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Notorious gangster flees French jail by helicopter

Spectacular jailbreak as Faid escapes in commando-style operation



GONESSE: This picture taken yesterday in Gonesse, north of Paris shows a French helicopter Alouette II abandoned by French armed robber Redoine Faid after his escape from prison in Reau. — AFP

REAU: A notorious gangster who said his life of crime was inspired by films such as "Scarface" pulled off a brazen jailbreak yesterday, fleeing a prison near Paris aboard a hijacked helicopter in a commando-style operation. Redoine Faid, 46, broke out of the prison with the help of two accomplices who used smoke bombs and angle grinders to overcome wardens in the facility's visiting room where Faid was talking to a brother, according to prison unionist Martial Delabroye.

The men quickly made good their escape in the helicopter in an operation lasting just 10 minutes, Delabroye told AFP at the penitentiary in Reau in the French capital's southeastern suburbs. It is the second time Faid has pulled off a spectacular jailbreak—in 2013, he blasted his way out of a prison in northern France using dynamite. The helicopter-hijacked from a terrified flight instructor-landed at around 11:15 am in the prison yard.

The two black-clad men armed with assault rifles set off smoke bombs before breaking their way into the prison's visitation room using the power tools. Informed sources earlier said there were three accomplices. The wardens, who were unarmed, fled to safety and raised the alarm. The helicopter was later found in a north-

eastern suburb of Paris about 60 kilometers from the prison, one source said, adding that a manhunt has been launched across the entire Paris region.

A police source said the helicopter pilot was a flight instructor waiting for a student when he was seized by Faid's accomplices. He was forced to fly before being later freed in a state of shock. The men apparently went on to use a car that was later found torched in a shopping mall carpark, police said. The escape came after an appeals court in April sentenced Faid to 25 years for masterminding a botched armed robbery in 2010 in which a policewoman was killed.

Faid has been behind bars since mid-2011 for breaking the terms of his parole over past convictions for bank robberies and brazen heists of cash-in-transit vehicles. In his 2013 jailbreak, he briefly took four guards hostage with a pistol before escaping in a waiting getaway car. All the hostages were released unharmed.

Faid was recaptured six weeks later at a hotel in an industrial area on the outskirts of Paris. A woman working at the hotel told AFP at the time that Faid's accomplice had paid for the room in cash and that the two men had been there for several days.

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News in brief

40 killed in accident

MUMBAI: At least 40 people were killed when a packed bus spun off a slippery road and fell into a deep ravine in the northern Indian state of Uttarakhand yesterday, police said. "Rescue operations are on and we are still not sure about the final count of dead bodies," said a police official, who declined to be identified since he was not authorized to speak to the media. "It was raining, these are narrow, hill roads and the bus driver lost control." A team of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and local police were engaged in rescue operations, he said. — Reuters



Indian policemen and bystanders gather around the bodies of passengers after a bus fell into a gorge. — AFP

11-year-old girl bride

KUALA LUMPUR: The marriage of a Malaysia man with a 11-year-old Thai girl in the Muslim majority country has sparked outrage with one activist yesterday labeling the groom a "child predator". Malaysian Muslims below the age of 16 are allowed to marry if they obtain the permission of a religious court. But the country's women and families ministry said there was no record of religious authorities approving the union, which took place last month across the border in Thailand's largely Muslim far south. "Our officers have gone to the house and met the girl's mother. We are waiting for more reports before deciding on the next course of action," deputy prime minister Wan Azizah Wan Ismail was quoted as saying by the Sunday Star newspaper. The 41-year-old husband could be jailed for six months if he married without permission. — AFP

US stabbing attack

WASHINGTON: An "unprovoked" stabbing attack in an Idaho apartment complex that is home to many refugees left nine people injured including six children, police in the capital city of Boise said. Police apprehended a suspect, a 30-year-old man they named as Timmy Kinner who was until Friday a resident at the same complex, but not a refugee himself. "Four of the victims received life-threatening injuries," the Boise Police Department said in a statement about the incident, which occurred on Saturday night. The statement added that Kinner had been "asked to leave" the apartment on Friday, and that "the suspect's exact motives and reasons for attacking specific individuals is still under investigation." "As you can imagine the witnesses in the apartment complex along with the rest of our community are reeling from this attack," Police Chief Bill Bones said. — AFP

Hodeida assault halted

ABU DHABI: The United Arab Emirates yesterday announced it had halted the offensive it is backing against Houthi rebels in Yemen's port city of Hodeida to give a chance to UN diplomatic efforts. In a series of tweets, UAE Foreign Minister Anwar Gargash said the pause was aimed at pursuing negotiations for an unconditional rebel withdrawal from the port but warned that full military action could resume.

The weeks-long offensive on

Hodeida-Yemen's main port-has raised fears of further suffering and deprivation in a country already deeply shaken by years of war between the Iran-backed Houthis and President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi's Gulf-backed government. Pointing to a renewed push for a negotiated settlement by UN envoy Martin Griffiths, Gargash said: "We have paused our campaign to allow enough time for this option to be fully explored. We hope he will succeed."

He said the pause had been in effect since June 23 and while there was continued "pressure on the parameter", pro-government forces were awaiting the results of an upcoming visit by Griffiths to the rebel-held capital Sanaa. Griffiths met with Hadi in the southern city of

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ABU DHABI: Reem Al-Hashemi, UAE State Minister for International Cooperation, speaks during a press briefing in the capital Abu Dhabi about the humanitarian situation in Hodeida. — AFP

Iran vows to foil US bid to block its oil exports

TEHRAN: Iran vowed yesterday to defeat US efforts to block its oil exports and warned rival producer Saudi Arabia it would never take Tehran's "place" on the international oil market. "We will surely do something to thwart the US rallying cry that Iranian oil (exports) must be stemmed," First Vice President Eshagh Jahangiri said in statements broadcast on state television. "The (Iranian) government has a plan... and God willing we are certain that we will be able to sell as

much oil as we want," he said. The United States exited from the nuclear deal between Iran and world powers in May and said it would reimpose economic sanctions on the Islamic republic and its business partners by November 4.

On Tuesday a senior State Department official described tightening the noose on Tehran as "one of our top national security priorities". The official warned countries including China and India, who are key buyers of Iranian oil, that they should stop purchasing crude from the country before the November deadline or face US sanctions. European countries have been attempting to negotiate exemptions for their firms, but the official confirmed that US President Donald Trump intends to stick to his deadline. "We're not granting waivers," the official said.

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Saudi pulls out of recession in first quarter

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's economy pulled out of recession in the first quarter of 2018, thanks to rising oil prices and a surge in the non-crude sector, authorities said yesterday. The kingdom's economy grew by 1.15 percent in the first three months of the year compared to the same period last year when it shrank by 0.84 percent, according to the General Authority for Statistics. The body attributed the growth to a 2.7 percent jump in the non-oil sphere and a 0.62 percent rise in the oil sector, which contracted by nearly 2 percent in the first quarter of 2017. Oil prices have been steadily rising since early 2016, when OPEC and non-OPEC producers struck a deal to cut output.

The cut in oil revenue—which accounts for 70 percent of government income—pushed the OPEC kingdom's economy into negative territory last year for the first time since 2009, a year after the global financial crisis. The reports of growth come as Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman pushes a package of sweeping economic and social reforms in the kingdom. As part of his Vision 2030 plan, the heir to the throne plans to reduce Riyadh's dependence on oil, boost tourism and massively invest in the underdeveloped entertainment sector to increase domestic spending.

Crude prices have remained strong even after oil producers said last week they plan to increase output starting in July. US President Donald Trump said Saturday that Saudi Arabia's King Salman had agreed to his request to ramp up oil production by up to two million barrels per day. Riyadh has posted a budget deficit for the past four years, borrowing from domestic and international markets and hiking fuel and power prices to finance the shortfall. It also introduced a five percent value-added tax at the start of 2018. Since 2014, Saudi budget deficits have totaled \$260 billion and the government is projecting a 2018 shortfall of \$52 billion. — AFP

Goalkeeper shines as Russia kick Spain out



MOSCOW: Russia's goalkeeper Igor Akinfeev (right) reacts as he celebrates with teammates after saving the ball in a penalty shootout and winning during the Russia 2018 World Cup round of 16 football match between Spain and Russia yesterday. — AFP (See Page 28)

Local

Amir, Crown Prince receive senior state officials

Amir to attend Jahra Medical City opening



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, and members of the parliament's bureau for the Second Session of the National Assembly's 15th Legislative Term. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, and members of the parliament's bureau for the Second Session of the National Assembly's 15th Legislative Term.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Seif Palace yesterday. His Highness the Amir also received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, and members of the parliament's bureau for the Second Session of the National Assembly's 15th Legislative Term, as well as a delegation of the National

Assembly's Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee, which visited France recently.

Furthermore, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. He then received Deputy Premier, Interior Minister and Acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, who introduced Lt Gen Essam Al-Nahham, the newly-appointed Interior

Ministry Undersecretary. Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah also introduced Lt Gen Nahham to His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister.

His Highness the Crown Prince also received Ghanem, members of the parliament's bureau for the Second Session of the National Assembly's 15th Legislative Terms, and the delegation of the National Assembly's Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee

which visited France recently. Moreover, His Highness the Crown Prince received His Highness the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh. In other news, His Highness the Amir is set to attend today the opening ceremony of Jahra Medical City at 10:00 am.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Interior Minister and Acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah and Lt Gen Essam Al-Nahham.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Interior Minister and Acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah and Lt Gen Essam Al-Nahham



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



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



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Interior Minister and Acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah and Lt Gen Essam Al-Nahham.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh.

Erdogan congratulates Amir on Sheikh Nasser's successful surgery

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a phone call Saturday from the President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Erdogan inquired about the health of First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and congratulated His Highness the Amir on the success of Sheikh Nasser's surgery. His Highness the Amir expressed his sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Turkish President and wished him prosperity and wellness.

His Highness the Amir also received a call from Ammar Al-Hakim, head of Iraq's national alliance and Hikma front, to inquire about health condition of Sheikh Nasser

Sabah Al-Ahmad. Hakim congratulated His Highness the Amir for the successful operation, wishing Sheikh Nasser's rapid recovery. His Highness the Amir thanked Al-Hakim for his inquiry and wished him lasting good health. His Highness the Amir also received a call from Dr Mohammad Bahruloom to congratulate him on Sheikh Nasser's successful surgery. His Highness the Amir thanked Bahruloom and wished him lasting wellbeing.

In addition, His Highness the Amir received a phone call yesterday from Iraqi political leader Moqtada Al-Sadr. Sadr's call came to check on the health of Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber, congratulating His Highness the Amir on Sheikh

Nasser's recovery and wishing the First Premier utmost wellbeing.

Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad also received a phone call Saturday from Saudi Crown Prince and Defense Minister Mohammad bin Salman to congratulate him on success of his surgery. The Ministry of Defense said in a statement Sheikh Nasser thanked Prince Mohammad for his call and wished him better wellbeing.

Furthermore, Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad received a phone call from the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE's Armed Forces Sheikh Mohammad Al-Nahyan. In his phone call, Sheikh Mohammad inquired about Sheikh Nasser's health conditions

and congratulated him on the success of his surgery. Sheikh Nasser expressed his sincere gratitude for Sheikh Mohammad's phone call and wished him wellbeing, the Defense Ministry's Directorate of Moral Guidance and Public Relations said in a press statement. The First Deputy Prime Minister also received a call from the ruler of the Emirate of Fujairah and Member of the Federal Supreme Council of UAE Sheikh Hamad Al-Sharqi to inquire about his health condition and to congratulate him on the success of the operation, the Defense Ministry's Directorate of Moral Guidance and Public Relations added. Sheikh Nasser thanked Sheikh Hamad's phone call, the statement said. — KUNA



First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah

Local

Govt gives priority to VAT bill, voting eyed before year's end

Cabinet rejects proposal to tax expats' remittances

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The government has put the value-added tax (VAT) bill on its priorities' list during the next parliamentary term which kicks off in October, well-informed sources said. The parliament's financial affairs committee is likely to receive the bill in September in order to discuss it before it is put up for voting when the parliament resumes sessions the following month, said the sources, adding that the current plan calls for the voting session to take place before the end of the year.

Further, the sources, who spoke on the condition of anonymity said that the cabinet's economic affairs committee was currently making the final touches on the VAT bill before it is referred to the Fatwa and Legislation Department in order to phrase it in a way compatible with the constitution before the bill's final referral to the parliament. "The government is very keen on passing the VAT law to achieve the economic reforms suggested by IMF and follow the steps of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates," the sources explained.

Moreover, the sources pointed out that the government had officially notified the parliament that it rejects parliamentary demands to cancel decisions of increasing the fuel, electricity and water prices. The cabinet also rejects a proposal to impose fees on expatriates' remittances. "The cabinet's economic affairs committee argues that imposing fees on expats' remittances would harm the economy, force specialized manpower out of Kuwait and scare away foreign investments," the sources explained.

Non-oil revenues

The budget deficit in five years starting from 2014-2015 until 2018-2019 accumulates to KD 28 billion, well-informed oil sources said, attributing the deficit to the sharp drop in oil prices to below \$20 per barrel in 2016. According to Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), oil price in the current fiscal year's budget has been set at \$50 per barrel, and is expected to exceed \$65 on the short and medium ranges as predicted by international oil agencies, which expect prices to be \$66.6 in

2018 and \$64.5 in 2019. Meanwhile, non-oil revenues increased by KD 140 million in 2018-2019 to become KD 1.77 billion, compared to only KD 1.63 billion in 2017-2018.

Health insurance

Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Hamed Al-Azmi issued a ministerial resolution to provide health insurance for Kuwait University's KU non-Kuwaiti teaching staff members, as stipulated by the university's supreme council. The insurance also covers staff members' family members, for whom they already receive social allowances, while the university will pay all the fees and no compensation would be paid for bills issued from private health facilities.

On a different concern, the head of History Department at KU's Faculty Of Arts Dr Abdullah Al-Hajri announced launching the PhD program for Islamic history. Hajri also denied reports suggesting that there was shortage in teaching staff members, and stressed that the department's 42 teachers do their best in teaching students of the department as well as students studying history in other colleges.

Businesses closed

The Public Authority for Industry (PAI) recently issued decisions concerning land plots that the authority owns, said informed sources, noting that the decisions include closures and administrative penalties. The sources explained that the decisions ordered closing down plots in Shuwaikh industrial area and Kabd because they had been utilized without having a PAI license. Other facilities were closed for violating labor dormitory conditions.

KD 101,000 in compensations

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) recently complied to court orders and paid KD 101,000 in compensations in 45 cases filed against it in 2016 and 2017. Informed sources explained that most of the cases were filed because the ministry refused to issue commercial licenses or register trade marks for a number of applicants.



Health insurance for KU staff

Council rejects proposal to build fourth floor in citizens' houses

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The Municipal Council's technical committee yesterday rejected a proposal to allow citizens who already have built three floors in their government homes to build a fourth one, in addition to another proposal to increase the percentage of construction in private residential areas. The two proposals were made by members of the council's previous term.

In other news, Municipal Council member and head of the Hawalli committee Abdullah Marzouq Al-Roumi yesterday toured Salwa and Rumaithiya to inspect violations related to renting government houses to bachelors. The tour resulted in

filing several citations and making warning notices. Speaking on the occasion, Al-Roumi said that the tour came to keep the promises made to area residents concerning fighting corruption and negative phenomena. He added that he plans to follow up the problem of traffic congestions in Salwa which he believes is caused by the number of private schools there. He promised to inspect those schools' licenses and remove those unlicensed.

Road project

Forty six percent of Al-Ghous street project's leg extending from the Fifth Ring Road to the Sixth Ring Road is complete, said Khaled Al-Meraj, the engineer responsible for the project. The project is one of the most important and urgent ones to facilitate traffic flow, Meraj said, adding that the Public Authority for Roads and Transport is closely following up with its progress.

Exemption

For the first time in Kuwait, a court recently made a verdict to exempt a Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MSAL) employee from using the biometric access control system to check in and out of work because he suffers from acute eczema, as per medical reports.

Al-Hamra educates students through voluntary teachers initiative

KUWAIT: As part of its ongoing commitment to youth empowerment, Al-Hamra Real Estate Company, a leader in real estate development and management, recently held a voluntary national educational initiative for the benefit of middle and secondary level students. Launched at the end of the academic year and in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, over 30 local teachers from government schools provided free private lessons for interested students at Al-Hamra Luxury center.

In line with its mission to contribute to the welfare and progress of Kuwait's youth and high achievers, Al-Hamra ensured a diversified program encompassing different subjects. 70 students from many schools across Kuwait were immersed in the learning of languages, science, philosophy, mathematics, geography including local heritage and history.

Abdullah Al Mansour, Al-Hamra Real Estate Company Marketing and Public Relations Manager said: "We are deeply committed to helping advance the capabilities of today's youth, who will be the leaders of tomorrow, unleashing their full potential through innovative and comprehensive learning experiences. We will press on as enablers of Kuwait's young minds to help them thrive and succeed in a competitive world. Youth empowerment is an investment for the future for us as a nation. We would like to thank the Ministry of Education for their immense support, the dedicated teachers and students who made this initiative such a great success."



Driven by its commitment to invest in the long-term sustainability of local communities, Al-Hamra Real Estate Company will continue to foster knowledge and provide innovative educational opportunities through dynamic and likeminded partnerships.



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah received yesterday the credentials of the new ambassadors of New Zealand and Mali to Kuwait. — KUNA

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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Panoramic view of Kuwait City. — Photo by Abdullah Jadaan (KUNA)

Interior, Education ministries coordinate to fight drugs

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Officials from the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) of the Interior Ministry and the Education Ministry's Educational Development and Activities Department held a meeting yesterday to discuss creating new mechanisms of cooperation in the field of drugs fighting and prevention. The two sides agreed to launch a plan to activate the role of schools'

principals in this regard, as well as the roles of the social and psychiatric services department at the education ministry.

The meeting was attended by the Education Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Development Faisal Maqseed, DCGD Director General Brig Bader Al-Ghadouri, Acting Director of the Interior Ministry's Relations and Security Information Brig Tawheed Al-Kandary and other officials.



KUWAIT: Interior and education ministries' officials meet to discuss their joint drug-fighting strategy.

Man assaulted neighbor in revenge

KUWAIT: An Arab woman complained to Farwaniya police that she received a call from her Arab neighbor telling her that she was sick and needed her help. The woman said that she called her husband and told him what happened, then her husband suggested that she goes and helps her neighbor. When the woman went to her neighbor's house, the neighbor and her husband grabbed her, tied her up then sexually assaulted her, according to the victim's statements to police.

Officers went and arrested the couple for questioning after they were first summoned to the police station but refused to come over.

Investigations later revealed that the victim's husband had a relationship with his neighbor's wife, and when the cheated man discovered the affair, he thought up of the idea to assault his neighbor's wife in revenge. So, he told his cheating wife to set his neighbor's wife up, or else he would divorce her and inform her family about her affair.

Theft

Forensic officers responded to a complaint in which an Egyptian man reported that his room was broken into and KD 300 in cash in addition to two mobile phones were stolen. Separately, police are using security camera footage to determine the

identity of a thief who stole cash from a patient in Jahra hospital.

Cross dresser arrested

A Kuwaiti young man was arrested and sent to vice detectives for cross dressing. A blood test was ordered as well on suspicions that the man may have been under the influence of drugs at the time of his arrest.

Car stolen

Qasar police received a complaint from a 22-year-old citizen who reported that his SUV was stolen by an unknown thief. Meanwhile, another citizen accused his personal driver of breaking into his car and stealing KD 120, saying that his driver went missing before he discovered the crime.

— Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Anbaa

NSA chief meets Romanian ambassador

KUWAIT: Chief of National Security Apparatus (NSA) Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali Al-Sabah yesterday received Romania's ambassador to Kuwait, Daniel Tanase. The meeting focused on means of strengthening bilateral

relations, the NSA's public relations' department said in a press statement. Both also addressed regional and international developments and issues of common concern, it added. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Chief of National Security Apparatus (NSA) Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali Al-Sabah received Romania's ambassador to Kuwait Daniel Tanase. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lt Gen Mohammad Al-Khedr received at his office yesterday Commander of the Technical School at the Kuwaiti Navy Colonel Mustafa Al-Dakheel, who presented to him a book he authored about tendering projects for the military institution.

Local

2,162 Kuwaiti students chosen for scholarships: Ministry

3,658 students accepted in internal scholarships

KUWAIT: The Higher Education Ministry declared on Saturday the acceptance of 2,162 students for overseas scholarships for the 2018-19 academic year. Some 894 male and female students will study in the US, 870 others in the UK and the remaining number will head to several countries, Fatma Al-Senan, assistant undersecretary for scholarships and cultural relations, said.

She added that the ministry would receive the accepted students in accordance with the planned dates to review and sign pledges. She noted that an SMS would be sent to each student that includes planned dates, urging all students to abide by these schedules. Senan asked them to complete their data and documents required by every country where they

will study, through the website of the ministry.

Internal scholarships

Meanwhile, Private Universities Council (PUC) Secretary-General Dr Habib Abul announced Saturday the acceptance of 3,658 students in internal scholarships of bachelor and diploma programs for the first semester 2018/19. Dr Abul, in a press statement, called on all students to review the private universities and colleges where they were accepted to complete the admissions and registration procedures and submit the original certificates. The Secretary-General congratulated the students for their scholarships and wished them success in their academic journey. —KUNA



NBK sponsors LOYAC's trip to Morocco

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) sponsors a trip for LOYAC's students to Morocco titled 'Atai'. This sponsorship reflects NBK's commitment to its Corporate Social Responsibility as well as the vital role it plays in supporting students, youths and self-building initiatives in Kuwait.

This sponsorship goes with NBK's support to LOYAC's annual activities and events including the trips. A group of volunteers from different backgrounds are participating in this trip which is designed to build the leadership skills in their personality. This 11 days trip includes a group of social initiatives, interacting with different cultures, volunteering and donating. During this trip, participants will be introduced to the Moroccans' different cultures and learn their daily life routine.

Farah Bastaki, NBK Public Relations Officer, said: "NBK always strives to empower Kuwaiti youth to realize their potentials, build their personalities and motivates their ambition. This trip with LOYAC comes in line with our strategy to invest in youth and develop their capabilities."

"This is the second Time we go with Loyacers to



Morocco. We are looking forward to re-experience this inspiring trip, living with the Moroccan families, hanging out with the youth, contributing to the community and exploring the treasures of its cities", added Bastaki. "Atai is truly an inspiring cross-cultural learning experience that adds profound value to the young people involved," she concluded.

Throughout the program, Loyacers and Moroccan youth will be engaging in stimulating discussions about various aspects of each society to gain a deeper understanding of what makes our cultures unique and beautiful.

In addition, the program includes a historic tour of Rabat and nightly urban adventures exploring the bazaars, and landmarks. Finish your program in the blue city of Chefchaouen and a free day in Casablanca.

LOYAC is a nonprofit organization that runs several programs for the youth to develop their professional skills, enhance their personal growth and help them find their sense of purpose by extending themselves to others.

KU hosts 34th engineering design projects' fair



KUWAIT: The engineering training center at Kuwait University's (KU) College of Engineering and Petroleum inaugurated the 34th annual engineering design projects' fair, featuring 111 students' projects. The event took place under the patronage of Minister of Justice

and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr Fahad Al-Afasi, and with the attendance of top KU officials led by Rector Dr Hussein Al-Ansari.

The exhibition offers students the opportunity to showcase their projects and skills learned through their

studying period. The students also competed for a prize allocated by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Scientists for the 'best engineering design' selected. The winner will be announced in an event to be held today at Crowne Plaza hotel.

Smile initiative honors 'Abjad Program' students

KUWAIT: 'Smile' initiative of the Future Society for Youth, aimed at providing social and psychological support for children battling cancer and their families, hosted an event to honor 10 of its children who were enrolled in the 'Abjad' educational program for their success in the second semester of the 2017-2018 academic year.

The initiative also honored the volunteer teachers of 'Abjad' program who were giving special lessons in basic subjects such as mathematics, Arabic, English and computer for children whose health conditions prevent them attending their school classes, in addition to carrying out other activities that develop children personalities and skills.

"This honor comes within the framework of the initiative 'Smile' to encourage children battling cancer who are enrolled in 'Abjad educational Program' to develop their educational process, and strengthen their self-confidence and ability to learn while battling cancer," Said Subah Al Zayani, Future Youth Society chairman.

Zayani praised the efforts of the volunteer teachers of the program, noting the role of developing a study plan for each sick child in accordance with the level of study and the length or short periods of school interruption for treatment, in addition to periodic assessment of each child and consultation with parents about the extent of their observation. He noted that 'Abjad' takes a part of the school role and because it aims to restore the child's information and keep him in touch with his academic achievement.

The program offers students transportation from their homes to the classroom at the society's headquarters three days a week. However, for children who cannot attend the classes, teachers volunteer to teach them at child's home.



KUWAIT: With the beginning of the mullet fishing season yesterday, the prices of a mullet basket (approximately 30 kilograms) varied between KD 38 and 47. Notably, small mullet is a fish favored by most Kuwaitis and residents for its delicious taste and reasonable prices. —By Meshaal Al-Enezi



At least two dead in Nicaragua's day of anti-Ortega marches

US teachers quietly train to carry guns into school

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INDONESIA: Some people prepare to catch offerings thrown by Tengger tribe people into the crater of Bromo volcano in Probolinggo, East Java province, as part of Yadnya Kasada festival which falls on the 14th day of the Kasada month based on the traditional Hindu lunar calendar. — AFP

Swedish law recognizes sex without consent as rape

Govt to allocate 120 m krona to combat sexual abuse

STOCKHOLM: A tough new law that recognizes sex without explicit consent as rape came into effect in Sweden yesterday, after the country was rocked by the #MeToo movement denouncing sexual harassment and assault. The law stipulates that a person has committed rape if they have been part of a sexual act in which the other person has not participated "freely". Rape had previously been defined as a sexual act carried out with the use of violence or threat.

Now for someone to face rape charges, "it is no longer necessary that violence or threats were applied, or that the aggressor took advantage of the victim's particularly vulnerable situation," according to the government. Courts will need to pay particular attention to whether consent was expressed with words, gestures or in another manner, and judges will have to rule on the issue, according to the law passed in May.

Judge Anna Hannell, who helped create the law, said there was "absolutely no requirement to formally say 'yes', to hit a button in an app or anything else of the same type". "Simply

participating physically is a sign of consent," she told Swedish news agency TT. More than 7,000 rapes were reported in Sweden last year, a 10 percent increase compared to 2016, latest official figures show. Rape is punishable by up to six years in prison, with a maximum penalty of 10 years if the victim is a minor. Backed by the ruling Social Democrat-Green coalition, the law has drawn criticism from several quarters including the Swedish lawyers' association and the national law council. Opponents say it will force judges to make arbitrary decisions on whether or not there was consent. However, the government has defended the legislation.

