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MP plans to grill minister over 'unconstitutional' appointment

Adasani vows to pursue major 'corruption' cases



JAKARTA: Bronze medalist Kuwait's Issa Al-Zankawi celebrates during the awards ceremony for the men's discus throw athletics event at the 2018 Asian Games yesterday. — AFP

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Opposition MP Riyadh Al-Adasani said yesterday he will file to grill Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Adel Al-Khorafi at the start of the next term starting October, insisting that his appointment is unconstitutional. Adasani and MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari had grilled Khorafi over alleged violations in the previous term but they did not gather sufficient support to file a no-confidence motion against him.

The lawmaker described his appointment as "politically suspicious", adding the minister does not have any real work to do. Adasani also warned that if the next grilling fails to oust the minister, he will continue to grill him unless the government does not dismiss him. He recalled that in the previous term, he addressed a question to the prime minister and Khorafi sent a response stating that the question was not in line with the constitution, "although the question was legitimate and in line with the constitution".

The lawmaker said he will continue to press for legal action against a number of major suspected corruption cases like suspected money laundering at the Olympic Council of Asia, which is based in Kuwait. He said the issue has already been sent to the public prosecution for legal action, adding that it is illogical that the dealings of one official amounted to KD 12 million and KD 6 million by another.

He also said the National Assembly pressed action against the inflated hospitality expenditures of the interior ministry and case has also been referred to the public prosecution. He said that such expenditures amounted to only KD 2 million a year, but in the previous two years, swelled to KD 33 million. He said those suspected of being involved in the case have been suspended pending legal action.

Adasani said an investigation has been launched by the Audit Bureau into allegations that the Cabinet was giving funds to lawmakers, saying that if proven, the case amounts to bribery. He also said that he will continue to monitor developments regarding violations committed in the distribution of agricultural land to some people, in violation of the law.

Separately, Director-General of the Public Authority for Sports (PAS) Humoud Fulaiteh yesterday said a PAS delegation held a very positive meeting with officials of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in the Swiss city of Lausanne on Tuesday. In a statement by PAS, Fulaiteh, who is heading the Kuwaiti delegation in Switzerland, affirmed there was an agreement between the authority and IOC officials on "all topics that would lift the ban on the Kuwaiti sports permanently". The statement quoted Fulaiteh as saying that execution of the agreed-upon "roadmap" would begin next week, hoping there would be no intervention "from other parties to obstruct" the process.

Trump warns of violent change if Reps lose midterms

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump warned evangelical leaders that if Republicans lose control of Congress in the midterm elections, Democrats will institute change "quickly and violently". The New York Times has reported. At a meeting with those leaders at the White House on Monday, Trump said everything was at stake for his conservative agenda if his party loses in November, according to an audiotape of the meeting obtained by the Times.

Democrats "will overturn everything that we've done and they'll do it quickly and violently," Trump said, according to the Times report published Tuesday night. "They will end everything immediately. When you look at Antifa," he added, referring to militant leftist anti-fascism groups, "and you look at some of these groups, these are violent people." The Times said a White House spokesman, Hogan Gidley, declined to expand on what the president meant.

It was not the first time Trump has warned of violence if things did not go his way. During the 2016

presidential campaign, he said his supporters would probably react violently if he did not win the Republican nomination. "I think you'd have riots," Trump warned. The Times said reporters were allowed to listen in on brief comments by Trump during the Monday meeting with ministers and pastors, and heard him talk about abortion, religious freedom and youth unemployment.

But after the press was shown out of the room, Trump changed the subject and suggested how the evangelical leaders could help Republicans win in November, the Times reported. "I just ask you to go out and make sure all of your people vote," Trump said. "Because if they don't - it's Nov 6 - if they don't vote we're going to have a miserable two years and we're going to have, frankly, a very hard period of time because then it just gets to be one election - you're one election away from losing everything you've got."

Trump also welcomed FIFA boss Gianni Infantino to the White House on Tuesday, congratulating football's governing body for awarding the 2026 World Cup to North America before jokingly waving a red card at journalists. "I very much appreciate the fact that we have won a very important event, the World Cup in 2026," said Trump, who had backed the joint USA-Mexico-Canada bid which triumphed over Morocco at a vote in Moscow on June.

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WASHINGTON: FIFA President Gianni Infantino (center) laughs as US President Donald Trump holds a red card during a meeting in the Oval Office of the White House on Tuesday. — AFP

News in brief

Instagram adds verified accounts

SAN FRANCISCO: Instagram yesterday set out to thwart duplicity with an option to authenticate high-profile accounts at the Facebook-owned image or video sharing social network. Blue badges displayed at Instagram accounts will indicate holders have gone through a verification process that includes providing photos of identity documentation. Verification badges are intended to enable Instagram users to know when posts actually come from accounts of celebrities, notable public figures, big brands or well-known organizations. In coming weeks, profiles of accounts with huge audiences will start showing more information, such as when they were created, where it is located, and what ads it may be running. — AFP

Iran arrests 'dozens of spies'

TEHRAN: Iran's intelligence minister said "dozens of spies" had been arrested as part of a crackdown on espionage and dual nationals and alluded to an agent Iran had placed in the Israeli government. Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi said Iran had planted the agent "in the cabinet of a country that has a very strong intelligence service". The conservative Tasnim news agency said this was a reference to Gonen Segev, a former Israeli energy and infrastructure minister who was charged with spying by a Jerusalem court last month. The minister said there was also a concerted effort to root out dual nationals working in official positions. He added 230 "terrorist cells" had been intercepted over the past year. — AFP

Saudi women grow ventures at US incubator

WASHINGTON: Reem Dad, a 22-year-old from Saudi Arabia, is developing a platform for pilgrims and tourists to experience a virtual reality tour of Madinah, one of Islam's holiest sites. Heba Zahid, 37, is working on GreenDesert, a venture that would be one of the first to help create a recycling culture in the Middle Eastern country. Dad and Zahid were among 14 young women social entrepreneurs from the ultraconservative kingdom who recently attended an intensive program at Halcyon, a Washington-based business incubator, to turn their ideas into reality.

The initiative comes after Saudi women were given the right to drive in June, among reforms backed by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman raising hopes for greater gender equality despite an ongoing crackdown on women's rights activists. "Everything is changing now... There is space for females everywhere," said Dad, whose virtual reality program is called Taibah VR. "If a man wants to establish a company or wants to start up something, there's a process they go through - the same process we also go through. So I feel we are equal," she told AFP.

Other projects include an Arabic-language app to help autistic children communicate, matching employers and workers to reduce unemployment and underemployment, as well as a video game to motivate youths to engage in community service. The Saudi government's Vision 2030 aims in part to promote local businesses, including those run by women, whose participation in



WASHINGTON: Saudi entrepreneurs Asmaa Alabdallah (left) and Reem Dad stand in front of Halcyon House on Aug 17, 2018. — AFP

the workforce is expected to grow from 22 percent to 30 percent by the end of the next decade. That's still far behind most other nations. In the United States, where large gaps remain between women and men's employment rates, wages and job positions, around 60 percent of women participate in the labor force, according to the Brookings Institution.

Halcyon fellow Asmaa Alabdallah, 22, founded BitGo, a Pokemon Go-like augmented reality game that uses gamification techniques to encourage community service. "Of course, we have a lot of challenges... but the most important thing is that you will never give up," she said, insisting like Dad that her greatest obstacle lay not in being a woman entrepreneur in Saudi Arabia as much as in finding local programming talent.

Continued on Page 24

Demonetization 'a flop'; rupee hits fresh lows

MUMBAI: Indians returned almost the entire amount of currency withdrawn in the government's note ban of Nov 2016, raising fresh questions over the purpose of a shock move that triggered a sharp slowdown in the economy. In its annual report, the Reserve Bank of India said the total value of notes returned by the public was 15.3 trillion rupees (\$216.7 billion) or 99.3 percent of the total of 15.4 trillion rupees of notes in circulation on Nov 8, 2016. "The figures show the demonetization exercise was a flop," said a chief economist at a bank, who sought anonymity as the subject is a sensitive one. "Almost the entire amount came back, which showed that people were not hoarding money in cash."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi stunned India with his so-called demonetization campaign that he said aimed to uncover unaccounted wealth and counterfeit money. The old notes of 500-rupee and 1,000-rupee denomination ceased to be legal tender from Dec 31, 2016. The move hit India's growth, driving it to a three-year low of 5.7 percent in the June quarter of 2017, with several small businesses shutting down and many laborers losing their jobs.

However, Subhash Chandra Garg, the government's economic affairs secretary, told reporters the RBI data did not mean the effort was unsuccessful. "I think demonetization achieved its objective quite substantially," Garg said, declining to elaborate.

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Crown Prince praises teacher's 'great' educational role

Sheikh Nawaf stresses need of adopting latest methods of effective education



KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Chairman and members of the Board of Directors of Kuwaiti Teachers Society. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Director General of the Environment Public Authority (EPA) Sheikh Abdullah Ahmad Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, and EPA members.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah praised the great role of teachers in educating generations and instilling virtuous values among students, which is the cornerstone of the educational process. His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince also stressed the need of adopting the latest methods of effective education in addition to boosting Islamic values, Kuwaiti customs and respect for original traditions.

This came during His Highness' meeting with Chairman and members of the Board of Directors of Kuwaiti Teachers Society at Bayan palace yesterday. They thanked His Highness for patronizing the 43rd Teaching Conference, organized by Kuwait Teachers Society on 'Teacher's professional development and contemporary challenges'. They also presented to His Highness a copy of the society (2017-2021) strategic plan. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf has also conveyed greet-

ings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to all teachers and students on the new educational year and wished them more success and progress.

Also yesterday, His Highness the Crown Prince received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. He also received Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and Acting Defense Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as well as Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan.

Separately, His Highness the Prime Minister received Director General of the Environment Public Authority (EPA) Sheikh Abdullah Ahmad Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, and EPA members. The reception came on the occasion of EPA's winning the outstanding achievement award in Geographic Information System (GIS) for the year 2018, for its Environmental Monitoring Information System of Kuwait (eMISK) last July in the United States. — KUNA



His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and Acting Defense Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

China respects minority freedoms, religious belief

KUWAIT: The Chinese Embassy in Kuwait held a press conference yesterday, during which it released the following statement:

The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) reviewed China's report on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in Geneva from 10 to 13 August 2018. It recognized the progress made by China in protecting the rights and interests of national minorities and its achievements in the implementation of the convention.

Human rights for all are what the Chinese government and people have been striving for. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, under the leadership of the CPC and through unremitting efforts, the Chinese people have scored unprecedented achievements in human history and blazed an oriental pathway toward modernization. By integrating the universal principles of human rights with China's specific conditions, promoting mutually reinforcing progress in democracy and people's wellbeing, and upholding peace and development in a holistic way, we have blazed a path of human rights development with Chinese characteristics.

China has managed to meet the basic living needs of its 1.3 billion-plus people, lifted more than 700 million people out of poverty, and created 770 million jobs. We have put in place the world's largest education system, social welfare system and community-level democratic election system, making historic progress in human rights development in China. China's endeavors have also provided new viable solutions to challenges in the protection of human rights worldwide.

China's experience shows that human rights can be protected in more than one way. Countries can find their own models of human rights protection in factor light of their national conditions and people's needs. The key contributing to China's remarkable achievements in its human rights endeavors is its firm commitment to a human rights development path with Chinese characteristics.

While some anti-China forces have made unjustified accusations against China for political purposes, and a few foreign media have tarnished China's anti-terrorism and criminal actions in Xinjiang through its distorted reports of the CERD review, they have ulterior motives. At present, Xinjiang enjoys social stability, economic growth and harmonious coexistence among different nationalities. People of all national groups in Xinjiang cherish a peaceful and prosperous life. Any rumor or slander will have no meaningful results.

In these years, China has consistently advanced human rights protection, especially with regard to national minorities. Guaranteeing the right of minorities in China to participate in deliberations on state affairs and administration, since all 55 national minority groups in China

are fully represented in the National People's Congress (NPC) and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). The heads of departments in 155 national autonomous local authorities in China are officials from national minorities. The national minorities and the regions in which they live have experienced rapid economic and social development. In 2017, the eight provinces saw national minorities growing their investment in fixed assets by 11.8 percent, up 4.6 percentage points more than the national average. Education for national minorities also developed rapidly. China exempted rural students from all tuition and compulsory education fees and increased public funding for primary and secondary schools providing compulsory education in rural areas. China has also protected the right of minorities to use and develop their own languages effectively. To date, 14 national minority projects have been placed on UNESCO's "Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage" and 479 works of national minorities have been placed on the list of intangible national cultural heritage.

China has also adhered to the policy of freedom of religious belief, sought to guarantee the right to freedom of religious belief of citizens and to build positive and robust religious relations in order to maintain religious harmony and social congruence. The constitution of China clearly states the citizens have the freedom to believe. No state, social group or person may compel a citizen to believe in or believe in a religion, and no discrimination against believing or non-believers may be made. The State shall protect legitimate religious activities. No one shall engage in activities that disrupt social systems, harm the physical health of citizens or impede

the application of the education system in the country under the pretext of religion. Of the 56 national minorities in China, 10 are Muslim nationalities and citizens of these nationalities are scattered in various provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government administration. The total number of Muslims in China is more than 20 million, and the number of mosques is more than 40,000. The Xinjiang Uigur Autonomous Region is the largest Muslim region in China with a population of 13 million. The relevant Chinese law protects legitimate religious activities. All legitimate religious activities performed by citizens who are believers in religious places and in their own homes according to religious traditions are administered by religious groups and citizens themselves and no organization or person may interfere in it.

China, including the Xinjiang Autonomous Region, is also a victim of terrorist acts. China rejects terrorism in all its forms, and this position is permanent and clear. Terrorism is the enemy of human society and the current situation of combating international terrorism is complex and harsh. The fight against terrorism in all its forms and its image must be a shared responsibility and a priority task of all states and the international community. China always supports the strengthening of international cooperation in the fight against terrorism and supports the efforts of the international community in this area. In order to maintain security, stability, and integrity of the international community, everyone must participate in the efforts of the international community to combat terrorism within the framework of the United Nations, leaving the double standard.

FOR THE CITIZENS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION STAYING IN KUWAIT

Embassy of the Russian Federation in the State of Kuwait announces that the additional voting to elect the member of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation (Nizhniy Novgorod constituency No. 129) will be held at the premises of the Embassy of Russia in Kuwait:

Daiya, Block 5, Diplomatic Campus, Al-Yemen street, plot 17, on Friday, September 7, 2018 from 8:00 till 20:00.

All Russian citizens staying in Kuwait, who have reached the age of 18 years are invited to take part in the elections.

Make sure you keep your valid passport of the citizen of the Russian Federation with you.

For any information related to the forthcoming elections please address the Consular Section of the Embassy. For enquiries you are welcome to contact: 22560427, 22560428.



KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) recently honored staff members who reported for duty during Eid Al-Adha at branches which opened throughout the holiday.

Local

Rohingya minority crisis proves to be worst in modern history: Kuwait

Military option in Idlib would have catastrophic consequences: Otaibi

NEW YORK: The crisis of the Rohingya minority proved to be of the worst in modern history, Kuwait said late Tuesday. With the Muslim minority being subjected to killing and torture, the least that can describe such acts is ethnic cleansing, said the Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait to the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi. This came in a speech Otaibi delivered at a meeting for the UN Security Council on Myanmar. "The world is following our session and expects from us: at least, to hold our moral and humanitarian grounds regardless of any political considerations," he noted.

More than 887,000 Rohingya refugees have been displaced since August last year, as they joined some 300,000 other refugees who have fled Myanmar to Bangladesh, he added. On April 24 this year, members of the Security Council arrived in the city of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, to assess the tragic situation faced by more than 1.2 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. "This session comes a day after the fact-finding committee issued its report documenting the genocide-level crimes, war crimes and crimes against humanity that took place in Myanmar," he said. "These findings were in line with what we have seen on ground in Rakhine State, in addition to statements by eyewitnesses Cox's Bazar."

Reiterating condemnation of such acts that go counter to international laws and norms, Ambassador Otaibi underlined the necessity for the Government of Myanmar to shoulder its responsibility, either in terms of protecting its people and/or refraining from the use of disproportionate military force. Otaibi also expressed his appreciation to the Government of Bangladesh in regards to the crisis of the Rohingya refugees: whom more than 50 percent are children, in addition to some 31,000 women solely caring for their families. Kuwait, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Peru led the Security Council on the April 2018 field visit to Bangladesh and Myanmar.

17,000 private sector jobs for Kuwaitis soon

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP) is carrying out distinguished efforts towards increasing the percentage of employing Kuwaitis and limiting future unemployment, MGRP Secretary General Fawzi Al-Majdali said. The program works in several areas at the same time to achieve this goal, support employment policies, create job opportunities for Kuwaitis and curb unemployment by providing many means that support nationals and urge them to work in non-government areas, financially or otherwise, he added.

The program exerts efforts towards achieving the targeted increase in Kuwaiti labor percentage in the private sector in many aspects, particularly monthly payments for Kuwaitis in nongovernment areas in order to urge them to work in the private sector, Majdali said. He added that the proposal to amend the percentages of Kuwaiti workers in the private sector is complete, and is being coordinated with concerned authorities to make 17,000 job opportunities available soon.

The program proposed and prepared four decisions that were issued by the Cabinet in 2003, 2005 and 2008 that aim to provide 33,732 citizens with jobs, Majdali further noted. He added that the program reviewed the current percentages decision and added some amendments to it, and carried out a survey of employers to make sure about their intentions to employ Kuwaitis in the private sector. According to the proposed law, telecommunication and banking sectors will witness the highest percentage rises, because the new change stipulates that 65 and 68 percent of employees should be Kuwaitis respectively. The decision stipulates 30 percent of Kuwaitis in higher education, 8 percent for occupational, science and technical activities and 10 percent for support and administrative services.

Arcades

Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and State Minister for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh issued ministerial decision 95A/2018 with regards to rules to grant approval to entertainment arcades. The decision stipulates that to grant approval, security, safety and preventive measures should be present. As for the specifications of the arcades, they should be at least 100 sq m in size with trained supervisors and a minimum of one for every five rides.

Electronic games should not contain bloody scenes that contribute to boosting violence or involve gambling. The decision bans the sale of food and drinks in the arcades until after obtaining a license from the concerned authority, and they must not have closed cabins. The decision set the hours for children from 8 am to 10 pm and 8 am to midnight for adults, except for holidays, when closing time can be extended till 2 am. The decision bans men from working in women's areas and women to work in men's areas and banned smoking in children's areas.

Kuwaiti official hails cultural cooperation with Egypt

CAIRO: A senior official from the Kuwaiti National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature (NCCAL) praised yesterday the Kuwaiti-Egyptian cultural cooperation, which he described has no limits and one of the most important tributaries of the deep-rooted relations between the two countries, adding that Cairo is a beacon of culture in the Arab world. NCCAL's Acting Secretary General Bader Al-Duwaish told Middle East News Agency (MENA) that the National Council has been keen to strengthen cultural and artistic cooperation with Egypt due to its leading position in the 'soft power arena', and its high cultural and artistic beacons, including the Egyptian Opera House and the General Book Library Authority in Cairo. He added that the selection of Kuwait as an honorary guest during the Cairo International Book Fair in 2014 reaffirms the strong relations between the two countries, both at the official level and the cultural levels. — KUNA

Catastrophic consequences
Separately, Kuwait said before the UN Security Council late Tuesday that a military option in Syria's Idlib would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences, especially with half of the governorate's population are internally-displaced.

Diplomatic efforts need to be doubled on the highest of levels in order to avoid carnage and not re-live the bloody scenarios in Aleppo and Eastern Ghouta, Otaibi said. "Eyes are on Idlib, resided by some three million people. Any military escalation would worsen the already dire humanitarian crisis."

It is sad and frustrating at the same to see the Council resolution not being implemented on ground," Ambassador Otaibi said in reference to resolution 2401, which was unanimously adopted by the UN Security Council last February and called for immediate cease-fire and facilitating entry of humanitarian assistance. "Resolutions unimplemented are worthless ones. History once again will witness incompetence of the UN Security Council in light of loud breaches of international humanitarian law and international law for human rights throughout the Syrian crisis," Otaibi stated. — KUNA



Mansour Al-Otaibi

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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A flock of pigeons at Shuwaikh beach. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Arab League lauds steps for effecting common trade zone

Kuwait working seriously for common Arab custom union

CAIRO: Arab States have taken strides on the path of establishing the free Arab trade zone, an Arab League official said yesterday marking the start of the 38th session of custom general directors in the organization member countries. Common products' rules of origin will be in effect as of October 1, capping years of deliberations on this particular issue, said Ambassador Kamal Hassan, the Arab League's Assistant Secretary General for Economic Affairs, in his statement at the opening session.

Ambassador Hassan underscored necessity of coordination among the custom general directors to address requirements for setting up the joint trade zone, other related issues in addition to facilitating inter-Arab custom tasks. Services features as a top priority in the joint Arab economic tasks, he said, noting that Ten Arab States had signed an agreement for cooperation at this level.

Arab countries are also bonded with a 'transparency treaty', according to which the signatory states notify the Arab League about actions with respect of inter-Arab trade to avert complications in the commercial activities among them.

Meanwhile, Ahmad Al-Jamal, the session chairman and President of the Qatari General Authority of

Customs, said participants in the two-day meeting would discuss matters related to the Arab Custom Union and commissions' tasks on custom procedures, information and translation of the coordination system. Jamal Al-Jalawi, Director-General the General Administration of Customs, headed the Kuwaiti delegation that took part in the meeting.

Customs union

Meanwhile, Jalawi said that Kuwait is seriously acting to meet all requirements for the aspired Arab joint custom union. Kuwait is also providing continuous support for Arab economic actions and efforts for tackling snags obstructing establishment of the great Arab free trade zone, he said.

Jalawi said the conferees adopted a draft of the common Arab custom law and executive bylaws, pending submission to the Arab ministers of economy and finance at their meeting, scheduled in Cairo next week. Moreover, they adopted an index for Arab custom procedures, final text of the Arab custom declaration in Arabic, French and English, in addition to setting rate of the "Arab dinar" for setting value of personal belongings and gifts in passenger's possession, or an equal value in national currencies. — KUNA

Arab custom law draft adopted



CAIRO: Officials attend the Arab League's 38th session of custom general directors in Cairo, Egypt yesterday. — KUNA

Arab Woman Awards Kuwait 2018 nominations open

KUWAIT: The Arab Woman Awards, presented by Harper's Bazaar Al-Arabiya, announced nominations are open for its 2018 edition. Now in its 6th year in Kuwait the awards have twenty categories including business, fashion, entrepreneurship, charity, media, young talent and medicine. Previous award winners were Ambassador Reem Al-Khaled, Dr Kefaya Abdulmalek, Mariam Abdulmalik Al-Salah and Nada Al-Shammari. Nominations for this year's awards can be made via the website <http://www.arab-womanawards.com/nominate/>

The full list of winners will be announced in October at a prestigious awards ceremony held in Kuwait City hosted by honorary chair and leader of the board of judges, Sheikh Mubarak Fahad Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Kuwait Undersecretary of State.

"The Arab Woman Awards Kuwait were launched to recognize the drive and passion of the women in Kuwait. We are a country of high achievers with educated, focused people who really want to build on the success of our country.

As such I encourage everyone who knows of an incredible, hard-working woman who deserves to be celebrated to



Mubarak Fahad Al-Salem Al-Sabah

nominate her now," said Sheikh Mubarak Fahad Al-Sabah.

The other members of the judges are Professor Moudhi Al-Humoud previous Minister of Education; Sheikha Souad J A Al-Sabah, fashion designer and founder of Sirdab6

and Dr Labiba Temmim, co-founder of the Arab Woman Awards Kuwait and Managing Director of Hayatt Breast Cancer Association.

The Arab Woman Awards were launched in 2009 by ITP Media Group with the aim of raising public awareness of the significant achievements by Arab women and to provide young women with inspirational role models. The events now run across the GCC with ceremonies in the UAE, Kuwait, KSA and Qatar with over 300 winners to-date. All awards ceremonies are private by-invitation only events with a commemorative publication created per country.

NBK celebrates back to school day at its children's hospital

KUWAIT: Having the 'Back to School' season approaching, the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) organized a special event displaying school supplies at its children's hospital. This event comes as a part of a fun program designed for engaging children undergoing treatment and runs all year round. The children had the chance to select their stationery from the book shop 'International Business Center' that offered all school supplies to the children. Yaqoub Al-Baqer, NBK Public relations team leader said "The fun activity program is a part of NBK's social responsibility towards children to support them while they get their treatment."

"The children enjoyed picking up their favorite stationery and creating their paper kites," Baqer added. "We are overwhelmed to see the children happy and live the excitement while getting prepared to school." The fun event is part of a program that extends all over the year and includes a library corner, storytelling sessions, fun events and a movie night activity that are organized occasionally. Children at the hospital choose their favorite story to read or a cartoon movie to watch with their family and friends. NBK has provided a



display screen, entertainment facilities, variety of different and various books and other supplies for children to enjoy the whole program. It is worth mentioning that NBK's Stem Cell Therapy Unit is the first children's bone mar-

row transplant center in Kuwait. The new center is the largest corporate social responsibility donation in Kuwait and will expand the hospital's ability to treat children with cancer and blood diseases.

Local

Steel factory fire put out after four hours

20 people involved in fight near co-op branch



KUWAIT: Firefighters battle a blaze in a steel factory in industrial Mina Abdullah.

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

KUWAIT: Fire broke out in a steel factory in industrial Mina Abdullah, prompting Mina Abdullah, Um Al-Haiman, Mubarak Al-Kabeer hazardous material and backup fire stations to respond. The fire was contained and some people were rescued. It took firemen four hours to bring the flames under control. An investigation was opened to determine the cause of the fire.

Dispute

A police statement said operations did not receive any call about an assistant principal of a school Tasered a teacher. The statement said investigations revealed that a fight took place between the two and no Taser was used, and the dispute was resolved friendly.

Work mishap

An Indian man in his 50s lost his life when a machine he worked on fell on his head, Al-Anbaa reported yesterday. The body was recovered by the coroner as investigations underway to determine what led the accident to happen.

Harassment

Ahmadi detectives are trying to identify a caller from a company phone and determine whether it is a male or female, as a man claimed he was urged to commit immoral

acts. A citizen in his 20s in east Ahmadi told police he was harassed through the phone and handed them a screenshot.

Fight

A fight between more than 20 young men broke out near a branch of Dhahar Co-operative Society. The reason behind the fight was a collision between two vehicles. Police located the car that was driven recklessly and it was impounded, prior to arresting the driver and questioning him.

Smuggling foiled

Hitteen postal parcel center foiled an attempt to smuggle more than one kilogram of cannabis. The case was sent to the Drugs Control General Department, as authorities are working on identifying the person to whom the parcel was sent.

Burglary

Forensic experts went to a citizen's chalet in Nuwaiseeb to take evidence from the room of the guard after the place was raided and burgled.

Reckless driving

A citizen was arrested after being pulled over for driving erratically. He was found in an abnormal condition, and tablets suspected of being drugs were found, in addition to drugs paraphernalia.

The strange, shocking theft of an antique oud

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Theft can happen at any time and even in broad daylight, right in front of you. This week a Salwa resident experienced the most shocking theft when a man enquiring about a classified ad she'd posted offering to sell her father's antique oud stole the musical instrument from her. On Monday evening, the woman received a call from a man claiming he was interested in buying the 50-year-old oud she wanted to sell. She gave the man her address and at the agreed upon time, he drove up in front of her building.

When the man got out of his car, he left the engine running. He spoke with the woman for a few minutes and asked to examine the oud. First he said it needed repairs and bargained a bit on the price. He also offered to swap the oud with another poor-looking one, but the woman refused. He asked to take the oud for a day to try it, offering her any form of guarantee, but she again refused. The man then asked to 'try' it out, saying that he needed to sit down to play. As they were standing on the street curb, he suggested that he get back in the car.

He then said he was thirsty and asked for a glass of water. When the woman turned to go into her apartment and bring some water, the man sped off with the oud. When she tried to call him, the man turned his mobile off and blocked her. The shocked woman immediately went to the police station and gave them the suspect's vehicle's license plate number. The police officer told her no investigators were working and told her to return the next morning.

She went again the next morning to file a case against the man for theft of the oud, giving police the conversation records on her phone in addition to his car's plate number. The investigator called the man, who seemed very cooperative on the phone



The antique oud

and promised to come to the police station. After an hour, the police officer called him again, and he claimed he was on the way. After another hour, the officer called him again, and he again said he was on the way.

But the suspect never showed up. So the police officer advised the woman to file a case that would be transferred to the criminal investigation department to arrest the man. A sentence for theft can include imprisonment between one to three years. After the police calls, the man seemed to have realized that the theft would not go unreported and that there was enough evidence of the crime. So after failing to come to the police station, despite being called repeatedly by a detective, the man sent the stolen oud by taxi back to the woman's address. As the oud was returned, he no doubt is hoping that the case will now be forgotten. All the events, including the return of the oud - now with a broken piece - have been recorded and included in the case file at the police station.



KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality stormed an unlicensed storage area in Kabd yesterday, and removed encroachments on state property. Police were informed to arrest the owner of the 100,000 square-meter area, who had divided it into workshops and warehouses that he rented illegally. Kuwait Municipality Director Ahmad Al-Manfouhi oversaw the operation. —By Hanan Al-Saadoun





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International

THURSDAY, AUGUST 30, 2018



Iran ready to abandon nuclear deal if needed

EU urges 'amicable' end to Franco-British scallop war

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GUGULETHU: Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May (center) watches school children dancing during a visit to the ID Mkhize Secondary School in Gugulethu, about 15km from the centre of Cape Town, as part of a working visit to South Africa yesterday. — AFP

UK PM's dance moves dubbed 'Maybot'

Mayin' Alive! May's somewhat stiff dance moves win mixed reviews

LONDON: British Prime Minister Theresa May's somewhat stiff dance moves won mixed reviews yesterday as she became an unlikely social media star with her "Maybot" manoeuvres. The PM got into the groove in Cape Town on Tuesday when she was welcomed to South Africa by some dancing schoolchildren. The 61-year-old joined in the fun with some shapes reminiscent of gangly former England footballer Peter Crouch's robot dance - before looking up, clocking the cameras and drastically reining it in. The Daily Telegraph newspaper said it was "the exact moment where she loses the will to live" - the forthcoming avalanche of social media mockery appearing before her very eyes.

But before that, just for a few seconds, "we saw who Theresa May really was... just a woman, flapping about in



May becomes unlikely social media star

front of some bewildered kids like she was being attacked by eels. "It was without doubt the most human she has ever looked, which is an odd thing to say about a video

that looks like a possessed shop mannequin being Tasered." The Sun compared her to John Travolta with the headline "Mayin' Alive!" - but called her performance "toe-curling". The Daily Mail said the "robotic nature of her game attempts" saw her moves dubbed the "Maybot" on social media. Meanwhile May's dance made it onto the front page of The Guardian, which called it "an impression of a wobbly fridge".

2 out of 10

Professional dancer James Jordan gave her performance low marks. "It was embarrassing to watch - like bad mum dancing," he told The Sun. "But at least she gave it a go. You have to praise Theresa for trying. I'll give her two out of 10 for effort - one point for each leg." Referring to a

popular BBC celebrity ballroom dancing contest, even May admitted she had not set the dance world on fire.

"I think the chances of 'Strictly Come Dancing' coming calling are pretty minimal," she told Sky News television, adding: "Everybody was dancing. It was great excitement." Dance choreographer Arlene Phillips was quoted as saying in the Daily Mail that she would "give her some advice on how to relax, swing her hips - but most of all, make her look comfortable." The Times said the way "Twinkle Toes Theresa" had "pawed at the concrete" raised concerns that she "might have stood in something as she stepped out of her car". In South Africa, The Citizen newspaper said May "put on a brave face" and "joined in with a bit of a Madiba-esque shuffle" in the style of former president Nelson Mandela. — AFP

Tears, anger; Germany returns remains from Namibian genocide

BERLIN: Germany yesterday handed back human remains seized from Namibia a century ago after the slaughter of indigenous people under its colonial rule, but angry descendants slammed Berlin for failing to properly atone for the dark chapter. Herero chief Vekuii Rukoro, whose ancestors were among the tens of thousands of Herero and Nama people massacred between 1904 and 1908, said the handover ceremony should have taken place not in a Berlin church, but a German government building.

He also accused Berlin of taking too long to formally apologize for what is often called the first genocide of the 20th century. "By trying not to acknowledge the past, the German government will continue to make serious mistakes as regards present and future policies," Rukoro told the church audience, which included government officials from both countries. "We are after all the direct descendants of these remains and we should not be ignored." A Namibian delegation formally received the remains, including 19 skulls, a scalp and bones, during the church ceremony.

Michelle Muentefering, a minister of state for international cultural policies in the German foreign ministry, asked "for forgiveness from the bottom of my heart" as she handed over the remains to Namibia's culture minister. Several Herero women in traditional, cow-horn shaped headdress wiped away tears during the at times emotional proceedings. "May the remains of our ancestors finally go home to Namibia in peace. May they return to the dust from which they came. May justice be done and faith in humanity be restored," said Nama chief Johannes Isaack. Outside the venue, some two dozen protesters held up signs that read "Repatriation without an official apology?" and "Reparations Now!".

No reparations

The German government announced in 2016 that it planned to issue an official apology for the atrocities committed by German imperial troops. But it remains locked in talks with the Namibian government on a joint declaration on the massacres. It has also refused to pay direct reparations, arguing instead that German development aid worth hundreds of millions of euros since Namibia's independence from South Africa in 1990 was "for the benefit of all Namibians". Angered by

Berlin's stance, representatives of the Hereros and Namas have filed a class-action lawsuit in a US court demanding reparations. They also want a seat at the table in the discussions between the German and Namibian governments. "They are still negotiating on an appropriate text... for an apology. That's a big joke," chief Rukoro said during the service, wearing a red, military-style dress uniform.

