

# Friday Times

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## Local

## Man and maids on cruise boat



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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**T**his title sparked a debate on social media during the Eid holiday. Why? What is the cause of the outrage against this man? The answer is simple. A Kuwaiti man in his sixties was seen in a short video taking his three domestic helpers away from home on a cruise during Eid to enjoy the holiday. He said that they deserve the break and to have some fun on Eid just like we do. So he rented a boat and took the three women on a tour! What harm has he done? No clue!

Suddenly this man became a target of several comments that are disgusting, ignorant, arrogant and insulting, just because he thought his maids deserve a real holiday and little time for entertainment. Some of these ugly comments were saying things like, "They will never be grateful to you, why you are doing this to them", "They don't deserve anything", or worse, "Clearly your family doesn't care about you, so you have no company except for your maids". I also found that most opinions were attacking the man's behavior without any consideration that what he did was an act of courage in a society that still discusses whether giving the maid a day off or not is possible.

I have huge respect for this man and I believe what he did can be interpreted as a day off for the maids' superb work that they do at all time, especially in Ramadan and during the school year. I think the term "maid" or "domestic helper" has a huge misperception here in Kuwait. First and foremost, is there a job description for this term? Is cleaning the house and taking care of children one job or two? I see this as two different tasks. The first may not require experience, but the latter needs a lot of experience and a school certificate, because it is a full-time job in itself. So, when a domestic helper is expected to perform these two missions plus maybe wash the car, she is doing multiple tasks daily, besides the pressure of being away from family and maybe no day off.

Another thing here is the dress code. I agree and understand that most work agencies around the world ensure that workers follow a dress code. But I don't understand why a maid is forced to wear a hijab, for example. Or accompany the sponsor on family visits and the kids to the playground in the evening. So she in fact must do all the housework and yet has no choice when it comes to going out with the family wherever they wish at the end of the day. I wonder if it is in the job description that joining the family in their outings is compulsory!

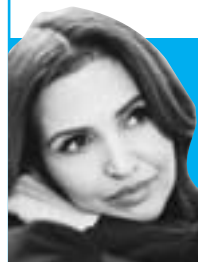
Some may think these views are irrelative to this man's video, but I wanted to clarify that this man was right to consider the hard work the domestic helpers do for him and his family, and this little gesture is a huge thank you to these ladies, who seemed very happy with smiles on their faces, savoring the happy moments. I would like to say a big thank you to you! What you did was unique, and it shows that not all Kuwaitis are alike. I hope this man doesn't listen to any negative comments that come from haters.

### PHOTO OF THE DAY



Owls are predators and they utilize camouflage and blending in with the environment to make them more successful hunters. "There are about six species of owl in Kuwait. They are protected by the environment law that forbids hunting them. People should respect this law and refrain from hunting it, as they may seriously harm its reproduction. The owl has only one partner for its entire life, so if somebody kills one, its partner will stay lonely and will never reproduce," notes Osama Al-Anezi, founder of the Q8 Owl Group. — Photo by Jasem Almotar/KUNA

## Kuwait and see (time for change)



IN MY VIEW

By Nejouad Al-Yagout

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**K**uwait is now considering limiting the number of expatriate students in its public schools. The only "non-Kuwaitis" who may be included into our government schools are stateless students who are the offspring of military personnel or parents from Gulf countries or a student who has a Kuwaiti mother. Apart from the fact that this can be misconstrued (or construed, for that matter) as racism, the majority of students in public schools are already sheltered and not accustomed to diversity, so embedding them even further into a cocoon is worrisome.

I have experience teaching English at a public school here and I lasted only a year. The students and staff members were incredible souls, but the curriculum was shockingly insular. All teachers receive a book from the Ministry of Education and we were not allowed to divert from the book under any circumstances. The classroom routine was also a ritual that needed to be conformed to strictly. Vocabulary words were to be written on the left side of the whiteboard (yes, not kidding), the title of the chapter and page number on the top, and the rest of the board was used to take notes while dictating to students. During an evaluation, I was gently berated for not adhering to the board set-up as per the stipulation. To say the students were bored out of their minds is an understatement. Little did they know the teacher (yours truly) was

more bored than them.

One day, I rebelled and had a discussion with sophomore students regarding school. They vented about how much they hate school, and I mentioned Malala Yusefzai, who at their age became a pioneer for young women globally. They had no idea who Malala was, so I asked the head of the department if I could share a YouTube interview with them to galvanize and inspire them. The rule was to ask the principal. When I did, her response was: No way! What if their parents support the Taleban? I looked at her, awestruck, and said: You think we have families who are inclined toward Taleban ideology? In Kuwait? She said: You never know. So I thought: All the better to air the video and educate these young minds, so they do not follow in the footsteps of their parents. She told me to stick to the curriculum. And so we kept their minds insulated into a dogmatic, preserved syllabus without stimulation, just in case someone would get offended.

And now, a new solution is to further isolate them by depriving them of an inclusive, diverse student body and propel them into a society that seems stubbornly moving toward Kuwaitization in all fields. Why is it that the only laws that seem to be implemented are laws that protect and focus on Kuwaitis? Why can't we focus on real education, solving the addiction problem in our country, eradicating censorship, allowing religious freedom, increasing tolerance, fixing our highways and educating drivers and building a community that provides equal opportunities for all regardless of race, nationality and religion? I see that for Kuwait. And many locals too, but if our lawmakers are hell-bent on imposing benefits on locals at the expense of foreigners, we need to remind them that passports are man-made and there are enough resources on our planet to be shared by all.

# Kuwait Times

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# Palm trees most fruitful in Kuwait



**P**alm trees in the Arabian Peninsula are not only famous for their historical and religious value but also for their unique ability to grow in harsh environments. In Kuwait, palms represent nearly all of the trees producing fruit, specifically dates.

The Kuwaiti people often plant palm trees in their gardens, including the Khlas, Samaran and Berhi trees for each kind produces dates that are considered lush and tasty.

Palm trees in Kuwait are estimated to be around

89 percent of the fruitful trees in the country, with 16 fruit-bearing trees found in every one square kilometer of the total territory of the country, according to Kuna reports.

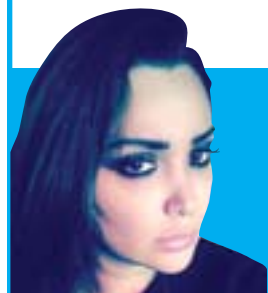
The moderate warm and hot weather in most of the Arab region is the most appropriate environment for palm trees making the Arab world the first in growing palm trees in the world.

— All photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat





# Please do me a favor and don't invite me



JUST KIDDIN', SERIOUSLY

By Sahar Moussa

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Every time I'm invited to a wedding, engagement party, birthday or any occasion, I try to disappear and invent a million excuses in order not to attend. Nowadays, to be invited to such events is a complete hassle and very expensive, especially if you are a woman and living in Kuwait. The first thing a woman thinks of when she is invited to any of these occasions is: 'What shall I wear? I have nothing to wear! I can't wear this dress because I already wore it before. I need to buy a new dress!' Although shopping is a constant urge and desire for women, going and searching for the perfect dress in order to impress attendees at a wedding or a party takes so much time, energy and money.

Maybe if you are lucky you can find a nice gown on sale between KD 40 and KD 60 - as I said before - if you are lucky. And I'm not talking about buying big brand names - I'm talking about buying a dress from a standard shop for middle-class people. If you are wearing a short dress or a skirt, then buying new shoes to match your

dress is a must. The desired shoes will cost you between KD 20 and KD 30. If you are wearing a long gown, then you can save some money and wear old comfortable shoes that you can actually dance in, otherwise you have to spend extra money and buy new shoes.

If you are trying to imitate fashionistas, you will definitely need a matching bag with the shoes, and this would cost you around KD 20 to KD 30. Shall I go on? Of course I will, simply because I haven't mentioned jewelry/accessories, makeup and hair. If you are the kind of woman who likes to attract attention, you will need bling-bling jewelry or accessories capable of turning heads when you pass by the crowd of women who are sitting like vultures ready to criticize the smallest details of your outfit and compare it with theirs.

Here you have two options - either you wear real jewelry that you have kept in a secure box from your wedding or inherited from your mother and get away with it. Or you can buy a good fake accessory that also costs not less than KD 30. Have I mentioned that you have to go to a nail salon in order to apply nail polish just to complete your look? Well, that will cost you around KD 10 to KD 12.

The second important question that women ask themselves if they are invited to a particular event other than 'What shall I wear?' is 'Where and how will I do my hair and put on my makeup?' If you are a low-key person and you decide to do your makeup and hair at home, then you will be saving around KD 60. If you are the kind of person

that has lost the battle between personal conviction and social pressure, then be my guest and pay the KD 60.

Let us double-check our checklist. Dress: Check. Shoes: Check. Accessories: Check. Hair and makeup: Check. Nails: Check. Did I forget anything? Well yes, the gift! You will look bad if you go empty-handed. You have to get a gift, and this will also cost you not less than KD 50. So the total a woman has to pay when she is invited to a wedding or any important occasion is around KD 270!

Arabs in general and Kuwaitis in particular love to show off, and women feel so much pressure from society when they are invited to any occasion. They are pressured to dress up and they pay a lot of money for their outfits. It has become a vicious competition between women. The problem is if you are invited to a certain event and do not attend, people will complain that you did not show up. If you attend but your outfit doesn't match their fashion standards, they will criticize you. If you decide to attend and you look really nice and fashionable, they will still criticize you.

So basically, no matter what you do and how much money and energy you spend, society without a doubt will criticize you. So there are three solutions to this issue. One: Spend money, energy and time to fit the crowd. Two: Just be yourself, wear whatever makes you feel comfortable and ignore all the criticism. Three: It's what I usually do. I tell everyone in advance - please do me a favor and don't invite me!

# 1st



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## Local

# Kuwait urges UNSC to prioritize mediation in peacemaking

**NEW YORK:** Kuwait Representative to the United Nations Mansour Al-Otaibi called on the UN Security Council to attach greater importance to peacemaking and working with partner organizations to solve conflicts. Regional organizations can play greater roles in brokering peace in keeping with Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, he said at a UNSC session on 'Mediation to Broker Peace'. Ambassador Otaibi referred to a verse in the Qur'an stressing the importance of mediation 1,400 years ago. "Indeed, the United Nations was established to prevent conflict, and mediation is a civilized means for settling conflict," he pointed out.

"If two parties agree to participate, it is a sign of their civilized nature. The history of mediation demonstrated it had been institutionalized in the twentieth century, notably through the 1907 Hague Convention. It is unfortunate the Council has not paid enough attention to mediation. It should increase its use of Chapter VI of the Charter. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," Ambassador Otaibi stressed. "It is unacceptable for the United Nations to spend billions of dollars containing and managing conflicts by deploying peacekeepers when it is more

viable to invest in mediation. Logic dictates it should prioritize Chapter VI over Chapter VII," he went on.

Ambassador Otaibi pressed the council to prioritize mediation, giving regional and sub-regional organizations more responsibility through Chapter VIII in this regard. The Kuwaiti diplomat appreciated the efforts of the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to settle conflicts in various parts of the world, and asked him to continue using his offices in this regard. In his address to the session, the UN chief said the United Nations "must be bold and creative" in harnessing the avenues and capacities available for mediation. "We must make prevention our priority by investing in mediation, peace-building and sustainable development," Guterres stressed. "The United Nations has various resources it deploys, including the Standby Team of Senior Mediation Advisers, whose members are providing guidance in the Central African Republic on transitional justice and assisting in the design of a mediation process in Yemen, among its many efforts around the world."

Discreet engagement also plays a role, he said, noting that talks with the Taliban, away



**NEW YORK:** Kuwait's Representative to the United Nations Mansour Al-Otaibi addresses a UNSC session on 'Mediation to Broker Peace'. — KUNA

from the glare of publicity, has allowed positions to be clarified, while broader work with non-governmental organizations - which often have greater freedom to establish contacts and foster

dialogue with armed groups - has been instrumental to success. "I urge you to commit to more effective use of mediation," the Secretary General added. — KUNA

## Kyrgyzstan lauds Kuwait's contributions to Nomad Games

**KUWAIT:** Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to the State of Kuwait Samargyul Adamkulova lauded yesterday the contributions by the State of Kuwait to the upcoming third World Nomad Games scheduled in her country on September 2-8.

Ambassador Adamkulova affirmed in an interview that the Kuwaiti contribution would help the third World Nomad Games to gain wider global recognition. Kuwait will be sending a traditional troupe from the Sabah Al-Ahmad heritage village to partake in the festivities, gathering 3,000 participants from



Samargyul Adamkulova

60 countries. The Kyrgyz Ambassador said that the games would feature around 37 competitions including horse riding, folklore wrestling, and more.

A sideline conference on the importance of preserving wildlife — namely a specific breed of hawks — will be held, said the Ambassador. Kuwait took part in the previous installment of the games in 2016 with the participation of the camel-racing club. The World Nomad Games was first held in 2014 in Kyrgyzstan with the participation of 500 individuals. The second incarnation, also in Kyrgyzstan, saw the participation of 1,200 athletes and executives from 37 nations. — KUNA

## LAPA, KUNA organize 'Green Journalism' program for youth

**KUWAIT:** Loyac Academy of Performing Arts (LAPA) and Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) co-organized the 'Green Journalism' training program in Loyac native language campaign that teaches writing skills and dialogue in Arabic Language.

The three-day training program, which began last Monday for the ages between 12-17 years, aimed to reuse the Arabic language in light of challenges it faces, as well as developing trainees' personalities. A lecture on the basic principles of journalism and various media skills in addition to introducing students to the specialties of journalism was given to the trainees during the program by Editor Kholud Al-Anazi from KUNA.

During the program, the trainees visited KUNA headquarters and got briefed on the na-

ture of the agency work as they also attended part of editorial sector morning meetings. Deputy Director General of Editorial Sector, Editor-in-Chief of KUNA, Saad Al-Ali, stressed the importance of such training programs that are concerned in increasing youth awareness. Ali also stressed the importance of training and developing youth skills and abilities and guiding them to deal with the best media, especially in the light of the spread of social media.

Loyac's 'Green Journalism' program was supervised by interviewer Manayer Al-Qallaf, who taught the basics of journalism, artistic criticism, and how the audiovisual industry. The program was made by specialists from KUNA and Kuwaiti media personalities. The program included breathing and sound exercises, with speech specialists from the Fawzia Sultan Health Care Network, as well as field visits to the events sites and local newspapers to learn more about the work of newspapers as well as visiting the studios of Al-Arabia and (MBC) channels in Dubai. The program included participation of journalist and artistic critic Ahmed Nasser, writer Rawabi Al-Bannai, interviewer Bassam Al-Jazzaf, artist Nasser Al-Zaayer, Abdullah Boftain and Bader Al-Issa. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** KUNA's editor Kholud Al-Anazi with Loyac trainees holding their graduation certificate. — KUNA

## Consumer protection center at Avenues

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Ministry of Commerce and Industry announced yesterday the opening of commercial control and consumer protection center at the Avenues Mall on Sunday in the presence of the Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan. Assistant Undersec-

retary for Commercial Control and Consumer Protection Sector Eid Al-Rashidi said in a press statement, the idea of establishing the center at the Avenues Mall aims at serving the consumers and facilitating the procedures for them. The center will provide a number of services, including the issuance of licenses for festivals, as well as a special section for consumer complaints through the presence of industry inspectors with expertise in both Arabic and English languages, Rashidi added. Rashidi noted that the center will also be working throughout the week, including Friday and Saturday, in order to provide services to the consumer. — KUNA



# Company fined KD 84,000 for illegal use of state property

## No injuries in Sulaibiya fire



KUWAIT: This handout photo released by Kuwait Municipality yesterday shows shacks set up illegally on state property in Mubarak Al-Kabeer.



Flames are seen inside a labor residence in agricultural Sulaibiya, where a fire was reported yesterday.

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

**KUWAIT:** Mubarak Al-Kabeer municipality's safety department carried out several field tours targeting several companies to make sure that storage licenses are still valid and limit the illegal use of state property. Head of the department Maisa Bushehri said the tour resulted in issuing a citation to a company for illegally using 10,000 square meters of state property for offices and storage, besides having an expired license. The fine was of KD 84,000.

### Sulaibiya fire

Firemen put out a blaze at a labor residence in agricultural Sulaibiya yesterday. A call was received about the fire in chalets belonging to a dairy company, so Sulaibkhat, Jleeb Al-Shuy-

oukh, Kabd and backup fire stations responded, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) said in a statement. No injuries were reported.

### Smuggling foiled

Airport customs in cooperation with the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) foiled an Arab man's attempt to smuggle a large quantity of Tramadol tablets, Al-Anba reported yesterday. Head of the Air Customs Department Waleed Al-Nasser said DCGD gave details of the suspect and his time of arrival. He was found wearing a vest containing 6,932 tablets.

### Vendor escapes death

A watermelon vendor escaped death as a car swerved towards

him after it was hit by another vehicle on Fourth Ring Road. Police are working on identifying the driver of the runaway car.

### Complaint against workers

The interior ministry submitted a complaint to the attorney general accusing several workers at an oil company of rejecting procedures by military security officers guarding the off-limits Burgan gate with regards to vehicle inspections and checking IDs. The ministry said the workers gathered in front of the north Burgan gate and refused to leave their vehicles as ordered by the guards and enter with pedestrians. The complaint added that employees contacted the workers union, which met and issued a statement to escalate the matter, with several hashtags on social media urging workers not to comply with security instructions.

## 393 worker registered on 59 fake offices

By A Saleh and Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** The Public Authority for Manpower carried out a campaign at some malls in Sharq, resulting in the discovery of tens of stores and offices that are closed although hundreds of workers are under their sponsorship. The campaigns come as part of field tours that aim at organizing the marketplace and stop marginal laborers in violation of residency law or those who work for people other than who provided them residencies, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and State Minister for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh said. The campaign resulted in the discovery of 59 fake offices with 393 expats registered on them, she added. About reports of not renewing residencies of some groups of expat laborers who do not have degrees, Sabeeh said "such a decision has not been discussed yet."

### Durra company

Acting Social Affairs Ministry Undersecretary and Assistant Undersecretary for the Social Care Sector

Sheikha Al-Adwani said the social affairs ministry has no objection to open offices of Al-Durra domestic help recruitment company in cooperatives, in coordination with the Union of Consumer Co-operative Societies.

### Stationery prices

The commercial supervision and consumer protection department at the commerce ministry said the sector has taken the necessary measures to monitor prices of school stationery supplies. It said inspection teams in the six governorates began monitoring goods and are receiving complaints. It added the teams found several companies that did not place price tags on their goods, besides having two different prices for the same item.

### Environmental concern

The environmental Green Line group warned against the hazardous environment situation in Basra, as the water has become polluted, with an increasing number of people affected with cholera symptoms. The group called upon the Cabinet to mobilize concerned departments as a precaution to ensure no epidemics cross into the country. Head of the group Khalid Al-Hajeri said the escalating water pollution in Basra makes us worried about the spread of cholera. He said information received by the group indicates Basra hospital has received around 1,500 cases of colic and diarrhea.

## Health minister refers former official to prosecution

**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Bassel Al-Sabah has referred a former official at the Ministry of Health to Public Prosecution for hosting an Arab law professor in the fake capacity of a doctor. Sheikh Bassel, who also filed a libel suit against the ex-official, said in a statement yesterday that he has taken the action in implementation of directions by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to be firm against any financial irregularities. He has vowed that he will not be reluctant in taking necessary legal procedures against any person who may seek to squander public funds. In 2015, the former official was responsible for bringing in a law professor from an Arab country to partake in a convention held by the Ministry of Health in the latter's fake capacity as a doctor. The ministry had to pay for that person's travel and residency costs in the country. — KUNA



Dr Bassel Al-Sabah

# International

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Saudi-led coalition rejects UN's report

'Stop cleaning foreign toilets,' president urges Venezuelans

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NDIEBENE-GANDIOL, Senegal: Fishing boats stand on a sandy beach of Ndiebene-Gandiol near the northern Senegal city of Saint-Louis. In 2006, Khady Dieye's husband left the family home on Senegal's northern coast and boarded a dugout canoe in the hope of reaching Spain. 'Since then, we have not had any news of him,' Dieye, who lives in the small fishing village of Ndiebene-Gandiol said. — AFP

## Lost at sea: Dead migrants never identified

### Thousands of migrants die at sea every year

**NDIEBENE-GANDIOL:** In 2006, Khady Dieye's husband left the family home on Senegal's northern coast and boarded a dugout canoe in the hope of reaching Spain. "Since then, we have not had any news of him," said Dieye, who lives in the small fishing village of Ndiebene-Gandiol near Saint-Louis. Like many other would-be migrants, he disappeared, leaving his family not knowing whether he was dead or alive, stuck between hope and grief.

With thousands of migrants dying at sea every year across the globe, European and African governments are struggling to keep up with the deaths and identify the bodies, experts told AFP. "Many migrants' bodies wash up here because of rip currents," said the local deputy mayor, Arona Mael Sow, referring to notoriously dangerous coastal areas where river and sea waters mingle. Despite close collaboration with the police and firemen, "there are always bodies we are not able to identify," Sow told AFP. So families like Dieye's go through the mourning process anyway, observing the proper rituals in this Muslim-majority country.

"We said the Quran and gave the alms five months later," added the 50-year-old, who lives with her four children on a small plot of land. Dieye heads a support group for families of missing migrants with the help of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which posts their pictures online to help with the

search. Another villager, Safietou Ndiaye, said it took her family seven months to accept the probable death of her brother in 2006. But not all families manage to do so. "Some keep the hope that their relatives are still alive," Ndiaye said.



### Governments struggling to keep up with the deaths

can make identification much harder because "bodies which have been taken out of the water have often started rotting," a security official in Saint-Louis told AFP. In such cases, they are buried on the beach, he said.

Across the globe, the number of migrants who have died at sea is "enormous" but the rate at which they are identified remains "very low," said Jose Baraybar, a Paris-based forensic expert who works for the International Committee of the Red Cross and was addressing a meeting in Dakar. So local residents have teamed up to do their own investigations. "We discuss the disappeared, how

#### Water damage

Earlier this month, a canoe carrying 150 would-be migrants from The Gambia ran aground in Dakar, the Atlantic port city and capital of Senegal. Similar incidents have multiplied on the coast of Senegal and Mauritania in recent months - sometimes with tragic outcomes. And rescuing victims from the sea

to identify them from their clothes, watches, faces, identity papers," Dieye told AFP, saying her village was working with people from another village near Dakar.

#### Lucky charms

When two local boys died at sea in April, their relatives recognized them through the clothes and lucky charms they were wearing, Ndiebene-Gandiol's mayor said. And in the neighboring village of Pilote-Bar, bracelets and rings were found on corpses which helped with identification, according to Issa Wade, who heads another support group for the families of missing migrants. But it gets significantly harder when the deaths occur hundreds or even thousands of miles away. "The main issue is having information about the victims before they die," explained Baraybar.

"Without knowing who they were, if they were 1.80 meters tall, what they were wearing or whether they were wearing a ring or a bracelet, without having this information from the relatives, it is impossible." The puzzle continues for forensic experts in places like Greece or Italy, when bodies are found in the Mediterranean. In transit countries like Tunisia, "migrants conceal all information about themselves to avoid being sent back to their country" if arrested, said Moncef Hamdoun, who heads the forensic department at Charles-Nicolle hospital in Tunis. "We have a database for Tunisians," but not for people from elsewhere, he said. And when bodies end up in the sea, pictures are of little use, he said. — AFP

International

# Hello, stranger: South Koreans recount an 'awkward reunion'

'It was like I met someone I don't know at all'

**SEOUL:** There were no tearful hugs when 81-year-old South Korean Jung Hak-soon met her North Korean nephew and sister-in-law for the first time. Instead, she says, she just wanted to return home. "It was like I met someone I don't know at all," said Jung, who was among 89 South Korean families who joined in reunions last week of relatives separated by the Korean War, fought from 1950 to 1953.

"I wish my nephew resembled my brother, but he did not. They were like strangers," she told Reuters, days after the event held in North Korea's tourist resort of Mount Kumgang. "I don't want to meet them again. I don't know how other separated families felt, or maybe I am just cold-hearted." While many wept and embraced loved ones they were meeting for the first time in more than six decades, others, such as Jung, couldn't connect at all with their Northern relatives.

The disconnect shows how far apart the neighbors have grown in the decades since they ended hostilities in a truce rather than a peace treaty, leaving them technically in a state of war. As war survivors on both sides age and in some cases, die, nearly half of those attending the events from August 20 to 26 met for the first time distant relatives such as grandchildren or nephews, rather than children or immediate siblings. The long separation

brought not only emotional distance but a difference in political outlook. For example, South Korean Cho Kwon-hyeong said he became uncomfortable at hearing praise of the North Korean leadership from the wife of his nephew living in the North. "They said this meeting could happen thanks to Kim Jong Un," the 80-year-old added. "There were no other words except that." Kim and South Korean President Moon Jae-in agreed at a summit in April to resume the reunion events after a gap of three years. Those attending from the North are believed to have been chosen on the basis of their loyalty to the regime. In the South, participants are picked by computer, weighing factors such as their age.

The most important news Cho gleaned during the interaction was that his brother had died. "I hadn't heard from him since he was taken by the North Korean military during the Korean war," he added. "I didn't even know if he was alive or not." It is a shame the neighbors have so many families who die without ever learning if relatives across the border survived, said the South's Moon, who himself comes from such a divided family. More than 75,000, or nearly 57 percent, of the 132,484 South Koreans who signed up since 1988 hoping to reunite with families have already died, a government registry shows. — Reuters

## Norway minister steps down for wife's career

**OSLO:** Norway's transport minister said yesterday he was stepping down to allow his wife to further her medical career, in a move welcomed as a win for gender equality. "It's been fantastic to be a minister and, in fact, I could have continued all my life," said Ketil Solvik-Olsen, a member of the right-wing Progress party who served in the post since 2013. "But I've come to a crossroads in my life where it's my wife's turn to pursue her dream. It's a deal we've had in place for a number of years," he told TV2 Nyhetskanalen television, adding that he intends to return to frontline politics at some stage.

