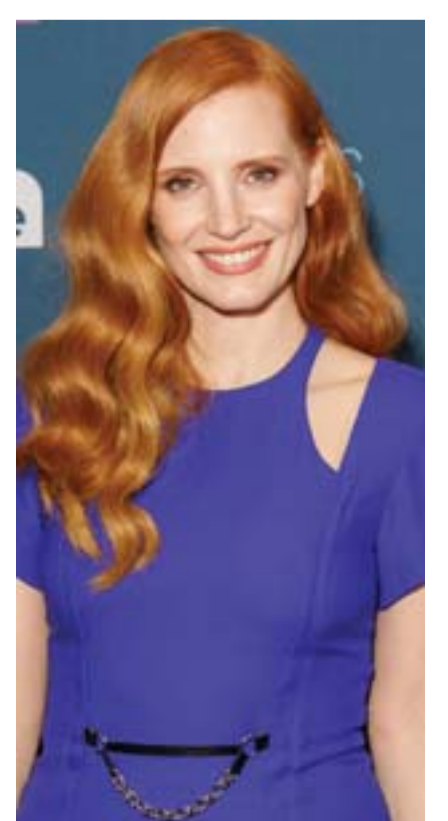
Constance Wu: I don't think anything through

Constance Wu doesn't "think anything through". The 36-year-old actress - who stars in 'Crazy Rich Asians' - has been outspoken on a number of issues concerning the Asian-American community and the film business in general, including likening the use of CGI to make 'Ghost in the Shell' star Scarlett Johansson "look more Asian" to the "practice of blackface". Constance admitted: "I don't think anything through. I am very impulsive and reactive. I have always been a person who is kind of outspoken, but nobody knew who I was before. "Now I have this weird thing called fame, and I wasn't looking for it, I didn't ask for it, but if you have it, you might as well use it for something good. And the best thing I think I can do is help amplify the voices of people who don't feel heard." Constance insisted she doesn't hold a grudge against any of the big-name actors and actresses she's criticized over the years, like Scarlett. But, on the other hand, she also thinks it's important that she continues to speak her mind. Constance told the Guardian newspaper: "I love Scarlett Johansson. I'm not blaming Scarlett. She isn't out there like, 'Let me go choose the part that's going to make people mad the most.' "But the only way she'll know that she's doing that is if we begin a conversation and say, 'It's not your fault, but this is something that's important to a population.'"



Tate Taylor to direct Jessica Chastain's Eve

Tate Taylor will direct Jessica Chastain's new movie 'Eve'. The future of the blockbuster was thrown up in the air earlier this year when bosses were forced to find a new filmmaker following Matthew Newton's decision to step down over concerns about his abusive past but, although it's taken a while to get to the production stage, it looks like things are finally coming together as the 49-year-old film director has agreed to lead the flick, according to Empire. This isn't the first time Taylor and Chastain, 41, have worked together on a big film as he previously directed her in 'The Help' back in 2011. However, Jessica was no doubt devastated when Newton - who also penned the script - was pulled from the film as she was looking forward to working with him. She said at the time: "Matthew is wonderfully adept at crafting complex and relatable characters. We've been fans of his work and are so thrilled to be partnering with him and Voltage on 'Eve'." Official plot details are still a closely-guarded secret, but according to Collider, Eve is a female assassin who is being hunted by her former employers. It's not yet known whether bosses will go ahead and use Newton's script. Meanwhile, Jessica has recently lashed out at Hollywood's gender pay gap. The actress has also insisted she "isn't afraid" to speak out against inequality. She explained: "It's important to speak out and amplify our imbalance in the moviemaking industry. I have experienced no backlash from anyone since making my views public. "I certainly wasn't afraid to do it. Glad I did it. It's taken a long time to get this far, and I'm out front for those who cannot speak out. We must turn this around." — Bang Showbiz





Cubans dance Rumba in a street of Havana. — AFP photos

Rumba, the dance of seduction running through Cubans' veins



A couple dance Rumba in a street of Havana.



A Rumba teacher talks to musicians, during a master class in Havana.



Cubans and tourists take a Rumba masterclass in Havana.

Born among black slaves on sugar plantations, Cuba's rumba has since become a national icon almost as renowned as its cigars or amateur boxers and two years ago was designated by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage. Set to a five-stroke rhythm and the beat of hollow claves and African drums, Cubans take to the streets of Havana every year in August to celebrate their dance of seduction. And while rumba has expanded and traveled to grace the great dance halls of Europe, its essence is conserved in the blood of Cubans who keep the rhythm alive in their everyday movements. "It's an expression of the joy of life, created during the slavery period in the sugar plantations, in the neighborhoods, in the ports, on the railway lines," said Miguel Barnet, president of Cuba's writers and artists guild. "Wherever the slave worked, he needed his spiritual and liturgical songs, for salvation and healing."

Clave rhythm

It developed from the end of the 18th century through the 19th. Men, usually dressed all in white, wearing a hat and sometimes carrying a cane, move elegantly as women's wide, brightly colored skirts flutter to their steps. The man fol-



A couple dance Rumba in a street of Havana.

lows and woos the woman as both move their hips and slide their arms and legs to the clave rhythm. It's not just a performance to watch, though, as spectators often join in and allow their bodies to be swept along by the African drumbeat. To the outsider, it might look sexual, and not without reason. The man at times produces a pelvic thrust known as the "vacunao" that betrays the rumba's roots as an African fer-



Cubans dance Rumba in a street of Havana.



A Cuban musician prepares his drums to play Rumba in Havana.

tility dance. "For me, rumba is Cuba and I'm a loyal conservationist of the tradition," said 31-year-old Yanaisis Ordonez who graduated from the National School of Art in 2004.

"It feels like it belongs to me. I carry it in my blood." In the La Maravilla courtyard in front of the Belen convent that once owned a sugar plantation with more than 300 slaves, children watch and try to imitate the dancers' steps. A shirtless man collecting buckets of water passes by; occasionally a youngster listening to reggaeton on a speaker comes into earshot, perhaps unaware that the beat he's listening to shares the same Bantu cultural influence and African roots as rumba, according to music critic Pedro de la Hoz.

'Born before Cuba'

"Rumba was born before Cuba and a long time before the idea of heritage was born," said

Barnet. "Rumba is older and contributed to the development of the nation concept. It's a fundamental part of Cuban identity." When Rumba caught on, it started to be practiced in various neighborhoods and communities. "It's a type of folklore that's not stuck in time. It incorporates new ways and approaches, and that keeps it alive," said De la Hoz. It radiated throughout the world through salsa, in cabaret shows and prestigious dance halls. "It's music and dance that intertwine legacies from Africa, Spain and other parts of the Caribbean in Cuban music," added De la Hoz.

"It has African drums and intonations but there's a lot from Spain: are there not traces of flamenco in rumba?" Today rumba exists in New York, Paris, Mexico and on the big screen, but also in Cuban courtyards.

"There's rumba in the great symphonic genres. But it also remains right here in the neigh-

borhoods, where it will never cease to exist," said De la Hoz.

'Unique flavor'

For De la Hoz, rumba "reflects the legacy of a continent that came to recognize itself as such in Cuba." Following their arrival in colonial-era Cuba or Brazil, "Africans became aware that they belonged to a continent, to a wider culture." Now, though, despite rumba's "unique flavor," it's become a professional discipline, according to dance coach Isaías Rojas, from the Superior Institute of Art. "We've seen amazing rumba dancers in the United States and eastern Europe," he said. However, its heart and soul will always remain in the Caribbean. "Rumba lives in people's daily lives, when they go to the store, to the butcher. When you walk, your body converses with, and dances rumba," said Rojas. — AFP



Cuddliest artist in Vienna, panda's paintings go on sale

Vienna Zoo is luring visitors with a new attraction: a painting panda. Yang Yang, a female that gave birth to twins two years ago, has learned to use a brush to paint small pictures, and 100 of them are being sold online for 490 euros (\$560) each, to raise funds to produce a picture book about the Austrian zoo's pandas. Yang Yang's abstract works are reminiscent of the first attempts of a small child - black splotches on white paper. — Reuters



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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Very hot and with light variable wind changing to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h.