He accused both countries of trying to sideline him and others from the handover proceedings, saying he had been told in advance "not to embarrass the two governments". He also blasted the decision to hold the ceremony at the French Church in Berlin. "We don't believe that it is bigger and more dignified than all the government buildings of the federal government in Berlin." Rukoro and Nama chief Isaack are both plaintiffs in the US lawsuit. The New York judge in the case has yet to rule on whether to hear the suit, which Germany wants thrown out on the grounds of state immunity from prosecution.

'Extermination order'

Incensed by German settlers stealing their land, women and cattle, the Hereros revolted in 1904 and killed more than 100 German civilians over several days. The Nama people joined the uprising in 1905. Determined to crush the rebellion, General Lothar von Trotha signed a notorious "extermination order" that would lead to the deaths of some 60,000 Hereros and 10,000 Nama people. Many were murdered by German imperial troops while others, driven into the desert or rounded up in prison camps, died from thirst, hunger and exposure. Dozens were beheaded after their deaths, their skulls sent to researchers in Germany for discredited "scientific" experiments that purported to prove the racial superiority of white Europeans.

In some instances, captured Herero women were made to boil the decapitated heads and scrape them clean with shards of glass. Research carried out by German professor Eugen Fischer on the skulls and bones resulted in theories later used by the Nazis to justify the murder of Jews. Germany has previously repatriated human remains to Namibia in 2011 and 2014. The remains, many of which were stored on dusty shelves in universities and clinics, were "often stolen... brought to Germany without respect for human dignity", according to the German foreign ministry. — AFP

German city takes down golden Erdogan statue after outcry

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: The German city of Wiesbaden removed yesterday a temporary statue of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan set up in a town square by artists, after it sparked confrontations between his supporters and opponents. "In agreement with state police, Mayor Sven Gerich decided to have the statue removed as security could no longer be guaranteed," the city's government said on Twitter. Firefighters arrived shortly after midnight with a crane to lift the four-metre (13-foot) tall golden effigy of

Erdogan from the central German Unity Square, where it had been placed on Monday as part of Wiesbaden's Biennale art festival.

Organizers had hoped the statue would provoke public debate relevant to this year's theme of "bad news". Since a failed 2016 coup attempt in Ankara, Erdogan's crackdown on political opponents and journalists—including some German nationals—has been closely followed in Germany, home to a sizeable Turkish minority. The statue, which had been posed to point boldly into the distance, was quickly defaced with insults like "Turkish Hitler". A "slightly aggressive atmosphere" developed, a police spokesman told the DPA news agency, while city councillor Oliver Franz told the Wiesbadener Kurier newspaper that verbal confrontations had escalated into scuffles and "bladed weapons were spotted". "We put up the statue to discuss Erdogan," Wiesbaden city theatre chief Eric Laufenberg told DPA. "In a democracy, we have to put up with all kinds of opinions". But Emil Saenze, a local representative of far-right, anti-immigrant party Alternative for Germany (AfD) blamed the outcry on "stupidity" by the organizers, who had "given a stage to a despot who spends his time humiliating Germans". — AFP



WIESBADEN: Firefighters lift a four-meter tall golden statue featuring Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to remove it in the western German town of Wiesbaden, where it had been placed as part of Wiesbaden's Biennale art festival. — AFP

International

Israel renews threat to attack Iran's military targets in Syria

Russia hopes West won't 'obstruct anti-terror operation' in Syria

JERUSALEM: Israel yesterday renewed its threat to attack Iranian military targets in Syria, after the two Muslim allies signed an accord on security cooperation. "The accord concluded by (Syrian President) Bashar Al-Assad and Iran constitutes a test for Israel: Our response will be loud and clear," Intelligence Minister Yisrael Katz said on Israeli public radio. "We will not allow Iran to establish itself militarily in Syria," he said. "We will react in Syria with all our might against any Iranian target that threatens Israel, and if the Syrian army's air defense intervenes against us, it will pay the price." Iran's military attaché to Damascus said Tuesday that his country's military advisers would remain in Syria under the defense agreement signed the previous day.

"Support for Syria's territorial integrity and the independence of Syrian sovereignty were also emphasized in the agreement," Brigadier-General Abolghasem Alinejad said. Tehran has provided steady political, financial and military backing to Assad as he has fought back against a seven-year uprising. Israel has sought to avoid direct involvement in the conflict but acknowledges carrying out dozens of air strikes in Syria to stop what it says are deliveries of advanced weaponry to its Lebanese enemy Hezbollah. It has also pledged to prevent its arch foe Iran from entrenching itself militarily in Syria and a series of strikes that have killed Iranians in Syria have been attributed to Israel.

Anti-terror operation

Meanwhile, Russia yesterday called on the West not to stand in the way of an "anti-terror operation" in Syria's Idlib, as speculation grows Damascus is planning a Russian-

backed offensive on the rebel-held province. "I hope our Western partners will not give in to (rebel) provocations and will not obstruct an anti-terror operation" in Idlib, foreign minister Sergei Lavrov said at a press conference with his Saudi counterpart Adel al-Jubeir in Moscow. Lavrov also said that there is "full political understanding" between

Russia and Turkey, who support opposing sides of the Syrian civil war but are currently in intense negotiations to ensure Idlib does not become a breaking point in their alliance.

"It is necessary to disassociate the so-called moderate opposition from terrorists and at the same time prepare an operation against them while minimizing risks for the civilian population," Lavrov said. "This abscess needs to be liquidated." Lavrov went on to accuse the West of "actively heating up" the idea of a "so-called planned chemical attack by the (Syrian) government." Over the last week, Moscow has accused Syrian rebels of planning to stage a chemical attack in the northwestern province that would "provoke" Western strikes on its ally Damascus.

It also accused British secret services of being "actively involved" in the plot. Moscow's accusations came after US President Donald Trump's national security adviser John Bolton said Washington will respond "very strongly" if Syrian regime forces used chemical weapons to retake Idlib. This week Russian media reported Moscow is reinforcing its military presence in the Mediterranean near Syria. In April, the US, France and Britain launched joint missile strikes on Syrian targets in response to an alleged chemical weapons

“Our response will be loud and clear”



SARAQIB, Syria: Turkish forces are seen in a convoy on a main highway between Damascus and Aleppo, near the town of Saraqib in Syria's northern Idlib province yesterday. — AFP

attack in the town of Douma that left scores of people dead.

Russian stuck by its ally Syria and angrily insisted the Douma attack was staged by the White Helmets volunteer rescue service. Russia, a long-time ally of Syria, launched a military intervention in 2015 to support the embattled regime of President Bashar al-Assad, a move that changed

the course of the war. Damascus still holds the southeastern tip of Idlib, a strategically important province adjacent to Latakia on the Mediterranean coast that is home to Assad's clan. More than 350,000 people have been killed and millions displaced since Syria's war started in 2011 with the brutal repression of anti-government protests. — Agencies

News in brief

Egypt kills 20 jihadists

CAIRO: Egypt's army said yesterday it has killed 20 jihadists in the latest round of military operations in the Western Desert and Sinai Peninsula. The military launched a sweeping operation in February focused on Sinai in eastern Egypt aimed at wiping out militants, including from the Islamic State group, who have been waging a bloody insurgency. Operations over the past few days had "resulted in the elimination of seven extremely dangerous" jihadists close to Egypt's western border with Libya, the army said in a statement. It said 13 militants were also killed in shootouts with government forces during army raids in central and northern Sinai. — AFP

UK to open embassies

LONDON: Britain said yesterday it would open new embassies in Chad and Niger to boost its diplomatic presence in Africa's troubled Sahel region. The announcement came as Prime Minister Theresa May wrapped up a trip to South Africa and headed to Nigeria and Kenya on her first trip to the continent as premier. "In one of Africa's most fragile regions, we are increasing our support for African countries' efforts to tackle the underlying drivers of instability and conflict," the Foreign Office in London said in a statement. "The expansion will see the UK step up diplomatic, defense and development engagement in the region, creating new partnerships and opportunities and reducing potential threats to UK and European security." — AFP

Bomb kills 5 Kenya troops

NAIROBI: Five Kenyan soldiers were killed and 10 injured yesterday when their vehicle hit a landmine on a road in a coastal area close to the Somali border. "Soldiers operating in Lamu County, while on a humanitarian civil assignment to fetch and distribute water to the residents in the area, hit an Improvised Explosive Device (IED)," the military said in a statement. It said five soldiers "succumbed to their injuries" while 10 were being treated for injuries. The incident occurred on a dirt road a few kilometers from the border, between the coastal village of Kiunga, where there is an airstrip, and Sankuri. — AFP

Activists held in Greece

LESBOS ISLAND: Police in Greece on Tuesday said they had arrested three members of a Greek NGO on suspicion of helping migrants illegally enter the country. The members of Emergency Response Centre International (ERC) were detained on the Greek island of Lesbos, where thousands of migrants are housed in squalid conditions in cramped camps. "The activities of an organized criminal network that systematically facilitated the illegal entry of foreigners were fully exposed," a police statement said. Members of the group were in contact with migrants on social media groups and "actively assisted" their illegal entry into Greece from 2015 onwards, according to the statement. — AFP

Suicide car bomber kills 11

RAMADI: A suicide bomber blew up a vehicle in the town of Al-Qaim in western Iraq yesterday, killing at least 11 people, five of them security personnel, police said. The 9 am bombing at a checkpoint on the outskirts of Al-Qaim also wounded 16 people - 11 civilians and five security personnel, police Captain Mahmud Jassem said. The town, on the Syrian border some 340 kilometers from Baghdad, was one of the last in Iraq to be recaptured from the Islamic State group in November last year. One month later, Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi declared victory over the jihadists. But since then, the security forces have announced a number of campaigns to flush out holdout IS fighters from sparsely populated areas from which they have continued to mount attacks. — AFP

Iran 'ready' to abandon nuke deal if needed

TEHRAN: Iran's supreme leader warned yesterday the country could abandon its nuclear deal with world powers if it no longer served its interests, even as economic and political pressure mounted on the government. "Naturally, if we reach the conclusion that (the nuclear deal) is no longer maintaining our national interests, we will put it aside," Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said in a meeting with the cabinet, according to his website. He said Iran must not "pin its hopes" on Europe, despite European efforts to salvage the nuclear deal following the withdrawal of the United States.

The government of President Hassan Rouhani has been battered by the return of US sanctions, which has triggered a rapid departure of foreign firms and ended his hopes of attracting large-scale investment. His political enemies are circling, with parliament announcing that two more of his ministers could be impeached in the coming days.

The labor and economy ministers have already been sacked by parliament this month and motions have been accepted to vote on impeaching his industries and education ministers in the coming days. Khamenei insisted the political tumult was a sign of the strength of Iran's democracy. He praised the tough questioning Rouhani received in parliament on Tuesday as "a glorious show of the power of the Islamic republic and the self-confidence of officials."

Differences between officials are "natural", he added, though he said they should not be covered by the media "because the people would become worried". Tuesday's grilling in parliament was the first for Rouhani in five years as president, and lawmakers slammed his handling of five economic issues, ranging from unemployment to the collapsing value of the currency. In voting at the end of the session, they declared they were unsatisfied with four of his responses.

'Day and night'

Under parliamentary rules, the issues could then have

Clashes shatter illusion of security in Libyan capital

TRIPOLI: A bout of fighting in Libya's capital has laid bare the fragility of a militia cartel that had brought a veneer of stability to the city and encouraged the gradual return of foreign diplomats and plans for elections in December. Major battles have become rarer in Tripoli since last year as a handful of armed factions aligned with the internationally recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) consolidated their control.

But the ascent of four or five "super militias" has created resentment among groups excluded from the capital and from access to the spoils of Libya's informal economy. That has heightened the risk of conflict and made the challenge of disbanding militias or integrating them into regular security forces more complex, diplomats and analysts say. Bringing militias to heel is seen as crucial to resolving a conflict that has divided Libya since a NATO-backed uprising forced Muammar Gaddafi from power seven years ago, slashing oil production and giving space to migrant smugglers and militants.

Fighting on Monday and Tuesday pitted the Seventh Brigade, or Kaniyat, from Tarhouna, a town 65 km south-east of Tripoli, against the Tripoli Revolutionaries' Brigades (TRB) and the Nawas, two of the capital's largest armed groups. The Kaniyat and other groups from outside Tripoli have noticed the success of rivals inside the city with growing unease. Reports about the wealth, power and extravagant lifestyles of some Tripoli militia commanders have fuelled resentment. "The profits from state capture now go to a narrower set of armed groups than ever before," said Wolfram Lacher, a researcher at the German think-tank SWP. "That's a very dangerous situation because it excludes powerful forces from access to levers of the state and administration, and this is now causing those



TEHRAN: Khamenei (center) speaks during a government meeting in the capital Tehran. — AFP

been referred for judicial review, but parliament speaker Ali Larijani - a close ally of Rouhani - said yesterday there were no legal grounds for doing so. Parliament can theoretically impeach Rouhani, but he has the protection of Khamenei, who has previously said removing the president would "play into the hands of the enemy". Instead, Khamenei called on officials to work together "day and night" to resolve the country's economic problems.

Iran's currency has lost around half its value since the US announced it was withdrawing from the nuclear deal in May, and further pain is expected when sanctions on its crucial oil sector are reimposed in November. Conservative opponents of Rouhani, who have long opposed his outreach to the West, are smelling blood. Next in their sights is his minister of industry, mines and business, Mohammad Shariatmadari, who is accused of failing to prevent high inflation, particularly in the car industry. A motion was also filed yesterday to vote on the impeachment of Education Minister Mohammad Bathaei, over a series of issues linked to school budgets, the curriculum and alleged mismanagement.

Impeaching ministers

Iran's parliament launched impeachment proceedings

forces to build alliances against the big militias in Tripoli." As they launched their incursion into Tripoli, Kaniyat denounced their rivals as the "Daesh (Islamic State) of public money", promising to "cleanse" them from the country.

Heavy fighting

Kaniyat made gains as tanks, armored vehicles and pickup trucks mounted with anti-aircraft guns were deployed in densely populated residential areas of southern Tripoli, with explosions and heavy artillery fire echoing across the city. At least five people were killed and nearly 30 wounded on the first day, officials said.

Tripoli's big armed groups claim official status through the GNA - which is opposed by a rival government and military faction based in the east of the sprawling North African country - but act with autonomy. They guard strategic buildings, control Tripoli's airport and have infiltrated ministries and many of the banks, giving them access to coveted dollars at the official exchange rate, about five times cheaper than the parallel rate. "They place their people throughout the state administration, particularly in positions that offer control of economic resources," said Lacher. Since last summer an ex-prime minister, the mayor of Tripoli and the head of the state religious authority have been among a series of senior figures to be abducted then released by militias. A key member of the GNA's leadership, Fathi Al-Majbari, withdrew from his position after an armed group attacked his residence in June. Earlier this month the National Oil Corporation denounced militia threats against the newly appointed head of its fuel distribution unit over efforts to tackle smuggling, and the sovereign wealth fund said that it had been forced by threats and abductions to move premises.

Prominent Libyans based abroad have said they seek the protection of armed militia factions, not the government, when they travel to Tripoli. Diplomatic staff evacuated amid fighting in 2014 and now tentatively returning ultimately depend on armed groups for access and protection. Critics of a French-led plan to hold national elections on Dec 10 worry that a free vote will be impossible, and that militias will challenge with force any result they

against two more cabinet ministers yesterday, as opponents of President Hassan Rouhani piled further pressure on his government. The labor and economy ministers have already been sacked by parliament this month and, on Tuesday, Rouhani faced his first grilling by lawmakers in his five years in power.

Conservative opponents of the president, a political moderate, appear keen to drive home their advantage in the wake of a deepening economic crisis triggered by the reimposition of US sanctions.

Yesterday, 20 members of parliament signed a motion to summon Education Minister Mohammad Bathaei, who must now appear within 10 days to face questions and an impeachment vote. On Tuesday, two other groups of MPs presented motions to impeach the minister of industry, mines and business, Mohammad Shariatmadari.

Rouhani faced tough questions over his handling of the economy when he appeared before lawmakers on Tuesday. In voting at the end of the session, lawmakers declared they were unsatisfied with his answers to four of their five questions, covering unemployment, smuggling and the collapsing value of the Iranian rial. — Agencies



ZLITEN: A trail of blood is pictured at the site of an attack on a checkpoint in the city of Zliten, 170 km east of the Libyan capital Tripoli. An attack on a checkpoint between the Libyan capital and the town of Zliten killed four soldiers of the UN-backed unity government. — AFP

don't like. "I think it's a race against time and I feel like the (Libyan) state's disappearing," said one senior diplomat. "It's hard now to tell where the state and where's the militia." Gaddafi's four-decade-long, one-man dictatorship left Libya with few effective state institutions after his overthrow. — Reuters

International

Germany's police under fire after far-right mob violence

Police in eastern Germany accused of stoking tensions

BERLIN: Police in eastern Germany were accused yesterday of stoking tensions by leaking to far-right groups the arrest warrant over a fatal stabbing that sparked racist mob violence. "It's unacceptable that some police officers think they can leak things like this even though they know they're committing an offence," said Saxony state's deputy premier Martin Dulig, calling the release a "scandal".

Saxony, in Germany's ex-communist east, has again become a hotspot for xenophobia after a knife killing early Sunday in the city of Chemnitz led to protests that degenerated into rightwing extremists hunting down immigrants in the streets. Police on Monday arrested a 22-year-old Iraqi and a Syrian, 23, suspected of killing a 35-year-old German identified only as Daniel H. with multiple stabbings in the late-night altercation.

Authorities have not yet fully disclosed the identities of the victim or suspects in keeping with the German convention of protecting the identities of people involved in judicial proceedings. However, the arrest warrant of one of the suspects found its way into the hands of rightwing groups who then posted it online, where it was widely shared, spelling out the full names of the suspects, victim, eye-witnesses and the judge. National Interior Minister Horst Seehofer called the release "completely unacceptable", and prosecutors said they had launched an investigation on suspicion of breach of official secrets rules.

Lawyer Sebastian Schamer, who has defended victims of neo-Nazi violence, said he had filed a criminal complaint against an activist who posted the warrant, Lutz Bachmann of far-right movement PEGIDA, short for Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident. The right-wing "Citizens Movement Pro Chemnitz", which had

also shared the warrant, complained on Facebook that "the internet police" had deleted the document which it said showed how the suspects had "slaughtered" the German man. State premier Michael Kretschmer, who has defended the police force against charges of being ill-prepared to deal with the far-right rallies, promised that "we will clarify the matter," speaking to regional public broadcaster MDR.

New protests planned

Saxony has been a stronghold of far-right parties and groups that bitterly oppose Chancellor Angela Merkel for her 2015 decision to keep open German borders to a mass influx of migrants and refugees. Police in the state have also come under fire for the alleged sympathies of some officers with movements like PEGIDA and the anti-immigration Alternative for Germany (AfD) party.

Saxony police last week apologized for obstructing a TV crew at a rightwing anti-Merkel rally at the instigation of a nationalist protester who turned out to be an off-duty police employee. Dulig said that "it has got to be clear that certain things will no longer be tolerated in the police force". The latest controversy comes as the mood remains highly charged following what have been labeled as "pogrom-like" scenes in Chemnitz on Sunday in which extremists assaulted immigrants from Afghanistan, Syria and Bulgaria. On Monday night some 7,000 protesters, most of them football hooligans and rightwing nationalists, again took to the city's streets and clashed with anti-fascist protesters, leaving some 20 people injured. Police said they were investigating 10 incidents of protesters making the illegal Hitler salute. Police, who were initially overwhelmed



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

by the mobs on Sunday, then also faced criticism for having only deployed 591 officers on Monday, leaving them outnumbered more than 10 to one.

The small deployment came despite a warning by the domestic intelligence service that thousands of extremists, including from the hardcore hooligan and martial arts scenes, were heading to Chemnitz. The service, in its situa-

tion report, spoke of a "nationwide mobilization" via social media, especially by the hooligan groups "Kaotic" and "NS Boys", short for "New Society Boys". Pro Chemnitz has announced a new demonstration today while AfD and PEGIDA have called for a rally Saturday, with a silent march through Chemnitz in memory of the stabbing victim and against Germany's "enforced multi-culturalism". — AFP



Arrest warrant leaked to far-right groups

French baguette faces pinch from anti-salt MPs

PARIS: France's beloved bread loaf, the baguette, may be about to lose some of its bite, with politicians looking into the health risks of additives set to propose legislation forcing bakers and processed food makers more generally to slash salt content. After months of investigation and hearings, a parliamentary committee has come to the conclusion that voluntary agreements on the reduction of high salt levels have not been respected and that it is time to impose healthier norms via legislation.

That committee is due to present its proposals in September but the drift of what is on the way was made clear yesterday by key people involved in the deliberations. "It's a real public health problem," said Loic Prud'homme, one of a 20-member parliamentary committee looking into the matter. Michele Crouzet, another committee member, said the daily intake of salt in France, at about 10 to 12 grams, is still double the limit recommended by the World Health Organization. Excessive salt levels are linked to cardiovascular trouble, which in France is the second-biggest killer among health problems.

Crouzet said the committee could propose a tax on salt like one already introduced in France on the sugar content of fizzy drinks. But some say that levy has been ineffective because manufacturers are shifting to other forms of sweetener. "What we can now say is that voluntary agreements do not work and it's now time to switch to binding constraints," Prud'homme said. In the case of the baguette, and bread more generally, voluntary agreements struck in 2002 had sought to limit the salt level to 18 grams per kilo of flour within five years, he said. Some 16 years later, that goal had still not been met.

"In any event what's certain is that it's now time to move via sturdy legislation, which could involve setting constraints in gram terms for salt," he said in a separate interview on a public service radio station, francinfo. A report to be presented by the committee will also seek to tackle excessive use of other additives in processed food and pre-prepared meals, and seek curbs on advertising that aims to promote less-than-healthy food among children, said Prud'homme. — Reuters

LA to pay \$14.3m to family of man mistakenly shot

LOS ANGELES: Los Angeles County has agreed to pay \$14.35 million to the family of a man mistakenly shot by police during a search for a wanted gang member, the family's attorney said. The settlement, one of the highest ever paid by the county, was reached earlier this year but the amount had not been made public. Frank Mendoza, 54, was fatally shot on August 1, 2014 by a sheriff's deputy who mistook him for Cedric Ramirez. Ramirez, 24, a parolee wanted on felony charges, had broken into the Mendoza home during a police chase in LA's Pico Rivera neighborhood.

Several members of the family managed to escape from the house. But when Mendoza tried to flee through the front door, a deputy mistook him for Ramirez and shot him once in the forehead and once in the leg, according to a report of the incident.

"This is the worst nightmare of any citizen, where they're under the suspicion that they're being protected by law enforcement and instead, law enforcement ends up taking their life," Garo Mardirossian, the family's attorney, told reporters on Monday. Mendoza's family had filed a wrongful death lawsuit against Los Angeles County and the Sheriff's Department after the shooting, claiming that officers had been negligent. — AFP

Corruption trial of senior Kenyan judge suspended

NAIROBI: The corruption trial of Kenya's deputy chief justice, the country's second-highest judge, was suspended yesterday amid a barrage of legal petitions at various courts. Philomena Mwili, one of seven members of the Supreme Court, was arrested on Tuesday after Kenya's director of public prosecutions, Noordin Haji, accused her of abusing her office for personal gain. Mwili was among the judges who annulled President Uhuru Kenyatta's initial election win in August 2017, leading to the controversial holding of a fresh vote.

She was due to be formally charged at a Nairobi magistrates' court yesterday but High Court judge Chacha Mwita suspended

the case until October 9 to hear a constitutional challenge brought by her lawyers. Mwili's lead lawyer James Orengo, a prominent opposition figure and elected senator who played a key role in overturning last year's election result, said the move against her was "an attack on the judiciary".

"These charges have been brought not to secure justice but to secure the removal of the deputy chief justice from office," he said before launching his legal challenge. "There is no factual foundation for instituting these proceedings," he said, insisting on her innocence. After his initial victory was annulled, Kenyatta publicly warned that he would "fix the judiciary" and some judges subsequently faced threats and intimidation.

Political undercurrents

In October 2017, Mwili's bodyguard was shot dead the day before the Supreme Court was to hear a petition to postpone the re-run. As a result, Mwili did not

attend the hearing and the lack of a quorum meant the election went ahead unchallenged. "This is an intensified war on the Supreme Court," Orengo said yesterday. Mwili was appointed to the Supreme Court in 2016 and shot into the limelight for her role in annulling Kenyatta's first poll win.

She was accused Tuesday of accepting money as a gift in dubious circumstances, failing to pay taxes and using false pretences to carry out a transaction involving an asset belonging to the Imperial Bank, which collapsed in 2015. Mwili appeared in court later that day and was released on bail of five million shillings (\$50,000/42,000 euros).

But Haji denied accusations the arrest was politically-motivated. He said Mwili was targeted as part of an ongoing crackdown against corruption, which has seen several high-ranking officials hauled into court, a rarity in graft-ravaged Kenya whose citizens rarely see justice done. "We are an independent institution and we are



NAIROBI: Kenya's deputy chief justice Philomena Mwili, the country's second-highest judge, appears at the Millman Law Court in Nairobi yesterday. Mwili was arrested after Kenya's director of public prosecutions, Noordin Haji, accused her of abusing her office for personal gain. — AFP

not being directed by anyone," he said. "This decision has not been taken lightly. The dignity and independence of the judiciary is dear to us." — AFP

EU urges 'amicable' end to scallop war

BRUSSELS: The European Commission yesterday urged France and Britain to find an "amicable" solution after fishermen from the two countries clashed in the English Channel over a hoard of scallops. Brussels insisted however that it could not get involved in the fight as arrangements for trawling for the prized shellfish were made between individual countries, not at a European level. "We saw the reports of incidents involving French and British fishermen off the coast of Normandy," European Commission spokesman Daniel Rosario told a daily briefing in Brussels.

"Scallop fishery is regulated at national level and over the past years common management measures have been agreed between France, the UK and Ireland," the spokesman added. "So it is in the interest first and foremost of the fishermen that this agreement is in place. And we invite the national authorities to resolve any dispute in an amicable way as has been done in the past." As a years-long dispute boiled over, five heavily outnumbered British scallop boats sailed into battle with around 35 French vessels in the incident on Tuesday.

Fishermen from both sides hurled stones and insults at



HERAULT: A boat is moored at the Etang de Thau lagoon near Sete, southern France. — AFP

each other while some of the boats also rammed each other, according to video footage. The skirmish took place more than 12 nautical miles out to sea where the British are legally allowed to fish all year round.

But their French counterparts, restricted to fishing for scallops between October 1 and May 15, have accused

the British of depleting stocks and want them to face the same rules.

The issue is doubly sensitive given the uncertain future of arrangements for fishing in the area after Britain leaves the EU in March 2019, particularly if Britain crashes out without a withdrawal deal. — AFP

Rebels kill four police officers in Indian Kashmir

SRINAGAR: Suspected rebels shot dead four police officers while security forces killed two militants in Indian Kashmir yesterday as tensions rose before a major Supreme Court hearing on the troubled region. Five police officers who had stopped near the southern Kashmir town of Shopian to repair their vehicle were ambushed, Inspector General of Police Swayam Prakash Pani told AFP.

"Four of the police were killed. One who was inside the vehicle at the time of the attack is safe," Pani said. Separately, two suspected rebels were killed in a gunfight with government forces not far from the attack on the police, officials said. The Muslim-majority Himalayan region, divided between India and Pakistan since their split in 1947, has seen a resurgence of hostilities in the past two years. Security officials say at least 144 militants

have been killed this year, while more fighters have joined rebel ranks. There are an estimated 250 active underground fighters, they say.

Separatist groups have called a general strike for Thursday and Friday before the Supreme Court hearing, which they fear could allow Indians from outside Kashmir to buy property in the state and get government jobs. The court will hear arguments on Friday on a legal challenge against a 1954 constitutional provision, Article 35A, that reserved the special privileges for Kashmir permanent residents. Separatist groups seeking Kashmir's independence or merger with Pakistan, along with business and civil society groups have opposed scrapping Article 35A.

Incorrect rumors this week that the article had been scrapped caused protests and clashes in Kashmir. The ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party of Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants to annul the constitutional provisions that grant special status to Kashmir. A BJP spokesman this week said Article 35A had become an obstacle to outside investment in the region. Rebel groups have for decades fought hundreds of thousands of soldiers and police deployed in Indian Kashmir. Pakistan controls a separate part of the former Himalayan kingdom and like India claims the region in full. — AFP



KASHMIR: Kashmiri protestors clash with Indian government forces after Eid prayers in downtown Srinagar. — AFP

International

Professor charged with murder; wife's body found in a suitcase

The latest grisly murder to transfix the crowded city

HONG KONG: A University of Hong Kong (HK) professor was yesterday charged with murder after police found his wife's decomposing body stuffed in a suitcase in his office, the latest grisly murder to transfix the crowded city. Officers discovered the woman's body, wearing only underwear and with electric wire around her neck, hidden in the suitcase inside a large wooden box in the office of 53-year-old Cheung Kie-chung. The associate professor from the Department of Mechanical Engineering had reported his wife missing on August 20, saying she had not returned home after an argument three days earlier.

Police said they became suspicious of Cheung after CCTV footage failed to show his wife leaving their home, while Cheung was seen moving a large wooden box out of the premises. On Tuesday afternoon police searched Cheung's office, a five-minute drive from the dormitory where he lives with his wife and children. "There was blood seeping out from the suitcase and it stank," Superintendent Law Kwok-hoi told reporters Tuesday night. He said the victim might have been strangled, but the cause of death still needed to be

confirmed by a post-mortem.

Law said Cheung, who will make his first court appearance today, had told investigators he had a dispute with his wife on the night she disappeared over family toilet hygiene. Cheung is also the warden of the dormitory where his family lives and a member of the university's governing council. Zhang Xiang, the university president, said yesterday he was shocked and saddened at the murder and described it as a tragedy. He said the university would offer support to students and colleagues affected. Another Hong Kong academic is currently on trial for using a yoga ball filled with carbon monoxide to kill his wife and daughter inside a car. The southern Chinese city, famed for its cramped housing but low crime rate, is occasionally rocked by high-profile murders that often involve gruesome attempts to hide or dispose of bodies. In 2016 British banker Rurik Jutting was jailed for life for the murder of two Indonesian women in Hong Kong. He stuffed one of their bodies in a suitcase and placed it on his balcony. The year before, a local man was jailed for chopping up his parents and storing their body parts in a freezer. —AFP



Officers discover body with electric wire on her neck



HONG KONG: Students walk in front of the University of Hong Kong's Wei Lun Hall, the residential block where university professor Cheung Kie-chung and his family lived, in Hong Kong's Pok Fu Lam area yesterday. A University of Hong Kong professor has been arrested on suspicion of killing his wife after police found a body stuffed into a suitcase in his office, the latest grisly murder to transfix the crowded city.—AFP

Pakistan party call for Dutch envoy's expulsion over cartoons

LAHORE: An Islamist party in Pakistan called for the expulsion of the Dutch ambassador yesterday as it launched a protest against a far-right Dutch politician's plan for a cartoon competition featuring caricatures of the Muslim Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). Several thousand activists gathered in the eastern city of Lahore for the demonstration organized by Tehreek-e-Labbaik, a party that amassed the fifth largest number of votes in a general election last month having campaigned as a defender of the laws and punishments for crimes of blasphemy.

Party leader Khadim Hussain Rizvi set out from Lahore's historic centre at the head of a protest he aims to take through the towns of Punjab province to the capital Islamabad, where protesters will stage a sit-in to pressure Pakistan's new Prime Minister Imran Khan to cut diplomatic ties with the Netherlands. "The Dutch ambassador should be immediately deported," Labbaik spokesman Ejaz Ashrafi told Reuters. "We will only stop when the government meets this demand."

Pakistan has already complained to the Dutch government about far-right parliamentarian Geert Wilders' plans for a cartoon contest that will upset and provoke Muslims. Wilders intends to display the cartoons on the walls of his political party's room in parliament. He says he's had "hundreds" of entries. "The Foreign Office called the charge d'affaires of the Netherlands and issued him a Demarche' to record a protest," the Pakistani prime minister's office said in a statement yesterday.

The Netherlands Prime Minister Mark Rutte said last week that the cartoon competition "was not something I would do" and his government was not associated with it. Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said he planned to take up the issue with the United Nations and several world leaders. "They don't understand how much they hurt us when they do such acts," Khan, a cricketer-turned-politician, said on Tuesday, a day after the upper house of parliament condemned the proposed cartoon competition.

Officials from the Punjab provincial government met with Labbaik leaders in Lahore in a vain attempt to persuade them to call off their protest. "We told them to stop the protests because the Pakistan government is taking up the issue effectively," an official involved in the talks told Reuters, adding that Labbaik representatives insisted the protest would only end once the Dutch envoy was expelled. Last year, in a stand-off with the previous government, Labbaik shut down a main highway leading into Islamabad for nearly three weeks over a small change in wording to an electoral law changing a religious oath to a simple declaration. —Agencies



BAGO: A village is flooded in Yedashe township, Bago region after rampaging flood waters from Swar Chaung dam submerged large areas in central Myanmar yesterday. —AFP

Myanmar dam overflows as thousands displaced

BAGO: A major effort was under way to reach thousands of people trapped in their homes after a dam swollen by monsoon rain overflowed early Wednesday in central Myanmar, officials said. A surge of water inundated the rural flatland in Bago region after the Swar Chaung dam spillway, which regulates the release of water, collapsed due to heavy seasonal rain. AFP reporters in Kayin village described how some people waded through chest-deep water to get to higher ground. Many others remained trapped in their half-submerged homes as rescuers worked into the night to try to ferry residents out.

No casualties have yet been reported but more than 12,600 people have taken shelter in about 30 temporary camps. Ministry of Social Welfare director Phyu Lae Tun said. "There are more than 14,000 households and some 63,000 people affected by the waters," she said. The torrent also fractured part of a bridge on

the Yangon-Mandalay highway linking Myanmar's two biggest cities. Deputy Minister for Construction Kyaw Linn told reporters the bridge's supporting towers were sinking. "We will get divers to go down and check after the water levels recede," he said.

