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## Panel debates creating more jobs for Kuwaitis

### Islamist MP Al-Tabtabai fumes over Cairo Airport's incident

#### Amir inaugurates Jahra Medical City



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah patronized and attended the opening of Jahra Medical City yesterday. The New Jahra Hospital consists of four-towers with 14 floors surrounded by parking spaces for about 5,000 cars. The KD 364 million project has a bed capacity of 1,234 beds, and was built on an area of 7,250,000 square meters. (See Page 3)

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: A National Assembly panel responsible for speeding up creating more jobs for Kuwaitis by replacing expatriates said yesterday it has decided to invite two Cabinet ministers for a broad discussion on the issue. MP Safa Al-Hashem said the panel decided during a meeting yesterday to summon Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh to discuss the government commitment to the replacement policy both in the public and private sectors.

She said the ministers should submit lists with all projects and the required replacement percentages and the extent of the government compliance to those percentages supported by mathematical tables. The panel was established a few months ago after lawmakers said they were not satisfied with government programs to lay off expatriates especially in government jobs and appoint nationals in their place.

Hashem said that the government had told the panel earlier that thousands of jobs would be created for Kuwaitis by scrapping some 3,108 jobs filled by

expatriates. She said that based on available statistics, the services of 1,431 expatriate employees only had been terminated, falling short of government plans. Hashem said that there are around 12,000 unemployed Kuwaitis waiting for jobs, and that state-owned oil companies have announced that they have around 2,000 vacancies waiting to be filled.

She described the government statements on the issue of employment for nationals at the expense of expatriates as contradictory, noting that the panel understands that some jobs are not acceptable to Kuwaitis. According to figures released by the panel last month, some 350,000 Kuwaitis and 100,000 expatriates are employed in government jobs and MPs insist that many of them are not needed.

In another development, Islamist MP Waleed Al-Tabtabai said yesterday that he was stranded at Cairo Airport for 12 hours without any reason before he was allowed to enter Egypt to attend an Arab parliamentary meeting. Tabtabai travelled to Egypt as a member of a Kuwaiti parliamentary delegation to the meeting but he was stopped at the airport for 12 hours whereas other members were allowed to go. Tabtabai has been highly critical of the Egyptian regime.

### Miracle rescue: Boys trapped in cave found safe

MAE SAI: Twelve boys and their football coach trapped in a flooded Thai cave for nine days were "found safe" yesterday, in a miracle rescue after days of painstaking searching by specialist divers through muddy waters and winding tunnels. There had been no contact with the boys, aged between 11 and 16, since they went missing with their 25-year-old coach last Saturday.

The massive rescue effort had for days been hampered by heavy rains that flooded the Tham Luang cave in northern Thailand, blocking access to chambers where it was hoped the group would be found alive. But yesterday Chiang Rai provincial governor broke the news

of their rescue, delighting a nation which has anxiously followed every twist and turn of the dramatic effort to save them. "We found all 13 safe... we will take care of them until they can move," Narongsak Osottanakorn told reporters, who broke into spontaneous applause and cheering.

"We will bring food to them and a doctor who can dive. I am not sure they can eat as they have not eaten for a while." Divers took advantage of a brief window of good weather yesterday to edge further into the cave, with the water levels dropping slowly but steadily every hour thanks to round-the-clock pumping. They had hoped to find the "Wild Boar" team on an elevated ledge dubbed "Pattaya beach". But the boys had retreated 300-400 meters further as the ledge was submerged, Narongsak added.

The team's travails appear far from over with a complex operation predicted to try to bring the group several kilometers through the

cave-which is still partially submerged. Loved ones, friends and teachers of the "Wild Boar" football team refused to give up hope of seeing the young players again, holding an increasingly desperate vigil at the cave entrance.

Tinnakorn Boonpiem, whose 12-year-old son Mongkol is among the 13, reacted with joy. "I'm so glad... I want to him to be physically and mentally fit. I am afraid he will be mentally affected by this incident." Scores of divers-including foreign experts-have been sent into the cave with hundreds of oxygen tanks, establishing a base camp inside the chambers over the weekend. Thailand has been a nation transfixed by the plight of the "Wild Boar" team, with social media lighting up in support of the group and the country's deeply spiritual reflexes stirred into action. Shamans and Buddhist monks have held prayers and given offerings at the cave imploring mountain "spirits" to return the boys safely.