His wife, Tone Solvik-Olsen, has accepted a posting in a children's hospital in the United States for a year, he added. Social media users in Norway reacted positively to Solvik-Olsen's decision, calling the move "respectable" and "a great example" on Twitter. At the forefront of global gender fairness efforts, Norway is ranked second behind only Iceland by the World Economic Forum on equality between men and women.

According to national media reports, the energy minister, Terje Solviknes, is also set to give up his portfolio to concentrate on local politics. The prime minister's office said there would be a cabinet shuffle on Friday without providing details. Norway's Progress party has been in power since 2013 as part of a coalition with the Conservatives, with the center-right Liberal party joining last year. All three parties are headed by women. — AFP



Kuwait Times

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## International

# Saudi-led coalition rejects UN's 'war crimes' report

## Report points to widespread arbitrary detention, rape and torture

**RIYADH:** A Saudi-led coalition battling in Yemen yesterday dismissed as inaccurate a report by UN investigators that highlighted possible war crimes in the conflict-torn country including deadly air strikes by the alliance. "We affirm the inaccuracies in the report and its non-neutrality," the coalition said in a statement released by the official Saudi Press Agency. "The report did not mention Iran's role in the continuation of the war... and its continued support for the Houthi" militias. The coalition added that it would later provide a "comprehensive and detailed legal response" to the report. In their first report released on Tuesday, a team of UN-mandated investigators said all parties in Yemen's bloody conflict have committed a "substantial number of violations of international humanitarian law".

Many of these violations may amount to "war crimes", the report said, pointing to widespread arbitrary detention, rape and torture. The report said coalition air strikes had caused "most of the documented civilian casualties", pointing to a large number of strikes on residential areas, markets, funerals, weddings and medical facilities. It said there were "serious concerns about the targeting process applied by the coalition," pointing out that in many cases there were no apparent military targets in the vicinity of the attacks.

Yemen's devastating conflict has left nearly 10,000 people dead since March 2015, when a Saudi-led coalition intervened to fight Houthi rebels closing in on the last bastion of President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi's government. The UN human rights office said Tuesday that some 6,660 civilians were among the dead, while more than 10,500 had been injured. The UN has already described the situation in Yemen as world's worst humanitarian crisis. UN-backed talks between Yemen's government and the Iran-aligned Houthi militias are to open in Geneva on September 6 — a first step toward resuming peace negotiations that broke down two years ago. — AFP



**AL HAJJAH, Yemen:** Displaced Yemenis from the border area of Hiran with Saudi Arabia prepare to build a makeshift shelter at an improvised camp for displaced people in the northern province of Hajjah. A Saudi-led coalition battling in Yemen yesterday dismissed as inaccurate a report by UN investigators that highlighted possible war crimes in the conflict-torn country including deadly air strikes by the alliance. — AFP

## US accuses Iran of bad faith over sanctions lawsuit

**THE HAGUE:** The United States on Wednesday accused Iran of bad faith for challenging Washington's renewed nuclear-linked sanctions against it at the UN's top court. Iran has asked the International Court of Justice to order the United States to lift the sanctions, reimposed after US President Donald Trump pulled out of a multilateral 2015 accord. Iran brought the case at the court in The Hague under a 1955 friendship treaty that predates the country's Islamic Revolution.

Washington told the court it had no jurisdiction to rule on the case, which it said was a matter of national security. "Iran is not invoking the treaty of amity in good faith in this proceeding," US State Department lawyer Jennifer Newstead said in her closing argument. "Iran cannot be permitted to draw this court into a political and

psychological campaign" against the United States, she added.

During four days of hearings, Iran said the sanctions reintroduced this month are causing economic suffering for its citizens. The US lawyers retorted that economic mismanagement was at the root of Iran's woes. A second wave of US measures is due to hit Iran in early November, targeting its vital oil exports. Closing the hearings, ICJ president Abdulqawi Yusuf said the court would issue a ruling "as soon as possible" but did not set a date.

"The judges are well aware of the political stakes," said Eric De Brabandere, professor of international dispute settlement at Leiden University in the Netherlands. But "in principle the court will focus strictly on the legal aspects of the case", he told AFP. Despite their 1955 Treaty of Amity and Economic Relations, Iran and the United States have not had diplomatic ties since 1980. The ICJ was set up in 1946 to rule in disputes between countries. The court is tasked with deciding only whether it has jurisdiction over Iran's request, De Brabandere said. But he noted that "the political consequences of the decision are of course important," since either state would see a favorable outcome as "a huge victory". — AFP

## Rights groups call on Bahrain to free activist Rajab

**PARIS:** More than 100 rights groups urged Bahrain yesterday to "immediately release" high-profile activist Nabeel Rajab who is serving two separate jail sentences for alleged anti-government statements. The call by 127 non-governmental organizations came after the United Nations denounced the Shiite opposition leader's detention as "arbitrary" and "discriminatory" earlier this month.

Wednesday's signatories including Human Rights Watch said they "welcome this landmark opinion... recognizing the role played by

human rights defenders in society and the need to protect them". "We call upon the Bahraini Government to immediately release Nabeel Rajab in accordance with this latest request," the NGOs said in a statement.

Rajab—a key figure in 2011 protests against Bahrain's Sunni minority monarchy—was sentenced in February to five more years behind bars over tweets critical of the Saudi-led intervention in Yemen. The charges also relate to statements denouncing the alleged mistreatment of prisoners at the notorious Jaw prison, south of Bahrain's capital Manama. The 53-year-old, who co-founded the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, is already serving a two-year sentence handed down last July for "disseminating rumors and false information" in television interviews critical of the government.

In its August 13 report, the UN's Working Group on Arbitrary Detention had also called for Rajab's immediate release and said he should be "an enforceable right to compensation and other reparations, in accordance with international law". —AFP

## International

# ‘Stop cleaning foreign toilets,’ president urges Venezuelans

## Brazil sends troops to the border with crisis-ridden neighbor

**CARACAS:** Thousands of Venezuelans are clamoring to return home to recession, hyperinflation and a collapsing economy. President Nicolas Maduro’s government claimed yesterday as Brazil sends troops to the border with its crisis-ridden neighbor. A day after Maduro told the hundreds of thousands of his compatriots who have already fled the region’s worst economic crisis in recent memory “to return from economic slavery: stop cleaning toilets abroad and come back to live in your homeland,” Communications Minister Jorge Rodriguez claimed many are trying to do exactly that.

Rodriguez said Venezuelan embassies around the world are inundated with requests from citizens to return home, but that the government “cannot publicize it until it’s happening in real time” for fear of “retaliation against those Venezuelans seeking repatriation.” According to the United Nations, some 1.6 million Venezuelans have fled the country since 2015, with the numbers accelerating all the time.

On Monday, Venezuela chartered an airplane to bring 89 citizens back home from Peru, where Maduro said they had suffered “racism, contempt, economic persecution and slavery.” Peru recently tightened its border controls, requiring Venezuelans fleeing poverty and an economic meltdown to show a passport to enter after saying that more than 400,000 were already living in the country. Rodriguez singled out Peru, Ecuador and Colombia for special criticism as countries where

Venezuelans have been the victims of “xenophobia and hate crimes.” And he said Venezuela would petition the UN Refugee Agency to demand a response from Lima, Quito and Bogota.

### ‘Tragic’ exodus

He made no mention of Brazil, though, which is sending troops to its border following a violent attack by locals earlier this month that drove 1,200 migrants back into Venezuela. Brazil President Michel Temer said the troop deployment was aimed at providing “security for Brazilian citizens but also Venezuelan immigrants fleeing their country.” Temer didn’t specify how many soldiers would be sent but the move suggested a hardening of attitudes towards Maduro’s government. Temer called on “the international community to adopt diplomatic measures” to halt the “tragic” exodus of Venezuelans that “threatens the harmony of practically the entire continent.”

But he added: “Brazil respects the sovereignty of other states, but we have to remember that a country is only sovereign if it respects its people and looks after them.” Regional leaders are showing signs of wanting to act as the Organization of American States (OAS) called a meeting for September 5 to discuss the crisis. OAS chief Luis Almagro said Maduro’s “dictatorial government” had created an “exasperating” situation and shown “a complete disassociation from the people’s problems” as well as an “absolute inability” to provide “basic



**PASTO:** Members of Venezuelan migrant families Mendoza Landinez and Lomelly, walk along the Pan-American highway, between Pasto and Ipiales, Colombia, on their way to Peru. — AFP

necessities.” Ecuador is also organizing a meeting of 13 Latin American countries on September 3-4 to talk about Venezuela.

“None of the countries is prepared to be able to deal with the migrants or the impact of their arrival,” said Peter Hakim of the Inter-American Dialogue think-tank. Experts believe the migra-

tion problems will increase pressure on Maduro. “He has challenged many patterns of political behavior in the region,” which “now has a collective motivation to put Venezuela back” on the path of democracy, said David Smilde of the Washington Office of Latin America (WOLA) research center. — AFP

## Venezuela’s crisis boosts trafficking risk for women and, children

**BOGOTA:** Migrant women and children fleeing Venezuela’s economic collapse are at heightened risk of sexual exploitation and trafficking on their journeys seeking refuge across South America, aid agencies said yesterday. More than 1.6 million Venezuelans have abandoned the oil-rich nation since 2015 to seek better lives in neighboring Colombia and across the region in one of the largest mass migrations in Latin American history, the United Nations says.

Thousands of destitute migrant families are crossing the porous border into Colombia each day. Desperate for jobs to send money back home to feed their hungry families, migrants make easy prey and are vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers, experts say. A report issued on Wednesday by Bogota-based think tank, The Ideas for Peace Foundation (FIP), said sex trafficking of Venezuelan migrants is particularly rife along Colombia’s northern borders where criminal gangs and guerrilla groups are active.

“In border areas, the Colombian state has very little control,” Juan Carlos Garzon, head of FIP, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. “It’s very difficult for Venezuelan migrants because they come across major illegal groups who take advantage of their vulnerability. We’ve heard

several testimonies of the sexual exploitation and trafficking of women,” he said. Omar Ochoa, a local government human rights official in Colombia’s northern city of Bucaramanga, told local media earlier this week he was concerned by reports of girls forced into prostitution as they travel 200 km on foot and by bus from the Colombian border.

### Forced begging

Child migrants are being trafficked into forced begging in Colombia, according to children’s charity Terre des Hommes that this month surveyed more than 900 people, mostly Venezuelan migrants, along the border. “People we interviewed have been telling us that Venezuelan children are being rented out to beg on the streets at traffic lights and as domestic workers,” said Marion Prats, a child protection specialist at Swiss-based Terre des Hommes.

“Mothers ... are worried about their daughters taking up offers of work and becoming trapped in prostitution.” Colombia’s child protection agency (ICBF) identified 350 Venezuelan children who were victims of child labor in Colombia from March to June this year. Tighter entry rules for Venezuelans introduced by Peru and Ecuador this month increase the risk of trafficking, the UN and Norwegian Refugee Council say. “Of particular concern are the most vulnerable ... people trying to reunite with their families and unaccompanied and separated children,” said Olga Sarrado, a UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) spokeswoman. There are no figures to show how many migrants become victims of sexual and labor exploitation. Globally, some 25 million people are believed to be victims of labor or sex trafficking, according to the International Labor Organization and other leading groups. — Reuters

## Air raid warning tech gives Syrians life-saving minutes

**MAARET AL-SHUREEN:** Khaled Al-Idlibi was still speeding away with his brother perched on the back of his motorbike when he heard the air strike that leveled his neighbors’ house in northwest Syria. Those crucial extra minutes were thanks to a warning system that could help save civilian lives in an expected regime offensive on Idlib province, home to the last significant rebel-held area.

The Sentry program, launched two years ago by two Americans and a Syrian coder, uses human observers and a network of sensors to compute a predicted impact location when Syrian or allied Russian warplanes take off. The resulting estimate can then trigger air raid sirens near the target zone and send warnings to mobile phone applications, giving residents more time to take cover.

Idlibi, a 23-year-old media activist, lives in Maaret Al-Shureen, a rebel-controlled town in Idlib. On June 10 last year, he was picking up belongings he had left behind while fleeing from an earlier air strike when his smartphone suddenly lit up. “I received an alert on Telegram that a new warplane had taken off towards the same area,” he said, recounting that he and his brother jumped on their motorbike and rode to about a kilometre from the predicted impact spot. Idlibi said “only three children were wounded that day” and estimated that up to 15 lives may have been saved by the Sentry alert.

First launched in August 2016, the Sentry technology has become a sort of weather forecast service for many Syrians. The system’s creators say that it has proved its worth, including during the intense air campaign against the rebel stronghold of Eastern Ghouta, earlier this year. “We saw a huge spike in use as the campaign ramped up,” John Jaeger, a co-founder of the Hala Systems firm that developed the technology used in Sentry, told AFP. Jaeger, a former US diplomat and technologist who was looking for new ways to prevent civilian deaths in Syria, created the system with US entrepreneur Dave Levin and a Syrian coder whose identity is kept secret. — AFP

## International

# Accusations of racism flare up in the Florida governor's race

## A vote for black opponent would 'monkey this up'

WASHINGTON: Accusations of racism flared up yesterday in the Florida governor's race after the Republican candidate told voters they would "monkey this up" if they chose a liberal African-American Democrat backed by Senator Bernie Sanders. The upset victory by Democrat Andrew Gillum, 39, in the Florida gubernatorial primary was the most notable of a slate of party primaries held on Tuesday to decide candidates for the midterm election.

Gillum's opponent in November will be Representative Ron DeSantis, an enthusiastic backer of President Donald Trump who surged in the polls in Florida, America's third-largest state, after earning the endorsement of the president. DeSantis, also 39, landed in hot

water within hours of his primary victory, however, with comments to Fox News which were interpreted by some as being racially charged. Speaking of his opponent, who is seeking to become Florida's first black governor, DeSantis said "the last thing we need to do is to monkey this up by trying to embrace a socialist agenda with huge tax increases and bankrupting the state."

"That part wasn't lost on me," Gillum responded on Fox News when asked about the "monkey this up" comment. "It's very clear that Mr DeSantis is taking a page directly from the campaign manual of Donald Trump," he said. "In the handbook of Donald Trump, they no longer do whistle calls. They are now using full bull horns." DeSantis spokesman Stephen Lawson rejected any racial overtones. "Ron DeSantis was

obviously talking about Florida not making the wrong decision to embrace the socialist policies that Andrew Gillum espouses," Lawson said in a statement. "To characterize it as anything else is absurd."

In other races, a former air force fighter pilot, Representative Martha McSally, won the Republican primary in Arizona to replace the retiring Republican Senator Jeff Flake, a vocal critic of Trump. With 52 percent of the vote, McSally eas-

ily defeated arch conservative Kelli Ward, a former state senator, and Joe Arpaio, an immigration hardliner who was convicted of criminal contempt and pardoned by Trump last year. Trump had mostly stayed out of the race but he endorsed the 52-year-old McSally

### Republican and Democrat face off

on Wednesday, saying she was "strong on crime" and "the border."

#### 'We were counted out'

McSally will take on Democrat Kyrsten Sinema as Republicans seek to hold on to their slim 51-49 majority in the Senate in November. Democrats had been hoping for a victory by one of the right-wing candidates - Ward or Arpaio - in a bid to increase their chances of capturing the seat. A replacement for the other senator from Arizona, the late John McCain, is to be named in the next few days by the southwestern state's Republican governor and will be up for election in 2020.

Trump welcomed DeSantis's victory in Florida and criticized Gillum, the mayor of Tallahassee, the Florida capital. "Not only did Congressman Ron

everything that we've done and they'll do it quickly and violently," Trump reportedly said. "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." Monday did not mark 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." — AFP



ORLANDO: Democratic Florida gubernatorial candidate Gwen Graham is hugged by a supporter after conceding the primary to Tallahassee Mayor Andrew Gillum at her election night party held at The Social on August 28, 2018 in Orlando, Florida. Gillum will face Republican Ron DeSantis in the general election in November. — AFP

DeSantis easily win the Republican Primary, but his opponent in November is his biggest dream... a failed Socialist Mayor named Andrew Gillum who has allowed crime & many other problems to flourish in his city," Trump tweeted. "This is not what Florida wants or needs!" DeSantis's campaign featured an ad in which he encourages his toddler to use blocks to "build the wall" - a reference to Trump's border wall with Mexico - and dresses his baby in a "Make America Great Again" outfit.

Gillum, who has called for Trump's impeachment, is the first African-American to win Florida's

Democratic nomination for governor and his surprise win came against better-funded, more mainstream opponents. "We were counted out every step of the way," Gillum said. "My four opponents collectively spent over 90 million dollars. I think our total spending may have been six." If elected, Gillum promised to work for universal health care and "common sense" gun laws in a state where there has been a spate of mass shootings. Sanders, who represents the left wing of the party and came up short in his 2016 challenge to Hillary Clinton for the Democratic presidential nomination, welcomed his victory. — AFP

## Trump warns of violence around midterms

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump raised the specter of violence around upcoming midterms Wednesday, saying he did not want to see "unnecessary" unrest days after he reportedly warned evangelical leaders of violent change if Republicans lose control of Congress. When asked by a reporter why he had on Monday suggested there would be violence around the November elections, Trump simply said "because that's the way."

"If you look at what happens ... there's a lot of unnecessary violence all over the world, but also in this country, and I don't want to see it," he said.

At a meeting with evangelical leaders at the White House, Trump had said everything was at stake for his conservative agenda if his party loses, according to an audiotape of the meeting obtained by the Times. Democrats "will overturn

## Television reporter shot dead in Mexico

MEXICO CITY: A Mexican television reporter was shot dead Wednesday in the resort city of Cancun, becoming the eighth journalist to be killed this year in a country notoriously dangerous for the media. Javier Enrique Rodriguez Valladares worked as a cameraman and reporter for Canal 10. The station said his family had confirmed his death.

The government of Quintana Roo state, which includes Cancun, said another man was also shot dead with him, reportedly while the pair were walking down a street in the city center. Canal 10 said Rodriguez

Valladares was mainly a cameraman but also did interviews and features on political issues. The state government said there was no immediate indication the murder was related to his work but that all avenues of investigation remained open. Rodriguez Valladares is the third journalist to meet a violent death in Quintana Roo in the past two months.

Ruben Pat, editor-in-chief of the Playa News weekly, was shot dead outside a bar in Playa del Carmen in July, not far from the tourist hotspot. And on June 29, Jose Guadalupe Chan was shot dead in a Mayan indigenous village in the south of Quintana Roo. He was also working for Playa News as a reporter. Last year 11 journalists were killed in Mexico which has been ravaged by drug-related violence. According to various freedom of speech organizations, more than 100 journalists have been killed in Mexico since 2000. The vast majority of those crimes have gone unpunished. — AFP

## International

# White House lawyer quits as Russian probe heats up

## More upheaval in the US president's legal team

**WASHINGTON:** Donald Trump said Wednesday that White House counsel Don McGahn will be leaving his post, signaling more upheaval in the US president's legal team as the probe into Russia's election interference closes in on his inner circle. McGahn, who has advised Trump on dealing with Special Counsel Robert Mueller's Russia probe, also has been interviewed at length as a cooperating witness by Mueller's team. He will be leaving his White House post "in the fall," Trump said via Twitter.

The 50-year-old lawyer is one of the few people left in the White House who had a senior role in Trump's election campaign, where McGahn was general counsel. His replacement, according to media reports, could be his current deputy White House counsel Emmet Flood, a Washington veteran who represented president Bill Clinton when he faced impeachment in the late 1990s. Trump also maintains a team of private lawyers led by former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani to deal with his personal legal troubles.

### Courts with conservatives

McGahn's departure will come "shortly after the confirmation (hopefully) of Judge Brett Kavanaugh to the United States Supreme Court," Trump said. "I have worked with Don for a long time and truly appreciate his service!" he added. But despite that assertion, Trump made the announcement on Twitter without first telling Mc-

Gahn. The New York Times reported, citing people close to the president and the lawyer. As the president's official legal advisor, McGahn has served Trump well, advising on relations with Congress and the Justice Department as well as dealing with Mueller.

He has also been at the center of one of the Trump administration's biggest political successes: placing dozens of pro-Republican, conservative judges on the Supreme Court and other federal courts around the country. McGahn was instrumental in Trump's nomination of both Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh—judges with strong conservative records—to the Supreme Court. But his personal relations with Trump have been formal and at times testy, as he has tried to protect the president from a slew of accusations and investigations into his personal behavior, his business, and his campaign's alleged collusion with Russians in the 2016 election.

According to media reports, McGahn has struggled to prevent the president from acting on his impulses to interfere dangerously in the Russia investigation. He also has had to mediate the deep tensions between Trump and the Justice Department over the probe. According to the New York Times, McGahn threatened to quit in June 2017 rather than carry out Trump's directive to fire Mueller, just weeks after he was named. McGahn has also pushed back when Trump has sought to oust Attorney General Jeff



**WASHINGTON:** White House lawyer, Don McGahn is pictured after a meeting in Washington, DC. — AFP

Sessions, also out of frustration over the Mueller probe.

### Witness against Trump?

Those and other episodes, including the firing of FBI director James Comey, have made McGahn a potentially important witness as

Mueller examines whether Trump illegally tried to obstruct the investigation—an offense that could lead to impeachment. Earlier this month, The New York Times reported that McGahn had "cooperated extensively" with Mueller's team, taking part in at least three interviews totaling 30 hours. — AFP

## Pope's rightwing rivals on attack over abuse claims

**VATICAN CITY:** Allegations that Pope Francis covered for a senior US cardinal accused of abuse have raised questions about a possible plot against the pontiff by figures within the Catholic Church's ultra-conservative hierarchy. Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, a former Vatican envoy to Washington, dropped an 11-page bombshell at the weekend accusing Francis of ignoring sexual abuse allegations against prominent US cardinal Theodore McCarrick. Pope Francis "knew from at least June 23, 2013, that McCarrick was a serial predator," Vigano alleged. "He knew that he was a corrupt man, he covered for him to the bitter end."

The timing of the letter's release - right in the middle of Francis's landmark trip to Ireland - immediately raised speculation about a campaign against the Argentine pontiff. Among some ultra-conservative Catholics, the pope is regarded as a dangerous progressive who is more interested in social issues than traditional Church matters. But so far, Francis has remained silent, refusing to address the allegations and saying only that Vigano's missive "speaks for itself". Since then, two of the pope's fiercest critics have stepped forward to support the archbishop.

### Resign

Italian journalist Marco Tosatti, who runs a conser-

vative and staunchly anti-Francis blog, boasted Tuesday that he had helped Vigano craft and edit his testimony before translating it into Spanish and English. Tosatti praised the "courage" of Vigano, who was never made a cardinal and was exiled to Washington as the Holy See's ambassador after blasting the Vatican for poor financial management.

On Wednesday, US cardinal Raymond Leo Burke - the pope's fiercest critic within the Vatican - backed Vigano's call for Francis to step down. "I cannot say if it is wrong to demand the resignation of the pope, I only say that to get to that, you have to investigate and act on what's found," Burke said in an interview with Italian daily La Repubblica. "A resignation request is legitimate regardless. Anyone can make it for any clergyman who has made a grave error."

This is not the first time Burke has moved against the pontiff. In 2016, he was one of four cardinals who wrote a letter to the pope saying that he should be sanctioned for confusing Catholics after permitting people who have divorced and remarried to take communion in certain circumstances. Vigano, 77, is also no stranger to showing his disapproval of Francis - last year he was one of 60 conservative priests who signed a petition accusing the pontiff of "heresies". Nonetheless, he told RAI television on Wednesday he "never felt any desire for vengeance or held a grudge" against Francis. Paul Elie, who lectures at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs at Georgetown University, said the voices raised against Francis were a direct result of his tolerant outlook. "Because Francis is not inclined to an authoritarian style, he has allowed a much greater degree of dissent to be expressed openly than his predecessors," he told AFP. People, he said, were speaking out "much more than they used to." — AFP

## Trump takes aim at Watergate reporter

**WASHINGTON:** US President Donald Trump took aim at Carl Bernstein, one of the reporters who helped bring down Richard Nixon's presidency, accusing him of making up stories. Bernstein and Bob Woodward led the Washington Post team that investigated the 1972 break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate complex, which eventually led back to the White House, prompting a scandal that forced Nixon to resign in 1974. "Sloppy @carlbernstein, a man who lives in the past and thinks like a degenerate fool, making up story after story, is being laughed at all over the country!" Trump tweeted.

He also slammed CNN - a frequent target of criticism from the president - saying that the network "is being torn apart from within based on their being caught in a major lie and refusing to admit the mistake". Bernstein was one of the reporters on a CNN story that quoted sources as saying Trump's former attorney Michael Cohen claimed the US president knew in advance about a

June 2016 meeting in which Russians were expected to share dirt on then-election rival Hillary Clinton. The story has since been called into question as one of the sources - Cohen's own lawyer Lanny Davis - recanted, but the network has stood by it.

The network hit back, replying to Trump's tweet. "Make no mistake, Mr President, CNN does not lie. We report the news. And we report when people in power tell lies. CNN stands by our reporting and our reporters. There may be many fools in this story but @carlbernstein is not one of them," it said. Bernstein also pushed back against the president. "I have spent my life as a journalist bringing the truth to light, through administrations of both parties. No taunt will diminish my commitment to that mission, which is the essential role of a free press," he wrote on Twitter. "@CNN stands by its story, and I stand by my reporting," Bernstein added.