Army chief Min Aung Hlaing, under mounting international pressure to face international justice following a damning UN report this week on the Rohingya crisis, was quick to arrive at the scene on Wednesday morning. "We have to work together," he said. "The spillway will not be able to be controlled until the water flow stops." The deluge comes just weeks after heavy monsoon rains pummeled Myanmar, causing widespread flash floods that forced some 150,000 people to flee their homes. Southeast Asia's annual monsoon season runs from around June to November.

Regional neighbor Laos was hit badly last month when heavy rainfall caused the collapse of a dam. At least 35 people were killed, scores went missing and thousands more languished in shelters. The \$1.2 billion Xe-Namnoy dam - a joint venture between South Korean, Thai and Laotian firms - collapsed on July 23 after heavy rains, unleashing a barrage of water that swept away entire villages in the country's south. The communist country has since suspended its hydropower strategy to become the "battery of Asia" by damming rivers and selling electricity to its neighbors.—AFP

Indian court places activists under house arrest amid outrage

NEW DELHI: India's Supreme Court ordered police yesterday to put five prominent rights campaigners suspected of links to Maoist guerrillas under house arrest as outrage grew over their detention. Critics of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government have dismissed the allegations against the activists, who were detained a day earlier, and said the crackdown was part of ongoing attempts to stifle all dissent. Police detained the campaigners, seized their laptops and mobile phones, in raids on their homes in different cities, triggering protests and a petition in the Supreme Court challenging the action.

Sudha Bharadwaj, who has been fighting for the rights of workers in parts of India such as Chhattisgarh where left-wing guerrilla groups operate, said the action against her was part of a broader crackdown on opponents of the government. "The effort is whatever is the opposition to this regime, whether it is workers rights, tribal rights, everybody who in the opposition is being rounded up," she told reporters outside her home in Faridabad, a short distance from New Delhi. The arrests follow months of tensions between right wing nationalist groups and advocates of free speech that has played out in college campuses and spilled over into the streets.

Critics also say several top journalists have been forced out of their jobs for their critical reporting of the government. The others detained on Tuesday included long-time Varavara Rao, a prominent poet from the southern city of Hyderabad, activists Vernon Gonsalves and Arun Ferreira from Mumbai and civil liberties activist Gautam Navlakha from New Delhi. Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party-led government has faced mounting criticism from activists and academics, who accuse it of undermining the secular and pluralistic principles of India's constitution.

The BJP denies these allegations but says it is opposed to appeasement of any community and has long advocated tough action to protect national security. "These five are no threat to anyone," said Prashant Bhushan, a lawyer for a group of leading academics that has petitioned the Supreme Court to release the activists. "The charges against them on the face of it appear indiscriminate, unwarranted, part of a malicious campaign to threaten human rights defenders, independent journalists, writers and thinkers in the country from critiquing the government and its policies, and an attempt to muzzle dissent," the petition said.

Intellectual force

Police have also accused the five of inflammatory speeches at a rally in western India last year which led to violent clashes between Dalits, the lowest in the Hindu caste hierarchy, and right wing organizations. A police officer said the main case relates to speeches made during a rally held in the city of Pune on Dec 31, 2017 commemorating the valour of Dalits. The following day, violent clashes broke out between members of the lower caste and hardline Hindu groups.

The police officer, who could not be named because he was not authorized to speak to reporters, said police had seized documents relating to the long-running Maoist insurgency afflicting parts of the country. The guerrillas are fighting for the rights of the landless in parts of eastern and southern India, dubbed "the Red Corridor". The police officer said the five activists gave intellectual force to an insurgency in which thousands of people have been killed over the years.

Modi faces an election next year and opposition parties are trying to forge an alliance to stop his Hindu nationalists from coming back to power. The Supreme Court headed by the chief justice Dipak Misra said it would hear the petition challenging the arrests of the activists next week and until then they would be placed under house arrest, and not police custody. Judge DY Chandrachud, one of the judges on the bench said the right to criticise was a crucial for democracy. "Dissent is the safety valve of democracy. If dissent is disallowed, then the pressure cooker may burst," he said. — Reuters

Malabar Group offers 7 crore rupees to Kerala flood relief

DUBAI: Malabar Group has announced a contribution of total 7 crore Indian rupees to the Kerala flood relief. The flood that swept away almost half of Kerala has cost many life and property. The overall loss is yet to be estimated, however honorable Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and government is leading a very commendable rehabilitation work. To support the activities of Chief Minister, MP Ahammed Chairman-Malabar Group handed over a cheque of INR 2 crore yesterday at Trivandrum, Kerala. He also committed a financial help of INR 5 crore for rebuilding and repairing houses lost and damaged in the flood.

This includes RS 1 crore collected from the employees of Malabar Group. Hence, the total relief from Malabar Group is 7 crore Indian rupees. The entire relief activities will be routed through Malabar Housing Charitable Trust. Malabar Gold & Diamonds is always at forefront when it comes to CSR activities. The group sets aside a fixed percentage of its net profit for the benefit of the needy in the



M P Ahammed, Chairman of Malabar Group handing over the cheque and commitment letter to honorable Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. Minister for Industries and Sports EP Jayarajan and Malabar Gold and Diamonds International Operations Managing Director M P Shamlal Ahammed were also present.

respective markets it operates in. They undertake social welfare activities all year long, focusing on five priority

areas such as medical, educational sector, environment as well as housing and women empowerment.

Analysis

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'Ghetto President' shakes up Ugandan politics

The arrest this month of a 35-year-old legislator who calls himself "Ghetto President" has sparked fierce street protests in Uganda. Musician-turned-MP Robert Kyagulanyi represents a new challenge to President Yoweri Museveni, in power since 1986. Museveni has won praise in the West for his support against militant Islam and his role as power broker in the volatile Great Lakes Region. Uganda has also welcomed foreign investors such as France's Total, China's CNOOC and Britain's Tullow as part of a plan to start pumping oil from 2021.

But the 74-year-old leader's move to sign a law scrapping a 75-year age limit has prompted many Ugandans to believe he wants to remain in power indefinitely. Opposition to him has been galvanized by Kyagulanyi, who according to his backers was beaten and tortured after he was arrested on Aug. 14 for his role in the stoning of Museveni's convoy. He was unable to stand without help when he appeared in a military court last week to face charges, subsequently dropped, of illegal weapons possession. He was then charged with treason in a civilian court before being granted bail.

Though many Ugandans have long complained of worsening government services, rising crime and widespread corruption, there has not been a politician broadly popular enough - especially among the young - to challenge the status quo.

Who is 'Bobi Wine'?

"Bobi Wine" is the stage name of Kyagulanyi, who entered politics last year with a landslide victory as an independent candidate in a parliamentary by-election. He was already well-known among young Ugandans for his songs about corruption, poor government services and poverty. "Why de price of electricity too high? Why de price of education is too high?" Kyagulanyi crooned in one song. His music videos frequently portray the life of everyday Ugandans in neighborhoods with unpaved roads and poor infrastructure. Kyagulanyi has become a leading critic of unpopular measures including a tax on social media used by many Ugandans. Despite having an active Twitter account himself, Museveni says social media is used to spread gossip and lies.

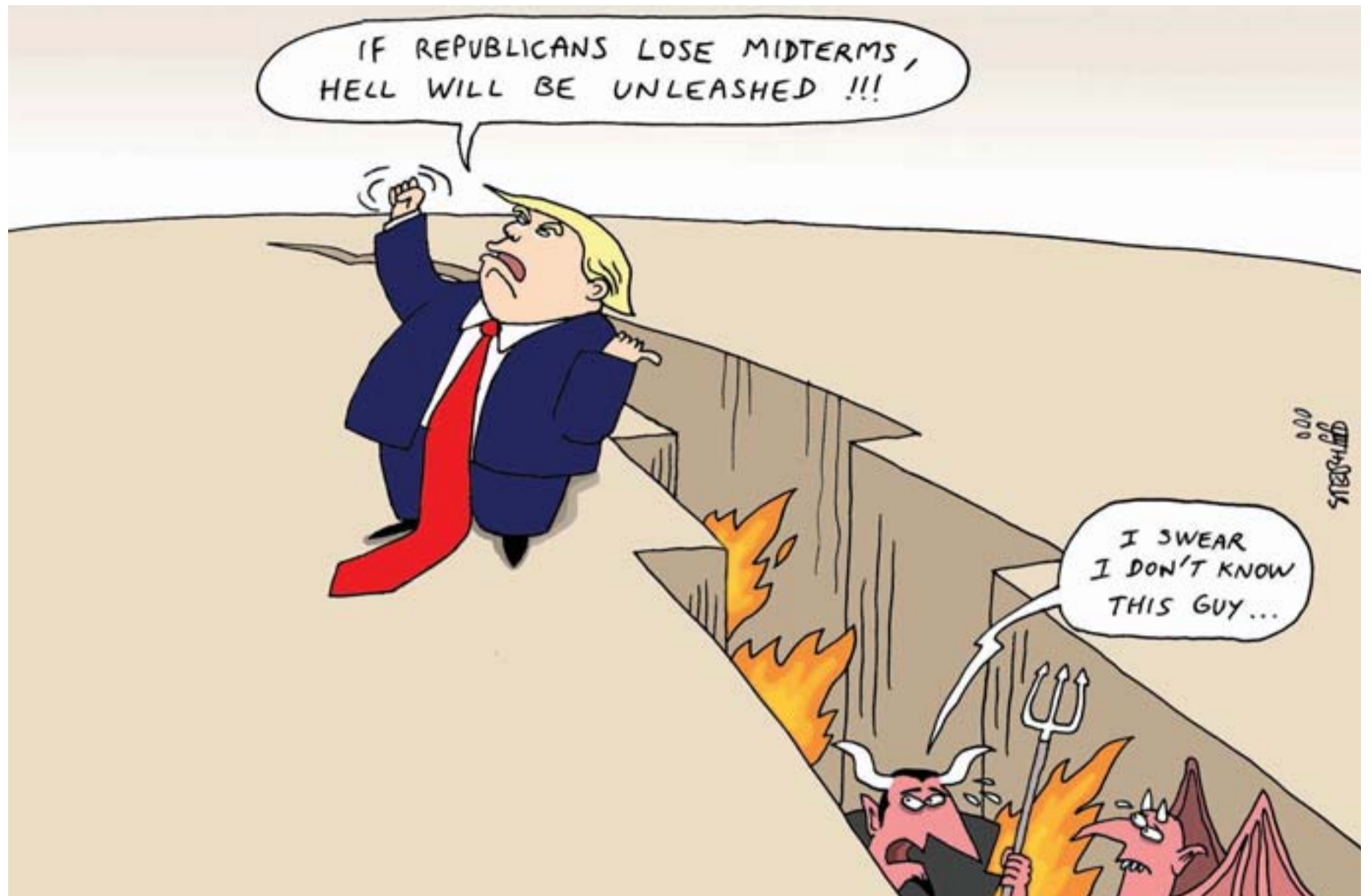
How has the government responded?

Street protests against government policies have broken out repeatedly in recent years. Rights groups say Museveni has reacted with a mix of force and cash handouts. The government denies the use of heavy-handed tactics and says the country is a thriving multiparty democracy. Last week, during two days of anti-government demonstrations in the capital Kampala and other parts of the country over Kyagulanyi's detention, police said they arrested dozens of people in Kampala and fired tear gas to quell "riots". On Tuesday, soldiers involved in the alleged beating of Kyagulanyi, four other MPs and civilians who have been charged with treason, the army said. That came after the Parliament Speaker called for the arrest of security forces involved in the beatings in a letter to Museveni on Aug. 27.

Is he a threat to Museveni's grip on power?

Nearly 80 percent of Uganda's population of 41 million people is under the age of 30, according to Youth Policy Labs, a Berlin-based think-tank. Though new to politics, Kyagulanyi has succeeded in mobilising youth discontent. The #FreeBobiWine hashtag has become a rallying point on Twitter. This is something veteran opposition politicians such as Kizza Besigye, who at 62 years old is considered part of Museveni's generation, have failed to do so. Besigye has lost three consecutive, disputed presidential elections.

The energy behind Kyagulanyi comes in contrast to signs of declining support for Museveni, a former guerrilla fighter and one of Africa's longest-serving rulers. At an Independence Day party in his home region last year, uniformed security outnumbered a small crowd of bored spectators. For now, the protests have abated. But independent Kampala-based analyst Anna Reuss said the movement around Kyagulanyi still had the potential to be a game-changer. "What has happened over last two weeks has changed the country and changed the conversation," she said. "It's lit a fire that even if it just keeps smouldering, the government can't fully put it out again." — Reuters



Iran influence op: Bigger, persistent, global

An apparent Iranian influence operation targeting Internet users worldwide is significantly bigger than previously identified, Reuters has found, encompassing a sprawling network of anonymous websites and social media accounts in 11 different languages. Facebook and other companies said last week that multiple social media accounts and websites were part of an Iranian project to covertly influence public opinion in other countries. A Reuters analysis has identified 10 more sites and dozens of social media accounts across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube.

US-based cyber security firm FireEye Inc and Israeli firm ClearSky reviewed Reuters' findings and said technical indicators showed the web of newly-identified sites and social media accounts - called the International Union of Virtual Media, or IUVM - was a piece of the same campaign, parts of which were taken down last week by Facebook Inc, Twitter Inc and Alphabet Inc. IUVM pushes content from Iranian state media and other outlets aligned with the government in Tehran across the internet, often obscuring the original source of the information such as Iran's PressTV, FARS news agency and al-Manar TV run by the Iran-backed Shiite group Hezbollah.

PressTV, FARS, Al-Manar TV and representatives for the Iranian government did not respond to requests for comment. The Iranian mission to the United Nations last week dismissed accusations of an Iranian influence campaign as "ridiculous". The extended network of disinformation highlights how multiple state-affiliated groups are exploiting social media to manipulate users and further their geopolitical agendas, and how difficult it is for tech companies to guard against political interference on their platforms.

In July, a US grand jury indicted 12 Russians whom prosecutors said were intelligence officers, on charges of hacking political groups in the 2016 US presidential election. US officials have said Russia, which has denied the allegations, could also attempt to disrupt congressional elections in November. Ben Nimmo, a

senior fellow at the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab who has previously analyzed disinformation campaigns for Facebook, said the IUVM network displayed the extent and scale of the Iranian operation. "It's a large-scale amplifier for Iranian state messaging," Nimmo said. "This shows how easy it is to run an influence operation online, even when the level of skill is low. The Iranian operation relied on quantity, not quality, but it stayed undetected for years."

IUVM TV YouTube account after Reuters contacted the company with questions about it. A message on the page on Tuesday said the account had been "terminated for a violation of YouTube's Terms of Service". IUVM did not respond to multiple emails or social media messages requesting comment. The organization does not conceal its aims, however. Documents on the main IUVM website said its headquarters are in Tehran and its objectives include "confronting with remarkable arrogance, western governments and Zionism front activities".



State-affiliated groups are exploiting social media

Further investigations

Facebook spokesman Jay Nancarrow said the company is still investigating accounts and pages linked to Iran and had taken more down on Tuesday. "This is an ongoing investigation and we will continue to find out more," he said. "We're also glad to see that the information we and others shared last week has prompted additional attention on this kind of inauthentic behavior."

Twitter referred to a statement it tweeted on Monday shortly after receiving a request for comment from Reuters. The statement said the company had removed a further 486 accounts for violating its terms of use since last week, bringing the total number of suspended accounts to 770. "Fewer than 100 of the 770 suspended accounts claimed to be located in the US and many of these were sharing divisive social commentary," Twitter said.

Google declined to comment but took down the

App store and satirical cartoons

IUVM uses its network of websites - including a YouTube channel, breaking news service, mobile phone app store, and a hub for satirical cartoons mocking Israel and Iran's regional rival Saudi Arabia - to distribute content taken from Iranian state media and other outlets which support Tehran's position on geopolitical issues. Reuters recorded the IUVM network operating in English, French, Arabic, Farsi, Urdu, Pashto, Russian, Hindi, Azerbaijani, Turkish and Spanish.

Much of the content is then reproduced by a range of alternative media sites, including some of those identified by FireEye last week as being run by Iran while purporting to be domestic American or British news outlets. For example, an article run by in January by Liberty Front Press - one of the pseudo-US news sites exposed by FireEye - reported on the battlefield gains made by the army of Iranian ally Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad. That article was sourced to IUVM but actually lifted from two FARS news agency stories.

FireEye analyst Lee Foster said iuvmpress.com, one of the biggest IUVM websites, was registered in Jan 2015 with the same email address used to register two sites already identified as being run by Iran. ClearSky said multiple IUVM sites were hosted on the same server as another website used in the Iranian operation. — Reuters

Cameroon cocoa exporters, farmers flee crisis in Anglophone region

Cocoa firms operating in Cameroon have moved staff out of the Anglophone region of the country and farmers are abandoning their crops in the area, as violence between separatists and security forces intensifies, exporters and farmers told Reuters. Sources say the deepening conflict has started denting cocoa output and flow from the southwest, stripping the region of its mantle as Cameroon's top cocoa-growing area. Telcar Cocoa, Olam and Theobroma are among the firms that have moved the majority of their staff out of southwest Cameroon due to safety concerns, according to several sources with knowledge of the matter.

Some cocoa farmers have also abandoned their plantations and fled, driven out by a rise in kidnappings, extortion and fighting between insurgents and security forces. "Producers have fled into the bush and elsewhere, and can no longer take care of their plantations," said James Mosima, president of the union of southwest cocoa farmers. "The situation is really very difficult."

Cameroon has been gripped by violence since Nov 2016, when government forces crushed a movement of Anglophone teachers and lawyers protesting against their perceived marginalization by the country's French-speaking majority. The protests morphed into an insurgency of separatists seeking independence for the Anglophone southwest and northwest regions, which were controlled by Britain during colonialism.

The crisis has intensified ahead of elections in October, with the increasingly bloody clashes hitting cocoa trade in what was once the key cocoa region of Cameroon, the world's fifth-largest producer.

Worsening violence

In recent months, insurgents have abducted and killed soldiers while security forces responded by burning villages and opening fire on fleeing residents, according to witnesses. The army denies such accusations. Sources say deteriorating security has made it increasingly difficult for cocoa buyers and exporters to operate in the area. At least one warehouse belonging to Telcar, the largest buyer in the region, was burned, according to several sources with knowledge of the matter.

The crisis has led major cocoa firms - including Telcar Cocoa, Theobroma and Olam - to relocate most of their staff from the region, according to sources. Telcar Cocoa is a joint venture between Cargill and Cameroonian businesswoman Kate Kanyi Fotso Tometi. Theobroma is part of ECOM Group. The sources said Theobroma has relocated its staff some 150 km south, from the Mamfe region to Kumba. Olam, meanwhile, has moved staff out of Mamfe and Kumba to the economic capital, Douala, the sources said.

Most international companies had small teams stationed in the region, they said, with one of the sources estimating 15-20 people were moved altogether. Cargill declined to comment. Olam and ECOM did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Cameroon's trade minister and Fotso also declined to answer questions about the crisis in the Anglophone regions. Most international export firms now use local buying agents as intermediaries to source cocoa from the affected areas, exporters said. "At one point, if the effort or the risk is too much ... you leave it to the buying agents," one source at an international firm said.

Bullets and extortion

Some farmers also said they had fled, fearing vio-

lence and threats from separatists demanding payments to allow cocoa to move out of the southwest. Several cocoa farmers who had left that region told Reuters armed groups had been targeting "rich men" and demanding money to allow the flow of goods out of the area. In June, Peter, 59, abandoned his cocoa farm and sought refuge in Douala with his wife and four children. "Since (the) beginning of this year ... not a week has passed without an exchange of fire between army and separatist fighters," said Peter, who declined to give his last name for security reasons. "I had three hectares of cocoa and I gave up everything. I could not stay because, apart from bullets, the separatists extorted money from us."

As many as 200,000 people have fled the English-speaking regions since late last year, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. As farmers flee the southwest, sources say the conflict has started to hit cocoa output and flow. The southwest accounted for 45 percent of Cameroon's production in 2016/17, but its share dropped to 32 percent last season, according to CICC, the country's cocoa regulator. Cameroon produced 253,510 tonnes of beans in the 2017-2018 season.

The conflict has made it more difficult to move beans out of the Anglophone region and into the main port in Douala, the sources said. Cameroon's cocoa stocks built up to 21,159 tonnes in 2017-2018, from 7,212 tonnes in the prior season, according to the National Office of Cocoa and Coffee (ONCC). "The vast majority of this stock is in the English-speaking region because the fighting paralyzes everything," a source at the ONCC said.

However, trade sources said cocoa was still finding its way out of the southwest, as more beans were being smuggled into Nigeria instead. One trade source estimated that volumes flowing across the border rose to 30,000-40,000 tonnes last season, from about 10,000 in previous years. "At the end of the day, cocoa is money for the locals," the source said. "It's like water - it always finds its way out." — Reuters

Business

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MUMBAI: In this file photo, an Airbus A330 of India's Jet Airways landing during rain showers in Mumbai. Bargain-basement fares, high oil prices and a tumbling rupee are causing turbulence in India's hyper-competitive aviation market, virtually wiping out airlines' profits and leaving them scrambling to cut costs to survive. — AFP

India's airlines go into a tailspin

Cheap fares, costly fuel and sinking rupee cause turbulence

MUMBAI: Bargain-basement fares, high oil prices and a tumbling rupee are causing turbulence in India's hyper-competitive aviation market, virtually wiping out airlines' profits and leaving them scrambling to cut costs to survive.

India's aviation sector is expected to become the world's third-largest by 2025, with passenger numbers increasing six-fold over the past decade as a growing middle class take advantage of better connectivity and inexpensive flights. But experts warn cheap tickets and an over-reliance on favorable fuel pricing is unsustainable.

India's top two airlines by market share, IndiGo and Jet Airways, and debt-laden state carrier Air India are all suffering financial woes, while SpiceJet's boss has said the industry is in "great stress". "The rise in the price of Brent fuel, a depreciating rupee and a resulting mismatch between high fuel prices and low fares have adversely impacted the Indian aviation industry, including Jet Airways," Jet CEO Vinay Dube said this week. Brent crude has risen 50 percent over the past year, while the impact has been exacerbated by the rupee recently touching a record low of 70 to the dollar.

Then they must pay taxes of up to 44 percent on jet fuel, the highest in Asia according to Bloomberg News, all the

while stumping up billions for new planes to keep up with passenger demand.

Profits nosedive

On Monday, Jet Airways reported a loss of 13.23 billion rupees (\$189 million) for the three months ended June 30, compared with a profit of 535 million rupees for the same period a year earlier.

"The key challenge faced by Indian airlines is on the cost front as 60-70 percent of expenditure is exposed to fluctuations in oil prices and currency markets," Binit Somaia, South Asia director at the Centre for Aviation (CAPA), said. Millions of dollars have been wiped off the value of Jet's stock this year and its financial situation has been the subject of furious speculation in Indian media in recent weeks. That intensified after the carrier failed to release its first-quarter earnings as scheduled



Airlines under pressure to cut costs

earlier this month, before finally releasing them on Monday showing a second successive loss. In July, it denied a report in the Economic Times that it needed to make major cost cuts or face having to shut down operations within 60 days.

But the carrier announced with its earnings Monday that it would implement a "comprehensive cost reduction program" amounting to 20 billion rupees over the next two years and seek investment to help turn around its fortunes.

"Airlines can't solely rely on oil prices being low to bring in profitability. They need to be careful with pricing and manage costs better," said Amrit Pandurang, an independent aviation expert. Jet's struggles are not unique. IndiGo's profits plunged 97 percent on-year in April-June, sending its stock plunging. And Air India, once the country's monopoly airline and known affectionately as the "Maharaja of the skies", has been haemorrhaging mon-

ey for years and losing market share to low-cost rivals.

'Ongoing crisis'

Air India is about \$8 billion in the red and reported losses of almost 58 billion rupees for the financial year ending March 2017. In June, it sought an urgent loan of 10 billion rupees to maintain day-to-day operations and last week, local media reported it was defaulting on bank loan payments and had sought a \$5 billion bailout. A handful of carriers, most notably fugitive tycoon Vijay Mallya's Kingfisher Airlines, have already gone bust. Airlines have to navigate a fiercely competitive market, with a host of budget airlines offering steep discounts to attract passengers. Some tickets, before taxes, are as low as 999 rupees. Analysts agree that Indian airlines cannot hold off passing on the rising operating costs to customers much longer. "Pricing has been irrational and unsustainable. Airlines will have to raise fares in the coming months to match costs even if it means a subsequent passenger crunch," Devesh Agarwal, editor of the Bangalore Aviation website, said. They also say carriers must lobby the government to reduce taxes. "Indian airlines need to avoid price wars... and provide a much unified front to tackle the ongoing crisis," said Pandurang. — AFP

Canada and US resume NAFTA talks amid rising optimism

WASHINGTON: Canada has three days to tackle contentious issues when it resumes talks with the United States yesterday to salvage the trilateral North American Free Trade Agreement amid signs Ottawa was open to taking a more conciliatory approach.

After more than a year of talks, Mexico and the United States announced a bilateral deal on Monday, clearing the way for Canada to rejoin talks to update 24-year-old NAFTA which accounts for over \$1 trillion in annual trade between the three nations.

But despite obstacles, Canada and the United States could reach an in-principle deal by the Friday deadline. "We are optimistic about having some very good, productive conversations this week," Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland said yesterday told reporters as she entered the US Trade Representative's Office.

Freeland said on Tuesday that Mexico's concessions on auto rules of origin and labor rights was a breakthrough. Ottawa is also ready to make concessions on Canada's protected dairy market in a bid to save a dispute-settlement system. The Globe and Mail reported late on Tuesday.

"We're hearing that there's a lot of progress being made and that it's possible that ... we'll be able to see something sometime soon," Kevin Hassett, Chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, told Fox Business Network yesterday.

"Absolutely, the Friday deadline is a real thing ... and we hope that Canada will be part of that," Hassett said. The three countries are aiming to seal a trade pact by Friday to allow Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto to sign it before he leaves office at the end of November. The timeline accommodates a 90-day waiting period under US trade law before President Donald Trump can sign the pact. Republicans also face mid-term elections in November and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau a national one expected by October 2019. After being sidelined from the talks for more than two months, Freeland will be under pressure to accept terms the United States and Mexico worked out. The US Congress also wants a deal that includes Canada. "The fact that agreement on those difficult issues for

Mexico was able to be reached definitely clears the way for us to have significant, substantive, and I hope productive, conversations with the US this week," Freeland said after a brief meeting with US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer.

Sticking points

Freeland dodged questions on Tuesday on what points Canada would be willing to concede on, noting that Ottawa's key issues are well known. US President Donald Trump warned he could proceed with a deal with Mexico alone and levy tariffs on Canada if it does not come on board with the revised trade terms. One of the issues for Canada in the revised deal is the US effort to dump the Chapter 19 dispute resolution mechanism that hinders the United States from pursuing anti-dumping and anti-subsidy cases. Lighthizer said on Monday that Mexico had agreed to eliminate the mechanism.

To save that mechanism, Ottawa plans to change one rule that effectively blocked American farmers from exporting ultrafiltered milk, an ingredient in cheesemaking, to Canada, the Globe and Mail reported, citing sources. Canadian government officials were not available for an immediate comment on Wednesday. On Tuesday, Trudeau said he would defend Canada's dairy farmers.



WASHINGTON, DC: Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland walks to the waiting media on Tuesday in Washington, DC. Freeland arrived in Washington to rejoin trilateral trade negotiations, after interrupting a trip to France, Germany and Ukraine. — AFP

Other hurdles include intellectual property rights and extensions of copyright protections to 75 years from 50, higher threshold than Canada has previously supported.

"I think that what they probably need by Friday is some indication from Canada to the Americans that it's ready to play ball, that

they're ready to negotiate in good faith," said Mark Warner, a trade lawyer with MAAW Law, which specializes in Canadian and US law. "If Chrystia Freeland goes down there and she starts going on and on about red lines again, then I think it's all over," he added. — Reuters

Business

Albayrak sees no big risk to Turkish economy, Moody's sounds alarm

No-let up in Turkey lira slide after Moody's downgrades

ISTANBUL: Turkey does not expect a big risk to the economy or financial system, the country's finance minister was quoted as saying yesterday, illustrating the deep divide between Ankara and global investors over a worsening currency crisis.

The comments from Finance Minister Berat Albayrak, who is President Tayyip Erdogan's son-in-law, come as ratings agency Moody's sounded more alarm about the outlook for the banking sector and as data showed economic confidence at its lowest in nearly a decade.

The lira has lost around 40 percent of its value this year, driving up the cost of fuel and food and heightening concern about the risk to banks and the broader economy. Initially sparked by worries about Erdogan's influence on the central bank, the crisis has worsened over a rift with Washington.

"We do not see a big risk about Turkey's economy or financial system," Albayrak told reporters on his flight back from Paris earlier this week, according to the newspaper Hurriyet. He cited low levels of net public debt and household debt, and the strength of the financial system, as reasons for his confidence, it said.

Investors are less sanguine. Moody's

downgraded its ratings on 20 financial institutions on Tuesday, citing the increased risk of a deterioration in funding. The operating environment is now worse than previously expected, it said.

"The downgrades primarily reflect a substantial increase in the risk of a downside scenario, where a further negative shift in investor sentiment could lead to a curtailing of wholesale funding," Moody's said. It cut the ratings for some of Turkey's top banks, including Isbank, the biggest listed lender by assets. The lira weakened as far as 6.4029, its weakest since Aug. 15. It was at 6.3850 to the dollar at 0951 GMT. Banking stocks fell 1 percent.

'Deep recession'

Around \$179 billion of Turkey's external debt matures in the year to July 2019, equivalent to almost a quarter of its annual economic output, JPMorgan estimates. Most of that - around \$146 billion - is owed by the private sector, especially banks, it said. "Financing needs over the next 12 months are large and access to markets has become problematic," it said in a note.

For years Turkish companies have borrowed in dollars and euros, drawn by the

lower interest rates. But the decline in the lira has driven up the cost of servicing those loans, and raised the possibility of ballooning bad debt for banks. Official data yesterday showed economic confidence fell this month to its lowest since 2009.

"Staggeringly bad economic confidence reading for August," said Timothy Ash of BlueBay Asset Management in emailed comments. "Harbinger of a deep recession looming. Rebalancing full throttle."

Albayrak has signalled that Turkey wants to mend its ties with the European Union as it faces what he said are moves by the United States that threaten the global economy. His trip to Paris this week, where he met with France's finance minister, appeared to be part of that effort.

However, Ankara has so far found little help from overseas partners, apart from Qatar, which has pledged \$15 billion in support. A German official on Tuesday denied a reported that Berlin was considering providing a financial lifeline to help Turkey avert a crisis. The Hurriyet also quoted Albayrak as saying that steps would be taken to prevent foreign currencies from being used for real estate and shopping-mall store rents and sales.



ANKARA: The Turkish lira showed no sign of recovery as it slid further against the US dollar yesterday.

Retailers in Turkey's malls, which often pay their rent in dollars, have also said their businesses were suffering due to the ailing lira. Separately, the central bank said it

would re-impose limits on overnight transactions, but at twice the limit that applied until Aug. 13, when it said it would provide all the liquidity needed. — Reuters

French business leaders want more from ex-banker Macron

JOUY-EN-JOSAS, France: When he won the presidency 15 months ago, Emmanuel Macron charmed company chiefs with a promise to make it easier to do business in France. But the economy remains sluggish, and bosses' patience is waning.

A former investment banker, Macron had pledged to run France more like a start-up, moving swiftly to shake-up the country's famously complex labor laws to make it easier to hire and fire people.

He vowed to attract foreign investment, kickstart slow growth and slash unemployment which had been stuck at around 10 percent under his Socialist predecessor Francois Hollande. But tax cuts intended to spur spending and investment have yet to bear much fruit: his government has been forced to reduce this year's growth forecast from 2.0 percent to 1.7 percent.

This prompted Prime Minister Edouard Philippe to announce at the weekend that he was dropping targets for reducing the deficit. Lackluster economic results add to a growing pile of problems on Macron's desk, including the resignation of his popular environment minister Nicolas Hulot and a scandal involving a top security aide. Unemployment is edging down only slowly - it remains at 9.1 percent - and Macron's popularity ratings are hovering at record lows around 36 percent.

'Hasn't all been terrible'

For now, the 40-year-old centrist can still count on widespread support in the business community, although bosses warn that will change unless Project Macron yields better results. "We have to acknowledge that it hasn't all been terrible. Reforms that had never been taken have been put in place in a year," said Jacques Letort, head of a con-



COPENHAGEN: French President Emmanuel Macron (second left) and French Ambassador to Denmark Francois Zimeray (left) greet people during a visit at the Confederation of Danish Industry (DI) headquarters yesterday in Copenhagen. — AFP

struction company.

His view was widely shared at the summer gathering of employers' organization MEDEF, which wrapped up in the Paris suburb of Jouy-en-Josas yesterday.

Business leaders were impressed that Macron managed to push through the labor reforms in the face of repeated mass protests led by trade unions. "Macron has made very strong decisions," Francoise Cattalan-Johnson, head of a real estate rental company, told AFP at the conference.

In a survey of business leaders by OpinionWay last month, 54 percent said they were satisfied with Macron's actions — 13 percent more than in May when he was struggling with public sector protests and rolling rail strikes. And 65 percent agreed the government was keeping up the pace of the reforms in the face of protests.

But the corporate world is starting to show signs of impatience. Macron's government has "given confidence back to entrepreneurs", MEDEF chief Geoffroy Roux de Bezieux said Tuesday, but "this regained confidence remains fragile".

"We'd prefer proof of his love over declarations of love," he said.

'Too much fat'

In particular businesses hoped cuts to public spending—which represents 57 percent of GDP in France, against 46 percent on average in Europe—would create private sector opportunities. Macron promised on the campaign trail to slash 120,000 of France's 5.6 million public sector jobs by the end of his five-year term, an issue that has contributed to angry street protests. Philippe said on Sunday that only 4,500 public sector jobs will be axed in 2019 and some 10,000 in 2020 — figures seen as too low to allow Macron to keep his promise.