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MAE SAI: A happy family member shows the latest pictures of the missing boys taken by rescue divers inside Tham Luang cave yesterday. — AFP

#### News in brief

##### 'Dead' woman found alive

JOHANNESBURG: A South African woman who paramedics had declared dead after a horrific car crash was later found alive in a mortuary fridge, emergency services said yesterday. Ambulance service Distress Alert confirmed that the unnamed woman had been certified dead by paramedics at the scene of the pile-up outside of Carletonville, southwest of Johannesburg, in the early hours of June 24. Mortuary technicians then found her alive in a morgue fridge several hours after the crash in which the victims' car rolled, throwing all three occupants clear of the vehicle, killing two of them. — AFP

##### Iran president in Europe

GENEVA: Iranian President Hassan Rouhani arrived in Switzerland yesterday at the start of European trip billed as of "prime importance" after the US pulled out of the 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers. The tour, which also includes a stop in Austria, is part of Tehran's efforts to secure Europe's continued support for the landmark agreement aimed at preventing Iran from building the atomic bomb. Substantial parts of the historic nuclear pact were negotiated in Switzerland before it was signed in July 2015 in Vienna, where the Rouhani will head tomorrow. The trip will be an "opportunity to talk about the future of the (nuclear) agreement," he told reporters at Tehran's Mehrabad Airport before boarding his flight, state television showed. — AFP (See Page 7)

### Neymar on target as Brazil book quarter-finals



SAMARA: Brazil's forward Neymar celebrates with Brazil's midfielder Paulinho after scoring the opening goal during the Russia 2018 World Cup round of 16 football match between Brazil and Mexico yesterday. — AFP (See Page 28)

### France's arms exports halved; Middle East clients still the biggest

PARIS: French weaponry exports fell sharply last year in the absence of major deals to sell new Rafale fighter jets, with Middle Eastern clients again making up the bulk of the orders, the defense ministry said yesterday. In its annual report to parliament, the ministry said the value of exports dropped to 6.9 billion euros (\$8 billion) from 14 billion euros the previous year and the record 17 billion euros booked in 2015.

Those two years saw the first big export orders for Rafale jets made by Dassault Aviation to Egypt, Qatar and India-following a string of failed efforts to sell the planes outside France. But France, the world's third-biggest arms exporter after the US and Russia, will book an additional 12 Rafale sales to Qatar this year. "The results from 2017, with 6.9 billion euros, is in line with the average from years before the Rafale contracts," the ministry said.

It added that helicopters and missiles made up nearly half of last year's foreign orders. Orders from Middle East clients rose to 3.9 billion euros from 1.9 billion in 2016, despite an economic slowdown stemming from lower oil prices "which delayed some acquisition projects," the ministry said. NGOs and other critics have assailed France for supplying weapons to Mideast governments, in particular Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates over their support for pro-government forces in Yemen fighting Houthi rebels.

Around 10,000 Yemeni citizens have died in the fighting, and some groups accuse the Saudi-led coalition of bombing schools, hospitals and other civilian targets.

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# 1,629 expatriates in public sector terminated in 2018

## Education ministry first with 114,868 employees, including 83,743 teachers

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** The number of expatriate workers terminated in state departments in the first half of 2018 reached 1,629, according to official statistics which further indicate that 1,431 non-Kuwaitis lost their jobs in the public sector in the past three months alone.

This is a drastic step forward in the government's efforts to create more jobs for Kuwaiti jobseekers in the public sector by releasing expats working in state departments, especially when considering that only 666 non-Kuwaiti employees were terminated in 2017 according to statistics released by the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

The information technology system at the CSC issued recently its second quarterly statistical report for 2018 regarding the total number of government employees until as of July 1, 2018. The statistics show that the total number of public sector employees reaches 352,169, with an increase of 2,478 Kuwaiti employees compared to the first quarter of 2018. The report further shows that 42.1 percent of the employees (148,257) registered in the second quarter were males, whereas female employees made by 57.9 percent (203,912). Further, the report showed that

Kuwaiti staff make up 76.13 percent of public sector employees (268,100), in addition to 4,521 Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nationals, 48,180 Arabs and 31,368 non-Arab foreign nationals.

In terms of employment at each state department, the statistics show that the Ministry of Education has the largest number of civil employees with 114,868, followed by the Ministry of Health with 63,206, the Ministry of Electricity and Water with 21,025 and Ministry of Interior with 20,270.

Jobs wise, the statistics show that teaching staff members came first with 83,743 employees, followed by 55,712 administrative support employees, then 50,411 in medical jobs, 43,511 in engineering jobs, 23,631 in financial, economic and commercial jobs and 572 in marine jobs.

As far as qualifications is concerned, the statistics show that government employees include 5,518 PhD holders, 11,623 Master's holders, 161,919 bachelor's degree holders, 54,584 diploma holders, 66,629 high school degree holders, in addition to 10,911 employees (including 3,334 citizens) with primary education. Moreover, the statistics show that 10,654 employees, including 7,480 citizens, have been in service for over 30 years.

a weekly meeting yesterday. During the meeting, the Cabinet was briefed on recommendations by the joint ministerial committee for economic affairs and public services on mechanisms of operating the new health projects, according to the statement. The Cabinet decided to task the MoH, in coordination with the Ministry of Finance and the Civil Service Commission, with studying financial requirements and occupations for the new hospital, Jahra hospital and Sheikhha Salwa Al-Sabah Stem Cell and Umbilical Cord Center.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet affirmed the importance of the upcoming visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the Republic of China, scheduled to take place from the 7th to 10th of July, 2018. The

### Allowances

A total of KD 40,195,463 have been spent to pay various promotions for citizens in June, said manager of financial incentives' affairs at the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP) Heyam Al-Dowailah. Dowailah added that 60,333 citizens had benefited from the promotions which included KD 11,075,000 as cadre increases, KD 10,344,000 for social allowances and KD 7,473,000 for expensive living conditions' allowances. She also noted that children allowances reached KD 2,085,000 while teachers' raises reached KD 375,000.