"#MeToo showed with force that a lot still needs to be done to fight sexual harassment and sexual violence at work

and in the rest of society," Gender Equality Minister Lena Hallengren said in a statement yesterday. The government will allocate 120 million krona to combat sexual abuse, she added.

Changing behaviors

The #MeToo campaign exposing sexual misconduct, which began with the series of allegations against Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein, has shaken up nearly every sector in Sweden, one of the most gender-equal countries in the world. More than 10,000 women in Sweden—including actresses, journalists, lawyers, musicians, doctors and construction workers—have spoken up and campaigned against harassment.

"#MeToo is changing behaviors and people now

understand the extent to which sexual violence is widespread," said Ida Ostensson of the Make Equal foundation, a key campaigner for the new law.

"We finally have legislation that protects physical and sexual integrity," she added. In May, the Swedish Academy announced there would be no Nobel Literature Prize this year following a major sexual assault scandal. The announcement came after Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter in November published the testimonies of 18 women claiming to have been raped, sexually assaulted or harassed by Jean-Claude Arnault, an influential culture figure with long-standing ties to the Academy. He has since been charged with two counts of rape.

The scandal sowed deep discord among the institution's 18 members, prompting six to resign. "It's important that society clearly states what is OK and what isn't," Erik Moberg, a Swede in his thirties, said. "It makes you think about your own behavior and that of others."—AFP



Rape is punishable by up to six years in prison

11 killed in India's capital, police probe link to gang war

MUMBAI: Eleven members of a family were found dead in India's capital yesterday, most of them hanging from the ceiling of their home, blindfolded and hands tied behind the back, in a part of the city that was the scene of a gang war just two weeks ago. The victims included four men and seven women, including teenagers. A neighbor in the Burari district found the victims early yesterday, police said.

One of the bodies was found lying on the floor and the others hanging from a railing attached to the ceiling, media reports said. "We don't know the reason yet, our team is at the spot and investigating this," said a police official posted in the area, who did not give further details. The official cannot be identified under briefing rules.

On June 18, three people were killed and five were injured when members of rival gangs fired at each other in the main Burari market. Police said the two gangs are headed by men whose enmity goes back to 2013. While police are yet to establish any connection between the two incidents, the investigation will consider all possible aspects, a senior police officer who is handling the gang war case said.— Reuters

Blast rocks Afghan city killing 12

JALALABAD, Afghanistan: An explosion in a city in eastern Afghanistan where President Ashraf Ghani was visiting killed at least 12 people, officials said yesterday, in the latest deadly violence to rock the country. Provincial governor spokesman Attaullah Khogyani said a suicide bomber struck a market, killing at least 12 people and wounding 20. Khogyani said that 10 Afghan Sikhs were among the dead. The death toll was confirmed by interior ministry spokesman Najib Danish, adding the assault was "most probably" carried out by a suicide bomber.

"I can confirm there are some Afghan Hindus among the wounded and we are checking if they are among the fatalities," Danish said. Afghans often use the word Hindus even when talking about Sikhs. Small communities of both faiths reside in what is otherwise an overwhelmingly Muslim nation. Provincial health director Najibullah Kamawal put the death toll at 15. Afghan officials often give conflicting information in

the immediate aftermath of attacks.

Ghani's spokesman confirmed the president was still in Nangarhar but was "away from danger". Ghani arrived in Jalalabad earlier yesterday to open a hospital, part of a two-day visit to the restive province. The attack came a day after Ghani ordered Afghan security forces to resume offensive operations against the Taliban following the expiration of the government's 18-day ceasefire. The government's unilateral truce overlapped with the Taliban's three-day ceasefire for Eid, but the militants refused to prolong it.

The unprecedented ceasefire over the holiday capping Ramadan triggered spontaneous street celebrations involving Taliban fighters and security forces. But it was marred by two suicide attacks in Nangarhar that killed dozens of people and were claimed by the Islamic State group, which has a smaller but relatively potent presence in Afghanistan. IS was not part of the ceasefire. The attack comes as US envoy Alice Wells visits Kabul as part of efforts to ratchet up pressure on the Taliban to engage in peace talks.

The Taliban have so far ignored Ghani's offer of peace negotiations. Instead, they have insisted on direct talks with the United States, which Washington has repeatedly refused. Wells said that since



JALALABAD: An Afghan victim receives treatments at an hospital following a suicide attack in Jalalabad yesterday. — AFP

the Afghan government and United States were willing to start talking under preconditions, the onus was now on the Taliban to respond. "Right now it's the Taliban leaders... who aren't residing in Afghanistan, who are the obstacle to a

negotiated political settlement," Wells said in remarks embargoed until yesterday. Wells, who is due to hold talks in Pakistan today, said Islamabad also needed to do more to squeeze the Taliban and get them to the negotiating table.—AFP

International

At least two dead in Nicaragua's day of anti-Ortega marches

Officials visit country in face of worsening repression

MANAGUA: At least two demonstrators were killed and 11 others wounded in Nicaragua Saturday, a rights group said, as thousands of demonstrators marched against President Daniel Ortega across the Central American country. Dubbed the Flowers March, the protests honored the youth killed in the more than two months of anti-Ortega unrest met with repression by government forces that has left at least 220 people dead.

A 23-year-old street vendor was shot in the head when some of the marchers strayed off the scheduled route, according to rights groups. "This is something incredibly difficult," said Luis Ortiz, the man's elderly father, who fought alongside the president decades ago when Ortega was a Sandinista rebel commander. "I never imagined that my son would die in the hands of someone with whom I fought so hard. I gave my sweat and my blood... I am an injured vet, too."

"I am still a Sandinista," he added, "but not with Daniel," referring to the president. At the beginning of the march armed men also fired on a protesters' barricade at the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua (UNAN), where the Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights (CENIDH) said one man behind student-erected barricades was killed. "I'm here because I want to see my Nicaragua free, it hurts that children like me have died, but we must continue fighting to get this dictator out," a 15-year-old student wearing a ski

mask said. In one hand, he was waving a Nicaraguan flag, and in the other, he held a mortar launcher.

Against the new dictatorship

In other cities including Leon, Masaya and Granada marches were also organized by the Civic Alliance for Justice and Democracy. The demonstrations were the first of their kind since May 30, when a huge Mother's Day march turned bloody after pro-government forces attacked and left 18 people dead. The protesters demand the resignation of Ortega, a 72-year-old former leftist guerrilla who came to power with the popular uprising that defeated the dictator Anastasio Somoza in 1979, and retook the presidency in 2007 after a vote.

Activists accuse him of establishing—together with his wife Vice President Rosario Murillo—nepotism, a dictatorship and brutal repression. "I have always marched, and today more than for our dead, for the children, I grieve for the murders at the hands of Ortega and Rosario. I was in 1979 against Somoza and now against the new dictatorship," said Cecilia Cruz, 67. The march, supported by the powerful business union—formerly an ally of Ortega—had been suspended a week ago due to the violent incursion of riot police and paramilitaries in several areas of the country.

The Civic Alliance pushed back the demonstration to take advantage of a visit from experts from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Inter-American Commission on Human

Rights. The officials came to the country in the face of worsening repression, and have met with delegates from the government and the Alliance, as well as with victims of the violence.



MANAGUA: People attend the 'Marcha de las Flores' - in honor of the children killed during protests - in Managua. —AFP

With the mediation of the Catholic Church, the gov-

ernment and the Alliance resumed talks on Monday. But dialogue has had trouble taking off because Ortega, whose third consecutive term ends in January 2022, will not consider a proposal to move up elections from 2021 to March 2019. —AFP

More Syrians leave Lebanon for home

MASNAA, Lebanon: Several dozen Syrian refugees left Lebanon for neighboring Syria yesterday as part of returns coordinated between both countries, an AFP reporter and authorities said. A total of 42 Syrians returned voluntarily from Lebanon through the Masnaa crossing to areas in Syria, Lebanese authorities said. A Lebanese coordinator said they were headed for areas including Moadmiyet al-Sham, a suburb of Damascus where the regime retook control from rebels in October 2016.

An AFP reporter saw men and women dressed in crisp clothes board a bus, some carrying bags or young children. Mohammad Nakhla, 58, was anxious to set foot in his home country for the first time in six years. "I've never felt better," he said, as he waited to return with 10

family members to Moadmiyet al-Sham. Lebanon hosts just under one million registered refugees from the conflict in Syria, although authorities say the real number is much higher.

More and more are returning however as the regime reasserts its control over larger parts of the country. Damascus has approved the return of 450 Syrian refugees from Lebanon from a list of 3,000 requesting to do so, Lebanon's state news agency NNA said this week. On Friday, the head of Lebanon's Hezbollah said his powerful movement was creating a mechanism to help Syrian refugees return home, in coordination with Lebanese authorities and Damascus.

Hassan Nasrallah said the group was setting up centers with phone numbers and social media accounts where refugees could sign up to return home. On Thursday, 294 Syrian refugees headed home from the Lebanese border town of Arsal. Earlier this year, around 500 refugees also left southern Lebanon for Syria in a return organized by Beirut and Damascus. Several thousand have inde-



MASNAA: Syrian refugees board a minibus evacuating them from Lebanon at the Masnaa crossing on the Lebanon-Syria border yesterday, on their way back to Damascus. —AFP

pendently left in recent years. More than 350,000 people have been killed and over half the country's population dis-

placed since Syria's war started with the brutal repression of anti-government protests in 2011. —AFP

Myanmar not safe for Rohingya returnees

CHAKMARKUL, Bangladesh: The head of the Red Cross yesterday said it was not safe to return Rohingya refugees to their homes in Myanmar, where he described whole villages abandoned and destroyed. Peter Maurer toured strife-torn western Myanmar before visiting refugee camps over the border in neighboring Bangladesh, where nearly one million Rohingya have sought refuge from violence.

The bulk of the persecuted Muslims in Bangladesh have arrived since August, fleeing a huge Myanmar army crackdown in troubled Rakhine state that the UN has likened to ethnic cleansing. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres today will make his first visit to the camps since that influx of nearly 700,000 Rohingya sparked a humanitarian crisis in southeast Bangladesh. The UN says Guterres, who discussed the Rohingya with Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in Dhaka yesterday, will use the trip to study prospects for "a safe, voluntary and dignified

return" of refugees to Myanmar.

But relief agencies warn that conditions in Rakhine, which is heavily restricted to international observers, remain too unsafe to consider repatriating the Rohingya to Buddhist-majority Myanmar. Maurer, the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, said a lot more was needed to improve the situation he witnessed in Rakhine during an official visit the past few days. "What I've seen in terms of destruction of villages, abandonment of situations, disruptions in markets, of livelihood, of communities, I don't think the present moment is an ideal condition to return," Maurer said in an interview in Chakmarkul refugee camp.

He said more was needed for those families eking out survival in gigantic tent cities in Bangladesh, where many would rather endure hardship than return to persecution. "We need to prepare the ground for returns for those who wish to return," Maurer said. Bangladesh and Myanmar agreed in November to begin repatriating the Rohingya but the process has stalled, with both sides accusing the other of frustrating the effort.

Fewer than 200 have been resettled, and the vast majority refuse to contemplate returning until their rights, citizen-



TEKNAF: President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Peter Maurer (2R) visits the Chakmarkul refugee camp in Teknaf. —AFP

ship and safety are assured. The Rohingya are loathed by many in Myanmar, where they were stripped of citizenship and branded illegal immigrants from Bangladesh despite calling Rakhine their homeland. The UN has says conditions in Rakhine are not ripe for a safe, voluntary and dignified repatriation, but signed an agreement with Myanmar to assess conditions on the

ground to help refugees make an informed decision. The UN Security Council visited Myanmar and Rakhine state in early May, meeting with refugees who gave detailed accounts of killings, rape and torching of villages at the hands of Myanmar's military. Myanmar has vehemently denied allegations by the US, United Nations and others of ethnic cleansing. —AFP

Suicide bombing wounds 19 at Iraq ballot warehouse

KIRKUK, Iraq: A suicide bombing yesterday targeting a warehouse where ballot boxes from Iraq's May elections were stored wounded 19 people, days before a vote recount, a security source said. "Nine policemen, six members of a counter-terrorist unit and four civilians were wounded when a car bomb driven by a suicide bomber exploded at the main gate of the warehouse," the source said.

The building was damaged by the blast but the ballot boxes were unaffected, said Rakan al-Juburi, the governor of Kirkuk north of Baghdad. Iraq's supreme court has ordered a manual vote recount in polling stations where results from the May legislative elections were contested following allegations of fraud.

The ballot was won by populist Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr's electoral alliance with Communists, as long-time political figures were pushed out by voters seeking change in a country mired in conflict and corruption. The vote recount is expected to begin tomorrow in the Kurdish provinces of Arbil, Sulaymaniyah and Dohuk, as well as in Kirkuk, Nineveh, Salaheddin and Anbar, the spokesman of the electoral commission said on Saturday. —AFP



KIRKUK, Iraq: Members of the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS) arrive at the scene of an attack outside warehouses where ballots from the May 12 parliamentary vote were stored in the northern multi-ethnic city of Kirkuk yesterday. —AFP

Thousands march in Hong Kong as restrictions grow

HONG KONG: Protesters marched through central Hong Kong yesterday in one of the city's major annual pro-democracy rallies as organizers said the event was coming under unprecedented pressure from authorities. Beijing has become increasingly intolerant of signs of dissent in semi-autonomous Hong Kong since massive pro-democracy rallies in 2014 brought parts of the city to a standstill and led to the emergence of activists demanding independence from China.

Hong Kong has rights unseen on the mainland, including freedom of expression, but there are concerns those liberties are now under threat from a repressive Beijing and a loyalist local government. Ahead of this year's march—which takes place on the anniversary of the city's return to China by colonial power Britain in 1997 — police rejected a number of starting points suggested by organizers. In the past, protesters have gathered on the main football pitches inside Hong Kong's Victoria Park.

But since last year, when China's President Xi Jinping paid a visit to mark 20 years since the handover, that area has been given over to a pro-Beijing rally. "This year is a turning point in which (authorities) have used different ways to mobilize their power to suppress the rally," Sammy Ip, from the Civil Human Rights Front which organizes the march, said.

Police warned residents they could be arrested for unlawful assembly if they joined the protest along the route, which Ip described as a way to "intimidate citizens". Pro-Beijing Hong Kong newspaper Ta Kung Pao called for the march to be outlawed in an editorial last month. Ip said the democracy movement was at a low ebb and was now being "hounded" by the government.

Government warnings

The march set off from a grass-covered area at one side of the park and culminated at the government's headquarters. Organizers said 50,000 attended, lower than last year's figure of more than 60,000. Police put the turnout at 9,800. Protesters chanted: "End one-party dictatorship! Reject the deterioration of Hong Kong!" Some wore masks of the city's leader Carrie Lam with long rubber Pinocchio-style noses attached.

"It's about justice," one 74-year-old who gave her name as Ms Liu said. "The problems in Hong Kong have always been serious but now they are getting worse." Social worker Iris Wong, 26, said she was worried about Hong Kong's freedoms being curtailed. "The government isn't working for the people and a lot of Hong Kong people are suffering," she said. Protesters flouted the police ban on joining midway through the march and speakers thanked them for "risking arrest". —AFP

International

US teachers quietly train to carry guns into school

Colorado law prevents from carrying weapons onto school grounds

COMMERCE CITY, United States: When Donald Trump proposed arming teachers to deter school shooters, the overwhelming response from educators was horror. Yet teachers in Colorado are taking action to carry concealed guns to school. The non-profit group FASTER, set up after 20 small children were killed in 2012 at Sandy Hook Elementary School, has trained more than 1,300 US school staff, mostly in Ohio, on how to use a handgun in the event of a school shooting.

Sixty-three of them have been trained in Colorado, home to the 1999 Columbine High School shooting. The swing state has a Democratic governor and both a Democrat and a Republican in the US Senate. "I think it's scary to people to bring a weapon into school," conceded Katie, a first-grade teacher in Jefferson County, west of state capital Denver, who declined to give her second name.

"They just see the bad side, not the positive side of how guns can save people," the 27-year-old said. She was a student this week at the three-day, \$1,000 course in Commerce City outside Denver.

The United States is the only developed country in the world that suffers relentless school shootings with roughly one a week, according to Everytown for Gun Safety, a group working to restrict firearms. America's gun violence epidemic kills around 33,000 people each year. More than 214,000 students have experienced a school shooting in the United States since 1999, according to a Washington Post database.

As shootings multiply and Congress remains paralyzed, FASTER saw an uptick in business, even before President Donald Trump supported arming teachers in the wake of a Valentine's Day massacre in Florida. "I had to add four additional classes to our schedule to meet demand this year, but I don't think it was related to Trump," Ohio director Joe Eaton said. This week, 24 Colorado school staff, including principals, teachers and pastors, attended a three-day training led by four active duty law enforcement officers.

“ Scary to bring a weapon into school ”

Rural areas

Colorado law prevents anyone from carrying weapons onto school grounds with the exception of school resource officers-law enforcement responsible for safety in schools-and security guards. Many on the course are prohibited from being armed at school, but hope their training will help their districts change their minds. The curriculum includes handgun basics, range shooting, casualty care tactics and roleplaying with an active shooter and simulated fire.

"I will definitely talk to my principal and security," said high school physics teacher John MacFarlane, 40, seeing weaknesses in his district's security protocol after the exercise. Wayne, a facilities manager at a rural primary and high school, said his district estimates it would take 20 to 25 minutes for law enforcement to respond to an incident at the school, which has no SRO. It took just 7.5 minutes for two teenage boys to kill their Columbine classmates in the library, where survivor Evan Todd told the class he was hiding. Twelve students and a teacher died in the 1999 shooting in Littleton, Colorado.

Todd, 35, said he "absolutely" believes there would have been fewer deaths if teachers had been allowed to carry a gun. But there are plenty of critics. "I do understand how it can be a tougher issue in our very rural areas," said Tom Mauser, spokesman for Colorado Ceasefire, a political action committee that advocates for stricter gun laws. "Teachers should be teachers, not SWAT members." Mauser's 15-year-old son, Daniel Mauser, died at Columbine.

Ominous thing

By the end of the course, 21 of the 24 participants met the Colorado Peace Officer Standards and Training requirements in handgun proficiency, the same level for police officers who graduate from the academy. Staff who receive POST qualification could be considered by their school districts to be security guards in order to



COMMERCE CITY: In this file photo school teachers and administrators participate in an Airsoft mock active shooter drill during a three day firearms course sponsored by FASTER Colorado at Flatrock Training Center in Commerce City, Colorado. —AFP

legally carry concealed guns on school premises. FASTER encourages schools to announce that they have armed staff as a deterrent for would-be shooters. Students themselves are divided.

"I think it would be a very smart thing so you don't have to wait and fear for your life," said Alex Easton, 14, from Aurora, Colorado. Andre Fouque, 16, from Louisville, Colorado, was more skeptical. "Would police be able to differentiate who had the gun? The

teacher would be the first person to get shot. We should leave that to the police," he said. FASTER is trying to schedule classes in Indiana and Wyoming, and see if there is enough demand to hold classes in New York state next year. "The more people talking about it, taking classes and carrying and getting approval from districts, the more it won't be a scary, ominous thing," said Katie, the first-grade teacher. —AFP

News in brief

Japan eases missile alert system

TOKYO: Japan has lowered its military readiness level against North Korean missiles as Washington embarks on delicate nuclear negotiations with Pyongyang, a report said yesterday, citing multiple unnamed sources close to the matter. The report came as Japan finds itself under pressure to soften its hardline stance against Pyongyang following US President Donald Trump's landmark summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un last month. Japan's Self Defense Forces on Friday dropped their program to always deploy Aegis warships in the Sea of Japan (East Sea) that detect and intercept incoming missiles, the Asahi Shimbun reported. —AFP

Cyclone barrels toward Japan

TOKYO: Okinawa residents braced for large waves and violent winds yesterday after weather authorities warned of a fierce cyclone approaching the southern Japanese island. Typhoon Prapiroon was closed in on Okinawa's capital Naha yesterday afternoon while packing gusts of up to 144 kilometers per hour, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency. It was expected to draw close to the Okinawa island yesterday night through to the next morning before veering towards southwestern Japan and the Korean peninsula, the agency said. Large storms regularly strike Japan over summer and early autumn, often causing fatal landslides and flooding. —AFP

Four killed in Nigerian camp

KANO, Nigeria: Boko Haram jihadists killed four people during a raid on a camp for civilians displaced by the Islamist group's violent insurgency in Nigeria's troubled northeast, security sources said Saturday. The gunmen entered the camp in the town of Banki near the border with Cameroon on bicycles and on foot Friday night and opened fire. "Boko Haram terrorists entered Banki IDP (internally displaced people) camp last night and killed four people, injured four others and took supplies away with them," a military officer in the town said. —AFP

Three Afghans beheaded

JALALABAD, Afghanistan: Unidentified gunmen beheaded three men and torched a boys' school in Nangarhar province in eastern Afghanistan late on Saturday, in an attack officials blamed on Islamic State militants. "They brutally beheaded three attendants and set fire to the school building," Mohammad Asif Shinwari, spokesman for the education department said, adding that the administrative offices and the school library were completely burnt. So far no group has claimed responsibility for the attack, which came after warnings from Islamic State last month of attacks on schools in Nangarhar, on the border with Pakistan, where the militants have established their main stronghold. —Reuters

Pantheon burial honors French rights icon Simone Veil

PARIS: Thousands of people gathered in Paris yesterday to pay their final respects to Holocaust survivor and women's rights icon Simone Veil as she was given the rare honour of burial at the Pantheon a year and a day after she died. Veil's death at the age of 89 prompted an outpouring of emotion as she had long been considered one of France's most popular and trusted public figures.

The Pantheon in the heart of Paris houses the remains of many great French figures, including Voltaire, Victor Hugo and Emile Zola. But she is only the fifth woman to be buried there, being laid to rest alongside her husband Antoine, a high-ranking civil servant who died in 2013. Their two coffins were escorted by Republican Guards through Paris from the Holocaust Memorial where they had stood for 48 hours to allow the public to pay their last respects.

The coffins were then placed on funeral biers before carried by pallbearers on a blue carpet leading to the Pantheon. Among the crowds were many

women wearing T-shirts with the slogan: "Thank you Simone." "She broke every glass ceiling, in terms of women in society, but also that of (France's role in) the extermination of the Jews: it was taboo," said Bernard Greensfeld, one of those standing outside the Holocaust memorial. "She's not going into the Pantheon as a Holocaust victim but as someone who overcame this horror and that's why she's in people's hearts," he told AFP.

The fifth woman

Simone Veil was 16 when she was deported along with family members in 1944 to Auschwitz. Her mother, father and brother were killed in the Holocaust. After her return she became a resolute advocate of women's rights as well as European reconciliation, securing her biggest political victory in 1974 by convincing the French parliament to legalize abortion despite fierce opposition. She also became the first elected president of the European Parliament in 1979, a post she held for three years.

The move to have Veil's remains transferred to the Pantheon began immediately after her death on June 30, 2017, with two petitions quickly gaining hundreds of thousands of signatures. Until now, only four women have been interred there: scientist Marie Curie, Sophie Berthelot, who was buried alongside her chemist husband Marcellin Berthelot and two resistance fighters Genevieve de Gaulle-Anthonioz and Germaine Tillion.

Moment of truth for Merkel as rebels weigh migration deals

BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel was fighting for her political future looking to placate conservative rebels over immigration with a hard-fought European deal even as eastern EU states called it into doubt. Merkel's centre-right CDU party and its conservative Bavarian CSU allies are holding separate meetings to weigh the results of last week's EU summit, which agreed collective measures by the bloc's 28 members to reduce immigration.

Merkel hopes the deals with Germany's neighbors will deter Interior Minister and CSU leader Horst Seehofer from defying her by turning away at the border asylum seekers already registered in other EU nations. The unilateral move would force her to fire him, in turn prompting a CSU walkout that would cost her majority in parliament. According to a document sent to coalition partners, Merkel sought to assuage the hardliners with deals with 16 other countries to return already-registered migrants if they reached Germany.

The German leader, who has been in office since 2005, has warned that the issue of migration could decide the very future of the EU itself. The EU and bilateral deals were "only possible because the chancellor enjoys respect and authority throughout Europe," Germany's

EU Commissioner and CDU politician Guenther Oettinger said in an interview with the Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung weekly. "That is very valuable for Germany, no one should destroy it."

But there were signs of some of the deals unravelling, as three central European nations—Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic—denied they had agreed to accept returned migrants. "Given the different statements from some EU member countries, one can doubt whether all of the decisions at the EU Council will become reality," head of the CSU parliamentary group Alexander Dobrindt told Bild am Sonntag newspaper. Leaders and MPs from the Bavarian party will meet in Munich to decide their response, while Merkel and her top lieutenants will gather in Berlin.

Admissions centers

EU leaders agreed Friday to consider setting up "disembarkation platforms" outside the EU, most likely in North Africa, in a bid to discourage migrants and refugees boarding EU-bound smuggler boats. Member countries could also create processing centers to determine whether the new arrivals are returned home as economic migrants or admitted as refugees in willing states.

At the national level, Merkel also proposes that migrants arriving in Germany who first registered in another EU country should be placed in special "admissions centers" under restrictive conditions, according to a document she sent to the CSU and coalition partners the Social Democratic Party (SPD). "There will be a residency obligation reinforced with sanctions," the document states. It says asylum applications in Germany between



PARIS: France's President Emmanuel Macron holds a moment of silence as he pays his respects by the coffin of former French politician and Holocaust survivor Simone Veil during the burial ceremony at the Pantheon in Paris. —AFP

A national decision

As the sun beat down, a large crowd gathered for the ceremony which was attended by members of her family, and a host of politicians and dignitaries, among them the former presidents Francois Hollande and Nicolas Sarkozy. At the ceremony, President Emmanuel Macron said the decision to bury her in the Pantheon was a decision taken by the entire nation. "It is... what all French people wanted," he said. "With Simone Veil,

all the women that have made France are here."

The transfer of Veil's remains had begun on Friday, when the couple's coffins were exhumed from the Montparnasse cemetery and brought to the crypt of the French Holocaust Memorial in central Paris, which she helped found. After Macron's address, the two coffins were transferred into the Pantheon where the coffins will lie in state until Monday, with admission free until July 8. —AFP



BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel leaves the German public television ZDF after recording the traditional 'summer interview' in Berlin, prior to a leadership meeting of her centre-right CDU party. —AFP

January and May this year were 20 percent lower than the same period in 2017.

Merkel told reporters on Friday that the EU and bilateral deals were "more than equivalent in their effect" to Seehofer's demands. The CSU's Bavarian state premier Markus Soeder said at a political meeting on Saturday: "Of course what has been achieved in Brussels is more than we originally thought." Seehofer has yet to respond in public to the Brussels summit. But he and Merkel were spotted Saturday discussing the outcome with tense faces on the balcony of her Berlin office.