Some business leaders say the government should not be using slow growth as an excuse for delaying public sector cuts. Philippe Marty, who runs a consultancy, said there was "too much fat" in the French public sector, which employs 80 staff for every 1,000 people—significantly higher than the European average of 61.

"Yes, Macron is more pro-business, but there are still things to do," Marty said. "Macron has said he wants to deliver for businesses. That's great, but I'm waiting for action," he added. "Business leaders still have faith in him but watch out, it won't last." — AFP

Putin softens controversial pension reform

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday proposed a series of measures to soften a deeply unpopular pension reform, in an apparent attempt to stem a major fall in his approval ratings.

In a rare televised address, Putin suggested raising the state pension age by five years to 60 years for women, instead of the earlier proposed eight years to 63, among other measures. "The treatment of women in our country is special, gentle," Putin said in the 30-minute speech.

However, he stuck to the overall plan, saying the proposed increase in the retirement age for men would still be by five years to 65, as originally planned. The Russian leader, who is 65, also suggested early retirement for mothers with large families. He said companies that fire or refuse to hire employees because they are nearing pension age should face administrative or criminal liability.

The proposed reform—already approved by parliament's lower house in a first reading last month—has sparked a rare outburst of public anger, with tens of thousands rallying across Russia in recent weeks. Putin had sought to distance himself from the unpopular measures and had been widely expected to soften the proposals to buttress his falling approval ratings.

Most Russians have been against the proposed hike and critics said the reform would essentially rob ordinary people of their earnings. Unlike in some western countries, pensions in Russia are meager and many have to

work past their state pension age to survive, while others rely on financial help from their children.

'Hard but necessary'

Putin insisted yesterday that tough measures were needed, citing "serious demographic problems" stemming from the country's huge losses during World War II and the fallout from the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. "We will have to make a hard, difficult but necessary decision," Putin said, adding his proposals would soon be sent to the Russian parliament's lower house, the State Duma.

"I ask you to treat this with understanding," he said.

The state pension age in Russia is among the lowest in the world and the proposed reform will be the first increase in nearly 90 years. But given Russians' low life expectancy — 65 years for men and 76 for women—many will not live long enough under the proposed reform to receive a state pension. However, the government says the burden is simply too great for its stretched finances as the economy struggles under Western sanctions.

Putin said that unlike a decade ago, the country's economy was ready for such reforms, pointing to the lowest unemployment rate since 1991 and increasing life expectancy.

Putin said that before announcing the amendments he had studied all "constructive proposals", including those put forward by the opposition. Ahead of the televised address, a Moscow court jailed Putin's top critic, Alexei Navalny, for 30 days on Monday, just days before he planned to stage a rally against the reform.

Putin said the reform would allow authorities to better adjust pensions for inflation, bringing the average pension to around 20,000 rubles (\$353) a month in 2024 from some 14,000 rubles now. — AFP

Italian bond yields fall on report govt eyes ECB support

LONDON: Italian government bond yields fell yesterday, with analysts citing a La Stampa article saying that Italy may try to secure help from the European Central Bank.

The newspaper said the government was worried by what might happen in September when it unveils new public spending targets. The budget, expected to contain welfare spending measures and tax cuts, will be approved by the cabinet late October and sent to the European Commission by Oct. 31.

"If the ECB covers you, markets can't speculate because they don't make money," La Stampa cited a government source as saying. "And in this way the rating agencies can't downgrade your debt," the source said. Italy's bond market has faced selling pressure since a new anti-establishment coalition came to power in June.

Italy's economy ministry declined to comment on the article. Two-year yields were last down 4 basis points (bps) at 1.24 percent. Ten-year yields fell 2 bps to 3.17 percent, narrowing the gap over German Bund

yields to 277 bps from 280 bps late on Tuesday.

"It seems like the move in Italian bonds is about this story," Rabobank head of rates strategy Richard Maguire said. "But in terms of the likelihood of the ECB intervening to help Italy with QE (quantitative easing), the political hurdle for the ECB would be extremely high." La Stampa said the ECB's support could come in the form of a new quantitative easing program.

Italy has been searching for allies to support its battered bond market in recent weeks. Italy's Economy Minister Giovanni Tria said on Tuesday that the Chinese government had no concerns about a recent widening of Italian yield spreads, following reports last week that US President Donald Trump told Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte that the US was ready to help Italy with its debt next year.

"At the end of the day the Italian government is looking for allies everywhere, they are cornered to some degree and eager to look for support," DZ Bank rates strategist Christian Lenk said. Analysts were skeptical about the impact of the article, which they said lacked details, pointing out that if Italy wants assistance from the ECB, Rome would have to apply to the ECB's Outright Monetary Transactions (OMT) program. Under the OMT, the ECB could buy a country's short-term bonds in the secondary market. But Italy must be in a macroeconomic adjustment program with strict lender supervision to qualify for the scheme. — Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY BUY SELL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.383147	0.397047
Czech Korune	0.005777	0.015077
Danish Krone	0.043478	0.048478
Euro	0.347092	0.360792
Georgian Lari	0.117157	0.117157
Hungarian	0.001003	0.001193
Norwegian Krone	0.032289	0.037489
Romanian Leu	0.059409	0.076259
Russian ruble	0.004460	0.004460
Slovakia	0.009060	0.019060
Swedish Krona	0.029160	0.034160
Swiss Franc	0.304043	0.315043
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.213928	0.225928
New Zealand Dollar	0.197031	0.206531
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.229577	0.238577
US Dollars	0.299450	0.304750
US Dollars Mint	0.299950	0.304750
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.002997	0.003798
Chinese Yuan	0.043102	0.046602
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036583	0.039333

Indian Rupee	0.003845	0.004617
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002644	0.002824
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	0.005615	0.005915
Singapore Dollar	0.217055	0.227055
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001519	0.002099
Taiwan	0.009758	0.009938
Thai Baht	0.008966	0.009518

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 Riyal	0.782123	0.787803
Qatar Riyal	0.079088	0.084028
Saudi Riyal	0.079860	0.081160
Syrian Pound	0.001287	0.001507
Tunisian Dinar	0.105934	0.113934
Turkish Lira	0.043899	0.055399
UAE Dirhams	0.081220	0.082920
Yemeni Riyal	0.000987	0.001067

Business

US Q2 GDP growth raised to 4.2%; consumer spending cut

Economy back on track to hit Trump's goal of 3% annual growth

WASHINGTON: US economic growth was a bit stronger than initially thought in the second quarter, notching its best performance in nearly four years and putting the economy on track to hit the Trump administration's goal of 3 percent annual growth. Gross domestic product increased at a 4.2 percent annualized rate, the Commerce Department said yesterday in its second estimate of GDP growth for the April-June quarter. That was slightly up from the 4.1 percent pace of expansion reported in July and was the fastest rate since the third quarter of 2014.

The slight upward revision to growth last quarter reflected more business spending on software than previously estimated and less imports of petroleum. Stronger software spending and a smaller import bill offset a downward revision to consumer spending. Compared to the second quarter of 2017, the economy grew 2.9 percent instead of the previously reported 2.8 percent. Output expanded 3.2 percent in the first half of 2018, rather than the 3.1 percent estimated last month. The Trump administration has set a target of 3 percent annual growth, which economists say is unsustainable because of structural constraints.

Robust growth in the second quarter was driven by one-off factors such as a \$1.5 trillion tax cut package, which provided a jolt to consumer spending after a lackluster first quarter, and a front-loading of soybean exports to China to beat retaliatory trade tariffs. There are signs some of the momen-



Imports revised down

tum was lost early in the third quarter. The government reported on Tuesday that the goods trade deficit jumped 6.3 percent to \$72.2 billion in July as a 6.7 percent plunge in food shipments weighed on exports.

While consumer spending has remained strong early in the third quarter, the housing market has weakened further with homebuilding rising less than expected in July and sales of new and previously owned

homes declining. The Trump administration's "America First" policies, which have led to an escalation of a trade war between the United States and China as well as tit-for-tat tariffs with the European Union, Canada and Mexico, pose a risk to the economy.

Economists had expected second-quarter GDP growth would be revised down to a 4.0 percent pace. The economy grew at a 2.2 percent rate in the January-March period.

The US dollar held near a session high against a basket of currencies after the data. US stock index futures were largely flat while prices of longer-dated US Treasuries were slightly higher.

Income growth slows

An alternative measure of economic growth, gross domestic income (GDI), increased at a rate of 1.8 percent in the second quarter, slowing from the first quarter's brisk 3.9 percent pace. The average of GDP and GDI, also referred to as gross domestic output and considered a better measure of economic activity, increased at a 3.0 percent rate in the April-June period. That followed a 3.1 percent growth pace in the first quarter.



ALHAMBRA: In this file photo, a property for sale is seen in Alhambra, California. US sales of newly-built single-family homes fell to a nine-month low in July 2018, marking the second straight decline and underscoring weakness in the housing sector. — AFP

The income side of the growth ledger was restrained by after-tax corporate profits, which grew at a 2.4 percent rate last quarter, decelerating from the 8.2 percent pace logged in the first quarter.

Growth in consumer spending, which accounts for more than two-thirds of US economic activity, was lowered to a 3.8 percent rate in the second quarter instead of the previously reported 4.0 percent pace. Consumer spending increased at a 0.5 percent pace in the first quarter. — Reuters

Britain's May takes trade-touting tour to Nigeria

ABUJA: Britain's Theresa May landed in Nigeria's capital yesterday on the second leg of her maiden Africa tour aimed at drumming up post-Brexit trade deals outside the European Union.

The prime minister had kicked off her three-nation visit in Cape Town on Tuesday where she pledged to prioritize investment in Africa—although it was her diffident dance moves rather than her diplomacy that captured the headlines. The tour, which will also take her to Kenya, is part of a campaign to promote Britain's global ambitions after Brexit.

With just seven months until Britain formally leaves the EU, May is under pressure back home from those skeptical of her ability to forge post-Brexit trade deals, with British officials eyeing a doubling of trade with Nigeria over the next decade or so.

"Bilateral trade between Britain and Nigeria was up to £4.2 billion [\$5.42 billion, 4.64 billion euros], in 2017 and we expect to more than double this figure by 2030," Laure Beaufils, Britain's deputy high commissioner to Nigeria, told a press conference ahead of May's arrival in Abuja.

China is currently Nigeria's biggest trading partner with Abuja importing some \$7 billion in goods from Beijing. — AFP

World stocks slip as uncertainty over NAFTA nags

LONDON: Global stocks eased yesterday on uncertainty over Canada's position in NAFTA, and with investors also nervous ahead of a deadline for the next round of China-US tariffs next week.

Talks to renew a NAFTA trade agreement between the United States, Mexico and Canada - after Monday's US-Mexico deal - hinge on Canada. Uncertainty over when a final agreement might pass the US Congress also kept trade muted.

MSCI's world equity index, which tracks shares in 47 countries, eased 0.1 percent from the 5-1/2-month high hit after Mexico and the United States struck their deal.

"The market is quite right to say after the knee-jerk reaction higher in the Mexican peso and equities, a) there was remarkably little detail, and b) what is the state of Canada?" Aberdeen Standard Investments head of global strategy Andrew Milligan said.

"It helps this rebound in risk assets we're seeing but it is an erratic rally because we need a bit more fuel to the fire," he said. US stocks were set for a cautious open with eMini futures for the S&P 500 giving back gains to trade flat while Dow Jones futures fell 0.1 percent.

European stocks drifted either side of flat, with the index of top 50 companies down 0.02 percent by 1247 GMT. US President Donald Trump threatened to proceed with Mexico alone and levy tariffs on Canada if it does not come on board with revised trade terms. But a trade deal might struggle to win approval from Congress unless Canada comes on board.

"The final decisions are unlikely until 2019 at the earliest," Goldman Sachs analysts wrote in a note to clients, saying that control of the majority in Congress might have gone to the Democrats by then, which could make agreement more difficult. Currencies reflected investors' lingering uncertainty.

Against the US dollar, the Canadian dollar fell 0.1 percent while Mexico's peso declined 0.3 percent. European autos stocks also slid 0.3 percent as details of the agreement on autos emerged. Auto executives and sources told Reuters a side agreement would allow the US to slap punitive tariffs of up to 25 percent on imports of Mexican-made cars, sport utility vehicles and auto parts above certain volumes.

On another front of the global trade conflicts, a deadline for public comment on Trump's increased tariffs on \$200 billion of Chinese goods was less than a week away on Sept. 5. "End-of-month flows could start to take hold into the end of the week, and combined with light news flow and the risk of impending trade war escalation could result in conviction remaining light," JPMorgan analysts wrote in a note. — Reuters

CBK receives winners of 'Your Trip As You Like' campaign

KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) received winners of the second draw for "Your Trip as you Like" campaign. Tickets and cash prizes topped with one kilogram gold which the bank launched at the start of the travel season to reward the customers of the bank when they use Al-Tijari cards. Head of Cards Center at CBK Abdulaziz Essa Malak received the winners and congratulated them on their win adding that there is still a chance for the customers to win in the coming draw. Four customers could win a travel voucher each worth KD 1,750 to 2,750 in addition to a draw to pick the winner of one kilogram of pure gold, he said.



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Business

Maduro's economic reforms fail to convince Venezuelans

In the streets of Caracas, a feeling of disillusionment and haplessness is palpable

CARACAS: President Nicolas Maduro has launched a raft of economic reforms aimed at injecting life into his country's dying economy, but Venezuelans aren't convinced and continue to flee in the thousands. Among the bare supermarket aisles and pharmacy shelves, interminable bank queues to withdraw scarce cash and buses that have grounded to a halt, the feeling of disillusionment, incredulity and haplessness is palpable in the streets of Caracas and beyond.

"It's a disaster, we don't have basic foods. The measures are pure lies, they'll bring more hunger and unemployment," 34-year-old doctor Marielsi Ochoa told AFP. Shelves are filled with cleaning materials and fizzy drinks but meat, chicken, eggs and corn flour—what used to be the Venezuelans' staple diet—have disappeared. Maduro's government has been busy recently, trying to generate capital and reverse the recession and hyperinflation that have gripped a country in which the International Monetary Fund is predicting inflation will reach one million percent this year.

The minimum wage got a 3,400 percent increase, while the currency was redenominated—removing five zeros—devalued to the tune of 96 percent and fixed to the value of Venezuela's largely discredited cryptocurrency, the petro.

There's also been an increase in the value added tax (VAT) and reduced petrol subsidies—Venezuelans pay the lowest prices in the world for fuel.

But experts say this won't solve the greatest economic crisis in Latin America's recent history. "I cannot see how Maduro's latest financial package can possibly address the huge inflation problem confronting Venezuela," said Peter Hakim, president emeritus and a senior fellow at the Inter-American Dialogue think-tank.

'Not coherent'

David Smilde from the Washington Office on Latin America said Maduro's "plan is not coherent." One of the main problems centers around the new bolivar being anchored to the petro, "which is backed by oil, which is itself calculated in dollars," said Smilde.

"This by itself could work, since one necessary task for

getting out of hyperinflation is to emit a new currency." However, Hakim said that in reality "the new currency has no backing beyond Maduro's rhetoric: no dollars, no gold, no increase in oil earnings, no nothing!"

Some experts have described the petro as nothing more than a tactic to circumvent US economic sanctions that Maduro blames for his country's woes.

Jesus Gonzalez, a 58-year-old bricklayer, said the "sacrifice" of standing in line for hours waiting to withdraw the daily limit of 20 bolivars from a cash point is barely worth it. "It's not enough for anything," he said. That sum will just about buy a cup of coffee. "I'm no economist, but Maduro's measures seem to be the same song with a different chorus," he added.

Hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans have given up hope of seeing normalcy or stability return to their country and have joined the southward exodus through Colombia and on to Ecuador, Peru, Chile and even Argentina. Many have traveled thousands of kilometers (miles), mostly on foot, carrying just a bundle of clothes and often forced to sleep outside in the street.

'You've got to go'

Genesis, a 27-year-old lawyer, hopes to soon cross with her husband and three-year-old daughter into Colombia where she has a promise of work as a waitress. "I don't have enough to buy the child her school uniform. Everyone around me is saying: 'You've got to go,'" she told AFP.

According to the United Nations, some 2.3 million Venezuelans live abroad, of which 1.6 million have emigrated since 2015. Hakim can see no end to the exodus.

"How can ordinary people remain in Venezuela with massive food shortages, medicines and medical care virtually unavailable, jobs scarce or badly paid, schools without teachers, escalating crime rates and no signs of relief?" he asked. Maduro's socialist government insists the reforms will work this time and brands the exodus a "right-wing campaign." On Monday, the government flew 89 Venezuelans back home from Peru where it said they had suffered "xenophobia" and "harassment."

"Stop cleaning toilets abroad and come live in the



CARACAS: A feeling of disquiet is palpable on the streets among people at bare supermarket aisles and pharmacy shelves and interminable bank queues.

fatherland," Maduro said Tuesday evening at a ceremony in which he signed agreements with foreign oil firms to boost oil production by a million barrels a day. OPEC says it stands at 1.5 million barrels a day, way down from 3.2 million in 2008.

In another reform, the banking regulator Sudeban said Venezuelans sending remittances back home must do so through authorized currency traders, not between private parties, and thus pay taxes on these transfers. Earlier this week Maduro ordered banks to adopt the petro as a unit

of account and launched an offer of bonds backed by gold bullion in a bid to inject optimism into the public.

"It will be the most appealing Christmas gift," he said of the bonds, due to be rolled out in two weeks, and backed by miniature gold ingots that come in pieces of 1.5 and 2.5 grams (0.05 and 0.09 ounces.)

"This is another farce," said Laura Lopez, a 64-year-old housewife who is weighing leaving the country as well. Industrial output in Venezuela has dropped dramatically to just 30 percent of its capacity. — AFP

JTC acquires 102 new Cummins dual-frequency generator sets

KUWAIT: Jassim Transport & Stevedoring Co. K.S.C.C. (JTC) Kuwait announced that its Power Rental Division successfully completed the procurement of 102 new units of Cummins diesel generators, thereby taking its total fleet strength to over 700 units with capacities ranging from 100 KVA to 1250 KVA. The landmark purchase of these generator sets is primarily aimed at meeting the market demand in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and is part of JTC's ongoing initiatives for maintaining a strong foothold within the Power Generation rental market.

The new generators feature noise attenuation and are perfect for installations where keeping noise to a minimum is required. Additionally, the generators are manufactured with the latest and highest safety standards allowing them to be utilized in critical oil and gas applications. With its far-reaching logistics network, JTC can rapidly mobilize these generators to any location in the region.

Commenting on the recent acquisition, Adel Kohari, Chief Executive Officer of JTC said, "For around 10 years JTC has been one of the premier suppliers of power rental solutions for Kuwait and the region providing custom and turnkey solutions for commercial, industrial and government clients, with one of the best safety records in the industry. We are pleased to receive the new generators



that we've completed reflects the rapid development of our capabilities to provide reliable and continuous power to meet the continuous demand of our clients. These generators have been designed specifically for the harsh operating environment of the Middle East rental market and finished to the highest standards. This groundbreaking deal

that we've completed reflects the rapid development of the market that we operate in." JTC has continuously earned the confidence of clients across all industry sectors by providing services that exceed client expectations and thereby positioning JTC as a major player in the Power Rental markets in Kuwait and the GCC region.

Brazil GDP seen as slower in second quarter

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazil's economy posted much slower growth in the second quarter due to a truckers strike and electoral uncertainty that could fuel investor jitters at least until October's presidential voting. GDP in Latin America's largest economy grew just 0.1 percent in the April-June period compared to the first quarter of this year, according to a poll of 23 financial firms conducted by the newspaper Valor. Official numbers are due out Friday.

The economy has lost steam since the first quarter, when GDP growth was 0.4 percent. Brazil emerged from a punishing two-year recession in 2017, posting yearly expansion of 1 percent. Government forecasts for 2018 have been scaled back from a GDP rise of nearly 3 percent, down now to 1.5 percent. Market watchers expect expansion of 1.47 percent, according to a survey by the Central Bank. Uncertainty over the election is rattling markets and encouraging the decline of the real, which has lost 20 percent of its value against the dollar since January.

Hopes for faster economic growth took a severe hit in late May with an 11-day truckers strike that shut down supplies of fuel, food and other goods in this vast country with a very limited rail network. "We have an election campaign that is completely undefined, and the possibility of a dispute between extreme positions (in a runoff) has fueled uncertainty and reduced consumption and investment plans," said Carlos Langoni, former chairman of the Central Bank and currently director of World Economy Center at the Getulio Vargas Foundation. — AFP

Warba Bank to hold Al-Sunbula weekly draw

KUWAIT: Warba Bank, "the Best Investment Bank" and "Best Corporate Bank" in Kuwait, will be organizing the 30th and 31st Al-Sunbula Account weekly draws in parallel as the 30th draw was postponed due to Eid Al-Adha holidays. The draw to announce the 10 lucky winners will be held on Thursday at 11 am in presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Bank officials.

Al-Sunbula Account is the perfect choice for all customers who wish to save money and achieve steady returns while simultaneously have the opportunity to win cash prizes throughout the year. Due to the high traffic on this account, for its offerings of unparalleled opportunities, Warba Bank has worked on enhancing Al-Sunbula account to provide customers with more benefits. Such enhancements include increasing the number of winners and the frequency of the draws. Now, on every Thursday the Bank holds draws for 5 weekly winners of KD 1,000 each. In addition, the bank continues its monthly draws held on the first Thursday of every month, with cash prizes of KD 30,000 divided amongst 4 winners: two winners getting KD 10,000 each, and two winners getting KD 5,000 each.

Thus, the new development of Al-Sunbula account has increased the total number of winners to 24, and the total amount of prizes to 50,000 KD instead of 30,000 KD. As for the chances for winning, each customer is eligible to enter the draw against each KD 10. It is noteworthy, that Warba Bank has recently launched the Al-Sunbula Fixed Deposit, which provides depositors with high returns of up to 3 percent, as well as getting monthly chances to win in Al-Sunbula Account draws.

Furthermore, Warba Bank has launched its latest Customer Onboarding solution, in line with its ambitious five-year strategy that enables non-Warba Bank customers to request opening Al-Sunbula account in an easy electronic manner through the Bank's website without having to visit any of the Bank's branches, by following 5 simple steps that might take up to 5 minutes. New customers will be able to request opening the account at anytime, anywhere, and the Bank will receive, process and pass the new application for approval through whole new and unique electronic system used to implement this service. Warba Staff will then contact the customer to determine the appropriate time to visit the branch to get required signatures, verify the customer's identity, deliver his/her debit card, and activate the account.

NBK announces winner of KD 125,000 in Al-Jawhara draw

KUWAIT: Rami Taiser Jabren was announced as the winner of KD 125,000 by the National Bank of Kuwait during the monthly draw of Al-Jawhara account for the month of August. The name of the winner was announced live on air on radio FM 88.8 and in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce & Industry and NBK representatives.

Since 2012, the National Bank of Kuwait has rewarded loyal customers with a total worth of

prizes up to KD 2,200,000 annually with weekly, monthly and quarterly draws. For every KD 50 deposited in Al-Jawhara account, customers receive a chance to enter these draws.

"Customers not only enjoy the many features and benefits of Al-Jawhara account, but are also automatically enrolled into the draws to win KD 5,000 weekly, KD 125,000 monthly and KD 250,000 quarterly," said Suresh Varadarajan, Head of Liabilities & Insurance, Consumer Banking Group, National Bank of Kuwait. "Customers can also double their chances to win when they simply not withdraw or transfer amounts from their account during the required period."

Al-Jawhara account can be opened with an opening balance of KD 400 by visiting the nearest NBK branch or through NBK Online and Mobile Banking services. Varadarajan added: "Al-Jawhara account continues to reward customers with great prizes and easy ways to enter the draws. This comes as part of our commitment to give back to our cus-



Suresh Varadarajan

tomers and ensure that they enjoy every step of their banking experience." Benefits of Al-Jawhara Account include a free Visa debit card with access to more than 650,000 ATM machines around the world; access to NBK Online Banking and NBK Mobile Banking for viewing and managing your account wherever you are in

the world. Customers always have access to NBK's 24 hour, seven day a week call center and SMS notice service by request. Al-Jawhara account holders also have unlimited withdrawals (terms and conditions apply).

Singapore-China free trade talks at 'critical stage'

SINGAPORE: Talks on a China-backed free-trade pact have reached a "critical stage", Singapore's leader said yesterday as he urged regional economic ministers to seal the deal by the end of the year. The 16-nation Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which will be the world's biggest free-trade accord if it is agreed, has taken center stage as Washington embarks on a unilateral, protectionist agenda. Covering about half the world's population, the RCEP notably excludes the US, which has been leading another regional pact—the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) — until

President Donald Trump abandoned it on coming to office early last year.

"The RCEP negotiations have continued for some time, and have now reached a critical stage," Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said as he opened a five-day meeting of economy ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The Singapore meeting will be joined later in the week by top trade officials from ASEAN's main trading partners, including China, Japan, Australia and the US.

"After a great deal of work, the possibility of substantively concluding the RCEP negotiations is finally in sight," he said. Lee also warned about escalating tensions between the US and China—who have been locked in a spiralling trade row—and other major economies including the eurozone and Canada.

"The RCEP will be an important signal to the world that ASEAN members and our partners place high value on free trade, regional integration

and international cooperation," he said. The pact will group the 10 ASEAN members plus China, India, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, and will cover a third of the world's gross domestic product.

A diplomatic source said Singapore, this year's ASEAN chair, is pushing for an agreement on the RCEP before handing over the chairmanship to Thailand in 2019.

Another source involved in the talks said ASEAN leaders hope to announce the "substantial conclusion" of negotiations during a summit in November with their main trading partners, and they expect the pact to be implemented in 2020.

Beijing is keen to use Washington's rejection of the TPP to build enthusiasm for its own deal and increase influence in the region. RCEP is a more modest deal that prescribes lower and more limited regulatory standards. The 11 remaining TPP members signed a slimmed down version of the agreement in March. — AFP

Technology

Russia's Kalashnikov branches out from rifles to robots, e-cars

Kalashnikov maker comes out of oblivion into aggressive rebranding

MOSCOW: A recent pledge by Kalashnikov to compete with Elon Musk's Tesla with a Russian retro "electric supercar" drew chuckles, but the legendary gun producer has long been trying to branch out into products from drones to yachts.

The remarkable transformation by the manufacturer most famous for the AK-47 automatic rifle is without precedent in its 200-year history. Kalashnikov produces 95 percent of all Russian-made light arms and exports to some 27 countries.

The rifle, designed by the brand's namesake Mikhail Kalashnikov just after World War II and described by the company as "the greatest weapon of the 20th century", is now in its fifth generation.

Visitors to the Kalashnikov stand at a defense trade fair outside Moscow last week were therefore surprised when they came across the pale-blue prototype of the CV-1 electric car, based on a 1970s-era Soviet hatchback, standing next to a display of rifles.

Founded in Izhevsk (1,300 kilometers east of Moscow) in 1807, the Izhmash factory has seen a series of upheavals since 2013, when Russia's state corporation RosTec, the controlling holding, merged it with a nearby pistol maker Izhmekh, naming the new company Kalashnikov Concern.

Prior to the merger, the factory looked like it would meet a typical fate of many other Soviet-era industrial titans: in 2012 Mikhail Kalashnikov and other veteran employees lamented falling production figures, bad management and low salaries.

Out of oblivion

After the arrival of private shareholders in 2014, the

company launched new models of assault and hunting rifles, handguns and other types of small arms, along with an aggressive re-branding campaign that included introduction of a clothing line and accessories including caps and umbrellas.

Just a few years later, these efforts seemingly paid off: in January 2017 the company went on a hiring spree, increasing its workforce by 30 percent to meet the rising export demand. Following the introduction of Western sanctions against it, Kalashnikov Concern changed a new subsidiary that was meant to work with the US market into a separate company called Kalashnikov USA. In February 2017, the Russian state became a minority shareholder after Rostec sold a large stake to Kalashnikov's managing director Alexei Krivoruchko. In a shift for Russia's defense industry, Rostec wants civilian merchandise to increase to 50 percent of its overall output by 2025.

'Is this a gag?'

Though its CV-1 electric car prototype may never end up on the production line, it is a step into a growing sector which is still in its infancy in Russia.

This summer, Kalashnikov provided 30 electric motorcycles and three-wheelers to the Russian police during the World Cup. "Next year we will launch sales of our first electric motorbike," Vladimir Dmitriev, who took the post of director after Krivoruchko went to work at the defence ministry, said at the Moscow region defense fair last week.

"We are talking about electric mobility because we understand that sooner or later the engine is going to disappear," said Olga Boitsova, the commercial director



MOSCOW: In this file handout photo released by Kalashnikov media press office, shows a retro-looking pale blue prototype electric car, the CV-1, produced by Russian arms maker Kalashnikov, in Moscow. —AFP

for the company's civilian products.

In 2018-2019, Kalashnikov is set to start exporting electric cars and motorcycles to Saudi Arabia.

Standing next to the vintage-looking CV-1 at the

fair, 27-year old student Dmitry Rodionov said it looked "funny" while jovial sexagenarian Yelena Razhina was hopeful that it would be "as reliable as the Kalashnikov rifle and conquer the world." —AFP

007 carmaker Aston Martin gears up for London stock market float

LONDON: Aston Martin yesterday said it plans to float one quarter of the British company on the London stock market, as demand rises worldwide for the luxury brand's cars favoured by fictional spy James Bond.

Full details of the initial public offering will be published on September 20, Aston Martin said in a statement, with reports noting that the company could be valued up to £5.0 billion (\$6.4 billion, 5.5 billion euros). "Today's announcement represents a key milestone in the history of the company, which is reporting strong financial results and increased global demand for its award-winning sports cars," Aston Martin chief executive Andy Palmer said in the statement.

The century-old carmaker, based in Gaydon in central England, is controlled by Italian private equity fund Investindustrial and Kuwaiti investors.

German carmaker Daimler will meanwhile keep its near 5.0-percent stake in the group, Aston Martin said. While Britain has a strong car manufacturing industry, the brands have fallen into foreign ownership over recent decades, with Germany's BMW buying Rolls-Royce and Mini, Volkswagen taking control of Bentley — and Jaguar-Land Rover falling into the hands of Indian giant Tata Motors.

And while the UK's key car manufactur-



PARIS: In this file photo an Aston Martin DB10 drives down the Champs Elysee in Paris to promote the new James Bond film Spectre. —AFP

ing has warned about potential Brexit fallout, Aston Martin boss Palmer yesterday said his company was well shielded ahead of the country's formal EU departure in March next year.

"The benefit of being a luxury company is that we are relatively impervious to those kinds of changes," he told BBC radio. However, he noted that as a precaution, the group was increasing stockpiles of its engines in case of possible border delays once Britain exits the EU in March next year.

Earlier this year, Palmer said Aston Martin could in the future supply engines to Formula One under the leadership of new owner Liberty.

'Carried away by the brand'

Founded in London in 1913, Aston Martin rose to fame thanks largely to its DB5 sports car, a favorite of Sean Connery, the original

movie Bond. Analysts said that with a valuation of about £5.0 billion, Aston Martin would find itself at the top end of London's second tier FTSE 250 index.

"It's important for potential investors to concentrate on the company's financial prospects and not to get carried away by the brand however, and that means having a thorough read of the forthcoming prospectus," Laith Khalaf, senior analyst at stockbroker Hargreaves Lansdown, said yesterday.

Ferrari has seen its share price soar since the group made its own stock market debut in Milan nearly three years ago. Also yesterday, Aston Martin revealed that its revenues rose eight percent in the first six months of 2018 to £445 million.

The performance was driven from sales of special edition vehicles, including the Vanquish Zagato family and DB4 GT Continuation models. —AFP

Robot teachers invade Chinese kindergartens

BEIJING: The Chinese kindergarten children giggled as they worked to solve puzzles assigned by their new teaching assistant: a roundish, short educator with a screen for a face.

Just under 60 centimetres (two feet) high, the autonomous robot named Keeko has been a hit in several kindergartens, telling stories and challenging children with logic problems.

Round and white with a tubby body, the armless robot zips around on tiny wheels, its inbuilt cameras doubling up both as navigational sensors and a front-facing camera allowing users to record video journals. In China, robots are being developed to deliver groceries, provide companionship to the elderly, dispense legal advice and now, as Keeko's creators hope, join the ranks of educators.

At the Yiswind Institute of Multicultural Education on the outskirts of Beijing, the children have been tasked to help a prince find his way through a desert-by putting together square mats that represent a path taken by the robot-part storytelling and part problem-solving.

Each time they get an answer right, the device reacts with delight, its face flashing



BEIJING: Children watching a Keeko robot make its way on a path they made from square mats at the Yiswind Institute of Multicultural Education in Beijing. —AFP

heart-shaped eyes. "Education today is no longer a one-way street, where the teacher teaches and students just learn," said Candy Xiong, a teacher trained in early childhood education who now works with Keeko Robot Xiamen Technology as a trainer.

"When children see Keeko with its round head and body, it looks adorable and children love it. So when they see Keeko, they almost instantly take to it," she added.

Keeko robots have entered more than 600 kindergartens across the country with its makers hoping to expand into Greater China and Southeast Asia. Beijing has invested money and manpower in developing artificial intelligence as part of its "Made in China 2025" plan, with a Chinese firm last year unveiling the country's first human-like robot that can hold simple conversations and make facial expressions. —AFP

When cars fly? Japan wants vehicles to take off

TOKYO: It might sound like pie in the sky, but Japan's government is banking on a future with flying cars, launching an initiative yesterday with the private sector to develop futuristic vehicles.

The initiative aims to draw up a roadmap by the end of the year on commercializing flying cars, a concept that so far remains largely theoretical. Japanese government officials are partnering with companies including Boeing and Airbus, as well as major Japanese firms like All Nippon Airways, Japan Airlines, NEC and the Toyota-backed Cartivator.

"(Flying cars) are expected to solve issues of transportation in remote islands or mountainous areas, or rescue operations and goods transport in disaster," trade ministry official Shinji Tokumatsu said.