### Work permits

The Public Authority for Manpower gave permission to employers yesterday to apply to cancel work permits of expatriate employees who are held in jail pending a final court order, and to cancel absconding employees' residency visas. The authority also urged sponsors in such cases to apply to cancel the employee's work permit and pay the cost of returning him or her to their country. Further, the authority pointed that in case an employee stops showing up to work and starts working for somebody else other than their sponsor, the latter should pay the cost of returning the absconding employee to their country after the original employer files an absconding report.

### Fiber optics

The Ministry of Services started the third and last phase of the fiber optics project which will provide

visit will provide opportunities for an exchange of views on several issues of common interests, the Cabinet said in a statement after its weekly meeting, chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. The Cabinet took note of the delegation accompanying His Highness the Amir, which included Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh, Minister of Finance Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and State Minister for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh, Minister of commerce and industry Khaled Al-Roudan, Oil Minister and Minister of Electricity and Water Bakheet Al-Rasheed and several other top officials. — KUNA



all housing, commercial and investment units with advanced landline cables that would help change internet services' speed from maximum of three to 100 gigabytes per second, a ministry official said, noting that the fiber optic cables would enable subscribers to receive TV broadcast as well. The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, added that the ministry plans to increase internet speed to more than 200 gigabytes per second in the future.

## Health Ministry to take charge of Jaber Hospital

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwaiti Cabinet has asked the Ministry of Health (MoH) to assume responsibility of the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital's building from the Ministry of Public Works so as to manage and operate the facility. This came in a statement issued by the Cabinet following



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the Cabinet's meeting yesterday. — KUNA

## Firemen tackle Shuaiba warehouse blaze

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

**KUWAIT:** Firefighters tackled a blaze that erupted in a warehouse containing foam, paint and cleaning material in west Shuaiba yesterday. No injuries were reported in the blaze which required efforts of firefighters from four different stations, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFS) said in a statement. Meanwhile, investigations began to find out the cause of fire.

### Citizenship forgery

Detectives discovered a new citizenship forgery case involving a Kuwaiti woman who has two separate nationality certificates. Interior Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Nationality and Passports Maj Gen Sheikh Mazen Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah sent a tip to detectives about a Kuwaiti man who manipulated his nationality file ten years ago and added his daughter-in-law to his file as his daughter, after giving false details, and got her civil ID, a nationality and passport stating that she is born in 1983.

Investigations also revealed that the woman was later involved in schemes by which she would agree to marry a man in order to obtain marriage loans and housing allowances, before getting a divorce that would also entitle her to receive a monthly payment from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor as well as a labor support allowance. The woman used this scheme with several men to receive multiple payments from the government. Police arrested the woman and her husband, and found with them documents showing that the woman had two separate identities. The woman admitted to committing the forgery together with her husband and father-in-law who has since passed away.

### Domestic violence

A man left his wife and sister-in-law injured in a domestic dispute reported recently. Police and paramedics arrived to the scene shortly after the incident was reported, and found the two women suffering from several injuries. The sisters were taken to hospital, and a case was filed for investigations.

### Arrests

Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh police arrested an Ethiopian woman wanted on smuggling liquor for personal use, and for having an expired residency. The arrest was made after the woman attempted to escape as soon as she noticed police while walking by a street in the area. Separately, Hawally police arrested a Kuwaiti young man with possession of a police strobe lights in a Salmiya mall's parking lot. The suspect was charged with impersonating a detective. Meanwhile, police in Reqqa arrested a citizen for causing public disturbance, and was also found to be wanted for defaulting on a KD 12,000 payment. The arrest was made following complaints from area residents. The suspect was sent to concerned authorities.

Legalese

## Working in the unforgiving summer



By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

**I**n Kuwait we are blessed to have good weather for several months even though the Kuwaiti summer can be unforgiving with temperatures reaching over 50 C degrees, and therefore the question remains on the legalities of working in the heat. I for one cannot bare to stand more than a few minutes outside, without feeling like my skin is burning and that an AC or shaded area is vital for my survival; both blessings that some workers do not have in Kuwait. Many workers may not have to work in the heat, but may have to walk to work, or get a bus or have no access to air-conditioning. Today, I will be discussing a few laws related to working conditions.

### No air conditioning

**Question:** There is no air conditioning at our office, and I would like to know if it is legal to work in such environments.

**Attorney Fajer:** There are no specific regulations on the workspace environment, although the law does mention that the environment has to be safe. Moving forward though, I think it is important for the Kuwaiti government to have more laws and bylaws in place that discuss the working environment of employees in Kuwait with guidelines on the heat in the country, whether it is for a regular office space, drivers, factory employees or doctors. As of now, there are only bylaws that discuss working outdoors from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm from June 1st until end of August.

### Working 24 hours

**Question:** We are construction workers and we are behind schedule with the contractors, and therefore we are now working 24 hours throughout the day. I have afternoon shifts on some days, and it would be extremely hot outside. I do not think I can keep working like this.