Merkel-bashing

The chancellor's frantic last-minute diplo-

macy was ultimately prompted by the CSU's fear of losing its cherished absolute majority in Bavaria's state parliament. The "Free State" with its beer-and-leatherhosen Alpine traditions, powerful industries and impenetrable dialect has a more conservative bent than other German regions. But the CSU and CDU together form a centre-right force that has dominated national politics for decades. Political stability was upset by Merkel's 2015 decision to keep borders open to migrants and refugees arriving in Bavaria from the Middle East via the Balkans, Hungary and Austria. Since then, more than one million people have arrived in Germany, while Merkel's governments have repeatedly tightened immigration and asylum laws. —AFP

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Analysis

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Iran's rulers face discontent as US pressure mounts

Mounting pressure from the Trump administration combined with discontent among many Iranians at the state of the economy are rattling the Islamic Republic, with little sign that its leaders have the answers, officials and analysts say. Three days of protests broke out on Sunday in Tehran's Grand Bazaar, with hundreds of angry shopkeepers denouncing a sharp fall in the value of the Iranian currency. The disturbances are a major challenge, but analysts expect the leadership will survive despite factional infighting and growing economic problems.

However, the weekend protests quickly acquired a political edge, with people shouting slogans against Iran's ultimate authority, Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and other top officials, calling them thieves who should step down. Bazaar merchants, mostly loyal to the leadership since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, are angry at what they see as the government's muddled response to the crisis, which they said had sent prices soaring and made trading almost impossible.

The rial has lost 40 per cent of its value since last month, when President Donald Trump pulled out of Iran's 2015 nuclear accord and announced draconian sanctions on Tehran. These include an attempt to shut down the international sale of Iranian oil, Tehran's main source of revenue, a threat that has cast a chill over the economy. "The country is under pressure from inside and outside. But it seems there is no crisis management plan to control the situation," said an official close to Khamenei's camp.

The full impact of Trump's withdrawal from the nuclear deal and Washington's move to stop foreign countries from doing business with Iran, may not be clear for months. European signatories are hoping to salvage the deal - under which most sanctions were lifted and Iran curbed its nuclear program - but there are doubts they can keep it alive. Already French companies Total and Peugeot, for example, have said they will pull out of Iran rather than risk being shut out of the US financial system, as Washington threatens to use the dollar's reserve currency status to punish anyone who gets in the way of its ramped-up Iran policy.

Iran has blamed US sanctions for the fall in the rial, saying the measures amount to a "political, psychological and economic" war on Tehran - although some officials recognize that the threat has exposed serious failings at home. "Sanctions cannot be blamed for all the internal problems. They have yet to be implemented," said a second official, familiar with Iran's decision-making process. To pile on the pain, Washington says all countries must end crude imports from Iran by Nov. 4, hitting the oil sales that generate 60 percent of the country's income. Iran says this level of cuts will never happen.

'Death to the dictator'

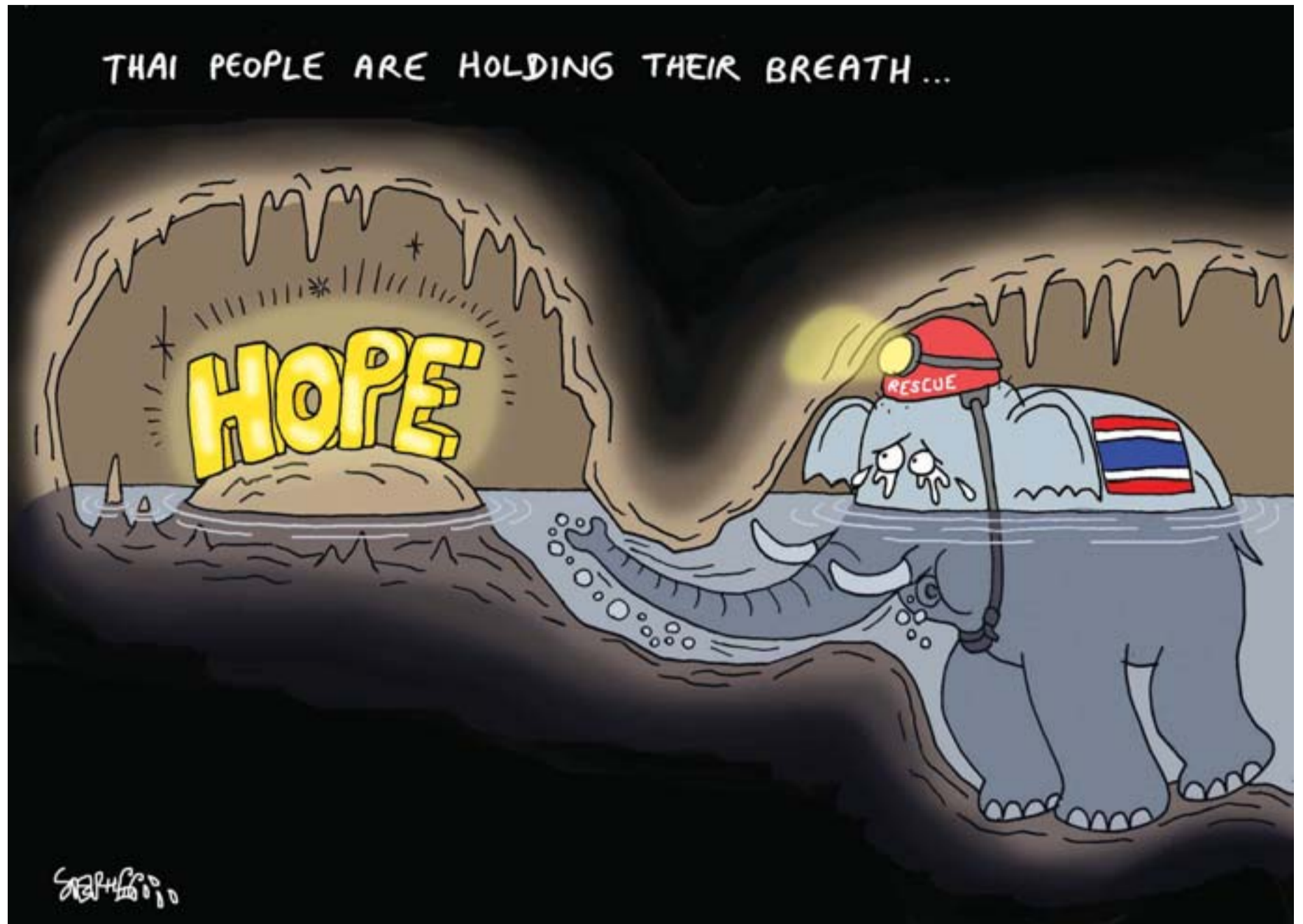
Tehran's Grand bazaar is traditionally the biggest financial ally of the establishment, and it helped bankroll the 1979 Revolution. But while cries of "Death to the Dictator" resembled chants of "Death to the Shah" four decades ago in the bazaar, analysts and insiders ruled out any chance that Iran is once more on the brink of a seismic shift in its political landscape.

"With severe economic pressure ahead of us, the protests will not die easily," said an Iranian diplomat in Europe. "But the chance of a regime change is zero because Iranians do not want another revolution and are skeptical it would be for the better." Police and security forces maintained a heavy presence in the area after days of clashes with protesters. Though officials say the bazaar has resumed normal business, the rial crisis and its political reverberations are surely far from over. Video on social media showed protests continuing in several towns and cities, with some participants demanding regime change.

While pragmatist President Hassan Rouhani's government has tried to stop the currency slide with a combination of threats and persuasion, many Iranians remain unconvinced. "The rial's fall is disrupting my business. The cost of imports has skyrocketed. If it continues, I will not be able to continue my business," said Reza, a shopkeeper in the bazaar who refused to give his full name. Despite calls for unity by Khamenei, divisions have emerged among Iran's ruling elite, with some hardliners calling for a snap presidential election, and criticizing Rouhani for economic mismanagement.

Factional power struggles are endemic in Iran, where hardliners around the Supreme Leader, such as the Revolutionary Guards and the judiciary, face off against the president, and pragmatists and reformists in elected institutions such as parliament. "Both sides will try to use the combination of external and internal pressure to advance their causes," said Sanam Vakili, an adjunct professor teaching Middle East politics at SAIS Europe. "If the government fails to find an immediate solution to the crisis ... a snap presidential election will be inevitable in the coming months," said Tehran-based analyst Saeed Leylaz.

Some analysts see an outside chance that Iran's hardline leaders might seek an accommodation with the United States, with the prospect of sanctions bringing Iran's economy to its knees. But Trump may be in no hurry to embark on negotiations that might bolster Iranian clerical leaders. The leadership "might lean towards a compromise with America to preserve the establishment," said one official involved in Iran's nuclear talks with foreign powers. "But of course America should show flexibility as well." —Reuters



Helsinki, an obvious choice for Trump-Putin summit

The choice of Helsinki as the location for the first long-awaited summit between presidents Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin is a reminder of the Finnish capital's Cold War history when it was the backdrop for a number of key tete-a-tetes between US and Russian leaders. The July 16 meeting between Trump and Putin is aimed at warming ties with Moscow, at a time when Russia's relations with the West languish at levels not seen for decades.

Finland shares a 1,340-kilometer (832-mile) border with Russia. Helsinki, a hotbed of spies during the Cold War, is located just three hours by train from Saint Petersburg and one hour by plane from the three Baltic states now members of NATO. As a result it has served as neutral ground for meetings between US and Soviet or Russian leaders. "Finland was an in-between country in the Cold War era.... It wanted to form this bridge and stressed its neutrality in its relations with the superpowers," Teija Tiilikainen, director of the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, told AFP.

Building bridges

On August 1, 1975 the Helsinki Accords were signed by then US president Gerald Ford and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev. The document stipulated that the two powers would respect the 1945 borders drawn up Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill in Yalta. The agreement also raised the issue of human rights, a first at a time when

Soviet jails were brimming with dissidents.

In 1990, one year before the fall of the Soviet Union, Finland organized the last USSR-US summit, hosting US president George Bush and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. "Finland has always said that it rejects bloc politics and it played a big role in the de-escalation," a European diplomatic source told AFP. The last big meeting between a US and Russian president in Helsinki dates back to 1997, when Bill Clinton held talks with Boris Yeltsin. That summit led to progress in several areas, including arms control and NATO's welcoming of former Soviet bloc nations.

No longer as neutral

Finland belonged to Sweden for six centuries before becoming a Russian Grand Duchy from 1809-1917. It then fended off the Red Army during the Winter War of 1939-1940, and again from June 1941 to September 1944. Once it was finally free from the Soviet's grasp, it remained cautious for many years not to wake the Russian bear, refraining from any public criticism during the Cold War in a practice known as "Finlandisation". But once the Cold War was over, things changed radically. After the fall of the USSR, Finland wasted no time in forging closer ties with the West, joining the European Union in 1995. And while it is not a member of NATO, it enjoys close ties with the Alliance and became a member of its Partnership for Peace program in 1994.

A 2017 defense report published by the

Finnish government underlined "the special status" of its bilateral defense cooperation with Sweden, and referred to the United States as "an important partner for Finland" at a time when "military tensions have increased in the Baltic Sea region". And yet, Finland has no intention of burning its bridges with its powerful eastern neighbour, its fifth biggest trading partner. "Finland has a fairly good relationship with the Russians in the current situation," Juhana Aunelus, the director of the Centre for European Studies at the

University of Helsinki said. "Finland has also a close relationship with the United States, much closer than it used to have," he noted.

Finnish President Sauli Niinisto has played a large role in those strong ties. He was one of the first to congratulate Trump on his 2016 election victory, and he included Putin in several of Finland's centennial independence celebrations in 2017. Finland's role as a facilitator in peace negotiations also follows in the Nordic tradition. —AFP



HELSINKI: The Market Square and the Helsinki City Hall are pictured in Helsinki, Finland. US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin are to meet in Helsinki, the capital of Finland on July 16, 2018. — AFP

Ballots and bullets: Mexico's bloody election campaign

It is one of the lasting images of Mexico's election campaign: as a Congressional candidate poses for a selfie with a supporter, a man in a baseball cap calmly approaches and shoots him in the back of the head. Fernando Puron, who was running for Congress in the northern state of Coahuila, is one of 136 politicians murdered since candidate registration for Sunday's elections in Mexico opened in September, according to the consulting firm Etellekt.

It is by far the bloodiest Mexican campaign on record, as the violence gripping the country has exploded massively into the political world. Puron, 43, had just left a June 8 debate in which he had vowed to crack down on drug cartels, citing his record fighting the brutal Zetas cartel as mayor of the city of Piedras Negras when he stopped outside to pose for a picture with a supporter.

Grainy footage from a security camera shows how another man watched the pair from a distance, then walked up to Puron, put a gun to the back of his head, and pulled the trigger, walking off as the candidate crumpled to the ground. He is one of 48 candidates murdered this campaign season - 28 who were killed during the primary campaigns and 20 during the general election campaign, according to Etellekt. At the last national elections, in 2012, nine politicians and one candidate were murdered.

The new figure shows the lengths to which the country's powerful drug cartels are going to place their own allies in local government, in a bid for territory, government resources and soft policing, analysts say. The new law of local politics in Mexico is that "you have to obey orders from the hitman or capo" who rules your turf, said consultant Luis Carlos Ugalde, former head of Mexico's federal electoral authority. "If they think a politician's not going to work with them, negotiate, back down, then they kill him," he said.

'Failed' strategy

This political violence is part of the larger bloodbath harrowing Mexico, which has left more than 200,000

people murdered since the government deployed the army to fight the cartels in 2006. That includes a record 25,339 murders last year. Violence is a major issue in the campaign, and one that has hit hard across the country - whether in the chic resort region of Los Cabos, on the Baja California peninsula, or in places mired in the poverty that affects more than 50 million of Mexico's 120 million people.

The country has grown used to seeing burned and mutilated bodies abandoned on highways, police and soldiers attacked by heavily armed hitmen, or headless bodies floating in rivers. It is often hard to decipher why a given politician was killed. Some, like Puron, appear to have been eliminated for fighting the cartels. Others appear to have been taken out for striking a deal with a rival cartel, and still others have been killed in crimes that, like so many

in Mexico, remain murky. "We should be asking ourselves how many candidates are being murdered because they're mixed up in organized crime. That's the major problem," said Ugalde.

The director of Etellekt, Ruben Salazar, is critical of the "failed" strategy of the government's drug war, which has only fragmented the cartels, he said. "An infinitude of criminal cells emerged, and now they are waging a constantly escalating battle for control of territory and trafficking routes," he said. Sergio Aguayo, a security expert at El Colegio de Mexico, said the country faces a deep-rooted problem of "complicity between public officials and criminals." That poses a severe problem for Mexican democracy, regardless of how Sunday's elections turn out. "I can't think of another country in the world where organized crime has achieved as much power as it has in Mexico," Aguayo said. — AFP



Police officers patrol the Purepecha indigenous community Nahuatzen, in Michoacan State, Mexico. — AFP

Business

MONDAY, JULY 2, 2018

12 Dollar remains strong as German business morale continues to fall



13 US workers fear steel tariffs could be nail in the coffin



14 flydubai set to mark first direct flight between Dubai and Sicily



This photo shows employees of the Ryo Won Footwear Factory working on a production line making shoes in Pyongyang, US President Donald Trump dangled the carrot of foreign investment in front of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at their nuclear summit, but analysts say few will want to put money into one of the highest-risk business environments in the world. —AFP

Plastic bans leave manufacturers clutching at straws

Europe takes the lead with biodegradable plastics

PARIS: For decades, plastic straws have been essential props for cocktail makers, smoothie lovers and fast food addicts. But that may be starting to change, thanks largely to vigorous environmental campaigning. Under pressure from activists, the European Union, Britain, India and even fast food giants like McDonald's have all made some headway towards bringing the use of plastic straws to an end.

And with public pressure growing on governments, particularly in Europe, to ban single use plastics, manufacturers are feeling the heat. According to peer-reviewed US journal Science magazine, eight million tons of plastic are dumped into the Earth's oceans and seas each year — 250 kilograms every second. For years, the focus of environmentalists has been on plastic bags. But plastic straws have now come into the spotlight, thanks in part to images that have gone viral on the internet. One online video about the danger posed by seemingly innocuous straws shows a sea turtle rescued off Costa Rica getting one removed from its nostril.

Baby steps

The British government in April said it planned to ban the sale of single-use plastics including straws. The European Union followed suit in late May. In India's commercial capital Mumbai, Burger King, McDonald's and Starbucks were fined for violating a ban on single use

plastics, an official said earlier in June.

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi has pledged to make his country free of single use plastic by 2022. Some corporations are also taking steps. In the UK and Ireland, McDonald's has pledged to complete a transition to paper straws by 2019. In France, the burger giant is testing alternatives. The Hilton hotel giant in May vowed to remove the offenders from its 650 properties by the end of 2018. "Laid end to end, the straws saved each year in (Europe, the Middle East and Africa) would exceed the length of the River Seine," the hotel chain said in a statement.

Pasta and bamboo sticks

There are alternatives to plastic straws, but they are much pricier. The five-star Monte Carlo Palace hotel in Monaco has introduced biodegradable straws. Others are using raw pasta and bamboo sticks. The United States is resisting change while Europe takes the lead with biodegradable plastics made either from fossil fuels or crops such as potatoes and corn.

Some 100,000 tons of bioplastics were produced in 2016 in the world, according to Germany's specialist Nova-Institute. In 2017, biodegradable plastic production capacity rose to 800,000 tons globally, the European Bioplastics industrial group said. And while this may appear to be a step in the right direction, manufacturers are concerned

about the impact outright bans would have on their sales.

"It's not a very good sign," said Herve Millet, technical and regulatory affairs manager at PlasticsEurope, the region's leading plastics manufacturers' association. "But ... big corporations also have concerns over their image and they must at least try to find a way to respond to society's expectations."

No miracle cure

Europe's top plastic straws manufacturer Soyez, which is based in France, is also uncertain about how to make the transition. "The problem isn't new and it's serious, so we obviously need to find alternatives," the company's director Pierre Soyez said. "We've been working on this for several months," he said, adding that it was "really complicated" to try to make the shift overnight.

Experts, meanwhile, warn that biodegradable plastics may not be a miracle solution anyway. "People think that biodegradable means nothing is dumped in nature. But that's not the case at all," engineer Virginie Le Ravalec of the French Environment and Energy Management Agency. A separate collection system for bioplastic waste would need to be set up in order for the shift to really work, and that would involve millions in investment from states.

Activists fear, however, that biowaste may end up in the oceans—much like plastic has for decades. "Over periods of



SAN FRANCISCO: Paper straws sit on the bar at Fog Harbor Fish House. —AFP

days, weeks or even months, a bioplastic item could present just as much threat to marine life as a conventional plastic item," Fiona Nicholls of Greenpeace warned. As such, Nicholls says humanity's only hope is to reduce our use of plastics. "Swapping one plastic for another ... is not a fix to the plastic pollution problem that our oceans and waterways face." —AFP

Australian supermarkets work to prevent 'bag rage'

SYDNEY: Australia's biggest supermarket chains are scrambling to combat "bag rage" as frustrated shoppers vent their anger over the removal of single-use plastic bags. One man put his hands around a supermarket worker's throat, the West Australian newspaper reported, while grocery stores are putting on more staff to help customers get used to the change.

The removal of single-use plastics is part of a national push to reduce waste. As of July 1, major retailers in all but two Australian states will be fined if they supply single-use plastic bags. National supermarket chain Coles, owned by Wesfarmers, yesterday removed single-use plastic bags from its stores, shortly after rival Woolworths banned the bags on June 20.

Consumer complaints forced Woolworths to backflip on charging customers 15 Australian cents (11 US cents) for a reusable plastic bag, with the retailer now offering

them free until July 8. "They just want a little extra help from us to get through the transition," said Claire Peters, Woolworths managing director, in an emailed statement.

After seeing the backlash at its rival, Coles said it would open every checkout lane yesterday to reduce queue lengths as staff explain the changes to customers. "We are taking a proactive step," a Coles spokesperson said in an emailed statement. The union that represents Australian shop assistants has launched a public awareness campaign on the issue. "While we understand that some customers may be frustrated by this change, there is absolutely no excuse for abusive or violent behavior towards retail staff," said Gerard Dwyer, national secretary of the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association, in a statement on the union website.

The union conducted a survey earlier this week and of 132 members who responded, 57 said they suffered abuse due to the plastic bag ban. More than 8 million tons of plastic ends up in the world's oceans each year, according to United Nations Environment Program figures. The UN wants to eliminate single-use plastic by 2022 and says more than 60 countries have so far taken steps to ban or reduce plastic consumption. —Reuters

Russians protest pension age hike

MOSCOW: Several thousand people took to the streets across Russia yesterday to protest a hugely unpopular government decision to hike the pension age that has led to a record slump in Vladimir Putin's approval ratings. In a rare show of widespread public opposition to a government proposal, both Kremlin-friendly trade unions and political parties and Putin's top critic Alexei Navalny organized protest rallies in dozens of cities. Analysts say that growing popular discontent over the reform amid plunging living standards may present the most serious challenge to Putin during his nearly 20 years in power.

"Let's be honest: the state pension hike masterminded by Putin and (Prime Minister Dmitry) Medvedev is a true crime," Navalny said on Instagram ahead of the rallies. "It is common robbery of tens of millions of people under the guise of 'much-needed reform.'" Earlier yesterday, protesters rallied in the far-eastern cities of Vladivostok, Khabarovsk and Komsomolsk-on-Amur and the Siberian city of Omsk. More protests were expect-

ed later in the day. Navalny said more than 3,000 people protested in Omsk, tweeting a picture of a city square flooded with people. The demonstrations drew people from all sides of the political spectrum including Navalny's supporters, Communists and radical nationalists. Rallies will not take place in Moscow and other cities hosting the World Cup where protests are banned. The authorities have proposed raising the pension age to 65 for men and 63 for women, which would be the first such increase in nearly 90 years. Given Russians' low life expectancy many will not live long enough to receive a state pension.

More than 2.5 million people have signed a petition against the hike. To sweeten the pill, the government announced the proposed reform the day the World Cup kicked off in Russia. But more than 80 percent of Russians say they are against the state pension hike and even state-controlled pollsters registered a rare decline in Putin's stellar approval numbers.

According to the VTsIOM state pollster, the Kremlin leader's approval ratings slumped by a record 14 percentage points in the space of nearly two weeks—to 64 percent on June 24 from 78 percent on June 14 when the measure was unveiled. The last time Putin's approval ratings were so low was in January 2014, just months before his popularity skyrocketed following the annexation of Crimea from Ukraine. —AFP

NBK Money Market Report

Dollar remains strong as German business morale continues to fall

KUWAIT: A robust US dollar, tightening monetary policy and broadening geopolitical dangers have molded the winners and losers in the financial and equity markets.

Lately, a more significant issue has risen for markets and one that will fundamentally determine the performance of classes in the coming months is the path of Federal Reserve policy and further elevation in the US dollar.

economic figures. If economic fundamentals continue to widen, then a further correction in emerging markets may occur.

US Federal Reserve achieves its inflation goal

The FED's preferred measure of inflation rose to the central bank's target of 2% and the headline PCE followed the same trend towards 2.3%.

The unemployment rate is set to fall further below the Fed's goal, signaling upward pressures on wages and prices.

economy has accomplished its mission of a 2% inflation target. The above data further supports the era of economic divergence between the US and most major economies.

US GDP revised lower

The third and final reading from the US Commerce Department revealed that the American economy expanded at a slower pace than previously thought.

The recent positive data witnessed from the largest economy in the world indicates that the soft Q1 GDP reading was transitory and a rebound may soon be expected.

The US economy is still outperforming other developed nations around the globe as economic figures diverge in America's favor.

UK & EUROPE German business moral resumes downward trend

Looking into the German Business sentiment indicator, the index has declined six times in the past seven months.

The above data is somewhat at odds with the PMIs released last week, which showed a better reading for the service PMI.

The variance between headline & core inflation

The 19 countries sharing the euro currency witness annual price growth rising from 1.9% to 2% this month.

The outlook for the single economy is still uncertain as some entities blamed the sluggish first quarter on transitory reasons.

UK Q1 GDP revised slightly higher

Thanks to the British service sector, UK Q1 GDP was revised slightly higher to 0.2%, from the prior assessment of 0.1%.

The BoE expects GDP to inflate by 0.4% in Q2 after the harsh weather conditions in the first quarter.

Greece's long-term debt prospects 'uncertain': IMF

ATHENS: Greece's long-term debt prospects are uncertain, the International Monetary Fund said Friday, questioning the country's ability to maintain high budget surpluses to 2060.

Eurozone ministers last week agreed to extend maturities by 10 years on major parts of Greece's total debt obligations.

2022, and 2.2 percent to 2060. "It will very challenging for Greece to achieve that 2.2 percent primary balance, and at the same time grow at the rates that are envisaged."

Only one, Italy, did so in the context of double digit unemployment rates. "There are significant risks on the horizon (and) the legacies of the crisis still linger,"

Dohlmans insisted however that borrowing markets are now "wide open" for Greece following the eurozone deal.

the data aided interest rate probability of an August rate rise by the BoE to 60% from 50%.

ASIA Japan's Inflation Conundrum

Most major central banks around the globe have set a price growth target of 2%. Nowhere, though, does the pursuit for this figure carry drama like it does in Japan.

The Bank of Japan latest Core CPI data, the bank's preferred inflation indicator, slipped to 0.5%, shy of the 0.6% estimate.

The current level of price growth in Japan and the latest summary of opinions of the June policy meeting, suggest policy makers are in no hurry to exit the current monetary strategy.

and education, the IMF is now calling for resources to be pumped back. "There are unmet social spending needs-education, health,"

Also speaking Friday, Dunja Mijatovic, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights said health and education rights had been adversely affected by eight years of crisis cuts.

Greece currently owes the IMF around 10 billion euros which it is expected to fully repay by 2024, said Dohlmans, a former IMF mission chief to Belarus.

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report. Includes Global Stock Indices, MENA Stock Indices, Global Currencies Exchange Rate, MENA Currencies Exchange Rate, Global Interest Rates, Global Bond Yields, and Commodities tables.

EXCHANGE RATES. BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL. Table listing various currencies and their exchange rates.



Business

US workers fear steel tariffs could be nail in the coffin

They have had to raise prices to pay for more expensive steel

POPLAR BLUFF: The mood is tense at a nail factory in rural Missouri, where workers fear that steel tariffs imposed by President Donald Trump's administration could cost them their jobs. As giant spools of steel feed the manufacturing process, the men and women operating the whirring, screeching machines of the Mid-Continent Nail Corporation wonder if Trump himself will come to their rescue. It has been a successful business, employing some 500 people in the rural community of Poplar Bluff.

"People like us, we thought: biggest nail manufacturer in the United States, our jobs should be safe. Obviously, it's not," said machine shop supervisor Sean Hughey. The nail company is publicly raising the alarm, saying the tariffs on steel imports may put it out of business. They have had to raise prices to pay for more expensive steel and cannot compete with cheaper imported nails-completed products that face no tariffs at all. "It's a misguided policy," said Chris Pratt, Mid Continent's chief financial officer and operations chief. "I just think it's a policy that wasn't thought out completely. And we got to fix it."