"We launched the public-private

meeting to cultivate a new industry and make it profitable in the world market." In Japan, a group of engineers working with the Cartivator project are already developing a three-wheeled car that relies on drone technology to take flight.

Toyota and affiliated companies have invested about 42.5 million yen (\$382,000) in the project. Cartivator is hoping to launch a manned prototype by the end of 2019 so it can be used to light the Olympic flame when Japan's capital Tokyo hosts the Games in 2020.

The manned vehicle, dubbed SkyDrive, will have four sets of propellers and be just 2.9 metres (9.5 foot) long and 1.3 meters wide. But Japan is not alone in the flying car marketplace.

Companies researching the sector include Uber, the Kitty Hawk project backed by Google founder Larry Page, Lillium Aviation in Germany, Safran in France, and Honeywell in the United States. Last month, British engine maker Rolls-Royce revealed plans to develop a hybrid electric vehicle, dubbed the "flying taxi," while Kitty Hawk in June offered test flights to people interested in buying its vehicle. —AFP

Trump warns tech giants, stepping up attacks claiming 'bias'

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump stepped up attacks on big tech firms Tuesday, warning Facebook, Google and Twitter to be "careful," hours after slamming what he called "rigged" internet search results.

Trump offered no details on what if any actions he might take, but a top White House aide suggested the administration may look at some type of regulation in response to the president's complaints.

After a pair of early-morning tweets assailing Google, Trump expanded his warnings to other big internet firms in comments to reporters at the White House. "I think Google is really taking advantage of a lot of people and I think that is a very serious thing and it is a very serious charge," Trump said.

He went on to cite Facebook and Twitter, in an apparent reference to his claims last week of social media suppressing conservative voices.

"You can't do that to people," he said. "We have literally thousands and thousands of complaints coming in." Trump added: "Google and Twitter and Facebook—they are really treading on very, very troubled territory and they have to be careful."

In his Twitter comments, the US president complained that Google searches for "Trump news" brought up mostly negative stories about him. "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?" he wrote.

According to Trump, "96 percent of results on 'Trump News' are from National Left-Wing Media."

Google strongly rejected any bias claims. "Search is not used to set a political agenda and we don't bias our results toward any political ideology," it said.

"We continually work to improve Google search and we never rank search results to manipulate political sentiment."

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. Last week, Trump tweeted that "Social Media is totally discriminating against Republican/Conservative voices" and added "we won't let that happen."

Free speech guarantees

The president's claims on Google 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 information and news that is good," Trump said. Google and other internet firms have long faced complaints about search results, which are based on algorithms that can take into account user browsing history, location and other factors. —AFP

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- ◆ Minor surgeries (lipoma, sebaceous cyst, ingrowing nail)
- ◆ Diagnosis, treatment and follow up of all surgical emergencies
- ◆ Hemorrhoids, fistula & anal fissure surgeries
- ◆ Surgery for morbid obesity (sleeve, gastric bypass)
- ◆ Breast surgeries
- ◆ Hernia repair
- ◆ Thyroid & adrenal surgeries
- ◆ Surgery for reflux disease
- ◆ Cholecystectomy & laparoscopic appendicectomy
- ◆ Liver, pancreas & bile ducts surgeries

Dr. Hani Haider
General Surgery Consultant
http://www.international-clinic.com **Tel: 1886677** ic_kwt

Scope of Clinical Practice:

- ◆ General & Laparoscopic Surgery
- ◆ Single Port Surgery
- ◆ Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, Including Colorectal Cancer
- ◆ Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abscess
- ◆ Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- ◆ VAAFT Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fistuloscope)
- ◆ Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- ◆ Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- ◆ Stomach Balloon Insertion & removal
- ◆ Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- ◆ Gallstones & Abdominal Hernias Surgery
- ◆ Colonic Hydrotherapy & Fecal Incontinence Treatment
- ◆ Laparoscopic mini bypass
- ◆ Transanal minimally invasive surgery

Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:

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

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

مستشفى دار الشفاء Dar Al Shifa Hospital
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Consultant Pediatrician

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

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

DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED
Consultant of General Surgery
Laposcopic and Bariatric Surgery

Academic Certificates - Training

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

Scope of clinical Practice.

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

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

Health & Science

UK rejects CAR-T cancer cell therapy as too expensive

Yescarta approved in EU for intractable lymphoma cases

LONDON: A cutting-edge CAR-T cell therapy for otherwise untreatable forms of blood cancer is too expensive to justify its use on Britain's state-funded health service, the country's healthcare cost agency NICE said on Tuesday. The decision by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is a blow to US drugmaker Gilead Sciences, which wants to get its Yescarta product approved for use on the National Health Service (NHS).

The NICE rejection comes one day after the European Commission approved Yescarta for two aggressive forms of non-Hodgkin lymphoma. That green light cleared the way for each European country to decide on whether to fund the treatment. Yescarta is the first CAR-T therapy

to be assessed by NICE. The agency is currently appraising Novartis's rival Kymriah, which also won EU approval on Monday. NICE experts met last week to consider initial recommendations on the Swiss firm's product, a spokesman said.

Both Yescarta and Kymriah are chimeric antigen receptor T-cell therapies, or CAR-Ts, which reprogram the body's own immune cells to attack malignant cells. The treatments represent a brand new approach to fighting cancer, since the therapy involves extraction of infection-fighting cells from a

patient. These cells are then genetically engineered to recognize cancer cells and infused back. The process is complex and expensive but it offers hope for people with certain kinds of blood cancer who have exhausted

all other treatment options.

Meindert Boysen, director of the centre for health technology evaluation at NICE, said Yescarta was "an exciting innovation in very difficult to treat cancers, with a promise of cure for some patients" but said its price was too high for it to be considered cost-effective. The US list price for Yescarta is \$373,000. The UK price is confidential. NICE said Gilead had proposed a "commercial arrangement" if Yescarta was recommended. Typically, drugmakers provide price discounts in exchange for NHS access.

Gilead said it was "in ongoing discussions with NICE to identify appropriate treatment comparators which can clarify how cell therapy may be made available to patients in the UK". Raj Chopra, head of cancer therapeutics at the Institute of Cancer Research in London, said the NICE rejection was disappointing for patients. "If we're going to see CAR-T therapy widely available on the NHS, we need to find ways to reduce the costs," he said. Yescarta was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration in October. — Reuters



CALIFORNIA: A Gilead Sciences, Inc. office is shown in Foster City, California. —Reuters

“
Find ways
to reduce
the costs
”

Solar coolers heat up earnings for Kenya's dairy farmers

KIBUMBU, Kenya: Four years ago, Njeru Kamuru nearly quit dairy farming. But when he learned that a solar-powered milk-cooling plant was to be built in his Kenyan village, he changed his mind. Before then, Kamuru said, he struggled to sell more than half of the 12 litres of milk his brace of cows gave during their morning and evening milking sessions. Selling those six litres earned him about a dollar; the rest of the milk went to his relatives on credit or was drunk by his wife and four children.

Breaking even was hard, he said, with the key problem a lack of refrigerated storage. "I could spend the whole day at the farm waiting to sell milk to my fellow village customers," Kamuru said in Kibumbu village in central Kenya. And if the morning's milk supply was difficult to sell - and it was - he was at least able to pasteurize it to ensure it did not go off. The evening's milk supply was trickier. "If there were no customers, it all went to waste," he said.

Others in the Kibumbu Dairy Farmers Association had the same problem, so they approached the governor of Tharaka Nithi County and demanded that he honour a 2012 campaign pledge to construct a milk-cooling plant. In 2015, the solar-powered facility opened, using county funds. These days, Kamuru no longer sells milk to the villagers. His family uses two litres a day, while the rest goes to the community-owned plant. "The amount I deliver is recorded every day, and then I am paid at the end of the month," he said.

Access 24/7

Kenyan farmers often struggle with the country's unreliable electricity supply, with the problem particularly acute in rural areas. For the country's dairy farmers - who, according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), have 3.2 million head of dairy cattle -



KENYA: Motorbike milk delivery boys wait to collect receipts at the Kibumbu Dairy Farmers Association's solar-powered plant in central Kenya. — Reuters

it's a particular problem. Kibumbu's solar milk-cooling plant ensures that farmers like Kamuru can store their milk safely, day or night, without it going off.

The timing is good: demand for dairy products is rising fast, particularly in rapidly growing urban areas, according to the Kenya Livestock Producers Association (KLPA). "This means that farmers must have access to storage facilities that work around the 24-hour clock without interruption," said Patrick Kimani, who heads the KLPA. "Solar-powered milk coolers provide such a solution."

Typically, local governments pay for milk-cooling plants, then hand over ownership to dairy associations. Tharaka Nithi County Governor Muthomi Njuki said in a phone interview. It is then the responsibility of the farmers to pay for maintenance. Njuki added. The Tharaka Nithi facility does that by deducting 10 percent of each farmer's monthly earnings. Apart from being community-owned, the KLPA's Kimani said, solar milk-cooling plants are cheap to maintain and can deal with the blackouts that continue to trouble Kenya.

Growing solution

The dairy industry is an important part of Kenya's economy, worth about 3.5 percent of GDP, the FAO estimates, with about 2 million people directly or indirectly working in it. Kimani said the country has about one million

dairy farmers, but just 15 percent can connect to the national electricity grid to refrigerate their milk. Some of the rest rely on one of 50 solar cooling plants set up in 10 counties since 2014, Kimani said.

With the cost of solar technology falling, he added, building more plants will become increasingly affordable in coming years to help Kenya's 500-plus dairy associations. With demand for dairy products climbing, Kimani said, there are plans for plants in key production areas to boost their capacity to process milk into products such as yoghurt and milk powder. At the office of the Kibumbu Dairy Farmers Association, manager Lucy Muthoni divides her day between monitoring the milk containers that farmers bring in, and checking that the solar system on the plant's roof is keeping the coolers humming.

The plant receives more than 5,000 litres of milk a day, she said, with about one-third consumed by people in nearby Chuka town and the rest sent to the capital, Nairobi, for processing. Solar power and milk make for a good combination, she said. "Milk is most likely to go bad when the day is hot. Yet it is when it is hot that the solar system can absorb and store more energy to keep the coolers operating during the day and at night," Muthoni said. And, she added, the fact that milk can be refrigerated means more local people are turning to dairy farming. — Reuters

Kid you not: Goats can read your face

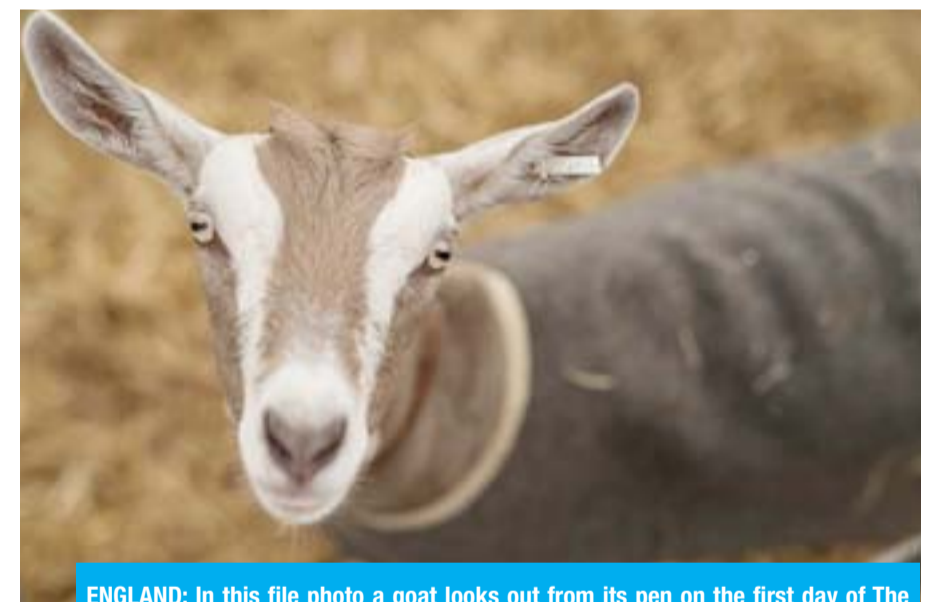
PARIS: Goats can distinguish smiling human faces from frowning ones on photos, and actively seek out snapshots of happier individuals, a study said yesterday. Shown two pictures of the same person - one with a happy expression and the other angry - 20 domesticated goats in an experiment were more likely to approach the smiling image and touch it with their snout, said researchers from Europe and Brazil.

"Goats looked and interacted on average 1.4 seconds with the happy faces and 0.9 seconds with the angry faces," study co-author Christian Nawroth of the Queen Mary University of London told AFP. "That means that goats spend approximately 50 percent more time to look and interact with hap-

py images compared to angry ones." The study, published in the journal Royal Society Open Science, claims to provide the first evidence of goats reading human emotional expression.

The findings suggested "livestock species have very sophisticated minds to interpret their environment," said Nawroth, and "likely adapt their behavior" based on human facial expressions. Goats, unlike dogs or horses, were not domesticated because of their ability to read and respond to human moods, but to provide their milk, meat, dung, and coats.

"The study has important implications for how we interact with livestock and other species, because the abilities of animals to perceive human emotions might be widespread and not just limited to pets," said Nawroth's colleague Alan McElligott. The team found goats were even more likely to approach happy pictures when they were placed to the right of the angry image, suggesting the animals use the left side of their brain to process positive emotion. —AFP



ENGLAND: In this file photo a goat looks out from its pen on the first day of The Royal Cheshire County Show at Tabley, near Knutsford, northern England. —AFP

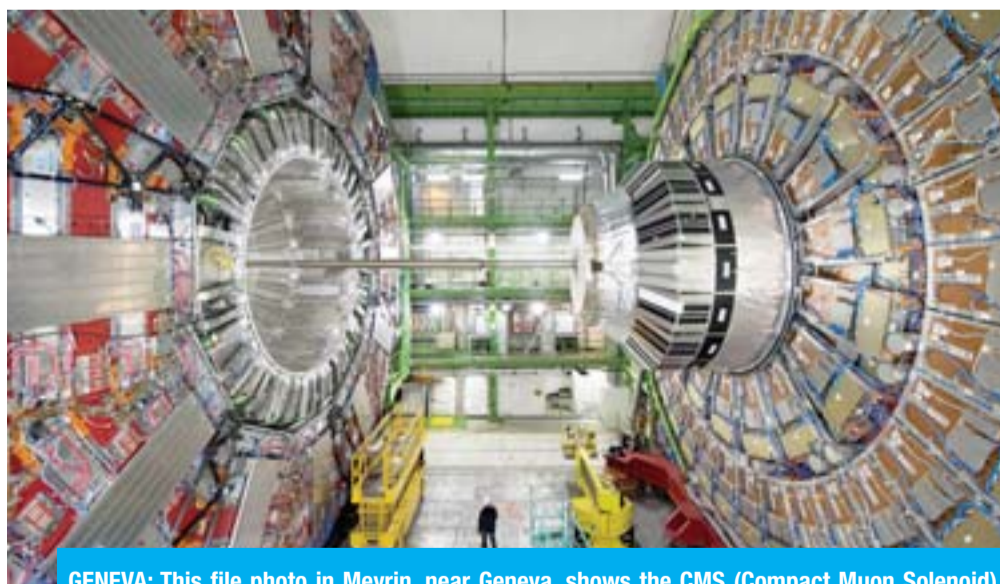
Physicists finally observe 'elusive' Higgs decay

PARIS: Six years after tracking down the Higgs boson, the subatomic particle that confers mass on matter, physicists said Tuesday they have "at long last" witnessed it decaying into tiny bits called "bottom quarks". The predicted decay was observed at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) famous for the Nobel-capped discovery of the Higgs particle in 2012, Europe's CERN physics lab announced.

"During the early preparations of the LHC, there were doubts on whether this observation could be achieved," the ATLAS scientific collaboration said of the "elusive interaction" now documented at the massive particle accelerator. Because Higgs bosons themselves are hard to find, and other particles also break up into bottom quarks, it has been difficult to track down those attributed specifically to Higgs decay.

Researchers say the long-awaited observation serves as further verification of the Standard Model of physics - the mainstream theory of the fundamental particles that make up the Universe and the forces that govern them. Under the model, developed in the early 1970s, quarks and leptons are the most basic building blocks of matter.

There are six types of quarks, of which bottom quarks - also called beauty quarks - are among the heaviest. The Standard Model



GENEVA: This file photo in Meyrin, near Geneva, shows the CMS (Compact Muon Solenoid) cavern at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN). — AFP

predicted that Higgs decay would yield pairs of bottom quarks about 60 percent of the time. But finding these quarks has been "among the most demanding analyses carried out by ATLAS so far," the team said in a statement.

New physics?

Scientists probing the nature and workings of the Higgs and other particles are on the lookout for anything that does not fit with Standard Model predictions. This is because the model doesn't explain dark matter or dark energy, and appears to be incompatible with

the theory of gravity. Some other model of "new physics" is needed to explain these.

Proposed alternatives have included the existence of extra dimensions, or "supersymmetry" which postulates the existence of a sibling of equal mass for every known Standard Model particle. Evidence for neither has yet been found. The latest observation was also "consistent with" the Standard Model, said the CMS team that worked with ATLAS on the project. But it "still leaves room for contributions from new physics." "It's another point for the Standard Model," physicist Pauline Gagnon told AFP. —AFP

Bees get hooked on harmful pesticide

PARIS: Bumblebees acquire a taste for food laced with a pesticide known to harm them, according to a study suggesting the chemicals pose an even greater threat to pollinators than previously thought. In experiments, researchers showed that bees initially put off by sugar water containing neonicotinoids - the most widely-used class of insecticide worldwide - soon started seeking them out to the exclusion of untainted food.

The findings were published yesterday in the journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B. Neonicotinoids, earlier research has shown, disrupt the ability of bees to reproduce and lower their resistance to disease. "At first, it appeared that the bees did avoid the food containing the pesticide," said lead author Andres Arce, a researcher at Imperial College London. "However, as individual bees increasingly experience the treated food they develop a preference for it."

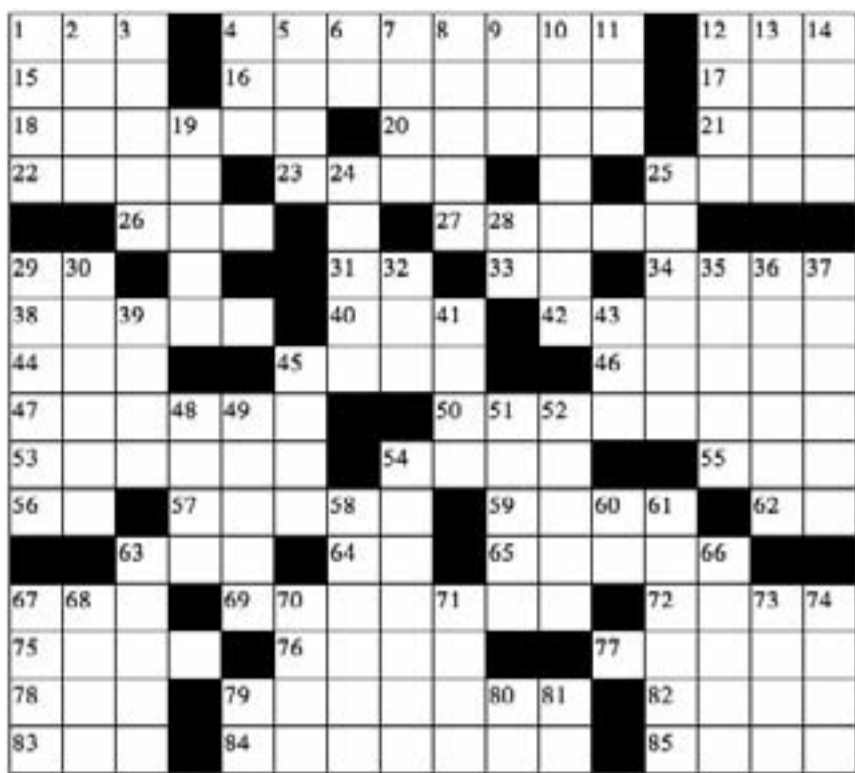
Even when the position of their feeders was switched, the pollinators made a beeline for the one laced with insecticide. Neonicotinoids target nerve receptors in insects much in the way nicotine - the addictive ingredient in tobacco - does in humans and other mammals. "Our findings... tick certain symptoms of addictive behavior, which is intriguing given the addictive properties of nicotine on humans," said lead researcher Richard Gill, also from Imperial.

Unlike contact pesticides, which remain on the plant surface, neonicotinoids are absorbed by seeds and transported to leaves, flowers, roots, and stems as the plant grows. Several countries have banned forms of the insecticide, mainly due to its impact on Nature's little helpers. In the European Union, three neonicotinoid-based products will be off-limits in open fields starting on December 19. France has banned five chemical variants starting Saturday.

Canada recently announced it would phase out two neonicotinoids used on canola, corn, and soybean crops. Widely used over the last two decades, neonicotinoids were designed to control sap-feeding insects such as aphids and root-feeding grubs. In recent years, fears have been growing over the declining health of bees globally, and the possible role of neonicotinoids. —AFP

Stars

CROSSWORD 1996



ACROSS

1. Standard time in the 7th time zone west of Greenwich, reckoned at the 105th meridian west.
4. Brightly colored carnivorous fish of western Atlantic and West Indies waters.
12. Inquire about.
15. (informal) Of the highest quality.
16. Having a margin with rounded scallops.
17. Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
18. A percussion instrument consisting of a pair of hollow pieces of wood or bone (usually held between the thumb and fingers) that are made to click together (as by Spanish dancers) in rhythm with the dance.
20. Forced to turn and face attackers.
21. Thigh of a hog (usually smoked).
22. The sixth month of the civil year.
23. The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
26. The month following August and preceding October.
27. United States neuroscientist noted for his studies of the neural basis of vision (born in 1926).
29. A state in northwestern North America.
31. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
33. Unknown god.
34. A book of the New Testament.
38. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
40. (used of animals especially a horse) Of a moderate reddish-brown color n 1.
42. An ancient Iranian language.
44. A master's degree in fine arts.
46. Cultivated in temperate regions.
47. Type genus of the Otariidae.
50. A cell without a nucleus (as an erythrocyte).
53. The item at the end.
55. A guided missile fired from shipboard against an airborne target.
56. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
57. (Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation) Optical device that produces an intense monochromatic beam of coherent light.
59. The outermost (and toughest) of the 3 meninges.
62. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
64. A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
65. A genus of Platalea.
67. A white linen liturgical vestment with sleeves.
69. Congenital absence of the heart (as in the development of some monsters).
72. Stairway in India leading down to a landing on the water.
75. Lacking or deprive of the sense of hearing wholly or in part.
76. An independent ruler or chieftain (especially in Africa or Arabia).
77. A daughter of your brother or sister.
78. An associate degree in applied science.
82. A language unit by which a person or thing is known.
83. A chronic skin disease occurring primarily in women between the ages of 20 and 40.
84. Caused to be slower or later.
85. Chief port of Yemen.

DOWN

1. Informal terms for a mother.
2. Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
3. (medicine) A grossly malformed and usually nonviable fetus.
4. Being one hundred more than two hundred.
5. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
6. A brittle silver-white metalloid element that is related to selenium and sulfur.
7. (prefix) Opposite or opposing or neutralizing.
8. Wood of a larch tree.
9. A member of the Shoshonean people of Utah and Colorado and New Mexico.
10. A canvas bag that is used to feed an animal (such as a horse).
11. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
12. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
13. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
14. God of love and erotic desire.
19. Any of several tall tropical palms native to southeastern Asia having egg-shaped nuts.
24. Jordan's port.
25. Resembling or containing slate.
28. A monarchy in northwestern Europe occupying most of the British Isles.
30. An oral cephalosporin (trade names Keflex and Keflin and KefTab) commonly prescribe for mild to moderately severe infections of the skin or ears or throat or lungs or urinary tract.
32. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
35. A state of extreme confusion and disorder.
36. Steady recurrent ticking sound as made by a clock.
37. An internal representation of the world.
39. South African term for 'boss'.
41. Not only so, but.
43. The month following March and preceding May.
45. The time during which someone's life continues.
48. The elapsed time it takes for a signal to travel from Earth to a spacecraft (or other body) and back to the starting point.
49. Tropical American tree grown in southern United States having a whitish pink-tinged fruit.
51. A family of Sino-Tibetan languages spoken in southeastern Asia.
52. Capital of Nigeria in the center of the country.
54. Brazilian tree with handsomely marked wood.
58. Hard white substance covering the crown of a tooth.
60. An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
61. An island in the Aegean Sea in the Saronic Gulf.
63. Lower in esteem.
66. Having the leading position or higher score in a contest.
68. (archaic or Scottish) Faithful and true.
70. The work of caring for or attending to someone or something.
71. The nest of a squirrel.
73. The highest level or degree attainable.
74. Being of the age 13 through 19.
79. A silver-white metallic element of the platinum group that resembles platinum.
80. A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.
81. A doctor's degree in religion.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Today finds you sympathetic and understanding of the feeling of those close to you. You seem to have thrown your more judgmental attitude out of the window. You have learned you thrive when you surround yourself with those who are positive and uplifting. You are becoming the friend to others that you wish them to be for you. This is a great step in the right direction. Your life and all things in it seem to be full of happiness. You are on a very positive path. Hard work and dedication will lead you to great reward.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may find you tendency to be indecisive may cause conflict with someone you care about. Consider all the options diplomatically, then make a choice. Recognize that ignoring this situation is not the right choice. Consider consequences, then choose, and act. Someone may find your actions offensive. Pay no attention to anyone who doesn't seem supportive. They will get over it.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Today may find you a bit unsatisfied with your surroundings. It may be someone or the physical place you are in that is just not sitting right with you. You may feel as if someone or something is holding you back or may just feel frustrated by your life in general. This may be a great time for an evening out and about. Change your surroundings. Clear your head but choose your company wisely to avoid any conflict as this is a time you need to have fun. You have to find a comfortable balance between work life, family, and social life. Gemini, remember it is good for you to get out and enjoy yourself from time to time.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

The company you keep says a lot about you. Make time for your loved ones. Don't wait for a holiday or a special event. What is a little thing to you can make a big difference in the life of someone you care about. You are creative enough to turn a small act into a big memory. Take the time. Make the effort. The reward will be great.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You have a tendency to be indecisive at times. This could cause conflict with someone special to you. Consider all the options and put much thought into your decisions today. Make a choice. This is not the time to procrastinate. Someone may be offended by or not agree with the choice you make. Remember, Leo, you can not please everyone all of the time. Do what is best for you and yours.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You can stop looking for perfect relationships. Since every person is flawed, a relationship between two of those persons can't be perfect. You just have to decide how much imperfection you can tolerate. Limit your relationships to the people who don't have the flaws you can't live with. Surround yourself with people who are aware of your imperfections and love you anyway. Peace is conceived when love and tolerance are united.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

When you hear the phone ring today, answer it. You have a friend in need and you are just the person to help them out. You are understanding. There is no issue too personal that your friend feels they can not discuss with you. Your guidance and knowledge are priceless to this person. The first person they feel they need to run to when things go wrong. Be careful to not take on emotional baggage when offering your advice. This is not your circus and these are not your monkeys. You have to remember there is a difference between sympathy and empathy. Use caution, Libra. The weight of the world does not belong on your shoulders.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may find confrontation is right around the corner. Your values don't seem to be the same as someone you find yourself bumping heads with. You may find a lack of respect for this person and they seem to feel the same way about you. Remember, that is why they make chocolate and vanilla. Not everyone's taste is the same and this applies to people's beliefs as well. Sometimes you may find it is best to agree to disagree and today is just one of those days. You may find yourself at a standstill with this person. Do not bother to fight this battle.



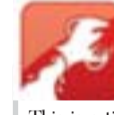
Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Your moods and feelings may reach new levels. You may feel moody and even dreamy during this time.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may find yourself getting mixed signals from someone close to you. You feel as if you don't know up from down. The harder you try to please this person, the more you seem to do wrong. You could find yourself in the company of someone whose values are opposite of yours. You do not like what they represent. You have a strong sense of values and morals and are very picky about the company you keep. It is important to remain kind and try to be understanding. This is why they make chocolate and vanilla, not everyone has the same taste.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

This is a time you feel more inward. You may be in the mood to only spend time with those closest to you. A nice evening at home will bring the most peace into your world today. This is a great time to do some soul searching. You have questions about what all happened in your world the led you to the place you are in today. You may be able to appreciate the hardships you have experienced and the lessons they taught you. This is a point you start to appreciate the wisdom you have gained through your life. You have learned to look for the positive in all life brings your way. This alone will make you a better person who others want in their lives.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Your relationships have taken priority in your life. You value the love you have for others and the love you feel from them. Your emotional needs are being deeply satisfied. There is a vast difference between independence and loneliness. At this time, you seem to be becoming more of a homebody. You find more at ease staying in surrounded only by your loved ones or close friends. This is where you belong as your feelings are finding you more reflective rather than expressive. You crave new beginnings, perhaps this would be a great time for a new experience or a new hobby. Pisces, take the time to reflect and learn from your past and make plans for your future.

Wordsearch Puzzle

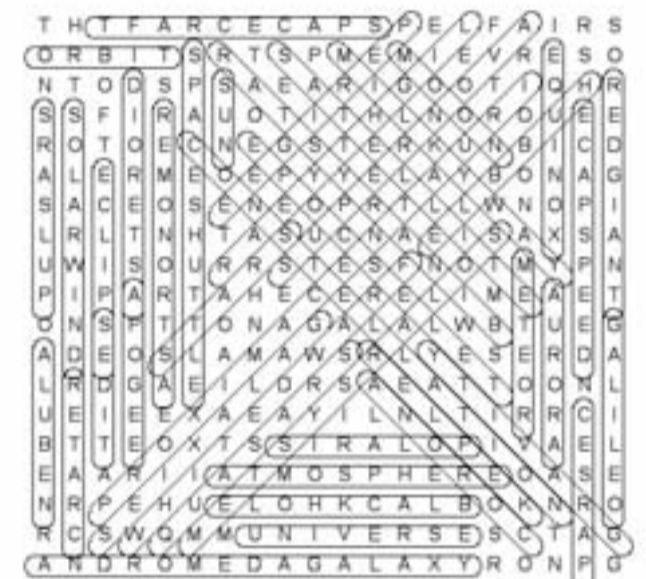
Astronomy 2

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



- | | | | |
|------------------|---------------|-------------|-----------|
| ASTRONOMY | FIREBALL | MAGNETIC | RADIATION |
| AXIS | FLARES | MATTER | REVOLVE |
| CELESTIAL | FUSION | METEORITE | RING |
| CHAOS | GALACTIC | NEWTON | ROCKET |
| COMET | GALAXY | NOVA | ROTATE |
| COSMOS | GRAVITATIONAL | OZONE | SOLSTICE |
| DEBRIS | HYDROGEN | PARALLAX | SPACE |
| EMISSION | INTERSTELLAR | PHOTOSPHERE | SUNSPOTS |
| ENERGY | LIGHT | PLANET | SYZGY |
| EXPLORATION | LUMINOSITY | PLASMA | |
| EXTRATERRESTRIAL | LUNAR | PROTON | |

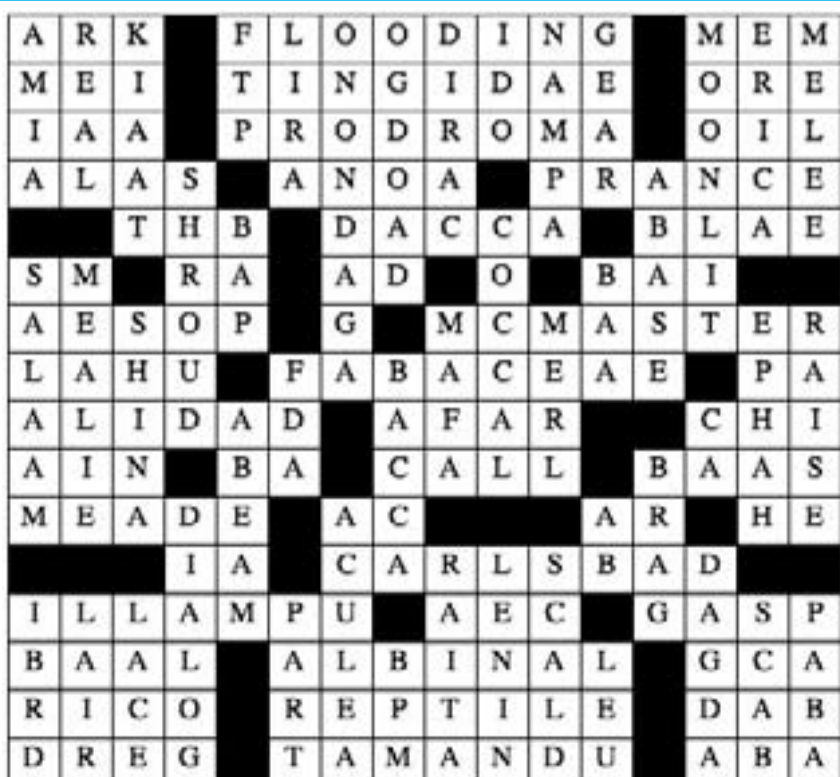
Astronomy



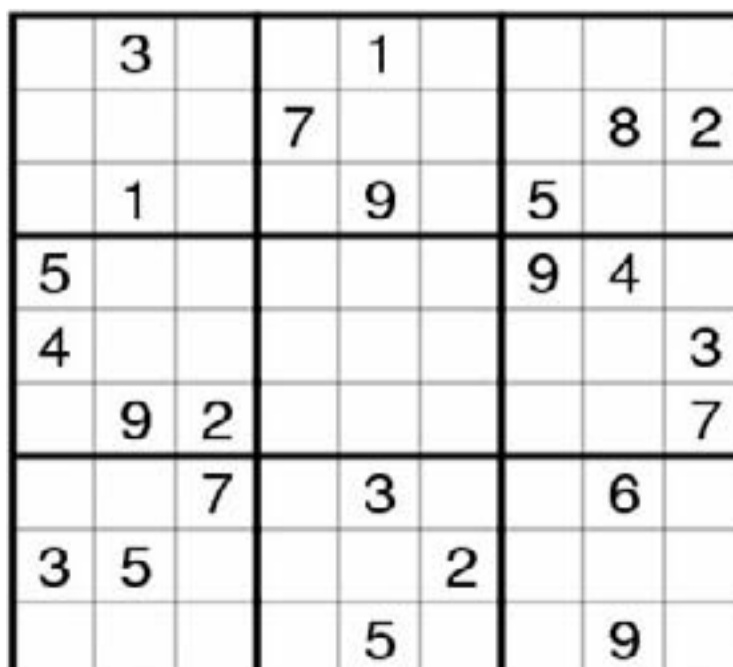
- | | | | |
|------------------|------------|------------------|---------------|
| ANDROMEDA GALAXY | DEEP SPACE | MOON | SOLAR SYSTEM |
| AROGEE | ECLIPSE | NEBULA | SOLAR WIND |
| ASTEROID | EQUINOX | ORBIT | SPACE SHUTTLE |
| ASTRONOMER | GALAXIES | PARSEC | SPACECRAFT |
| ATMOSPHERE | GALILEO | PERIGEE | 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 |

Hidden sentence: THE FIRST PERSON TO SET FOOT ON THE MOON WAS NEIL ARMSTRONG

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

THURSDAY, AUGUST 30, 2018

A worker carries a board as he sets up the red carpet area near the entrance of a screening room ahead of the 75th Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido on August 28, 2018. Italian actor Michele Riondino will host the opening ceremony of the festival. — AFP



Syrian ballerina brings touch of grace to streets of Damascus

Syrian ballerina Yara Khudeir is on a mission - to bring some peace and beauty into the lives of her war-weary compatriots by dancing her way through the streets and alleyways of Damascus. Most onlookers welcome the unlikely sight of the slim, graceful 19-year-old with long black hair pirouetting



and twirling through the ancient city. Some stop to film her with their mobile phones or take selfies with her. "I want to show the world that Damascus was and will remain a source of arts and always full of love and peace. We must end the idea the world has of us, that Damascus is a place of violence, destruction and killing," said Khudeir.