**Attorney Fajer:** It is illegal for you to be working in the heat outdoors from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm from June 1st until end of August, and the company can be violated and ordered to pay a KD 200 fine per employee. You would need to put a complaint against your employer in this regard.

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Local



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attends the opening of Jahra Medical City yesterday. — Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives a memento during the opening ceremony.

# Amir patronizes, attends opening of Jahra Medical City

## Jahra Medical City completed in record time - official

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah patronized and attended the opening of Jahra Medical City yesterday. Upon arrival, His Highness the Amir was received by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Basel Humoud Al-Sabah, Amiri Diwan Administrative and Financial Chief Abdulaziz Saud Ishaq and CEO of Mohamed Abdelmohsen Al-Kharafi and Sons Company Loay Jassem Al-Kharafi. The ceremony was attended by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and senior state officials.

### Huge role

In his speech at the event, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah said the Amiri Diwan is playing a huge role in boosting Kuwait's developmental plan through executing vital cultural, social, entertainment and judicial projects. With the opening of Jahra Medical City, the Amiri Diwan has moved to cover the health sector, he added.

The city includes six 724,000-square meter buildings, expanding over 235,000 square meters of land space, said Sheikh Ali. These include four sections for patients rooms, the biggest gynecology and emergency and accidents centers in Kuwait, one of the biggest laboratories, educational facilities and conference rooms, 5,000 parking spaces, helicopters landing spot and emergency shelters, the minister noted. The project that includes 1,234 beds for patients was built within three years with a cost of KD 364 million.

In this occasion, Kuwait's Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Basel Humoud Al-Sabah delivered a speech in which he extended sincere thanks and deep gratitude to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for patronizing this ceremony. The New Jahra Hospital, which consists of four-towers with 14 floors surrounded by parking spaces for about 5,000 cars, was built on an area of 7,250,000 square meters, is considered a great addition to the health care process in the country, he said.

The hospital includes some 1,234 beds in the internal sections, for adults, women, children and newborns, as well as intensive care units, cardiac care, critical cases, radiation services, laboratories, blood bank and pharmacy, he added. The hospital also includes 131 outpatient clinics covering all specialties and providing health services, ambulance and emergency services through a modern and integrated system in accordance with the latest international specifications. The minister in his speech also expressed thanks to the working team of the Amiri Diwan, led by Abdulaziz Ishaq. In the coming period, and after the opening of the new hospitals, the clinical capacity will increase by approximately 7,000 beds, bringing the total clinical capacity of the Ministry's hospitals to approxi-



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is greeted upon his arrival to the venue.



The new Jahra Hospital.

mately 16,000 beds in different specialties and in line with international standards, he said.

### Record time

The Amiri Diwan has succeeded in completing the Jahra Medical City project within a short span of three years, its administrative and financial chief Abdulaziz Ishaq said. Speaking to the press, Ishaq reiterated that the buildings include the biggest gynecology and emergency centers in Kuwait, in addition to laboratories, educational facilities, parking lots and clinics. The city also provides a nursery where medical staff and employees can leave their children while they handle their duties, he said.

The main hospital includes 156 ICU rooms, and offers new services in the region such as hyperbaric medicine, with the first unit in Kuwait and the world's second largest one. The facility provides patient transport service (PTS) through the second biggest one worldwide.

The city includes a huge central laboratory with automated lines, 6,000 square meters; Kuwait's largest maternity and gynecology center; 45,000 square meters; biggest emergency department in the country, 18,000 square meters; 135 outpatient clinics, totaling 31,000 square meters; lecture and conference halls and other education facilities; four robotic pharmacies; and a helipad. In addition, there are 115 dentistry clinics in three floors, totaling 29,000 square meters. It also includes lecture and conference halls, the state of the art medical equipment, imported from the US, Europe and Canada. — KUNA



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is greeted upon his arrival.



Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Basel Humoud Al-Sabah delivers a speech.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah is welcomed upon his arrival.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah speaks with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.



Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah addresses the audience.



A room inside the hospital.



A look inside the hospital.



## Local

## Work together to write new chapter in relations

By Wang Di, the Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait

At the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah will pay a state visit to China in early July. During the visit, the leaders of the two countries will have an in-depth exchange of views on China-Kuwait relations, cooperation in various fields, international and regional issues of common interest, which will jointly direct the development of the two countries' relationship in the new era. The two sides will also sign a series of cooperation documents. In addition, His Highness the Amir will also attend the opening ceremony of the 8th ministerial meeting of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum and deliver a speech as the representative of Arab world.

This is the seventh visit to China by His Highness the Amir, who is also the first Arab leader that pay a state visit to China since Xi Jinping be re-elected as the president of China. Thus the visit will become a new milestone in the history of China-Kuwait relations and will inevitably enhance the strategic connotation of bilateral relations, raise the level of pragmatic bilateral cooperation and have a lasting and far-reaching impact on the development of bilateral relations.