Trump's attack on Bernstein comes as the White House braces for the release of a book by Woodward. — AFP

## International

# Trump administration killed Puerto Ricans with 'neglect'

## Hurricane Maria death toll raised to nearly 3,000

**MIAMI:** President Donald Trump's administration killed Puerto Ricans through "neglect," the mayor of the island's capital said yesterday, after the official death toll for Hurricane Maria was raised to nearly 3,000. Trump defended his handling of the crisis, claiming that his administration did a "fantastic job" and that Puerto Ricans are still being helped, but Yulin Cruz, the mayor of San Juan, had a different view. "The administration killed the Puerto Ricans with neglect. The Trump administration led us to believe they were helping when they weren't up to par, and they didn't allow other countries to help us," Cruz told CNN. "Shame on President Trump. Shame on President Trump for not even once, not even yesterday, just saying, 'Look, I grieve with the people of Puerto Rico.'"

After nearly a year of controversy over the death toll from the September 2017 storm, Puerto Rico Governor Ricardo Rossello said Tuesday that the new estimate of 2,975 dead would be considered the official figure. The Puerto Rican government's longstanding official death toll from Maria had been 64. Hurricane Maria wreaked widespread devastation and caused \$90 billion in damage when it tore across Puerto Rico, and is ranked as the third-costliest storm in the United States since 1900. Households on the island went for an average of 84 days without electricity, 64 days without water and 41 days without cellular telephone coverage

## German police brace for new protests after racist attacks

**CHEMNITZ, Germany:** German police braced for more far-right protests yesterday against Chancellor Angela Merkel's immigration policies in the eastern city where a fatal stabbing has sparked outbreaks of racist mob violence. Saxony state police said they would be backed by reinforcements from five other states and federal police, after being heavily outnumbered by thousands of neo-Nazis, football hooligans and other extremists in unrest on Sunday and Monday.

The flashpoint city of Chemnitz, where state premier Michael Kretschmer was to hold a town hall-style meeting on democracy from 1700 GMT, has seen a violent outbreak of long-simmering anger against what protesters label "criminal immigrants" since Sunday's knife killing. Police have arrested Iraqi Yousif Ibrahim A, 22, and the Syrian Alaa S, 23, for the stabbing of 35-year-old Daniel H, a carpenter - the crime that set off random street attacks against people whom the mob took to be foreigners.

after the storm.

In comparison, the death toll from 2005's Hurricane Katrina - the costliest hurricane in US history - was significantly lower, estimated at 1,833. Trump told reporters Wednesday that his administration is doing a "fantastic job in Puerto Rico," and that governor Rosello has done an "excellent job." Assistance to Puerto Rico was more difficult because - unlike Texas and Florida, also struck by hurricanes last year - "it's much harder to get things onto the island," Trump said. The island was also deeply in debt, and its power grid was crippled by neglect even before the hurricane, he said. "I think most of the people in Puerto Rico really appreciate what we have done," said Trump.

### 'Stain' on Trump presidency

One month after Maria, when the official number of people killed stood at 16, Trump said that the disaster was nothing compared to Hurricane Katrina's death toll. "That shaped and hampered the type of response that we got, federal assistance, federal deployment and assets, to Puerto Rico," said New York lawmaker Nydia Velazquez, a Democrat of Puerto Rican descent.

"It is indisputable that thousands of people died because of the disastrously inadequate response," Velazquez told CNN. The president's comments, plus images of Trump throwing paper towels at hurricane survivors, outraged Puerto Ri-

The disturbing scenes, which saw assaults against an Afghan, a Syrian and a Bulgarian man and were described as "pogrom-like" by some observers, have sparked widespread revulsion in Germany and beyond. In another violent hate crime overnight in the ex-communist east, a 20-year-old migrant was subjected to xenophobic insults, kicked and beaten with a iron chain by three men in the Baltic coast city of Wismar, police said without giving his nationality.

Images of protesters making the illegal Hitler salute in Monday's protest were "shocking," said UN human rights chief Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, demanding that politicians from all over Europe speak out. Merkel - travelling in Africa until Friday, mainly to discuss how to fight the causes of migration to Europe - has condemned the far-right protests, declaring there is no place for "hate in the streets" in a liberal democratic state.

### Inflamed passions

Tensions risked being inflamed further by a news report that the Iraqi suspect in the murder case had, despite a lengthy criminal record, somehow avoided deportation. The trained hairdresser had arrived in Germany in 2015, the peak year of the influx that would bring over one million mostly Muslim people to the EU's biggest economy, reported mass-circulation Bild daily. Since then he had reportedly received a suspended seven-months jail term for assault and been charged with other offences, including taking illegal drugs across national borders, fraud and property damage.—AFP



**PUERTO RICO:** A house destroyed by hurricane winds is seen in Barranquitas, southwest of San Juan, Puerto Rico, following the passage of Hurricane Maria. — AFP

cans. White House press secretary Sarah Sanders said Tuesday that the president is "proud of all of the work the federal family undertook to help our fellow citizens in Puerto Rico." Cruz was having

none of it: "What is there to be proud of?" she asked CNN, mentioning the death toll. "Is that what he's proud of?" Puerto Ricans are "going to remember this forever."—AFP

## Macron under fire for calling French 'resistant to change'

**PARIS:** French President Emmanuel Macron came under attack from the opposition yesterday after describing his countrymen as "Gauls who are resistant to change" during a trip to Denmark. The comments came during an exchange with French expatriates in the Scandinavian country, which Macron has long admired because of its economic model that mixes a strong social security system with rules allowing companies to easily fire workers. "Let's not be naive, what is possible is linked to a culture, to a people who are the product of their history," Macron said on Wednesday afternoon.

"These Lutheran (Protestant) people, who have experienced transformations in recent years, are not like the Gauls who are resistant to change," he said, using a term for the ancient tribes that roamed France more than 2000 years ago. The remark echoed previous comments by Macron saying the French "hate reforms" and that the country is "unreformable". He prefers

instead to talk about a "transformation" under his leadership. The 40-year-old former investment banker is trying to push through his own version of Denmark's "flexi-curity" model of flexibility and security by loosening French labour law and reforming the social security system. But the opposition back home seized on the remarks. "As usual, he scorns the French while overseas. The Gauls will take great pleasure in responding to his arrogance and contempt," said far-right leader Marine Le Pen. Leftwing MP Alexis Corbiere from the France Unbowed party denounced Macron for his "staggeringly stupid remarks". "Macron in Denmark is not only contemptuous of his own people but also very ignorant about the Gauls who were incredibly progressive," he added.

### Nepotism row

But the president was quick to respond while in Finland where he is on the second leg of his Scandinavian trip. "You need to step back from the controversy and social media," Macron told reporters, describing his remarks as "a light-hearted moment". "I love France and the French people, make no mistake. I love it in all of its components." And he also defended a decision to appoint French writer Patrick Besson as consul general in Los Angeles.

Besson, who has written some 20 novels, is a close personal friend of Macron and his wife Brigitte who penned an overwhelmingly positive book on how Macron captured the French presidency in May 2017. —AFP



## International

# For a Beijing 'house church', CCTV cameras and eviction

## Chinese Christians split between official, underground churches

**BEIJING:** The Zion church in Beijing, one of the city's largest unofficial Protestant "house" churches, has operated with relative freedom for years, hosting hundreds of worshippers every weekend in an expansive, specially renovated hall in north Beijing. But in April, city authorities asked the church to install 24 closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras in the building for "security", Zion's head pastor, Jin Mingri said.

"They wanted to put cameras in the sanctuary where we worship. The church decided this was not appropriate," Jin said over tea in his spacious, book-lined office. "Our services are a sacred time." When the request was refused, police and state security agents started harassing churchgoers, calling them, visiting them, contacting their workplace and asking them to promise not to go to church, according to statements from the church and interviews with attendees.

China's constitution guarantees religious freedom, but since President Xi Jinping took office in 2012, Beijing has tightened restrictions on religions seen as a challenge to the authority of the ruling Communist Party. China's religious affairs bureau and the public security ministry did not respond to faxed requests for comment. The Chinese government says greater oversight of religious activities is needed in order to regulate

believers and facilitate worship, as well as to prevent foreign forces from influencing China's internal affairs using the guise of religion.

### House or official

China's Christian believers are split between those who attend unofficial "house" or "underground" churches and those who attend government-sanctioned places of worship. The unofficial establishments, which range from small living room-gatherings to large, professional operations like Zion, had in recent decades been tolerated by authorities.

They were often able to rent large spaces, though these are rarely identifiable from the outside. The only church exteriors in China adorned with steeples or crosses are officially sanctioned. In February, new legislation increased oversight of religious education and practice, with harsher punishment for practices not sanctioned by the authorities. In addition to being asked to install security cameras, some unofficial churches have been asked by police to take detailed lists of attendee IDs and phone numbers, churchgoers and activists say.

Some who push back have been visited by police and asked to switch places of worship to officially sanctioned churches, they added. The Zion church, which occupies an office building

floor that was previously a nightclub, is now being evicted despite previous verbal assurances from its landlord that it could rent the location until 2023, Jin said. The landlord could not be reached for comment. Jin does not expect to be able to find a landlord that would rent the church another suitable location.

### Rare protest

There are roughly 60 million Christians in China, most of them Protestant, with about 10 million Catholics, according to independent estimates. The Vatican and Beijing are locked in talks to resolve a decades-long dispute over appointing bishops in China that, if resolved, could make underground Catholic churches official, with Holy See-approved bishops.

On July 23, more than 30 of Beijing's hundreds of underground Protestant churches took the rare step of releasing a joint statement complaining of "unceasing interference" and the "assault and obstruction" of regular activities of believers since the new regulations came into effect, according to a copy of the statement seen by Reuters and confirmed by Jin. "We call on the government to respect history and the current situation of house churches, respect the means and practices of religious work, and respect citizens' basic freedoms and rights to be-

lieve," the letter said.

Wang Yu, a prominent rights lawyer who has defended Christians from harassment and was recently baptized at Zion after years of worship there, said she believes the pressure on believers is an attempt to force the church to close. "The authorities hope numbers will dwindle till it becomes impossible to continue, but in recent months ever-more churchgoers have been attending service," she said. Wang fears, however, the situation will worsen, given the authorities have started describing the church as a "cult" when pressuring churchgoers. In one of its statements, Zion also says authorities have called the church a cult.

"Being labeled a cult was how it all started for the Falun Gong in 1999," Wang said, referring to the spiritual movement the Communist Party banned that year. The new regulations have increased government pressure on the churches to "sinicize" - to be culturally Chinese and submit to oversight from the Communist Party - but many have resisted, saying this would be a fundamental betrayal of their faith. "House churches believe that our spiritual needs and the content of our faith is ruled over by God," Pastor Jin said. "What we need is the freedom to believe. Without this, it is not real faith." —Reuters

## Monk removed as China temple head amid sex probe

**BEIJING:** The former head of China's government-run Buddhist association has been removed as abbot of a Beijing temple following a sexual assault investigation, officials said. Xuecheng, a Communist Party member and abbot of Beijing's Longquan Monastery, is one of the most prominent figures to face accusations in China's growing #MeToo movement. He is under criminal investigation after a report by fellow monks accused him of sexual and financial improprieties, including coercing several nuns to have sex with him. Investigators had also uncovered evidence that his monastery had broken national financial rules.

A prominent personality in Chinese Buddhist life with a social media following of millions, Xuecheng's presence on China's Twitter-like Weibo service has been silent since August 1, when he posted a statement rejecting the sexual assault claims. The Buddhist Association of China said in a statement the decision to remove him as abbot was made in a meeting last Friday after consulting a report by the country's top religious authority. "We have removed Xuecheng as the abbot of Beijing Longquan Monastery," it said. He had stepped down as head of the Buddhist association earlier this month.

The 95-page report, which circulated online late last month, contained allegations from two monks that Xuecheng had sent explicit text messages to at least six women. —AFP

## Pentagon cautions India over buying Russian weapons

**WASHINGTON:** A top Pentagon official cautioned India on Wednesday that there are no guarantees for a special waiver from US sanctions if it buys new weapons platforms from Russia. Washington is alarmed at the prospect of India, an increasingly important US military ally and the world's top defense importer, buying new systems from Russia, including its S-400 long-range, surface-to-air missile system. Under current US rules against Russia, third countries could face sanctions if they transact with Russian defense or intelligence sectors.

But after lobbying from Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, Congress granted the US president and the secretary of state the option of granting waivers, such as when an ally nation transitions from legacy Russian gear to Western arms. Randall Schriver, the Pentagon's assistant secretary of defense for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs, said the waiver authority had created the impression Washington would insulate India "from any fallout from this legislation no matter what they do."

"I would say that's a bit misleading," Schriver told an audience at the Carnegie Endowment For International Peace in Washington. "We would still have very significant concerns if India pursued major new platforms and systems (from Russia). I can't sit here and tell you that they would be exempt, that we would use that waiver." Schriver was speaking ahead of a historic summit in New Delhi next week, a first ever "2+2" between India and the United States that will see Mattis and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo meet with their Indian counterparts. Schriver said the prospect of India buying the S-400 is particularly "troubling" for



**KATHMANDU:** Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (center) arrives at Tribhuvan International Airport to attend the 4th Summit of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) in Kathmandu yesterday. — AFP

a lot of reasons.

"Our strong preference ... is (for India) to seek alternatives and see if we could be a partner to India in addressing those defense needs," he said. The United States has in recent years pushed to forge closer diplomatic and military ties with India, a fellow democracy that it sees as key to countering China's growing regional ambitions. India has increasingly turned to the United States and France for arms purchases, but is still reliant on Russian hardware and expertise to maintain its existing arsenal. Schriver said the Indian and US militaries would next week discuss expanding the scope and complexity of joint military exercises. — AFP

## International

# China slams Trump's 'absurd, irresponsible logic' on DPRK

## US lawmakers blasted for Xinjiang sanctions call

**BEIJING:** China yesterday derided the "irresponsible and absurd logic" of the United States after President Donald Trump accused Beijing of making Washington's relationship with North Korea more difficult. Trump doubled down on his suggestion that China was not helping to rein in its Cold War-era ally - a charge he first leveled when he cancelled a trip to North Korea by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo that was due to take place this week. "A lot of people, like me, feel that the US is first in the world when it comes to twisting the truth, and irresponsible and absurd logic," Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told a regular press briefing. "This logic is not easily understood by all," Hua said.

Trump's refusal to direct criticism at North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and instead blame other parties for a lack of progress comes despite reports the US received a belligerent letter from Pyongyang, which prompted Pompeo to cancel a planned trip to North Korea last weekend. "We hope the US can play a positive and constructive role in settling the issue just like the Chinese. To solve the problem, it should look at itself instead of shifting blame," Hua added.

### Trade war

Speaking at the White House on Wednesday, Trump said: "China makes it much more difficult in terms of our relationship with North Korea". "Part of the North Korea problem is caused by the trade disputes with China," Trump said. But he insisted his ties with Chinese President Xi

Jinping were "great" and that he had a "fantastic relationship" with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, whom he met in Singapore in June. The US president said he was not considering resuming joint military exercises on the Korean Peninsula that Pyongyang considers "provocative".

Beijing is Pyongyang's sole major ally, and the main transit country for any goods entering the North. Trump said that China - angered by US moves on trade - is no longer being as tough as it could be on North Korea. "We know that China is providing North Korea with considerable aid, including money, fuel, fertilizer and various other commodities. This is not helpful!" he tweeted on Wednesday evening.

On the subject of military exercises, which the US suspended as a "good faith" measure following Trump's summit with Kim, the president said "there is no reason at this time to be spending large amounts of money on joint US-South Korea war games" though added these could resume if the need arose. It came a day after Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said the Pentagon was not planning to suspend any more military drills, before appearing to backtrack on Wednesday by insisting "no decisions" had been made on the matter.

Trump also reiterated his wish to fundamentally alter the trade status quo between the United States and China, the world's top two economies. He said he needed to take a tough stance with Beijing on trade "because it was really not fair to our country," criticizing his pred-

ecessors who "closed their eyes" to the issue.

### Belligerent letter

In June, Trump and Kim pledged to work toward the "complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula" although their joint statement was short on details for how that might be

achieved. Efforts stalled several weeks ago, and last week, Trump ordered Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to cancel a planned trip to Pyongyang. At the time, Trump said that he did not believe China was helping in the denuclearization process due to Washington's tougher stance on trade. — Agencies



**WASHINGTON:** US President Donald Trump speaks during an event to announce a grant for drug-free communities support program, in the Roosevelt Room of the White House in Washington, DC, on August 29, 2018. — AFP

## It's a bird... it's a train... pigeon racers cause flap with rail ruse

**SHANGHAI:** Cheating to win is as old as sport itself but two Chinese pigeon racers took it to modern-day extremes when they hid the birds in milk cartons and hopped on a bullet train. It was no surprise then when their homing pigeons scooped the first four places in the race and total prize money of more than one million yuan (\$150,000). But the pigeons' rapid times soon raised suspicions and Shanghai race organizers turned the men in when the scale of the ruse emerged, the state-run Legal Daily reported.

The two men, surnamed Gong and Zhang, attempted to conceal their crime by killing the birds and giving up the prize money, the state newspaper said. But it was too late and a Shanghai court handed the duo suspended sentences of three years for fraud. The court also fined Gong 30,000

yuan and Zhang 20,000 yuan, Legal Daily said, adding that they also broke competition rules by using older pigeons instead of one-year-olds.

The two men went to great lengths to beat the opposition in the race in April 2017 from the city of Shangqiu in the province of Henan to Shanghai on China's east coast, a distance of about 750 kilometers. Gong and Zhang began their nefarious plan a year in advance, raising the pigeons at two feeding points, in Henan and Shanghai, to familiarize the birds with the locations. After handing the pigeons over to organizers in Henan, rather than flying straight to Shanghai, the birds went to the feeding point elsewhere in the province.

There, they were concealed in milk cartons for the bullet-train ride to Shanghai, where they were released to the finish line and first place. Gong and Zhang will not serve jail time unless they commit more wrongdoing - forgoing the prize money saved them from time behind bars. Pigeon racing is popular among older people in China and Shanghai is considered the modern-day home of the sport. Speeds vary depending on distance, but racing pigeons can fly about 150 kilometers per hour — fast, but not as fast as a bullet train. — AFP

## Famed Malaysian Hindu temple gets technicolor paint job

**BATU CAVES, Malaysia:** A famed Malaysian Hindu temple complex has had its steps painted in a dazzling array of colors, sparking excitement from some visitors but angering officials who oversee heritage sites. The Batu Caves complex, a series of caverns set in a limestone hill on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur, is popular with devotees from Malaysia's ethnic Indian minority and tourists, with a regular stream of people clambering up the 272 steps to reach the temples.

The steps have been painted in a kaleidoscope of bright colors ahead of a Hindu ritual that is conducted in temples every 12 years, which will take place today. But the temple management committee has found itself in hot water with the government heritage department, after allegedly failing to seek permission to paint the steps.

The committee will receive a warning letter from the department, while Deputy Culture Minister Muhammad Bakhtiar Wan Chik said he was "very disappointed" and the work had "disturbed the harmony, in-

tegrity and originality of Batu Caves", the Star newspaper reported.

He played down the possibility of the complex losing its heritage status, but urged others running historic sites to get consent before carrying out major work or renovations. But the paint job on the steps, which were previously the same color as the limestone hillside, impressed tourists visiting the complex.

Ratna Yunita from Indonesia described it as "out of the ordinary". "So many colors, so many people in such a beautiful place, it feels like you're in India, not in Malaysia," she told AFP.

Batu Caves is an important religious site for Tamil Hindus. During the annual Thaipusam festival, massive crowds of devotees descend on the complex, with many piercing their bodies with hooks and skewers to showcase devotion to the deity Murugan. Most of Malaysia's roughly 32 million people are Muslim, but the country also has around two million ethnic Indians and nearly seven million ethnic Chinese. — AFP

# Lifestyle Friday Times

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Kuwait's stand next to an aquarium in the Scientific Center in Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

**Ancient Chinese painting expected to fetch \$51 million**

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# 'First Man' shows Armstrong's view after Moon landing, sitting in 'tin can'



(From left) Actor Jason Clarke, actress Olivia Hamilton, director Damien Chazelle, actor Ryan Gosling and actress Claire Foy pose as they arrive for the opening ceremony and the premiere of the film 'First Man', presented in competition at the 75th Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido. — AFP photos

Everyone knows what Neil Armstrong said as he stepped onto the Moon, and when Ryan Gosling delivers the line in "First Man", which opened the Venice Film Festival on Wednesday, it sounds like dialogue as familiar as "To be or not to be". But Oscar-winning "La La Land" director Damien Chazelle takes the viewer deeper than that epic moment when Armstrong took "one

small step for (a) man, one giant leap for mankind," to show what it must have felt like to leave the world behind, with a high chance of never coming back.

"This was a story that needed to hinge between the Moon and the kitchen sink," Chazelle said of the film that begins in 1961 as the United States trails the Soviet Union in the space race, through to the 1969 Moon landing

- with many personal and professional crises on the way. At the kitchen sink is Armstrong's wife Janet, played by "The Crown" actress Claire Foy, who tells a friend she married the aeronautical engineer "because I wanted a normal life", but finds herself bringing up a family in extraordinary circumstances. The mundanity of real life in "First Man" contrasts with the enormity of the mission.

Armstrong is told he has been selected to head the Apollo 11 mission in the unglamorous setting of his work's toilet. When he tells his son he is going to the Moon, the boy replies by asking if he can play in the garden. "Their dad wasn't an astronaut, he was their dad," said Foy, who, like the rest of the cast, spoke to Armstrong's family to prepare for a film that dials down the patriotic glory and focuses on the bravery and frailty of its characters.

While the Oscar-winning space adventure "Gravity", which opened Venice in 2013, seduced audiences by the graceful beauty of floating above the Earth, "First Man" squeezes the viewer into a cramped capsule from which Armstrong gets occasional glimpses of the Moon as he steers towards touch-down - scenes Chazelle made deliberately claustrophobic and disorientating.

"Space is obviously mostly this kind of black void, and you're travelling searching for objects, or searching for landing areas, in this expanse that is mostly completely nebular, and then on top of that you are in these kind of flying tin cans," he told reporters. "So everything about it felt terrifying to me and made me all the more the amazed that it even halfway worked out - so I wanted to capture that."

Co-produced by Steven Spielberg, "First Man" is based on a 2005 biography by historian James Hansen which hints at a remarkable gesture Armstrong may have made while standing on the Moon. In the movie's version of that scene, Armstrong lifts the reflective outer visor on his helmet, revealing his suppressed anguish as he remembers a tragedy in his life, many years ago and a world away, before composing himself for the journey home. "First Man" is one of 21 movies in competition for the Golden Lion which will be awarded on Sept 8. — Reuters



Model Sara Sampaio arrives for the opening ceremony and the premiere of the film 'First Man'.



Member of the Venezia 75 competition jury, English actress Naomi Watts arrives for the opening ceremony.



Actor Ryan Gosling arrives for the opening ceremony and the premiere of the film 'First Man', presented in competition at the 75th Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido.



Member of the Venezia 75 competition jury, Austrian-German actor Christoph Waltz arrives for the opening ceremony of the 75th Venice Film Festival.



Actor Jason Clarke arrive for the opening ceremony of the 75th Venice Film Festival.



Italian Culture Minister, Alberto Bonisoli arrives for the opening ceremony and the premiere of the film 'First Man', presented in competition at the 75th Venice Film Festival.



Members of the Venezia 75 competition jury (From left) Austrian-German actor Christoph Waltz, French actress and director Nicole Garcia, English actress Naomi Watts, Taiwanese actress and director Sylvia Chang, Italian director and screenwriter Paolo Genovese, Polish director Malgorzata Szumowska, New Zealand actor and director Taika Waititi, President of the Venezia 75 competition Jury, Mexican director Guillermo del Toro, and Danish actress Trine Dyrholm (right) arrive for the opening ceremony of the 75th Venice Film Festival.



President of the Venezia 75 competition Jury, Mexican director Guillermo del Toro delivers a speech during the opening ceremony, prior to the premiere of the film 'First Man'.



Argentine model Georgina Rodriguez arrives for the opening ceremony of the 75th Venice Film Festival.



Actress Vanessa Redgrave acknowledges receiving a Golden Lion Lifetime Achievement Award during the opening ceremony of the 75th Venice Film Festival, and prior to the premiere of the film 'First Man', presented in competition at Venice Lido.



Italian tv show host and companion of Italy's Interior minister, Elisa Isoardi arrives for the opening ceremony of the 75th Venice Film Festival.



Model Izabel Goulart arrives for the opening ceremony and the premiere of the film 'First Man'.



(From left) Italian singer-songwriter and television presenter, Jo Squillo, former Miss Italy contestant and TV presenter, who was left scarred after her ex-boyfriend allegedly threw acid in her face, Gessica Notaro, and paralympic athlete Giusy Versace arrive for the opening ceremony of the 75th Venice Film Festival, and the premiere of the film "First Man".



Director Damien Chazelle and actress Olivia Hamilton arrive for the opening ceremony and the premiere of the film 'First Man'.



Actress Vanessa Redgrave and her husband actor Franco Nero attend Redgrave's Golden Lion Lifetime Achievement Award giving ceremony, during the opening ceremony of the 75th Venice Film Festival, prior to the premiere of the film 'First Man'.



Men dressed in traditional knight's armor battle during the annual 'Just Out' medieval festival next to Manasija Monastery, near the town of Despotovac, Serbia.— AFP photos



Men dressed in French crusaders pose for a photograph during the annual 'Just Out' medieval festival next to Manasija monastery.

## The fighting is real at Serbia's medieval festival



Men dressed in traditional knight's armor get ready for a battle during the annual "Just Out" medieval festival.

Dressed from head-to-toe in knight's armor, fighters thrashed each other with steel swords in high-octane duels at a Serbian chivalry festival on Saturday. These were not staged re-enactment shows but full-contact fights in a combat sport known as historical medieval battle. Around 60 fighters from European countries spanning France to Romania participated in the tournament, wielding blunted weapons as they skirmished across a grassy pitch in the shadow of a 15th century fortress in eastern Serbia.