Her initiative began two weeks ago when she was walking with friends in the old city and started to dance in the street. She posted her pictures on Facebook and quickly became something of a celebrity in a country that has endured more than seven

years of civil war in which hundreds of thousands have been killed and millions driven from their homes.

Khudeir, who comes from the southern Syrian town of As-Suwayda, has faced criticism from some people for dancing in the streets, but many support her efforts. "Please do not stop because their (the critics') remarks are nonsense," a university student who gave his name as Bisher told Khudeir as she danced. "What you are doing is very beautiful..." Another passerby, Marah, said Syria needed street art. "It is a very nice thing... It is art for the soul," she said. Khudeir said she ignored her critics. "Of course I sometimes hear some words. But I do not care much about these words. I just think about what I am doing. I do not listen to those people," she said.

Khudeir began learning ballet aged 10 and then became a member of Syria's rhythmic gymnastics team. Despite the eruption of civil war in 2011, she continued to perform in her home town and two years ago opened her own ballet dancing club there. Khudeir said she had decided to carry out her dancing initiative in Damascus because it is the cultural and political heart of the country. "All arts started here and it is Syria's centre," she said. — Reuters



Controversial Fukushima nuclear statue to be removed



The statue, named "Sun Child" and sporting a yellow protective suit with a digital display on its chest showing "000" to symbolize zero nuclear contamination, was installed at the station earlier this month. — AFP

A giant statue of a child wearing a radiation suit in the Japanese city of Fukushima will be removed after it sparked a huge controversy in the nuclear-hit area. Fukushima city mayor Hiroshi Kohata said the statue intended to be a symbol of reconstruction had ended up being divisive. "I judged it impossible to keep displaying a statue meant to be 'a symbol of reconstruction' when citizens are divided over it," Kohata said in a statement Tuesday. He said the statue on display near the city's main train station would be "removed as soon as possible" and officials would discuss what to do with the 6.2-metre (20-foot) figure.

The statue, named "Sun Child" and sporting a yellow protective suit with a digital display on its chest showing "000" to symbolize zero nuclear contamination, was installed at the station earlier this month. The figure holds a helmet in one hand, showing the air is safe to breathe, and a symbol of the sun in the other, representing hope and new energy.

But it prompted a deluge of criticism online, with some calling it "creepy" and others arguing it did little to help Fukushima as it

fight to restore its reputation. "I sincerely apologize to the people whose feelings were hurt," Kohata said, adding that he also felt sorry for those who had supported the statue, including children involved in naming it. Fukushima city is the capital of Fukushima prefecture, whose Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant melted down in the 2011 tsunami, becoming the world's worst nuclear disaster since Chernobyl.

The meltdown affected a vast agricultural region, forcing many local residents to give up their ancestral properties—possibly never to return due to severe radioactive contamination. The area is battling to restore its reputation and local farm produce undergoes radiation checks to ensure it is safe before being shipped to stores. Nevertheless, many consumers shy away from buying for fear of contamination. The artist, Kenji Yanobe, said he had tried to show "bright hopes for the future" by depicting the child as looking to the skies. On his website, he described the statue's removal as "very regrettable" but said he no longer wanted his work to be a source of controversy inside and outside the city. — AFP



CAGE NAMED AN AMBASSADOR FOR THE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL AND AWARDS IN MACAU

Nicolas Cage has been announced as a talent ambassador for The International Film Festival & Awards in Macau. The Hollywood star will attend the festival's opening ceremony on December 8 and his supernatural thriller movie 'Mandy' will also be screened during the event. Mike Goodridge, the artistic director of the International Film Festival & Awards, said: "Nicolas Cage is a brilliant, iconic actor and a star for the ages. We are proud and delighted to welcome him to Macau this year as our talent ambassador, and to show his extraordinary new film 'Mandy'." The Academy Award-winning actor will also participate in a masterclass event at the festival on December 9. Nicolas, 54 - who is one of the movie industry's best-known actors - previously claimed to be a "student

of film performance". The actor has appeared in a wide variety of roles during his career, and he explained that he's always been keen to challenge himself. He shared: "I see myself very much as a student of film performance and I'm always looking to learn something. That's why if you look at my filmography, it's so eclectic. I'm always trying to challenge myself and take those risks and go for the triple axel, even though I might fall on my face. It's still exciting to go for it and you still get points for trying." Nicolas explained that he particularly enjoys making thought-provoking movies. He said: "I don't like to make message movies per say, but I do like to reflect and hold a mirror up to current events and society so that people can make their own decisions about what they do and do not believe."

Abrahamson named head of London Film Festival jury

'Room' director Lenny Abrahamson has been named the jury president of this year's BFI London Film Festival. The world-famous festival is set to begin on October 10, and Abrahamson has been officially announced as the head of the jury prior to the announcement of the full schedule of movies today. The Oscar-nominated filmmaker said: "I am delighted to continue my relationship with the BFI London Film Festival. It's an honor to be this year's jury chair and I very much look forward to deliberating with my fellow jurors on what is sure to be some of the most exciting, thought-provoking and original work in this year's selection of films." Abrahamson and his fellow jury members are set to oversee an official competition section of ten movies, including

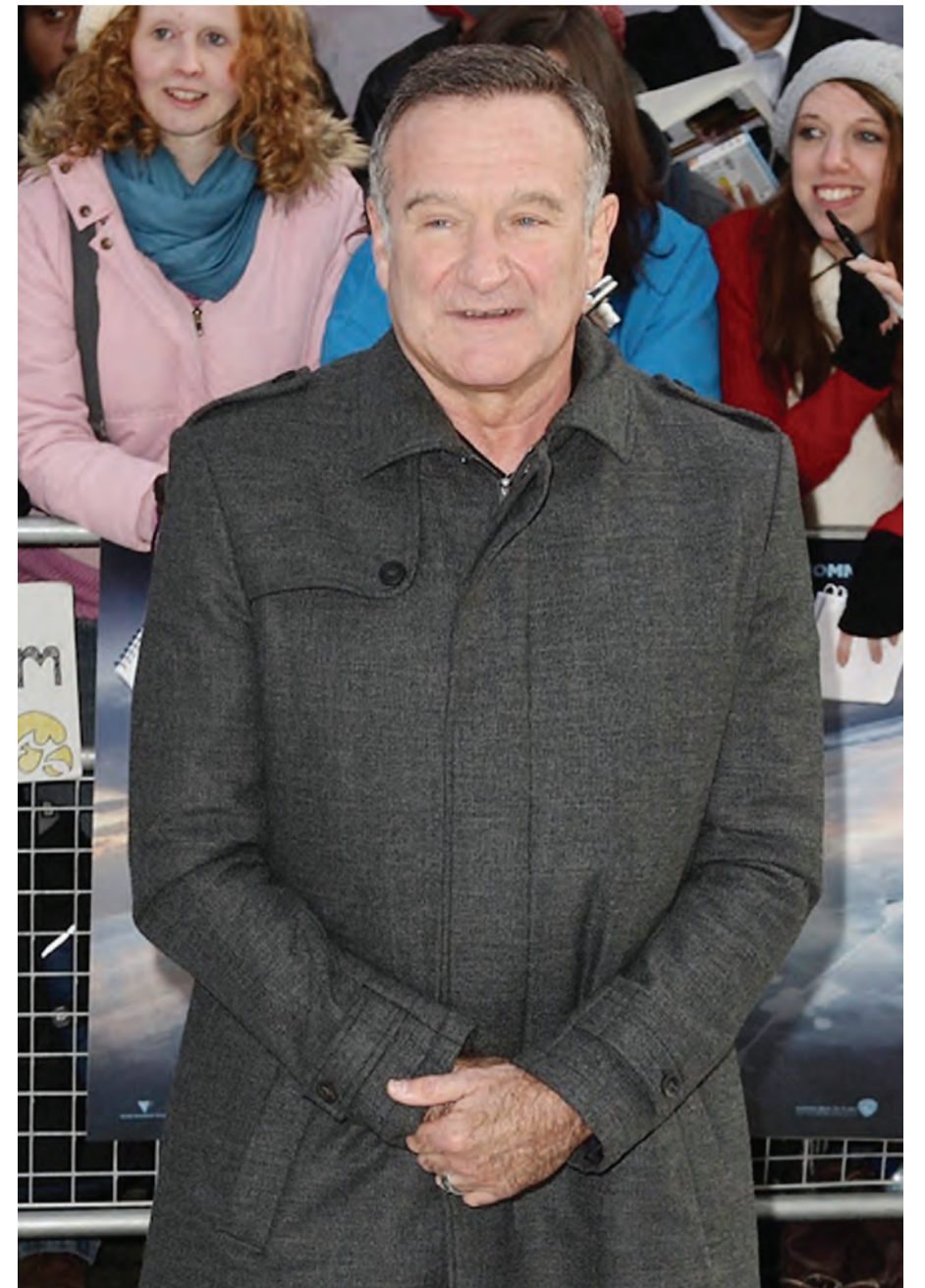


the world premiere of Ben Wheatley's 'Happy New Year, Colin Burstead'. Of the films in the official competition, 50 percent come from a female director or co-director. Other notable films set to feature at this year's festival include 'The Old Man & The Gun', which stars Hollywood icon Robert Redford, and the crime thriller 'Destroyer', which features Australian actress Nicole Kidman. Another anticipated highlight of the festival will be the screening of director Peter Jackson's World War Two documentary. Meanwhile, it was previously announced that Steve McQueen's crime thriller 'Widows' will open the annual event in London, while the festival will close with the world premiere of 'Stan & Ollie', which stars British comedian Steve Coogan.

Elba admits he doesn't know what the MCU is



Idris Elba doesn't know what the "MCU" is. The 45-year-old actor has starred in the 'Thor' and 'Avengers' movies, but he still doesn't understand the meaning of the abbreviation, which stands for Marvel Cinematic Universe. During an interview with Yahoo, Idris was asked a question about the "MCU" and he admitted to having never heard the term, adding that he thought it concerned an English soccer team. After the meaning of the abbreviation was explained to him, Idris said: "Oh right, I have never heard that before! I thought it was Manchester United ... but don't worry about it." Idris' confession comes shortly after he claimed that the world isn't ready for the first black James Bond. The London-born actor has been heavily linked to the coveted role - currently played by Daniel Craig - and although he is interested in playing 007, he doesn't think cinemagoers around the world want to see a black man play the character. He said: "I think in England we have reached that stage [of having a black James Bond] because culturally we're sort of a lot more diverse but the rest of the world is not like that and I think there is a real sort of stigma. It's like, 'Oh he's black, can he do it because he's black?'" Idris also rejected claims that people would be more accommodating to the change because of recent historical moments, like Barack Obama becoming America's first black president. He explained: "Obama can be president because he's a very smart man and I'm sure he had some feelings like, 'Well, I'm not the first black president, I'm Obama. I'm the first Obama.'" So for me, you know, I don't like to make a big deal of it, the point is that it's a great rumor. If it was to ever happen, I think it would be the will of a nation."

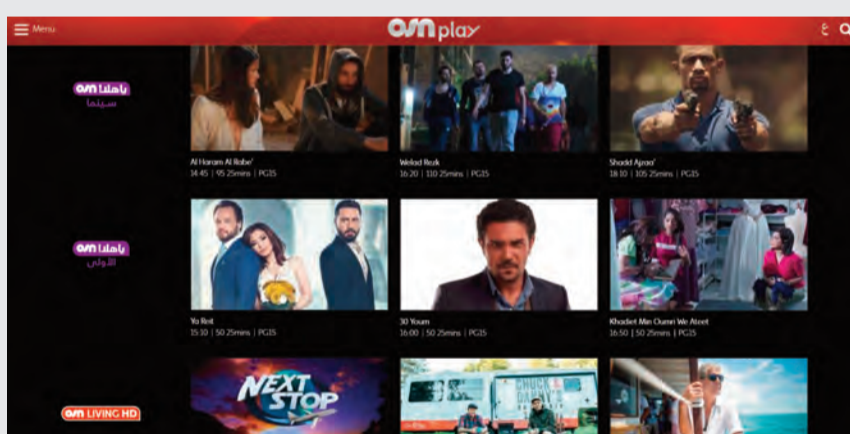


Mrs Doubtfire musical set for Broadway

'Mrs Doubtfire' is being turned into a Broadway musical. The 1993 comedy movie starred the late Robin Williams alongside the likes of Sally Field and Pierce Brosnan, and theatre producers Fox Stage Productions and Kevin McCollum have now confirmed that the hit film is set to be transformed into a stage production. McCollum and Bob Cohen of Fox Stage Productions said: "Mrs Doubtfire' is such a beloved story, both laugh-out-loud hilarious and extremely moving. Getting this team together and crafting 'Mrs Doubtfire' for the stage has been pure joy. We can't wait to get into production." It's been confirmed, too, that the musical will be written by John O'Farrell and Karey Kirkpatrick, with Tony Award-

winner Jerry Zaks set to direct the project. However, casting news and dates for the show have yet to be announced. The Chris Columbus-directed movie tells the story of a struggling actor, played by Williams, who loses custody of his children. As a result, he decides to disguise himself as a Scottish nanny called Euphegenia Doubtfire in a bid to get closer to his kids. Meanwhile, comedian Kevin Hart previously admitted he'd love to star in a 'Mrs Doubtfire' remake. The Hollywood actor - who featured in 'Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle' in 2017 - shared: "I'll stay on the Robin Williams train and say that if I could jump into 'Mrs Doubtfire', that was a very amazing performance on both ends for him. I think that's one I'd love to get to play in."

OSN brings customers 24 new live channels on OSN Play

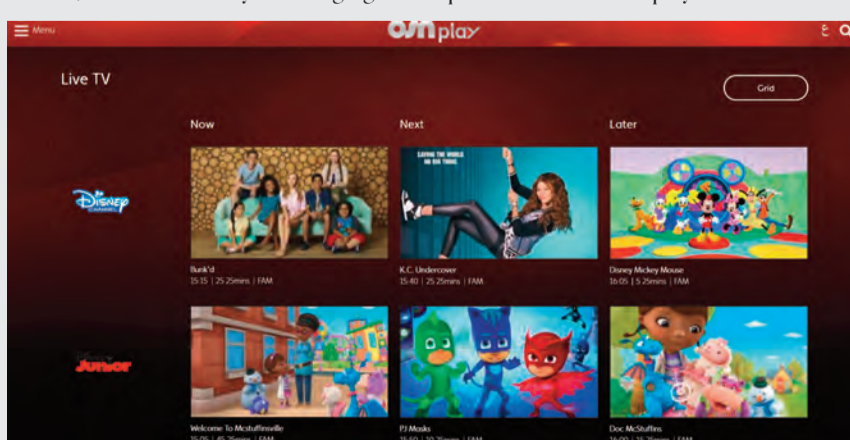


OSN, the region's leading entertainment network, is putting seamless online streaming of content at the very heart of its digital strategy. OSN Play, the free streaming online catch-up TV service for OSN subscribers, is providing customers with an additional 24 live channels, giving viewers nearly 60 live TV channels, 7,000 hours of On Demand content, 400 movies and over 40 complete box sets ready to watch at any given time on any connected screen. Accessible across the MENA region, on any device and absolutely free for OSN customers, the new live TV channels offer world-class quality programming on the go, including BBC First, Sundance TV, Nat Geo People HD, Nicktoons, Paramount and TLC channels, to name a few.

As a technological innovator OSN is committed to investing heavily in digital delivery of content to meet the changing ways in which customers consume entertainment, offering even more of the great online TV experience they want, anytime, anywhere. Emad Morcos, Chief Content Officer, said: "OSN Play is changing the

way audiences in MENA consume content. We've listened to our customers and studied the trends and by increasing the streaming capacity of OSN Play and taking it up to nearly 60 live channels, we are giving viewers access to the premium entertainment they know and love, the way they want it. This is part of our ongoing digital strategy to elevate content viewing experiences by providing more live and on-demand options, at no extra cost."

OSN Play now offers sports, Arabic, kids and general entertainment live-streaming channels - 12 movie and series channels, 10 sports channels, 2 Arabic channels, 7 Kids channels, 8 Pehla channels, 5 Pinoy channels and 12 factual and lifestyle channels. All of this sits alongside hundreds of fresh new episodes of general entertainment, Arabic Series, and kids' entertainment, which is added every month. More live streaming channels will be added so OSN customers can enjoy more of their favorite entertainment - anytime, anywhere and on any screen. For the full list of live channels on OSN Play please visit osn.com/play.



Ed Sheeran: Drake duet is 'inevitable'

Ed Sheeran says it is "inevitable" that he will collaborate with Drake "at some point". The 27-year-old singer believes his and 31-year-old rapper's "worlds have to meet", but admits he has only met the 'In My Feelings' hit-maker a handful of times and doesn't even know if he feels the same way about working together. He said: "I feel like at some point, me and Drake need to do something. I feel like

that has to happen at some point. I mean, I've been on tour for god knows how long and he's been on tour for god knows how long and he's constantly releasing stuff. I just think at some point those two worlds have to meet, and I don't know how or what it sounds like, but I feel like it's inevitable ... I've only met him a couple of times. I don't even know if it's in the cards. I'd like to think he has the same mindset as me."



Ed believes it would be "interesting" if he and Drake teamed up together, but he won't be too devastated if a collaboration doesn't ever happen. When it was suggested there are "a lot of similarities" between him and Drake, Ed replied: "Yeah, but then we're very different in a lot of ways, which I think would make for an interesting song. "But it's one of these things. Like, if it doesn't happen, it's not going to be the end of my world-but I just think it'd be interesting." However, Ed may have to wait for Drake to approach him for the duet, because he "feels weird" asking big-name stars "to do things". Speaking to Entertainment Weekly, he added: "I always feel very weird asking people that I know who are famous to do things, because, I don't know ... it feels weird." The Bieber and the One Direction and the Taylors and the Beyoncé's-I want to be seen as an equal, I don't ever want handouts, so I don't feel comfortable going. 'Hey, can you do this?'— Bang showbiz

Daltrey's Legends of Football gig

Roger Daltrey is set to perform at the Legends of Football Awards ceremony in honor of Frank Lampard. The Who frontman will be the headline act at the glitzy bash on October 8 at London's The Grosvenor House Hotel on Park Lane, where the 40-year-old former England and Chelsea midfielder will be recognized for his career achievements on the pitch. Speaking about his forthcoming gig at the Nordoff Robbins charity event, Daltrey - who supports rival London team Arsenal - commented: "I'm delighted to be performing at this year's Legends of Football event and I'm very much looking forward to October 8th. It's an honor to be involved with such a great cause and to be part of a wonderful night of football and music to celebrate the career of a true footballing legend, Frank Lampard, even if he is a Chelsea hero. "I'm also very excited to help raise funds for Nordoff Robbins who do fabulous work to change the lives of vulnerable and isolated people through music. Having been amongst the first bands to support Nordoff Robbins when The Who played one of their first events back in 1976, it's wonderful to still be able to help such a great organization and a truly worthy cause." Lampard - who follows in the footsteps of last year's recipient of the accolade, Steven Gerrard - previously commented on landing



the prize: "It's a real honor for me to receive the Legends of Football award this year. "Just seeing my name mentioned amongst those past winners is something to cherish. I'm looking forward to the dinner on October 8th. I hope to see you there." Supported by the Premier League, Legends of Football - which was previously known as the HMV Football Extravaganza - has raised more than £7 million for music therapy charity Nordoff Robbins, since its inception in 1996.

Lifestyle | Music & Movies



Fans dance in front of a Giant Crown installed to celebrate the 60th birthday of Michael Jackson, on the South Bank in London, Britain yesterday. — Reuters photos

LONDON FANS PAY TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL JACKSON ON 60TH BIRTHDAY

Fans of Michael Jackson honored the "King of Pop" on what would have been his 60th birthday yesterday by gathering at a temporary monument in the shape of a crown

erected in his honor in London. Braving the rain, fans imitated his famed dance and moon-walk moves around the 13-foot (4 meter) white, sparkling crown erected by record label Sony

Music on the south bank of the River Thames. "The first time I saw him in person, I was 18 years old, he came to London and it was just manic," said fan Mayah Thomas, now 31.

"(Jackson was) really shy, but also really personable. He would always try and make the fans comfortable." Jackson, famed for hits like "Bad" and "Beat It", had been rehearsing for a

series of comeback concerts scheduled in London before his sudden death in 2009 at the age of 50. The crown monument will stand for just one day. —Reuters

Women directors slam 'toxic masculinity' of Venice film festival

The Venice film festival was slammed for its "toxic masculinity" as it opened yesterday with just one female director represented among its most mouth-watering line-up in decades. With Hollywood effectively turning the festival into its launchpad for the Oscars with new films by Damien Chazelle, the Coen brothers, Alfonso Cuaron and Lady Gaga's much-hyped screen debut, feminists have lashed the organizers for choosing only one film by a female director. It is the second year in a row that Venice has featured just one film by a woman among the 21 vying for the Golden Lion top prize.

female filmmakers involves lowering standards." Others blamed a streak of Italian "toxic masculinity" that saw actress and #MeToo campaigner Asia Argento pilloried in her homeland for accusing Harvey Weinstein of rape.

'I will resign'
Barbera insisted that he chose the films "on the quality and not the sex of the director", telling reporters that "if we impose quotas, I resign." He was already under pressure for including a documentary by Bruce Weber, "Nice Girls Don't Stay for Breakfast" despite claims of coercive sexual behavior by the American fashion photographer made by 15 male models. Weber denies any wrongdoing. Barbera also faced questions over his decision to invite disgraced Hollywood director James Toback to premiere his film "The Private Life of a Modern Woman" at Venice last year.



Official Competition jury members (from left) Austrian actor Christoph Waltz, New Zealand's actor and producer Taika Waititi, British actress Naomi Watts, Polish producer Malgorzata Szumowska, Danish actress Trine Dyrholm, French actress Nicole Garcia, president of the jury and Mexican director Guillermo Del Toro, Taiwanese actress and director Sylvia Chang and Italian director Paolo Genovese pose during the jury photocall at the start of the 75th edition of a Venice Film Festival, on August 29, 2018, at Venice Lido, in Venice. — AFP



(From left) Screenwriter Josh Singer, actress Olivia Hamilton, director Damien Chazelle, actor Ryan Gosling, actress Claire Foy and actor Jason Clarke pose during a photocall for the film "First Man" yesterday prior to its premiere in competition at the 75th Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido.



Actor Ryan Gosling and actress Claire Foy pose during a photocall for the film "First Man" yesterday prior to its premiere in competition at the 75th Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido.

Barbera said. "I'm not a judge. I'm not a lawyer. I'm a festival director. I knew Mr Toback and I invited him," he said of the director, who denies the allegations. "We will see if the courts decide if the accusations are true, and if they're true he'll go to jail." But even the row over women directors cannot take the shine off the way Barbera has turned around the world's oldest film festival.

Launchpad for Oscars
A host of Oscar winners over the past five years have been premiered at Venice including "Gravity", "Birdman", "Spotlight", "La La Land" and last year's best film, "The Shape of Water". Its Mexican director Guillermo del Toro is the head of the jury this year. Barbera has stolen some of the Cannes' thunder and its stars, with his festival's timing making it a better launchpad for the American awards season. Venice has also profited from Cannes' feud with streaming giant Netflix, scooping up all of its

films which might normally have been shown at the world's biggest film festival. Venice's staggering line-up this year includes new films by Oscar-winning "Son of Saul" director Hungarian Laszlo Nemes, Britain's Mike Leigh and Paul Greengrass, Chinese master Zhang Yimou, Emir Kusturica and two of France's biggest directors, Jacques Audiard and Olivier Assayas, who would usually show at Cannes. The festival kicks off late yesterday with "First Man", with Chazelle teaming up with his "La La Land" star Ryan Gosling. The Canadian actor plays astronaut Neil Armstrong in the years leading up to 1969, when he became the first man to walk on the moon. Australian Jennifer Kent is the solitary woman gunning for the Golden Lion with "The Nightingale". The last time a woman took Venice's top prize was 43 years ago when German director Margarethe von Trotta won with "Marianne and Juliane". — AFP

Thousands pay respects as Aretha Franklin lies in state

Fans paid their respects en masse Tuesday to US music icon and "Queen of Soul" Aretha Franklin, whose body lay in a golden casket while dressed in a red dress and matching stilettos in Detroit. The 76-year-old singer, beloved by millions around the world, died of cancer on August 16, closing the curtain on a glittering six-decade career that made her one of America's most celebrated artists. Thousands of people are expected to bid her farewell at the Charles H. Wright Museum for African American History on Tuesday and Wednesday, at her father's New Bethel Baptist Church on Thursday and a star-studded funeral on Friday.

the street and around the block, swaying to Franklin tracks or breaking into song and dance, with a steady flow trickling inside.

'On a cloud'
"Thank you Queen, thank you for all your years of loving us," said one woman, dressed in a floral romper suit dancing with her friends outside the venue to Franklin's 1985 hit "Freeway of Love." In the marble museum, people gazed at the musical icon, resplendent in her finery. Outside, they posed for snapshots next to her cream hearse. CNN reported that it was the same 1940 Cadillac LaSalle that transported the body of her father and of civil rights icon Rosa

Parks in 2005. Franklin is resting in a 24-karat casket, the network added. A group of five friends told AFP they drove from Chicago, dressed alike in white pants and blue Franklin T-shirts to pay their respects despite heavy rain sweeping parts of the Midwest. "It was beautiful, like she's laying on a cloud," said Clemy Robinson. "You can only look that restful and peaceful when you're at home with the lord, so I know where she is and she's in a better place and she looks wonderful," added one of her friends, Kim Harrison. Franklin won 18 Grammy awards and provided a soundtrack to the civil rights movement, singing to raise money for the cause and uplifting activists with her phenomenal voice and upbeat anthems. Her signature song, "Respect"—recorded as a feminist anthem—became a rallying cry as African Americans rose up nationwide in the 1960s to fight peacefully for racial equality.

Born in the segregated American South in Memphis, Tennessee, she moved to Detroit with her prominent Baptist preacher and civil rights activist father. Martin Luther King Jr was a family friend. She sang at his funeral after he was assassinated in 1968, as well as at the inaugurations of presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, the country's first African American head of state. She was awarded America's highest civilian honor by president George W. Bush and tops Rolling Stone's list of the 100 greatest singers of all time. — AFP



The viewing of Aretha Franklin's casket is seen at the Charles H Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit, Michigan. — AFP photos



Mourners line up to view the body of Aretha Franklin at the Charles H Wright Museum of African American History.



Fans of Aretha Franklin attend a viewing for the soul music legend at the Charles H Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit, Michigan.

Lifestyle | Features



Iraqi disabled youths walk outside a gym in the capital Baghdad. — AFP photos



Iraqi disabled youths line up during a training session at a gym.

IRAQ'S 'SPECIAL ATHLETES' GO FOR GOLD

With two gold medals to her name already, Iraqi badminton player Heba Asghar is more determined than ever as she prepares for next year's Special Olympics for athletes with intellectual disabilities. Still only aged 23 now, Asghar won a gold at the 2015 games in the United States as well as in Greece four years earlier. And in March, Asghar, who has Down syndrome, will fly the Iraqi flag again at the Special Olympics World Games 2019 in Abu Dhabi. Flicking through magazines featuring her daughter's feats, Asghar's mother, Souad, said that sport had marked a turning point. "She was never stable, she was aggressive with family members," she said, at their Baghdad home.

Then at the age of 10, Asghar started playing table tennis, winning a silver medal at the Special Olympics in Japan, before finding her niche in badminton. "She worked hard and thanks to that, she overcame her disability, she became a champion and that made her proud," her mother said. Her 2015 gold medal victory at the Los Angeles summer Special Olympics earned her a monthly \$600 (514-euro) grant from the Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sports. Smiling next to a table covered in her awards and newspaper clippings of her achievements, she dreams of more medals to come.

Scant support

At a sports hall for disabled athletes in the Iraqi capital, 17-year-old Dhaher Wadi is also preparing for the March 2019 tournament in Abu Dhabi. At the last regional Special Olympics in March this year, held in the United Arab Emirates capital too, Dhaher, who also has Down syndrome, won gold in the 25-metre sprint and silver in the 50 meters. "When Dhaher started three years ago, she did swimming, but finally she found herself in the sprint," said her father, Ali. "We hope she picks up the same medals in the World Games, and we will do everything to make her get there," he said. The 60-year-old has retired from the health sector and now looks after his daughter, who goes to a publicly funded school.



An Iraqi disabled youth gestures during a training session at a gym in the capital Baghdad.



Iraqi badminton player Heba Asghar arranges her medals as her mother stands next to her.



Iraqi badminton player Heba Asghar poses with her medals.

But, he said, "unlike most other countries where young people with mental disabilities are taken care of, nothing is provided for them (in Iraq), not even specialized vehicles to take them to training". Asghar's father, also aged 60, said years of conflict and the country's attempts at rebuilding had squeezed public funds and left the disabled with scant financial support. There are no official figures for the number of people with Down syndrome in Iraq, and "no medicines are available" for the genetic disorder, said Salah Asghar.

'You are a champion'

Nevertheless, Iraqi athletes came home with a total of 52 medals at this year's regional Special Olympics, which gathered competitors from 31 nations. As well as badminton, Iraqi competitors also won medals in swimming, basketball, athletics and bocce, a game similar to bowls. Essam Al-Khafaji, who set up the Iraqi team, said the athletes were "determined to learn and to go beyond their disability". After regular training, "they grow more independent", said Khafaji. On all the walls of the sports centre where the athletes train, the team's slogan reads: "Let me win, and if I don't, let me show my courage in trying."

Among those training for the Special Olympics is Ali, a 24-year-old also living in Baghdad who has twice undergone heart surgery. At the last regional Special games in March, he won a gold medal in bocce. Now, with a smile permanently on his face even if he has difficulty in expressing himself, Ali is aiming for more success at the 2019 Special Olympics, at which some 7,000 athletes from 177 countries are to compete in 24 disciplines. Hussein Ali, 20, who won a gold in athletics in Abu Dhabi, is proud of his achievement. "My mother and my father helped me become a champion," he said.



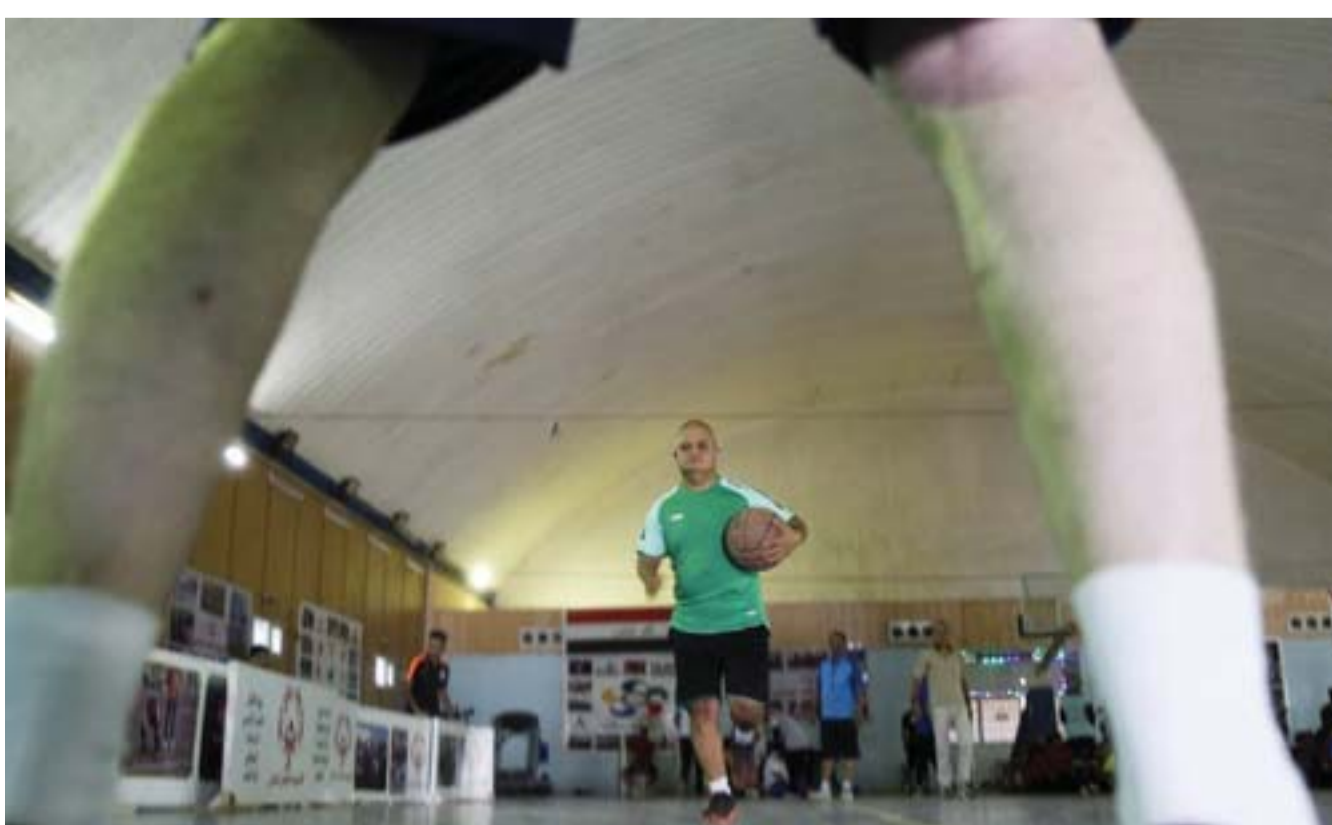
An Iraqi girl plays table tennis during a training session.