Kuwait was the first Gulf Arab state to establish diplomatic relations with China. The two countries enjoy traditional friendship, have mutual respect and support and share broad common interests, which has constantly drawn closer their friendship. In recent years, the high-level China-Kuwait exchanges have become increasingly frequent. Zhang Gaoli, the then Member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Vice Premier, and Yang Jiechi, President Xi Jinping's Special Envoy, Member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC and Director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the CPC Central Committee, have successively visited Kuwait, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the then Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and other Kuwaiti leaders visited China. The results of China-Kuwait cooperation are increasingly fruitful in the framework of the joint-construction of the "Belt and Road". The cooperation on "Silk City and Five Islands" development project is steadily progressing, while both sides at the working level are keeping in close communication and coordination. The bilateral trade has grown steadily. China is currently Kuwait's largest import source and the second largest export market. The trade volume between the two countries in 2017 has reached \$12 billion with year-on-year growth of 28.5 percent, while the trade volume in the first quarter of 2018 has reached \$3.995 billion, with year-on-year growth of 54.83 percent. Kuwait is one of the most important crude oil suppliers for China. In 2017, China imported more than 18 million tons of crude oil from Kuwait, worth \$7.1 billion. China has implemented 80 contracting projects in Kuwait, covering oil field services, exploration, refining, housing, infrastructure, telecommunications and other fields, with a total contract value of \$14.9 billion. The two countries have also witnessed flourishing cultural exchanges, close contacts between the youth, media, culture, and art troupes. The upcoming Chinese Culture Center in Kuwait will further enhance the level of cultural exchanges and increase the civil understanding and friendship between the two countries. It is believed that His Highness the Amir's state visit to China will inject new impetus into the China-Kuwait relationship, and is of great significance in further pushing bilateral cooperation into a new era.

The 8th Ministerial Meeting of China-Arab States Cooperation Forum will be held on July 10th in Beijing, China, under the theme "jointly building the 'Belt and Road' and promoting peaceful development, working together to enhance the China-Arab strategic partnership in the new era". Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah or representatives, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States will attend the meeting. His Highness the Amir will attend the opening ceremony of the meeting and deliver a speech as the representative of Arab world.

Since its establishment in 2004, the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum has developed into a major platform for China and Arab countries to conduct collective dialogue and pragmatic cooperation. China-Arab strategic mutual trust continues to increase, China supports Arab countries in their own efforts to explore development paths and development models that suit their own national conditions, and support Arab people's just cause. Arab countries also give China valuable support on issues involving China's core interests and major concerns.

In June 2014, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed that China and Arab countries make joint efforts in the construction of the 'Belt and Road' at the opening ceremony of the 6th ministerial meeting of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, which has received positive responses from Arab countries. Driven by the 'Belt and Road' initiative and promoted by the forum's mechanisms, China-Arab economic and trade cooperation has been closer, cultural exchanges flourished, peace and security cooperation deepened. China is now the Arab world's second-largest trading partner, the bilateral trade volume between them was more than \$190 billion in 2017, with year-on-year increase of 11.9 percent. Seven Arab countries, including Kuwait, have become the founding members of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank which has approved 4 projects involving Arab countries with a total loan commitment of \$660 million. The China-Arab States Cooperation Forum has played an increasingly important role in promoting China-Arab strategic cooperation in the 21st century.

At present, the international situation continues to undergo profound and complex changes, the world economy is still in a period of profound adjustment, geopolitical factors have become more prominent, and local turmoil has cropped up. Both China and Arab countries are developing countries, both are at an important development stage and shoulder the common mission of realizing the nation's rejuvenation of and the country's prosperity and strength, which gives them a profound foundation and broad prospects for cooperation. The 8th ministerial meeting of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum is at exactly the right time, and of great significance to further consolidating the traditional friendship between China and Arab countries, advancing the construction of the 'Belt and Road', promoting the building of a new type of international relations and a community of common destiny, and strengthening the institutional building of the forum.

We believe that the convening of the 8th ministerial meeting of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum will continuously deepen China-Arab collective dialogue and pragmatic cooperation, and will also push China-Kuwait relations to a higher level. China-Kuwait relations are now standing at a new historical starting point, where the two sides will use the joint-construction of the 'Belt and Road' as a chance to continuously expand pragmatic cooperation in various fields, implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, promote the integration between China's 'Belt and Road' initiative and Kuwait's '2035 National Vision', and write a new chapter in the friendly cooperation relationship between China and Kuwait.



## Kuwait's Foreign Minister lauds camaraderie with Britain

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled meets British counterpart, committee chairman



LONDON: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson. — KUNA photos

LONDON: Kuwait's Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah has spoken highly of his country's ties with Britain, citing a collective desire for more progress in relations. After an encounter with British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson yesterday, the Kuwaiti foreign minister said that he was delighted to have been invited for talks over matters of mutual concern. "We have spoken extensively about a number of major issues," Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said, pinpointing the conflicts in Yemen, Syria and Libya, in addition to the war against terror. He also spoke of the recent Kuwaiti-UK Joint Steering Group meeting, which addressed issues running the gamut from defense and healthcare to education and investment.