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

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 28/08/2018 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	46 °C	34 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	47 °C	32 °C			
ABDALY	48 °C	29 °C			
BUBYAN	** °C	** °C			
JAHRA	48 °C	34 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	44 °C	30 °C			
SALMIYAH	41 °C	34 °C			
AHMADI	40 °C	35 °C			
NUWASIB	41 °C	30 °C			
WAFRA	45 °C	30 °C			
SALMY	46 °C	29 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	08/29	Very hot	47 °C	32 °C	N-NW	12 - 35 km/h
Thursday	08/30	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas and some high clouds will appear	46 °C	31 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 30 km/h
Friday	08/31	Very hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas and some scattered clouds will appear	47 °C	31 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 30 km/h
Saturday	09/01	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas and some high clouds will appear	46 °C	32 °C	NW-SE	10 - 35 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:00
Sunrise	05:23
Zuhr	11:49
Asr	15:23
Sunset	18:15
Isha	19:35

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	47 °C
MIN. Temp.	28 °C
MAX. RH	46 %
MIN. RH	08 %
MAX. Wind	E 36 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

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Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
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Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
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Nuzha	22526804
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Qadsiya	22515088
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Flight Schedule

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Wednesday 29/8/2018				Departure Flights on Wednesday 29/8/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	405	Sohag	00:05	IAW	158	Al Najaf	13:00
JZR	513	Sharm el-Sheikh	00:10	RBG	554	Alexandria	13:10
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15	JZR	176	Dubai	13:10
QTR	8511	Doha	00:45	SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	THY	767	Istanbul	13:40
KAC	102	London	00:50	JZR	144	Doha	13:55
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
MSR	618	Alexandria	01:35	RAJ	645	Amman	14:15
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	CLX	792	Hanoi	14:30
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	FEG	442	Asyut	14:50
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	JZR	802	Tbilisi	14:50
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00	KNE	773	Taif	15:00
JZR	267	Beirut	02:10	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	KAC	539	Sharm el-Sheikh	15:00
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	WAN	415	Beirut	15:00
WAN	714	AGP	02:20	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
AEE	956	ATH	02:25	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	JZR	188	Dubai	15:10
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
THY	768	Istanbul	02:40	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
THY	1404	AYT	02:45	KNE	684	Madinah	15:50
KAC	418	Manila	03:05	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:55
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:00
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KNE	530	Jeddah	16:00
RJA	648	Amman	03:05	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
RBG	215	Sohag	03:05	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10	KAC	619	Doha	16:15
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:25	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
KAC	796	Madinah	03:35	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:40
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	SVA	505	Madinah	16:55
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30	MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:55
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	SAW	706	Damascus	17:00
JZR	1541	Cairo	04:35	KEC	503	Beirut	17:15
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	FDB	052	Dubai	17:20
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
KAC	544	Cairo	05:20	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	KAC	381	Delhi	17:45
KAC	154	Istanbul	05:35	NIA	362	Alexandria	17:50
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	KAC	331	Trivandrum	17:55
JZR	561	Sohag	05:55	KAC	283	Dhaka	18:00
BAW	157	London	06:10	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:25	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
JZR	603	Mumbai	06:25	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:25	JZR	184	Dubai	18:20
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	JZR	608	Hyderabad	18:25
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	JAV	622	Amman	18:30
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50	JZR	240	Amman	18:30
JZR	505	Doha	06:55	KAC	151	Istanbul	18:35
JZR	143	Doha	07:00	JZR	538	Cairo	18:35
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
WAN	342	Sohag	07:30	WAN	117	Bahrain	19:30
JZR	503	Luxor	07:50	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
KAC	384	Delhi	08:05	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
JZR	529	Asyut	08:10	RJA	641	Amman	20:00
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
SAW	703	Damascus	08:30	JZR	552D	Alexandria	20:05
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	FBR	058	Dubai	20:30
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	JZR	602	Mumbai	20:30
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:25	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	DLH	624	Dammam	20:50
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	353	Bengaluru	21:00
IRM	1188	Mashhad	09:55	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00
SYR	341	Latakia	10:05	KNE	232	Riyadh	21:00
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
JZR	787	Riyadh	10:30	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:35
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
JZR	903	Baku	11:10	KAC	205	Islamabad	21:55
JZR	165	Dubai	11:45	KTM	308	Abu Dhabi	22:05
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00	EDM	445	Cairo	22:10
WAN	134	Doha	12:20	KAC	543	Colombo	22:20
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	KAC	383	Delhi	22:25
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:30	THY	1413	TXZ	22:25
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	JZR	860	Dubai	22:30
THY	766	Istanbul	12:45	KAC	604	Ahmedabad	22:40
CLX	792	Luxembourg	12:45	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:50
JZR	239	Amman	13:00	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:00
JZR	357	Mashhad	13:05	KAC	411	Bangkok	23:15
RJA	644	Amman	13:20	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:30	SVA	515	Riyadh	23:30
				WAN	337	Alexandria	23:40
				JZR	503	Jeddah	23:45
				SVA	560	Sohag	23:45

Trump says Google 'rigged' with bad news about him

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump took aim yesterday at Google, claiming that news search results were "rigged" against him, which prompted a White House aide to suggest the administration may look at regulating the huge Internet platform. In early morning Twitter comments, the US president complained that searches for "Trump News" brought up negative stories about him, and questioned whether this was illegal.

The attacks follow Trump's unsubstantiated claims repeated last week that US social media giants were "censoring" conservative voices. On Google, Trump wrote, "they have it RIGGED, for me & others, so that almost all stories & news is BAD. Fake CNN is prominent. Republican/Conservative & Fair Media is shut out. Illegal?" According to Trump, "96% of results on 'Trump News' are from National Left-Wing Media," which he describes as "very dangerous".

Google strongly denied Trump's claims. "Search is not used to set a political agenda and we don't bias our results toward any political ideology," a Google spokesperson said in an email. "Every year, we issue hundreds of improvements to our algorithms to ensure they surface high-quality content in response to users' queries. We continually work to improve Google search and we never rank search results to manipulate political sentiment."

The claims appeared to be based on a report from the Trump-friendly news site PJ Media which relied on an analysis chart by conservative news host Sharyl Attkisson that categorized major news outlets such as the New York Times, CBS and CNN as "left wing". "Google & others are suppressing voices of Conservatives and hiding informa-

tion and news that is good," Trump said. "They are controlling what we can & cannot see. This is a very serious situation - will be addressed!"

Technology and media analysts say there is little evidence to suggest Google is skewing results for political reasons. And if they did, the president would have little recourse under the constitution's free speech protections. "Accusations of search engine 'bias' have existed as long as there have been search engines. Indeed, search engines are 'biased' in the sense that they privilege some information over others," said Eric Goldman, who heads Santa Clara University's High Tech Law Institute.

Goldman said that any attempt by government to force search engines to display only good news would be a flagrant violation of the Constitution's First Amendment speech guarantees. "Search engines fully qualify for First Amendment protections for their search results. Numerous cases going back over 15 years have confirmed this," he said. "Any effort by Trump to 'fix' search engine results will violate the First Amendment. It's not even a close question."

'Looking into it'

It was not immediately clear what if any measures Trump envisioned, but his top economic adviser Larry Kudlow told reporters at the White House that "we're looking into it" when asked about the claims on Google. Nuala O'Connor, president of the Washington-based Center for Democracy & Technology, said that while "algorithmic bias" is a legitimate question, there is no evidence of bias and that it would be worrisome if the government tried to step in with regulations. "It's deeply concerning that any government official would



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump speaks to reporters after a phone conversation with Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto on trade in the Oval Office of the White House on Monday. — AFP

try to bring public pressure on a platform over news and information that is important to our democracy," O'Connor said.

While there is little to suggest that internet firms actively suppress content for political reasons and

have large online followings, public perception is another matter. A Pew Research Center survey released in June found 43 percent of Americans think major technology firms support the views of liberals over conservatives, and 72 percent accepted the

idea that social media platforms actively censor opposing political views. Among Republicans and Republican-leaning independents, 85 percent said they think social media sites intentionally censor political viewpoints, Pew found. — AFP

Iran lawmakers reject Rouhani answers on economic woes



TEHRAN: President Hassan Rouhani speaks at the Iranian parliament yesterday. — AFP

TEHRAN: Iran's parliament declared its dissatisfaction with President Hassan Rouhani yesterday, voting to reject his answers after grilling him over the deteriorating economy. It was the first time Rouhani had been summoned by parliament in his five years in power, and MPs demanded answers on unemployment, rising prices and the sharp depreciation of the rial, which has lost more than half of its value since April. The lawmakers, who have already impeached his labor and economy ministers this month, were unimpressed.

In votes at the end of the session, they expressed dissatisfaction with Rouhani's responses to four of their five questions on the economy. In the coming days, they will decide whether the government's failures on these issues amount to a breach of legal obligations and should be referred to the judiciary. The economy has been battered by the return of US sanctions following President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from the landmark nuclear deal between Iran and world powers. Rouhani trod a difficult line, seeking to acknowledge the problems facing ordinary Iranians without admitting to a full-blown crisis. "It should not be said we are facing a crisis. There is no crisis. If we say there is, it will become a problem for society and then a threat," he told parliament.

As usual, Rouhani offered no concrete policy proposals, instead saying the answer lay in showing a united front. "You may talk about employment, foreign currency, recession, smuggling... I think the problem is in people's view of the future," he said. "The people are not afraid of the United States, they are afraid of our disagreements. If the people see we are united, they will realise the problems will be resolved."