The intense, highly-physical matches—best described as mixed-martial arts but with medieval weapons—are refereed and scored based on a point system. "I have a background in boxing and I love history, so for me (this sport) is a good mix," said 28-year-old French fighter Victor Rousseau, 28, as he prepared for a group match. While the fighting is rooted in old traditions, the modern form of medieval battle has only become formalized as a sport in the past decade, helped by the

launch of a world championship called "Battle of the Nations."

The tournament in Serbia was part of a three-day medieval festival, called "Just Out", in a river gorge home to the 600-year-old Manasija monastery, which is fortified by massive stone walls and towers. Festival-goers in medieval garb, many carrying swords of their own or bows and arrows, have been camping out in tents for three days of jousting, archery, crafts and meat-heavy medieval meals.

"This fighting and this culture... it's wonderful," said Velimir Birmanac, a Serbian spectator wearing "civilian" medieval dress with a loose shirt and belt holding a dagger, satchel and hollowed animal horn for drinks. "It's an extraordinary experience," he added, watching as the next pair entered the ring. The festival is aimed at fostering "respect of moral values" and aiding in the "uncompromising fight against violence on women, children and weaklings," according to the official "Just Out" website. —AFP



Men dressed in traditional knight's armor fight during the annual 'Just Out' medieval festival.



Tourists and visitors admire and take pictures of the 18th Century Baroque Trevi Fountain and the 16th Century Palazzo Poli in downtown Rome.—AFP photos



Tourists and visitors gather around the 18th Century Baroque Trevi Fountain in downtown Rome.



Tourists and visitors admire and take pictures of the 18th Century Baroque Trevi Fountain and the 16th Century Palazzo Poli in downtown Rome.

## From fights over selfies to midnight swims: Rome's Trevi Fountain

It is one of the must-see sights for visitors to Rome but its iconic Trevi Fountain has been making headlines for the wrong reasons recently—and people are getting fed up. Two tourists came to blows earlier this month as they competed for a prime selfie spot and a new round-the-clock deployment of police officers clearly indicates the authorities have had enough of bad behavior. “There are too many people,” a French tourist says as he struggles to see past the throngs gathered in front of the 18th century UNESCO site on Trevi Square.

“There needs to be more order, otherwise the visit is not pleasant,” adds Rafel Llerat, a 44-year-old visitor from Spain. The on-site police officers, whose job it is to manage the crowds swarming around Bernini’s masterpiece, add to the hubbub with their whistle-blowing at the slightest misdemeanor. “No, it’s not possible to go to this area, you risk damaging the marble,” one of them says to a tourist trying to eat ice cream at the edge of the fountain.

### Roman bathing

Their twitchiness, however, is justified. Three weeks ago, a brawl erupted between a young Dutch tourist and a 44-year-old Italian-American, both of whom had set their sights on a strategic place to take a selfie at the site. And in mid-August, a couple of 30-year-old Canadian tourists were fined 450 euros for swimming in the fountain just hours after their first attempt was thwarted by police. The stunt was perhaps in homage to one of the Trevi Fountain’s most iconic moments, when Swedish actress Anita Ekberg went for a dip in Federico Fellini’s film “La Dolce Vita”.

Rome’s city council have since decided to deploy local police officers to monitor the fountain day and night after a dozen similar incidents led to fines. Faced with the growing

number of visitors, the city’s mayor has repeatedly expressed the wish to control access to the baroque work to unclog the site. But that idea is not popular with some tourists, with 39-year-old American Sal Boscarello saying: “If we had to wait in line, we would not have come.” Valentina Baldi, a 48-year-old from Tuscany, says visitors should just have more respect. “This is one of the most beautiful places in Rome. People should be more educated: they should understand that we are facing a monument.” A 1.5 million euro (\$1.7 million) restoration of the landmark, made famous by the 1953 film “Roman Holiday”, was financed by upmarket jeweler Bulgari and finished in 2016.—AFP



The 18th Century Baroque Trevi Fountain in downtown Rome, is reflected in a tourist’s sunglasses.

## Sun, sand and a workforce shortage at Hungary's popular lakeside resort

**W**ith its inviting turquoise waters, white sandy banks, picturesque mountainous landscapes and resort towns, Hungary's Lake Balaton has plenty for tourists to write home about. But a labor shortage exacerbated by low salaries and Hungary's anti-immigration policies is making life difficult for the lake's tourism industry. Already popular under communism, visitors still flock in increasing numbers to central Europe's largest lake to soak up its warm summer climate and enjoy the beaches, bars and eateries, as well as locally produced wines.

But that's proving a headache for restaurant and hotel owners, who struggle to find workers, as unemployment in Hungary is historically low at 3.6 percent, while nationalist firebrand Prime Minister Viktor Orban is strongly against immigration. "It's impossible to find a gardener, or a waitress or a cook," said Balazs Banlaki, the owner of Kali-Kapocs, a restaurant nestled in the hills of Mindszentkalla on the northern shore of the lake, which lies about 80 kilometers (50 miles) southwest of the capital, Budapest. Banlaki usually needs about 10 employees to run his restaurant, which he only opens during the summer months, but he has to do more and more himself. "Before each new season, we repaint the restaurant, but even for that kind of work, it's me who takes up the brush now," he told AFP.

### 'Young people don't stay'

With a national average salary of less than 530 euros (\$610) per month and half a million people having left the country to work in western Europe over the past decade, Hungary lacks workers. Despite having one of the lowest fertility rates in the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) and a population currently of less than 10 million, its government has not heeded appeals from businesses to open its borders to qualified workers. Banlaki recalled how last year he could only offer drinks, coffee and sandwiches because he could not find a cook.

After raising salaries, he is glad to have at least a handful of workers this year. "But even when we find someone, there is a high chance that he or she will quit again quickly.

With festivals, holiday plans with friends and other occasions, young people don't stay. I don't dare to criticise our workers for fear they will just leave," he said.

On the other side of the lake-known also for its big beach parties and discotheques-the high-end Plazs Siofok beach complex that can hold close to 10,000 people faces similar challenges. "We advertise (job openings) everywhere and all the time... The lack of qualified workers is a constant problem," manager Erzsebet Mazula said.



This picture shows an inside view of the 'Kali-Kapocs' restaurant in Mindszentkalla village, at Balaton Lake in Hungary.



An inside view of the 'Kali-Kapocs' restaurant in Mindszentkalla village, at Balaton Lake in Hungary.



A detail of an old store door is pictured at the 'Kali-Kapocs' restaurant in Mindszentkalla village, at Balaton Lake.



Owner of the 'Kali-Kapocs' restaurant, Balazs Banlaki, is pictured in Mindszentkalla village, at Balaton Lake.

### Online check-in?

Due to its trendy image—with numerous restaurants, an outdoor gym, beach bars and a concert stage drawing Hungary's best DJs and singers-Plazs Siofok can attract student workers, Mazula said. "They are certainly not professionals, but we train them before the season starts. Being involved and friendly and smiling is more important than knowing how to make complicated cocktails," she told



A part of Balaton Plage is seen in Siofok at Balaton Lake in Hungary.—AFP photos





An inside view of the 'Kali-Kapocs' restaurant in Mindszentkala village, at Balaton Lake in Hungary.



People relax near a small runnel and a path bent beside the building of the 'Kali-Kapocs' restaurant in Mindszentkala village.

AFP. "But even with this system, you can see there are not enough waiters and waitresses to serve our clients."

At Siofok, mother-of-two Petra Lisztes, 39, said they spent several weeks at the lake every year and she had noticed that many of the small food and drinks stands had remained shut this time and that service in restaurants was slower. The problem extends far beyond Lake Balaton. Seen as a relatively cheap holiday destination, the number of tourists to Hungary has climbed seven percent this year so far, according to official data released by the KSH Hungarian Central Statistical Office, after already reaching a record 29.5 million hotel overnight stays last year.

To compensate for a lack of workers, several Budapest hotels have started to simplify reception services inspired by airline companies' online check-in systems. But the problem is hard to solve for jobs that require expertise, such as cooks, head waiters and waitresses or managers. Seeking to offer a solution, the government is trying to convince pensioners to return to work by exempting them from having to pay social contributions and capping taxes at 15 percent. Since last year, Budapest has permitted workers from neighboring non-EU countries Ukraine and Serbia to work in Hungary for up to 90 days without a work permit. But, so far, the measures have failed to solve the shortage.—AFP



The 'Kali-Kapocs' restaurant building and the garden are pictured in Mindszentkala village, at Balaton Lake.

## Ancient Chinese painting expected to fetch \$51 million



A Falangcai Poppy Bowl is displayed during a media preview for the Sotheby's Chinese Works of Art Autumn Sales in Hong Kong.

**A**nearly 1000-year-old ink painting by one of China's greatest literati masters Su Shi is expected to fetch US\$51 million at auction, Christie's said yesterday as the work went on view in Hong Kong. The Song Dynasty artwork created by Su is "one of the world's rarest Chinese paintings," said the auction house. Entitled "Wood and Rock," the ink-on-paper handscroll depicts a dragon-like old tree with withered branches and a sharp rock resting at its root. The versatile literati, also known as Su Dongpo is one of the most important cultural figures in Chinese history and was an esteemed scholar, poet, prose-writer, painter, calligrapher and statesman.

"The number of the works securely attributed to him are very few, probably only two or three. They are extremely rare," said Jonathan Stone, deputy chairman for Christie's Asian art department. The

185.5cm-long scroll is inscribed with calligraphy and the poems of four important literati of the 11th century in China, and also exhibits the seals of 41 collectors. The painting will be on view until September 1 and will go under the hammer on November 26 as part of Christie's Hong Kong Autumn Sale. Stone said the artwork is expected to attract interests from outside China. "It's an international masterpiece instead of just a Chinese masterpiece," he added. In 2010, "Dizhuming", a Chinese calligraphy scroll by Huang Tingjian-Su Shi's student—sold for \$64 million at Poly Auction in Beijing. Hong Kong's auction houses have seen frenzied bidding among Asian buyers in recent years, with sales of diamonds, paintings and ancient ceramics shattering world records. A rare Qing Dynasty porcelain bowl enameled with poppies is expected to fetch \$25.6 million at Sotheby's in October.—AFP



A Falangcai Poppy Bowl is displayed during a media preview for the Sotheby's Chinese Works of Art Autumn Sales in Hong Kong yesterday.—AFP photos



# A foodie's guide to Amman, Jordan

While most travelers head for Jordan with Petra high on the agenda, investing some food-fuelled days in the cosmopolitan capital Amman is a delicious idea. There's so much more than cafe-hopping down Rainbow St for the best creamy hummus of your life or developing an addiction for cardamom-spiced coffee; this is a city of feeders, so bring your appetite.

Five days in Amman is idyllic (for true gastronomic commitment, put the new Jordan Food Week in the diary), but you can cover many of these culinary experiences (intensely!) in two.

## Tour the souqs and the sights

Downtown Amman is the place to immerse all your senses. Any food lover will get excited about the abundance of exotic spices and colors on display at the souqs (markets of indoor and outdoor stalls). They're pulsating with atmosphere, with sellers keen to attract your attention to offload their wares. Generally, all the vegetables are grown in Jordan, as is most of the





fruit. In spring, look out for the bright green janarek (sour plums), refreshing to munch on while navigating rows of bright pink radishes as big as your hand; big bags of juicy dates or perfectly formed rose buds.

Don't miss Izhiman Coffee on Petra St for not only restorative, freshly roasted coffee beans but also an incredible assortment of herbs and spices (popcorn and cheddar cheese spices being among the more obscure), and get an education on the difference between royal thyme, super thyme and special thyme.

When you're done taste-testing and haggling, there are some impressive ruins nearby to build your appetite back up. Climb the many steps of the Roman Theatre or take a trip up to Amman's Citadel for views across the earth-toned city from its highest hill, where the Roman ruins of the Temple of Hercules can be seen from all over town (just in case you get disorientated in a food coma and need your bearings).

#### Take a traditional Jordanian breakfast

The quickest way to feel like you're integrating into Jordanian culture is to eat what the locals do for breakfast: fuul medames. You can request it at Middle Eastern restaurants (where it's also often served as a side dish), but most hotel buffets will have a copper contraption full of warm fava beans, next to a selection of toppings to tailor the meal as you wish. Start with an empty bowl and smear it generously around the edges with your choice of hummus or tahini (never both!). Ladle the warm fava beans (the fuul) into the middle of the bowl, use a teaspoon to scatter a line of purplish-red sumac across the top and then criss-cross it with a line of cumin. This is the base that you build on. What's next is up to you: diced tomatoes, raw onion, a dressing of garlic, lemon and chilli, olive oil and/or extra chilli. Fuul

medames is served alongside either warm pita bread or falafel.

#### Dip into Amman's diverse culinary heritage

Forget the dips you've bought in a supermarket at home or even tried in an adequate restaurant. The hummus in Amman really is incredible: thick, creamy, lightly smoky chickpea heaven. To take things up a notch, try it warm: the Hummus Fatteh at Jafra Caffé in Downtown Amman is a velvety, comfort-food dream of hummus mixed with toasted bits of bread, lamb, lemon and vinegar dressing topped with buttery pine nuts.

Jordan's national dish is mansaf, meaning 'large platter', and it's a meal of tender meat (usually lamb, though look out for camel) cooked in jameed (tangy sheep's milk yoghurt) on a bed of aromatic rice, garnished with toasted almonds and wrapped up in shrak (paper-thin Bedouin bread). It comes to the table looking like a parcel, which is then unwrapped in a cloud of steam to be eaten communally.

One of the more authentic places to try it is at Tawaheen Alhawa Restaurant in its sprawling external courtyard of cushion-lined wooden tables around a fountain. Challenge yourself to eat it the traditional way: use your right hand only and roll some of the rice into a ball with a little of the warm yoghurt sauce. It's polite to stick to your corner of the mansaf plate and eat a few balls of just the rice first before progressing to the lamb and almond mixture.

One of Amman's best restaurants for Jordanian cuisine, and one of the prettiest, is pink-bougainvillea-draped Sufra, on Rainbow St in Jebel Amman. Start with a selection of mezze, along with warm bread straight from the oven (if you're on the terrace, you'll see the baker hard at work pummeling dough) and revel in the fresh flavors.

Daily specials are scrawled on a black-



## Lifestyle | Travel



board - Monday: reqab mahschiyah (lamb neck filled with rice), Tuesday: fakharat rish (chops tagine), for example - which may invoke wistfulness for a longer stay. Factor in a cheering postprandial stroll down Rainbow St afterwards or a 10-minute walk over to Draj Al Kallha, one of Amman's most colorful stairways, lined with arty cafes and street murals.

#### Enjoy sweet treats with the locals

What's that queue of white-shirted business types along the alley? It's a pilgrimage to sweets haven Habibah, so join in the addiction and get a fix of kunafeh, a delicious treat of warm cheese pastry in rosewater syrup sprinkled with pistachios. Or take a seat inside at Al Quds (you'll want to beat the lunchtime crowds to get a table) and order it with circles of Arabic ice cream rolled in pistachios for maximum delight.

#### Coffee or (mint) tea?

Accepting a hot drink is an important Bedouin ritual and generally signifies acknowledgement of hospitality. Traditional coffee in Amman is thick, strong, bitter and spiced with cardamom. The quality varies, but Sufra Restaurant has one of the smoothest, most addictive cups, offered with rose Turkish delight biscuit sandwiches to seal the sweet deal. If you're not a tea or coffee drinker, you can always opt for lemon and mint, a crushed ice, syrupy, citrus con-

coction typically offered to Westerners in restaurants on arrival.

#### Cook with Jordanians or celebrate the new Jordan Food Week

Given Amman's food scene has flown under the international radar, the inaugural Jordan Food Week, held in July 2018, was overdue. An initiative of USAID Jordan Local Enterprise Support Project, this celebration of the nation's diverse culinary heritage features the wares of local producers and restaurants, live cooking demonstrations and talks, as well as shining a light on rare and forgotten recipes from rural villages. Most significantly, it champions the work of more than 70 female home-based artisanal producers who had previously struggled to build small businesses. It's expected to be an annual event.

Another supporter of Amman's female cooks is Maria Haddad, who established popular cooking school Beit Sitti with her sisters Dina and Tania in Jabal Lweibdeh back in 2010 to support and employ local women. Group lessons - grilling aubergines on open flames and chopping garlic on the flowery outdoor terrace before dining on your four-course meal in Maria's grandmother's house - are hugely atmospheric. Maria has plans for a new venture where guests dine authentically in Jordanian homes, so keep an eye on the website. —www.lonelyplanet.com



# Shrimp go wild with jalapenos, garlic, cumin and cayenne

By America's Test Kitchen

Jolts of grill flavor and spicy heat can enhance the delicately sweet and briny flavor of shrimp, but it's easy to overdo it. Most recipes overcook the shrimp and finish them in a bath of mouth-numbing sauce; we wanted juicy shrimp with a smoky crust and chili flavor that was more than just superficial. To achieve this, we sprinkled one side of the shrimp with sugar to promote browning and grilled this side for a few minutes. Then we flipped the skewers to finish gently cooking on the cooler side of the grill.

We created a flavorful marinade with pureed jalapenos, garlic, cumin, and cayenne to give our shrimp skewers a spicy, assertive kick, and then set some aside to double as a sauce. Butterflying the shrimp before marinating and grilling them opened up more shrimp flesh for the marinade and finishing sauce to flavor. We also packed the shrimp very tightly onto the skewers so they would cook more slowly.

## Grilled jalapeno and lime shrimp skewers

You will need four 14-inch metal skewers for this recipe.

Marinade:

1-2 jalapeno chills, stemmed, seeded, and chopped

3 tablespoons olive oil

6 garlic cloves, minced

1 teaspoon grated lime zest plus 5 tablespoons juice (3 limes)

1/2 teaspoon ground cumin

1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper

1/2 teaspoon salt

Shrimp:

1 1/2 pounds extra-large shrimp (21 to 25 per pound), peeled and deveined

1/2 teaspoon sugar

1 tablespoon minced fresh cilantro

Process all ingredients in food processor until smooth, about 15 seconds. Reserve 2 tablespoons marinade; transfer remaining marinade to medium bowl.

Pat shrimp dry with paper towels. To butterfly shrimp, use paring knife to make shallow cut down outside curve of shrimp. Add shrimp to bowl with marinade and toss to coat. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or up to 1 hour.

For a charcoal grill: Open bottom vent completely. Light large chimney starter filled with charcoal briquettes (6 quarts). When top coals are partially covered with ash, pour evenly over half of grill. Set cooking grate in place, cover, and open lid vent completely. Heat grill until hot, about 5 minutes.

For a gas grill: Turn all burners to high, cover, and heat grill until hot, about 15 minutes. Leave all burners on high.

Thread marinated shrimp onto four 14-inch metal skewers. (Alternate direction of each shrimp as you pack them tightly on skewer to allow about a dozen shrimp to fit snugly on each skewer.) Sprinkle 1 side of skewered shrimp with sugar. Place shrimp skewers sugared side down on hotter side of grill (covered if using gas) and cook until lightly charred, 3 to 4 minutes.

Flip skewers and move to cooler side of grill (if using charcoal) or turn all burners off (if using gas) and cook, covered, until other side of shrimp is no longer translucent, 1 to 2 minutes. Using tongs, slide shrimp into clean medium bowl and toss with reserved marinade. Sprinkle with cilantro and serve.



## Kids

## Color Me



## Jokes

Q: Knock, knock—Who's There?—Boo—Boo Who?

A: Well you don't have to cry about it.

Q: Knock, knock—Who's There?—Theodore—Theodore who?

A: Theodore is stuck and it won't open!

Q: Knock-knock—Who's there?—Cher—Cher who?

A: Cher would be nice if you opened the door!

Q: Knock, knock—Who's There?—Amos—Amos who?

A: A mosquito bit me!

Q: Knock, knock—Who's There?—Police—Police Who?

A: Police let us in, it's cold out here!

Q: Knock-knock—Who's there?—Amarillo—Amarillo who?

A: Amarillo nice guy.

## Sudoku

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

Solution

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

## Did you know?

A crocodile cannot stick its tongue out.

A shrimp's heart is in its head.

It is physically impossible for pigs to look up into the sky.

The "sixth sick sheik's sixth sheep's sick" is believed to be the toughest tongue twister in the English language.

If you sneeze too hard, you could fracture a rib.

Wearing headphones for just an hour could increase the bacteria in your ear by 700 times.

In the course of an average lifetime, while sleeping you might eat around 70 assorted insects and 10 spiders, or more.

Cat urine glows under a black-light.

Like fingerprints, everyone's tongue print is different.

Rubber bands last longer when refrigerated.



## Comic

### WORD SEARCH

#### Australia

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 49 letters spell a secret message.

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

ADELAIDE	DIDGERIDOO	MARSUPALS	QUEENSLAND
AUSSIE	DINGO	MELBOURNE	RAINFORESTS
BEACHES	DOWN UNDER	MONARCHY	RUSSELL CROWE
BOOMERANG	EMUS	NEW SOUTH WALES	SEAFOOD
BRISBANE	EUCALYPTUS TREES	NICOLE KIDMAN	SHRIMP
CANBERRA	HUGH JACKMAN	OCEANS	SURFING
COMMONWEALTH	KANGAROO	OUTBACK	SYDNEY
CONTINENT	KEITH URBAN	PARLIAMENT	TASMANIA
CORAL SEA	KDALA	PERTH	VEGETITE
CROCODILES	KOOKABURRA	PLATYPUS	VICTORIA
DESERTS	KYLIE MINOGUE	PRIME MINISTER	WOMBAT

### CROSSWORD 1997



#### ACROSS

- (physics and chemistry) The smallest component of an element having the chemical properties of the element.
- Jail in a local police station.
- A small cake leavened with yeast.
- A dress worn primarily by Hindu women.
- A promise.
- Toward the mouth or oral region.
- People having the same social or economic status.
- A violin made by Antonio Stradivari or a member of his family.
- Type genus of the Rutaceae.
- (Jewish cookery) A loaf of white bread containing eggs and leavened with yeast.
- The system or principles and theory of labor unions.
- An associate degree in nursing.
- A crime syndicate in the United States.
- An anti-TNF compound (trade name Arava) that is given orally.
- An endorsement.
- Of or at or relating to an anode.
- A defensive missile designed to shoot down incoming intercontinental ballistic missiles.
- Fermented alcoholic beverage similar to but heavier than beer.
- Infectious disease caused by a species of chlamydia bacterium.
- In a murderous frenzy as if possessed by a demon.
- State in northeastern India.
- A city in northwestern Syria.
- Rice cooked in well-seasoned broth

- with onions or celery and usually poultry or game or shellfish and sometimes tomatoes.
- A name for the Old Testament God as transliterated from the Hebrew YHVH.
- Not only so, but.
- Spherical gram-positive parasitic bacteria that tend to form irregular colonies.
- An inflammatory swelling or sore.
- A colorless and odorless inert gas.
- An endorsement.
- A genus of temperate and arctic evergreen trees (see spruce).
- Being one more than fifty.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- A public promotion of some product or service.
- The first light of day.
- Having a woven pattern.
- Seal again.
- Polish filmmaker (born in 1929).
- Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
- The bureau of the Treasury Department responsible for tax collections.
- Large shaggy-haired toothless anteater with long tongue and powerful claws.
- A barrier constructed to contain the flow or water or to keep out the sea.
- 100 pyas equal 1 kyat.
- Any new member or supporter (as in the armed forces).
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

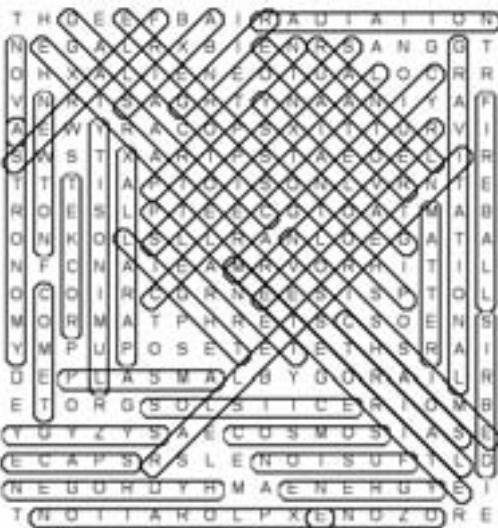
#### DOWN

- United States writer (born in Poland) who wrote in Yiddish (1880-1957).
- The basic unit of money in Western Samoa.
- Using speech rather than writing.
- Lost temporarily.
- A long-playing phonograph record.
- An association of countries in the western hemisphere.
- A vacuum tube in which a hot cathode emits a beam of electrons that pass through a high voltage anode and are focused or deflected before hitting a phosphorescent screen.
- The basic unit of money in Slovakia.
- Russian ballet dancer (1910-1998).
- A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
- 3rd largest island in the world.
- Wild sheep of northern Africa.
- Informal or slang terms for mentally irregular.
- (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
- The capital and largest city of Yemen.
- A midwestern state in north central United States in the Great Lakes region.
- An informal term for a father.
- Small space in a tissue or part such as the area between veins on a leaf or an insect's wing.
- A scheming person.
- Area consisting of a small depression in the retina containing cones and where vision is most acute.
- Boiled or baked buckwheat.
- A tricyclic antidepressant drug (trade name Elavil) with serious side effects.
- Of or relating to or characteristic of

- Yemen or its inhabitants.
- A mistake resulting from inattention.
- By chance.
- Ancient Persian god of light and truth.
- The 10th letter of the Greek alphabet.
- A deep bow.
- The cardinal number that is the sum of four and one.
- Urged social reform in 19th century England.
- A traditional Japanese system of unarmed combat.
- An attendant who carries the golf clubs for a player.
- An acute viral disease of the nervous system of warm-blooded animals (usually transmitted by the bite of a rabid animal).
- (Irish) Chief god of the Tuatha De Danann.
- Characterized by lightness and insubstantiality.
- A feeling of strong eagerness (usually in favor of a person or cause).
- The basic unit of money in China.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
- God of love and erotic desire.
- The part of the nervous system of vertebrates that controls involuntary actions of the smooth muscles and heart and glands.
- A brief (and hurriedly handwritten) note.
- A metric unit of volume equal to one thousandth of a liter.