Immediate effect

Many of the workers here voted for Trump. And the Poplar Bluff region favored the president over Hillary Clinton in the 2016 election by a margin of more than 60 percent. They liked his promise of a resurgence in American manufacturing. "I just want to have America on a level playing field, you know. And he seemed like he was interested in doing that," said Hughey.

Support for Trump has not wavered. But workers want the brash Republican to provide an

exemption from the tariffs, so the factory can continue to import cheap steel from Deacero, the Mexican company that owns Mid Continent. But the company's exemption request is one of more than 20,000 the Trump administration has received. Factory executives say they can't wait.

Orders have plunged 70 percent and they already have shut down one of their three plants at a sprawling complex in Poplar Bluff. Sixty workers are laid off and hundreds more may soon lose their jobs. If nothing changes within a few more months, the company might close altogether. "We need help immediately," said George Skarich, Mid Continent's vice president of sales. "Because the longer this lasts, the longer it puts us in a position of losing money on a daily basis."

'I'm scared'

Poplar Bluff is a small community of approximately 17,000 with a handful of manufacturing plants, surrounded by a seemingly endless expanse of farms. Mid Continent-source of 50 percent of all American-made nails-is a regional economic powerhouse. It is also a lifeline for Diane Brogdon. Her job as a machine operator provides the sole source of income for the 54-year-old and her daughter, who is attending college.

"I'm scared about losing everything I have. I think I'm too old to start over again," she said. Brogdon has worked at the plant for eight years. Just a few months ago, she felt secure enough to buy a house. Now, she's afraid she will lose it. She still supports Trump, but wants him to rethink some of his actions. "He needs to stop and think about the people that might lose their

jobs because of some of his policies," she says.

Other plant workers echo Brogdon's sentiment. They are hopeful Trump would help, if only he heard their pleas. They have engaged in a media blitz, including a full-page ad in the local newspaper with an open letter asking for the president's help. "More than any other president in our time, you have shown compassion for US manufacturing workers," the letter says.

'Buy American'

Certainly, the tariffs have been good for some. In March, US Steel hired 500 workers as it expanded capacity at one of its plants just a two-and-a-half hour drive north of Poplar Bluff and is bringing on 300 more this summer. Sam Anders can attest to the business boom. The 28-year-old travels from town to town for a company that refurbishes steel plant furnaces. He said they can't keep up with demand.

"We're so far behind on work right now we can't even hardly keep guys out on the road long enough," Anders said. He is in Poplar Bluff to make repairs at an engine-making plant just across the street from the nail factory. Anders is unsympathetic to the company's pleas and questions why it relies so heavily on cheap foreign steel. "We only buy American-made stuff, American-made steel, in our shops, where we build all of our equipment," he said.

Job losses 'already'

The problem with the tariffs is that even if tens of thousands of steel manufacturing jobs are created, hundreds of thousands of jobs may be lost due to subsequent tit-for-tat duties,



POPLAR BLUFF: Mid Continent Nail Corporation's George Skarich, Vice President of Sales (R) and Chris Pratt, CFO, talk to reporters in a production plant that has been closed because customers have stopped placing orders in favor of cheaper imports of nails. — AFP

Economist Laura Baughman of the research group Trade Partnership Worldwide researched US tariffs imposed in 2002 and predicts job losses this time around could be as high as 400,000.

"Right now, you're seeing it already," Baughman said. "There's the steel-consuming jobs, which is everything from nails and automobiles, to construction... as well as jobs that get lost in restaurants, for example, because people

who lose jobs don't go out to restaurants anymore." Senator Claire McCaskill, a Missouri Democrat, has taken hold of the issue during a tough midterm reelection campaign and says her office has accumulated a list of dozens of worried companies. "We want to keep this issue out front and center so that we can try to save as many of these jobs as we can," she said, after touring the nail factory with executives. — AFP

Slovakia to feel most pain from Trump car tariffs, says experts

BRATISLAVA: As the world's largest per capita car producer, Slovakia stands to be hit hardest if US President Donald Trump makes good on his threat to impose a 20 percent tariff on cars imported from the EU, analysts say. Trump's threat was the latest salvo in an escalating trade war that saw the European Union slap duties on US-made jeans and motorcycles in a tit-for-tat response to US tariffs on European steel and aluminum exports.

The specter of US tariffs that sent shares in Fiat Chrysler, Daimler and BMW tumbling on European stock exchanges also spooked Slovakia's automotive sector. It boasts Germany's Volkswagen—which is Slovakia's biggest private-sector employer—France's PSA and South Korean Kia along with more than 300 automotive supply companies.

All told, they generate over 300,000 jobs in the euro-zone country of 5.4 million. Jaguar Land Rover will also open a new plant in September. This makes Slovakia the EU's leading car and car part exporter to the United States in terms of share of GDP—and the most vulnerable to tariffs. "The ratio of overseas car exports to Slovakia's GDP is significantly the highest among all countries of the EU, with it being up to 1.7 percent," the Slovak Institute for Financial Policy (IFP) said in a study. "An increase in customs duties on car imports would have the biggest impact on Slovakia," it concluded.

As the only Slovakia-based carmaker that exports directly to the US, Volkswagen—and its many local suppliers—will suffer the most should US tariffs be slapped on the high-end Touareg, Audi Q7 and Porsche Cayenne models produced at its Bratislava plant. Overall, the carmaking sector has a 44 percent share of Slovakia's total industrial pro-



TRNAVA: In this file photo taken on December 3, 2015, employees work on the assembly line of the Peugeot 208 car by French car maker PSA Peugeot Citroen at the company's automobile factory. — AFP

duction and 35 percent of its exports. Last year, 1,001,520 cars rolled off assembly lines in Slovakia and exports were worth 3.7 billion euros (\$4.3 billion). Annual production has exceeded one million cars in each of the last three years and is forecast to grow by more than a third by 2020.

'Challenge'

A 25 percent tariff on cars could cost Slovakia approximately 90 million euros, according to IFP calculations. Tariffs would "definitely pose a challenge for Slovak carmakers reaching out to customers in the United States," Jan Pribula, Secretary General of the Automotive Industry Association of the Slovak Republic (ZAP), told AFP.

Slovak Economy Minister Peter Ziga has said that Bratislava would rally for unity across the European Union in the interests of keeping the car sector tariff-free.

Carmakers based in Slovakia have so far declined to comment on possible US tariffs. "As these plans are only speculations, we will not comment on them," Volkswagen Slovakia spokesman Michal Ambrovič said.

The German company's Slovak operation produced 361,776 cars last year, and 99.7 percent of its production was exported, with 20 percent to the US, according to an internal report made available to AFP. Groupe PSA Slovakia, maker of Citroën C3 and Peugeot 208 in Trnava, also declined to comment on the tariff impact, but spokesman Peter Svec did say that its plant does not sell to the US market. PSA produced 335,296 cars in 2017, 91 percent of its production was sold to customers EU countries, according to the company annual report. KIA Slovakia spokesman Andrej Sahaj also confirmed that sales of its vehicles are restricted to Europe. — AFP

China is manufacturing activity slows in June

BEIJING: Chinese factory activity slowed in June, dropping from an eight-month high the previous month official data showed Saturday, missing expectations as the world's second largest economy faces the prospect of a trade war with the US. The Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), a key gauge of factory conditions, came in at 51.5 in June, decelerating from 51.9 in May, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said.

The number was below the 51.6 reading tipped in a Bloomberg News survey of economists. Although the numbers indicate a slowdown, they held comfortably above the 50-point mark that separates expansion from contraction and were higher than the NBS's average reading of 51.3 for the first half of the year. The declining figures come as trade tensions with the US have cast a shadow on China's export-oriented manufacturing sector, with both sides threatening potentially damaging tariffs on billions of dollars worth of goods.

Nevertheless, "the manufacturing industry's fundamentals are on the whole trending positive," NBS analyst Zhao Qinghe said in a statement, adding that "manufacturing and demand are expanding at an overall steady pace." While large-scale enterprises continued to expand in June, small and medium-sized businesses are experiencing contraction, he noted, with both groups dropping below the 50 point mark.

Activity at small and medium-sized businesses dropped 0.2 to 49.8 and 1.1 points to 49.9 respectively, he said. Last Sunday, China's central bank said it would reduce the reserve requirement ratio for most banks in an effort to free up funding for small firms. The move will not necessarily pay off, however. "Looking ahead, we see increasing headwinds to the economy in the second half of the year from slowing credit growth," Capital Economics said in a research note, adding that the risk of a China-US trade war is "adding to the uncertainty." — AFP



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Business

flydubai set to mark first direct flight between Dubai and Sicily



KUWAIT: A senior delegation from Dubai, including IIE Liborio Stellino, the Ambassador of Italy in the UAE, Jeyhun Efendi, Senior Vice President, Commercial Operations for flydubai, Thierry Aucoc, Senior Vice President, Commercial Operations (Europe & Russian Federation) for Emirates, arrived at Catania International Airport (CTA) to mark the start of direct flights between Dubai and Sicily. The delegation was met on the ground by Muhammad Alnaqbi, Deputy Head of the UAE Mission to Italy, and by Nico Torrissi, Chief Executive Officer for Societa Aeroporto Catania (SAC). On arrival, the flight was met with a traditional water cannon salute.

IIE Liborio Stellino, Italy's Ambassador to the UAE, said: "The new flydubai connection with Catania will enable, in an effective way, for the South of Italy to be directly linked to Dubai's extensive air network. It is therefore favorably perceived as part and parcel of the multifaceted and comprehensive Italy-UAE partnership. Such a positive development in connectivity is going to become immediately a very useful tool for both countries, a win-win approach, creating enhanced results and a successful impact on the tourism and trade sector." flydubai offers direct flights to Catania and

through its partnership with Emirates this service will operate as part of its codeshare offering unmatched travel options. flydubai's route network in Europe includes 27 points in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland (from October), Greece, Italy, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Turkey and Ukraine. Jeyhun Efendi, Senior Vice President, Commercial Operations for flydubai, said: "We were the first airline in the Middle East to take delivery of the Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft. As part of today's inaugural, we have announced that Catania is one of the destinations on our growing network to be regularly served by the newest aircraft in our fleet. The convenience of direct flights from Dubai as well as onward connections opens up the world to our passengers. flydubai's professional and friendly service onboard and the comfort of our new aircraft with a flat-bed in Business Class will ensure our passengers enjoy an exceptional travel experience."

An enhanced travel experience
flydubai's brand-new Boeing 737 MAX 8 offers passengers more comfort and an enhanced travel experience. The new cabin

offering features a flat-bed in Business Class and in addition to the extra space and privacy, passengers can sleep comfortably during their flight. Economy Class offers new RECARO seats, which are designed to optimize space and comfort so passengers can sit back, relax and enjoy their flight. flydubai also offers exceptional inflight entertainment with a full HD, 11.6-inch screen, featuring a wide selection of movies, TV shows, music and games in English, Arabic and Russian. In addition, the Boeing Sky interior with its gently-sculpted sidewalls and its smooth-flowing lines provides passengers with a more relaxing travel environment.

Emirates will codeshare on this route as part of the Emirates flydubai partnership announced in July 2017. For bookings under the codeshare, Emirates passengers will receive complimentary meals and the Emirates checked baggage allowance on flights operated by flydubai in Business and Economy classes. With the partnership, passengers from the hundreds of destinations spanning six continents in over 80 countries will have an opportunity to travel to Catania via Dubai.

Thierry Aucoc, Senior Vice President, Commercial Operations (Europe & Russian Federation) for Emirates said, "Our partnership

with flydubai enables travelers in Catania and the greater surrounding area to easily access destinations across Emirates network, particularly Dubai, Thailand, Australia, Egypt and China, all of which are popular for local travelers. We also expect the route to boost the number of visitors to the region, particularly from key inbound markets like Melbourne and Sydney." Catania is the second largest city on the Island of Sicily and is known for its rich culture, arts and history.

Sicily is filled with museums, monuments and the well-known Mount Etna. In addition, the island is popular for its spectacular beaches and culinary delights, including pasta, seafood and pastries.

Nico Torrissi, Chief Executive Officer for Societa Aeroporto Catania (SAC), said: "The launch of new direct flight between Catania and Dubai provides easy access to Sicily from a major world aviation hub. This supports the promotion of Sicily as a unique destination with rich art and history making it popular among tourists from Dubai, Far East Asia, Australia and New Zealand. In addition, it will further stimulate trade and help to attract direct investment to Sicily." The inaugural program in Sicily included a press conference for local media as

well as journalists from Rome and Milan and concluded with a dinner for key travel trade partners. In addition, flydubai brought a group of media and social media influencers from the UAE, GCC and India to showcase Catania and Sicily as a preferred tourist destination.

Flight Details

flydubai's flights to Catania started on 13 June 2018. flydubai flight FZ767/FZ768 operates between Terminal 2, Dubai International (DXB) and Catania Airport (CTA). Business Class return fares from Dubai to Catania start at AED 9,745 and are inclusive of all taxes and 40kg checked baggage. Economy Class return fares from Dubai to Catania start at AED 1,895 including 7kg of hand baggage.

Flights can be booked through flydubai's website (flydubai.com), the official flydubai app, Contact Centre in Dubai, the flydubai travel shops or through our travel partners. For competitive travel packages visit Holidays by flydubai which provides passengers with thousands of hotel options that suit all budgets and ancillary services including airport transfers, sightseeing packages, UAE visa facilitation, car rental and excursions all available within a single booking process.

AUB announces KD 250K Hassad Islamic account grand prize winner

KUWAIT: On 27th June, Ahli United Bank held its Lifetime Salary annual grand prize draw as part of the Al Hassad Islamic Savings Account program, which is the largest prize draw in Kuwait. It was a special occasion for Mr Abdulhakeem Ibrahim Esmail who won KD 250,000 as a lifetime salary over 250 months.

Ahli United Bank congratulates Mr Abdulhakeem Ibrahim Esmail who is now able to achieve his dream of acquiring a house or his favorite car, to travel abroad, establish a new business or any dream he might have along with his aspirations - and all this, simply by having an account with AUB in Kuwait. The Al Hassad Islamic Savings Account program is the largest in Kuwait with a total annual prize draw of KD 3,400,000 aimed at realizing the dreams and ambitions of customers since inception. The program also provides 26 weekly prizes, which represent the biggest number of weekly winners.

To qualify for the Al Hassad Islamic Savings Account prizes, customers only need to open a saving account with a minimum of KD 100. For every KD 50 of quarterly balance in the account, customers earn one chance to enter the quarterly draw. Moreover, customers earn one chance to enter the weekly draws for every KD 50 of balance. This means the more deposits made, the higher the chances of winning. The Al



Hassad Islamic Savings Account's customers in Kuwait and Bahrain are eligible to participate in the draw in line with the account's terms and conditions. For more information on Ahli United Bank's Al Hassad Islamic Savings Account and the wide range of prizes it presents, along with the requirements to qualify for the draw, customers are invited to visit any of the Bank's branches, call the customer service "Hayakum" or visit the Bank's website.

Burgan Bank names daily lucky winners of Yawmi account draw



KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, the second largest in terms of assets, announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000.

The lucky winners are:

1. Khaled Mohammed Ebrahim Alrashed
2. Yasmeen Anwar Nasser Alhamati
3. Victor S Abdelmalak
4. Abdulla Athbi Abdulaziz Husain
5. Hashem Al-Rifai And/O' Fayha Aliyan

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a Quarterly Draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers Daily and Quarterly Draws, wherein the Quarterly Draw requires customers to

maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win. For more information on opening a Yawmi account, the new quarterly draw or on any of the bank's products and services, customers are urged to visit their nearest Burgan Bank branch, or simply call the bank's Call Center. Customers can also log on to Burgan Bank's www.burgan.com for further information.

flydubai announces the alignment to Emirates Skywards

KUWAIT: Dubai-based carrier flydubai has announced yesterday that the award-winning loyalty program of Emirates airline, Emirates Skywards will become the loyalty program for both airlines. This strategic move builds on the success of the initial phase of the extensive partnership which sets out how the two Dubai-based airlines have been able to offer customers unmatched travel options.

The innovative partnership, announced in July last year, goes beyond code-sharing to a number of initiatives spanning commercial, network planning, airport operations, customer journey and with yesterday's announcement, the alignment of the carriers' loyalty programs. From 01 August 2018, OPEN members will be enrolled into Emirates Skywards to continue to be rewarded when travelling with flydubai. Members will be able to earn both Skywards Miles and Tier Miles every time they fly with Emirates or flydubai enhancing collection and spending opportunities.

During July, OPEN Gold members and Emirates Skywards Silver members and above,



who are also OPEN members, can convert their OPEN reward points to Skywards Miles (2 OPEN reward points = 1 Skywards Mile). OPEN reward points held in existing accounts can be redeemed until 31 July 2018 for future flights with flydubai. Since launch, more than 650,000 passengers have benefited from the Emirates and flydubai partnership. The seamless approach to travel committed to by both airlines

is further cemented today with this collaboration, passing on the benefits to passengers who now have the choice to travel to over 200 unique destinations on the combined network of both airlines. To learn more about the alignment of the OPEN programme with Emirates Skywards, members are encouraged to read the communication sent by the airline or log in to their OPEN account.

HUAWEI Mate 10 Series can now recognize you

KUWAIT: Facial recognition technology is on the rise globally, thus becoming a part of our everyday life. Today, we can shop with our face, pay for things using a selfie, get tagged automatically on social media, be greeted at hotels upon arrival, detect genetic disorders from patient photos, find missing persons, and even take attendance in schools.



How to set up?
Go to Settings and touch Privacy & security > Security > Screen security > Screen lock > Face Unlock.
Follow the onscreen instructions, touch Set it up then Continue.
Wait for your phone to identify your face and touch Continue.

The truth is that facial recognition technology is popping up everywhere even into our smartphones as by recognizing faces, smart-

phones will immediately unlock without having to use passwords anymore.

Looking to constantly innovate and provide consumers with top-notch experiences, Huawei has already used facial recognition technology in some smartphones, and is introducing today Facial recognition into the HUAWEI Mate 10 Series, therefore bringing more features and functionality to users' experience.

Face Unlock brings more convenience to users

The Huawei Face Unlock option is a safe and convenient way to interact with the Mate 10 Series, providing one more option besides fingerprint to unlock the device. Using advanced facial recognition software, the option has enhanced security settings, recording data points on your face to prevent photos and videos of your face being used to unlock the phone. Users can set up Face Unlock by going to the "Security & Privacy" submenu in Settings. When accessing the feature for the first time, they will have to have enroll their face by taking a headshot. After creating a facial profile, users have two options to use Face Unlock: "Direct Unlock" and "Slide to Unlock".

The "Direct Unlock" unlocks the device automatically when the screen is turned on and the user's face is recognized; the "Slide to Unlock" requires users to perform a swipe gesture to unlock the device after their face is recognized. Direct Unlock works best when the option to wake up the device on pick up is also enabled, as it allows users to unlock their device with minimal effort (device behavior on pick up can be adjusted from a separate Settings submenu, accessible from a shortcut in the Face Unlock submenu).

On the other hand, Slide to Unlock synergizes with "Smart Lock Screen Notifications", which, when enabled, blocks notifications from being viewed unless the device is first unlocked. Having both options available gives users the freedom to choose the option that best fits their preferences and usage habits. Face Unlock is the latest feature to be added to the HUAWEI Mate 10 Series. Featuring the world's first Kirin AI



processor, HUAWEI FullView, as well as a dual Leica camera powered by AI, the HUAWEI Mate 10 Series were highly acclaimed globally. The devices also pack a powerful 4000 mAh battery with AI-powered Battery Management, and support T-V Fast-Charge Safety Certified HUAWEI SuperCharge technology.

CBK appoints Assistant GM

KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced appointing the current assistant general manager of individual banking services, Hameed Ibrahim Salman as general manager of individual banking services noting that the promotion was approved by the Central Bank of Kuwait. Notably, Salman has over 26 year experience in individual banking services and has worked for several regional banks.



Hameed Ibrahim Salman

Health

'Slow but sure' progress toward less toxic tools to fight cancer

Rising field which the pharmaceutical industry is investing heavily in

BALTIMORE: John Ryan is just one of the miracles to emerge from the Johns Hopkins cancer unit in Baltimore. An immunotherapy treatment—highly effective in a minority of patients—saved his life after a lung cancer diagnosis. The retired military nuclear reactor specialist will celebrate his 74th birthday in July, and his battle with cancer illustrates the promises and failures of immunotherapy, a burgeoning field in which the pharmaceutical industry is investing heavily.

Ryan has been able to attend the graduations of three of his children, and will take part in the wedding of one of his daughters this summer—even though doctors expected he had just 18 months to live in June 2013. "That's exciting stuff to be around for," he said. But he knows of plenty people who have not been so lucky.

"In five years, I have lost a lot of dear friends." Immunotherapy is one of two major categories of drugs against cancer. The best-known is chemotherapy, which has been used for decades and aims to kill tumors but is so toxic that it also attacks healthy cells, leading to major side effects like weakness, pain, diarrhea, nausea and hair and weight loss.

Ryan went through all that in 2013, and his tumor persisted. Exhausted by chemo and wracked with pain, Ryan was accepted into a last-ditch clinical trial using nivolumab (brand name Opdivo) in late 2013. The drug was delivered intravenously at the hospital, at first every two weeks, then once a month. His tumor rapidly disappeared, and 104 injections later, the main side effect has been itching. Recently, a mysterious mass appeared in his right lung. It was treated with radiation. "They shot me with chemo, it almost killed me. And now I have been sucking up immunotherapy, and it's been good. My quality of life has been great," said Ryan.

Relatively few patients

Immunotherapy trains the body's natural defense-immune cells, also known as T-cells—to detect and kill can-

cer cells, which otherwise can adapt and hide. Some experts are cautious, having been disappointed numerous times by other newfangled approaches to fighting cancer. But many consider immunotherapy as a turning point. More than 30 immunotherapy drugs are in development, and 800 clinical trials are underway, according to Otis Brawley, medical director of the American Cancer Society.

Ryan's oncologist, Julie Brahmer, said she now starts about a third of her lung cancer patients on immunotherapy first, not chemo. It helps that the Baltimore facility has numerous clinical trials under way, far more than the average US hospital. Doctors are intrigued by the unusually long remissions seen in a small number of patients like Ryan. These success stories make up about 10 to 15 percent of patients, said William Nelson, director of the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins.

Normal remissions typically last a year and a half to two years. Chemotherapy and radiation are still the most dominant tools. But in recent years, a series of clinical trials have shaken up the cancer world, showing it was possible to better treat and even cure some of the most difficult forms of cancer without resorting to the most toxic techniques.

Personalized treatments

A spectacular example concerns prostate cancer. Researchers have found that recommendations of regular screening had the opposite effect of what was intended: too many tumors that would never have spread were being treated in operations. Regarding breast cancer, a major study published in early June at the American Society of Clinical Oncology conference showed that for tens of thousands of women, surgery and hormone therapy were enough to keep cancer away. Chemotherapy was being given unnecessarily, they found, in a finding that surprised the cancer community.

Meantime, genetic analyses are becoming ever more



BALTIMORE: Lab workers are seen in the Ludwig Center for Cancer Genetics and Therapeutics, at Johns Hopkins Hospital. — AFP

common for tumors, allowing more precise and rapid treatments for patients. Johns Hopkins has a genomic lab specially designed to help doctors personalize patient treatments, rather than basing treatment simply on the location of the tumor. "At this point we have better and better tools to say, 'Yes, he needs to be treated, you don't,'" said Nelson. Some cancers, including brain cancer, remain on the margin of these new treatments.

But for leukemia, breast, lung, cervical, colon and rectal

cancer, as well as the serious skin cancer known as melanoma, immunotherapy and other personalized treatments are making progress "slowly but surely," said Nelson. For oncologist Julie Brahmer's part, she hopes that one day, metastatic cancers—those that can spread to points distant from the site of origin—will be treated like a "chronic disease," rather than a death sentence. John Ryan has a simpler objective in mind. "My goal is to die of something other than lung cancer," he said. — AFP

Revenge of a forgotten medical 'genius'

VIENNA: It's not an uncommon fate for a pioneering scientist: languishing unrecognized in his time before dying in obscurity. But as his 200th birthday approaches, the life-saving work of a Hungarian obstetrician is finally getting its due. Decades before Louis Pasteur won widespread acceptance for the germ theory of disease, Ignaz Semmelweis was battling his peers to accept what is today medical orthodoxy—doctors should thoroughly disinfect their hands before treating patients.

Born on July 1 1818, Semmelweis joined the obstetrics department of Vienna's general hospital in 1846 and was immediately struck by the extremely high maternal mortality rate in the wing where student doctors trained: it stood at more than 10 percent, at times going up to almost 40 percent. By contrast, in the neighboring wing where midwives trained, the rate stayed under the contemporary average of three percent.

"This disparity troubled Semmelweis enormously and he started a thorough epidemiological study," says Bernhard Kuenburg, president of Vienna's Semmelweis Foundation. In 1847, the penny dropped when a colleague died of septicemia after carrying out an autopsy: Semmelweis surmised that dead bodies must hold invisible but potentially deadly "particles". "At the time, medical students went directly from an autopsy to assist with a labor without disinfecting their hands," Kuenburg said. With soap not being enough to fix the problem,

Semmelweis imposed a more rigorous regime of hand-washing for five minutes with a harsh chlorinated lime solution. With this "very simple method" Semmelweis slashed the mortality rate "to almost zero," Kuenburg says.

Fiercy disposition

But instead of plaudits, Semmelweis suffered the wrath of the grandees of Vienna's medical fraternity and in 1849 his contract was not renewed. "The self-estimation of the doctors was very high back at this time. Of course they were offended because they didn't like the idea that they were guilty of causing this terrible mortality rate," Kuenburg says. Moreover, it would still be a quarter of a century before Pasteur was finally able to prove the existence of "microbes". Other doctors demanded evidence, according to Kuenburg. "They said: 'No, Mr Semmelweis cannot be right. He cannot show us the pathogens so something is fishy with this theory.'" And Semmelweis's fiery disposition and lack of tact didn't help—he did not shrink from calling colleagues "killers". Towards the end of his life his mental health deteriorated and he died in an asylum in 1865, at the age of 47.

100 deaths a day in the EU

At the end of the 19th Century Semmelweis's reputation began to be rehabilitated after the discoveries of Pasteur, Robert Koch and Alexandre Yersin bore out his theories. In 1924 the French writer Louis-Ferdinand Celine dedicated a medical thesis to him and hailed him as a "genius". Today he is considered the father of modern theories of hospital hygiene and sterilization. But even though disinfecting hands is accepted as common sense for medical personnel, the practice still isn't as systematic as it should be, according to Professor Didier Pittet, infection control expert at the World Health Organization (WHO).

Worldwide, the practice is only adhered to "in 50 percent of cases on average, even though it can prevent 50 to



VIENNA: Bernhard Kuenburg, president of the Semmelweis Foundation, gestures during an interview in front of a commemorative plaque for pioneering scientist Ignaz Phillip Semmelweis. — AFP

70 percent of hospital infections," he told AFP. Some 3.2 million people are affected annually by hospital-acquired infections within the EU, resulting in 100 deaths every day. Pittet estimates the global figure for such deaths to be between five and eight million year Hungary.