But Rouhani's government - which staked everything on its bid to attract foreign investment through a more "moderate" approach to relations with the West - has been badly weakened by the return of sanctions. Most foreign firms have abandoned investment projects in Iran, and the next phase of renewed US sanctions in November will hit the crucial oil sector. "We will not allow a bunch of anti-Iranians who have gathered in the White House to conspire against

us," Rouhani vowed. But most Iranians blame the government for failing to capitalize on the nuclear deal. "You created a palace of wishes called the JCPOA," said Mojtaba Zolnour, an MP for the religious center of Qom, using the technical name for the nuclear deal. "With one kick from Trump, this palace was demolished, and you didn't have an alternative," he said. Despite the impeachment of two of his ministers, Rouhani himself is protected by supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who said recently that removing the president would "play into the hands of the enemy".

That may explain the soft line taken by several speakers, with one conservative MP, Hossein Naghavi-Hosseini, emphasising: "We will stand by your government for the sake of protecting the system of the Islamic republic." But when it came to the votes, lawmakers accepted only one of Rouhani's answers - related to international banking sanctions, which they agreed were beyond his government's control.

Rouhani has even lost support among reformists who had backed him as the best option after their own leaders were either locked up or barred from standing for office. Leading reformist Mostafa Tajzadeh, who has spent several years in jail for criticizing the system, said Rouhani's parliament appearance was a missed opportunity. "By explaining the reasons for the country's problems, Rouhani could have taken a big step towards increasing public awareness," he wrote on Twitter. "Parliament's negative votes shows that failing to disclose the facts will only embolden our rivals and disappoint the people."

The only previous time a president has been questioned was in 2012 when parliament summoned Rouhani's controversial predecessor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, whose erratic, populist style had alienated him from the establishment and further damaged Iran's international standing. It was after that session that MPs decided they should vote on the president's answers, deputy speaker Ali Motahari explained to ISNA news agency this week, because Ahmadinejad's responses were so "strange" and unconvincing. — AFP

Crippling costs of investigative...

Continued from Page 1

being missed, which is a major worry for democracy, Ryle argued. "There is huge pressure on younger journalists to produce more and more, what is described as 'churnalism', working very quickly turning around press releases and statements and not having the time to check facts or poke around".

Ryle said the Panama Papers investigation - which uncovered clandestine financial dealings on a grand scale through offshore shell companies - cost the ICIJ \$2 million. "To that you have to add to the cost of the 300 reporters who were collaborating on the project in 80 countries across the world, which would be millions more." Ryle insisted that despite the obstacles investigative journalism was experiencing a renaissance thanks to "a small number of journalists around the world". "This is partly because of non-profits like ourselves (supporting reporting) and because of Trump and the fake news era we are in, journalists are more keen to prove what we are doing is worthwhile and essential.

"Journalism is fighting for its life and is trying to make itself relevant and counter all the attacks on it. So in some ways there is better reporting being done now," he said. "There is definitely a fight back. Philanthropists are seeing the need to support investigative reporting in order to keep people accountable.

After flooding, tourism in Kerala...

Continued from Page 1

Sudarsanan T K, a houseboat owner in the town of Alappuzha, had been looking forward to the peak tourist season, but as his home disappeared under 2.5 m of water his family now have to live aboard the boat he would otherwise be renting to tourists from Europe, China, Malaysia and India. "I've nothing left, but this houseboat. I don't know how I can repay my bank loan in this condition. The bank may take back my boat. I will have nothing at all then," Sudarsanan, a 64-year-old father of two, told Reuters.

Some 1,500 houseboats are tied up at Alappuzha, going nowhere, with many of the owners still paying off loans taken to buy the boats. Sudarsanan owes about \$8,600 on the loan taken eight years ago to buy the boat, and he could have earned up to \$7,000 by December if the deluge hadn't washed away his hopes. Hundreds of people perished in the flood and more than one million of Kerala's 35 million people were forced to abandon their homes and take shelter in relief camps.

Blessed with natural beauty, fertile land and bountiful seas, Kerala has been dubbed "God's own country" by its people, but the Marxists running the state government reckon it will need \$3.57 billion to rebuild over the next two years. "Kerala's GDP growth may fall by 2 percent," state Finance Minister T.M. Thomas Isaac told Reuters, forecasting growth of 6 percent for the financial year ending next March. Crops have been lost, the construction industry was dead for a month, and tourism, which contributes 10 percent of the state's economy but accounts for about 25 percent of jobs creation, has been badly hit.

For discerning tourists looking for a more laidback Indian experience, Kerala has it all - long sandy beaches, lazy waterways, charming, historic towns like Kochi



MAALULA, Syria: In this file photo taken on Sept 18, 2013 AFP reporter Sammy Ketz hits the ground as a Syrian soldier runs past during sniper fire in this ancient Christian town. — AFP

"It is pretty small compared to the old business model but it is certainly growing. People are funding reporting because they see a democratic need for it - but it is not making up for what was there before." — AFP

and the cool, forested hills of the Western Ghats. Kerala doesn't draw numbers like the northern tourist circuit, the so-called "Golden Triangle" running from New Delhi to the Taj Mahal in Agra, and Jaipur's palaces in the desert state of Rajasthan, but it has carved out a sizable niche.

Last year, one million foreigners visited Kerala, along with 15 million domestic tourists, but state government and industry officials reckon the flood will result in losses for the tourism sector of \$357 million. The floods struck just as Kerala was gearing up for Onam, the harvest festival which is one of the highlights of the state's cultural calendar. Festivities, including the spectacular Vallam Kali races involving traditional war canoes, some manned by more than 100 paddlers, were postponed.

"Kerala has lost out on one of the best seasons, as the calamity struck during the 10-day run up to Onam," said Ranjini Nambiar, who heads a travel consultancy. Thousands of volunteers have joined a clean-up campaign mounted by the state, and Shilendran M, an executive with the CGH Earth luxury hotel chain, expected some kind of order to be restored within the next few weeks. "The state administration is working on a war footing," said Shilendran, whose group has more than a dozen properties in Kerala. "We are limping back to normal."

Hardly anywhere in the state escaped the calamity. Ernakulam district, the biggest industrial and tourism contributor to Kerala's economy and home to the historic city of Kochi, suffered major damage, and its busy international airport was shut for nearly two weeks. Munnar, a hill resort overlooking the tea and cardamom plantations high in the Ghats was cut off, as bridges were washed away and landslides blocked roads. Once every dozen years a bright purplish-blue bell-shaped flower called the Neelakurinji, blossoms on the slopes around Munnar - and this was one of those years. The state tourism had marketed 2018 as the Kurunji year, but people in Kerala are more likely to remember the mud. — Reuters

Sports

Astros ambush Oakland Athletics in opener of AL West showdown

Wild eighth inning carries Angels past Rockies

HOUSTON: George Springer keyed an outburst in the third inning before Alex Bregman sparked another in the eighth as the Houston Astros claimed the opener of a key three-game series with the visiting Oakland Athletics 11-4 on Monday at Minute Maid Park. Houston extended its winning streak to six games and pushed its lead over the Athletics in the American League West to 2 1/2 games with two games remaining in the season series. The Astros did so by rallying from a 4-0 deficit. Bregman finished 4-for-5, and he and Tyler White both hit three-run homers and drove in four runs. Marwin Gonzalez added three hits. Oakland's Marcus Semien and Matt Chapman hit two-run homers off Gerrit Cole (12-5), but the Houston starter got the win with six innings of four-run ball. Cole struck out eight.

Orioles 7, Blue Jays 0

Trey Mancini hit a three-run homer and drove in five runs, and David Hess threw six shutout innings as Baltimore defeated visiting Toronto to end an eight-game losing streak. Toronto's Kendrys Morales was unsuccessful in his bid to tie the major league record of hitting a home run in eight consecutive games. The designated hitter went 0-for-3 with a walk, and his streak ended at seven games, which still set a club record. The Orioles now are 2-12 versus Toronto this season. The Blue Jays lost their second in a row after a five-game win streak that included a three-game sweep of the Orioles last week.

Giants 2, Diamondbacks 0

Chris Stratton pitched a career-best eight shutout innings, and Steven Duggar hit a two-run home run in the second, delivering San Francisco a victory over visiting Arizona. Stratton (9-7) held the Diamondbacks to five hits. He struck out six and did not walk a batter, retiring the last 10 batters he faced. Giants reliever Tony Watson got the first two outs in the ninth, and Hunter Strickland recorded the final out to strand two runners and earn his 14th save.

Angels 10, Rockies 7

Eric Young Jr.'s two-out, bases-loaded single in the bottom of the eighth inning drove in two runs and helped lift Los Angeles past Colorado in Anaheim, Calif. The Angels snapped a six-game losing streak and prevented the Rockies from moving into a first-place tie with the Arizona Diamondbacks in the National League West. The Rockies had taken a 7-5 lead in the top of the eighth inning on a grand slam by DJ LeMahieu off Jim Johnson (5-3). However, the Angels rallied in the bottom of the inning against Adam Ottavino (6-3). Noe Ramirez pitched the ninth for his first career save.