### Yesterday's Solution

#### Astronomy 2



ASTROLOGY	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	SYZYGY
EXPLORATION	LUMINOSITY	PLASMA	
EXTRATERRESTRIAL	LUNAR	PROTON	

The hidden message is: THE BIG BANG THEORY WAS FIRST PROPOSED BY GEORGES LEMAITRE

### Yesterday's Solution



### Daily SuDoku

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

### Yesterday's Solution

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

TV Listings

**OWN MOVIES ACTION**

00:00 Ice Agent  
 01:35 Falsely Accused  
 03:00 Acts Of Vengeance  
 04:35 Rise Of The Legend  
 06:50 Street Fighter  
 08:40 Iron Man 2  
 10:55 Falsely Accused  
 12:25 XXX: Return Of Xander Cage  
 14:25 Stealth  
 16:35 Iron Man 3  
 18:50 The Perfect Weapon  
 20:20 Cyborg X  
 22:00 Female Fight Squad  
 23:30 Training Day

**ANIMAL PLANET HD**

00:45 North Woods Law  
 01:40 Intruders  
 02:35 Cat vs Dog  
 03:25 Lone Star Law  
 04:15 North Woods Law  
 05:02 Wildest Europe  
 05:49 Pit Bulls & Parolees  
 06:36 Swamp Brothers  
 07:00 Swamp Brothers  
 07:25 The Jeff Corwin Experience  
 08:15 Lone Star Law  
 09:10 Lone Star Law  
 10:05 North Woods Law  
 11:00 Wildest Europe  
 11:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees  
 12:50 Cat vs Dog  
 13:45 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet  
 14:40 North Woods Law  
 15:35 Intruders  
 16:30 The Jeff Corwin Experience  
 17:25 Lone Star Law  
 18:20 Cats 101  
 19:15 The Bronx Zoo  
 20:10 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet  
 21:05 Wildest Europe  
 22:00 Intruders  
 22:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees  
 23:50 The Bronx Zoo

**Discovery Family**

00:30 Destroyed In Seconds  
 00:55 Destroyed In Seconds  
 01:20 How It's Made  
 01:45 How It's Made  
 02:10 My Cat From Hell  
 03:00 Tanked  
 03:50 Ultimate Survival  
 04:40 Space Dealers  
 05:30 Secret Space Escapes  
 06:20 How It's Made  
 06:40 How It's Made  
 07:00 Destroyed In Seconds  
 07:25 Destroyed In Seconds  
 07:50 My Cat From Hell  
 08:40 How It's Made  
 09:05 How It's Made  
 09:30 Tanked  
 10:20 Ultimate Survival  
 11:10 Destroyed In Seconds  
 11:35 Destroyed In Seconds  
 12:00 How It's Made  
 12:25 How It's Made  
 12:50 Space Dealers  
 13:40 Secret Space Escapes  
 14:30 How It's Made  
 14:55 How It's Made  
 15:20 My Cat From Hell  
 16:10 Ultimate Survival  
 17:00 My Cat From Hell  
 17:50 Tanked  
 18:40 Destroyed In Seconds  
 19:05 Destroyed In Seconds  
 19:30 Penn & Teller Tell A Lie  
 20:20 The Carbonaro Effect  
 21:10 How It's Made  
 21:35 How It's Made  
 22:00 Ultimate Survival  
 22:50 Penn & Teller Tell A Lie  
 23:40 The Carbonaro Effect

**ci crime & investigation network**

00:00 Homicide Hunter  
 01:00 Homicide Hunter  
 01:55 Crimes That Shook Australia  
 02:50 Killers: Behind The Myth  
 03:45 Crimes That Shook Britain  
 04:30 Nightmare In Suburbia  
 05:15 Crimes That Shook Australia  
 06:00 Crimes That Shook Australia  
 07:00 It Takes A Killer  
 07:20 The First 48  
 08:05 Killers: Behind The Myth  
 08:50 Crimes That Shook Britain  
 09:35 Crimes That Shook Britain  
 10:30 Crimes That Shook Australia  
 11:25 Crimes That Shook Australia  
 12:20 Homicide: Hours To Kill  
 13:15 Motive For Murder  
 14:10 Killers: Behind The Myth  
 15:05 It Takes A Killer  
 15:35 It Takes A Killer  
 16:00 It Takes A Killer  
 16:30 Live PD: Police Patrol  
 17:00 The First 48  
 18:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill  
 19:00 Marcia Clark Investigates  
 21:00 Evil Up Close  
 22:00 It Takes A Killer  
 22:30 It Takes A Killer  
 23:00 The First 48

**COMEDY CENTRAL**

00:05 Tosh.0  
 00:30 Nightcap  
 00:55 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
 01:20 Another Period  
 01:45 The Alternative Comedy Experience  
 02:10 Tosh.0  
 02:35 Nightcap  
 03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah

03:25 Nightcap  
 03:50 Nightcap  
 04:15 Takeshis Castle Thailand  
 04:40 Takeshis Castle Thailand  
 05:05 I Used To Be Fat  
 05:55 Disaster Date  
 06:20 Disaster Date  
 06:50 Disaster Date  
 07:15 Coaching Bad  
 08:05 I Used To Be Fat  
 08:55 Bondi Ink  
 09:45 Snack Off  
 10:10 Snack Off  
 10:35 Ridiculousness Arabia  
 11:00 Ridiculousness Arabia  
 11:25 Ridiculousness Arabia  
 11:50 Takeshis Castle Thailand  
 12:15 Takeshis Castle Thailand  
 12:40 Impractical Jokers  
 13:05 Impractical Jokers  
 13:30 Impractical Jokers  
 13:55 Friendszone  
 14:20 Friendszone  
 14:45 Friendszone  
 15:10 Key And Peele  
 15:35 Key And Peele  
 17:20 Takeshis Castle Thailand  
 17:45 Takeshis Castle Thailand  
 18:10 Friends  
 18:35 Friends  
 19:00 Friends  
 19:25 Friends  
 19:50 Friends  
 20:12 Detroiters  
 20:35 Detroiters  
 21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
 21:30 Martha And Snoop Potluck Dinner Party  
 22:00 Graves  
 22:25 Kurt Braunohler: Trust Me  
 23:15 Tosh.0  
 23:40 Tosh.0

**Disney Channel HD**

00:00 Hank Zipzer  
 00:25 Alex & Co.  
 00:45 Disney Mickey Mouse  
 00:50 Evermoor Chronicles  
 01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
 01:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
 02:05 Binny And The Ghost  
 02:30 Binny And The Ghost  
 02:55 Hank Zipzer  
 03:15 Disney Mickey Mouse  
 03:20 Hank Zipzer  
 03:45 Alex & Co.  
 04:10 Alex & Co.  
 04:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
 05:25 Binny And The Ghost  
 05:40 Rolling With The Ronks  
 05:45 Disney Mickey Mouse  
 06:00 Stuck In The Middle  
 06:25 Tangled: The Series  
 06:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts  
 06:55 Hotel Transylvania: The Series  
 07:20 Bizaardvark  
 07:45 K.C. Undercover  
 08:10 Bunk'd  
 08:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...  
 09:25 Tangled: The Series  
 10:15 Bizaardvark  
 11:05 Liv And Maddie  
 11:55 K.C. Undercover  
 12:45 Hotel Transylvania: The Series  
 13:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...  
 14:00 Hotel Transylvania: The Series  
 14:15 Bunk'd  
 14:40 K.C. Undercover  
 15:05 Disney Mickey Mouse  
 15:10 A.N.T. Farm  
 15:35 Bizaardvark  
 16:00 Tangled: The Series  
 16:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...  
 16:50 Raven's Home  
 17:15 Stuck In The Middle  
 17:40 Hotel Transylvania: The Series  
 18:05 K.C. Undercover  
 18:30 Bunk'd  
 18:55 Descendants Wicked World  
 19:00 Raven's Home  
 19:25 Liv And Maddie  
 19:50 K.C. Undercover  
 20:15 Disney Mickey Mouse  
 20:20 Tangled: The Series  
 20:45 Bizaardvark  
 21:10 Hotel Transylvania: The Series  
 21:35 Stuck In The Middle  
 22:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...  
 22:50 Lolirock  
 23:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch  
 23:35 Binny And The Ghost

**Discovery Channel HD**

00:15 Misfit Garage  
 01:05 Salvage Hunters  
 01:50 Hot Grease  
 03:20 Misfit Garage  
 04:05 Alaska: The Last Frontier  
 04:50 Dirty Jobs  
 05:35 Storage Hunters  
 06:00 The Liquidator  
 06:23 Property Wars  
 06:45 Storage Hunters  
 07:10 How Do They Do It?  
 07:35 Flying Wild Alaska  
 08:20 The Liquidator  
 08:45 Property Wars  
 09:10 Dirty Jobs  
 09:55 Flying Wild Alaska  
 10:45 Dirty Jobs  
 11:30 Misfit Garage  
 12:20 The Liquidator  
 12:43 Property Wars  
 13:05 Storage Hunters  
 13:30 How Do They Do It?  
 13:55 Misfit Garage  
 14:40 Misfit Garage  
 15:30 Salvage Hunters  
 16:15 Hot Grease  
 17:50 Cuban Chrome  
 18:40 Chrome Underground  
 19:25 Misfit Garage  
 20:15 Misfit Garage  
 21:00 Wheeler Dealers  
 21:50 Misfit Garage  
 22:40 Street Outlaws  
 23:30 Outback Truckers

**Discovery Channel HD**

00:15 Misfit Garage  
 01:05 Salvage Hunters  
 01:50 Hot Grease  
 03:20 Misfit Garage  
 04:05 Alaska: The Last Frontier  
 04:50 Dirty Jobs  
 05:35 Storage Hunters  
 06:00 The Liquidator  
 06:23 Property Wars  
 06:45 Storage Hunters  
 07:10 How Do They Do It?  
 07:35 Flying Wild Alaska  
 08:20 The Liquidator  
 08:45 Property Wars  
 09:10 Dirty Jobs  
 09:55 Flying Wild Alaska  
 10:45 Dirty Jobs  
 11:30 Misfit Garage  
 12:20 The Liquidator  
 12:43 Property Wars  
 13:05 Storage Hunters  
 13:30 How Do They Do It?  
 13:55 Misfit Garage  
 14:40 Misfit Garage  
 15:30 Salvage Hunters  
 16:15 Hot Grease  
 17:50 Cuban Chrome  
 18:40 Chrome Underground  
 19:25 Misfit Garage  
 20:15 Misfit Garage  
 21:00 Wheeler Dealers  
 21:50 Misfit Garage  
 22:40 Street Outlaws  
 23:30 Outback Truckers

**Disney Junior**

00:00 Trulli Tales  
 00:30 PJ Masks  
 01:00 PJ Masks  
 01:25 PJ Masks  
 01:50 The Hive  
 02:00 Zou  
 02:15 Zou

00:55 Boyster  
 01:20 Counterfeit Cat  
 02:10 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja  
 03:00 Boyster  
 03:45 Dude That's My Ghost  
 04:35 Counterfeit Cat  
 05:00 Guardians Of The Galaxy  
 05:29 Marvel's Avengers Assemble  
 06:00 Marvel's Spider-Man  
 06:29 Lab Rats  
 07:00 DuckTales  
 07:31 Big City Greens  
 07:45 Furiki Wheels  
 08:00 Phineas And Ferb  
 09:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil  
 10:00 Gravity Falls  
 11:00 Lab Rats  
 11:29 Lab Rats  
 12:00 Phineas And Ferb  
 12:29 Phineas And Ferb  
 13:00 Furiki Wheels  
 15:29 DuckTales  
 16:00 Phineas And Ferb  
 16:15 Milo Murphy's Law  
 16:30 Phineas And Ferb  
 16:35 Milo Murphy's Law  
 17:00 Big City Greens  
 17:29 Big Hero 6 The Series  
 18:00 Lab Rats  
 18:29 Lab Rats  
 19:00 Disney 11  
 19:29 Mech-X4  
 20:00 DuckTales  
 20:29 Big Hero 6 The Series  
 21:00 Marvel's Spider-Man  
 21:29 Star Wars Rebels  
 22:00 Phineas And Ferb  
 22:15 Furiki Wheels  
 22:30 Big City Greens  
 22:45 DuckTales  
 22:50 Dude That's My Ghost  
 23:15 Dude That's My Ghost  
 23:40 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja

**OWN MOVIES HD COMEDY**

01:15 Naked Gun 33 1/3: The Final Insult  
 03:00 Little Loopers  
 05:00 Fan Girl  
 07:00 Galaxy Quest  
 09:00 Little Loopers  
 11:00 Fan Girl  
 13:00 Galaxy Quest  
 15:00 Big Trouble  
 16:45 Are We Done Yet?  
 18:30 Memories Of Me  
 20:30 Without A Paddle: Nature's Calling  
 22:15 Joshy

**OWN MOVIES HD KIDS**

01:10 Capture The Flag  
 02:50 Freddy Frogface  
 04:25 Pacific Pirates  
 06:00 Back To The Sea  
 07:45 Rainbow Valley Heroes  
 09:25 Dinofroz Return To The Past World  
 11:00 The Dog Lover  
 12:50 Freddy Frogface  
 14:20 Pacific Pirates  
 15:50 Papelucho & The Martian  
 17:15 Dinofroz Return To The Past World  
 18:50 Swan Princess: Rolly Undercover  
 20:15 A Doggone Adventure  
 21:50 Papelucho & The Martian  
 23:15 Rainbow Valley Heroes

**EHD**

00:50 Botched  
 01:50 E! News  
 02:50 Botched  
 05:30 Celebrity Style Story  
 06:00 Second Wives Club  
 07:00 Second Wives Club  
 08:00 E! News: Daily Pop  
 09:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian  
 11:45 Celebrity Style Story  
 12:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
 15:15 E! News: Daily Pop  
 16:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry  
 19:00 E! News  
 20:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian  
 23:00 Very Cavallari  
 23:55 Very Cavallari

**OWN SERIES HD COMEDY**

00:15 The Middle  
 00:40 The Middle  
 01:05 Seinfeld  
 01:30 Seinfeld  
 01:55 Community  
 02:20 Til Death  
 02:45 Suburgatory  
 03:10 Late Night With Seth Meyers  
 04:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
 04:50 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
 05:40 Mom  
 06:05 Suburgatory  
 06:30 The Goldbergs  
 06:55 LA To Vegas  
 07:20 Late Night With Seth Meyers  
 08:10 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
 09:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon  
 09:50 Superstore  
 10:15 Life In Pieces  
 10:40 Mom  
 11:05 Suburgatory  
 11:30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
 12:20 The Goldbergs  
 12:45 LA To Vegas  
 13:10 The Middle

**Discovery Science**

00:05 Food Factory  
 00:30 Mega Builders  
 01:20 Secrets Of The Underground  
 02:10 Sci-Fi Science  
 02:35 Street Science  
 03:00 How It's Made  
 03:24 How It's Made  
 03:48 Mythbusters  
 04:36 Mega Builders  
 05:24 How Do They Do It?  
 05:48 Food Factory  
 06:12 Secrets Of The Underground  
 07:00 How Do They Do It?  
 07:26 How It's Made  
 07:50 How It's Made  
 08:14 Mega Builders  
 09:02 Sci-Fi Science  
 09:27 Street Science  
 09:50 How Do They Do It?  
 10:14 Food Factory  
 10:38 How It's Made  
 11:02 How It's Made  
 11:26 Mythbusters  
 12:14 Mega Builders





## Stars



### Aries (March 21-April 19)

Wisdom rather than knowledge is what counts most in your life to you now. You have been down troubled roads and turned each stumbling block into a stepping stone. You have lived and learned and may have an opportunity to share this wisdom with a troubled friend. Don't get discouraged if your advice is overlooked. Remember, no one could have changed your mind about some of the mistakes you made. Realize others too, may have to experience trouble to learn the lessons that are to be learned in their lives. You are a good friend and a good person. You may find today you are shown appreciation and gratitude for who you are to others.



### Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may encounter an unusual amount of stress today. Counter it by taking time for yourself to do what you enjoy most. Paint, write, or escape with a good book. Yoga or meditation may even be something you should consider making a part of your daily routine. Be careful not to shut yourself off from those who care about you. Their support is important. Do not try to conquer every problem on your own.



### Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Teamwork is strongly indicated, but those you work with aren't fond of your day dreamy mood today. Your required tasks pull you into a most productive cycle and you overcome any obstacles you may encounter. You could have a secret you're having trouble keeping; consider the consequences of sharing this. Someone - a younger person - could demand that you decide today when you're just not ready; this could lead to some difficulties. You have an understanding heart when it comes to a friend in need. Sticking to your guns in a sticky situation could prove to be your best bet.



### Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Are you getting mixed signals? That's not unusual. Feelings are complicated, and what one wants from you may change daily, or even hourly. Don't hesitate to ask for clarification. Feelings are abstract. Actions are concrete. Find out what you need to do. Take action and do not look back. Keep your eyes on the prize.



### Leo (July 23-August 22)

Today is a day you have been longing for. You need an escape. Let your hair down and head for wide open spaces. Take a ride in a convertible. Just get outside and breathe in the fresh air. You crave a sense of freedom. Decide exactly what you want out of life and make it happen. This is a great time to make clear decisions about your future.



### Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You will make a new acquaintance today. Don't assume the person is insignificant. There may be connections or influence here that will lead to opportunities for you. Or, it may be that this is the very person you need in your life right now. Be accessible. Make it clear that you are open to what the person has to offer. You may find sharing your feelings openly with others, helps them open up to you.



### Libra (September 23-October 22)

You are at peace. You have stability in your life and this is very comforting to you. Comfort and happiness are very familiar in your world. Now is a time music seems to draw you in. An outdoor concert, playing an instrument, or simply turning up your favorite tunes will bring a great sense of peace into your world today. There is a nagging feeling to be free from want that seems to be coming over you today. A shopping trip or taking some time to spoil yourself is in order. You work hard and constantly do for others. Take the time this evening to do something special for you, Libra. You deserve it.



### Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Don't skip out on your responsibilities even though you may be tempted. Seems as if a party is calling your name. You may regret choosing fun over your duties. This is not a good time for you to break any old molds and develop new patterns. This could cause conflict for you and not be in your best interest career wise. You are stable and predictable. This tends to bore you at times, but you are admired as the dependable one in the work place. You work well with others who see you as a natural born leader. This is being noticed at work and could bring reward and financial gain your way. Stick to what you know and continue your path to success.



### Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Today is a great day to just go with the flow. Go ahead and take advantage of opportunities that present themselves to you. Don't be surprised if taking a chance brings great reward. You may feel extra close to a loved one today. Aris, this may be the day you learn to truly learn to love and appreciate yourself for who you have become and where you are in life. You have been feeling a that need to be needed and appreciated and today may just the day you receive that reward you have been longing for.



### Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Let your hair down and take a drive. A horseback ride would be even better. Turn the music up loud and throw your cares out of the window. Find an escape and route to peace. Enjoy this day and all it brings. Spoil yourself. You may find you are more materialistic than usual. A shopping trip is in order to satisfy this need. Head to the mall and go for it! You work hard and deserve to be free from want.



### Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Close relationships take on more emotional depth, power and importance in your world now. You feel as if you are needed and cared for. When these two feelings are missing you automatically have a feeling of uneasiness come over you. You were not made to be alone. Expressing your desires and vulnerability, helps draw your special someone closer to you. You may find the more you allow yourself to open up the closer you two become.



### Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You are being noticed in the workplace. It may become very obvious to your superiors at work that you are talented beyond the title you hold. You may find that you are in line for a promotion or you will be assigned a special project due to your leadership abilities. Everyone has their eye on you. From your personal life to your career, you are beginning to outshine those around you. You may find your analytical skills are in top shape and you are not only able to solve every problem you come across but may be finding satisfaction in spending your spare time solving puzzles or playing word games. You are in the mood to exercise your mind.

## COUNTRY CODES

Afghanistan	0093	Jordan	00962
Albania	00355	Kazakhstan	007
Algeria	00213	Kenya	00254
Andorra	00376	Kiribati	00686
Angola	00244	Kuwait	00965
Anguilla	001264	Kyrgyzstan	00996
Antigua	001268	Laos	00856
Argentina	0054	Latvia	00371
Armenia	00374	Lebanon	00961
Australia	0061	Liberia	00231
Austria	0043	Libya	00218
Bahamas	001242	Lithuania	00370
Bahrain	00973	Luxembourg	00352
Bangladesh	00880	Macau	00853
Barbados	001246	Macedonia	00389
Belarus	00375	Madagascar	00261
Belgium	0032	Majorca	0034
Belize	00501	Malawi	00265
Benin	00229	Malaysia	0060
Bermuda	001441	Maldives	00960
Bhutan	00975	Mali	00223
Bolivia	00591	Malta	00356
Bosnia	00387	Marshall Islands	00692
Botswana	00267	Martinique	00596
Brazil	0055	Mauritania	00222
Brunei	00673	Mauritius	00230
Bulgaria	00359	Mayotte	00269
Burkina	00226	Mexico	0052
Burundi	00257	Micronesia	00691
Cambodia	00855	Moldova	00373
Cameroon	00237	Monaco	00377
Canada	001	Mongolia	00976
Cape Verde	00238	Montserrat	001664
Cayman Islands	001345	Morocco	00212
Central African Republic	00236	Mozambique	00258
Chad	00235	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Chile	0056	Namibia	00264
China	0086	Nepal	00977
Colombia	0057	Netherlands (Holland)	0031
Comoros	00269	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Congo	00242	New Caledonia	00687
Cook Islands	00682	New Zealand	0064
Costa Rica	00506	Nicaragua	00505
Croatia	00385	Nigar	00227
Cuba	0053	Nigeria	00234
Cyprus	00357	Niue	00683
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Norfolk Island	00672
Czech Republic	00420	Northern Ireland (UK)	0044
Denmark	0045	North Korea	00850
Diego Garcia	00246	Norway	0047
Djibouti	00253	Oman	00968
Dominica	001767	Pakistan	0092
Dominican Republic	001809	Palau	00680
Ecuador	00593	Panama	00507
Egypt	0020	Papua New Guinea	00675
El Salvador	00503	Paraguay	00595
England (UK)	0044	Peru	0051
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Philippines	0063
Eritrea	00291	Poland	0048
Estonia	00372	Portugal	00351
Ethiopia	00251	Puerto Rico	001787
Falkland Islands	00500	Qatar	00974
Faroe Islands	00298	Romania	0040
Fiji	00679	Russian Federation	007
Finland	00358	Rwanda	00250
France	0033	Saint Helena	00290
French Guiana	00594	Saint Kitts	001869
French Polynesia	00689	Saint Lucia	001758
Gabon	00241	Saint Pierre	00508
Gambia	00220	Saint Vincent	001784
Georgia	00995	Samoa US	00684
Germany	0049	Samoa West	00685
Ghana	00233	San Marino	00378
Gibraltar	00350	Sao Tome	00239
Greece	0030	Saudi Arabia	00966
Greenland	00299	Scotland (UK)	0044
Grenada	001473	Senegal	00221
Guadeloupe	00590	Seychelles	00284
Guam	001671	Sierra Leone	00232
Guatemala	00502	Singapore	0065
Guinea	00224	Slovakia	00421
Guyana	00592	Slovenia	00386
Haiti	00509	Solomon Islands	00677
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Somalia	00252
Honduras	00504	South Africa	0027
Hong Kong	00852	South Korea	0082
Hungary	0036	Spain	0034
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Sri Lanka	0094
Iceland	00354	Sudan	00249
India	0091	Suriname	00597
Indian Ocean	00873	Swaziland	00268
Indonesia	0062	Sweden	0046
Iran	0098	Switzerland	0041
Iraq	00964	Syria	00963
Ireland	00353	Taiwan	00886
Italy	0039	Tanzania	00255
Ivory Coast	00225	Thailand	0066
Jamaica	001876	Toga	00228
Japan	0081	Tonga	00676

## Health

# Old foe, cholera, returns to haunt Algeria

**BOUFARIK, Algeria:** Outside a hospital in Algeria, worried relatives arrive daily in a desperate bid to talk to those quarantined inside—the victims of the country's first cholera outbreak in more than 20 years.

Cases began appearing in early August and two people have so far died, with scores hospitalized in Boufarik, about 20 kilometers (12 miles) south of Algiers.

Said, whose mother has been quarantined for 10 days, told AFP he is "tired and demoralized". "I want to visit my mother. But they do not allow me access", he said. Only suspected cholera admissions, confirmed cases and staff are allowed into Boufarik hospital's infectious diseases department, where 91 people have been quarantined.

For others, access is "formally forbidden", said manager Reda Daghbouche. If they are fit enough to leave their beds, patients on the ground floor can talk to their loved ones through the windows.

Standing a metre (yard) or so in front of an open window with blue shutters, three women covered their mouths with veils or handkerchiefs, as they exchanged a few words with a relative.

And truck driver Fatah spoke through the bars of a locked door to his mother—one of 59 confirmed cases.

"Thank God, she is now on her two feet—when we brought her to the hospital she was in a serious condition, we thought we'd lose her", he said. Fatah has visited his mother every day for 12 days and "hopes for her release very soon".

## Suspect watermelons

Patients arriving at the hospital with acute watery diarrhoea and vomiting—key cholera symptoms—are immediately placed in isolation.

Samples are sent to the Pasteur Institute, the national body in charge of infectious diseases, to test for *Vibrio cholerae* bacteria.

Patients are rehydrated while they await results. "Analysis takes from three to seven days", said Daghbouche.