"Disinfecting the hands with an alcohol solution is cheap and simple and has an immediate impact on infection rates," including for multi-resistant organisms, Pittet says. But despite this, "it's an act which isn't taken seriously enough, notably by doctors themselves" Pittet says, adding that some seem to think worrying about sterilizing their hands is somehow beneath them. However, the WHO's "Clean Care is Safer Care" campaign, launched together with 19,000 hospitals worldwide in order to raise awareness of the importance of hand sterilization, is starting to pay off. —AFP

'Flying brain' blasts off on cargo ship toward space station

TAMPA: A ball-shaped artificial intelligence robot nicknamed the "flying brain" because it is trained to follow and interact with a German astronaut blasted off Friday toward the International Space Station aboard SpaceX's Dragon cargo ship. A spare hand for the station's robotic arm, an experiment to measure plant stress and a study of a new cancer treatment were also on board as the Falcon 9 rocket lifted off from Cape Canaveral, Florida at 5:42 am (09:42 GMT).

"We have ignition and liftoff! The Falcon 9 rocket powers the Dragon spacecraft toward the International Space Station," said a NASA commentator as the white rocket fired its engines and lit up the skies on a dark, Florida morning. The unmanned Dragon capsule carried 5,900 pounds (2,700 kilograms) on its 15th supply mission to the orbiting lab, as part of a \$1.6 billion contract with NASA.

Both the capsule and the rocket have flown before. The Dragon sent cargo to space in 2016 and the Falcon blasted off a NASA satellite two months ago. The California-based aerospace company headed by Elon Musk is intent on re-using rocket parts and spacecraft to lower the cost of spaceflight. About 10 minutes into the flight, SpaceX confirmed that the Dragon had successfully deployed from the rocket's second stage and was in a "good orbit." The capsule is scheduled to reach the station on July 2.

'Historic' AI experiment

A key piece of cargo is a basketball-sized device called CIMON, or Crew Interactive Mobile Companion. It has been described as a "flying brain" by Manfred Jaumann, head of microgravity payloads at Airbus. CIMON's activation will mark "a historical moment," becoming the first robot of its kind to interact with people in space, said Christian Karrasch, CIMON project manager at the German Aerospace Center (DLR), during a NASA press briefing Thursday.

CIMON has been trained to recognize the voice and face of Alexander Gerst, 42, a geophysicist with the European Space Agency. When Gerst calls to CIMON, the floating robot will acoustically sense where Gerst is calling from, orient itself that way, and zoom over. Hovering at the astronauts' eye level, its front camera can detect if the per-



OHIO: This NASA photo released June 25, 2018 shows SpaceX's Crew Dragon at NASA's Plum Brook Station in Ohio, undergoing testing in the In-Space Propulsion Facility—the world's only facility capable of testing full-scale upper-stage launch vehicles and rocket engines under simulated high-altitude conditions. —AFP

son in front of it is indeed Gerst, or someone else. It is also designed to interpret his emotional state.

CIMON will be powered by more than a dozen propellers to help it zip around and avoid bumping into things inside the Columbus module of the space lab. "This is designed to work in English. It understands Alexander," said Bret Greenstein, global vice president of Watson Internet of Things Offerings at IBM. "It will come to him when he speaks." All six crew members at the orbiting outpost can speak to CIMON, though it has been taught to work best with Gerst.

The goal for this flight is mainly to demonstrate the technology works. The robot should be able to guide Gerst through various science procedures, showing videos or pictures as needed. Gerst can also ask the robot questions beyond the simple procedure at hand. —AFP

Cyberdoc puts UK GPs on defensive

LONDON: A medical chatbot said to perform as well as or even better than human doctors has sparked a war of words in Britain, in a clash over how much the cash-strapped public health service should rely on artificial intelligence. AI company Babylon, which is already working with the National Health Service (NHS) claimed its chatbot scored higher marks than real live doctors in "robust tests".

The British firm said it quizzed the AI using sample questions for trainee exams set by Britain's Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP), the professional body for family doctors. The programmed chatbot, a key feature of Babylon's "GP at Hand" app, scored 81 percent when sitting the test for the first time, while the average pass mark over the past five years for doctors was 72 percent, according to the company.

Its founder Ali Parsa, who presented the findings in London earlier this week, hailed the results as "a landmark". "(They) take humanity a significant step closer to achieving a world where no one is denied safe and accurate health advice," he said in a statement. Andrew Goddard, an NHS doctor and president of the Royal College of Physicians (RCP), which represents 34,000 doctors across the globe and hosted the Babylon event unveiling the findings, told the audience that Artificial Intelligence was "the future".

"How quickly we'll get there I will wait and see—medicine needs to get engaged with it," he said. But ahead of the London showcase, the RCGP issued a stern rebuke of the company's claims. "No app or algorithm will be able to do what a GP does," said its vice-chair Martin Marshall. "Computers are computers, and GPs are highly-trained medical professionals: the two can't be compared and the former may support but will never replace the latter."

The organisation went on to question the sample questions used by Babylon in its testing. In response, the company called the RCGP "completely off the mark" and accused it of "misunderstanding" facts. Mobasher Butt, Babylon's medical director, said the RCGP was "shoring up an outmoded and financially self-interested status quo which solely works to the benefit of a limited number of partner GPs."

Cutting costs

Babylon says it is on a mission "to put an accessible and affordable health service in the hands of every person on earth". It launched an app for patients in Britain's NHS in parts of London last September that has more than 50,000 users. The company also has more than 2 million members in its healthcare service in the east African nation of Rwanda.

It plans further rollouts around the world, and is collaborating with tech giants Samsung and Tencent to expand its app offerings. "I believe that we are on the threshold of being able to do with healthcare what Google, for instance, did with information," Parsa said. Noting two-thirds of healthcare costs within the NHS go on salaries, he called on the medical community to welcome AI. "As long as we don't tackle our complete reliance on human beings to deliver healthcare, we are not going to be able to do so affordably." But the RCGP said Babylon's "GP at Hand" app was "cherry-picking" patients, "leaving traditional GP services to deal with the most complex patients." "The way it is being used risks undermining and damaging traditional general practice services," it added. —AFP

Human lifespan may not have peaked after all

TAMPA: Has the maximum lifespan for a human already been reached? Maybe not, said a study of Italian centenarians published Thursday found that human longevity is slowly increasing. Scientists have long debated whether or not the ultimate lifespan in people has been attained. A 2016 study in the journal *Nature* argued that it has, in 1997, when Frenchwoman Jeanne Calment died at the record-breaking age of 122.

But the new findings in the journal *Science* point to the possibility for extended human longevity, and that our species' lifespans may increase over time. Based on data from more than 3,800 centenarians in Italy, researchers found the risk of death slows, and even plateaus, above age 105. "As we age, our health and risks of death get worse faster and faster. But at extreme ages, they stop getting worse," said co-author Kenneth Wachter, a professor of statistics at the University of California, Berkeley.

"They don't get better, but they stop getting worse. They level out—it's called a plateau," he told AFP. Researchers studied data on all inhabitants of Italy aged 105 and older between 2009 and 2015 — those born between 1896 and 1910, for a total of 3,836 documented cases, said the study. Focusing on mortality among people born in the same years, over time they found slight declines in mortality rate.

This suggests as time went on, people were living a bit longer than those born in prior years. "The slow but distinct improvements over time that we see in the level of the plateau beyond age 105 give hope that a fixed limit to lifespan is not currently in view," explained Wachter.

Socioeconomic factors and improved medical care could be factors in the lengthening human lifespan. But "similar mortality plateau patterns in extreme age are observed in other species, hinting at common structural and evolutionary explanations," said the report. —AFP

Health

Baby with rare condition given 'new chance' in London hospital

KUWAIT: A Russian baby, Vitaly, has been given a new lease of life after being treated for an extremely rare condition called Prune Belly Syndrome at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children in London (GOSH). Vitaly suffers from an extremely rare condition called Prune Belly Syndrome and has been in and out of hospital since birth. Vitaly's parents first knew something was wrong at a routine ultrasound in Russia at 13 weeks, where doctors originally diagnosed with Vitaly with megacystis. However, when Vitaly was born, it was evident that his condition was a lot more serious than was first expected.

Vitaly was diagnosed with a rare condition called Prune Belly Syndrome, a condition that affects around 1 in 40,000 births. Professor Imran Mushtaq, Consultant Paediatric Urologist at GOSH, who treated Vitaly explains that Prune Belly Syndrome is a very rare condition. "The muscle of the tummy (the abdominal wall) is very thin and children also have very weak, very abnormal and often dilated kidneys. The bladder is also very distended and doesn't work very well. The condition has three main symptoms: abnormal urinary syndrome, abnormal abdominal wall and their testicles are inside the tummy and have not descended. And that's why some people call it the Triad Syndrome," explains Professor Mushtaq.

As the condition was so rare, doctors in Russia were unable to provide the expertise necessary to help Vitaly,

so his mother Lidia started to research for treatment. In search of expert treatment to help him, his family travelled to Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children (GOSH) in London. "I tried to get in touch with other mothers who had children with similar conditions on the internet, and that's how I found out about Anglomedical and Professor Mushtaq at GOSH," Lidia explains. Before arriving at GOSH, the family worked with Anglomedical, a medical concierge based in the UK, who helped them liaise with GOSH and prepare to come to the UK.

"Initially when Vitaly arrived he was in a very poor condition," Professor Mushtaq says. "He was very weak and had a poor kidney situation. And that's where Dr Stephen Marks has been amazing. He has worked really hard to improve the nutritional status, to improve the kidney function and he got us to the stage where we could we could carry out a simple procedure."

'Our doctors have done everything'

Dr Stephen Marks, Consultant Paediatric Nephrologist at GOSH, was the lead medical physician and kidney specialist overseeing Vitaly's care. "I instituted medical management to improve his electrolyte imbalance with additional supplements, phosphate binders, activated vitamin D and treatment of his anaemic of chronic disease," Dr Marks explains. "I coordinated the multidisciplinary team input with dietetic, urology, general surgery, dermatology and respiratory reviews."

Vitaly was given a gastrostomy to improve his nutritional input and growth at GOSH. Professor Mushtaq also performed a vesicostomy operation on Vitaly's bladder to make an opening in the bladder so the urine drains straight out into the nappy. Since these operations, his condition has improved significantly. "Our doctors have done everything for our child. They have saved the life of our child," Vitaly's dad explains.

"Everyone was telling us how Professor Mushtaq treats all his patients like they are his own children before we came," Lidia explains. "When we arrived, we saw how true that was: it's how he communicates with Vitaly, how he holds him, how they have a laugh together. There is so much warmth and so much love in what he does, so it's not only this amazing professional world-class expertise but it's also his relationship which makes parents so calm and comfortable in this difficult situation. Thank you from all the parents in Russia you've helped."

Vitaly will have to return to GOSH regularly for check-ups and will soon need a kidney transplant, as well as further surgery to reconstruct the bladder. "We treat children from all over the world with rare urological and kidney conditions. I consider it our responsibility to use our expertise to try our best to benefit every child not only in the UK but around the world" Professor Mushtaq concludes. GOSH's urology service treated 92 patients from the Middle East last year, including 19 children from the UAE and 42 children from Kuwait.



Baby Vitaly and family

CLINIC

PAGE





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DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED
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What's On

Lesotho Ambassador bids farewell



A farewell ceremony was held recently for Ambassador of Lesotho to Kuwait Popane Lebessa on the occasion of the end of his tenure. Senior officials from Kuwait's Foreign Ministry, diplomats and other dignitaries attended the event. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Exclusive summer camp for BuBa kids customers

Burgan Bank is pleased to announce its exclusive tie-up with Wiggle Kids Club this summer, in offering its BuBa customers a 25 percent discount on summer camp registrations. The camp is catered to children of ages 1-13 years old, providing them different ranges of activities from arts and crafts, recycling, gymnastics, martial arts, kickboxing, capoeira, zumba, hip-hop, French language, underwater animal theme day, obstacle races, as well as educational games and much more. The summer camp offer is valid on one month memberships only and registration period will close on July, 31st, 2018. To avail this offer, BuBa kids customers must visit Wiggle Kids Club that is located in Promenade mall, anytime from today by presenting their BuBa ATM card.

MIDDLE EASTERN RICE WITH BLACK BEANS AND CHICKPEAS



Ingredients:
2 tablespoon olive oil
4-5 clove garlic, minced
1/2 cup uncooked basmati rice
2 teaspoons ground cumin
2 teaspoons ground coriander
1-2 teaspoon ground turmeric
1-2 teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
1/2 teaspoon red chili pepper flakes
1 cup chicken broth
1 pound ground turkey (or extra lean ground sirloin)
1 can (15oz) garbanzo beans (chickpeas), drained and rinsed
1 can (15oz) black beans, drained and rinsed
1 bunch chopped fresh cilantro (optional) - I didn't use this
1 bunch chopped fresh parsley (optional) - I used this
1/4 cup pine nuts (optional) - I didn't use this
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:
Heat 1 tbsp of olive oil in a medium size pot over medium heat. Stir in rice, and 1/2 the amount of spices: cumin, coriander, turmeric, and cayenne pepper.
Cook and stir a couple of minutes, then pour in chicken broth. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer 20 minutes.
Set another large skillet over medium heat, and add 1 tbsp of olive oil. Stir in garlic & onions, and cook until they soften. Add the ground sirloin/turkey, as well as the rest of the spices and chili pepper flakes and cook until evenly brown.
Gently mix cooked turkey, garbanzo beans, black beans, and parsley into the cooked rice. Season with salt and pepper. Serve with plain yogurt.

HAMUSTA SOUP



Ingredients:
4 leaves Swiss chard, stalks discarded and leaves cut into wide ribbons
2 stalks celery, leaves removed and chopped and stalks cut into 1/4-inch slices
2 small zucchini, quartered lengthwise and thickly sliced
2 small carrots, peeled and sliced into rounds
1 large potato, peeled and cut into cubes
1 head garlic, cloves peeled and lightly smashed
9 tablespoons lemon juice
1 tablespoon white sugar (optional)
1 tablespoon salt
6 1/3 cups water

Directions:
Stir chard, celery, zucchini, carrots, potato,

garlic, lemon juice, sugar, and salt together in a large pot; add water. Bring the mixture to a boil, reduce heat to medium-low, and cook at a simmer until the vegetables are fork-tender, about 15 minutes.

Cook's Note:
You can add prepared kubbah to the finished soup, if desired.

Turkish chicken kebabs

Ingredients
1 cup whole-milk Greek yogurt
2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice, or more to taste
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons ketchup
6 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon Aleppo red pepper flakes

1 tablespoon kosher salt
1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 teaspoon paprika
1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 1/2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs, halved
4 long metal skewers

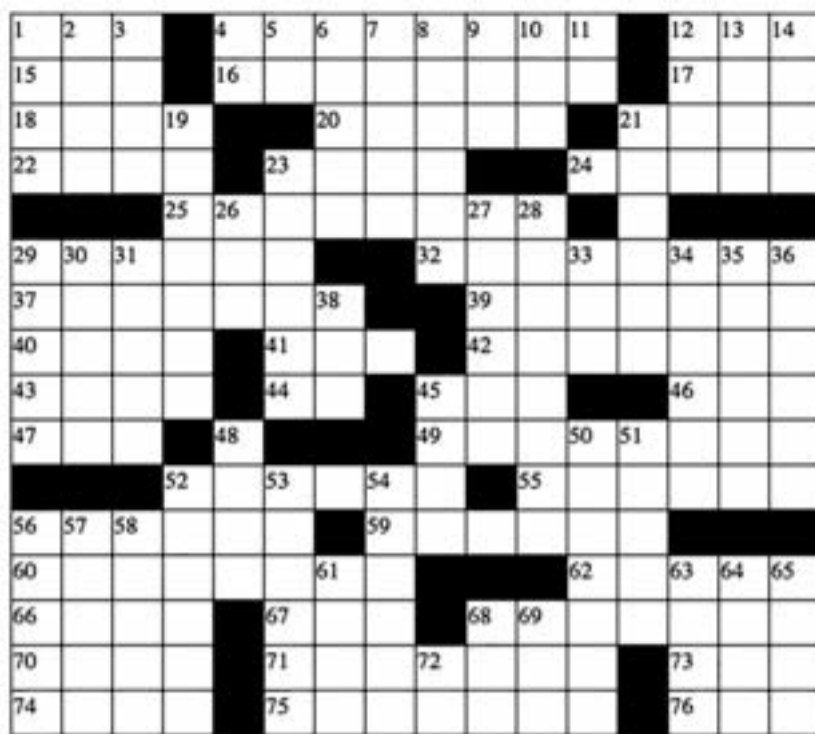
Directions:
Whisk yogurt, lemon juice, olive oil, ketchup, garlic, red pepper flakes, salt, cumin, black pepper, paprika, and cinnamon together in a bowl.
Place chicken thigh halves into the yogurt marinade and coat them thoroughly on all sides. Cover bowl with plastic

wrap and refrigerate 2 to 8 hours.
Preheat an outdoor grill for medium-high heat and lightly oil the grate.
Using 2 skewers for each kebab, thread half of the chicken thighs onto each pair of skewers making a fairly thick "log" shape.
Place kebabs on grill. Do not try to turn them until they begin to unstick from the grill, 3 or 4 minutes. Turn kebabs and grill the other side 3 or 4 minutes; turn. Continue cooking and turning until chicken is no longer pink in the center and the juices run clear, about 6 minutes. An instant-read thermometer inserted into the center should read at least 165 degrees F (74 degrees C).



Stars

CROSSWORD 1948



ACROSS

1. An accountant certified by the state.
4. A member of the Democratic Party.
12. A widely distributed system of free and fixed macrophages derived from bone marrow.
15. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
16. Likely but not certain to be or become true or real.
17. A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
18. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
20. Any admirable quality or attribute.
22. God of love and erotic desire.
24. Lacking either stimulating or irritating characteristics.
25. The early stage of growth or development.
29. A wired or starched collar of intricate lace.
32. Having or showing arrogant superiority to and disdain of those one views as unworthy.
37. Someone who rows a boat.
39. An imaginary line connecting points on the Earth's surface where the magnetic declination is the same.
40. Large recently extinct long-horned European wild ox.
41. The airforce of Great Britain.
42. Devoid of violence or disruption.
43. Hinge joint in the human leg connecting the tibia and fibula with the femur and protected in front by the patella.
44. A logarithmic unit of sound intensity.
46. Used in combination to denote the middle.
47. The capital and largest city of Japan.
49. Something of sentimental value.
55. Brass (or a yellow alloy resembling brass) that was hammered into thin sheets.
56. Take revenge for a perceived wrong.
59. Any of various water spirits.
60. A three-tone Chadic language.
62. Pasture grass of plains of South America and western North America.
66. Any tree or shrub of the genus Inga having pinnate leaves and showy usually white flowers.
67. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
70. A narcotic that is considered a hard drug.
71. Nearly cosmopolitan family.
73. Slender bristlelike appendage found on the bracts of grasses.
74. Swift timid long-eared mammal larger than a rabbit having a divided upper lip and long hind legs.
75. A festival featuring African-American culture.
76. A nucleic acid consisting of large molecules shaped like a double helix.

DOWN

1. The quantity a cask will hold.
2. Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
3. The biblical name for ancient Syria.
4. A person forced to flee from home or country.
5. A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
6. Informal terms for a mother.
7. A religious belief of African origin involving witchcraft and sorcery.
8. A waiter at a drive-in restaurant.
9. A run that is the result of the batter's performance.
10. Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).
11. A brittle silver-white metalloid element that is related to selenium and sulfur.
12. God of death.
13. The part of a hammerhead opposite the flat striking surface (may have various shapes).
14. Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
19. Tall feather palm of northern Brazil with hard-shelled nuts yielding valuable oil and a kind of vegetable ivory.
21. Report or maintain.
23. On a ship, train, plane or other vehicle.
26. A unit of pressure.
27. Mostly tropical songbird.
28. British statesman who as Prime Minister bought controlling interest in the Suez Canal and made Queen Victoria the Empress of India (1804-1881).
30. Worn or shabby from overuse or (of pages) from having corners turned down.
31. Italian philosopher who used Copernican principles to develop a pantheistic monistic philosophy.
33. The federal department responsible for safeguarding national security.
34. The organization of information according to preset specifications (usually for computer processing).
35. Not like.
36. A city in the western Netherlands.
38. Tag the base runner to get him out.
45. A Kwa language spoken in Ghana and the Ivory Coast.
48. Tall evergreen of Japan and China yielding valuable soft wood.
50. (plate tectonic theory) A hypothetical continent including all the landmass of the earth prior to the Triassic period when it split into Laurasia and Gondwanaland.
51. Of a stem or strict bearing or demeanor.
52. An organ in its earliest stage of development.
53. A statement that expresses a personal opinion or belief.
54. A geographical region of northeastern South America including Guyana and Surinam.
58. The younger brother of Edwy who became king of Northumbria when it renounced Edwy.
61. A gully that is shallower than a ravine.
63. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
64. (used of grass or vegetation) Cut down with a hand implement or machine.
65. A former copper coin of Pakistan.
68. An edge tool used to cut and shape wood.
69. The cry made by sheep.
72. Not out.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Today you may find you very productive in the workplace. Mentally you are disciplined, and you are extremely focused on the task at hand. You may discover you have the ability to communicate your thoughts to others and find they have better understanding of what you expect from them today. The workplace is where you are at ease and you tend to stand out as you are a problem solver and handle every situation that comes your way today with ease. Issues you have viewed as problems in the past should be easily solved today and you may wonder why you didn't see the solution was so obvious before. You may find yourself very talkative today and find yourself deep in conversation with an elder.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may be feeling a strong desire for change, a need for something new and different. It may be time to throw out the old and start fresh. Let your creative side be your guide. Step above and beyond the boundaries you have allowed yourself to become so comfortable with and let your hair down. You may find those close to you are drawn to the new and different version of you and find great ease when communicating with them. This could be a great time to study and take some time to broaden your intellectual horizons. Reach out to a love one whether by a phone call or possibly a letter. You may find they are very open to what you have to say and old barriers between you have since dissolved.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You are ambitious and have a great desire to be noticed. You want to be the center of attention and stand out in the crowd. You are this goal. Today may find you feeding off gossip and seeking understanding of those around you. You are interested in getting to the root of what makes those around you do the things they do. You feel this will give you insight and authority over them. You are well on your way to achieving a level of organization that will put you right where you want to be.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Today is a great day for a long walk with someone you love. Romance is in the air for you today. A longing for a close and intimate relationship. You may find this as a time when you are extremely loving and kind to those around you. Your quick wit and ability to communicate with ease is what is most notable about your personality today. You may find that ideas flow and new creations are on the horizons. Today would be a great day to grab that journal and get these ideas down on paper. Enjoy all of the wonderful ideas and emotions that seem to flow freely today.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Today finds you extremely independent and you have great pride in who you are and all you have accomplished in life. A sense of pride is what you feel now. You want to surround yourself with all the luxuries the world has to offer. This is also a very productive time for you and you may find ease when working as a team with others on special projects. You may be asked to lead a project or offered some type of promotion as your ability to organize a team is very evident to others. Leo. This is a time your mind is clear, and the lines of communication are open with all around you. Use this time of high energy to your advantage.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Discipline, discipline, discipline! This should be your focus for today. You will be able to move mountains through strict discipline and determination. You may want to focus your time and energy on one goal and hit it full speed ahead. One area to exercise a bit of caution in, is not pushing yourself beyond your limits. Know your limits and don't overdo things. You will feel as though the sky is the limit and no goal are beyond your reach today. This is a high energy and rewarding day for you and you should prosper.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You may find yourself wanting to broaden your horizons. You know this is a big world and your life is contained in a tiny square of it. It may be time to take a step out of that box and find what the world has to offer you. You could find it difficult to communicate with others today because you find your mind is a million miles away. Curiosity has taken a hold on you and you can't seem to stay focused on the here and now. You may find yourself longing to belong. You may find yourself focusing on building stronger relationships with those close to you. Libra, this is a great time for you to participate in any team project that comes your way.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Today finds you at your mental best. You seem to be paying close attention to detail and are extremely disciplined. Things you may have viewed as problems in the past present clear solutions today. You feel a need to be respected and are not only working to organize your surroundings, but you are able to organize the people around you. You're extremely ambitious and devoted to your job today. This is a great day for working with others and you may be called upon to lead the team. You may have to work to fund balance between your home and work life as you try hard to keep everyone around you happy. Scorpio. This is an easy task for you as you are as devoted to your family as you are to your job.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Call it intuition, psychic ability or whatever you like. You know what others want and you know how to provide it. Seems all are drawn to you and fascinating by your intelligence and problem-solving skills. You find yourself in touch with your emotions and deeply in touch with the emotions of those surrounding you. You are in love with your life and those who are in it. Forgiveness and making things right with those close to you plays a big part in who you are and what is important to you at this time. Sagittarius, you are on the right track to live a life full of peace and harmony.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Today may find you extremely productive. You may find that your hand eye coordination is on point and this is a great day to work with your hands or get out and participate in your favorite sport. This could be a great day for exercise and being outdoors. You should be able to accomplish any task set before you with ease today. You may find that you are extremely emotional today but have them well in control. This will be a very productive and high energy day for you. This is also a day you may truly enjoy the company of others and find you desire to surround yourself with friends and family and enjoy some bonding time.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You may find yourself with your foot in your mouth today. Something you let slip out may go against your best interest. You may find you have to do some scrambling to fix this and make things right. You may find yourself in a disagreement with someone older or in authority. A desire to be appreciated and admired for who you are is prominent in your world today. You may find by surrounding yourself with those closest to you that your every desire will be fulfilled today. It seems time spent with the ones you love will put you on top of the world and make you feel all the love and appreciation you desire.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

It seems your ideas and thoughts will have greater meaning. You may find yourself eloquent and forceful when speaking. People seem to really have a great understanding of what you have to say. Not everyone is receptive to the ideas and thoughts you have. You may find you don't agree with what this person has to say either. This may be a time of frustration for you. Decisions made now may not be made with a clear mind and should be put off until a later time. Any decisions you make at this time may have to be re-thought. This could be a great source of tension in your life.

Wordsearch Puzzle

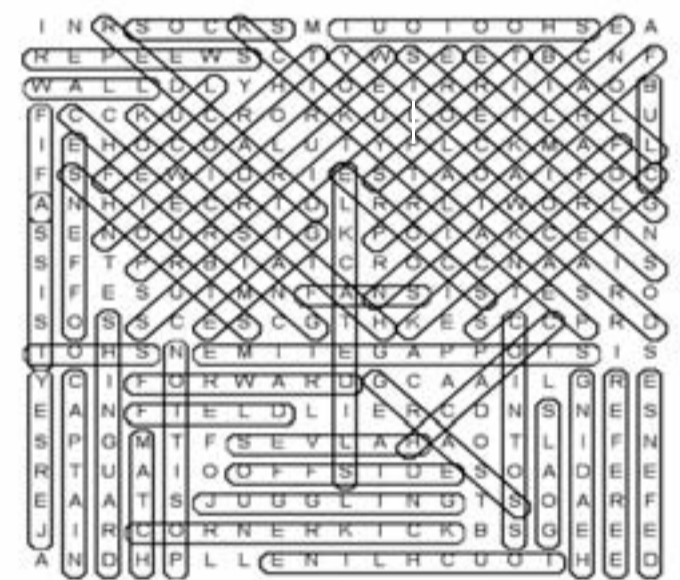
Songs From the Year 2000

Find and circle all of the songs from the year 2000 that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 29 letters spell an additional song title from 2000.



- | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| AMAZED | CALIFORNICATION | INCOMPLETE | PINCH ME |
| AMERICAN PIE | DESERT ROSE | JUMPIN' JUMPIN' | SAY MY NAME |
| BACK AT ONE | FADED | KRYPTONITE | SEPARATED |
| BACK HERE | GIRL ON TV | LUCKY | SHE BANGS |
| BAG LADY | HIGHER | MARIA MARIA | SMOOTH |
| BE WITH YOU | HOT BOYZ | MEET VIRGINIA | STAN |
| BEAUTIFUL DAY | I LIKE IT | MEGURITY | STRONGER |
| BENT | I NEED YOU | MOST GIRLS | THERE YOU GO |
| BREATHE | I TRY | MUSIC | TRY AGAIN |
| BROADWAY | I WANNA KNOW | NO MORE | WIFEY |
| BYE BYE BYE | I WISH | OTHERSIDE | WONDERFUL |

Soccer



- | | | | |
|-------------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| ASSIST | FORMATION | MATCH | SLIDE TACKLE |
| BALL | FORWARD | OFFENSE | SOCKS |
| CAPTAIN | FOUL | OFFSIDE | SPORT |
| CHEERING | GAME | PENALTY KICK | STOPPAGE TIME |
| CLEATS | GOALIE | POSITION | STRIKERS |
| CLUB | GOALS | PRACTICE | SUBSTITUTE |
| COACH | GRASS | RED CARD | SWEETEN |
| COIN TOSS | HALVES | REFEREE | THROW-IN |
| CORNER KICK | HAT TRICK | SCORE | TOUCHLINE |
| DEFENSE | HEADING | SHIN GUARD | WALL |
| FANS | JERSEY | SHOOT-OUT | WORLD CUP |
| FIELD | JUGGLING | SHORTS | YELLOW CARD |
| FFA | KICK-OFF | SHOT | |

The hidden message is: IN MANY COUNTRIES SOCCER IS CALLED FOOTBALL

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

MONDAY, JULY 2, 2018



French free diver Guillaume Nery dives in the shark basin of the Paris Aquarium during an event in tribute to French apneist Jacques Mayol. — AFP



Cambodians carry a 1,149.8 meter-long krama scarf so it can be measured and judged as the world's longest hand woven scarf in Phnom Penh yesterday. — AFP photos



Cambodians cheer under a large national flag as a 1,149.8 meter-long krama scarf is declared as the world's longest hand woven scarf.

CAMBODIA EARNS GUINNESS RECORD FOR LONGEST WOVEN SCARF

Cambodia won a place in the Guinness book of World Records yesterday for a 1,100-metre (3,600-foot) long version of the country's popular krama scarf. Supported by a youth movement with links to the nation's ruling party, more than 23,000 people took part in the six-month weaving marathon outside Phnom Penh's Royal Palace. Thousands of young people then rolled out the krama along a street in the capital yesterday for a visiting Guinness official to measure the garment. "With 1,149.8 meters, you have set a new Guinness World Record!" Swapnil Dangarikar, a Guinness adjudicator, told a large cheering crowd.

Long-serving Prime Minister Hun Sen earlier gave his own blessing to the campaign by weaving a few strands of thread into the scarf. Youngest son Hun Many, a fast-rising potential successor to his father, represented the 65-year-old premier at yesterday's event. "This Guinness World Record is for all Cambodians," he said at the event.

In recent years Hun Sen has tried hard to court the nation's youth, launching a Facebook page and displaying a lighter, more approachable side in public. The Guinness event comes just weeks before a highly controversial election that Hun Sen, who has ruled for 33 years, is poised to win after backing the dissolution of the opposition party last year. Analysts say the prime minister is also trying to build a political dynasty by priming his three



Swapnil Dangarikar (second right), an adjudicator from the Guinness World Records, awards a certificate to Sann Vathana (third left) from the GoGo Cambodia movement, after a 1,149.8 meter-long krama scarf was named as the world's longest hand woven scarf in Phnom Penh yesterday.

sons in leadership positions. His eldest son Hun Manet was on Saturday promoted to two senior and powerful military posts while his second son Hun Manit is the head of a powerful military intelligence unit. — AFP



Cambodians roll out a 1,149.8 meter-long krama scarf so it can be declared as the world's longest hand woven scarf.



Official from the Guinness World Records adjudicator Swapnil Dangarikar (center) points during the measuring of the famed hand woven scarf known as Krama.



Cambodians carry a 1,149.8 meter-long krama scarf so it can be measured and judged as the world's longest hand woven scarf in Phnom Penh yesterday.

Kim Kardashian West 'fires' make-up artist Joyce Bonelli

Kim Kardashian West has reportedly "fired" her long-time make-up artist Joyce Bonelli. The 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians' star and her relatives - including her mother Kris Jenner, sisters Kourtney and Khloe Kardashian and half-sisters Kendall and Kylie Jenner - hired the cosmetics guru before they were thrust into the limelight back in 2007 and have worked with her for shoots and their family E! reality TV ever since. But, despite her loyalty to them, the famous family reportedly decided to part ways with Joyce a few months ago because they didn't think she was the "right fit anymore".

A source told Us Weekly magazine: "The family doesn't speak to her anymore. She hasn't worked with them for months. The decision was made amicably. They just stopped working with her because they didn't see it as a right fit anymore." And, although it was a joint decision, the Kardashian-Jenner clan have since cut all ties with Joyce by unfollowing her on social media - even Khloe's best friend Malika Haqq, Kim, 37, and her siblings clearly have no issues cutting people out of their lives as they did the same with Khloe's boyfriend Tristan Thompson, with whom she has two-month-old daughter True, when they found out that he'd cheated on the 33-year-old beauty.

As soon as the cheating scandal broke, which happened to be the day before the blonde beauty went into labor, Khloe's sisters unfollowed the basketball player on Instagram. However, they have since patched up their differences and buried the hatchet after Khloe begged them to forgive the 27-year-old NBA star for the sake of her and baby True. The unfollowing didn't go down too well with Tristan at the time and he actually blocked Kim on the social networking site, but she has since persuaded him to refollow her.



Kim Kardashian

Richie felt pressure to be taken seriously as a fashion designer



Nicole Richie felt pressure to be taken seriously when she made her debut as a fashion designer. The 36-year-old former reality star was initially known as one of the faces on 'The Simple Life' alongside Paris Hilton but decided to follow her dreams of starting her own fashion business after the show ended - a decision she says came with the pressure to succeed in her new venture. In an interview with Forbes, she shared: "I am a serious designer. At the same time, I'm still me. I learnt very quickly that validation cannot come from someone else. There are many versions of success and everyone has to define this for themselves. For me, I want to be able to stand behind what I'm doing. Even if it's a failure, it's my failure and I can stand behind that."

Nicole's label - House of Harlow 1960 - has gradually become one of the most powerful brands since its launch in 2008 when it initially started out as a costume jewelry company. She said: "I have been working on this from the time I was 24. I really didn't even know if it was something that I could turn into a business. I knew that I loved creating, but obviously, there's more to it than that. Once I got into the business, I never looked back." On reflection, the 'Candidly Nicole' star said that she would tell her younger self to focus on creating a voice and identity for before kick-starting her brand.

Teigen relied on daughter's feedback for her make-up line

Chrissy Teigen relied on her daughter's feedback for her new make-up line. The 32-year-old model - who teamed up with Becca Cosmetics for the second time on a range of limited-edition products called the Endless Summer Glow Collection - turned to her two-year-old daughter Luna for advice when it came to the line's fragrances. Speaking with WWD, she said: "[Luna is] very into smell, she likes really fresh, clean scents. So was John [Legend], too. They're two peas in a pod in every single way. The [scent] that they both loved is the one we ended up going with." Chrissy - who recently gave birth to her second child, called Miles, with the 39-year-old singer - also revealed her daughter is a keen product-tester, especially when it comes to new make-up brushes.

She added: "Luna is obsessed with sitting on my countertop in the bathroom. She'll go, 'Up, up, up.' I put her up there and she loves brushes, using them on her face. Becca sends us tons of clean brushes all the time, so she's always using them." The mother-of-two also drew inspiration for her collection from her family's time in Malibu this summer. She shared: "We rented a house out there right on the beach and it's pretty different vibes for us. We're usually city people, so being out there, I was inspired to have something really beachy, really glowy, something that would have a little bit of effortlessness to it because obviously, as you can hear, I have babies and dogs and anything that makes me feel a little bit sexier is good in my book." — Bang Showbiz



Dutch designer Ronald van der Kemp (center) poses with models at the end of his 2018-2019 Fall/Winter Haute Couture collection fashion show in Paris, yesterday. — AFP photos

RONALD VAN DER KEMP FASHION SHOW



Lifestyle | Fashion



Models present creations by Ronald Van Der Kemp during the 2018-2019 Fall/Winter Haute Couture collection fashion show in Paris yesterday.



Elle Fanning reveals love for 'fashion and dressing up'

Elle Fanning has always had a love for "fashion and dressing up". The 20-year-old actress is best known for her roles on the big screen in movies such as 'Maleficent' and 'Super 8' - but Elle has revealed she enjoys delving into the world of fashion. In an interview with the Sydney Morning Herald newspaper, she said: "I've always loved fashion and dressing up and having fun with that." However, the blonde beauty - who also appeared as a campaign model for Miu Miu, Marc by Marc Jacobs and Tiffany & Co. - has confessed she's yet to find her go-to style.

She shared: "I don't really have any one particular style - I usually like to experiment and wear outfits that suit my mood and state of mind. I pretty much try to stay true to what seems to connect with me." Meanwhile, Elle previously opened up about her runway debut with MiuMiu for their Autumn/Winter collection earlier this

year. She said: "The adrenalin, oh my god! It was incredible. You think it's just walking but it's not." The actress - who is Dakota Fanning's younger sibling - used her experience playing a model in the movie 'The Neon Demon' to inspire her on the runway, but later admitted she was worried about messing up in front of Vogue Editor-in-Chief Anna Wintour.

She revealed: "I used tips of what Abbey Lee [fellow model and actress who starred alongside Elle in the movie] had taught me, of how to walk and the posture of that. "But in a movie, you have a lot of takes and you're not as nervous. If you mess up, it's OK; but [here] no, because Anna Wintour's staring at me, and I was like no, I'm not messing up." — Ban Shwobiz



Elle Fanning

David Beckham designs sneaker for Adidas' Prouder campaign

David Beckham has thrown his support behind Adidas' Prouder campaign. The 43-year-old retired soccer star is one of a number of well-known celebrities, which also includes Rita Ora, who have put their own twist on the brand's iconic Samba sneakers to mark London Pride. David - whose design will be exhibited between July 4 and July 10, before being auctioned off in support of the Albert Kennedy Trust - said: "What makes me proud in 2018 is the world that we live in - the diversity, the quality, the creativity ... I have a young family and I want them to grow up in a world where they are given a chance, where they are part of that diversity and equality - things that are changing over the years. "I think we're in a really positive place and it can only get better."

Rita, 27, has also lent her support to the campaign, calling for the world to embrace "diversity". She said: "My ingredients for a perfect world is diversity, being inclusive, having the freedom to be in love with whoever

you damn well please." David signed his original sponsorship deal with Adidas in 1998 and even in retirement, he continues to work with the world-famous brand. Despite the constant interest in his life, David admitted he can't complain about his own fame. He previously shared: "I would never complain about the position I'm in or the attention I get. "At the end of the day, I'm very lucky to have what I have and do what I do, but I don't see myself as any different from anyone else who works hard and is a dad and a husband." — Bangshowbiz



David Beckham



Iraqi cellist and conductor Karim Wasfi. — AFP

Cellist brings sounds of 'peace, coexistence' to ruins of Iraq's Mosul

Iraqi cellist and conductor Karim Wasfi has played a concert for "peace and co-existence" amid the ruins of Mosul, almost a year after Iraqi forces ousted the Islamic State group from the capital of its self-declared "caliphate". Dozens of people attended on Friday as Wasfi, in full concert dress, played on a makeshift stage among the most iconic religious monuments of Iraq's second city.

The venue lay between the Catholic church of Our Lady of the Hour with its famed clock tower and the remains of the iconic Hadba

("hunchback") leaning minaret next to the Nuri Mosque, destroyed during the battle for the city. Wasfi was joined by the violinist, guitar and oud players of local band Awtar Nerkal. "This music is a message from Mosul to the whole world, of the concepts of security, peace and coexistence," said Wasfi. The dual Iraq-US national is former conductor of Iraq's National Symphony Orchestra and has been nicknamed "Iraq's Rostropovich" after the Russian maestro cellist.

The music was "a call for companies, investors and organisations to come and take

part in the reconstruction of the city, especially its destroyed Old Town", the bearded and bespectacled artist said. The impromptu concert came in the same week that Iraqi authorities finally launched clean-up operations in the city that jihadists held for three years until their ouster in July 2017. Several times over the past three years, Wasfi, who was born in Cairo, has taken his cello onto the streets of Baghdad to play at bomb sites shortly after attacks. — AFP

IT'S IN THE BLOOD: GUIDING RAFTS DOWN POLAND'S MOUNTAIN GORGE

Stanislaw Migdal sinks his long wooden pole into the water with a practiced hand. For decades now, the mountain river guide has been propelling rafts full of tourists down southern Poland's Dunajec River Gorge in keeping with a 200-year-old tradition. Wearing a vibrant blue waistcoat embroidered with colorful flowers and a black mountain cap, he expresses how proud he is to be part of the elite group of 500 men who hand down the job from father to son. "To be a river guide here, you have to be a mountain man from the Pieniny! You have to be born in one of the five villages by the Dunajec River, live here, be part of a family of guides," he told AFP. "We've begun accepting guides from elsewhere, but only if they settle down to live here."



The Dunajec River Gorge, which marks the border with Slovakia, offers breathtaking scenery. Over the course of millions of years, the river dug its bed across limestone mountains dotted with trees to create a dramatic valley. Its vertical walls can reach up to 300 meters (984 feet) in height and plunge straight down into the water. Seen from above, the rafts, which carry up to 12 people, look as small as ants.

White water adventure

More than 230,000 holidaymakers from around the world took part in Polish rafting between April and October last year. The descent takes two to three hours, depending on the water level. At times, the current accelerates, giving rafters a wild adventure with white water and whirlpools. "It's amazing. It's not like anything I've ever seen before," said Kevin, a 30-year-old Irish tourist. "They don't have landscapes like this in Ireland... Not to such a scale," he told AFP. For safety reasons, there are strict rules on recruiting guides. "To apply, you have to be a man between the ages of 18 and 30. No women allowed. For the first three years, you apprentice with an experienced master before taking theoretical and practical exams," said Migdal, who has done the job for 35 years.

"Only masters are allowed to navigate when the Dunajec is running high because its depth varies from just a couple of centimeters to 18 meters, which comes with a number of dangers." Marek Kolodziej has been propelling his raft since the age of 18. "My father did it before me, so did my grandfather. My brother does it with me and now my son has also joined in," he told AFP. "Since we were little we dreamt of becoming river guides. It was natural, no one thought we would do anything else."

Man overboard

The job comes with its share of hazards, especially for the young men just starting out. "I fell into the water many times when I started as a guide. I was the helmsman and my pole got stuck between stones on the river bottom," said Czeslaw Kowalczyk, a 56-year-old who is on his 41st season as a guide. "I was young, inexperienced and I didn't want to let go. So I fell in the water!" Before they began offering tourists wild river rides, for centuries the guides floated logs down the Dunajec and Vistula rivers to the Gdansk port on the Baltic Sea.

Legend has it that for every trip the guide would add another seashell to the ribbon around his hat. They only began to carry tourists at the start of the 19th century to supplement their income—first using boats dug out of a single tree trunk, then on wooden rafts after running out of large enough trees. In 1932, they formed a river guide association. In the early days, it was a particularly tough job. Once done with the descent, the guide would have to use muscle power to fight the current and pull the raft upstream. Today, trucks do the job. Some things have changed but the guides' love of the job and their region remain intact. "The idea of quitting never even occurred to me," Kolodziej said. — AFP

Polish river guides are seen from the local mountain peak propelling their rafts with tourists during raft rides on the Dunajec River through the landscape of the Pieniny National Park in southern Poland. — AFP photos



Drake smashes streaming record with new album

Drake has smashed streaming records with his new album "Scorpion," with Apple Music and Spotify both reporting unprecedented listenership in its first day. Apple Music said on Instagram that the Canadian hip-hop superstar's fifth studio album was streamed 170 million times in the 24 hours since its release Friday. The worldwide figure is the highest ever reported by any streaming service for an album over one day and comes even though Apple Music significantly trails industry leader Spotify in

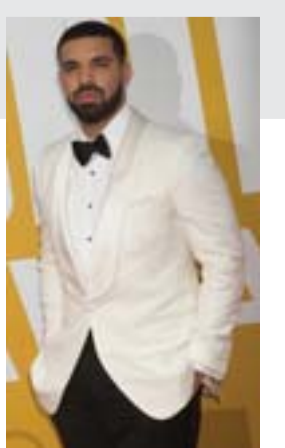
total users. Drake has a lengthy relationship with Apple, which heavily promoted "Scorpion." The hotly anticipated album inexplicably appeared two hours late on Spotify. But "Scorpion" also set a record on Spotify, which heavily featured the album after it went live. The site Spotifycharts, which tracks listening data, said that Spotify users streamed the album's 25 songs more than 132 million times over the first day. The figures smash the previous record for one-day streaming—rapper Post Malone's album "Beerbongs and Bentleys," which

was streamed just under 79 million times on Spotify on the first day of its release in April.

Streaming records are being frequently broken as growing numbers of listeners embrace Spotify, Apple Music and competitors such as Deezer and Tidal, which allow unlimited on-demand music. Just days ago, the Colombian reggaeton star J Balvin surpassed Drake as the artist with the most regular monthly listeners on Spotify—but Drake quickly retook the crown with "Scorpion." Drake has found massive success releasing sprawling albums and

mixtapes of danceable tracks online without consideration to physical formats. "Scorpion" features a posthumous duet with Michael Jackson, a collaboration with rap great Jay-Z and an admission that Drake secretly had a son with Sophie Brussaux, a French actress in pornographic films. — AFP

In this file photo Drake arrives to the NBA Awards at Basketball City in New York. — AFP



Classifieds

Monday, July 2, 2018



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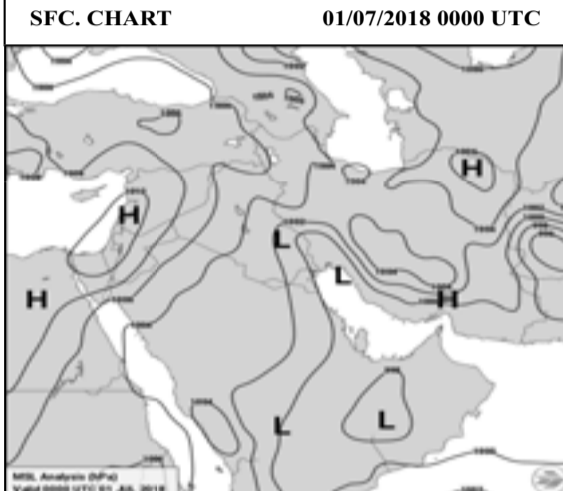
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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Very hot with moderate to fresh north westerly wind, with speed of 20 - 50 km/h causing rising dust.

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot with moderate to fresh over coastal areas north westerly wind, with speed of 20 - 40 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 01/07/2018 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	45 °C	33 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	47 °C	32 °C		
ABDALY	47 °C	27 °C		
BUBYAN	--- °C	--- °C		
JAHRA	47 °C	31 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	44 °C	29 °C		
SALMIYAH	42 °C	33 °C		
AHMADI	40 °C	34 °C		
NUWASIB	43 °C	30 °C		
WAFRA	46 °C	30 °C		
SALMY	44 °C	27 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	07/02	Very hot + raising dust over open areas	48 °C	33 °C	NW	20 - 45 km/h
Tuesday	07/03	Very hot + Relatively humid over coastal areas	47 °C	34 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 32 km/h
Wednesday	07/04	Very hot + Relatively humid over coastal areas + clouds	47 °C	35 °C	NW-SE	08 - 32 km/h
Thursday	07/05	Very hot + Relatively humid over coastal areas	47 °C	33 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 32 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:17
Sunrise	04:52
Zuhr	11:52
Asr	15:26
Sunset	18:52
Isha	20:23

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	47 °C
MIN. Temp.	34 °C
MAX. RH	22 %
MIN. RH	07 %
MAX. Wind	N 53 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

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

Embassy of India Kuwait

Contract for supplying Local Security Guard (LSG) for round the clock security at Embassy of India premises

The Embassy of India, Kuwait invites bids by 18th July, 2018 for awarding contract for hiring local security guard for round the clock security at Embassy premises.

The details of scope of work, requirements, conditions etc are available on Embassy's website www.indembkwit.org.

All offers should be in two sealed covers marked "Technical Bid" To be opened by addressee only and "Financial Bid" - To be opened by addressee only" and addressed to the "Head of Chancery", Embassy of India, Daeya, Diplomatic Enclave, Arabian Gulf Street, Safat 13015, Kuwait. The offer must be delivered at the Embassy on or before 1200 hrs on 18th July, 2018.

Embassy of India, Kuwait

Airlines

American Airlines	22087425
Kuwait Airways	22087426
Jazeera Airways	171
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493



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

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Monday 2/7/2018				Departure Flights on Monday 2/7/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
FEG	441	Asyut	00:05	JZR	176	Dubai	13:10
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15	SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	THY	767	Istanbul	13:40
KAC	504	Beirut	00:50	JZR	144	Doha	13:55
KAC	102	London	00:50	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	RJA	645	Amman	14:15
RJA	642	Amman	01:35	FEG	342	Sohag	14:50
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	IAW	158A	Al Najaf	14:55
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
THY	768	Istanbul	02:40	JZR	124	Bahrain	15:40
THY	1404	AYT	02:45	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
JZR	607	Kochi	02:55	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:55
JZR	651	Lahore	02:55	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:00
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KNE	530	Jeddah	16:00
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	JZR	606	Kochi	16:00
KAC	418	Manila	03:05	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
MSC	415	Sohag	03:10	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC	619	Doha	16:15
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:25	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	KAC	121	AGP	16:20
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:40
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30	KAC	191	Tbilisi	16:45
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	KAC	547	Alexandria	16:55
JZR	1541	Cairo	04:35	SAW	706	Damascus	17:00
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	FDB	052	Dubai	17:20
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:20	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
JZR	603	Mumbai	05:25	KAC	381	Delhi	17:45
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	NIA	362	Alexandria	17:50
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	KAC	331	Trivandrum	17:55
JZR	561	Sohag	05:55	KAC	283	Dhaka	18:00
BAW	157	London	06:10	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
WAN	342	Sohag	06:20	JZR	184	Dubai	18:20
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:25	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:25	JZR	240	Hyderabad	18:25
KAC	204	Lahore	06:30	JZR	240	Amman	18:30
KAC	678	Dubai	06:45	JZR	538	Cairo	18:35
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50	QTR	266	Beirut	19:15
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
JZR	143	Doha	07:20	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	19:20
JZR	529	Asyut	07:30	KAC	151	Istanbul	19:25
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	WAN	117	Bahrain	19:30
JZR	503	Luxor	08:05	QTR	621	Cairo	19:30
KAC	358	Kochi	08:05	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
KAC	384	Delhi	08:05	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	RJA	641	Amman	20:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	Muscat	124	Sharjah	20:00
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:15	KAC	552D	Alexandria	20:05
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	JZR	602	Mumbai	20:30
SAW	703	Damascus	09:30	KAC	357	Kochi	20:30
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
IAW	157	Al Najaf	10:00	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
MSC	405	Sohag	10:15	JAI	215	Delhi	20:35
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20	DLH	624	Dammam	20:50
JZR	787	Riyadh	10:30	KNE	232	Riyadh	21:00
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:35
JZR	1539	Cairo	11:05	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
WAN	134	Doha	11:10	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
JZR	165	Dubai	11:45	KAC	203	Lahore	22:00
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:30	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:05
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:10
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	KAC	1543	Cairo	22:15
THY	766	Istanbul	12:45	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	THY	1413	TXZ	22:25
JZR	239	Amman	13:00	KAC	383	Delhi	22:25
RJA	644	Amman	13:20	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:25
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:30	UAE	860	UAE	22:35
JZR	779	Jeddah	13:45	JZR	604	Ahmedabad	22:40
FEG	341	Sohag	13:50	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
IAW	157A	Al Najaf	13:55	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:00
				QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
				SVA	515	Riyadh	23:30
				WAN	337	Alexandria	23:40
				JZR	560	Sohag	23:45
				SVA	503	Jeddah	23:45



MOSCOW: Spain's defender Sergio Ramos (center) falls as Russia's defender Sergey Ignashevich (left) scores an own goal during the Russia 2018 World Cup round of 16 football match between Spain and Russia at the Luzhnik Stadium yesterday. — AFP (See Page 28)

Reports of hidden North Korea nuke raise questions

WASHINGTON: Reports that North Korea intends to secretly maintain some of its nuclear stockpile and production facilities raised questions yesterday about President Donald Trump's insistence that the North was "no longer a nuclear threat," after his historic summit in Singapore. The Washington Post cited four unnamed US officials who, it said, had seen or been briefed on new intelligence findings that point to preparations for deceiving the United States.

The Post's report came after NBC News said the North has been increasing nuclear weapons fuel production. The reports followed Trump's boast that the summit denuclearization pledge made by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un had effectively ended the North's nuclear threat, after months of inflammatory language from both sides.

The Post said the evidence of North Korean cheating had emerged since the June 12 summit, where Kim and

Trump signed a pledge "to work towards complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula." The stock phrase failed to clearly define denuclearization or produce a specific timeline towards dismantling the North's atomic weapons arsenal. It also stopped short of longstanding US demands for North Korea to give up its atomic arsenal in a "verifiable" and "irreversible" way.

Yesterday, Trump was stuck by his confidence in the North's efforts. "I think they're very serious about it," Trump said during an interview on Fox News' "Sunday Morning Futures." Asked how he could trust Kim's vow to denuclearize, Trump replied: "We had great chemistry. I made a deal with him. I shook hands with him. I really believe he means it." The interview was broadcasted yesterday but taped late in the week, before the reports of North Korean cheating emerged publicly.