Cubs 7, Mets 4

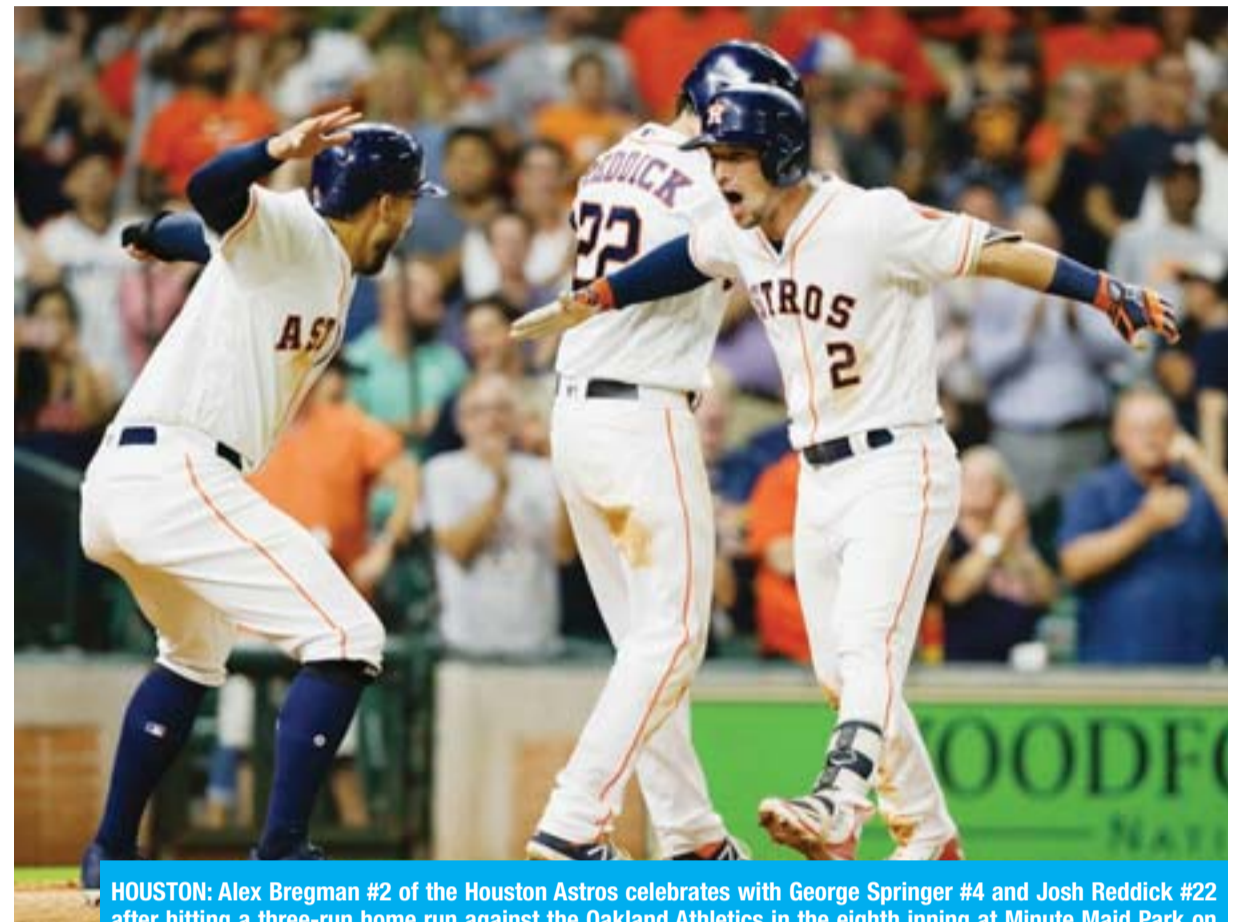
Ben Zobrist laced a tiebreaking double in the seventh inning, and host Chicago posted a come-from-behind win over New York. The Cubs have won six in a row to open up a 4 1/2-game lead on the second-place St. Louis Cardinals in the NL Central. The Mets have lost two straight. Anthony Rizzo homered and had three hits for the Cubs, while Zobrist, Javier Baez and Daniel Murphy had two hits apiece. Michael Conforto and Kevin Plawewski homered for New York.

White Sox 6, Yankees 2

Carlos Rodon pitched seven effective innings to win his fifth consecutive decision. Tim Anderson drove in two runs and made a dazzling play at shortstop, and Chicago won at New York. Rodon (6-3) matched a career high for consecutive wins by allowing two runs on two hits, which tied a career low. He walked four and struck out two. Since July 11, Rodon is 5-0 with a 1.72 ERA, and hitters are batting .143 (27-for-191) off him. Yoan Moncada had a two-run double for the White Sox.

Nationals 5, Phillies 3

Matt Wieters hit a solo homer, Stephen Strasburg pitched six effective innings, and visiting Washington



HOUSTON: Alex Bregman #2 of the Houston Astros celebrates with George Springer #4 and Josh Reddick #22 after hitting a three-run home run against the Oakland Athletics in the eighth inning at Minute Maid Park on Monday in Houston, Texas. —AFP

defeated Philadelphia. Juan Soto added two hits and an RBI for the Nationals. Strasburg (7-7) allowed two runs, five hits and three walks while striking out five. Justin

Miller pitched a perfect ninth to earn his first save of the season and the second of his career. Rhys Hoskins went 2-for-3 with a solo homer for the Phillies. —Reuters

ICC wants footage from new Al Jazeera graft documentary

SYDNEY: The Al Jazeera TV news channel is planning a follow-up documentary about alleged corruption in cricket, Australian and global cricket chiefs revealed yesterday, appealing for access to unedited footage to properly investigate the claims.

The Qatar-based broadcaster made a series of spot-fixing allegations in a first documentary entitled "Cricket's Match-Fixers" earlier this year involving unidentified current and former players. In that programme, Al Jazeera made contact with an Indian-based member of what it described as a fixing syndicate said to be linked to the notorious D Company crime gang.

"We are aware that there is a second documentary in the offing, this time based on historical recordings between a fixer, suspected to be (Aneel) Munawar and bookies in India," said Alex Marshall, head of the International Cricket Council's anti-corruption unit, in a statement.

"As with the first programme, we will investigate any claims made in a full and thorough manner and we take any allegations of corruption, historical or contemporary, extremely seriously. "Based on what we already know, we have engaged the services of an independent betting analysis company to examine the claims made about particular matches."

He urged Al Jazeera to hand over its evidence. "Access to the raw, unedited footage enables us to build a complete picture around the claims in the documentary and ensure our investigation is as fair and thorough as possible," he said. After the original documentary, the ICC launched a probe into the claims and said it had identified everyone involved except Munawar. It appealed yesterday to the cricket community to help track him down.

"We have identified every other person in the original documentary and have spoken to a number of them in connection with match-fixing, including those who are not deemed to be participants under our Anti-Corruption Code," said Marshall.

"However the true identity of Aneel Munawar remains a mystery. He plays a significant role in the programme, yet enquiries with law enforcement and immigration sources have not identified or located him."

He added that while a lack of cooperation from the broadcaster had slowed its investigation "we have been able to discount a number of claims made in the programme and continue to pursue other aspects".

"We will provide a full update at the conclusion of the investigation." Cricket Australia said it too had been notified by Al Jazeera of a follow-up programme involving fixing claims against current and former Australian players relating to matches from 2011. But it said so far the claims had not been found to be credible.

"Cricket Australia's Integrity Unit have conducted a review of the latest claims by Al Jazeera, from a known criminal source, and, from the limited information provided by Al Jazeera, our team have not identified any issues of corruption relating to current or former Australian players," it said. —AFP

Bolt struggling with football pace, but working hard

GOSFORD: Sprint superstar Usain Bolt admitted yesterday he was struggling with the tempo of professional football but is working hard to raise his fitness levels ahead of his first trial match this week.

The eight-time Olympic champion has been given an opportunity by Australia's Central Coast Mariners to fulfil his dream of a soccer career and has stepped up his training regime since hooking up with the A-League club last week. He was put through his paces with the rest of the squad at a more intensive session at the team's base in the town of Gosford, 75 kilometres (47 miles) north of Sydney, yesterday.

After some warming up and a jog around the pitch, he took part in ball drills and while his passing was fine, he was slow to get the hang of the movement required. The 32-year-old's lack of football fitness was also evident and he appeared to tire quickly, resting more than his teammates. Bolt admitted to struggling with the constant stop-start of football, more used to a quick fire sprint on the athletics track before winding down. "The most challenging thing for me is the stop and go because I'm not used to picking up speed, going back down, then back again," he said. "It's all about practising and getting used to the system. I have time so will just learn the ways and keep pushing." The Mariners hope to turn Bolt into A-League material in time for the start of the 2018/19 season in late October, with the club saying he can stay indefinitely to prove his credentials and earn a playing contract.