Those who test negative are sent home, while confirmed cases are kept in hospital until tests show the *Vibrio* bug has disappeared. In the hospital yard, a 35-year-old man kicked his heels, not quite sure what to do with himself. He told AFP he has been cured of cholera, after eight days in hospital.

But around 10 of his relatives are still hospitalized, he added, declining to give his name. Residents of Boufarik who live close to the hospital do not disguise their concern.

Many are poorly informed about cholera, which is transmitted through infected faecal matter, often via contaminated water or food. A grocer told AFP he wears medical gloves in case "the banknotes are contaminated". While the authorities insist tap water has not been compromised, the cost of mineral water has soared. And anti-bacterial gel has sold out locally.

Meanwhile, watermelons—allegedly the origin of the outbreak, since they absorb large quantities of untreated water—won't sell for any price. On Tuesday, 16 patients were allowed to go home from Boufarik hospital. An elderly man jumped for joy, as he saw his daughter leave the isolation wing after 10 days inside. He kissed the security guards who had stopped him from entering the wing. The released patients ran to their relatives' cars, desperate to leave. Those who remain in quarantine are like "prisoners waiting to be pardoned", said Fatah, disappointed that his mother remains inside. — AFP



**BOUFARIK:** A doctor gestures outside a hospital in the Algerian town of Boufarik, as the country faces a cholera outbreak. — AFP

## Congo Ebola outbreak not stabilized: WHO chief

**DAKAR:** It is too soon to say that an outbreak of Ebola in Democratic Republic of Congo is stabilizing due to difficulties identifying new cases near rebel-controlled areas, World Health Organization (WHO) chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on Wednesday.

Since the latest outbreak was declared on Aug. 1, 112 confirmed and probable cases have been identified in eastern Congo's North Kivu and Ituri provinces, including 75 deaths, according to overnight data from Congo's health ministry.

Some areas close to the outbreak's epi-

center in the town of Mangina are off-limits to health workers for security reasons, hampering efforts to control the spread of the disease. "If one case is hidden in the red zone or an inaccessible area, it's dangerous. It can just spark a fire, just one case," Tedros told Reuters on the sidelines of a news conference.

"There is a decline (in new cases)... but still, considering the accessibility and red zones, we cannot say that the outbreak is stabilizing," he told journalists earlier, adding that the next seven to ten days would be critical to controlling the outbreak. — AFP

# CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

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### DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED

Consultant of General Surgery  
Laparoscopic 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.



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Canadian Board of Otolaryngology  
Head & Neck Surgery and Facial Plastics.  
Fellow of Royal College of Surgeons-Canada  
A rare Subspecialty in Microscopic Ear Surgery, Cochlear implant & Ear diseases

- ◆ Diagnosis/ Treatment of General Ears, Nose, and Throat conditions in adults & pediatrics
- ◆ Minimally invasive Endoscopic sinus surgery including Balloon sinuplasty
- ◆ Minimally invasive Microscopic & Endoscopic Ear surgery
- ◆ Diagnosis & treatment of Otolaryngology and Audiology (Hearing loss, Tinnitus & balance disorders)
- ◆ Facial Plastic and reconstructive surgeries (Rhinoplasty, Otoplasty, Fillers & Botox injections)
- ◆ Diagnosis & treatment of snoring & obstructive sleep apnea in clinic without surgery
- ◆ Diagnosis & Treatment of voice and swallowing disorders.
- ◆ Diagnosis & Treatment of Head and Neck benign & malignant tumors.

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**DR. FAHAD S. BUHAIMED**  
Consultant Cosmetic Dermatologist & Hair Transplant, NY

**ACADEMIC CERTIFICATES:**

- ◆ Dermatology board certified.
- ◆ Fellowship training program in cosmetic dermatology and hair transplant, New York, USA.
- ◆ Member of American cosmetic dermatology society.
- ◆ Reference reviewer of International Journal of Dermatology.

**SPECIALIZED IN:**

- ◆ Dermatology & Cosmetic Treatments.
- ◆ Laser Treatments.
- ◆ Hair Transplant & Restoration.
- ◆ Body & Face Contouring.
- ◆ Injectable Fillers & Botox.

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Department: Heart & Vascular Center

**Specialized in:**

- 1- Diagnostic and therapeutic cardiac catheterization (Angiography and Angioplasty). Aortic valve implantation.
- 2- Diagnosis and treatment of coronary artery diseases
- 3- Diagnosis and treatment of heart failure, cardiomyopathies and valvular diseases.
- 4- Diagnosis and treatment of high blood pressure and high cholesterol.
- 5- Diagnosis and treatment of syncope, palpitations and cardiac arrhythmias.
- 6- Non-invasive diagnostic procedures echocardiography, exercise stress test, and 24 hour blood pressure and Holter monitoring

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- ◆ Fellow of the European Board Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery
- ◆ Member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- ◆ Member of the British Laryngological Association
- ◆ Member of the Canadian Society of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- ◆ Member of the European Laryngological Society

**Specialized in:**

- ◆ Management of benign and malignant vocal cord lesions.
- ◆ Vocal cord augmentation.
- ◆ Treatment of spasmodic dysphonia.
- ◆ Adenotonsillectomy using latest techniques.
- ◆ Thyroid surgery.
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- ◆ Endoscopic sinus surgery.
- ◆ Treatment of allergic rhinitis.
- ◆ Treatment of snoring.
- ◆ Treatment of vertigo.

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- ◆ 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

**daralshifa**  
Email: aalhaddad@daralshifa.com

**Dr. Ahmad Alaeddine**  
Head of Cardiology departmenta at Dar Al Shifa hospital

- Consultant Interventional and conventional cardiologist.
- Specialised in the Diagnosis and treatment of all adult cardiac diseases, including those cases that need urgent intervention in Cath lab (primary angioplasty).

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# Kuwait Times Classifieds

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Established 1961

Friday, August 31, 2018

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## Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171	FlyDubai	22414400
Jazeera Airways	177	Qatar Airways	22423888
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536	KLM	22425747
American Airlines	22087425	Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
	22087426	British Airways	22425635
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### Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Very hot with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 38 km/h.

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

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 30/08/2018 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	46 °C	35 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	47 °C	32 °C			
ABDALY	47 °C	30 °C			
BUBYAN	00 °C	00 °C			
JAHRA	47 °C	33 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	44 °C	29 °C			
SALMIYAH	39 °C	34 °C			
AHMADI	40 °C	35 °C			
NUWAISIB	42 °C	29 °C			
WAFRA	46 °C	29 °C			
SALMY	45 °C	29 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	08/31	Hot and some high clouds will appear	46 °C	30 °C	NW-SE	08 - 32 km/h
Saturday	09/01	Very hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with a chance for rising dust over open areas	47 °C	32 °C	NW-SE	15 - 40 km/h
Sunday	09/02	Hot and Humid specially over coastal areas	42 °C	32 °C	NW-SE	10 - 30 km/h
Monday	09/03	Hot and Humid specially over coastal areas	44 °C	29 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 32 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:02
Sunrise	05:24
Zuhr	11:49
Asr	15:23
Sunset	18:13
Isha	19:33

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	47 °C
MIN. Temp.	35 °C
MAX. RH	29 %
MIN. RH	09 %
MAX. Wind	N 43 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

### LOST

It is notified for the information that my original qualifying examination certificate of main secondary examination of year 2014 and Roll No. 8105633 issued by CBSE has been actually lost. Name of the candidate BADER MAHMOUD CHAMMOU, address: Hawally, Phone 66844674. (C 5415)

### REQUIRED

**Administrative commercial correspondence officer**

- Knowledge of PC use
- English & Arabic translation
- Full or part time

Send CV to: [alhudaidda@gmail.com](mailto:alhudaidda@gmail.com)

### CHANGE OF NAME

Black handbag containing important documents was forgotten inside a taxi (white and yellow) driven by a Pakistani from Farwaniya Block 1 to airport. Finder please call 66152130 or Kuwait Times newspaper on 24833199. 31-8-2018

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

## 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

# Business

FRIDAY, AUGUST 31, 2018

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**40** AI to seep further into everyday life at Berlin's IFA, say analysts



**41** IMF agrees to accelerate loan payout to Argentina: Macri



## Zain Group refinances \$700m 5-year revolving credit facility

Oversubscribed transaction refinances a \$800 million revolving credit facility arranged in 2014

*Bader Al-Kharafi: The closing of this revolving facility exemplifies the trust placed in Zain Group's digital transformation strategy by the regional and international banking community*

**KUWAIT:** Zain Group, the leading mobile telecom innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, is pleased to announce it has closed a \$700 million, five-year Revolving Credit Facility with a syndicate of regional and international banks. The transaction refinances a \$800 million Revolving Credit Facility arranged in 2014. The Facility will be used for general corporate purposes.

First Abu Dhabi Bank PJSC (FAB) acted as the Sole Co-ordinator of the Facility. FAB and SAMBA Financial Group acted as Bookrunners for the Facility. Arab Banking Corporation B.S.C., MUFG Bank Ltd. (DIFC Branch - Dubai), Credit Agricole Corporate and Investment Bank, Citibank N.A. London Branch, Natixis, DIFC Branch and Union National Bank PJSC all acted as joint Mandated Lead Arrangers. Arab Bank PLC acted as a Lead Arranger. FAB was also appointed the Facility Agent on the transaction.

The Facility was oversubscribed in syndication and as a result, each lender's original commitment was scaled back at signing.

Commenting on the transaction, Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO said, "The closing of this Revolving Facility, which saw the transaction being oversubscribed, exemplifies the confidence placed in Zain Group's digital transformation strategy by the regional and international banking community. We are sincerely appreciative of this unwavering support."

Al-Kharafi continued, "We continue to build a more dynamic Zain Group, with a strengthened balance sheet off the back of such developments as the recent consolidation of our Saudi operation into the Group effective July 2018. This latest Revolving Facility places Zain in a favorable financial position to explore organic and inorganic growth opportunities that may arise in the future."

Zain Group recently announced its net profit increased 5 percent year-on-year for the first six months of 2018, with customer growth of 5 percent, and data revenues increasing 10 percent over the same period.



Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi

## US consumer spending rises strongly; inflation firming

**WASHINGTON:** US consumer spending increased solidly in July, pointing to strong economic growth early in the third quarter, while a measure of underlying inflation hit the Federal Reserve's 2 percent target for the third time this year.

Other data yesterday showed an increase in new applications for unemployment benefits last week, but the underlying trend continued to point to a robust labor market. Strong domestic demand, rising inflation and a tightening jobs market likely will keep the US central bank on course

to increase interest rates for a third time this year in September. The Commerce Department said consumer spending, which accounts for more than two-thirds of US economic activity, rose 0.4 percent last month after advancing by the same margin in June. Households spent more at restaurants and on accommodation last month. There was also an increase in spending on prescription medication. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast consumer spending rising 0.4 percent in July. With demand strong last month, prices continued their gradual upward trend. The personal

consumption expenditures (PCE) price index excluding the volatile food and energy components rose 0.2 percent after edging up 0.1 percent in June. That lifted the year-on-year increase in the so-called core PCE price index to 2.0 percent from 1.9 percent in June. The core PCE index is the Fed's preferred inflation measure. It hit the US central bank's 2 percent inflation target in March for the first time since April 2012. Minutes of the Fed's July 31-Aug. 1 meeting published last week showed some policymakers worried "a prolonged period in which the economy operated beyond

potential could give rise to inflationary pressures."

The dollar was largely unchanged against a basket of currencies after the data. US stock index futures were trading lower while prices of US Treasuries were higher.

Strong consumer spending helped fire up economic growth in the second quarter, with gross domestic product rising at a 4.2 percent annualized rate, the fastest in nearly four years and almost double the 2.2 percent pace notched in the January-March quarter.—Reuters

## Business

# Nigeria stuns MTN with \$8.1bn demand, shares plunge 25%

## MTN Nigeria denies any wrongdoing

**JOHANNESBURG:** MTN Group shares plunged as much as 25 percent to a nine year low yesterday, a day after Nigeria ordered the telecoms group's Lagos-based business to hand over \$8.1 billion that the authorities say was illegally sent abroad.

The demand by Nigeria's central bank is the latest setback for MTN in Nigeria, the South African group's most lucrative but increasingly also its most problematic market. It comes two years after MTN, Africa's biggest telecoms company, agreed to pay more than \$1 billion to end a dispute in Nigeria over unregistered SIM cards. The latest case underlines the risks of MTN's strategy to operate in emerging markets, a move that has made it one of post-apartheid South Africa's biggest commercial success stories, with operations in more than 20 countries.

Nigeria's central bank said the funds had been illegally moved abroad because the company's bankers had failed to verify MTN had met all the foreign exchange regulations. MTN denies the allegations.

At 1224 GMT, MTN shares were down 21.05 percent at 84.78 rand, after touching 80.61 rand, a level last seen in 2009. The stock is on track for its biggest one-day decline on record.

The money is more than half of MTN's market capitalization, and analysts said the demand risked further undermining Nigeria's efforts to shake off an image as a risky frontier market for international investors. The crux of the allegation is that MTN used improperly issued certificates to convert shareholders loans in its Nigerian unit

to preference shares in 2007. As a result, dividends paid by MTN Nigeria to the parent company between 2007 and 2015 - amounting to \$8.1 billion - are deemed illegal, and should be returned, Nigeria alleges. "No dividends have been declared or paid by MTN Nigeria other than pursuant to certificates of capital importation issued by our bankers and with the approval of the CBN (Central Bank of Nigeria) as required by law," MTN said in a statement.

### Frontier market

The demand from the central bank has raised worries about doing business in Nigeria, whose finances have been hit by a weak economy and volatile oil prices.

"One wonders why this wasn't brought to MTN's attention years ago. You just can't do business in an environment where these type of things are going to happen," said Greg Davies of boutique investment house Cratos Capital in Johannesburg. The demand also comes ahead of next year's presidential election in Nigeria in which President Muhammadu Buhari, who swept to power on promises of tougher regulations, is seeking re-election.

"This smells like a central bank that is not independent from a government that has big fiscal issues," said Byron Lotter, an analyst at Vestact in Johannesburg. "This is another huge step backwards for Nigeria." Nigeria's central bank also fined four banks, including Standard Bank's unit in Nigeria, Stanbic IBTC, for their role in moving the money out of Africa's biggest econ-



**LAGOS:** Motorists drive under a MTN billboard across the Lagos-Ibadan expressway in Lagos. Nigeria's central bank has yesterday ordered South African telecoms giant MTN to refund \$8.13 billion (6.96 billion euros) that it allegedly illegally repatriated and fined four banks. — AFP

omy. On Wednesday, the central bank said it had fined Stanbic IBTC 1.8 billion naira (\$6 million) for violations of foreign exchange transactions rules and ordered that it return \$2.6 billion it repatriated on behalf clients, including MTN.

Standard Bank said in a statement its unit was "not a beneficiary of any of the remittances

made on behalf of clients and denies any imputation of malfeasance."

Last November, Nigeria's Senate approved a report largely exonerating MTN following an investigation, after the business was accused of illegally repatriating \$14 billion to its parent company. — AFP

## German unemployment holds at record low in August

**FRANKFURT:** Joblessness in Germany held firm at record lows in August, official data showed yesterday, as a robust economy kept companies hiring in Europe's powerhouse.

Just 5.2 percent of workers were unemployed this month, according to seasonally-adjusted figures from the Federal Labor Agency (BA), matching analysts' expectations.

The unemployment rate has not changed since May, remaining at the lowest level since German reunification in 1990. "The labor market continues to develop favorably," said BA chief Detlef Scheele in a statement. In unadjusted terms, less indicative of underlying trends but more prominent in public debate, the joblessness rate increased by 0.1 percent to 5.2 percent, amounting to 2.35 million people out of work. The jobless count typically increases in August as students graduate and register as jobseekers, and companies hold off hiring new staff until after the summer holidays. The German economy, powered by booming domestic demand and a healthy appetite for its goods abroad, is expected to continue its strong run in the coming months, keeping unemployment in check.

The closely-watched Ifo business confidence index this week hit its highest level since February, as the United States and the European Union backed off an escalating trade dispute sparked by President Donald Trump's "America First" policy. Analysts expect third-quarter growth in Europe's top

economy to match the 0.5 percent rise it booked between April and June, when it outpaced the eurozone's 0.4 percent growth. "The number of unemployed people is expected to decrease further by the end of the year," said KfW chief economist Joerg Zeuner. "The job prospects for skilled workers have not been this good for a long time."

### Inflation steady

Inflation in Europe's largest economy Germany held steady at 2.0 percent in August, official data showed yesterday, a figure likely to stoke pressure on the European Central Bank to raise interest rates. The preliminary year-on-year price growth reading from federal statistics authority Destatis was the same level as in July and in line with forecasts from analysts surveyed by data company Factset.

Measured using the Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices—the ECB's preferred yardstick—inflation slowed by 0.2 points compared with last month, to 1.9 percent. But that was still bang on target for the central bank's goal of price growth close to, but below 2.0 percent.

With German and eurozone-wide inflation hovering around the ECB target in recent months, politicians and some economists have been calling on policymakers to raise interest rates.

Central bank governors set rates at historic lows as part of measures designed to stoke growth and power inflation in the eurozone. They insist that they must first wind down their "quantitative easing" program—or mass purchases of government and corporate bonds—before tweaking interest rates. After buying some 2.5 trillion euros (\$2.9 trillion) of bonds, the ECB plans to reduce purchases from the present 30 billion euros per month to 15 billion from October, before ending the program in December. — AFP

## PetroChina's profits double as oil prices soar

**SHANGHAI:** China's biggest oil producer PetroChina said yesterday its net profit more than doubled in the first half of the year as global crude prices soared. Net profit surged 113.7 percent from the same period last year to 27.1 billion yuan (\$4.0 billion), the company said in a statement to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, where it is listed.

PetroChina, 86 percent-owned by its unlisted and government-controlled parent China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC), said the profit surge was due to the rise in crude prices.

"The fundamental supply and demand in the global oil market were on the tight side. The average international oil prices increased substantially as compared with the same period of last year," PetroChina said. Geopolitical risks in oil-producing countries also sent crude prices up, the report said.

"The recovery of crude price was the biggest driver for its strong performance," said Tian Miao, a Beijing-based analyst at Everbright Sun Hung Kai Co, told Bloomberg News.

"PetroChina may continue to benefit from a rise in the price in the second half." Sinopec, the world's biggest oil refiner and the listed unit of state-owned China Petrochemical Corp, said last week that its first half net profit climbed 51.8 percent from the same period last year to 42.4 billion yuan. Sinopec attributed the result to strong domestic growth for oil products. But it also warned that "uncertainty of international crude oil prices will increase due to trade frictions and geopolitical tensions" in the second half this year. — AFP

## Business

# China says trade talks with US should be based on 'equality'

## Beijing announces tax cuts in move to support economy

**CHINA:** China said yesterday that trade issues with the United States can only be resolved through talks as equals, and it will press on with the steady opening of its economy regardless of US actions. "The only correct choice in resolving trade friction between China and the US is through talks based on sincerity and equality," Commerce Ministry spokesman Gao Feng told reporters at a regular briefing.

"Whatever repressive measures the US adopts, China will firmly and steadily push forward reform and opening at its own pace."

Some Chinese firms and foreign companies in China have been affected by the US tariffs and are working to mitigate the impact, Gao said, without elaborating.

"We are confident that foreign trade will maintain steady momentum... and will roll out targeted policies to safeguard the legitimate rights of all firms in China, including foreign-invested firms," said Gao.

China's manufacturing sector is under pressure from higher borrowing costs, cooling investment and consumer spending, and a potential shock to exports as a result of the trade frictions with the United States.

A Reuters poll showed yesterday that activity in the vast factory sector likely slowed for a third straight month in August, as domestic demand remained weak and exporters faced rising uncertainties from the brewing US-China trade war. The head of China's top planning agency also warned that the economy faces increasing risks in the second half

of the year and policymakers need to step up efforts to meet key development goals.

In the meantime, US economic growth was a bit stronger than initially thought in the second quarter, notching its best performance in nearly four years. However, US goods trade deficit widened sharply in July as exports of agricultural products tumbled, indicating trade could be a drag on growth in the third quarter.

### Tax cuts

China's cabinet yesterday announced new measures to cut costs for companies as policymakers look to support growth amid an escalating trade war with the United States that threatens exporters.

The State Council announced tax cuts that should reduce firms' costs by more than 45 billion yuan (\$6.59 billion) this year, state radio reported. Beijing is speeding up infrastructure spending and offering help to smaller companies as China's economy cools and US trade tensions intensify. Beijing has pledged to use a more proactive fiscal policy as economic growth slows and firms struggle with tight liquidity and weak demand, due at least in part to a deleveraging campaign meant to reduce risks.

"Cutting taxes and reducing costs are a key initiative in implementing active fiscal policy and ensuring a stable economy," said the cabinet. At the meeting chaired by Premier Li Keqiang, the cabinet also decided to increase the rate of export tax rebates for some products, and increased the amount banks can lend to



**BEIJING:** Construction workers look at construction sites of various buildings outside the terminal building of the Beijing-Daxing New Airport in Beijing yesterday. The building, which is set for completion in 2019, will be the world's largest single terminal airport. — AFP

small firms and not have to pay taxes on interest income.

Foreign investors also will not have to pay

enterprise or value added taxes on interest income earned in the domestic bond market for three years, the cabinet decided. — Reuters

## Angry French farmers sow Chinese-owned field in protest

**CHATILLON-SUR-INDRE, France:** Mounted on tractors and wielding flares, angry farmers came from all corners of France to say to Chinese investors: get off our land.

More than 100 farmers swarmed on a Chinese-owned field in the Indre region of central France on Wednesday, occupying it in protest at what they say is financial speculation. Waving the flag of France's Farmers' Confederation, they filled a seed drill with rye and sprayed grain in a demonstration they said symbolised the need to "take back the land for the farmers".

"The land is there to provide for farmers' families and to produce food," said Laurent Pinatel, spokesman for the Farmers' Confederation. "The owners have come here to make a profit, to speculate on agriculture while mo-

nopolizing the land." Chinese consortium Hongyang bought 1,700 hectares (4,200 acres) of land in the Indre in 2016, growing wheat for the international market. The group has also snapped up 900 hectares in the nearby Allier region, adding to mounting worries in rural France that their traditional family ownership model is under threat from a huge rise in investor purchases.

Chinese investors have spent at least 76 billion euros (\$89 billion) on French land since 2010, according to figures published by the American Enterprise Institute and Heritage Foundation.

### Punches thrown

As tensions rose at Wednesday's protest in the hamlet of Murs, a farm worker employed by the Chinese landowners punched both a protester and a journalist in the face.

"We have the same problem in the north between Saint-Omer and Dunkirk," complained Jean-Luc Bardel, a farmer who travelled down for the protest, saying he had "barely" managed to buy three hectares due to investors buying swathes of land. "In the agricultural colleges loads of young people in rural areas want to return to the land. But they can't find any, or it's much too expensive, because consortiums have driven up the prices." — AFP

## US, Canada deal on NAFTA 2.0 appears certain

**WASHINGTON:** A deal on an overhaul of the North American Free Trade Agreement appears to be within reach, as Canada and the United States were set to continue negotiations yesterday aimed at getting the pact done by the end of the week. The two sides will resume their talks with a face-to-face between Canada's Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland and US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer as they seek a breakthrough.

Despite US President Donald Trump's threats to leave Canada on the sidelines after announcing a breakthrough with Mexico on Monday, Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau expressed optimism a deal was close.

The White House plans to notify Congress on Friday of its intention to enter into a new free trade agreement, to provide the required 90 days' notice that would allow NAFTA 2.0 to be signed by December 1, when Mexico will install a new president.

But that will mean compromises on both sides on issues that have created friction between the

neighboring countries, notably Canada's dairy trade rules and mechanisms to settle disputes, as the leaders each try to claim victory.

"I think they're going really well," Trump said of the Canada talks, which are "probably on track" to meet the Friday deadline. "I think Canada very much wants to make the deal," he said, but again raised the possibility of doing a separate deal with Mexico.

The crucial phase of talks began Tuesday continuing late into the night, and Trudeau expressed optimism the countries could reach agreement by the end of the week.

"There is a possibility of getting to a good deal for Canada by Friday," Trudeau said. But "no NAFTA deal is better than a bad NAFTA deal."

Mexico paved the way by agreeing to a NAFTA 2.0 with the United States on Monday.

"Our officials are meeting now, and we'll be meeting until very late in the night," Canada's Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland told reporters Wednesday. "We have agreed at the ministerial level, we will reconvene to review the work of officials overnight tomorrow morning."

But she declined to comment on the state of the talks, saying: "Given the extreme intensity and the very fast pace of this conversation, we are not going to conduct our negotiation in public." If the White House notifies Congress by Friday, it then would have until September 30 to submit the final NAFTA agreement. — AFP

## Business

# AI to seep further into everyday life at Berlin's IFA, say analysts

## Voice control, AI to dominate consumer devices this year

**BERLIN:** Electronics manufacturers are betting on artificial intelligence weaving itself ever more tightly into our relationships with their products on show at this year's IFA, the sector's annual Berlin trade fair, analysts predict.

"Voice control and AI are two trends dominating consumer devices industry this year, generating innovation in all segment," Hans Joachim Kamp, president of the GFU federation which co-organises IFA, told a press conference.

South Korean giant Samsung, through a new connected speaker, Home Galaxy, equipped to respond to spoken commands, may send its voice assistant Bixby into battle with Google's Assistant, Amazon's Alexa and Apple's Siri for dominance of living rooms and kitchens.

Such devices made a splash at last year's IFA, making the 2018 show an opportunity to take stock of their reception among the public.

Research firm Gartner predicts that by 2020 some 75 percent of American households will use a voice assistant. Meanwhile, similar technology is extending its reach into connected devices from fridges to lightbulbs, gigantic televisions with ever-higher resolution, and wearables used to track fitness data.