An Iraqi coach helps a disabled youth during a training session.

Everyday hurdles
However, despite the impressive haul of medals, the greatest challenge for the champions, like other mentally disabled people in Iraq, often remains at home and in everyday life. "There are people who help young people with mental disabilities and support them, but unfortunately in Iraqi society there are also those who don't understand," Asghar's

mother told AFP. Studies show that a large majority of Iraqis are opposed to children with Down syndrome attending public schools. "Often, when we go out with Heba, people move out of her way as if they're afraid. So she asks me, a bit naively, 'Why do they do that?'" said Souad. "Sometimes she cries, but I say to her: 'You are better than them, you are a champion.'" — AFP



An Iraqi disabled youth runs with a basketball during a training session at a gym.

UK royal Meghan's wedding dress to go on display



The gown worn by Meghan Markle at her wedding to Britain's Prince Harry will go on display later this year at Windsor Castle where their lavish marriage ceremony took place in May. The former US actress, now the Duchess of Sussex, wore a sleek, silk dress designed by Givenchy's Artistic Director Clare Waight Keller at her star-studded

wedding to Queen Elizabeth's grandson. The exhibition at Windsor, which begins on Oct 26 and runs until January, will also feature her five-metre long veil, embroidered with the flora of the 53 countries of the Commonwealth, and a diamond and platinum bandeau tiara, lent to her by the queen which has never been publicly displayed before. — Reuters

Classifieds

Thursday, August 30, 2018



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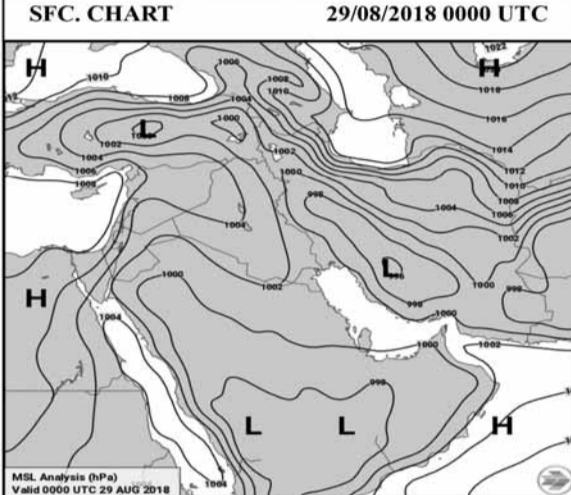
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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Very hot with light to moderate freshening later on north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 40 km/h with a chance for rising dust over open areas.

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 29/08/2018 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	47 °C	35 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	48 °C	35 °C			
ABDALY	48 °C	30 °C			
BUBYAN	---- °C	---- °C			
JAHRA	49 °C	36 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	46 °C	31 °C			
SALMIYAH	44 °C	34 °C			
AHMADI	42 °C	35 °C			
NUWAISIB	45 °C	31 °C			
WAFRA	48 °C	31 °C			
SALMY	47 °C	31 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	MAX. Temp.	MIN. Temp.	Wind Direction	Wind Speed
Thursday	08/30	Hot	46 °C	33 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 30 km/h
Friday	08/31	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas and some high clouds will appear	46 °C	30 °C	NW-SE	08 - 28 km/h
Saturday	09/01	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas	46 °C	30 °C	NW-SE	15 - 35 km/h
Sunday	09/02	Hot and Humid specially over coastal areas with a chance for carried dust over open areas	43 °C	31 °C	NW-SE	15 - 35 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:02
Sunrise	05:24
Zuhr	11:49
Asr	15:23
Sunset	18:14
Isha	19:34

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	47 °C
MIN. Temp.	32 °C
MAX. RH	24 %
MIN. RH	09 %
MAX. Wind	N 36 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

ACCOMMODATION CHANGE OF NAME

For Filipino only
Farwaniya block 1, near gulfmart. Available 25 of August. Contact 94418396 or 69972330 29-8-2018

I, Arul Susai Raj Dass, Passport No: N-1651409, Civil ID 254032601601, changed my name to Abdul Majid Dass. (C 5414) 29-8-2018

EMERGENCY 112
Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is **1889988**

For labor-related inquiries and complaints: Call MSAL **HOTLINE 128**

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw) DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Thursday 30/8/2018				Departure Flights on Thursday 30/8/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	405	Sohag	00:05	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
FEQ	441	Asyut	00:05	MSC	502	Alexandria	00:10
KAC	772	Istanbul	00:15	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
THY	504	Beirut	00:50	MSR	2615	Cairo	00:30
KAC	102	London	00:50	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	FEQ	344	Sohag	01:05
SAI	441	Lahore	00:50	MSC	406	Sohag	01:05
WAN	976D	Baku	00:55	JZR	528	Asyut	01:05
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	THY	773	Istanbul	01:45
JZR	539	Cairo	01:25	WAN	133	Doha	01:45
RJA	642	Amman	01:35	SAI	442	Lahore	01:50
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	DLH	625	Frankfurt	01:50
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	KAC	502	Luxor	01:55
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	677	Dubai	02:00
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00	KAC	417	Manila	02:00
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:45
JZR	267	Beirut	02:10	THY	765	Istanbul	02:50
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	AXB	396	Kozhikode	02:55
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	304	Istanbul	02:55
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	03:05
THY	768	Istanbul	02:40	KAC	412	Bangkok	03:10
JZR	533D	Alexandria	02:50	KNE	529	Jeddah	03:10
KAC	418	Manila	03:05	KAC	562	Amman	03:20
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	OMA	645	Muscat	03:20
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KAC	502	Beirut	03:20
MSR	606	Luxor	03:05	ABY	127	Sharjah	03:20
MSC	403	Asyut	03:05	KAC	857	Dubai	03:20
RBG	215	Sohag	03:05	SAW	705	New York	03:20
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10	KNE	531	Jeddah	03:20
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	JZR	535	Cairo	03:20
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:25	MSR	575	Sharm el-Sheikh	03:20
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	QTR	1072	Doha	03:30
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	FDB	051	Dubai	04:00
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	NIA	361	Alexandria	04:00
KAC	152	Istanbul	04:15	JZR	125	Bahrain	04:00
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30	KAC	542	Cairo	04:00
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	SVA	510	Riyadh	04:30
THY	1414	TZX	05:05	GFA	215	Bahrain	04:30
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	JZR	145	Doha	04:30
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	JZR	177	Dubai	04:30
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15	JZR	777	Jeddah	04:30
WAN	134	Doha	05:15	QTR	1080	Doha	04:30
KAC	544	Cairo	05:20	JZR	483	Istanbul	04:30
JZR	603	Mumbai	05:25	MSR	620	Cairo	04:30
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	WAN	966	Tbilisi	04:30
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	RJA	640	Amman	04:30
JZR	561	Sohag	05:55	GFA	217	Bahrain	04:30
KAC	362	Colombo	06:00	UAE	875	Dubai	04:30
BAW	157	London	06:10	FDB	063	Dubai	04:30
JZR	123	Bahrain	06:15	KAC	744	Dammam	04:30
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:25	ABY	123	Sharjah	04:30
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:25	KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	04:30
QTR	8511	Doha	06:35	KAC	156	Istanbul	04:30
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	NIA	161	Cairo	04:30
KAC	678	Dubai	06:45	KAC	776	Riyadh	04:30
RBG	539	Alexandria	06:50	RBG	555	Alexandria	04:30
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	KAC	674	Dubai	04:30
JZR	605	Ahmedabad	07:05	FDB	057	Dubai	04:30
JZR	143	Doha	07:20	KAC	178	Vienna	04:30
JZR	529	Asyut	07:30	KAC	174	Munich	04:30
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:45	KAC	616	Bahrain	04:30
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	JZR	189	Dubai	04:30
KAC	358	Kochi	08:00	OMA	647	Frankfurt	04:30
KAC	384	Delhi	08:05	KNE	381	Taif	04:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	MEA	402	Beirut	04:30
IRA	673	Ahwaz	08:35	KAC	620	Doha	04:30
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	KAC	692	Muscat	04:30
JZR	503	Luxor	09:00	QTR	1088	Doha	04:30
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KLM	533	Alexandria	04:30
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:05	JZR	445	Amsterdam	04:30
SAW	703	Damascus	09:30	UAE	859	Dubai	04:30
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	ALK	229	Colombo	04:30
FDB	052	Dubai	09:40	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	04:30
IAW	157	Al Najaf	10:00	KAC	168	Paris	04:30
SYR	341	Damascus	10:00	THY	764	Istanbul	04:30
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	676	Dubai	04:30
THY	1516	TZX	10:05	KAC	564	Amman	04:30
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	GFA	219	Bahrain	04:30
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	WAN	884	Sarajevo	04:30
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	QTR	1082	Doha	04:30
JZR	165	Dubai	11:45	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	04:30
JZR	541	Cairo	11:45	KAC	786	Jeddah	04:30
AHY	5101	Baku	11:55	DLH	8456	Frankfurt	04:30
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:20	KAC	933	Chennai/Ahmedabad	04:30
SAW	709	Latakia	12:30	BBC	043	Dhaka	04:30
MSC	411	Asyut	12:30	JZR	185	Dubai	04:30
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	JAI	574	Mumbai	04:30
THY	766	Istanbul	12:45	TRQ	230	KRT	04:30
ABY	121	Sharjah	12:55	WAN	136	Doha	04:30
JZR	239	Amman	13:00	MSR	2614	Cairo	04:30
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	FDB	071	Dubai	04:30
JZR	357	Mashhad	13:05	JZR	241	Amman	04:30

UN schools for Palestinians reopen despite US funds cut

GAZA CITY: Tens of thousands of Palestinian children returned to United Nations-run schools yesterday after the summer holidays, though major US cuts have thrown their funding into jeopardy beyond next month. Children wearing chequered uniforms and backpacks thronged schools across the Palestinian territories for the first classes of the new school year, AFP correspondents reported. The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) said all 711 schools it runs for 526,000 pupils in Gaza and the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria would reopen in the next few days despite the \$300 million US funding cut.

Fears raised by UN chief Antonio Guterres that the schools might not be able to reopen at all have failed to materialize, but UNRWA warned it might still be forced to close them again in a month if additional new funding is not found. "At the moment, we do not have enough money to keep the schools open after the end of September," UNRWA spokesman Chris Guinness told AFP. "At the end of September, UNRWA will be running on empty for all its services, including schools and medical facilities."

In 2017, the United States, which is traditionally the largest single donor to UNRWA, contributed more than \$360 million. But so far this year, it has given just \$60 million following President Donald Trump's decision to withhold aid to the Palestinians. Parents expressed deep concern about the uncertainty hanging over their children's education. "We are afraid of the schools closing," Soha Abu Hasara told AFP in Gaza City as she dropped her children off for their first day back in the classroom. Pupil Hala Muhanna, 11, said her "message to the world is that no-one has the right to close schools". "Even if they take away our schools we will bring them back," she said.

UNRWA was formed to support 750,000 Palestinians who fled or were expelled from their homes during the 1948

war that accompanied the creation of Israel. With their descendants, they now number more than five million across the Middle East. The United States has sought to use its aid to pressure the Palestinian government into resuming dealing with it after a nearly nine-month rupture. The Palestinians have boycotted the US administration since it recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital last December. Last week, Trump cancelled a further \$200 million in aid projects for Palestinians not funded through UNRWA. Senior Palestinian official Hanan Ashrawi accused the US president of "cheap blackmail".

Israel and the United States accuse UNRWA of perpetuating the Israel-Palestine crisis by maintaining the idea of the right of return - that Palestinians will be able to return to the homes from which they fled. Palestinians see the US embassy move and efforts to change the mandate of UNRWA as attempts to strip them of their rights. On Tuesday, Nikki Haley, US ambassador to the United Nations, said her country would want to "look at right of return".

She cited reports that UNRWA's school curriculum included unjust criticism of Israel and the United States, charges which the agency rejects. "UNRWA can stay there, and we will be a donor if it reforms what it does. If it goes and makes sure that they're not doing those teachings in textbooks, if they actually change the number of refugees to an accurate account, we will look back at partnering them."

Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas said yesterday that the US embassy move and pressure over the right of return were having a "devastating effect" on the peace process. Guinness pointed out that the US could not force the agency to change its mandate, as that would need a vote at the United Nations General Assembly. "If one member state decides to reduce our funds, that doesn't change our mandate, it just means we have less money to do it," he said. — AFP



NABLUS: Pupils and teachers gather in front of a school run by the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) in Balata refugee camp in the occupied West Bank yesterday, on the first day of classes after the summer holidays. — AFP

In Lebanon, Russia uses softer touch to win influence

ALEY, Lebanon: In a dimly-lit classroom in a Lebanese mountain town, students of all ages pore over Cyrillic workbooks and repeat carefully after their blonde instructor. "Privet. Kak dela?" - "Hello, how are you?" Moscow may have won influence in war-torn Syria through its blistering military intervention, but it is adopting a softer approach in neighboring Lebanon, where France and the US have held stronger sway. Whether through cultural outreach, planned business deals or traditional diplomacy, Russia appears to be trying to put down deep roots in the tiny Mediterranean country.

In her classroom at the Russian-Lebanese Cultural Center, nestled in the town of Aley, instructor Galina Pavlova says she hopes her native tongue will find more fans among Lebanese, who in addition to Arabic often speak French and English. "We don't want France and the United States to be the only ones present in Lebanon - Russia is a very important country too," she tells AFP.

The Aley center is one of three new such hubs to have opened in Lebanon this summer alone, established with the backing of Moscow's embassy in Beirut. "This expansion falls within the framework of a strategy aiming to strengthen Moscow's presence in the Middle East," says Imad Rizk, who heads the Isticharia Centre for Strategic and Communication Studies. Ties between Moscow and Beirut intensified in the 1950s with the rise of Lebanon's left, before fading after the collapse of the Soviet Union. "Lebanon, still strongly associated to the West, is one certainly symbolic piece of (Russia's) broader desire to remodel the world governance," says Julien Nocetti, a specialist in Russia's role in the Middle East. The aim, he says, is to hasten "the coming of a post-West world order."

As new cultural centers open, Moscow is also boosting to 60 the number of university scholarships it gives to Lebanese students this year and deepening its economic ties to Beirut. It nearly doubled the value of its exports to the tiny country from \$423 million in 2012 to \$770 million last year, according to Lebanese customs data. The two countries are

in talks over potentially opening a "green corridor" for Lebanese agricultural exports to Russia.

And Novatek, one of Russia's largest natural gas producers, is part of a consortium expected to begin exploring for gas off Lebanon's coast next year. Lebanon's top diplomat Gebran Bassil travelled to Moscow recently, encouraging more Russian companies to take part in a new upcoming tender for further exploration. Beirut is relying on external help to revive its struggling economy, and in April a donor conference raised \$11 billion in low-interest loans and aid for the state to improve basic public services.

"We hope to make the Russians participate in the vast project to modernize Lebanese infrastructure," says Jacques Sarraf, who heads the Lebanese-Russian Business Council. In addition, Sarraf says, "Russian businesses intend to put down roots in Lebanon's north ahead of Syria's reconstruction." But the process is complicated, with both Syrian and Russian firms facing European and American sanctions that have left Lebanese banks "reluctant to deal with their Russian counterparts," he adds. Lebanon's banking sector is already being carefully monitored by the US Treasury, which is seeking to weaken the powerful Iran-backed Hezbollah movement by targeting "suspicious" banking.

Lebanon's growth has slowed to a crawl in recent years as political divisions have paralyzed the government and services have been strained by the arrival of 1.5 million Syrian refugees. Moscow is looking to lend a helping hand there too, launching an initiative in July to repatriate refugees from around the region. The proposal has been welcomed by the political class in Lebanon, which hosts some 900,000 refugees who could return to Syria, according to President Michel Aoun, who is close to both Damascus and Hezbollah.

Moscow has also proposed a billion-dollar defense contract to arm Lebanese troops, but Beirut pulled out at the "last minute", says Sarraf. Such a deal could have jeopardized the sizeable US support Beirut receives from the US, including the \$1.7 billion it has received in military aid since 2006. Aram Nerguizian, co-director of the Carnegie Middle East Center's department on civil-military relations, says Lebanon's ties to the US were at stake. "If Lebanon accepts or even insinuates an intent to accept a Russian credit line for the purchase of Russian defense articles, it will have significant - and potentially irreversible - geopolitical consequences on Lebanon's existing bilateral and multilateral commitments and partnerships, especially ties to the US," he said. — AFP



ALEY, Lebanon: A Russian dance teacher gives a ballet class to girls in the Russian-Lebanese cultural center in this city east of Beirut on July 5, 2018. — AFP

Trump warns of violent change if...

Continued from Page 1

Trump meanwhile revealed that his 12-year-old son Barron was a keen football fan while describing the World Cup as "maybe the biggest sporting event in the world". "Soccer is a game, I guess you call it football," Trump added. "But over here, maybe at some point they'll change the name, I'm not sure. But we'll see. It's working very well either way."

Trump meanwhile noted that he would be out of office

by the time the 48-team tournament arrived in North America. "I won't be here. Maybe they'll extend the term," he said to laughter, as he gestured towards media. "Because I know they'd love to see that. If they don't extend the term, the media is going to be very boring, they'll all be out of business I guess."

Infantino meanwhile said FIFA was confident of helping produce a "fantastic" tournament in 2026, before presenting Trump with two soccer jerseys - one bearing his name and the number 26 (referring to 2026) and other with the number 45, denoting Trump's status as the 45th US president. Infantino then handed Trump a pair of referee's yellow and red cards, before explaining their meaning. Trump duly seized the red card and directed it at members of the press. "So this will be useful, I don't know, that's for your next media session," Infantino joked. — AFP

Khamenei ready to abandon nuke deal if needed

TEHRAN: Iran's supreme leader warned yesterday the country could abandon its nuclear deal with world powers if it no longer served its interests, even as economic and political pressure mounted on the government. "Naturally, if we reach the conclusion that (the nuclear deal) is no longer maintaining our national interests, we will put it aside," Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said in a meeting with the cabinet, according to his website. He said Iran must not "pin its hopes" on Europe, despite European efforts to salvage the nuclear deal following the withdrawal of the United States.

The government of President Hassan Rouhani has been battered by the return of US sanctions, which has triggered a rapid departure of foreign firms and ended his hopes of attracting large-scale investment. His political enemies are circling, with parliament announcing that two more of his ministers could be impeached in the coming days. The labor and economy ministers have already been sacked by parliament this month and motions have been accepted to vote on impeaching his industries and education ministers in the coming days.

Khamenei insisted the political tumult was a sign of the strength of Iran's democracy. He praised the tough questioning Rouhani received in parliament on Tuesday as "a glorious show of the power of the Islamic republic and the self-confidence of officials". Differences between officials are "natural", he added, though he said they should not be covered by the media "because the people would become worried". Tuesday's grilling in parliament was the first for Rouhani in five years as president, and lawmakers slammed his handling of five economic issues, ranging from unemployment to the collapsing value of the currency. In voting at the end of the session, they declared they



TEHRAN: Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (left) speaks during a government meeting yesterday. To his right is Iran's President Hassan Rouhani. — AFP

were unsatisfied with four of his responses.

Under parliamentary rules, the issues could then have been referred for judicial review, but parliament speaker Ali Larijani - a close ally of Rouhani - said yesterday there were no legal grounds for doing so. Parliament can theoretically impeach Rouhani, but he has the protection of Khamenei, who has previously said removing the president would "play into the hands of the enemy". Instead, Khamenei called on officials to work together "day and night" to resolve the country's economic problems.

Iran's currency has lost around half its value since the US announced it was withdrawing from the nuclear deal in May, and further pain is expected when sanctions on its crucial oil sector are reimposed in November. Conservative opponents of Rouhani, who have long opposed his outreach to the West, are smelling blood. Next in their sights is his minister of industry, mines and business, Mohammad Shariatmadari, who is accused of failing to prevent high inflation, particularly in the car industry. A motion was also filed yesterday to vote on the impeachment of Education Minister Mohammad Bathaei, over a series of issues linked to school budgets, the curriculum and alleged mismanagement. — AFP

Saudi women grow ventures...

Continued from Page 1

The training was funded in part by Madinah-based Taibah University, which launched a competition with support from the Saudi consulate in New York. During their two-week stay, the women fine-tuned their business pitches, built up their strategic networks and participated in workshops on negotiations, sales and vulnerability. They got advice from large companies like Amazon Web Services, other startups and consultants such as Deloitte. The program ended with the women presenting their fledgling ventures to some 150 investors, philanthropists, as well as international organization and embassy representatives.

Despite the optimism, numerous challenges remain in Saudi Arabia. Topping the list is the kingdom's guardianship system that prevents women from carrying out major decisions - including traveling abroad, getting married or divorced and signing contracts -

unless they get permission from a male guardian like a husband, father or brother. "In a country like Saudi Arabia especially that has historically not been open to women getting access to these kind of opportunities, the fact that they were willing to do this program with all-women founders was very welcome," said Halcyon director of policy and international programs Josh Mandell. "We expect these women to return to Saudi Arabia not just as future leaders for their country and their region, but to start successful ventures."

The women got workspace and housing at one of Washington's most illustrious addresses in the tony Georgetown neighborhood, Halcyon House, a sprawling red brick mansion with a sweeping view of the Potomac River. Since its inception in 2014, Halcyon Incubator's full-time fellowship has supported 61 ventures it says have raised more than \$56 million and created some 500 jobs positively impacting 675,000 people.

Last year, Halcyon became an independent nonprofit organization that also encompasses public policy and the arts. It was launched by Kate Goodall and Japanese American biochemist Sachiko Kuno, a co-founder of Sucampo Pharmaceuticals and a driving force behind the Washington-based, female-led investment fund WE Capital. — AFP

Demonetization 'a flop'; rupee...

Continued from Page 1

"Let's not enter into debate on this issue." The RBI also highlighted the upside risks to inflation from global crude oil prices strengthening expectations of another rate hike. India's July inflation rose an annual 4.17 percent, the ninth straight month in which it surpassed the RBI's medium-term target of 4 percent. The upside risks to inflation in the rest of the year warrant a "continuous vigil and a readiness to head off those pressures from getting generalized", the central bank added.

Meanwhile, the Indian rupee hit fresh lows against the dollar yesterday as emerging market currencies

continue to be sold off. The under-pressure currency in Asia's third-largest economy slid to 70.50 to the greenback in late morning trade, a record low. The rupee has been steadily falling throughout 2018 after starting the year at 63.67. Earlier this month it crossed 70 for the first time as India was buffeted by the turbulence of the Turkish financial crisis. The rupee was not alone, with the currencies of other emerging economies heavily dependent on dollar-dominated foreign capital like Brazil, South Africa, Argentina and Brazil also slipping in August.

The rupee slump is widening India's current account deficit, when the value of imports exceeds that of exports. India is a massive net importer of oil, securing more than two-thirds of its needs from abroad. High oil prices have been squeezing the rupee, making it less appealing to investors, analysts say. India's central bank has raised interest rates this year in part to help increase the value of the rupee. — Agencies

Sports

Rendon's 9th inning HR ruins Nola's gem as Nats stun Phils

Braves snap Rays' eight-game win streak

WASHINGTON: Anthony Rendon hit a two-run homer in the three-run, ninth-inning rally to help the visiting Washington Nationals defeat the Philadelphia Phillies 5-4 Tuesday night at Citizens Bank Park. Ryan Zimmerman had three doubles and a stolen base for the Nationals, who have won the first two games of the three-game series. The Phillies, who have lost eight of their last 10, had a two-run homer from Jorge Alfaro and a solo shot from Odubel Herrera. Tommy Hunter, who pitched a perfect eighth, walked Bryce Harper to start the ninth. He was replaced by Pat Neshek (1-1), who allowed Rendon's 17th homer of the season to give the Nationals the lead. Phillies starter Aaron Nola allowed two runs (one earned), four hits and two walks while striking out eight in seven innings in a hard-luck no-decision. Nationals ace Max Scherzer pitched five innings before being removed for a pinch hitter. He allowed three runs and four hits (two homers) and struck out five.

A'S 4, ASTROS 3

Nick Martini hit a tie-breaking double to center field in the ninth inning and Oakland evened its series with host Houston. In what amounted to a battle of the bullpens, the Athletics reigned supreme, getting 4 1/3 scoreless innings from right-handers Shawn Kelley, Fernando Rodney, Jeury's Familia (8-4), and Blake Treinen, who recorded his 33rd save with a perfect ninth. Oakland closed the gap in the American League West to two games in the loss column with the rubber match set for Wednesday. The Astros had their six-game winning streak snapped.

YANKEES 5, WHITE SOX 4

Pinch hitter Neil Walker homered in the bottom of the ninth for a walk-off win, one inning after Aaron Hicks tied the game with a two-run homer, as host New York overcame a four-run deficit to beat Chicago. Walker gave New York its seventh walk-off win when he ripped a first-pitch fastball from right-hander Dylan Covey (4-12) into the right-center-field seats. It was Walker's second career walk-off homer and fifth career walk-off hit-his second with the Yankees. Hicks and Miguel Andujar each smacked their 22nd home runs of the season for New York, helping the Yankees overcome a 4-0 deficit. Chicago saw its four-game winning streak stopped and lost for only the fourth time in its past 14 games.

RED SOX 8, MARLINS 7

Marlins shortstop JT Riddle's throwing error in the bottom of the ninth gave host Boston a wild 8-7 walk-off win over Miami. Riddle was trying to turn an inning-ending double play. He stepped on second for the second out of the inning, but a low throw to first spoiled his bid. Red Sox closer Craig Kimbrel (4-1), who blew a save chance in the top of the ninth, earned the win. The win snapped Boston's three-game losing streak. Boston, which trailed 6-4 in the eighth, is the only team in the majors without a four-game skid this year.

BRAVES 9, RAYS 5

Tyler Flowers signed a contract extension in the morning, then delivered a pinch-hit homer in the eighth inning later in the evening to help Atlanta to a win over visiting Tampa Bay, snapping the Rays' eight-game winning streak. Flowers agreed to a \$4 million contract for 2019 and an option for 2020. On the field, he came off the bench to club a two-run homer against ex-Brave Chaz Roe (1-3) as part of a four-run rally in the eighth. The homer, his sixth, just cleared the fence in left field. It was his first home run since Aug. 8. Atlanta extended its lead in the National League East to 4 1/2 games over the second-place Phillies.

Vettel aims for a triumphant Ferrari homecoming

MONZA: Sebastian Vettel can tighten the screw on Formula One leader Lewis Hamilton at Ferrari's home Italian Grand Prix this weekend and write a new entry in the record books. If he can deliver Ferrari's first Monza victory since 2010, Vettel will also equal British great Stirling Moss's unique achievement of winning at the 'Pista Magica' with three different F1 teams in the 1950s.

Vettel, 17 points behind Hamilton after a commanding win in Belgium last Sunday, has previously triumphed at Monza with Toro Rosso and Red Bull and will fancy his chances of the hat-trick at the super-fast track outside Milan. Spa showed Ferrari have the speed, even if Monza's low-drag characteristics make comparisons less clear-cut and could again favour Hamilton's Mercedes.

But Vettel is sounding confident. "We have a good car that seems to work everywhere," the four-times world champion said jubilantly at Spa. "Hopefully we can now carry that momentum and speed into the next race to Monza."

Mercedes have won in Italy for the past four years, with Hamilton on pole position ever since 2014 and triumphant four times in the last six years—his first coming with McLaren in 2012. Last year the Briton arrived at the circuit in the former royal park lagging Vettel by seven points and left with a three-point advantage in a turnaround that ultimately led to his fourth world title.

This season has been as hard-fought as any, with the two contenders each on five wins from 13 races and the advantage ebbing and flowing even if Spa suggested Ferrari might now have the upper hand.

"The next race, with this kind of performance they

GIANTS 1, DIAMONDBACKS 0

Gorkys Hernandez hit Jake Diekman's first pitch for a walk-off single in the ninth inning, giving host San Francisco a second straight win over first-place Arizona. The game began as a classic duel between Diamondbacks right-hander Clay Buchholz and Giants lefty Madison Bumgarner. The contest ended when San Francisco strung together a walk to Steven Duggar and singles by Nick Hundley and Hernandez with one out in the ninth to complete their ninth walk-off win of the season. The fourth-place Giants (67-67) got back to the .500 mark for the first time since 61-61 and moved within six games of first place in the National League West. The Diamondbacks (72-60) dropped into a tie for the division lead with the Colorado Rockies, who beat the Los Angeles Angels 3-2.

ORIOLES 12, BLUE JAYS 5

Tim Beckham hit a three-run homer and Craig Gentry added a two-run shot as Baltimore defeated visiting Toronto. Beckham's homer was the big blow in a four-run third inning that gave the Orioles an early 5-0 lead as Baltimore won consecutive games for the first time since July 28-29. Beckham, Gentry and Chris Davis all finished with three RBIs for Baltimore. Adam Jones went 4-for-5 with an RBI and two runs scored. Rookie lefty starter Josh Rogers (1-0) earned the win in his big league debut, giving up three runs on seven hits in five innings. It was the first time the Orioles started a left-hander this season. Toronto starter Thomas Pannone (1-1) gave up seven runs on nine hits in 3 1/3 innings and took his first major league loss.

INDIANS 8, TWINS 1

Carlos Carrasco tossed 7 2/3 shutout innings and Cleveland's offense provided him more than enough support in a blowout home win for the Indians over Minnesota. Overcoming a poor start in Boston that saw him get pulled after giving up five runs in less than four innings, Carrasco (16-7) was a much different pitcher against the Twins, striking out 11 batters and allowing just four hits before giving way to reliever Brad Hand with two outs in the eighth. Francisco Lindor went 4-for-5 with two runs, Jose Ramirez went 2-for-4 with three RBIs and Edwin Encarnacion went 2-for-3 with two RBIs to lead Cleveland. Jake Cave broke the shutout for Minnesota when he hit a solo home run off of Indians reliever Dan Otero in the ninth.

CARDINALS 5, PIRATES 2

Jose Martinez and Tyler O'Neill hit two-run homers to boost host St. Louis past Pittsburgh. Greg Garcia added an RBI single for the Cardinals, who have won six of seven and kept hold of the top National League wild-card spot. Colin Moran hit an RBI single for Pittsburgh, which has lost six of seven. It was Mike Shildt's first win as the full-time St. Louis manager after he went 26-12 as the interim boss following the firing of Mike Matheny. Cardinals starter Jack Flaherty (8-6) gave up one run and four hits in seven innings, with five strikeouts and no walks. The rookie right-hander is 4-0 with a 1.13 ERA in his past five starts.

REDS 9, BREWERS 7

Jose Peraza went 4-for-5 with a homer and Scooter Gennett tormented his former team with his NL-leading 16th three-hit game of the season as Cincinnati beat visiting Milwaukee. The Reds jumped on Brewers starter Junior Guerra (6-9) from the get-go as the first four batters hit safely, including a Peraza two-run homer, and Cincinnati brought nine men to the plate in a four-run inning. The top four in the Reds' order went 11-for-17, scoring eight of their nine runs. Brewers outfielder Christian Yelich hit a pair of homers to drive in five runs for Milwaukee. The home runs gave Yelich 25



Sebastian Vettel

have on straights, we might struggle to match them there," Hamilton said at Spa. Mercedes boss Toto Wolf, who recognised his car had deficits, felt the jury was still out on that.

"Spa was always a bit of a tricky one for us in the past as well," he told reporters. "Monza was a good one." "So I am very curious to see how it's going to go in Monza. Last year we were very much in control of the whole weekend and Ferrari had their worst weekend of the season, performance-wise, I'm not worried."

Red Bull will be looking more to Singapore, the race after, with Australian Daniel Ricciardo set to take a Renault engine upgrade that will incur engine penalties and leave him starting at the back. Dutch team mate Max Verstappen, third in Belgium, will be the main spoiler hoping to get amongst the Ferrari and Mercedes drivers to stir things up.

Force India will also be hoping for another strong performance after Sergio Perez and Esteban Ocon finished fifth and sixth at Spa in the team's first race under their new ownership.

Lance Stroll, the 19-year-old Canadian whose father leads the consortium that now owns Force India, started on the front row for Williams last year but there is no chance of a repeat of that feat this time. — Reuters



PHILADELPHIA: Starting pitcher Max Scherzer #31 of the Washington Nationals tags out Jorge Alfaro #38 of the Philadelphia Phillies in the second inning during a game at Citizens Bank Park on Tuesday in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. —AFP

for the season in his first career two-homer game.