They have a pre-season friendly on Friday against an amateur side and Bolt is expected to get his first taste of a competitive game, but only as a substitute. "I imagine he'll



GOSFORD: Thirty-one-year-old eight-time Olympic champion Usain Bolt trains with A-League football club Central Coast Mariners in Gosford yesterday. —AFP

get some minutes on Friday," said club coach Mike Mulvey, conscious that thousands of fans are set to turn up and with the match due to be broadcast live on pay-tv.

He said the Jamaican was "doing OK". "The things we are asking him to do are things that he hasn't done for quite some years," he added. "He has played football as an athlete in between athletic meets so he has rudimentary

skills. There's no problem about that. It's about being able to do it at the speed that we do it. It takes time to adjust."

Bolt dominated sprinting since taking double individual gold at the Beijing Olympics in 2008. He went on to win a further six Olympic golds and pick up 11 world titles before retiring last year and pursuing his real passion-football. —AFP

Spurs ace Ginobili retires from NBA

LOS ANGELES: San Antonio Spurs star Manu Ginobili confirmed his retirement from basketball on Monday, bringing down the curtain on a 23-year career that included four NBA Finals victories.

The 41-year-old Argentine star, widely seen as the most successful foreign player in the history of the NBA, confirmed his retirement in a brief posting on social media. "Today, with a wide range of feelings, I'm announcing my retirement from basketball," Ginobili wrote.

"IMMENSE GRATITUDE to everyone (family, friends, teammates, coaches, staff, fans) involved in my life in the last 23 years. It's been a fabulous journey. Way beyond my wildest dreams." The veteran shooting guard was a key part of the San Antonio teams which won four NBA crowns between 2003 and 2014 after he joined the league in 2002 from Italian team Virtus Bologna.

As well as the four NBA titles, Ginobili was twice selected for the All Stars, in 2005 and 2011. He also helped Argentina score a shock gold medal victory at the 2004 Olympics in Athens. He is one of only eight players in history—and the only non-US born player—to have won four NBA

championships and an Olympic gold.

Ginobili's retirement signals the final end of an era at San Antonio where he was a key pillar of championship-winning teams alongside Tim Duncan (retired) and Tony Parker, who left the team last month.

Tributes to Ginobili quickly swept across social media following his retirement. "Congratulations on one helluva career brother!" LeBron James wrote on Twitter. "It was a pleasure to match up against you over the years. Regular season, Finals, National Team, didn't matter was always a treat! God bless you, thanks for the playing the game the right way."

The NBA said in a posting on Twitter signed by commissioner Adam Silver that Ginobili was "a pioneer who helped globalize the NBA ... one of basketball's greatest ambassadors. "For 16 years, we were fortunate to watch a legend compete at the highest level. Thank you, Manu, for a career that inspired millions of people around the world."

Golden State Warriors coach Steve Kerr added: "One of the all time greats. Fearless, funny, compassionate and competitive as hell. Thank you Manu! Warriors star Stephen Curry said Ginobili embodied "how basketball is meant to be played." "With Passion, joy, and obviously a Champion through and through. Inspiration many sir," Curry wrote on Twitter.

Former Los Angeles Lakers star Kobe Bryant described Ginobili as a "true champion...one of the best I have ever matched up with." —AFP

Ooredoo's ambassador Al-Jeraiwi participates in the Asian Games

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait's brand ambassador, triathlete Najla Al-Jeraiwi, is competing in the 2018 Olympic Asian Games' triathlon, which includes running, swimming, and cycling. The event is scheduled to take place from Friday to Sunday, and includes three categories: Men's individual race, women's individual race, and mixed relay. This is Kuwait's first official participation in an Olympic event after lifting the ban, which was put in place nearly three years ago.

In a press statement, Ooredoo Kuwait lauded the achievement, noting that her participation brings pride to all the youth of Kuwait. The sponsorship of athlete Al-Jeraiwi comes in alignment with the company's core values of caring, connecting, and challenging. It further underscores the company's commitment to empowering women.

Al-Jeraiwi has a long track record of key achievements. She won the gold medal in the Sierra Nevada Triathlon, in the Spanish district of Granada last June. She won the bronze medal in the African Triathlon Union Cup - the Pan Arab Competition, held in Sharm Al Shaikh last March. She was the first Arab female triathlete representative in the 17th Asian Games, South Korea and the first GCC representative in UCI Road World Championships 2016. She was also the



Najla Al-Jeraiwi

runner-up in the ATU African Triathlon & Pan Arab championship and the GCC cycling champion in both Time Trial and Road race. Al-Jeraiwi is currently the national champion of Kuwait in both triathlon and cycling. She has come in the top 3 in multiple regional triathlons.

Supporting youth and empowering women is among Ooredoo's top priorities through its CSR strategy. The company signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs in 2017 to support youth projects and initiatives. Ooredoo is continuously working with the different entities in both private and public sectors to enrich youth experience in a variety of fields.

Sports



Chaotic mixed relay gets thumbs-up at Asian Games

IOC president Bach promise the next Olympic Games will be 'more youthful'

JAKARTA: Athletes declared the Asian Games' first-ever mixed 4x400m relay a fun-if chaotic-success yesterday, ahead of its planned introduction at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. Athletics bosses have introduced the concept—two men and two women on each team, running in whichever order they choose—as they seek ways to freshen up the sport, and boost participation.

The eight teams in Jakarta tried out a range of combinations and strategies, as a bemused crowd struggled to figure out who was winning. "First you feel like it's difficult because how can you run with girls?" said Abbas Abbas, of gold-winning Bahrain. "But it's very nice especially when you trust your team."

"It's the first time I've raced with girls!" The Asian Games race was the format's debut at a major multi-sports event, ahead of scheduled appearances at next year's Doha world championships as well as Tokyo 2020.

IOC president Thomas Bach has promised the next Olympic Games will be "more youthful, more urban and include more women". It has been trialled at smaller events including last year's Nitro Series in Melbourne.

Ultimately the countries which ran in the order man-woman-woman-man did best in Jakarta, with Bahrain and India pulling clear of the pack early on. "We had two amazing girls. Very fast. Very strong. Like men. We ran with four men!" said Abbas' team-mate Ali Khamis.

India picked up their third title of the athletics meet with a one-two in the men's 800m, where Manjit Singh sprung a surprise on compatriot Jinson Johnson.

China's Yang Lei described the event as "chaos" after a gridlock emerged at the final baton handover, while Japan's Eri Utsunomiya-giggling at the confu-

sion-said it was "Fun... just fun."

'HEIR TO LIU'

Elsewhere at the regional Olympics' fourth night of athletics, Xie Wenjun successfully defended his 110m hurdles gold to stretch China's winning streak in the race to 32 years. Xie, 28, crossed the line in 13.34sec to hand China its ninth consecutive win in the event stretching back to the 1986 Games in Seoul.

"This medal is a very important medal not just for me but also Chinese hurdling, because it has been kept for a long time," he said. Xie said he had been given "special instructions" before the race by former Olympic champion and world-record holder Liu Xiang, who is revered as one of China's greatest ever sportsmen.

"He's my idol, and it is also an aim to catch up with him. But I'm still on the way," said Xie. In the women's javelin China took a one-two, with Liu Shiyi springing an upset on favourite Lyu Huihui, bronze-winner at last year's world championships in London. Liu took gold with a Games record throw of 66.09m.

There was also gold for China in the women's 800m, where Wang Chunyu triumphed over two-time defending Asian Games champion Margarita Mukasheva of Kazakhstan. And Li Ling brought up China's ninth athletics gold as she easily defended her pole vault title, clearing 4.60m for a Games record before failing to break her own Asian record with an attempt at 4.71m.

But Bahrain secured victory in the women's 5,000m—courtesy of Kalkidan Bekkadu's victory over 10,000m champ Daria Maslova—to stay in touch with China at the top of the athletics rankings, with eight golds. — AFP



JAKARTA: Bahrain's Oluwakemi Adekoya (R) hands the baton to teammate Abbas Abbas in the final of the mixed 4x400m relay athletics event during the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta yesterday. — AFP

DAY 11 OF THE ASIAN GAMES

JAKARTA: Highlights of day 11 of the 18th Asian Games in Jakarta and Palembang yesterday.

FIRST GOLD FOR SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi Arabia claimed their first gold of the Games of the meet in the Equestrian Team Jumping event, finishing ahead of Japan. Defending champions Qatar took the bronze.

SOUTH KOREA WIN WOMEN'S TEAM TRACK CYCLING GOLD

South Korea avenged their defeat at Incheon in 2014 with a dominant win, which saw them overlap defending champions China en route to victory in the women's team pursuit final. Japan beat Hong Kong to claim the bronze medal.

IRANIAN WEIGHTLIFTER KORDASIABI RETIRES

Iranian weightlifter Behdad Salimi Kordasiabi has announced his retirement after winning his third consecutive Asian Games gold medal in the men's 105kg category on Monday. The 28-year-old was also a gold medalist at the 2012 London Olympics and twice winner at the World Championships. "Behdad Salimi officially said goodbye to the sport of God's championship after the gold medal of Asian Games," the Iran Weightlifting Federation said on Instagram. "Behdad Salimi took his shoes to say goodbye from the Championship and kissed the weights."