Such mass-market products are the bread-and-butter of IFA, which traditionally contrasts

with its nerdier Las Vegas-based American equivalent CES.

Global sales in the consumer electronics market are estimated to hit 845 billion euros (\$988 billion) this year, up 0.8 percent on the previous year, Kamp said, despite "economic crises and ongoing trade wars".

### Augmented reality

Also from Korea, Samsung rival LG is set to unveil its CLOi SuitBot, a powered exoskeleton that increases the user's leg strength and can be networked with the firm's other robots for complex tasks.

But visitors looking for novelty in their everyday tech companion, the smartphone, will be disappointed. Apple has historically shunned IFA, while Samsung unveiled its top-end Galaxy Note 9 phone just a few weeks ago.

Neither is a major announcement expected from China's Huawei, a star of past years at the Berlin show. Instead, the 2018 edition could be a breakthrough moment for augmented-reality applications that have so far left consumers unimpressed.

The technology superimposes digitally-generated elements like sounds or 2D and 3D images onto real-world scenes, for example in an Ikea app that allows users to virtually try out the



**BERLIN:** A hostess presents the Mavic 2 Pro drone at the booth of DJI during a preview day of the IFA, the world's leading trade show for consumer electronics and home appliances, in Berlin yesterday. — AFP

furniture giant's sofas or bookshelves in their homes.

With new glasses, lenses and helmets, "there are more and more technologies available that

include very high-quality content, whether it's augmented-reality Harry Potter or shopping applications", said Klaus Boehm of consultancy Deloitte. — AFP

## Top trends at Berlin's IFA tech fair

**BERLIN:** Europe's biggest tech fair, Berlin's IFA, opens its doors today with a flood of new product launches. Here are some of the top trends making waves along the aisles:

### Future TV: Higher resolution, bigger screens

With four times as many pixels as today's 4K ultra-high-definition (UHD) screens, the latest 8K TV sets have the potential to wow—but the first compatible content will only reach viewers in 2020 with the Japan Winter Olympics. In the meantime, Europeans are buying bigger and bigger TVs, hitting an average of 50 inches last year.

And wireless or wifi connectivity is moving from the "nice-to-have" to the "must-have" column, with many sets offering on-demand video that users can launch via voice command.

### Earphones get cuddly

Many of the bulky headphones that dominated audio over the past decade have shed wires in favour of Bluetooth connections in the past two years.

And as listeners increasingly opt for smaller earbuds for everyday use, headsets are evolving to fit new niches-like integra-



**BERLIN:** Visitors look at a television installation at the booth of LG during a preview day of the IFA, the world's leading trade show for consumer electronics and home appliances, in Berlin yesterday. — AFP

tion in soft neckbands that won't bother users as they drift off to sleep while bingeing on podcasts.

For shared sounds, TV-connected sound bars or multi-room speaker set-ups sport fewer and fewer buttons as voice commands become the control scheme of choice.

### Laptop or tablet? Why choose?

While ever-lighter and thinner laptops are a constant feature of tech shows, the real action at IFA is elsewhere.

High dynamic range (HDR) monitors increasingly offer gamers and other power users more true-to-life images on their desktop computers, while "convertible"

PCs-useable as either laptop or tablet—are increasingly popular for travel. As for "classic" tablets, sales fell some 18 percent last year according to IFA organizers.

### Wearables quit the gym

After a 2017 that saw wearable gadgets for monitoring fitness take off, this year they're increasingly present elsewhere, for example as trackers on the wrists of children or the elderly. But authorities in some countries are leery of such developments.

Last November, Germany banned a smartwatch aimed at children that allowed parents to remotely activate a microphone to listen in on the playground. — AFP

## Panasonic to move UK HQ on Brexit fears

**TOKYO:** Panasonic plans to move its European headquarters from Britain to the Netherlands later this year over concerns about potential tax issues related to Brexit, a company spokeswoman said yesterday.

"We will move our European headquarters to the Netherlands," the spokeswoman told AFP, confirming a report in the Nikkei business daily about the Japanese electronics giant's decision.

Laurent Abadie, CEO of Panasonic Europe, told the Nikkei that the headquarters would move from outside London to Amsterdam in October. The decision was sparked by fears that Japan could treat Britain as a tax haven after Brexit if London decides to lower its corporate tax rate in a bid to attract businesses, she said. If Japan made the designation, Panasonic could face back taxes levied by Tokyo.

Abadie told the newspaper that Panasonic had been considering a move for the past 15 months, with concerns about post-Brexit barriers to the flow of people and goods also a factor in the decision to move.

Of the 20 to 30 people in the London office, around 10 to 20 employees dealing with auditing and financial operations would move. Investor relations staff would stay put, the newspaper said. Britain is due to leave the EU in March 2019, in a process that has sparked uncertainty in the business sector and concern about the consequences for the country's economy. — AFP



## Business

# IMF agrees to accelerate loan payout to Argentina: Macri

## Agreement fails to soothe markets, peso falls

**BUENOS AIRES:** Argentina's President Mauricio Macri said on Wednesday that the International Monetary Fund has agreed to accelerate funding in support of his government's austerity program, but the move did little to calm the market as the country's currency came under renewed pressure.

IMF chief Christine Lagarde said the Washington-based lender would look at speeding up payments of the bank's \$50 billion loan after talks with Macri earlier Wednesday.

The IMF approved the \$50 billion, three-year standby loan in June. Lagarde said the IMF would work to strengthen its arrangement with Argentina and "re-examine the phasing of the financial program". The "more adverse international market conditions" battering Argentina's economy "had not been fully anticipated," she admitted in a statement.

Macri called for the early release of the funds in a phone call with Lagarde on Wednesday.

It came amid heightened volatility in Argentina's financial and currency markets, which have been battered by uncertainty over inflation, an economic downturn and budget deficits.

The Argentine peso has lost more than 40 percent of its value against the dollar this year. Inflation is projected to surpass 30 percent by the end of 2018.

### Plummeting peso

And the peso continued its decline Wednesday, plummeting 6.99 percent through the day to fall to 34.48 to the dollar by the close.

Macri had sought to soothe the turbulence in a statement before markets opened, assuring Argentines that help is on the way. "Over the past week, we have had new expressions of lack of confidence in the markets, especially over our ability to obtain financing for 2019," Macri acknowledged.

He said the IMF would provide "all the funds necessary to guarantee the fulfillment of the financial program next year." In return for an accelerated loan payment, the government has committed to reducing its budget deficit to 2.7 percent this year, from 3.9 percent in 2017, and to 1.3 percent of GDP next year. Doubts over Argentina's ability to repay heavy government borrowing have grown and analysts said the move reflected growing desperation in Macri's center-right government.

"The announcement was vague and was made by the president, which has its risks," said analyst Lorenzo Sigaut of consultants Ecolatina, who said it would have been more convincing if the announcement had been made by the economy minister.



**BUENOS AIRES:** Currency exchange values are displayed in the buy-sell board of a bureau de exchange in Buenos Aires, on Wednesday. — AFP

Overall doubts of an Argentine default on borrowings had been assuaged "only until Macri's term ends (in December next year) but as of 2020, they remain latent."

"The dollarization of assets is fueled internally by Argentines' distrust of the peso, because the government has promised much on the economy but hasn't delivered," said Sigaut. — AFP

## In Venezuela, new cryptocurrency is nowhere to be found

**ATAPIRIRE, Venezuela:** To hear Venezuela's leftist President Nicolas Maduro tell it, this remote hamlet of 1,300 souls is perched on the cutting edge of an innovation in cryptocurrency.

Located in an isolated savanna in the center of the country, Atapirire is the only town in an area the government says is brimming with 5 billion barrels of petroleum. Venezuela has pledged those reserves as backing for a digital currency dubbed the "petro," which Maduro launched in February. This month he vowed it would be the cornerstone of a recovery plan for the crisis-stricken nation.

But Atapirire residents say they have seen no efforts by the government to tap those reserves. And they have little confidence that their struggling village has a front-row seat to a revolution in finance. "There is no sign of that petro here," said homemaker Igdalia Diaz. She launched into a diatribe about her town's crumbling school, pitted roads, frequent blackouts and perpetually hungry citizens.

It turns out that Venezuela's petro is hard to spot almost anywhere. Over a period of four months, Reuters spoke with a dozen experts on cryptocurrencies and oil-field valuation, traveled to the site of the pledged oil reserves and scoured the coin's digital transaction records in an effort to learn more.

The hunt turned up little evidence of a thriving petro trade. The coin is not sold on any major cryptocurrency exchange. No shops are known to accept it. The few buyers Reuters could locate were those who had posted about their experiences on online cryptocurrency forums. None would identify themselves. One complained of being "scammed." Another told Reuters he had received

his tokens without problem; he blamed US sanctions against Venezuela and "awful press" for hurting the petro's debut.

Senior government officials have given contradictory statements. Maduro says petro sales have already raised \$3.3 billion and that the coin is being used to pay for imports. But Hugbel Roa, a cabinet minister involved in the project, told Reuters on Friday that the technology behind the coin is still in development and that "nobody has been able to make use of the petro ... nor have any resources been received."

The Superintendence of Cryptoassets, the government agency that oversees the petro, is a mystery. Reuters recently visited the Finance Ministry, where the Superintendence is supposed to be housed, but was informed by a receptionist that it "does not yet have a physical presence here."

The Superintendence's website is not functioning. Its president, Joselit Ramirez, did not respond to messages on his personal social media accounts. Phone calls to the Industry Ministry, which oversees the agency, went unanswered.

The Information Ministry did not reply to emails seeking comment. Maduro added to the confusion this month by announcing that salaries, pensions and the exchange rate for Venezuela's decimated currency, the bolivar, are now pegged to the petro. That move stirred bewilderment on Venezuela's streets and among economists and cryptocurrency experts who say the petro-bolivar tether is unworkable.

"There is no way to link prices or exchange rates to a token that doesn't trade, precisely because there is no way to know what it actually sells for," said Alejandro Machado, a Venezuelan computer scientist and cryptocurrency consultant who has closely followed the petro.

The chaos speaks to the desperation and disorganization that are gripping Maduro's government as Venezuela melts down. The petro was supposed to help his administration weather the hyperinflation that has rendered the bolivar all but worthless. He vowed that a cryptocurrency, which allows financial operations to be carried out anonymously, would enable Venezuela to undermine US financial sanctions and raise hard currency. — Reuters

## IMF supports South African land reform provided it's 'rules based'

**PRETORIA:** The International Monetary Fund gave its full backing to South Africa's land reform plan yesterday, as long as the highly contentious process is transparent and based on the constitution.

The Fund's senior resident representative in South Africa Montfort Mlachila told Reuters that the reform must not damage farm output to ensure South Africans continue to have reliable food supplies.

President Cyril Ramaphosa has said the ruling African National Congress (ANC) plans to change the constitution to allow the expropriation of land without compensation, as most of it is still owned by members of the white minority. "We are in full support of the need to undertake land reforms in order to address the issues of inequality," Mlachila said in an interview.

Nearly a quarter century after the end of apartheid, the country remains racially divided and unequal, and the ANC plan aims to improve the lives of the many poor black South Africans. The debate erupted again last week when US President Donald Trump said he had asked Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to study South African "land and farm seizures" and the "killing of farmers". South Africa accused Trump of stoking racial divisions. — Reuters

## Sports

# Kenya's Okeyo banned for life for taking Nike money

## Ordered to pay \$50,000 fine to Athletics Kenya

**LONDON:** Former senior Kenyan athletics official David Okeyo has been banned from the sport for life and fined \$50,000 after being found guilty of diverting hundreds of thousands of dollars of sponsorship payments for his personal use.

Okeyo, a former Secretary-General and Vice President of Athletics Kenya (AK) as well as a member of the IAAF Council, and Joseph Kinyua, a former Treasurer of Athletics Kenya, were investigated by the sport's ethics board in relation to payments made by US sportswear company Nike between 2003 and 2015.

In a 74-page judgement released yesterday, the Board found that on many occasions Okeyo did not disclose to AK the withdrawals of the Nike money he made from AK bank accounts and he could also not show any evidence of what the money had been used for.

He was thus found to have breached the ethics code on 10 occasions after taking sponsorship money that "could have been better directed to support the development of the sport of athletics in Kenya" and expelled him from his position on the IAAF Council.

He was ordered to pay the \$50,000 fine to AK. Kinyua was found by the board to have "engaged in similar conduct" but as he was not an IAAF official at the time, it was deemed that he was not bound by the ethics rules in place at the time and hence he escaped sanction.

The two men, along with former AK President Isaiah Kiplagat, were provisionally suspended at the end of 2015. Kiplagat has since died and consequently the ethics board dropped its investigation into his activities. Okeyo and Kinyua deny wrongdoing, saying that the money was legitimate payment for their

own expenses and expertise and for payments they personally made to athletes.

Kinyua told Reuters yesterday that he was happy with the decision and that "justice was done." Okeyo told Reuters: "Yes, I have read the decision of the Athletics Integrity Unit and my lawyers will advise me on the next course of action."

At the time of their suspensions Nike said the company had acted with integrity in its dealings with AK and that the "expectation and understanding" of the sponsorship deal was that the funds would be used to support and service the teams and athletes.

The judgement, however, showed that Nike had clearly been concerned about how the funds were being used and that the ethics panel was satisfied that in many, though not all of the instances it investigated, funds were being siphoned off.

"In failing to disclose the honorarium and service fee payments to the membership of AK, the panel is comfortably satisfied that the defendants diverted funds of AK for their own direct or indirect personal benefit, as charged," the Board said in its findings.

"In the view of the panel, Mr Okeyo's conduct in failing as Secretary General of AK ... constituted conduct likely to bring the sport of athletics into disrepute." On one occasion in 2010 Okeyo withdrew \$200,000 from AK accounts, saying subsequently that the money was used by AK to promote its athletics programmes.

However, the panel said that Okeyo could not produce any evidence to show that the executive board had approved this course of action, "nor did he provide any details as to what programmes had been supported, nor did he furnish any evidence by way of payment vouchers or supporting invoices to corroborate his ac-



Okeyo banned from athletics for life for siphoning off funds from Nike sponsorship deal.

count." The report added: "Under cross-examination, when asked to explain the purpose for the withdrawal of \$200,000, Mr Okeyo could provide no explanation, other than that he had been instructed to withdraw the money."

Okeyo has also been charged with the extortion of money from athletes but the ethics panel will issue a separate decision in relation to that charge. — Reuters

## Former world boxing champ Taylor arrested for assault: Report

**WASHINGTON:** Former world middleweight boxing champion Jermain Taylor was arrested Wednesday on domestic assault charges, Arkansas television station KATV reported. Taylor, who turned 40 earlier this month, was booked in Pulaski County Jail on charges of third degree domestic battery and aggravated assault, according to an arrest report seen by the Little Rock station.

The police report said Taylor was taken into custody at his home after he punched a woman, held a knife to her throat and threatened to kill her. Area police arrested Taylor in July of last year after he was accused of attacking a woman he was dating, police reports said, with prosecutors later dropping the charges.

The report also said Taylor was given a 19-year suspended sentence in three separate cases, a battery incident at a substance abuse treatment facility and aggravated assault charges from a Martin Luther King Day parade in Little Rock in January 2015 plus battery and threatening a woman in August 2014.

Two months later, Taylor fought the final bout of his career, defeating Australian Sam Soliman



Jermain Taylor

at Biloxi, Mississippi to win the International Boxing Federation middleweight crown for the second time.

He was later stripped of the crown for being unable to defend it due to legal issues and a ring return never materialized, ending his career with a record of 33-4 with one drawn.

Taylor won a light-middleweight bronze medal at the 2000 Sydney Olympics and won his first 25 professional fights, defeating Bernard Hopkins for the undisputed middleweight crown in 2005 and winning a rematch to reach 25-0.

His next fight was a draw with fellow American Winky Wright and his only career losses came soon after, to American Kelly Pavlik in 2007 and 2008 and to Britain's Carl Froch and German Arthur Abaraham in 2009. — AFP

## NZ's Moody ruled out of Rugby Championship with broken thumb

**WELLINGTON:** All Blacks prop Joe Moody has been ruled out of the rest of the Rugby Championship after he broke his thumb in their 40-12 victory over Australia tomorrow.

Uncapped tighthead prop Angus Ta'avao has been called into the squad, with Karl Tu'inukuafe and Tim Perry to cover Moody's absence on the loosehead side of the scrum. "Moods has had an x-ray which has revealed a fracture in his left thumb," All Blacks coach Steve Hansen said in a statement.

"He doesn't need surgery but will be in a cast for six weeks and, unfortunately, will miss the rest of the ... Rugby Championship. "The good news is he'll be back in time for the northern tour to Japan and Europe."

Ta'avao, who was called in because of an injury to Jeffrey Toomaga-Allen, is the second prop to have been drafted into the All Blacks after starting the season without a Super Rugby contract.

Tu'inukuafe also started the season without a full-time professional contract but was



Joe Moody

called into the All Blacks squad as injury cover for their test series against France in June. Both were picked up by the Waikato Chiefs after all six of the Hamilton-based side's originally contracted props were ruled out due to long-term injury.

"Angus had a big season for the Chiefs during the ... Super Rugby season, was part of a very good Chiefs pack and has made big strides on the technical aspects of his position," Hansen added. The All Blacks have won their first two matches of the Rugby Championship with bonus-point victories over the Wallabies to retain the Bledisloe Cup. The All Blacks re-assemble on Sunday in Nelson to prepare for their clash against Argentina on Sept 8. — Reuters

# Yelich hits for cycle in wild Milwaukee Brewers win

## Dodgers pound three homers, dump Rangers

**CINCINNATI:** Christian Yelich hit for the cycle while tying a franchise record with six hits, and Jesus Aguilar slugged the tiebreaking homer in the 10th inning as the Milwaukee Brewers posted a wild 13-12 victory over the host Cincinnati Reds on Wednesday night at Great American Ball Park. Yelich drove in three runs and scored twice while becoming the eighth player in franchise history to hit for the cycle. He is the first Milwaukee player to do so since George Kottaras against the Houston Astros on Sept. 3, 2011. Mike Moustakas was 4-for-6 with a homer and three RBIs, and Lorenzo Cain was 3-for-6 with three runs as Milwaukee won for the sixth time in its past nine games. The Brewers are five games behind the first-place Chicago Cubs in the National League Central while maintaining possession of the NL's second wild-card spot. The Brewers collected 22 hits, the most pivotal coming when Aguilar sent a 2-1 pitch from Reds right-hander Raisel Iglesias (2-3) over the center field wall in the 10th for his 30th homer of the season.

### PIRATES 2, CARDINALS 0

Trevor Williams struck out a career-high eight batters in six scoreless innings as visiting Pittsburgh ended a two-game losing streak with a five-hit shutout of St. Louis. Starling Marte and Gregory Polanco each hit an RBI single in the fifth for Pittsburgh, which had lost six of seven. The Cardinals had their two-game winning streak snapped and saw Matt Carpenter leave the game in the fourth inning because of nausea.

### CUBS 2, METS 1 (GAME 1, 11 INNINGS)

Ben Zobrist laced the game-winning RBI single in the bottom of the 11th inning as host Chicago edged New York in the completion of a game suspended by rain Tuesday night. The game was halted due to heavy rains on Tuesday just as the Mets began to bat in the top of the 10th inning and suspended just under an hour later. Javier Baez led off the 11th by drawing a walk against Paul Sewald (0-5). Victor Caratini then laid down a bunt fielded by Sewald, who overthrew first base as Baez raced to third and Caratini went to second. After Kyle Schwarber was intentionally walked to load the bases, Sewald struck out Albert Almora Jr. before giving way to Daniel Zamora, who gave up the winning single to Zobrist.

### METS 10, CUBS 3 (GAME 2)

Todd Frazier hit a grand slam in the first inning and finished with five RBIs for New York, which snapped out of an offensive funk to rout Chicago in the two teams' regularly scheduled game. With the win, the Mets snapped a three-game losing streak and salvaged the finale of the three-game series. The loss snapped a seven-game winning streak for the Cubs, who have the best record in the National League (78-54) and lead the St. Louis Cardinals by 4 1/2 games in the NL Central. The Cubs remained within striking distance until the late innings, but the Mets scored four times in the seventh and twice in the ninth.

### ASTROS 5, ATHLETICS 4

Tyler White clubbed his first career walk-off home run, and Houston won the rubber match of a critical three-game series with visiting Oakland. White smacked his 10th homer off Athletics right-hander Jeurys Familia (8-5), who was ahead in the count 0-2. White lofted a slider into the Crawford Boxes in left field as the Astros reclaimed their 2 1/2-game lead over the A's in the American League West. White's walk-off homer was the 81st in the major leagues this year, setting a single-season record. The previous mark of 80 was recorded in 2004.

### RED SOX 14, MARLINS 6

Boston scored 11 runs in the seventh inning and routed visiting Miami. The Red Sox trailed 5-3 entering the bottom of the seventh, when they pounded 12 hits off four Miami relievers, including Adam Conley (3-4). Red Sox starter David Price lasted just three innings, coming out of the game after he was hit on his left wrist by an Austin Dean line drive that was clocked at 103 mph. Price sustained a contusion. The Red Sox announced X-rays on Price's wrist were negative and that he would undergo further testing.

### WHITE SOX 4, YANKEES 1

Ryan LaMarre enjoyed the best game of his career when he homered and drove in four runs as Chicago defeated New York at Yankee Stadium. LaMarre helped the White Sox win a series in New York against the Yankees for the first time since August 2005 by hitting a two-run double in the second, an RBI double in the fourth and a solo homer in the seventh. The Yankees fell to 16-7 in their past 23 games since getting swept in a four-game series at Fenway Park from Aug. 2-5. New York also dropped 7 1/2 games behind Boston in the American League East.

### PHILLIES 8, NATIONALS 6

Jose Bautista hit the go-ahead RBI single in the seventh inning, Carlos Santana hit a grand slam, and host Philadelphia downed Washington. Bautista reached base four times with the single against Jimmy Cordero (1-1), a hit by pitch and two walks as the Phillies avoided being swept in the three-game series. It was Bautista's first start in right field for the Phillies, who acquired him Tuesday in a trade with the New York Mets.

### RAYS 8, BRAVES 5

C.J. Cron went 4-for-5, ending up a triple shy of the cycle, to help Tampa Bay to a win at Atlanta and split a two-game series. Tampa Bay has won nine of its past 10 games. The Braves won the season series 3-1. The game started 41 minutes late because of rain and was delayed for 66 minutes after the Rays batted in the sixth inning. First-place Atlanta saw its National League East lead slip to 3 1/2 games over the Philadelphia Phillies.

### DIAMONDBACKS 3, GIANTS 1

Zack Godley took a shutout into the eighth inning, and Steven Souza Jr. drove in two runs with



**CINCINNATI:** Erik Kratz #15 of the Milwaukee Brewers tags out Eugenio Suarez #7 of the Cincinnati Reds in the 7th inning at Great American Ball Park on Wednesday in Cincinnati, Ohio. — AFP

a home run and a double, allowing Arizona to salvage one win in its three-game series at San Francisco. Archie Bradley struck out Joe Panik at the end of an eight-pitch battle with the potential tying runs aboard in the eighth, preserving a two-run Arizona lead and sending the Diamondbacks to a win that allowed them to regain sole possession of first place in the National League West over idle Colorado. The Diamondbacks now move on to Los Angeles to face the third-place Dodgers in a four-game series. The Dodgers will begin the series just one game back in the West.

### DODGERS 3, RANGERS 1

Cody Bellinger, Manny Machado and Yasmani Grandal hit home runs, and Alex Wood pitched seven scoreless innings as Los Angeles completed a two-game sweep at Texas. The Dodgers won all four interleague games played against the Rangers this season, and they won their fifth consecutive game overall to match a season high. Wood (8-6) gave up four hits with five strikeouts and two walks. Dodgers closer Kenley Jansen, who has given up runs in each of his four outings since coming off the disabled list after returning from an irregular heartbeat, was given the night off. Scott Alexander pitched a scoreless eighth inning, and Kenta Maeda needed 27 pitches in the ninth to record his first save.

### PADRES 8, MARINERS 3

Hunter Renfroe had a homer and four RBIs, and Eric Hosmer, Manuel Margot and rookie Luis Urias added three hits apiece as host San Diego beat Seattle to sweep a two-game interleague series. Padres rookie Joey Lucchesi (7-7) allowed one run on six hits and two walks with nine strikeouts over 6 2/3 innings. Margot fell a triple

shy of the cycle as the Padres had 13 hits off Seattle starter Erasmo Ramirez (1-3) and reliever Roenis Elias.

### TWINS 4, INDIANS 3

Robbie Grossman singled home the tying and go-ahead runs in the seventh inning as visiting Minnesota edged Cleveland. The Twins trailed 3-2 going into the seventh, and Indians reliever Cody Allen (4-6) retired the first two batters before two walks and a single loaded the bases. Grossman then ripped a line drive to right field to drive in two runs. The Indians, runaway leaders in the American League Central over the second-place Twins, had a two-game winning streak snapped, and they have lost five of seven games. Minnesota snapped a four-game losing streak.

### ORIOLES 10, BLUE JAYS 5

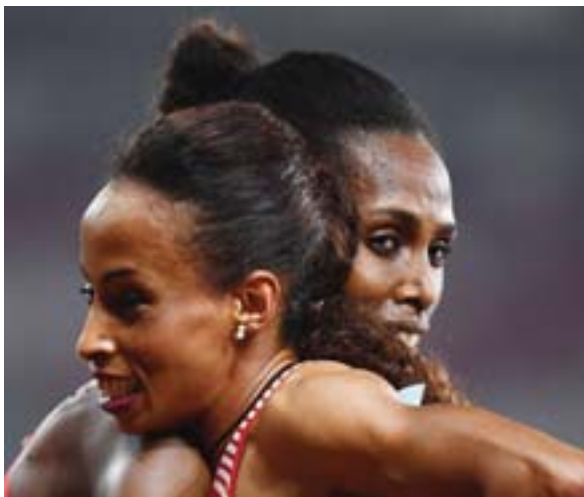
Adam Jones hit a grand slam and finished with five RBIs as host Baltimore rallied from an early four-run deficit to defeat Toronto. The win gave the Orioles a sweep of the Blue Jays in the three-game series, the first time in 2018 Baltimore has scored a three-game sweep. Jones finished the night 2-for-5 after getting four hits in Tuesday's win. His grand slam in the fifth gave the Orioles a 5-4 lead.