"We gave nothing. What we are going to give is good things in the future," the president said. His National Security Advisor, John Bolton, insisted yesterday that the administration was fully aware of North Korea's history of deception and was not entering the denuclearization talks naively. "There's not any starry-eyed feeling among the group doing this," Bolton said on CBS's "Face the Nation." Separately, he told "Fox News Sunday" that "we are using the full range of our capabilities to understand what North Korea is doing." — AFP

rebels in Hodeida without talks on the rest of Yemen's territory. "The Houthis will not make concessions unless they are guaranteed the upper hand in central and northern Yemen," said Yemeni analyst Najib Ghallab. The regional pro-government alliance yesterday accused the Houthis of "holding hostage" ships docked in the Hodeida port. Riyadh and its allies earlier imposed a major blockade on the port after a series of rebel missiles were fired from Yemen into Saudi Arabia. The coalition accuses Iran of smuggling weapons to the Houthis through the Hodeida port, a charge Tehran denies.

Griffiths was in the tiny Gulf sultanate of Oman on Thursday, where he met top rebel negotiator Mohammed Abdulsalam, UN radio reported. Griffiths spoke of progress on the radio and said a proposal to grant the UN a major role in managing the Hodeida port was being studied. Both the UAE and the Hadi government have held firm to their refusal of anything short of a full withdrawal of the Houthi rebels from Hodeida.

The UN has not publicly commented on Griffiths' talks on the Hodeida conflict. A source close to the Yemeni president said Griffiths was expected to return to Aden, where the Hadi government is temporarily based, for another round of talks. Some 70 percent of imports to Yemen, where eight million people face imminent famine, flow through the port of Hodeida. Nearly 10,000 people have died in the Yemen war since 2015, when Saudi Arabia and its allies joined the government's fight against the Houthis. The United Nations has called Yemen the world's largest humanitarian crisis. — AFP

television appearances.

At a Paris film festival in April 2009, Faïd approached Michael Mann, director of the 1995 gangster film "Heat" starring Al Pacino and Robert Niro, telling him: "You were my technical adviser." He wrote that he had watched the film dozens of times to perfect his bank-robbing prowess.

One of his prison supervisors said that Faïd had never had any conflict with staff, "but we must always be wary". "In the corner of his mind, he never lost the idea of escaping. Behind all his manners—he is very polite—he always hid his game," the supervisor said. Delabroye, the prison union rep, said the yard where the helicopter landed is the only area not equipped with anti-aircraft netting because inmates never use it—"except to leave the prison". — AFP

Hodeida assault...

Continued from Page 1

Aden on Wednesday and is reported to be pushing for the Houthis to cede control of Hodeida to the United Nations. The rebels have said they may be willing to share control of Hodeida's port with the UN but say their forces must remain in the docks and the rest of the Red Sea city.

The Houthis have controlled Hodeida and its port since 2014, when they also drove the Hadi government out of the capital and seized large swathes of northern Yemen. On June 13, the UAE and its allies, including Saudi Arabia, launched a massive military operation—dubbed "Golden Victory"—to drive the rebels out of the port. Pro-government forces managed to seize control of Hodeida's airport in mid-June after days of heavy fighting but did not immediately push forward into the city, home to some 600,000 people and about 150 kilometers west of Sanaa.

The fighting has claimed 429 lives, according to military and medical sources. There are no confirmations of civilian casualties, although the UN has documented thousands of residents fleeing combat zones. Gargash said the operation has succeeded in "forcing the Houthis to make concessions", but it remained to be seen "whether the Houthis are engaging seriously with this process or using it as a tactic to buy time". "Failing these patient efforts, we believe that continued military pressure will ultimately bring the liberation of Hodeida and force the Houthis to engage seriously in negotiations."

Analysts have ruled out major concessions by the

Notorious gangster flees French jail by...

Continued from Page 1

Faïd had earlier been released from a 10-year stint behind bars after convincing parole officers that he regretted his criminal past and was determined to start afresh. Police nicknamed him "The Author" for two books he co-wrote about his delinquent youth. Faïd, who has a cult following in the tough immigrant suburbs outside Paris where he grew up, has made several

Jordan trying to avert border crisis; Syrian army gains

AMMAN: Jordan stepped in to try to avert further violence and stem another wave of displacement across its border with Syria yesterday, mediating new talks between rebels and the Syrian government's main ally Russia for a truce in the southwest. Talks on Saturday broke down as the army seized more ground in its offensive, with insurgent lines in some areas collapsing, and a string of towns and villages accepting the return of government rule after intense bombardment.

Discussions yesterday were difficult, said diplomatic sources familiar with the talks. Opposition negotiators said they would only accept a deal that made Jordan a guarantor for the safety of Deraa province's 800,000 civilians and added that continued air strikes during the talks undermined trust in the process.

Fighting and bombardment had calmed overnight, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said, but reignited yesterday around Tafas, northwest of Deraa, along with heavy air attacks. Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad's offensive in the southwest aims to reclaim one of two remaining rebel strongholds in Syria, the other being Idlib and adjacent areas in the northwest. Assad's forces captured the last enclaves near Damascus and Homs earlier this year.

Southwest Syria is a "de-escalation zone" of reduced warfare and bombardment agreed by Russia, Jordan and the United States last year. Washington warned it would respond to violations of this agreement, but has done nothing so far. Last week, rebels said the United States had told them not to expect any American military support. The opposition's chief negotiator in wider UN peace talks, Nasr al-Hariri, last week accused the United States of complicity in Assad's southwest offensive, saying American silence could only be explained by "a malicious deal".

Peace talks in the town of Bosra al-Sham, home to a UNESCO world heritage site, failed on Saturday when insurgents rejected Russian terms for their surrender, but began again yesterday under the auspices of Jordan, rebel spokesman Ibrahim Al-Jabawi said. A military media unit run by the government's Lebanese ally Hezbollah, and a Syrian state television correspondent

Iran vows to foil US bid to block...

Continued from Page 1

Jahangiri's remarks came a day after Trump said that Saudi Arabia's King Salman had agreed to his request to ramp up oil production. "Just spoke to King Salman of Saudi Arabia and explained to him that, because of the turmoil & dysfunction in Iran and Venezuela, I am asking that Saudi Arabia increase oil production, maybe up to 2,000,000 barrels, to make up the difference," Trump said in a tweet on Saturday.

"Prices too high! He has agreed!," Trump added. Jahangiri said it was not that "simple". "They're begging the Saudis to raise their output so that if Iran's quota decreases nothing will happen to the markets," said Jahangiri. "In this battle, any country that tries to take Iran's place on the oil market will be guilty of treason against Iran... and surely one day it will pay the price of this treason," he said.

The official Saudi Press Agency confirmed a phone call between Trump and Salman about oil, but mentioned no specifics and the White House later struck a more cautious tone, saying in a statement the two lead-

said rebels in Bosra Al-Sham had agreed to come back under government rule and were starting to surrender their weapons.

Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said the kingdom was engaged in intensive diplomacy with all parties in the conflict to help broker a ceasefire that would ease the plight of displaced civilians. "We are moving in all directions and with all the parties to bring a ceasefire and protect civilians," he said in a Tweet on Saturday. "The Russian insistence on attempting to impose conditions, their unreadiness to stop the air strikes during negotiations, all this gives us more reason for lack of trust and justified fear," said Adnan Masalmeh, a coordinator of an opposition committee steering the negotiators.

Air strikes have pounded the region since the offensive ramped up two weeks ago, causing at least 160,000 people to flee their homes, according to the United Nations. On Saturday at least ten civilians were killed when bombs were dropped on the rebel-held village of Ghasam, relief workers said. The Observatory says more than 100 civilians have been killed since an escalation in fighting on June 19. Many who fled have sought refuge along the borders with Jordan and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. Both Jordan, which already hosts more than half a million Syrian refugees, and Israel, have said their borders will stay shut. Both countries' militaries have distributed aid supplies to people seeking shelter near the borders.

Yesterday, Israel also said it had deployed more tanks and artillery to the Syrian front as a precaution because of the fighting there. An Israeli army commander told Reuters that it was hard to quantify how many people had sought shelter in the area immediately across the border, but that it was in the thousands and there were hundreds more arriving each day. Southwest Syria was an early hotbed of the uprising against Assad in 2011 that morphed into the seven-year conflict that has cost over half a million lives and pushed half the country's pre-war population from their homes.

Until Assad's offensive began this month, its front lines had been mostly stable. However, the army has now taken much of the eastern side of the rebel territory there and forced two large towns on the western side, Dael and Ibtat, to accept deals to come back under state rule. That pattern of local groups in towns and villages agreeing deals with the government independently of the main rebel factions has been repeated in locations across the southwest. Yesterday, the army entered the areas of Al-Musayfra, Kuheil and Al-Sahwa after striking agreements with their inhabitants, the Observatory said.— Reuters

ers had "reaffirmed their dedication to a healthy and stable global energy market". Tehran and Riyadh are members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, a cartel that manages supply to the global market via production quotas so as to keep prices in member states' favor.

Iran and Saudi Arabia broke off diplomatic relations in 2016 and are locked in several proxy wars in the Middle East, including in Yemen. OPEC members agreed on June 22 to increase collective production by around one million barrels per day, in a context where oil prices have approximately doubled from a 2016 low. But members did not reach a decision "to assign any allocated production level of any member to others", Iran's oil minister Bijan Zangeneh said in a letter addressed to the oil cartel published by the ministry's Shana news agency.

Without naming Saudi Arabia, Zangeneh wrote "any increase" in production by any member state "beyond commitments stipulated in OPEC's decisions ... would constitute (a) breach of the agreement." The letter calls on the president of OPEC to "remind" member states to "adhere to their commitments ... and refrain from any unilateral measures undermining the unity and independence" of OPEC. Iran possesses the second-largest gas reserves on the planet, after Russia, and the fourth-largest oil supplies, while Saudi Arabia is the world's biggest oil exporter. — AFP

Sports



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Mexico show no fear as they target end to fifth-game hex

‘There’s no greater memory than making history with a fifth match’

SAINT PETERSBURG: Mexico do not have history on their side in their bid to dump Brazil out of the World Cup but the 2018 version of El Tri have already demonstrated a capability to surprise in Russia. For a seventh straight World Cup Mexico have made it to the last 16, but, agonisingly, they have failed to go any further on the six previous occasions, turning the desire just to make the “quinto partido” (fifth match) an obsession.

“There’s no greater memory than making history with a fifth match,” said Mexico captain Andres Guardado. “We’re different players in terms of the mental aspect, but we know we’ll be judged by whether we get through or not.”

“What greater motivation could you need when we face off against the five-time champions? It’s the perfect scene. It’s the biggest game of our lives.” Mexico’s last-16 misfortunes have often come down to the finest of margins. Defeat on penalties to surprise package Bulgaria in 1994 started an inauspicious run. They blew a lead against Germany four years later and against Argentina in 2006.

Conceding twice to the Netherlands in

the final minutes four years ago hurt more than most defeats, with a controversial penalty awarded for a theatrical Arjen Robben tumble deep into stoppage time sending the Dutch into the last eight.

VAR (the video assistant referee) should prevent a repeat of that injustice, but Guardado has warned Italian referee Gianluca Rocchi not to be fooled by any playacting from the world’s most expensive player, Neymar.

“We all know who Neymar is, but it isn’t up to me or my team to judge him, but the referees and FIFA,” he said. “Now there’s VAR they need to watch his style and know how to manage it. “We know he likes to exaggerate fouls, throw himself on the ground a lot, but that’s his style of play and the person who needs to stop that is the referee, not us.”

A Brazil side finding their stride in Russia after a slow start are arguably the toughest challenge Mexico could have asked for as they were punished for failing to back up victories over Germany and South Korea with defeat to Sweden to finish second in Group F.

Under Colombian coach Juan Carlos Osorio, though, Mexico approach every

game seeking to impose themselves rather than in fear of the opposition. “We will try to be more offensive-minded and more driven towards winning games rather than just being happy to be there and trying to not get embarrassed or playing not to lose,” said Osorio ahead of the tournament.

He was true to his word by going for Germany’s jugular in an opening game shock the world champions failed to recover from, failing to get beyond the first round of a World Cup for the first time in 80 years.

Hirving Lozano scored the only goal in Moscow but Mexico could and should have had many more with cooler heads. Despite landing in what is widely perceived as the tougher half of the draw, the team do not want for ambition.

“Why can’t we be Greece in the Euros? Why can’t we be Leicester in the Premier League?” said striker Javier Hernandez, Mexico’s all-time top scorer with 50 international goals. “We want to be world champions and that’s what we’re aiming for. We don’t want to put any limits on ourselves.” To be champions, they need to get to the fifth game first.—AFP



SAMARA: Mexico’s coach Juan Carlos Osorio attends a press conference at the Samara Arena stadium on the eve of the Russia 2018 World Cup round of 16 football match between Brazil and Mexico yesterday in Samara. — AFP

Argentina defeat marks end of an era for two-time champs

SOCHI: Argentinian headlines may have been dominated by the enigma that is Lionel Messi, tactical turmoil in the team and the Messianic Maradona in the background - but all that is history now as elimination by France spells the end of an era for the two-time champions. Argentina have not won a major international title since lifting the Copa America in 1993. They came closest with this squad in 2014, when they lost in the final of the last World Cup, and in the Copas America in

2015 and 2016. Their elimination by France on Saturday in a thrilling 4-3 reverse - beaten by pace and youth as much as by skill or talent - will now surely lead to a changing of the guard. Many of the Argentines who played in Russia are in their 30s, including Javier Mascherano, Sergio Aguero, Gonzalo Higuain, Ever Banega, Nicolas Otamendi, Gabriel Mercado, Enzo Perez, Angel Di Maria and even Messi himself.

Mascherano announced his retirement after the game, and there must be questions marks over his team mates’ desire to continue with the transatlantic flights and massive pressure from home fans. One of the biggest questions surrounds Messi. The Barcelona player retired from international football in 2016 but quickly reversed his decision. It would be no surprise if he finally called it a day.

Messi is one of the greatest players of the 21st century but he has yet to win a title with Argentina, losing all four of the finals he has played in, dating back to the 2007 Copa America in Venezuela. That should not be a reflection on his outstanding skill, but Argentina’s

repeated failure at the final hurdle is self-evident. Losing one final is unfortunate, losing three in four years is careless.

The Argentines, however, never looked anything like contenders this time around. They labored to a 1-1 draw with Iceland in their opener, were crushed 3-0 by Croatia in their next game, and needed a late winner from full-back Marcos Rojo to secure a place in the last 16. Messi, as so often happens, turned it on when he really had to, in that final group win over Nigeria. But he looked subdued against France and could not find a way past the packed defences of Iceland and Croatia. His inability to score in the knock-out phase of any World Cup is a telling statistic. Sampaoli is a successful coach, having won the Copa America with Chile in 2015, and he has vowed to continue in charge. He is aware of the age issue but convinced the future is in good hands. “I am convinced that Argentine football has a crop of players coming through,” Sampaoli said, “and we need to back them up if we are to return to be one of the top sides.”—Reuters

Golden generation? Belgium already eye next wave

MOSCOW: Belgian football’s hopes are high that a generation of hard work in rebuilding from the grass roots will bear fruit at this World Cup, but coaches are already looking beyond and at how to outfox bigger rivals next time.

They have seen Germany this year continue a run of champions going from boom to bust as winning teams age—Spain, Italy and France also all crashed after winning a previous World Cup; and the Belgian FA, and national coach Roberto Martinez, want younger talent lined up even before their elders have delivered.

“For the next four years, it’s very important for our young talented players to get experience,” Bob Browaeys, who has been national youth coach for nearly 20 years, told Reuters, arguing that past champions have been slow to refresh the first team.

Martinez, who saw his native Spain as reigning European and world champions humbled in Brazil in 2014, used a last group game after Belgium were through to give his reserves a run out: the likes of Youri Tielemans, 21, Adnan Januzaj and Anderlecht captain Leander Dendoncker, both 23, and national skipper Eden Hazard’s little brother Thorgan, beat a makeshift England 1-0.

“The so-called ‘golden generation’ wasn’t playing today,” said Martinez, trumpeting Belgium’s strength in depth to come. Browaeys has been part of a project to produce a new style of play and to maximise a small country’s talent pool that was born out of shame at Belgium’s poor showing as co-hosts of Euro 2000 with their more successful neighbours the Dutch.

Eighteen years later, that “golden generation” of players like Hazard, Kevin De Bruyne and Romelu Lukaku, produced by that system of teaching ball skills and vision from a young age in a network of youth clubs and schools, were the top scoring team the first round in Russia and believe nothing is beyond them.

Now, said Browaeys, “It’s the moment that they have to play for first place ... You need luck ... but I’m convinced that it’s possible. The players and the staff know this.”

Win or lose, with a Round of 16 game against Japan on Monday and possible quarter-final against Brazil, Browaeys believes that Martinez, long based in England’s Premier League where half the Belgian squad plays, has tuned in to the Belgian dream after taking over following disappointment in Brazil and at Euro 2016.

“The football that Martinez wants to play is exactly the same as our vision 20 years ago,” he said of Belgium’s creative dribbling and high pressing. “We wanted to produce another kind of player, another playing style. It’s very satisfying.”—Reuters

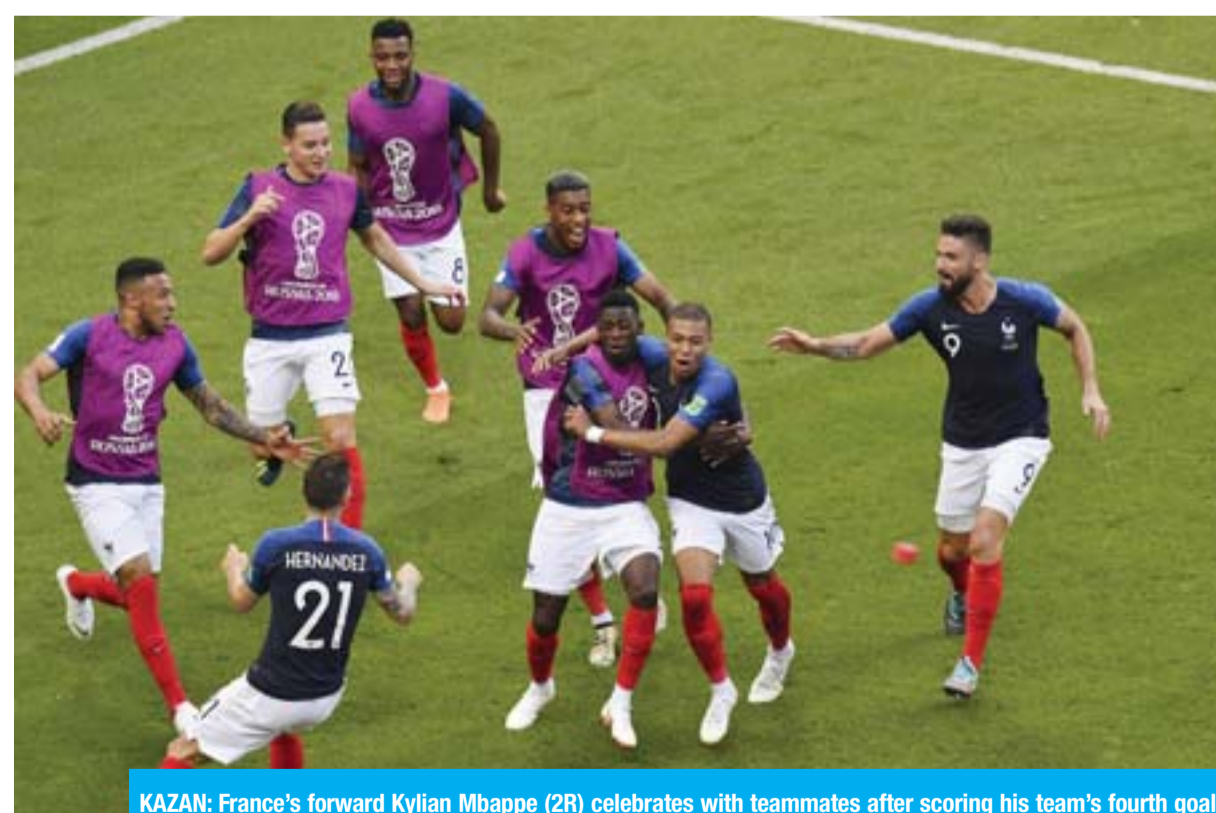
France’s Mbappe hailed as new global superstar

KAZAN ARENA: France players and the world’s press hailed Kylian Mbappe as an emerging superstar after the 19-year-old eclipsed Lionel Messi in a match that felt like the passing of a torch to a new generation.

Mbappe’s speed and power ruthlessly exposed Argentina’s defence in Kazan in a thrilling 4-3 victory on Saturday that re-established France among the World Cup favourites. As one number 10 trudged off-the player wearing an Argentina shirt with Messi’s name on-another in the blue of France took the plaudits. “Move over, Messi, a new global superstar is born at the World Cup,” was the headline in the Sunday Times in Britain.

“In this game, the Messi was him,” French sports daily L’Equipe said above a photograph of Mbappe celebrating. “He showed his talent to the world and overshadowed Lionel Messi.” The double strike made the boy from the Paris suburbs the first teenager since a 17-year-old Pele to score twice in a World Cup game. The Brazilian legend tweeted: “Congratulations, @KMBappe. 2 goals in a World Cup so young puts you in great company!” “He’s got a lot more talent than me,” France midfielder Paul Pogba said of Mbappe. “And he’s not going to stop there. He’s got so much talent.”

Argentina were simply swept aside by a new generation, and not just Mbappe — another of France’s scorers, Benjamin Pavard, is only 22 himself. “When you have players having a day like Mbappe had today, it’s very difficult to stop them,” said Argentina coach Jorge Sampaoli. With an average age of 25, a France side lacking major tournament experience were feeling the flak after three underwhelming group-stage matches reaped one penalty, an own goal and only one scored from open play. But coach Didier Deschamps’ “baby Bleus”



KAZAN: France’s forward Kylian Mbappe (2R) celebrates with teammates after scoring his team’s fourth goal during the Russia 2018 World Cup round of 16 football match between France and Argentina at the Kazan Arena in Kazan on Saturday. — AFP

silenced the detractors with the scintillating win over the 2014 finalists that put France back on course for a tilt at emulating France’s 1998 Cup-winning exploits, when Deschamps was captain.

Mbappe was not even born when France won their only World Cup, on home soil. “I can’t really take it in,” said Pavard, a defender so unaccustomed to scoring he did not know how to celebrate his superb strike. “I was running around everywhere, I didn’t know what to do.” Mbappe will be unleashed next on Uruguay, whose

steely defence should provide a far sterner test than the shambolic Argentine rearguard. It may be too early to talk of lifting the trophy in Moscow’s Luzhniki Stadium on July 15, but Deschamps was bubbling with excitement. “I experienced a lot of great joy and happiness as a France player, and the reason I took this job was to feel the same again,” said Deschamps.

“The lads are young, they have character. As the man in charge, especially when things go wrong, I’m very proud of this team and very happy for them.” — AFP

Sports

Detroit Tigers continue losing streak with 4-3 loss to Blue Jays

Jason Heyward had four hits to lead Chicago past Minnesota

TORONTO: Justin Smoak led off the bottom of the ninth inning with his 11th homer of the season to give the Toronto Blue Jays a 4-3 victory over the visiting Detroit Tigers on Saturday afternoon. Randal Grichuk hit a two-run homer for the Blue Jays, who have won the first two games of the four-game series to extend the Tigers' losing streak to 11 games. Nicholas Castellanos hit a two-run homer for the Tigers and John Hicks had a solo shot. Smoak's second career walk-off homer came against Detroit reliever Joe Jimenez (3-1). Seunghwan Oh (4-2) pitched around a single in the top of the ninth to earn the win.

RANGERS 13, WHITE SOX 4

Joey Gallo and Ryan Rua homered, and Bartolo Colon picked up his 245th career win as host Texas knocked off Chicago. Colon surrendered three runs on seven hits in a five-inning start. He struck out two and walked two for the Rangers, who have won three in a row and 11 of their past 13. Texas pulled away with a seven-run eighth inning, highlighted by a two-run double from Jurickson Profar and a two-run triple from Elvis Andrus. The Rangers, who also had a seven-run inning in their Friday win over the White Sox, have outscored Chicago 24-7 in the first two games of the series.

REDS 12, BREWERS 3

Reliever Michael Lorenzen, used as a pinch hitter, swatted a grand slam to cap an eight-run seventh inning as host Cincinnati rallied to beat Milwaukee. Lorenzen's third home run of the season came against Jacob Barnes, the Brewers' fourth pitcher of the day, and made a winner of Reds reliever Daniel Hernandez (3-0), who worked a scoreless seventh inning before Cincinnati's offensive uprising. Cincinnati starter Tyler Mahle went 5 2/3 innings, allowing three runs (one earned) on six hits and three walks while striking out 12.

RED SOX 11, YANKEES 0

Chris Sale fanned 11, allowed one hit in seven dominant innings and combined with two relievers on a two-hitter as Boston rolled at New York. Rafael Devers set a career high with five hits and drove in four runs. He hit a grand slam in the first off Sonny Gray on a 1-2 curveball before adding three singles and a seventh-inning double. Sale (8-4) allowed only a Giancarlo Stanton single with two outs in the first and two other baserunners. He reached 100 mph on his

final strikeout of the game against rookie Gleyber Torres in the seventh.

AS 7, INDIANS 2

Edwin Jackson recorded his 99th career win and continued his impressive run against Cleveland, pitching host Oakland to a sixth straight win. Josh Phegley, Dustin Fowler and Matt Olson hit home runs, helping the A's overcome a 2-0 deficit to record a second straight win in the three-game series. Jackson (1-0) picked up his first win with his new team with 6 2/3 innings of two-hit, two-run pitching. He struck out six and did not walk a batter. The 34-year-old right-hander improved his career record against the Indians to 10-1.

CUBS 14, TWINS 9

Jason Heyward had four hits and drove in two runs, and Albert Almora Jr. went 3-for-3 with two RBIs before departing with muscle cramps to lead Chicago past visiting Minnesota for a third straight victory. It was the third four-hit game of the season for Heyward, all coming in June. Ben Zobrist added two hits and three RBIs and David Bote scored three runs for Chicago. The Cubs finished with 20 hits, 17 of which were singles to go along with three doubles. Joe Mauer drove in three runs for the Twins, who got a home run from Eddie Rosario.

ANGELS 6, ORIOLES 2

Albert Pujols and David Fletcher came up with key hits as Los Angeles scored five runs in the eighth inning to win at Baltimore. The Orioles held a 2-1 lead before Pujols tied it off Mychal Givens (0-6) with a double to right-center. Two batters later, pinch hitter Chris Young reached on a fielder's choice against lefty Tamer Scott that drove in the go-ahead run. Scott later hit Martin Maldonado with a pitch, forcing in a run, and Fletcher followed with a two-run double. Justin Anderson (2-2) earned the victory with 1 1/3 innings of scoreless relief, handing the Orioles a seventh straight loss.