On bilateral ties, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled highlighted the impenetrable bond that both nations share, saying that his meeting with Johnson was an opportunity to take relations to a new level. The meeting brought together a phalanx of officials from the Kuwaiti foreign ministry. The Kuwaiti top diplomat then left, ending the one-day visit. During Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled's meeting with Johnson, efforts to strengthen bilateral ties and exchange of views over regional and international development and challenges were discussed.

Earlier yesterday, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled met at Kuwait's embassy in London with chairman of the British Parliamentary Friendship Committee Leo Docherty, where they reviewed bilateral relations and

means to strengthen them. Docherty underlined the importance of relations with Kuwait, working together to build such relationship and take it to even higher levels. He added that meeting the foreign minister was a great chance to look through international issues, praising Kuwait's role in the region's stability and perusing a successful policy on regional and international levels.

The meetings were attended by Kuwaiti Ambassador to the UK Khaled Al-Duwaisan, Assistant Foreign Minister for Europe Affairs Ambassador Waleed Al-Khubaizi, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for the Foreign Minister's office affairs Ambassador Saleh Al-Loughani and ranking foreign ministry officials. — KUNA



Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with the chairman of the British Parliamentary Friendship Committee Leo Docherty.

## NBK launches first summer internship program 2018

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) launched the first in a series of four, the 2018 Summer Internship Program. A two week courses customized for high school and college students aged between 14 and 21 years.

The Summer Internship Program this year is made up of four different sessions, five-hour daily over two weeks each. The second and third sessions start on the 15th and 29th of July, while the fourth will take place on 12th of August. For the second year in a row, Loyac will be participating in providing the students training sessions. This year NBK Capital will be taking part in the sessions provided as well.

"NBK views the Summer Internship Program as an extension to its educational initiatives and as part of its corporate social responsibility," said Yaqoub Al-Baqer, NBK Public Relations Team Leader. "This annual program demonstrates NBK's long-standing social involvement as well as its national commitment towards providing young generations with the suitable oppor-



tunities to experience how the actual professional banking concerns and transactions are handled and processed."

"It has been 17 years since the establishment of the program," added Baqer. "At the core of NBK's corporate social responsibility is our commitment to developing the youth in Kuwait. NBK invests at every level in the training, professional development and the growth of the youth cadres, to contribute to trainees'

basic and professional competencies and abilities in fields of practical life."

The program features a mixture of theoretical and practical training dedicated to provide the interns with invaluable knowledge on a variety of subjects such as: teamwork, creative thinking, the means of self-expression and modern banking, in addition to helping them having a greater exposure to daily banking work procedures.



KUWAIT: The Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in an activity organized at the Avenues Mall recently marking the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Ministry of Interior organized the event.



KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) signed a cooperation agreement with Kuwait Finance House (KFH) yesterday, by which KFH agrees to offer job opportunities to high achieving PAAET graduates in the future.



Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A display at Nayef Palace depicting Kuwait's traditional old souq (market), along with some historic cars that were used in Kuwait in the past. —Photo by Ghazy Qafaf (KUNA)

Reading books grew in Kuwait within 5 years: Novelist

JEDDAH: Kuwaiti novelist Buthaina Al-Essa said that reading books had been attracting growing numbers of people in Kuwait in the past five years. Essa's remarks came in a statement late Sunday, while she presented her project 'takween' at Saudi's cultural program of Souq Okaz festival held in Jeddah. There are currently over 300 book clubs in Kuwait, as well as other cultural clubs and reading forums, she noted. There are also several cultural events often taking place in a single day in Kuwait, she added. Speaking on her project, Essa said that it started as an account on Instagram, turned into a blog, became a library and finally turned into a publishing and training center. —KUNA



JEDDAH: Kuwaiti novelist Buthaina Al-Essa presents her project 'takween' at Saudi's cultural program of Souq Okaz festival in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. —KUNA

Malta's president, Kuwaiti poet seek to promote peace culture

ROME: Maltese President Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca discussed with famed Kuwaiti poet Abdulaziz Al-Babtain ways to promote a culture of peace through the works of a Kuwaiti cultural foundation.

Babtain, who heads a Kuwaiti cultural institution that carries his name, met with Preca a day earlier at the president's palace in the Maltese capital Valletta, where he gave her an invitation to attend an international peace forum slated for next year and organized by the Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain Cultural Foundation.

Babtain discussed with Preca many cultural issues and activities the foundation is pursuing, which highlight universal human values among people, according to a statement. Preca stressed the importance of the ideas of peace, which have become urgent at this time, Babtain said.

On the international peace forum scheduled to take place in The Hague, Netherlands, Babtain stated that this great initiative praised by Preca, reflects the foundation's keenness to support the concept of peace among people. —KUNA



Maltese President Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca meets with Kuwaiti poet Abdulaziz Al-Babtain.

sports festival, which will be held in many youth centers under supervision of qualified trainers.