GIDEON, SUKAMULJO TRIUMPH IN ALL-INDONESIA DOUBLES FINAL

Indonesian badminton duo Marcus Fernaldi Gideon and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo secured a 13-21 21-18 24-22 win over compatriots Muhammad Rian Ardianto and Fajar Alfian in the men's doubles final.

TAIWAN'S TAI OUTCLASSES SINDHU TO GRAB BADMINTON GOLD

Taiwan's Tai Tzu-ying won gold in the women's badminton singles final with a 21-13 21-16 victory over India's world number two Pusarla V. Sindhu. Tai, 24, won bronze four years ago in Incheon and also won gold at the Asian Championships in 2017 and 2018.

SOUTH KOREA BEAT HOLDERS INDIA TO ARCHERY GOLD

South Korea won a shoot-off to beat holders India in the men's archery team compound final, completing a double triumph for the nation following their women's team success.

CHRISTIE STUNS CHOU IN MEN'S BADMINTON FINAL

Indonesian Jonatan Christie dug deep to oust world number six Chou Tien-chen, of Taiwan, 21-18 20-22 21-15 in the men's badminton final, sparking huge celebrations from a partisan crowd at the venue. Christie, who won two gold medals at the 2017 Southeast Asian Games, adds to the silver he won in the team event earlier in the Games.

SOUTH KOREA RETAIN TEAM ARCHERY GOLD

South Korea have retained the gold medal in the women's team compound archery title after holding off a strong challenge from India, winning with a total score of 231-228. Taiwan won the bronze medal after beating Iran.

MALAYSIA BEAT INDONESIA TO WIN SEPAK TAKRAW GOLD

Malaysia won their first sepak takraw gold medal at the Asian Games since 1994 after earning a hard-fought 2-1 win over hosts Indonesia in the men's regu final.

KIM EDGES LEE IN ALL-KOREAN ARCHERY FINAL

Kim Woo-jin, a two-time gold medalist at the 2010 Asian Games, earned a 6-4 victory over compatriot Lee Woo-seok in the men's recurve individual final. Indonesian Riau Ega Agata Salsabilla clinched his first Asian Games medal, cheered on by the home crowd, as he beat Kazakhstan's Ilfat Abdullin to win the bronze. — Reuters

India's women boxers struggle without Kom

JAKARTA: Huswatun Hasanah set the Asian Games boxing tournament alight yesterday, becoming the first Indonesian woman ever to win a medal as India's female fighters struggled without "Magnificent" Mary Kom. Meanwhile Manny Pacquiao's proud boxing nation, the Philippines, secured their first medal of the men's tournament through flyweight Rogan Ladon. Indonesia's 20-year-old Hasanah showed a touch of arrogance as she showedboated in the second round and edged her lightweight quarter-final by split decision, 3-2, against India's Pavitra, who goes by just a single name. "I didn't think I could beat her, she is very experienced," Hasanah said of Pavitra, 31, who was in her first Asian Games and succeeding Sarita Devi, who controversially refused her 2014 bronze medal in a judging row, in the 60kg division.

"My strategy was to box to my coach's instructions," she told reporters. "There were no difficulties and I could tell how she was boxing from the first round." Indonesia's women's boxing team was only formed in

2006 and they have never won a medal at the Asian Games, until now. Hasanah's win means she is guaranteed a bronze even if she loses her semi-final against Thailand's Sudaporn Seesondee on Friday. But India's 2016 World Championships silver medalist Sonia Lather refused to speak to reporters after the crushing disappointment of a unanimous points defeat to tough North Korean Jo Son Hwa in the women's featherweight (57kg) quarter-final. Filipino Ladon squeaked past awkward Kazakhstan Azat Mahemtov to secure at least a bronze via a 3-2 split decision in a battle of southpaw flyweights. Ladon had arrested a major Philippines meltdown on Sunday when he became the first fighter to reach the last eight after four of his more fancied team-mates lost.

He prevailed even though he reopened an existing cut over his right eye early in the first round. "The cut? It's OK," he told AFP, despite wearing three butterfly plasters to close the wound. He will face Thai Yuttapong Tongdee in Friday's semi-final.

"I will listen and follow my coach's instructions for that opponent," Ladon added. "I need to focus more closely on what he tells me." India were left licking their wounds without all-time great Kom, the flyweight (51kg) gold medalist from four years ago, and former world and Asian champion Devi.

Five-time world champion Kom, the subject of the Bollywood biopic "Magnificent", has skipped the Asian Games to concentrate on winning a sixth world title on home

soil in Delhi in November.

WILD CELEBRATIONS

India has just one women's fighter left standing, flyweight Sarjubala Devi, who will try to avoid a medal wipeout when she fights China's Chang Yuan today for a place in the semi-finals.

Hasanah's win was greeted by wild scenes of celebration at the Jakarta International Expo among home supporters who had roared their delight every time the youngster landed a punch. Hasanah thanked the fans and said they had given her a huge boost. "They gave me the spirit (to win)," she told AFP. It made up for the hosts' disappointment when two Indonesian men missed out on a medal after losing their quarter-finals. Highly fancied Aldoms Suguro lost a 4-1 flyweight (52kg) split decision to Uzbekistan's Jasurbek Latipov.

And lightweight (60kg) Farrand Papendang was unanimously outpointed by Thailand's Rujakran Juntrong (5-0). Thailand again showed their strength in depth with a clean sweep of all five men's and women's quarter-finalists yesterday winning to the delight of their happy band of colourful and musical supporters.

In addition to Juntrong, Seesondee and Tongdee, welterweight (69kg) Ardee Saylor scored a unanimous points decision over Iran's Sajjad Kazemzadeh while women's featherweight (57kg) Techasuep Nilawan edged a 3-2 split decision over Kazakhstan's Saniya Sultankzy. —AFP



Kuwait shooting delegation to 18th Asian Games receive hero's welcome

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait Shooting Sport delegation to the 18th Asian Games received a heroes welcome at Kuwait International Airport.

Gold medalist in the skeet event Mansour Al-Rasheedi dedicated the achievement to HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Kuwait people.

He said it is hard to describe how happy he was to see Kuwait flag at the games with the national anthem being played after the sports suspension was lifted by the IOC.

He said the competition was very hard besides the bad weather.

Acting Director General of Sports Public Authority Sheikh Humoud Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah said the authority is committed to support and care for all athletes who



KSSC Secretary General Obaid Al-Osaimi, National Guard Major General Hashim Yousuf, Gold medalist Mansour Al-Rasheedi, KSSC President Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi and PAS Acting Director General Sheikh Humoud Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

participate abroad under the Kuwait flag.

Meanwhile, President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi said this achievement has a special feeling because of the late participation after lifting the sports suspension. He said this caused

delays in licensing the arms besides technical and administrative difficulties.

He said the government support of Kuwait shooting sport is an important factor in its outstanding performance and winning major championships.

Sports

Vardy and Cahill call time on England careers

Vardy was restricted to the bench for most of the WCup in Russia

MANCHESTER: Leicester City striker Jamie Vardy says he no longer wants to be considered for England duty and wishes to focus his time on his club career. The 32-year-old, who featured at the World Cup in Russia, said he had spoken to England manager Gareth Southgate about his decision but remained available to help should the team face injury problems.

"To be honest with you, this has been on my mind for a while," Vardy told the Guardian. "I'm not getting any younger and you can see, to be fair to the gaffer, he wants to make it more youthful, which obviously had its benefits during the World Cup - we got to the semi-finals and finished fourth, which is equal to the furthest we have ever been on foreign soil."

"So I just said to Gareth that I think it's probably best from now on, especially with the way he wants to go, to bring youngsters in who he thinks have got the ability and start nurturing them into international football," he said.

Vardy was restricted to the bench for most of the World Cup in Russia and said his lack of playing time had influenced his decision. "When you get selected, you want to be playing. If you're playing week in, week out for your club, you want to be going to England to play as well. And if it's not happening, then for me personally now it's better to be at home, spending that time with my family and training with my club, preparing for the next game after the international break."

"I thought I could have helped a bit more if I had more minutes. You know that you can hurt opponents in certain ways, in the way you play. But it wasn't to be. And you have to respect the manager's decisions."

Vardy said he had expressed his intention to Southgate shortly after the World Cup and confirmed it in a recent phone call. "We've not shut the door completely. If the worst came to happen and everyone was injured, then obviously I wouldn't say no," he said.

Chelsea central defender Gary Cahill has also announced his decision to take a "step back" from England duties after a similar conversation with Southgate. The 32-year-old defender, who has won 61 England caps, has struggled to force his way into the first-team under manager Maurizio Sarri this season.

"I think it's time that I take a step back now. It's the right moment to do that," Cahill said. "I've been hugely proud of what I've achieved, over 60 caps, I've captained my country on a few occasions, which has been a huge honour. "At the same time, in your football career you never want to shut a door completely and if I'm ever needed, I'm there." — Reuters



Gary Cahill (left) and Jamie Vardy.