### ROYALS 9, TIGERS 2

Adalberto Mondesi tripled, homered and tied his career high with four RBIs to lead Kansas City in a rout of visiting Detroit. Drew Butera had a pair of doubles while scoring a run and driving in another. Brett Phillips drove in two runs and scored one, as the bottom three hitters in the Royals' lineup had seven RBIs. Kansas City starter Danny Duffy (8-11) gave up just one run on two hits while walking three and striking out six in six innings. — Reuters

## Sports

## SNIPPETS



# Unified Korea trounce Taiwan to reach Asian hoops final

## Koreans advance to face China in this weekend's gold medal game

**JAKARTA:** A joint Korean women's basketball team slammed Taiwan 89-66 to reach the Asian Games final yesteryday, helped by Las Vegas razzmatazz and some good, old, northern grit. Roared on by around 100 fans waving Korean unification flags, North Korean Ro Suk Yong joint top-scored with 17 points in a blow-out victory for the defending champions in Jakarta.

The Koreans advance to face China in this weekend's gold medal game after they outgunned Japan 86-74 in the second semi-final. Beanpole centre Park Ji-su chipped in with 10 points—one of six Korean players in double figures—in her first game since being released by WNBA team the Las Vegas Aces.

A noisy section of Korean fans waving flags bearing the blue Korean unification flag with the slogan "One dream, one Korea", and wearing matching T-shirts, serenaded the players throughout. As chants of "Uri nun hana da" (we are one) echoed around the arena, the Koreans were sparked by a captain's performance from Lim Yung-hui—who at 38 is old enough to be the mother of some of her team-mates.

Lim also scored 17 points, along with Park Hye-jin, in a one-sided encounter. "This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," Korea forward Kim Han-byul told AFP. "It's definitely historical—just the fact the North Korean girls are able to play with us," added Kim, who was born Kimberly Roberson to a Korean mother and an American father in Indiana.

"I'm mixed myself and I came here with an open slate, that's what our whole team did. We show each other photos of our families, they're really nice girls—my mum's met them! "It's a big, big step in the right direction. Hopefully it will propel something in the future for maybe coming together again."

### STATE-APPROVED HAIRCUTS

Kim looked every inch the street baller with her bleach-blond hair and headband, while her northern cousins sported sensible, state-approved cropped cuts and no-nonsense ponytails.

But the hard-working Ro, one of three Pyongyang-based players on the team, had travelling Korean media eating out of her hand after the game.

"When you are united good things happen," said the 25-year-old. "I've never felt such warm support on a basketball court," added Ro, who paid tribute to Park's contribution. "Park Ji-su had a big impact—she's like a tree, just blocks everything."

## Heptathlete wins Asian gold with 12 toes, calls for new shoes

**JAKARTA:** Being born with six toes on each foot didn't stop India's Swapna Barman winning the Asian Games heptathlon—but she immediately issued a plea for shoes that actually fit. Barman led going into the last of the seven heptathlon disciplines, the 800m—her weakest event—and managed to cling on despite a fourth-placed finish as her closest rival came in last.

The Indian athlete, who still has all dozen of her toes, said every step of the race had been excruciating as she pushed through the pain barrier in her ill-fitting footwear.

"Normal shoes don't work for me. There is lot of pain when I wear any shoe, spikes or anything," she said after clinching gold late on Wednesday. "I hope they make special shoes for me because I have a lot of pain."

"Even warm-up shoes hurt, so forget about spikes." Barman, 21, shot to attention last year by taking gold at the Asian Championships in India. She then suffered a string of ankle and back injuries that kept her out for most of a year, but came back in time to finish second in India's Asian Games qualifiers.

In Jakarta she won her specialist high jump, as well as the shot put and javelin, to record a personal best score of 6,026, despite



**JAKARTA:** Unified Korea's Ro Suk Yong (C) tries to drive past Taiwan's Lin Yuting (L) and Wang Weilin (R) in the women's basketball semi-final match between Taiwan and Unified Korea during the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta yesterday. — AFP

Park provided the highlight of the game with a gnarly spin move on the baseline, topped off with a finger-roll Allen Iverson would have been proud of. North and South Korea have also formed united teams in canoeing and rowing at the Asian Games in the latest sign of thawing relations on the troubled peninsula.

The two countries marched together at the opening ceremony in Jakarta after forming their first-ever unified Olympic team—a joint women's ice hockey side—for February's Winter Games in Pyeongchang. However, Taiwan coach Albert Wagner was less enthralled at Korea's modern-day version of the ping pong diplomacy that brought the United States and China closer in the seventies. "Obviously it would be great if it were for the right reasons and not just to get good players," the American told AFP. "It would be historical if they came together as a country, not just as a convenience."

China had too much firepower for Japan, American-based forward Shao Ting scoring 16 points in a comfortable victory. "It's been a hard road to get to the final," said Shao. "We will cherish this precious opportunity to take home a gold medal." — AFP



**JAKARTA:** Gold medallist Swapna Barman of India celebrates during the medal ceremony for the women's heptathlon at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta yesterday. — AFP

her woes on the track. From a poor family in the east Indian town of Jalpaiguri, she said she has never considered surgery to remove the additional digits, blaming the extra width of her feet for the pain. Her feet were not her only concern as she raced to victory on Wednesday night—she also had to contend with acute toothache, which she blame on her sweet tooth. "I used to eat a lot of chocolates so have a lot of pain in one of my teeth before the start of the competition," she told reporters, wearing heavy strapping on her chin. "First day I thought I will not be able to do it because there was so much pain. But I had to do it because of all these days of hard work." — AFP

## Sports

# Amir congratulates Al-Kharafi, Al-Mesri on winning medals at 2018 Asian Games

## Information minister praises Al-Kharafi, Al-Mesri for their performances



**JAKARTA:** Gold medalist Uzbekistan's Shermukhammad Jandreev (2nd L), silver medalist Uzbekistan's Yakhyo Imamov (L) and bronze medalists Kazakhstan's Yersultan Muzapparov (2nd R) and Kuwait's Hussein Al-Mesri pose during the awards ceremony for the men's-90kg kurash event. — AFP



**JAKARTA:** Silver medalist from Qatar Ali Althani (L), gold medalist from Kuwait Ali Al-Kharafi (C) and bronze medalist from Saudi Arabia Ramzy Hamad Alduhami attend the medal ceremony for the individual final round jumping event at the equestrian competition. — AFP

**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti jockey Ali Al-Kharafi won the gold medal yesterday at the equestrian jumping event during the 2018 Asian Games held in Jakarta. Kuwaiti wrestler Hussein Al-Mesri also won bronze in Asian tourney. Al-Mesri won in Kurash wrestling competition (below 90 kg).

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah congratulated yesterday Kuwaiti jockey Ali Al-Kharafi on winning a gold medal at the equestrian jumping event

during the 2018 Asian Games in Indonesia. His Highness the Amir praised the achievement and wished the athlete the best of luck in future competitions.

His Highness the Amir also cabled Kuwaiti wrestler Hussein Al-Mesri, expressing congratulations on winning the bronze medal in Kurash wrestling competition. HH the Amir praised the champion's sports accomplishment hoping to see him making further achievements.

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

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Information Minister and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri congratulated the Kuwaiti jockey Ali Al-Kharafi for winning the gold medal at the equestrian jumping event and

Hussein Al-Mesri for winning the bronze during the 2018 Asian Games held in Jakarta, Indonesia. Kuwaiti athletes occupying top ranks in such tournaments is a result of the State of Kuwait's care for the youth and furnishing them with all possible measures to express their creativity capacities, the minister added. Kuwait has so far bagged six medals at the Asian Games with three gold, one silver and two bronze. — KUNA

## Son seeking gold with one eye on Spurs progress

**JAKARTA:** Son Heung-min is one Asian Games win away from earning gold and an exemption from military service but the South Korean forward is also keeping a close eye on how his Tottenham Hotspur team mates are doing in the Premier League-when he can keep his eyes open that is.

Son slept through Spurs' 3-0 win over Manchester United on Monday night having earlier played all 120 minutes of South Korea's 4-3 extra-time win over Uzbekistan. "It was too late, it was two o'clock in the morning here so I was sleeping but I was very happy when I saw the result," the 26-year-old said.

"I was very happy for that and very proud of my team mates. I'm here but I'm still watching my team mates, so I was very happy." Son made one appearance from the bench for Spurs before linking up with South Korea's Asian Games squad earlier this month. Spurs are currently second in the Premier League, behind Liverpool on goal difference, after winning all three of their opening fixtures.

He will not return to Tottenham until the middle of September as he is set to

join up with the senior national side next week for friendlies against Costa Rica and Chile and he knows he may have to bid his team to reclaim a place in Mauricio Pochettino's starting line-up.

"I've missed already three or four weeks and we have the international break before I will be back," he said. "I'm ready for that. Even when I don't play I will be waiting for my chance. We're one team and I have to be ready to play for my team."

Despite his exertions for his country in sweltering Indonesian conditions, Son said he would be in good shape for the restart to the domestic season

"Of course, it's a bit different with the weather and the humidity, and the pitches are also different, but I'll be ready when I go back to Tottenham," he added.

All that stands between South Korea and the gold medal is a win over fierce rivals Japan and while Son was reluctant to talk too much about the prospect of winning a military exemption he was in no doubt as to the importance of rounding out the tournament with the victory. — Reuters

## OCA hopes to see Kuwait back in Olympic fold for 2020

**JAKARTA:** Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) Director General Husain Al-Musallam has told Reuters he hopes his native Kuwait will implement a roadmap proposed by the International Olympic Committee that will see it return to the Olympic fold ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Games. Kuwait's national Olympic committee has been banned since 2015 after the government was accused of interference with a new sports law. As a result, Kuwaiti athletes had to compete under the Olympic flag at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games and they have had no access to IOC funds.

Earlier this month, the IOC provisionally lifted the ban shortly before the start of the Asian Games "as a gesture of goodwill to recognise the progress accomplished", allowing the country to compete under its own flag in Jakarta.

Al-Musallam said in an interview on Wednesday that several other countries had faced the same problem, the difference was Kuwait has been grappling with the issue for the last three decades. "This issue is not only in Kuwait but has happened in many other countries in the world. We have had the same issue before in India, Pakistan and Korea," he said. "All issues were solved after a year or two and things have moved forward.

Kuwait was also suspended in 2010 over a similar dispute but reinstated before the 2012 London Olympics. The country has had more than 15 national sports bodies suspended over the years, including its football federation, due to a controversial sports law.

Al-Musallam, a close ally of OCA President and FIFA Council member Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah, another Kuwaiti, said the country's government was focused on getting the ban lifted in time for the Tokyo Games. "For me, as a Kuwaiti, I am very proud that the team participated under the flag at the Asian Games and the athletes performed well in short notice," the 58-year-old said. "We need to work together in Kuwait, respect the minimum requirements and principles of the Olympic movement. "I hope we will work together to hold elections according to the roadmap proposed by the IOC and this will be helpful for everybody."

"The (Asian) Games have run during World War II, the Korean war and all nations have participated," he said. "The political problems during the India-Pakistan-Bangladesh war, the Afghanistan problems, Vietnam war, Iraq war - the Games have run. Despite all these challenges the Olympic movement in Asia is united and working well." — Reuters

## Sports

# Nadal speeds through, Wawrinka, del Potro win

## Murray still fighting to find full fitness after hip surgery in January

**NEW YORK:** World number one and defending champion Rafael Nadal steamed into the third round on another scorching day at the US Open on Wednesday with a straight-sets win over Vasek Pospisil. Nadal, spared the worst of the heat thanks to his late-night start on Arthur Ashe Stadium, sped past Pospisil 6-3, 6-4, 6-2. His only hiccup came in the second set, when he dropped his serve to fall 2-4 down. "The conditions are tough," Nadal said. "It was important to start very well with that break. To win in straight sets is always very positive, especially in these conditions. It's almost midnight, very happy about the victory."

Former champions Stan Wawrinka and Juan Martin del Potro also advanced, while 2012 winner Andy Murray, like Wawrinka back at Flushing Meadows after missing last year through injury, was bounced by Fernando Verdasco.

Wawrinka survived searing mid-day heat and a spirited Ugo Humbert. "I knew it would be a difficult match," said Wawrinka, who was pleased to find himself feeling fit after prevailing 7-6 (7/5), 4-6, 6-3, 7-5 in three hours and 21 minutes.

"My level is there. I'm playing really good tennis," added Wawrinka, who was unable to defend his 2016 title after undergoing two knee surgeries last year. "I think there is a good chance that I'm playing better in the next round," said the Swiss, who will face Canadian Milos Raonic for a place in the last 16. Meanwhile Murray, the 2012 US Open winner, who was playing his first Grand Slam in 14 months, is still fighting to find full fitness after hip surgery in January. He gave himself a mixed review

after a 7-5, 2-6, 6-4, 6-4 loss to Spain's Fernando Verdasco, whose only win over Murray in 14 prior meetings was at the 2009 Australian Open. "I think some of the tennis I played today was some of the best I've played since I had the surgery or since I came back," said Murray.

He was disappointed to surrender the first set after holding a set point, but pleased he had enough in the tank to push Verdasco through five break points in the final game before the Spaniard converted his third match point.

Even with his current limitations, Murray is a dangerous opponent, Verdasco said. "He's an unbelievable player, so talented. No matter how much his hip hurts or whatever, he's going to fight and he's going to put all the balls he can in and run," Verdasco said after earning a third-round meeting with 2009 champion del Potro. The third-seeded Argentinian, who career was nearly ended by wrist injuries after his maiden Grand Slam triumph here, defeated American Denis Kudla 6-3, 6-1, 7-6 (7/4). Del Potro was delighted to get through in three sets, and not spend too long in the steamy sunshine.

Organizers again implemented an extreme heat policy that allowed both men and women a 10-minute heat break in matches extended beyond straight sets. Stefanos Tsitsipas, the Greek 20-year-old who came in with high expectations after beating four top 10 players en route to the Toronto Masters final, said the heat took a mental as well as physical toll.

### BREATHING HEAT

"You don't have fresh air to breathe-you



**NEW YORK:** Spain's Rafael Nadal returns the ball to Canada's Vasek Pospisil during their men's singles tennis match on day 3 of the 2018 US Open at USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York. — AFP

breathe this heat that's coming, the moisture that's in the air. So you feel like you are empty," said the 15th-seed, who fell 6-4, 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 to Russian Daniil Medvedev.

Medvedev, who won his second ATP title of the season at Winston-Salem last week, booked a third-round meeting with 20th-seeded Croatian Borna Coric, a 7-6 (7/4), 6-2, 6-3 winner over

Spain's Roberto Carballes Baena. Fifth-seeded South African Kevin Anderson, runner-up to Nadal last year and a runner-up to Novak Djokovic at Wimbledon, made quick work of France's Jeremy Chardy, 6-2, 6-4, 6-4. Anderson next faces rising Canadian star Denis Shapovalov, who labored to a 6-4, 4-6, 5-7, 7-6 (7/2), 6-4 victory over Italian Andreas Seppi. — AFP

## Serena, Venus to clash for 30th time as Cornet shrugs off US Open sexism storm

**NEW YORK:** Serena and Venus Williams set up a 30th career meeting on Wednesday as the US Open reeled from a sexism row sparked when a player changed her shirt on court. Six-time champion Serena eased into today's third round encounter against her sister with a 6-2, 6-2 win over German world number 101 Carina Witthoef on the back of 30 winners and 13 aces.

Venus, the 2000 and 2001 champion, made the third round for the 17th time with a 6-4, 7-5 victory over Camila Giorgi of Italy. Today's match will be the earliest the sisters have met at a Slam since the 1998 Australian Open in what was also their first ever clash. It will be their sixth face-off in New York.

"Today will be incredibly hard," said Serena before jokingly hitting back at Venus's claim that when they last met at a Slam in the final of the 2017 Australian Open her sister had an advantage as it was "two against one."

That was a reference to Serena being in the early stages of pregnancy with her daughter Olympia. "I guess I had a little advantage but it's going to be hard for me on Friday," said 36-year-old Serena. Since Venus won their first ever clash in Australia, Serena, bidding for a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title, has

built up an advantage over the last two decades, enjoying a 17-12 head-to-head superiority.

"It's a tough match to have so early in the tournament. We would have liked to have played later but it is what it is. It's not the end of the world," added Serena. Venus, 38, and playing her 80th Slam, notched up her 775th career win by seeing off Giorgi. However, she was reluctant to discuss Serena when asked to describe the specific challenges. "You're beating it up now. Any other questions about anything else?" she barked. Defending champion and third seed Sloane Stephens also made the third round with a marathon 4-6, 7-5, 6-2 win over Ukraine qualifier Anhelina Kalinina.

Stephens triumphed after 2 hours and 46 minutes on Arthur Ashe Stadium and will next face two-time Australian Open champion and former world number one Victoria Azarenka. The American needed treatment on a blistered right hand in the second set as the crushing effect of the heat and humidity took its toll. However, the 10-minute heat-break between the second and third sets proved a timely boost. "I just sat on the floor, changed my outfit, had two bites of Sushi and a slushie," said the 25-year-old Stephens after seeing off world number 134 Kalinina.

Azarenka, the 2012 and 2013 runner-up, made the third round for the first time in three years with a 6-1, 6-2 win against Australian 25th seed Daria Gavrilova.

### '10,000 TIMES WORSE'

Azarenka was amongst the first players to condemn the United States Tennis Association (USTA) for handing French player Alize Cornet a code violation for changing her shirt on court on Tuesday. The incident sparked an immediate storm over sexism. The Belarusian said the USTA displayed double stan-



**NEW YORK:** Serena Williams of the US runs to hit a return to Carina Witthoef (out of frame) of Germany during Day 3 of the 2018 US Open Women's Singles match at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York. — AFP

dards for sanctioning Cornet while male players routinely remove their shirts courtside when the heat and humidity bite.

"If I would say my true feelings, it would be bleeped out, because it was ridiculous," said Azarenka. The USTA admitted they were wrong to hand Cornet a warning for slipping off her shirt on court after realizing she had put the garment on back-to-front during a heat-break. Cornet said she was stunned that the furore had caused so much controversy and was happy to accept the USTA's apology. "I think it's very fair from them to apologise to me. — AFP

## Sports

# Gattuso's Milan face Roma test in San Siro clash of US-owned clubs

## Ronaldo will be looking for his first goal for champions Juventus

**MILAN:** Gennaro Gattuso's AC Milan will look to put last weekend's collapse against Napoli behind them when they host Roma in their first game of the season at the San Siro today. Roma are also desperate for a win to bury any doubts about their title credentials after battling back to draw 3-3 with Atalanta at the Stadio Olimpico last Monday.

Both sides are now in US hands—AC Milan owned by billionaire Paul Singer's Elliot Management and Roma controlled by American businessman James Pallotta—and need three points to keep pace with Juventus and Napoli, who boast six points apiece after two rounds.

Milan—with a game in hand after their opener against Genoa was postponed—suffered a 3-2 defeat at Serie A runners-up Napoli despite holding a two-goal lead last weekend. It was a blow for Gattuso in his first match against his former Milan coach, Carlo Ancelotti, and he believes Roma will provide another “tough” test.

“We need to prepare well for Roma because they are a very tough team,” said Gattuso. “We need to repeat the many positive things we did at Napoli because not every team goes to the San Paolo and plays the way we did, with courage. “Of course, we need to correct the things that didn't work out.” Roma, meanwhile, battled back from a nightmare first half against Atalanta, with coach Eusebio Di Francesco needing surgery after punching the wall in the dugout during the game and breaking a bone in his left hand. Passions should be running high

again in what is new-look Milan's first home game of the season in front of an estimated 60,000 expectant fans at the San Siro. Former club legends Leonardo and Paulo Maldini have joined Gattuso in the club setup with ex-Brazil star Kaka arriving this week with a view to a role in the club. It will also be a clash between two strike aces in Milan's Gonzalo Higuain and Roma's Edin Dzeko—who both scored 16 goals in Serie A last season. Higuain—who has 111 goals altogether in Serie A—moved to Milan on-loan from Juventus but has yet to score for his new club.

Bosnian Dzeko—who has 54 Italian league goals—got Roma's opening match winner against Torino. And Roma forward Patrik Schick has no doubt 30-year-old Higuain will be one of the danger men. “They've bought Gonzalo Higuain — for me he and Giacomo Bonaventura are their best players,” said Czech international Schick, who also wants to make a mark after being plagued by injuries last season.

### RONALDO FOCUS ON JUVE GOAL

Cristiano Ronaldo will be looking for his first goal as seven-time reigning champions Juventus travel to promoted Parma tomorrow. The 33-year-old is skipping Portugal's next two internationals to focus on his new team after moving this summer from Real Madrid.

Two-time UEFA Cup winners Parma are back in the top flight after three promotions following their demotion to Serie D after bankruptcy. The side from the region of Emilia-Romagna have



**NAPLES:** File photo shows AC Milan's Italian coach Gennaro Gattuso looks on during the Italian Serie A football match Napoli vs AC Milan on August 25, 2018 at the San Paolo Stadium in Naples. — AFP

just one point from their opening two games.

Inter Milan travel to Bologna looking for their first win after an opening defeat to Sassuolo was followed by a draw against Torino. Inter midfielder Radja Nainggolan could play his first game

after suffering injury following his signing from Roma. Ancelotti's Napoli head to Sampdoria on Saturday, with surprise package SPAL, who sbattled relegation last season, looking to keep their winning momentum at Torino. — Reuters

## VAR in the spotlight after controversial Bundesliga start

**BERLIN:** The new Bundesliga season is only one match day old but it has already seen a string of controversial decisions that have put the video assistant referee (VAR) system in the spotlight.

Former referee Wolfgang Stark has been relieved of his duties as a video assistant referee after the system was at the centre of controversy relating to decisions in Saturday's VfL Wolfsburg-Schalke 04 match.

A yellow card handed out to Schalke's Matija Nastasic was changed to red in the 64th minute and, shortly after, a red card was replaced by a yellow for a Wolfsburg player after VAR intervention. In the VAR system, a trained referee with access to a video monitor, and in constant communication with the main match official, checks decisions considered “match-changing”.

Stark, an international referee from 1999 to 2014 and who officiated in 344 Bundesliga matches until 2017, would not work as a video referee “until further notice,” the

German Football Association (DFB) said.

VAR, in its second season in the Bundesliga, was expected to operate much like it did at the World Cup in Russia, an efficient support tool for referees to minimise potential game-changing mistakes.

But already its value is being called into question this season. Hoffenheim coach Julian Nagelsmann was left fuming when VAR was not used to overturn the awarding of a controversial penalty when Bayern Munich's Franck Ribery went down in the box in their match last Friday.

He was absolutely livid when, after Robert Lewandowski's penalty was saved, the system intervened to order a retake as Bayern Munich's Arjen Robben encroached into the box too early. Lewandowski made no mistake with the retake to make it 2-1 before Robben added a late third.

“Why was VAR not used to see that it was no penalty in the first place,” Nagelsmann asked. “VAR? Where was it? Certainly not here.” Even Bayern coach Niko Kovac acknowledged he “would not have given the penalty”, further adding to the controversy. Early leaders Borussia Dortmund, buoyed by their 4-1 demolition of RB Leipzig last week, hope there will be no need for VAR when they play Hanover 96 on Friday, with forward Paco Alcacer joining from Barcelona to further boost their firepower. — Reuters

## Newcastle suffer League Cup exit, Everton roll on

**LONDON:** Newcastle's miserable start to the season suffered another blow with a dramatic late 3-1 defeat to Championship side Nottingham Forest on Wednesday to crash out of the League Cup at the second round.

There was no such strife for Premier League high flyers Everton and Watford, who continued their unbeaten starts to the campaign with victories over Rotherham and Reading respectively to make round three.

Newcastle boss Rafa Benitez had been fiercely criticised for his negative approach in defeat to Chelsea on Sunday that left the Magpies with just one point from their opening three league games.

Benitez made seven changes for the visit to the City Ground but those coming in did their case little good as Daryl Murphy headed the hosts in front inside two minutes.

That looked like being enough for Forest, until Salomon Rondon registered his first Newcastle with practically the visitors' first decent chance two minutes into stoppage time. However, Forest weren't to be denied as Matty Cash and Gil Dias struck in six added minutes to reach the last 32. “I don't agree that Forest were the better team and I'm not concerned by how we played,” said a defiant Benitez. “We did not create many chances so



**LONDON:** File photo shows Newcastle United's Spanish manager Rafael Benitez is seen before kick off of the English Premier League football match between Newcastle United and Chelsea. — AFP

we need to improve in attack and keep working hard. “It's a long season, we knew it was going to be hard but we have confidence in ourselves.” Everton got the job done much earlier as Gylfi Sigurdsson and a double from Dominic Calvert-Lewin eased Marco Silva's men into the next round with a 3-1 win at Goodison.

Watford may be joint top of the Premier League with three wins from three, but the Hornets also have impressive depth as Javi Gracia made 11 changes for a 2-0 victory at Reading. Isaac Success and Domingos Quina on his debut ensured it was a successful night for Gracia's men. Millwall also reached round three after twice coming from behind to beat Plymouth 3-2 thanks to Aiden O'Brien's 89th minute winner. — AFP

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JAKARTA: Gold medalist Nadia Dusanova of Uzbekistan celebrates during the medal ceremony for the women's high jump at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta yesterday. — AFP (See Page 44)