A football competition will be held also as part of the summer program in participation with teams representing all centers starting from July 2 at Ardiya center till July 12, Kribani added. Participation of youth centers in such activities will add a competitive atmosphere to games sponsored by PAY, he noted. PAY will organize also a competition for Holy Quran and Prophetic tradition starting from July 8, for three days, with participation of a number of young people, stressing the Authority's keenness to strengthen the religious and moral aspects of youth through these activities. —KUNA

Summer programs, activities organized for youths

KUWAIT: Youth centers administration at the Public Authority for Youth (PAY) announced yesterday that it will organize a number of summer activities and programs directed for young people from both genders and all age categories. Administration director Dr. Musaed Al-Kribani said in a statement that these activities will include swimming lessons and aqua

## The Arab Open University - Kuwait

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France seeks gangster after helicopter jailbreak

## Over 270,000 displaced by South Syria violence



BERLIN: German Chancellor and leader of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) Angela Merkel leaves the Bundestag (lower house of parliament) in Berlin. — AFP

# Merkel's coalition at risk over migrant deal

## Seehofer insists on turning away asylum seekers

BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel's ruling coalition risked breaking apart yesterday, as her hardline conservative Bavarian allies pushed a showdown over migrant policy after she was unmoved by her interior minister's threat to resign. Horst Seehofer insisted on his plan to turn away asylum seekers at the border with Austria registered in other European countries, as he rejected EU deals reached last week by Merkel as inadequate. Seehofer said after talks with his party stretching into the small hours that he would step down as minister and CDU party head rather than acquiesce in the increasingly bitter standoff.

But after a night of high drama, Seehofer later said he would hold last-ditch talks with Merkel's CDU "in hopes of reaching an understanding". The meeting is set to begin at 1500 GMT. The future of Merkel's governing coalition between the CDU-CSU alliance and the centre-left Social Democratic Party (SPD) appeared to hang by a thread, as media slammed what they called a

reckless game of chicken. "It is fair to ask: has the CSU lost its mind?" Der Spiegel reporter Rene Pfister said.

"In the end, the government could fall and an old, proud party could descend into ridiculousness—and all of that to solve a problem that in reality hardly is one," given the dramatically lower numbers of asylum seekers arriving in Germany this year. Foreign Minister Heiko Maas of the SPD said the crisis had already damaged the country's standing as a bulwark of European stability. "I think the way this debate is being conducted is hurting Germany's image and above all that of the German government," he said.

### Ready for compromises

If Merkel holds firm and Seehofer does quit, the CSU could offer a replacement interior minister if it aims to remain tied to her party. Alternatively, it could break up the two parties' 70-year partnership, depriving Merkel of her majority in parliament and pitching Germany

into uncharted political waters. To survive politically, Merkel could attempt a minority government, seek a new coalition partner in the ecologist Greens or pro-business Free Democrats, or orchestrate a no-confidence vote in parliament that could trigger new elections.

As he entered a CDU crisis meeting yesterday, deputy leader Armin Laschet insisted that the sister parties "want to hold onto" their alliance. "It is a precious thing for our party system and that is why I'm confident we will succeed," he said. CDU general secretary Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer said earlier that party leaders were "united" behind Merkel and "effective, humane solutions together with our European partners". Meanwhile, Bavarian state premier Markus Soeder appeared to indicate a willingness to cut Seehofer loose for the sake of the coalition. "We are ready for compromises—you have to be in politics," he told reporters. "None of us want to call the government into question."

Merkel, who has been in office since 2005,

warned last week the battle over migration could decide the EU's future. European leaders agreed new measures Friday to reduce immigration and so-called "secondary migration" of asylum-seekers between countries. Merkel has proposed that migrants arriving in Germany who first registered in another EU country should be placed in special "admission centers" under restrictive conditions. A document she sent to the CSU and SPD also outlined deals with 16 other countries to return already-registered migrants if they reached Germany. However, Seehofer rejected Merkel's assessment that the EU-wide measures would "have the same effect" as his demand to turn away migrants registered elsewhere in the bloc. The "Union" of CDU and CSU have blended the southern state's beer-and-leather-infused conservatism with more moderate politics, forming a centre-right force that dominated Germany for decades. The CSU's conflict with Merkel comes as it faces an October election in Bavaria in which it fears losing its cherished absolute majority.

Merkel's 2015 decision to keep borders open to migrants and refugees arriving from the Middle East via the Balkans, Hungary and Austria scrambled the traditional alliances of German politics. Since then, more than one million people have arrived, while Merkel's governments have repeatedly tightened immigration and asylum laws. Nevertheless, the anti-refugee, anti-Islam Alternative for Germany (AfD) entered parliament for the first time last year, leading to months of paralysis while Merkel struggled to put together a workable coalition.

Opinion polls point to the AfD making a similar entrance to Bavaria's regional legislature in October—giving it seats in all of Germany's 16 states. Weeks of "Merkel-bashing", however, have failed to help the CSU. A Forsa poll yesterday showed that Seehofer had even failed to rally a majority of CSU voters behind him, with 49 percent backing the chancellor in the dispute against 48 percent for the interior minister and party leader. — AFP

## Five more beaten to death in India

NEW DELHI: Indian police said yesterday they have arrested 23 people after five men were bludgeoned to death by a crazed mob in yet another horrific lynching to rock the country. Indian media estimate more than 25 people have been killed in recent months in similar cases sparked by false rumors spread on smartphones of child kidnapping or allegations of thievery or sexual harassment. The latest gruesome incident saw eight men set upon in Dhule district, 330 kilometers from India's financial capital Mumbai in the western state of Maharashtra on Sunday.