Pogba says Man Utd players in 'shock' after Spurs humbling

MANCHESTER: Paul Pogba said Manchester United's players were in "shock" after a 3-0 defeat to Spurs dealt a heavy blow to their Premier League title ambitions. After a troubled build-up to the season, United have lost two of their first three matches of a campaign for the first time since 1992-93. That season, Alex Ferguson's men went on to clinch the title but there are few signs that under-fire manager Jose Mourinho can win United's first league title since 2013 following Monday's defeat at Old Trafford.

"It's bizarre," said Pogba. "(Against Tottenham) we were determined, we started well, and in the end we lost 3-0. It's a shock." "Even we don't understand what happened," added the French World Cup winner. "We started the game really well, we conceded two goals in the second half."

"The first goal was a real blow, we didn't understand why, because we had the game in hand. One goal, two... we kept pushing, we had chances, and we conceded the third. "The fans kept pushing us, they were really behind us. We feel really sorry for them, very disappointed. We wanted to do better."

"I think it was an undeserved defeat for us, in our desire, in everything we put into it. But football can be cruel. We just have to bounce back." United desperately need to return to winning ways at Burnley on Sunday to ease the pressure heading into the international break. Last season's runners-up are already six points behind a clutch of teams including Spurs and Liverpool but Pogba is keeping calm and focused. "It won't be easy, but it's just the start of the season," said the



SHANGHAI: File picture taken on August 8, 2015 shows then Juventus midfielder Paul Pogba (R) and Lazio's midfielder Ogenyi Onazi vying for the ball during the Italian Super Cup final football match between Juventus and Lazio in Shanghai. — AFP

Frenchman, who has been strongly linked with a move to Barcelona following a difficult period under Mourinho. "I prefer to start badly and end well than start well and finish badly."

Pogba's teammate Luke Shaw also believes the players can turn things around. "You always see a lot of things in the media that go on about what our dressing

room is like," the 23-year-old told MUTV.

"But, look, we have a really good spirit, a really good group of lads and a group that want to work, want to achieve big things here." "We'll improve, we'll keep working hard," he added. "It's early in the season so we've got a lot of games to come and a lot of positive things from tonight." — AFP

Wallabies coach Cheika's job safe

SYDNEY: Wallabies coach Michael Cheika yesterday won the backing of his bosses who pledged their support ahead of next year's World Cup despite a dismal run of defeats deemed "not acceptable".

Australia have now lost six of their past seven games, and ceded the Bledisloe Cup to New Zealand for the 16th consecutive year after a 40-12 hammering in Auckland at the weekend and a 38-13 thrashing in Sydney the week before.

The poor form has put pressure on Cheika, but Rugby Australia chief executive Raelene Castle said he continued to have the support of her and the board.

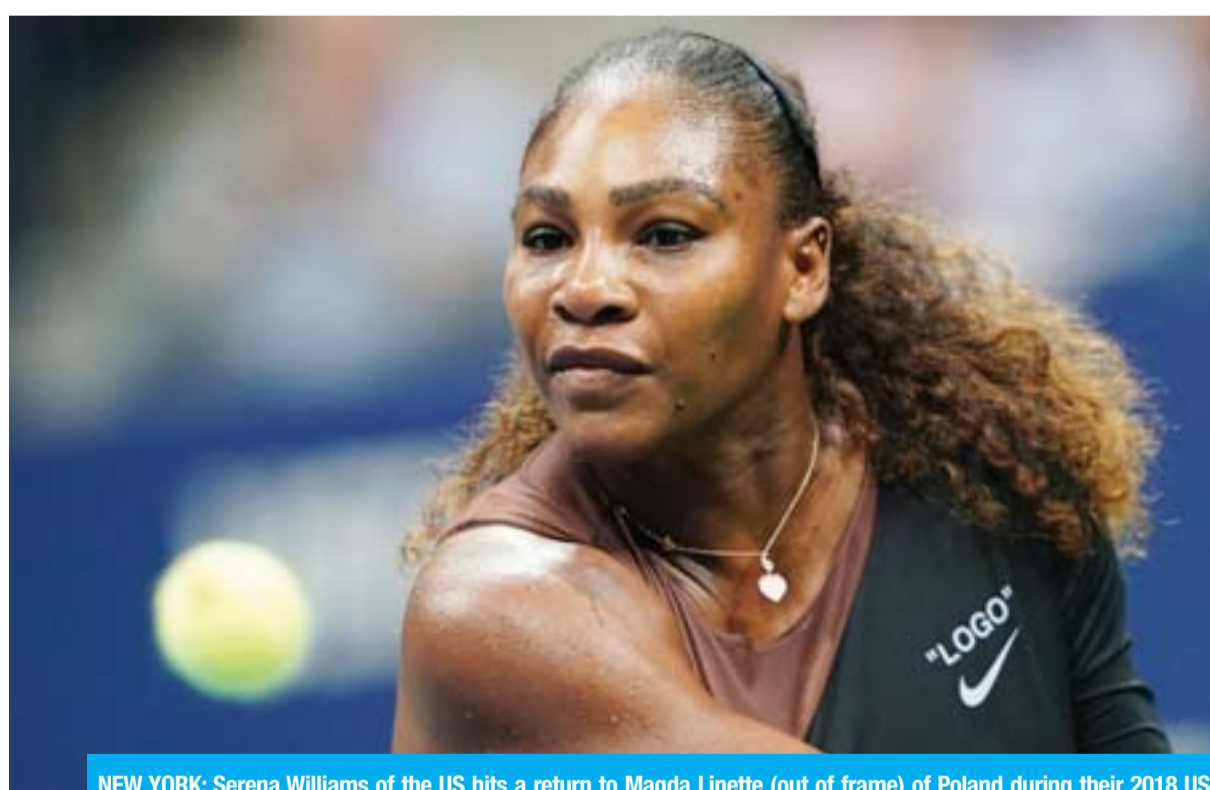
"He is contracted through to the World Cup and he has a plan—we are across that plan and we are comfortable with it," she said on the rugby.com.au website. "But clearly you can't just ignore the performances—they're not acceptable."

"So it's about what we can do to support him as an organisation to make sure he has what he needs to make sure the Wallabies are successful as we move into that World Cup." Asked to pinpoint an area she felt needed improvement, Castle nominated the Wallabies defence, which has leaked 78 points in two games.

"There are parts of our game that haven't performed, particularly around defence," she said. "So we will be having conversations around that. But I don't think it's about changing what we've got. It's about what else can we bring."

World Cup-winning coach Bob Dwyer said fitness was also an issue, blaming the players and not the coaching set-up for their recent woes. "I'm sure they're not fit enough," Dwyer, who led Australia to their first rugby World Cup title in 1991, told the Sydney Morning Herald. "In Sydney there were people walking with half an hour to go. You can't really pin that on the Wallaby coaching set-up."

Cheika has been adamant that the Wallabies' fitness levels had improved. "We were getting comments out of the Wallaby camp that fitness had definitely improved and skill level had improved. Well, that didn't appear to be the case," said Dwyer. But the former flanker, who was a mentor to current England coach Eddie Jones when he moved into coaching, also backed Cheika as the right man for the job. "My opinion is he is the coach and that's that," said Dwyer.—AFP



NEW YORK: Serena Williams of the US hits a return to Magda Linette (out of frame) of Poland during their 2018 US Open Women's Singles match at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York on Monday. — AFP

Serena Williams returns in style at US Open

NEW YORK: Serena Williams made a triumphant return to the US Open on Monday, opening her bid for a record-tying 24th Grand Slam title with a 6-4, 6-0 first-round victory over Magda Linette. Williams, a six-time champion at Flushing Meadows, missed last year's edition as she gave birth to daughter Olympia on September 1.

She was all-business on her return under the floodlights on the Arthur Ashe Stadium court, where she has lifted the trophy six times. Linette, the world number 68 from Poland who was facing Williams for the first time,

held her own in the early going.

But Williams broke her in the seventh game of the opening set to gain the upper hand and from there the American superstar rolled. The first set was tight," Williams, seeded 17th, said. "It was my first match back here in New York so that wasn't the easiest."

"Once I got settled I started doing what I'm trying to do in practice. "I think I'm getting there," added Williams, who reached the final at Wimbledon only to fall short of matching Margaret Court's all-time record of 24 major titles.

She didn't face a break point in the 70 minute match, but as her momentum built her emotions burst out with fist-clenched shouts of "come on". After Williams held serve from deuce for a 5-3 lead, Linette would hold to force Williams to serve out the set.

From there, it was all Williams as she raced through the second set in 28 minutes. She next faces Germany's Carina Witthoef, with a possible third-round clash with 16th-seeded sister Venus in the offing. — AFP

Real Madrid to buy back striker Mariano from Lyon

MADRID: Real Madrid are set to bring striker Mariano Diaz back to the club, a year on from selling him to Lyon, after they matched an earlier bid by La Liga rivals Sevilla, the Andalusian side said yesterday.