RAYS 5, ASTROS 2

Wilson Ramos recorded four RBIs in his first two at-bats, and Tampa Bay rode an ambush of Justin Verlander to a win over Houston in St. Petersburg, Fla. One start after allowing season highs in hits and runs, Verlander (9-4) eclipsed those totals in a second consecutive subpar outing. Verlander worked five innings, a season-low total, and sur-



ARLINGTON: Omar Narvaez #38 of the Chicago White Sox is late with the tag as Delino DeShields #3 of the Texas Rangers scores in the seventh inning of a baseball game at Globe Life Park in Arlington, Texas. —AFP

rendered five runs on nine hits and one walk with eight strikeouts. Ramos doubled with the bases loaded and no outs in the first inning, and he singled with the bases loaded and two outs in the second. Each time, he knocked in Kevin Kiermaier and Matt Duffy.

MARLINS 5, METS 2

JT Riddle's tiebreaking RBI infield single capped a three-run sixth inning as Miami rallied for a win over visiting New York. The Marlins have won the first two games of the three-game series to move percentage points ahead of the Mets for fourth place in the National League East. Miami had been in last place in the NL East every day since April 5. The Mets, who opened the season 11-1, have lost three straight and finished 5-21 in June. They have the worst winning percentage in the NL.

PHILLIES 3, NATIONALS 2

Jorge Alfaro and Aaron Altherr delivered RBI doubles on consecutive pitches in the fourth inning for host Philadelphia, which survived the early loss of starting pitcher Vince Velasquez to edge Washington. The Phillies have won three of their last four. The Nationals have lost four of their last five and six of their last eight. In the second inning, Velasquez was hit on the right (pitching) arm by a comebacker off the bat of Adam Eaton. Remarkably, Velasquez raced over, picked up the ball with his left hand and threw

out the speedy Eaton to end the inning and keep a runner from scoring from third. Velasquez exited the game due to a right arm contusion.

ROCKIES 3, DODGERS 1

Ian Desmond hit a home run and German Marquez gave up just two hits over eight innings as Colorado won at Los Angeles. Marquez was the second consecutive Rockies starting pitcher to go eight innings against a Dodgers offense that set a franchise record with 55 home runs in June. Rockies left-hander Tyler Anderson lasted eight innings in Friday night's victory. Marquez (6-8) yielded one run while striking out nine. He didn't issue a walk. Adam Ottavino tossed a scoreless ninth inning for his second save.

BRAVES 11, CARDINALS 4

A grand slam by Nick Markakis highlighted a six-run, fifth-inning rally, and Atlanta coasted to a win at St. Louis. Markakis went 2-for-3, scored twice and drove in five runs, the most important being his fourth career slam that came off St. Louis starter Luke Weaver (4-7). It was his ninth homer and first since June 5. The right fielder also doubled and added a sacrifice fly in the sixth as the Braves beat the Cardinals for the second straight day. Max Fried (1-2) was the beneficiary of Atlanta's 15-hit attack, pitching 6 2/3 scoreless innings and allowing four hits and three walks.—Reuters

'Surprised' Serena thanks Wimbledon for seeding boost

LONDON: Serena Williams has thanked Wimbledon chiefs for giving her the controversial seeding that divided the tennis world ahead of the grass-court Grand Slam. Williams' seeding has been a hot topic after the seven-time Wimbledon champion's tentative return to action following the birth of daughter Alexis Olympia in September.

The 36-year-old played her first Grand Slam for over a year at the French Open last month, reaching the fourth round before a shoulder injury forced her to quit ahead of her clash with Maria Sharapova.

Williams is ranked 181 after her maternity leave and French Open chiefs decided against seeding her. However, Wimbledon officials felt the former world number one's record on grass was so superior to her rivals that they seeded her 25th to ensure a balanced draw. Slovakian world number 32 Dominika Cibulkova was bumped from the seeding group as a result and complained bitterly in advance of the decision.

Other female stars are reported to be unhappy with Williams' seeding, but some, including two-time Wimbledon winner Petra Kvitová, insist they have no problem with the move. Serena wasn't sure she would be seeded for Wimbledon, which starts on Monday, and the 23-time major winner admitted she could have no complaints.

"I think I would be very ungrateful if I sat here and said it was too low, to be honest. So not at all," Williams told a press conference at Wimbledon yesterday. "I don't at all feel that way. In fact, I was pleasantly surprised. I came in here expecting that maybe I wouldn't get a seed. "I do know Wimbledon tends to kind of beat to their own drum. That's kind of one thing that's been able to set them apart. "It was a little bit in the back of my mind, that I would have a chance, but I didn't put that on it."

"You know, I'm here to do the best that I can do. I thought it was very, very noble and honest and cool." Williams' return to Wimbledon carries extra significance as it is 20 years since she made her debut, reaching the third round as a raw teenager.

She admitted it was emotional to be at a Grand Slam with her husband and daughter for the first time. "Was it 20 years ago? Wow, 20 years ago I can't say I thought I'll be here 20 years later," she said.

"I can't say I remember my first match. I'm definitely going to try to YouTube that! "It's crazy. It's just such great memories that I have here, which is why I wanted to bring Olympia here. It was just something special." Williams had a heart-warming moment on Centre Court earlier in the week when she took Alexis Olympia onto the turf where she has enjoyed some of the finest moments of her career. Serena has appeared in nine Wimbledon singles finals and, together with sister Venus, transformed the profile of women's tennis with their inspirational rise from the mean streets of south-central Los Angeles.—AFP

Tour de France block Froome from riding

PARIS: Tour de France organisers have formally blocked four-time champion Chris Froome from competing in this year's race, Le Monde reported yesterday, but his team promptly vowed he would be at the start line. Cyclingnews.com quoted Team Sky as responding to yesterday's report that they are "confident that Chris will be riding the Tour as we know he has done nothing wrong. The Team Sky star has been under a cloud since he was found to have twice the permissible amount of asthma drug Salbutamol in his system during September's Vuelta a Espana, which he won. Five-time Tour winner Bernard Hinault, who worked for the Tour organisation for many years, last month called for the peloton to strike if the British rider lines up at the start of this year's event next Saturday.

Froome responded on Wednesday that he will compete in this year's race despite the shadow cast by the case hanging over him and his team confirmed as much yesterday with their statement. The decision on the organisers' attempt to prevent the Kenyan-born Briton from taking part is expected to be made by the French National Olympic and Sports Committee, which is to make a ruling tomorrow, Le Monde said after the last-ditch bid to exclude him.

Technically, while Froome awaits the result of an ongoing investigation into his

Salbutamol case, he can still ride on the Tour. Amaury Sports Organisation (ASO), the organisers of the iconic Tour, refused to comment on the report although AFP has had confirmation of information they say backs their view that the defending champion should not be allowed to race.

According to the letter of the rules, Froome is authorised to ride until a final decision from the anti-doping tribunal of the International Cycling Union regarding his ongoing case. Le Monde says Froome will not necessarily attend tomorrow's meeting by the French committee with their ruling due Wednesday.

He is to be defended by British sports lawyer Mike Morgan, a French speaker, before the UCI tribunal. Sky, ASO and the French Olympic Committee will each choose an arbiter to decide whether Froome should be allowed to start the Tour. According to Tour statutes, organisers may ban a rider or a team if their presence is seen as liable to damage the image or reputation of the organisers or the event. UCI president David Lappartient reacted to the story on the sidelines of the French national championships. "For the moment we have here a leak in Le Monde. I have always said we would make known the general position of the UCI before the Tour and that will be the case. It begins next Saturday so we shall explain our position during the coming week," Lappartient said.

Tour de France race director Christian Prudhomme said Friday that in the absence of a ruling against the rider the organisers "evidently expects to see Chris Froome at the start line on July 7," adding that, "legally, he can." Team Sky have yet to unveil their eight-strong team.

Froome, who denies wrongdoing in the wake of his "adverse analytical finding" on



PARIS: This file photo taken on July 23, 2017 shows Great Britain's Christopher Froome (C) wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey flashing victory sign next to Spain's Mikel Landa during the 103 km twenty-first and last stage of the 104th edition of the Tour de France. Chris Froome's Tour de France 2018 participation thrown into doubt after Tour's owners 'block him from competing' yesterday. —AFP

September 20 last year, is out to emulate five-time winners Hinault, Jacques Anquetil, Eddy Merckx and Miguel Indurain. A win this year would make Froome the second racer after Merckx to win four straight Tours. American Lance Armstrong finished first seven straight times, but those results were retrospectively scrubbed out because of drug use. Hinault, whose 1985 win gave the host nation its last title, sees Froome as a "cheat", a stance Team Sky decried.

Froome's Giro win in May made him the first man to hold all three Grand Tours at once since Hinault himself in 1983. But Le

Monde commented that "the Tour de France wants to avoid at all costs finding itself in the same situation as at the recent Tour of Italy where Froome's final win is now marked with an asterisk." Spanish rider Alberto Contador, stripped of his 2010 Tour de France and the 2011 Giro after testing positive for clenbuterol at the former to earn a 2012 ban—he blamed the result on contaminated steak—has lamented the slowness of the case. "It would have been better for everyone if the Froome affair had been resolved much more quickly," he told French sports daily L'Equipe on Friday. —AFP

Tiger charges but fades as Ancer, Molinari lead National

POTOMAC: Tiger Woods, chasing his first victory since 2013, charged early but faded late Saturday at the Quicken Loans National, finishing six strokes behind co-leaders Abraham Ancer and Francesco Molinari.

Woods, playing his 11th US PGA event in a comeback from spinal fusion surgery, made four birdies in a row and sank a 25-foot birdie putt at the ninth. But Ancer matched the course record with a bogey-free eight-under par 62, his US PGA career-low score, to finish on 13-under 197, level with Italy's Molinari after 54 holes at TPC Potomac.

A group after Ancer closed with a nine-foot birdie putt, 14-time major winner Woods found a bunker at 18 and missed an eight-foot par putt, taking his fourth bogey to

shoot 68 and share 10th on 203. "It was frustrating because I played better than what my score indicates," Woods said. "I figured I had to get to 10-under and wasn't able to do it. Those four bogeys kind of ruined it." Tournament host Woods, who hadn't played in the event since 2015 due to back pain, is still contending for the first time since sharing second at Innisbrook and fifth at Bay Hill in March.

"I'm going to have to shoot a low round to try to give myself a chance," said Woods. "I would hope that it would be drier because it gives me a little better chance." Everyone could face lightning-fast greens yesterday as sweltering heat is expected to continue.

"I don't have a problem with my strength and my endurance," Woods said. "It's just a matter of keeping focus out here in this heat." Woods, whose 79 career US PGA victories are three shy of Sam Snead's all-time record, has not won a title since the 2013 WGC Bridgestone Invitational—a drought of 1,791 days in which 114 different rivals have taken victories.

If Ancer can make it 115, the \$1.2 million top prize will eclipse his career \$947,637 US PGA prize money.

World number 203 Ancer struggled in his 2016 rookie PGA season and lost his tour spot, but regained it for this season and shared eighth at Houston for his top PGA fin-

ish. "It feels great. I played awesome," Ancer said. "I didn't really make any mistakes, made some putts, kept the ball in front of me. I tried to make as many birdies as I could without making any mistakes."

Molinari closed with back-to-back birdies to shoot 65 and share the lead, two strokes ahead of Americans Ryan Armour and Zac Blair on 199 with Andrew Landry on 200 and Kevin Streelman, who set the course record Friday, sixth on 201. Woods, 42, is competing at Potomac for the first time. He won the National in 2009 and 2012 at nearby Congressional Country Club. Woods opened with a bogey, finding deep rough on his first two shots, then rescued par from bunkers at the second and third, praising his new mallet putter. "I turned everything around making that par at three," Woods said. "I just got rolling after that. I felt good all week with my putter." Woods began his birdie barrage with seven-footers at the fourth and fifth, sank a 12-footer at six and made an eight-foot putt at seven to reach 8-under, one off the lead.

Another stumble came at the par-4 eighth as Woods found deep left rough and blasted beyond a cart path behind the green on the way to bogey. Woods responded, however, with a dramatic 25-foot birdie putt at the par-3 ninth, giving a double fist pump of satisfaction as the crowd erupted in cheers.—AFP



SNIPPETS



Ronaldo tight-lipped on future after World Cup KO

European champions could look to the future with confidence.

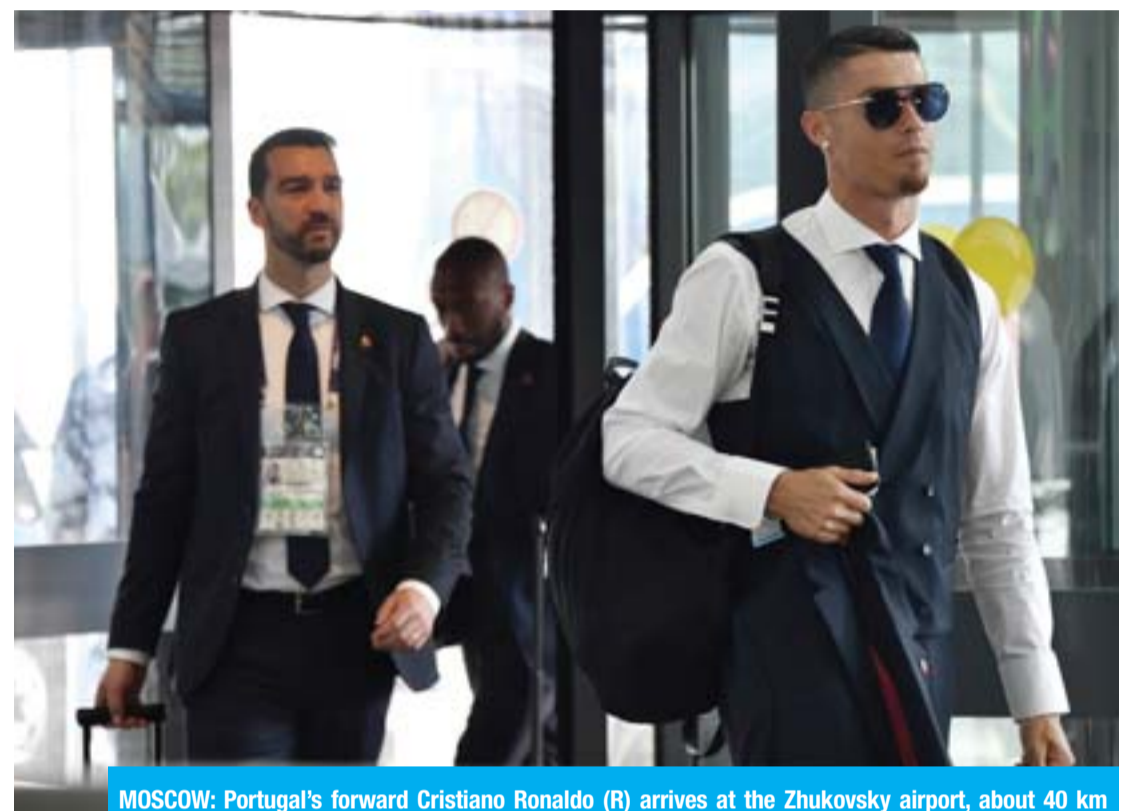
SOCHI: Cristiano Ronaldo saw his World Cup dreams slip away once again on Saturday but gave no hint as to whether he plans to continue playing for Portugal. The reigning European champions were undone by two Edinson Cavani goals for Uruguay in their last-16 tie in Sochi, despite Pepe bringing them level at one point early in the second half.

It was not to be Ronaldo's night, as he exited the World Cup on the same day as Lionel Messi's Argentina were eliminated following a 4-3 defeat at the hands of France. Ronaldo will be nearly 38 by the time the next World Cup comes around in Qatar in 2022.

"Now is not the time to talk about the future, either of the coach or the players," the Portugal skipper said after the game. The 33-year-old did however say that the European champions could look to the future with confidence.

"I am sure that Portugal will continue to be one of the best teams in the world. We have a young and ambitious squad," he said. Remarkably, neither Ronaldo nor Messi have managed to score a single goal in a knockout tie in four World Cups going back to 2006. Ronaldo reached the semi-finals with Portugal in his first World Cup in Germany, but has never made it past the last 16 since then. This has been his best World Cup in terms of goals scored, as he leaves with four in total, including a hat-trick in a 3-3 draw with Spain in the group stage.

His tally is one behind the tournament's current leading scorer Harry Kane, with Ronaldo also missing a penalty in the 1-1 draw with Iran. "He is an exceptional player," said Uruguay's veteran coach Oscar Tabarez. "He is their leader, their captain. You need to really concentrate to make sure he is not successful against you, but that is very difficult." Portugal coach Fernando Santos was hopeful that the Real Madrid man will continue to represent his country for some time yet.



MOSCOW: Portugal's forward Cristiano Ronaldo (R) arrives at the Zhukovsky airport, about 40 km southeast of Moscow, yesterday, as Portugal's team departs following their loss the previous day to Uruguay in their Russia 2018 World Cup round of 16 football match. — AFP

with Portugal's next challenge to defend the European Championship title they won in France two years ago.

"I am sure he will. Cristiano still has a lot to give to the game," Santos said when asked if he felt his captain would carry on representing his country. Portugal will take part in the inaugural UEFA Nations League later this year, beginning against Italy in September.

By that time, Ronaldo's situation at club level will be clearer after he raised doubts about his future with Real Madrid in the wake of their Champions League final win against Liverpool in May. "There is another tournament starting in September and of course we hope Cristiano will be with us to help the younger players grow," Santos said. "We have many young players and it is important to have our captain there." —AFP

World Cup brings village community closer

SAMARA: Dimitri Strazhkov dreams about becoming a professional player with CSKA Moscow and one day being called up to play for Russia's national team. The 15 year-old and other boys of all ages train every day at a small soccer field in the village of Aleksandrovka that was built only five years ago as a present from the town of Samara.

Located in the heart of a village with about 1,500 inhabitants, and under the watchful eye of a statue of Soviet state founder Vladimir Lenin, it serves the community as both an outlet for the teenagers to express themselves and as a meeting place for residents old and young.

For the kids in the village, the soccer field is at the centre of many of their close-knit relationships. "We call each other, we text on social media

and knock on each other's door. Then we agree on a time to come to the soccer field," Strazhkov told Reuters on Saturday.

On the field, the players try to emulate the skills of their heroes on television. The host nation's early success in the tournament has only amplified the status of popular players such as Aleksandr Golovin or Igor Akinfeev. But the foreign talents on display, including those of Russia's next opponents Spain, have also inspired the children of Aleksandrovka.

"My favourite foreign players are Zlatan Ibrahimovic, because he is very technical and powerful, and Spain's Fernando Torres, but as he is very, very old, I prefer Sergio Ramos," said Dimitri Maklakov.

Despite wearing a Spain T-shirt, Maklakov was certain Russia would win yesterday. Dimitri Terentyev, whose son Denis is a regular on the village pitch, says soccer runs in the blood. "His grandfather, his four brothers and my brother and I as well played football, and now Denis does as well," he said.

"And I hope my youngest will soon be playing as well." Yet for some, the World Cup is the very first time some villagers have encountered soccer.

Pensioner Irina Alekseeva, who lives alone in an old wooden house, says she has been reading soccer magazines and watching the news to learn about the game and engage with her grandchildren who visit her at the weekend to help run her farm.

"My grandchildren motivate me as they ask questions all the time, and they support the team and ask me to watch the matches with them," she says as the family gather to watch France play Argentina on the television. "I should be a modern grandmother and know who the stars like Ronaldo or Messi are." — Reuters

WORLD CUP 2018

Today's Matches (All local timings)

Brazil	17:00	Mexico
Belgium	21:00	Japan

England would find Sweden tough at World Cup: Eriksson

LONDON: Former England manager Sven-Goran Eriksson has tipped Gareth Southgate's team to beat Colombia in the World Cup last 16 but said his native Sweden would be tough opponents if they meet in the quarter-finals.

Eriksson—who coached England to two successive World Cup quarter-finals, in 2002 and 2006 — said he was impressed with the job Southgate is doing with his young team in Russia.

England face Colombia tomorrow in Moscow after finishing second in their group behind Belgium, while the Swedes play Switzerland in Saint Petersburg earlier the same day. Eriksson believes Sweden, who topped Group F after beating Mexico in their final match, may not be playing scintillating football but says they are tough to score against.

"When you come down to the last-16, it is always difficult, and it should be difficult," Eriksson told the BBC yesterday. "I think England will beat Colombia, then I hope they will meet Sweden. I know that everyone wants to avoid Brazil, and maybe rightly, but I think it is easier to score against Brazil than against Sweden."

"Sweden are not playing the best football in the world, but to score against them is very difficult," Eriksson said not too much should be read into



REPINO: England's forward Harry Kane shakes hands with a British journalist during an ongoing players versus press darts competition in Repino yesterday, ahead of the team's Russia 2018 World Cup round of 16 football match against Colombia. — AFP

England's 1-0 defeat to Belgium in a group match that saw both managers make multiple changes.

"It was the second team of England and the second team of Belgium. It is different when you change five, six and seven players," he said. "I think both managers did well. When you have the

chance in a long, hard tournament to rest players, you should do that. "It is a hungry England team. They seem to go out without any fears at all, and that is good. They enjoy their football and they play without the fear of losing. The pressure is not there too much." — AFP

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Russia stun Spain on penalties

Akinfeev saves two penalties in a dramatic shootout



MOSCOW: Spain's midfielder Andres Iniesta (R) kicks the ball past Russia's midfielder Roman Zobnin during the Russia 2018 World Cup round of 16 football match between Spain and Russia at the Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow yesterday. — AFP

MOSCOW: Russia captain Igor Akinfeev saved two penalties in a dramatic shootout as the World Cup hosts dumped title contenders Spain out in the last 16 following a 1-1 draw. Veteran Russia centre-back Sergei Ignashevich gifted Spain the opening goal on 12 minutes in Moscow when he unwittingly turned into his own net after grappling with Sergio Ramos.

Russia hit back just before the interval as Artem Dzyuba nervelessly converted a penalty awarded for a handball by Gerard Pique. Spain controlled the game as expected but struggled to create genuine chances, with Akinfeev sharp on the few occasions they did before saving from Koke and Iago Aspas to seal a 4-3 win on penalties. "We are having a fantastic World Cup," said Akinfeev. "Not just our fans, but the fans of other countries got a sense of this atmosphere and understood that Russians

really know how to play football and want to play football." Russia will meet either Croatia or Denmark for a place in the semi-finals, as Spain's rotten run against hosts nation at major tournaments continued. Fernando Hierro made the bold decision to drop Andres Iniesta for Koke in central midfield, with Marco Asensio handed his first start of the competition.

Russia boss Stanislav Cherchesov left out leading scorer Denis Cheryshev, opting for three central defenders in a conservative 5-3-2 formation. It was Nacho, in for Dani Carvajal at right-back, who won the free-kick that led to Spain taking the lead as he was caught by Yuri Zhirkov to the right of the penalty area.

Asensio, who made two brief substitute appearances in the group stage, whipped in dangerously to the far post where the ball looped in off an unsuspecting Ignashevich as

he tussled with Ramos.

Spain dominated the first 30 minutes, pressing Russia heavily as the hosts struggled to advance beyond the halfway line in humid conditions. Aleksandr Golovin carved out their first chance of note, starting a move with a jinking run before bending just wide of David de Gea's left-hand post.

Isco produced a series of regal touches with Spain's King Felipe VI among those in the crowd at the Luzhniki Stadium, but Russia equalised shortly before half-time.

A deep corner was met by Dzyuba, whose header struck the outstretched arm of Pique, with referee Bjorn Kuipers contemplating his decision before pointing to the spot. Dzyuba calmly sent De Gea the wrong way with his penalty to join Cheryshev on a team-leading three goals.

Akinfeev snuffed out an opening for Diego Costa on the

stroke of half-time as the Spain striker tried to latch onto a through ball. The Russia goalkeeper was again involved early in the second half, flying to his left to pluck a spinning Jordi Alba effort from the air.

Cherchesov introduced Cheryshev for Alexander Samedov on the hour, a move greeted by a deafening roar from the home support. Iniesta replaced David Silva, while Costa was withdrawn for Aspas, and the two substitutes went close to winning it late in regulation time.

A low 20-yard drive heading towards was palmed away by at Akinfeev at full stretch, with the angled follow-up from Aspas also pushed to safety. Aspas nearly picked out Carvajal with a cut-back seconds into the start of extra time, which saw Aleksandr Erokhin come on as Russia's fourth sub—the first time the rule has been applied at the World Cup.—AFP

Croatia advance to quarter-finals after penalty shootout

NIZHNY NOVGOROD: Croatia came back after conceding in the opening minute to earn a World Cup quarter-final berth after edging Denmark 3-2 in a penalty shootout after the two sides drew 1-1 in the round of 16 match yesterday.

They could have wrapped up the result five minutes from the end of extra time but Luka Modric had his penalty saved by Kasper Schmeichel.

However, the Croatia captain returned to bravely take one of the post-match kicks as goalkeeper Danijel Subasic saved three of Denmark's efforts to set up a quarter-final meeting with Russia on Saturday. It was

Modric's sublime pass that put Ante Rebic through on goal, before being brought down by Mathias Jorgensen, and offered Croatia a chance to win just before the lottery of the shootout. But Schmeichel made a smart save to keep the 1-1 stalemate intact through two hours of at times pedestrian football.

Two chaotic goals in the opening four minutes made for a rollicking start at the Nizhny Novgorod Stadium. However, it proved a false dawn as the spectacle faded with both sides choosing caution as their priority given the rare chance to reach the last eight at a World Cup.

Jorgensen took all of 57 seconds to breach the Croatia defence at the end of a long throw-in by Jonas Knudsen, stabbing at the ball with his left foot as he took it off team mate Thomas Delaney. Croatia goalkeeper Danijel Subasic got a hand to Jorgensen's toe-poke but effectively deflected the ball across his own line.

There was an element of comedy to the fourth-minute equaliser for Mario Mandzukic

as Denmark's early advantage quickly disappeared. A kick across the Danish defence was firmly hit away by Henrik Dalsgaard but straight into the face of team mate Andreas Christensen, creating a pinball effect that saw the ball fall for Mandzukic, who then expertly turned it into the net from close range.

The anticipated influence of Christian Eriksen for the Danes and Croatia's Modric held out hopes of more mouth-watering action but their craft was only evident in patches. Eriksen did shave the top of the woodwork just before half-time with a speculative effort while, at the other end, Ivan Rakitic forced a smart save from Schmeichel.

After the interval, the chances were even more sparse although Croatia did up the tempo towards the end of regulation time only to run into a resolute Denmark defence. In extra time, Knudsen's long throws proved the most dangerous attacking weapon but eventually it was penalties that delivered a winner. — Reuters



NIZHNY NOVGOROD: Denmark's defender Mathias Jorgensen fouls Croatia's forward Ante Rebic (R) in the penalty area during the Russia 2018 World Cup round of 16 football match between Croatia and Denmark at the Nizhny Novgorod Stadium in Nizhny Novgorod yesterday. — AFP