ROCKIES 3, ANGELS 2

Carlos Gonzalez's first-inning home run gave Colorado an early lead, and starting pitcher Kyle Freeland and two relievers made it stand up in a victory over host Los Angeles. The victory coupled with the Diamondbacks' 1-0 loss at San Francisco allowed Colorado to tie Arizona for first place in the National League West. Freeland (12-7) gave up one run on five hits and two walks in six innings. Scott Oberg allowed one run in two innings, and Wade Davis struck out all three batters he faced in the ninth for his 36th save. Short on available starting pitchers, the Angels had to employ a "bullpen game," stringing together a series of relievers, starting with Noe Ramirez.

PADRES 2, MARINERS 1

Right-hander Jacob Nix pitched 8 1/3 scoreless innings before serving up a home run to Nelson Cruz but host San Diego hung on to defeat Seattle. The 22-year-old Nix, who was the Padres third-round pick in the 2015 draft, entered the game with a 1-2 record and a 6.17 earned run average. He allowed eight hits with no walks or strikeouts while throwing 79 pitches with 59 going for strikes. Longtime Mariners ace Felix Hernandez (8-12) finished with nine strikeouts in allowing two runs on four hits over seven innings.

DODGERS 8, RANGERS 4

Manny Machado drove in four runs, and Brian Dozier hit a home run as visiting Los Angeles earned an interleague victory over Texas Rangers. Machado has RBIs in five of his last seven games, including multiple RBIs in three consecutive contests. The Dodgers won for the fourth straight time after getting swept in a three-game series by the St. Louis Cardinals last week. After trailing by 4 1/2 games in the National League West at the start of play Friday, the Dodgers are now

one game behind the teams tied for the division lead, the Arizona Diamondbacks and Colorado Rockies. The Rangers lost their third consecutive game, all to NL West opponents.

ROYALS 6, TIGERS 2

Jakob Junis recorded the first complete-game victory of his career and Hunter Dozier drove in two runs, leading host Kansas City to victory over Detroit. Junis (7-12) gave up two runs on six hits and didn't issue a walk while striking out seven. He tamed the Tigers' attack on just 104 pitches. It was just Junis' second victory since May 18. Four of his victories this season have come at the Tigers' expense. Adalberto Mondesi hit his fifth homer of the season, while Alex Gordon scored twice. Whit Merrifield and Salvador Perez each had two hits and scored a run for Kansas City, which had lost six of its previous eight games. JaCoby Jones, just activated from the disabled list, blasted his ninth homer for Detroit.

METS 1, CUBS 1 (SUSPENDED, 10TH INNING)

Jacob deGrom continued to build his National League Cy Young Award case, but he won't factor into the decision as the game between New York and host Chicago was suspended after heavy thunderstorms arrived two pitches into the top of the 10th. The Cubs' Steve Cishek fell behind 2-0 against Mets left fielder Michael Conforto when the storms arrived and forced the suspension a little less than an hour later. The game is scheduled to resume at 1 p.m. EDT Wednesday, with the series finale to be played 45 minutes after the conclusion of the suspended game. DeGrom gave up one run on eight hits and one walk while striking out 10 over eight innings in lowering his major-league-leading ERA from 1.71 to 1.68. Cubs starter Cole Hamels continued his resurgence by giving up four hits and three walks while striking out eight over five scoreless innings. — Reuters

VIVA sponsors Kuwait Football Association and the League



KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, announced its sponsorship for the Kuwait Football Association (KFA) and all its soccer tournaments for the season 2018/2019, after winning the tender.

The official partnership announcement took place at VIVA's Headquarters at Olympia Tower, in presence of the President of KFA Sheikh Ahmed Al-Yousef Al-Sabah and VIVA's CEO Eng. Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Badran, and executives from both parties.

On this occasion, Al-Yousef commented: "We are proud of this partnership with one of the leading com-

panies in Kuwait and the region in Telecommunications domain. We are keen to move the wheel of local sports tournaments and spread the spirit of challenge among all the Kuwaiti teams with VIVA's support."

On his part, Al-Badran commented: "Since the inception, VIVA has given the sport and youth sector a special attention due to its positive impact on the nurture of youth and society. This sponsorship is a continuous cooperation with KFA since 2011. We will ensure the success of the coming soccer league through our professional team to revive the glories engraved on the golden record of the KFA."



Vikas makes history for India as ugly scenes mar Asiad boxing

Philippines' Eumar Marcial breezed to a unanimous points decision over S Korea's Kim Jin-jea

SNIPPETS



JAKARTA: Krishan Vikas made history yesterday when he became the first Indian to win three Asian Games boxing medals, but ugly scenes erupted after an Iraqi lost a split decision. Bantamweight Jaafar Al Sudani's coach and corner were warned about their behaviour by the International Boxing Association (IBA) after "unacceptable" protests which led to a supporter leaping barriers into the Jakarta International Expo arena and scuffling with security staff.

Local favourite Sunan Agung Amoragam and Iraq's Jaafar Al Sudani had gone toe-to-toe for three pulsating rounds in their bantamweight quarter-final before the Indonesian edged it 4-1 on the five judges' cards. "It is unacceptable. We have to be good sportsmen and accept the decision of the judges," AIBA executive director Tom Virgels told AFP after he had read the riot act to the Iraq team. Vikas, who won gold in 2010 and bronze four years ago, had to draw on all his experience after suffering a nasty cut over his right eye early in his middleweight quarter-final against China's Erbieke Tanglatihan.

"It's quite satisfying to come through that and be the first Indian to win three medals," said Vikas after being guaranteed at least a bronze. "Especially as I suffered a serious injury." The 26-year-old fought brilliantly on the counter for the last two rounds as he protected his rapidly swelling eye to edge the fight 3-2 on a split decision. Earlier India's women, without five-times world champ Mary Kom as she focuses on this year's world championships in Delhi, were left empty-handed for the first time since their sport was introduced in 2010. India's last woman standing, flyweight Sarjubala Devi, failed to emulate Kom—who won gold in the same 51kg division four years ago—as she lost on points to China's Chang Yuan. Vikas face a tough task in Friday's semi-final if he wants a shot at a second Asian Games gold.

KAZAKH THREAT

Lying in wait is powerhouse hitter Abil Khan Amankul of Kazakhstan, who produced the per-



JAKARTA: India's Krishan Vikas (red) fights with China's Touheta Erbieke Tanglatihan (blue) in their men's middle (75kg) quarter-final boxing match. — AFP

formance of the day to batter Taiwan's Kan Chia-wei. Kazakhstan were the dominant boxing force at the last Asian Games, winning six golds, two silver and two bronzes.

But they have punched below their weight in Jakarta with Amankul only one other Kazakh reaching the medal bouts. Filipino 2016 world youth champion Carlo Paalam, 20, pulled off the best win of his senior career with a 4-1 split decision over another Kazakh, Temirtas Zhussupov.

Light flyweight Paalam was delighted at securing at least a bronze at his first Asian Games. "Of course it went to a split decision," said Paalam. "He's number one in Kazakhstan. He has fought in the Olympics." Paalam will now face Amit, who goes by one name, for a place in the final after the 22-year-old became the first Indian fighter to

book a last-four berth by out-boxing North Korean Kim Jan Ryong.

Amit said he had drawn from the experience of veterans in the India camp such as light welterweight Manoj Kumar, 31, who has been to two Asian and two Olympic Games. "They motivate me and I learn from them," he said. "Manoj (Kumar) is my room-mate and he shows me how to go about it." India's remaining light welterweight, Dheeraj Rangi, suffered a unanimous points loss to Mongolia's Chinzorig Baatarsukh. Later the Philippines guaranteed themselves at least another bronze when middleweight Eumar Felix Marcial breezed to a unanimous points decision over South Korea's Kim Jin-jea. He will take on Uzbekistan's Israil Madrimov for the right to go for gold. — AFP

Precious gold glitters for Son, Bahraini claims sprint double

JAKARTA: South Korea's Son Heung-min moved just 90 minutes away from the gold medal that would spare him military service yesterday as Bahrain's Edidiong Odiong completed a rare sprint double at the Asian Games.

Tottenham Hotspur forward Son played a captain's role as Korea beat Vietnam 3-1 to reach the men's football final against Japan—his last chance for a title that would exempt from a career-threatening, 21-month military stint.

"We're close to winning gold, to making history, and we will fight for it," said the World Cup star, whose clever pass set up Hwang Ui-jo for South Korea's second goal.

Later, Nigerian-born Odiong became only the fourth woman to complete the 100 and 200 metres double when she won the half-lap race in 22.96 seconds, ahead of India's Dutee Chand on 23.20.

It meant a silver sprint double for Chand, who missed the last Games in a row over her hyperandrogenism, which

causes elevated testosterone levels and also affects South Africa's Olympic champion Caster Semenya.

"God has given me a lot of trouble since 2014. I suffered a lot. Nobody could have suffered so much," said Chand. "But I came back to give two medals to India—it will be a big celebration back home!"

Japan's Yuki Koike won the men's 200m in 20.23 after a photo-finish with Taiwan's Yang Chunhan, while Iran's Ehsan Hadadi won a record fourth title in the men's discus.

Shi Tingmao emulated Chinese diving greats Wu Minxia and Guo Jingjing with her fourth gold medal, in the synchronised 3m springboard, as China stayed perfect in the competition with four wins out of four. Vietnam interrupted Indonesia's clean sweep in the home-grown martial art of pencak silat when Nguyen Van Tri and Tran Dinh Nam won two of the total of 16 golds on offer.

And Uzbekistan's run in another debut martial art, kurash, was halted when Iran's Elyas Ali Akbari won the men's -81kg category. Elsewhere, Himalayan nation Nepal won its first medal with silver in the men's team cross-country paragliding—ending a 20-year podium drought stretching back to Bangkok 1998.

China maintained their supremacy on the medals table, reaching 102 golds ahead of Japan's 32, South Korea's 37 and 30 for hosts Indonesia. — AFP

Thai 'dwarf giant' boxer surpasses Mayweather record with 51st win

BANGKOK: Thai boxer Wanheng Menayothin grabbed his 51st straight victory yesterday in a long but lop-sided bout against a fighter from the Philippines, defending his WBC title and surpassing the undefeated record of boxing legend Floyd Mayweather Jr. The 105-pound minimumweight champion, nicknamed the "dwarf giant" for his compact build and heavy hitting style, won on points after a bruising 12 rounds against Pedro Taturan in the Thai city of Nakhon Sawan.

Wanheng started strong, landing several hard rights in the early rounds that seemed to daze Taturan and signal a quick route. But the 21-year-old southpaw from the Philippines lived up to his alias "Rattle Snake", enduring the abuse and biting back in the fifth round with a flurry of punches.

The brief comeback was put down as Wanheng kept his composure in the second half of the bout, delivering clean hits that left Taturan visibly tired. Wanheng, 32, shot to unlikely fighting fame in May when he dispatched Panamanian Leroy Estrada,

equaling "Money" Mayweather's win streak. All three judges scored in his favour after the final round. Wanheng's record-busting quest has generated buzz in Thailand and in boxing media outlets. But it has also been shrugged off as a statistical quirk because of the two very different careers of the famous, flashy American and the soft-spoken Thai.

Wanheng has fought undistinguished rivals on home turf while Mayweather defeated some of the sport's all-time greats including Manny Pacquiao and Oscar De La Hoya. Mayweather's fights also come with huge purses, like the \$100 million on offer when he was teased from retirement last year to take on MMA star Conor McGregor.

Wanheng's legal name is Chayaphon Moonsri but he also fights under the alias "Five-Star Grilled Chicken" due to a sponsorship deal with a Thai food company. His latest win brings him level with Mexican flyweight Ricardo Lopez, who retired with 51 wins, one draw and no losses. — AFP

HIGHLIGHTS - DAY 12 OF THE ASIAD GAMES

BARMAN, SINGH CONTINUE INDIA'S GOLD RUSH IN ATHLETICS

Swapna Barman became the first Indian woman to win the heptathlon event at the Asian Games. The 21-year-old ended the competition with 6026 points. China's Wang Qingling won silver with 5954 points, while Japan's Yuki Yamasaki took bronze with a tally of 5873 points. Earlier, Arpinder Singh became the first Indian in 48 years to win the men's triple jump event after clearing a distance of 16.77 metres in the final.

WITA SECURES INDONESIA'S 14th PENCAK SILAT GOLD

Wewey Wita claimed Indonesia's 14th gold medal in pencak silat from 16 available at the meet. The 25-year-old crushed Tran Thi Them of Vietnam 5-0 in the women's 50-55 kg final.

WOMEN SWIMMERS WIN CHINA'S 100TH GOLD MEDAL

China picked up their 100th gold medal of the Games when their team of women won the artistic swimming free routine final with a score of 186.9395. Japan took silver after scoring 182.8690, while North Korea were third with 170.8475.

VIETNAM ENDS INDONESIA PENCAK SILAT DOMINANCE

Vietnam's Van Tri Nguyen and Dinh Nam Tran won their respective men's pencak silat gold medal matches to break Indonesia's hold on the sport after the host nation won all 11 of the previous titles on offer. Nguyen beat Malaysian Mohd Khaizul Yaacob 5-0 in the class J 90-95kg final, while Tran beat Mohd Fauzi Khalid in the class F 70-75kg final.

IKE WINS JAPAN'S THIRD SKATEBOARDING GOLD

Japan's Keyaki Ike won the men's street final with a score of 31.1 to seal his nation's third gold medal out of four skateboarding events yesterday. Indonesian Sanggoe Darma Tanjung took silver and South Korean Eun Ju-won clinched bronze.

KIM BEATS ELBERT SIE TO CLINCH SOFT TENNIS GOLD

South Korean Kim Jin-woong beat home favourite Alexander Elbert Sie 4-2 to win gold in men's soft tennis. South Korea have dominated soft tennis since its introduction in 1994, winning 23 of the 36 gold medals on offer prior to this year's edition.

SASAOKA LEADS JAPAN TO SECOND SKATEBOARDING WIN

Japanese skateboarder Kensuke Sasaoka has won the men's park final with a score of 76.00, adding to his nation's triumph in the women's event earlier yesterday. Indonesian duo Jason Dennis Lijnzaat and Pevi Permana Putra took silver and bronze respectively with scores of 68.33 and 67.00.

CHINA CONTINUE GOLD RUSH WITH ATHLETICS TRIUMPHS

China opened the day with gold medals in the men's and women's 20km race walking events. Yang Jiayu won the women's race in a Games record time of one hour, 29 minutes and 15 seconds while compatriot Qieyang Shijie took silver and Japan's Kumiko Okada the bronze. China's Wang Kaihua and Jin Xiangqian grabbed gold and bronze medals in the men's race while Japan's Toshikazu Yamanishi finished second. — Reuters

Sports

Thai street kid skate champ 'Oat' sows seeds for Tokyo Olympics tilt

'They're athletes-and it's a real sport!'

PALEMBANG: From runaway street urchin eating out of a trash can to Thai national skateboard champion, "Oat" Athiwat is a graduate of life's school of hard knocks. But the 24-year-old, abandoned by his parents at a young age and beaten by relatives, is daring to dream about the 2020 Tokyo Olympics after a promising fourth place finish at the Asian Games in Jakarta.

Oat never knew his mother and his father left him to pursue a monk's life in a monastery. At the tender age of eight, he shuffled around between different relatives living in Suphanburi, a city a couple of hours from Bangkok. Often the victim of violence by those looking after him, he would sleep rough on the street, permanently feeling hungry and with nowhere to turn.

"I used to eat anything I could find, even gum on the floor or the leftovers I found in the trash bin," Oat told AFP, his voice faltering as he wipes a tear from his cheek. "I didn't have any friends." Oat's way out of poverty came when a university student showed him some skateboarding tricks one day and he became instantly hooked.

"I felt I could be a real skateboarder," he said. "When I mastered new tricks, I would go to sleep with good dreams." A happy twist of fate saw the Thai national team train occasionally in Suphanburi.

Impressed by the boy's dedication, they brought a skateboard for him on their next visit as part of their outreach project. "When we travelled throughout Thailand, there were boys like that all the time," said Apichat Rutnin of the Thailand Extreme Sports Association. "It's a child's dream to run away with the circus."

Waif skater

At 11-years-old the waif skater stowed away in a bus to reach the capital, found his way to the team's training

park and waited 10 hours for them to show up. "We were moved by his tragic story and we took him in," said Apichat.

"Normally a guy who joins our team must qualify at a certain level but we thought we'd try him out." Oat was not the most gifted skater, according to Apichat. But he was confident, determined and disciplined.

"He didn't watch TV or play games like other kids," he said. "He was always the first one there and the last one to leave." Oat flunked his first competition-coming in last-but it only strengthened his resolve.

By 14, he ranked number one in the amateur skating ranks and joined the top tier. Two years later, he was Thailand's number one skater, a place he has kept for the past eight years. Grinning broadly, Apichat described the gamble to take in Oat as a "very good decision".

'IT'S A REAL SPORT'

At the Asian Games, Oat narrowly missed out on a medal-appropriately in the 'street' category-demonstrating a slick array of tricks on the rails, stairs and ramps. But he already has his sights fixed on Tokyo 2020 in the hipster sport's Olympic debut.

The Thai government has paid for the team to train in California, where Oat "hit a new level", according to coach Eric Kirkwood. Skaters in the United States and elsewhere in the West have been able to carve out a career thanks to sponsorship deals, until recently resisting overtures to join the Olympics.

That's not the case for most skaters in Asia, which has few homegrown skate brands with cash to burn. But training for an Olympic sport adds a degree of legitimacy-for government ministries and concerned parents.

"The same guys that would have had to stop (skate-



JAKARTA: Thailand's skateboarder Oat Athiwat seen with his skateboard during the 2018 Asian Games in Palembang on Tuesday. —AFP

boarding) are now being supported by the government," said Kirkwood. "They just get to skate." Oat has been back many times to Suphanburi to train.

One day, he passed his aunt's house and when his relatives heard he was in the national team, they

hugged him for the first time. Gone were the days when they used to tell him off for "hanging out with drug addicts" at the skate park. "They're not drug addicts," he would snap back. "They're athletes-and it's a real sport!" —AFP

Everton's Zouma not giving up on Chelsea career

LONDON: French defender Kurt Zouma is confident of playing for Chelsea in the near future despite agreeing to a season-long loan with Everton in search of regular first-team football. The 23-year-old secured a temporary move to Goodison Park last

month, a year after signing a new six-year deal with Chelsea.

"I will go back, yes," Zouma told British media. "I have always believed in myself since I started playing football at 16. I have always wanted to show myself at Chelsea since I have been there. "I want to show people I can come back and play there. That's why I need some game time at Everton here because they are a good team."

Zouma, who spent last season at Stoke City, said new Chelsea boss Maurizio Sarri agreed to the temporary switch only because there had been a surplus of centre-back options at Stamford Bridge.

"I knew I needed to play regularly so I didn't want to stay on the bench and wait for my chance after two

or three months," he added. "He (Sarri) agreed with me. I spoke with him and I knew at Chelsea they had five central defenders already."

Zouma will be looking to force his way into the starting lineup under Marco Silva at Everton, with Michael Keane out having suffered a hairline skull fracture and Phil Jagielka suspended. "I have come here to play and I want to take the opportunity the manager has given me," Zouma said.

"We played well in the three games, especially with the away games with 10 men. The spirit is good. With the players we have, we can do something." Everton, who are unbeaten in the Premier League after three matches this season, host Huddersfield Town on Saturday. — Reuters

Loew rejects Ozil's accusations of racism in German FA

MUNICH: Joachim Loew has rejected Mesut Ozil's accusations of racism within the German FA (DFB) as the head coach gave his analysis of Germany's World Cup debacle yesterday. "Mesut made allegations of racism, but I can clearly say that in the DFB, there have never been racist comments," Loew said while announcing his squad to face world champions France in Munich on September 6, then Peru three days later.

"The players with an immigration background have always enjoyed playing for us and nothing has changed," added Loew who has been head coach since 2006. Arsenal midfielder Ozil retired from international football on July 22 with a stinging three-page statement, in which he directly accused DFB president Reinhard Grindel of racism. This is the first time Loew has commented on the Ozil saga.

"His advisor called me to inform me that Mesut would issue the third part of his statement," added Loew. "The player himself did not call me, which normally players have done in the past. "Mesut has still not called and for the last two weeks I have unsuccessfully tried to reach him."

"I am sure there will be a chance for a personal conversation in the future. "He has chosen this path - I have to accept that." Ozil and Ilkay Gundogan, who were both born in Germany to Turkish parents, sparked a political storm on the eve of the World Cup by meeting Turkey president Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

When Erdogan's office put out pictures of the meeting, the pair's loyalty to Germany was hotly questioned, sparking fierce debate about integration, and they were attacked by German far-right politicians.

Ozil walked away from the German set up after the World Cup, complaining of facing "racism and disrespect" and specifically took aim at Grindel. "In the eyes of Grindel and his supporters, I am German when we win, but I am an immigrant when we lose," Ozil wrote damningly.

Following Germany's World Cup debacle, finishing bottom of their group in Russia, Loew announced on Wednesday that assistant coach Thomas Schneider has been demoted to chief scout. The axe has also fallen on Sami Khedira, 31, who was part of the team which won the 2014 World Cup.

The Juventus midfielder is the biggest name casualty in the new squad, which included Gundogan, as well as his Manchester City team-mate Leroy Sane, who was dropped for the World Cup. Loew says 'the biggest mistake' he made in Russia was to assume Germany could reach the knock-out stages by playing possession football.

"That was almost arrogant. I wanted to take our game to the limit and perfect it," admitted the 58-year-old. "I ended up taking too many risks and after the first game (a 1-0 defeat to Mexico) we had our backs to the wall."

Loew's new squad has a mix of "experience and youth" with his 2014 World Cup winning stars Mats Hummels, Jerome Boateng, Tony Kroos, Thomas Mueller and Manuel Neuer included despite below-par performances in Russia. Paris Saint-Germain centre-back Thilo Kehrer, 21, Hoffenheim left-back Nico Schulz, 25, and Bayer Leverkusen forward Kai Havertz, 19, are called up for the first time. Sane, Leverkusen defender Jonathan Tah and Freiburg striker Nils Petersen, who were cut from the provisional World Cup squad, all return.—AFP

Bale leads Giggs's Wales squad for Ireland, Denmark

LONDON: Gareth Bale spearheads Ryan Giggs's Wales squad for his first two competitive fixtures in charge against the Republic of Ireland and Denmark next month. Bale has been in fine form for Real Madrid, scoring in the European champions' opening two La Liga games, as he looks to fill the void left by Cristiano Ronaldo.

The four-time Champions League winner will carry even more of the attacking burden for his country after Hal Robson-Kanu announced his retirement from international football after a 44-cap career.

Robson-Kanu scored five international goals, most famously netting in a 3-1 win over Belgium in the quarter-finals of Euro 2016. "I spoke to him yesterday and it was a difficult decision for him," said Giggs yesterday.

"He's had a difficult six months, with the birth of his baby, and he wants to focus on his family and his club career. "He's an icon in Welsh football with the goal he scored against Belgium and I wish him all the best."

Giggs has recalled Newcastle defender Paul Dummett after the 26-year-old choose to end his international exile. Captain Ashley Williams also keeps his place despite being sent-off in two of his last three starts at club level for Everton and Stoke.

Wales kick-off their Nations League campaign at home to Ireland on September 6 before travelling to Denmark three days later.

Squad in full:

Goalkeepers: Wayne Hennessey, Danny Ward, Adam



Gareth Bale

Davies.

Defenders: Chris Gunter, Connor Roberts, James Chester, Ashley Williams, Chris Mepham, Tom Lockyer, Ben Davies, Paul Dummett, Declan John, Ethan Ampadu.

run win in the third Test at Trent Bridge.

An innings of 219 and figures of eight for 89 against Yorkshire put Worcestershire off-spinning all-rounder Ali's name in the frame for a match on a ground where he took six for 67 during England's 266-run win against India in the corresponding Test four years ago.

His inclusion means England will field two specialist slow bowlers at Southampton, where the fourth Test starts today, with leg-spinner Adil Rashid retained. "He's in fine form, he's gone back to his county and what you want from international players is for them to go back and prove a point-and that's exactly what Moeen's done in the last couple of weeks," Root told reporters at Southampton yesterday.

England also have concerns over whether all-rounder Ben Stokes will be able to bowl a full quota of overs because of a knee problem, another factor in Ali's recall in place of Surrey batsman Pope, dropped after just two Tests.

As for England one-day international gloveman Buttler, who deputised behind the stumps at Trent

Midfielders: Joe Allen, Matthew Smith, Aaron Ramsey, Andy King, Joe Ledley, Harry Wilson, David Brooks, Tom Lawrence, Ben Woodburn.

Forwards: Gareth Bale, Sam Vokes, Tyler Roberts. —AFP

Bridge, replacing Bairstow as keeper, Root said: "It was a medical call, he (Bairstow) didn't seem fit to be able to keep 100 percent in a Test match for five days and that was the call that was made."

"He will be disappointed but ultimately we've got to make sure we do the best thing for this team to win this game and I believe Jos is the right man to do it this time." Victory at Southampton would see England take an unassailable 3-1 lead in the five-match series.

"We under-performed last week-that's the bottom line-and we have a great opportunity to put that right this time around," said Yorkshire batsman Root. "I think one of our big strengths as a squad is our strength of character and, at home in particular, we're very good at bouncing back after difficult weeks."

"We've done it time and time again before and we don't expect anything less from the group this time as well." England team to play India: Alastair Cook, Keaton Jennings, Joe Root (capt), Jonny Bairstow, Ben Stokes, Jos Buttler (wkt), Moeen Ali, Sam Curran, Adil Rashid, Stuart Broad, James Anderson. — AFP

England recall Ali and Curran as Buttler keeps in fourth Test

SOUTHAMPTON: England have recalled Moeen Ali and Sam Curran for the fourth Test against India at Southampton, skipper Joe Root announced yesterday.

The pair replace top-order batsman Ollie Pope and all-rounder Chris Woakes, ruled out with a thigh problem. Meanwhile Jos Buttler will keep wicket instead of Jonny Bairstow, with the Yorkshireman deployed as a specialist number four batsman only despite breaking a finger behind the stumps during India's crushing 203-

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Sharapova downs battling Schnyder

'Survival mode' sees Djokovic through at steamy US Open



NEW YORK: Maria Sharapova of Russia reacts after losing a point against Patty Schnyder of Switzerland (off frame) during their 2018 US Open women's match on Tuesday in New York. — AFP

NEW YORK: Maria Sharapova shattered the fairytale return of 39-year-old Patty Schnyder at the US Open on Tuesday, winning a roller-coaster first round clash 6-2, 7-6 (8/6). Schnyder, the oldest ever player to make the main draw of a Grand Slam via qualifying, was outgunned by the five-time major champion in the first set and for the majority of the second.

However, she bravely battled back from 1-5 down to 6-6, showing the sort of ability and court-craft which won her 11 titles and once took her to seven in the world rankings. She even saved three match points in the tiebreaker before Sharapova's 23rd winner of the night sealed victory shortly before midnight.

"My average match against her is like two hours and 20 minutes so I knew I was in for a battle no matter what my story is or hers," said Sharapova who is now 21-0 in US Open night sessions.

"I knew we'd go out and relive the battles against each other. I know what a competitor she is and to come back on the tour is very admirable." Left-hander Schnyder made her US Open bow in 1997 — the year of the deaths

of Princess Diana in Paris and Mother Teresa in Kolkata.

It was the year that Mike Tyson famously nibbled on Evander Holyfield's ear while Twitter was still nine years away. Schnyder made the quarter-finals in New York in 1998 and 2008 before retiring in 2011.

Tuesday's match was her first main draw appearance at the US Open since 2010 and her first against Sharapova in a decade. "It doesn't really feel that special," said Schnyder. "It doesn't feel like I have been gone for a while as tennis is a passion of my life."

"Times passes really quickly and it doesn't seem it's eight years since I last played Maria." Schnyder was watched on Tuesday by three-year-old daughter Kim. "She enjoyed it. She saw herself up on the big screen," added Schnyder who does not know if her return to the tour will be permanent.

Her focus, she said, will be on her daughter. "It's more fun for me to get to know her world rather than her having to get to know my world of tennis." Understandably there were a few nerves on both sides.

Sharapova, the 2006 US Open champion, served up

three double faults in the first game with the opening four games of the contest all breaks of serve.

The Russian 22nd seed steadied the ship with two more breaks, pocketing the first set with Schnyder losing all four of her service games and failing to hit a single winner.

Schnyder finally held serve for 1-1 in the second set before retrieving the breaks to get to 5-5. "She still has incredible hands and moves incredibly well for being out of the game for so long," added Sharapova.

Meanwhile, Wimbledon champion Novak Djokovic suffered in sweltering US Open conditions Tuesday but battled through to the second round with a 6-3, 3-6, 6-4, 6-0 victory over Hungarian Marton Fucsovics. Djokovic, playing his first match on Arthur Ashe Stadium since falling to Stan Wawrinka in the 2016 final, received a brutal welcome back to Flushing Meadows as soaring temperatures and high humidity prompted organizers to offer the men a 10-minute mid-match heat break for the first time ever.

"We both struggled. We were not the only ones today. Brutal conditions," said Djokovic, who called for trainers who enveloped him in ice packed towels late in the second

set. "I had to find a way to dig myself out of the trouble."

Until late in the third it was "survival mode" said Djokovic, who endured a rocky start to the season after elbow surgery before breaking through for a 13th Grand Slam title at Wimbledon. His Cincinnati Masters victory over Roger Federer stamped him a US Open favorite along with defending champion Rafael Nadal, despite his modest sixth seeding.

He certainly looked a contender as he reeled off the last 10 games against Fucsovics, showing signs of sharper focus even before the 10-minute heat break between the third and fourth sets. Federer, the second seed, escaped the worst of the conditions as he headlined the night session on Ashe. Nor did he meet much resistance from Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka in a 6-2, 6-2, 6-4 victory.

Up 5-1 in the final set, Federer was unable to close out the match against Nishioka's serve, and then was broken on his first attempt to serve it out. Federer, who claimed his 20th Grand Slam title at the Australian Open in January, put the match away two games later, sealing it with a service winner.—AFP

Lyles, Semenya target Diamond League trophies

ZURICH: US prodigy Noah Lyles heads the field at the first of the two Diamond League finals, in Zurich today, when he comes head-to-head with Turkey's world and European champion Ramil Guliyev.

Lyles remains the undisputed favourite going into the men's 200m final, having already clocked up four wins on the Diamond League circuit this season. But Guliyev, along with Aaron Brown and Jereem Richards, will no doubt be breathing hard down the neck of the American, the defending Diamond Trophy champion.

"I acknowledge that Ramil Guliyev is running fast," said the 21-year-old Lyles, who ran a personal best of 19.65sec in Monaco in July. "I knew I had to get to the Diamond

League Final. Now I'm here, winning is more important than running fast." The 200m is just one of 16 Diamond League disciplines to be decided at the sell-out Letzigrund Stadium, with the remaining 16 disciplines to be decided in Brussels tomorrow.

The women's blue riband event sees Britain's newly-crowned European champion Dina Asher-Smith, who struck triple gold in Berlin after also winning the 200m and taking the 4x100m relay with her British team, take on a strong field over 100m.

Asher-Smith will line up alongside Dutch sprinter Dafne Schippers, Nigerian Blessing Okagbare-Ighotegunor, and proven Ivorians Marie-Josée Ta Lou and Murielle Ahoure. "There's no place to hide in the Diamond League!" admitted Asher-Smith.

"Sometimes it's not just about winning and losing, it's about the journey," the Briton said, before adding: "I hope to end my season on a high." South African Caster Semenya will look to wrap up the trophy in the women's 800m. "My main aim tomorrow is win the trophy," said the 27-year-old, the double Olympic champion (2012, 2016) and three-time world champion (2009, 2011, 2017) who is now unbeaten over the 800m since her elimination in the

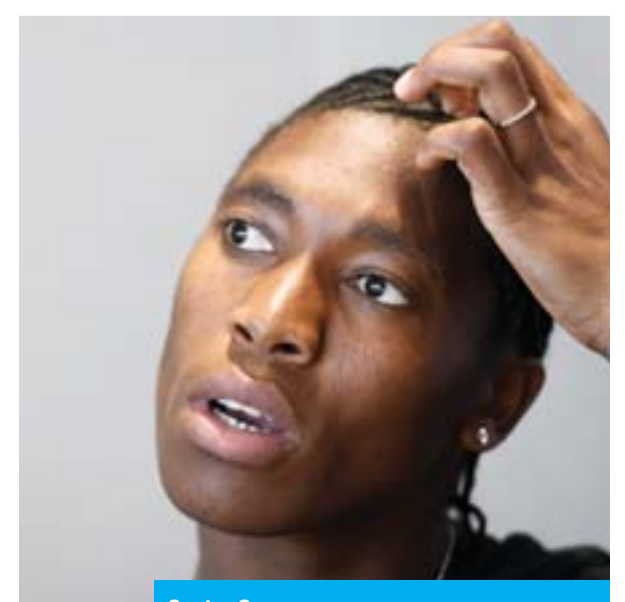
semi-finals of the 2015 worlds in Beijing.

But Semenya has also come under the spotlight this season off the track as she turned to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in her challenge of IAAF rules on testosterone levels in female athletes to be introduced in November.

Under the new regulations, "hyper-androgynous", athletes like Semenya would have to chemically lower their testosterone levels to be able to compete, something the 800m runner says is discriminatory and in violation of the IAAF's constitution and the Olympic Charter.

"I respect my opponents and I expect the same thing from them," Semenya said in Zurich. "My ultimate goal is always to entertain people." In the field, Greece's double defending title holder Ekaterina Stefanidi will bid to continue the form that saw her clinch European gold, up against American Sandi Morris.

Morris beat Stefanidi in Birmingham, albeit in extraordinarily windy conditions, and the American's season's best is also superior to the Greek vaulter's. Stefanidi, with the world, Olympic and European titles to her name, is a proven performer, however, making for what should be a thrilling contest.—AFP



Caster Semenya