"Real had first refusal and they have told us that they are going to activate their buy-back clause," Sevilla president Jose Castro told media. Spanish sports daily Marca reported that Sevilla had made a bid worth a total of 35 million euros (\$41 million) including bonuses. However, Real matched that bid to beat their rivals to the signature of the 25-year-old. Mariano, who was born in Spain but has roots in the Dominican Republic, was sold to Lyon a year ago. But Real inserted a buy-back clause in the deal as well as guaranteeing themselves 35 per cent of any future sell-on. Taking that into account, the actual fee paid by Real will be under 25 million euros.

Castro, who was speaking at a ceremony marking 11 years since Sevilla player Antonio Puerta died during a game, added: "Lyon had an agreement with Real. We negotiated a deal, and then Real had 48 hours in which to exercise their right. They decided to do so. We are still working on other alternatives."

Mariano came through the Real reserves but made just 14 top-team appearances at the Santiago Bernabeu before being sold to Lyon, for whom he scored 18 times in Ligue 1 last season to help the French side qualify for the Champions League.

But he was left out of Lyon's starting lineup last weekend and his return to Real comes with the European champions having so far failed to reinforce their attack following the departure of Cristiano Ronaldo to Juventus. — AFP

Ronaldo Jr joins Juventus youth academy

MILAN: Portuguese superstar Cristiano Ronaldo's oldest son has started training with the Juventus youth academy's Under-9 team, according to media reports in Italy.

Five-time Ball d'Or winner Ronaldo, 33, signed for Italian champions Juventus this summer from Real Madrid for 100 million euros. His oldest son Cristiano Jr—who was born in June 2010 — was photographed training on Monday with the Juve Pulcini 2010 squad reserved for Under-9s at Juventus's Vinovo ground.

Ronaldo's partner Georgina Rodriguez was also present at the training ground. Other senior Juventus players have children in the team's academy including Andrea Barzagli's son Mattia and fellow former Italian international Claudio Marchisio's son Davide.

Ronaldo revealed last week that Cristiano Jr—the oldest of his four children—was also a promising footballer. "He's very competitive. He's like me as a child. He doesn't like losing," the striker said in an interview with streaming broadcaster DAZN.

"He'll become like me, I'm 100 percent sure of it. I'd like to teach him some things, but ultimately he will choose what to do and he'll always have my support. "But of course, I'd like him to become a player because I think he has a passion for it too." — AFP

25 Bolt struggling with football pace, but working hard



26 Chaotic mixed relay gets thumbs-up at Asian Games



27 Vardy and Cahill call time on England careers



Nadal sends Ferrer into Slam retirement

Murray, Wawrinka return in style



NEW YORK: Rafael Nadal of Spain plays a forehand in his men's singles first round match against David Ferrer of Spain on Day One of the 2018 US Open at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center yesterday. — AFP

NEW YORK: Defending US Open champion Rafael Nadal sent close friend David Ferrer into Grand Slam retirement on Monday when his veteran compatriot was forced to quit their first round match with injury, but former winners Andy Murray and Stan Wawrinka made successful returns to New York.

Ferrer, a former world number three but now standing at a lowly 148, called it quits on a hot and humid night on Arthur Ashe Stadium despite leading 4-3 with a break in the second set after twice receiving treatment on a left leg injury. Top seed Nadal had taken the opener 6-3. "This is my last Grand Slam," said Ferrer who was runner-up to Nadal in the 2013 French Open final. "I have great memories of this tournament and I am just sorry that I couldn't finish it tonight."

Ferrer, 36, will play his last tournament on home ground in Madrid next year. "I am very sorry for David and sad for him," said Nadal. "We are close friends and have shared great moments—the Roland Garros final and Davis Cup wins. "He is one of the greatest players to have come from our country. He's a great person and great player." Nadal,

chasing his 18th Grand Slam title, will face Canada's Vasek Pospisil for a place in the last 32.

Nadal's potential semi-final opponent, Argentine third seed and 2009 champion Juan Martin del Potro, also reached the second round with a 6-0, 6-3, 6-4 win over American qualifier Donald Young. For Del Potro, whose career since his maiden Grand Slam triumph nine years ago has been decimated by wrist problems, it was his 30th career win at the tournament.

He next faces Denis Kudla of the United States who won his first match in five years at the tournament when he downed Matteo Berrettini of Italy 6-4, 7-5, 6-2. Former world number one Murray marked his first Grand Slam tournament in 14 months with a 6-7 (5/7), 6-3, 7-5, 6-3 win over Australia's James Duckworth.

Murray, the 2012 champion and playing just his fifth tournament of the year after undergoing hip surgery in January, last featured in a major at Wimbledon in 2017. Murray, whose world ranking has slumped to 382, goes on to face Fernando Verdasco, the Spanish 31st seed after seeing off the error-prone Duckworth, ranked at 448.

"He was serving big in the first set and the ball was flying around," said 31-year-old Murray who only returned to the tour in June.

"But I started to get into the return games, stood back a little more and that gave me more time to get in the rallies and find my range with my ground strokes." Like Murray, former champion Wawrinka also sat out the 2017 US Open in his case because of two knee surgeries.

But he showed no sign of rustiness on Monday, defeating eighth-seeded Grigor Dimitrov of Bulgaria for the second successive Grand Slam. Wawrinka, the 2016 champion, swept to a 6-3, 6-2, 7-5 victory on Arthur Ashe Stadium to repeat his opening round triumph over Dimitrov at Wimbledon.

"The last time I played on this great court, I won the title so it was great to be able to come back and play again," said the 33-year-old Swiss. Wawrinka, the former world number three, now down at 101, shrugged off having to take a medical time-out early in the third set.

South African fifth seed Kevin Anderson, the 2017 US Open runner-up to Nadal, also needed a medical timeout

for a leg injury in the third set of his clash with Ryan Harrison of the United States.

But Anderson, defeated in the Wimbledon final last month by Novak Djokovic, recovered to win 7-6 (7/4), 5-7, 4-6, 6-3, 6-4. Denis Shapovalov, the 19-year-old 28th seed, was 7-5, 5-7, 4-1 ahead of 18-year-old Felix Auger-Aliassime when his Canadian teammate and close friend was forced to retire.

Auger-Aliassime, making his Slam debut after coming through qualifying, had needed a medical timeout for an irregular heartbeat in the third set. Greek 15th seed Stefanos Tsitsipas saw off 36-year-old Tommy Robredo of Spain 6-3, 7-6 (7/1), 6-4.

Tsitsipas, 20, made the Toronto Masters final this month seeing off the likes of Novak Djokovic and Alexander Zverev on the way before losing to Rafael Nadal. The Greek was only three years old when Robredo played his first US Open in 2001.

US hopes were buoyed by wins for 11th seed John Isner and 18th-ranked Jack Sock who won his first singles match since May. — AFP

Should Man United sack Jose Mourinho?

MANCHESTER: Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho is fighting to save his job just three games into the new Premier League season after back-to-back defeats against Brighton and Tottenham.

Spurs' 3-0 win at Old Trafford on Monday was the heaviest home defeat of his coaching career and the team looked a long way from being realistic title challengers. So should United bite the bullet and fire the Portuguese coach or give Mourinho time to try and turn things around?

AFP Sports looks at the pros and cons of

keeping him in charge. Now in his third season at Old Trafford, United might have already seen the best Mourinho has to offer. In two spells at Chelsea and at Porto, Inter Milan and Real Madrid he always won the league in his second campaign. However, his third seasons at Chelsea and Madrid ended acrimoniously.

Mourinho won the League Cup and Europa League in his first season at United and finished second in the Premier League last season—albeit a record 19 points behind Manchester City. But there is little evidence from an illustrious career of an ability to turn things around once the going gets tough.

Mourinho's relationship with key players appears fractured. There have been high-profile tensions with World Cup star Paul Pogba and his French compatriot Anthony Martial. The Portuguese has always been a results-driven manager, able to point to a trophy-laden CV, and not feeling an overriding responsibility to enthrone his fan base with entertaining football. That approach caused friction at United

even when results were positive in his first two seasons as it did not fit with the attacking traditions of the club under Alex Ferguson and Matt Busby. Across town, Pep Guardiola has served up some spectacular football at Manchester City and Jurgen Klopp has produced a thrilling attacking side at Liverpool.

But the more prosaic Mourinho now does not even have results to fall back on. United already trail Liverpool, Spurs and Chelsea by six points and City by four. Unless swift action is taken they risk missing out on the top four and the Champions League next season, while a title challenge already looks unlikely.

Mourinho is not the only figure to blame at Old Trafford, where the team have not won the Premier League since Ferguson's last season in 2012-13. Last season's second-place finish was United's highest league position in the past five years and many of the club's fans have laid the blame for the relative under-achievement at the door of executive vice-chairman Ed Woodward. —AFP



Jose Mourinho