Police said the attack began after locals spotted one of the eight talking to a child after they disembarked from a bus near the village of Rainpada. "They were confronted by the locals who had gathered at the Sunday market after suspecting them to be child kidnappers," Dhule police chief M Ramkumar said. Three of them escaped but five were dragged to the village council office and battered to death with sticks and blunt objects.

Police said they identified the alleged attackers from a video shot during the assault. Another 17 suspects were still on the run, they added. Those killed were from Solapur district of the same state but some 450 kilometers



DHULE, India: This photo shows Indian women whose relatives were murdered in a lynching incident being led away from the crime scene area by villagers in Dhule district, some 330 kilometers from Mumbai. — AFP

away. Separately police rescued four people including a couple and their two-year-old child from a 1,000-strong horde in Malegaon, 50 kilometers southwest of the first incident. They took refuge inside a house and police were able to arrive just in time, arresting five people, local police officer Vittal Sase said.

The current spate of lynchings started in May last year in eastern Jharkhand state after rumors on WhatsApp about child kidnappers

led to the lynching of six men. The rumors have since resurfaced, with attacks reported in at least 11 states. The attacks—usually targeting outsiders—have left authorities scrambling to mount an effective response, with awareness campaigns and public alerts having a limited effect. Last week a "rumor buster" official tasked with alerting the public to such hoaxes was lynched by a mob in the remote northeastern state of Tripura.—AFP

## FBI foils July 4 attack by Qaeda sympathizer

WASHINGTON: The FBI announced yesterday the arrest of a professed supporter of Al-Qaeda who was planning to target members of the US military and their families with a bomb attack on a July 4 parade in Cleveland, Ohio. The Federal Bureau of Investigation said Demetrius Nathaniel Pitts, who also used the name Abdur Raheem Rafeeq, told an undercover agent that he wanted to load up a vehicle with explosives and blow it up during the US national day celebrations on Wednesday.

"His desire: to kill military personnel and their families," said FBI special agent Steve Anthony. FBI and Justice Department officials said Pitts, a US native with "an extensive criminal history" was arrested Sunday after discussing how to carry out the attack with the undercover agent. They had been watching him for months after he made statements in support of Al-Qaeda and expressed "violent intentions" against groups including the US armed forces, Anthony said. The posts called for Muslims to train in hand-to-hand

combat and in the use of arms and explosives. Anthony said. "His Facebook posts, quite frankly, were disturbing," he said. Pitts was charged with attempting to provide support to a designated foreign terrorist organization, which can bring up to 20 years in prison. It was the fourth arrest in the United States this year of someone accused of plotting for or in support of a jihadist group, according to Seamus Hughes of the George Washington University Program on Extremism, which tracks such cases.

Last December a Bangladeshi immigrant who pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group (IS) was arrested after he set off a pipe bomb in New York, mainly injuring himself. On October 31, an immigrant from Uzbekistan also expressing support for IS, plowed a truck through a crowd on a busy pedestrian and cyclist path, killing eight.

The FBI said Pitts was focused on the possible locations of an attack and that it was not clear whether he had the ability himself to carry it out, including whether he could acquire or build bombs. Officials also said it was uncertain if Pitts had a network inside or outside the United States. But he spoke of bomb-laden, remote-controlled cars piloted into the crowd at the annual parade, as well as a possible "large scale" attack on the prominent Roman Catholic St. John's Cathedral in the city. — AFP



## International

## Over 270,000 displaced by South Syria violence

## Strategic area protected by ceasefire

**DARAA, Syria:** More than a quarter of a million people have fled a Russian-backed government onslaught on southern Syria, the United Nations said yesterday, in the latest civilian exodus in the seven-year war. For nearly two weeks, regime forces and their Russian allies have battered rebel-held parts of southern Syria with air strikes, rocket fire, and barrel bombs. The strategic area was ostensibly protected by a ceasefire agreed by the US, Jordan, and Russia just under a year ago, but President Bashar al-Assad is dead-set on retaking it.

The violence has pushed waves of terrified civilians out of their homes at a shocking rate, the UN's refugee agency (UNHCR) said yesterday. "We were expecting the number of displaced in southern Syria to reach 200,000, but it has already exceeded 270,000 people in record time," said UNHCR spokesman in Amman Mohammad Hawari. "We're facing a real humanitarian crisis in southern Syria," he said. According to the UN's humanitarian coordination office, 70,000 of those displaced have sought shelter along the border with Jordan.

They arrived in dilapidated cars piled high with mattresses and suitcases to join thousands already camped out in arid plains near the frontier. Jordan has kept its border firmly sealed, insisting it cannot handle any more than the 650,000 Syrians already registered as refugees there, and has instead sent aid into Syria. Thousands of other displaced have headed west towards the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, although Israel, too, has pledged to keep its border closed.

## Never negotiate

Those key frontiers are what make Syria's south a prized area for Assad, in addition to its accessibility to Damascus. After securing the capital earlier this year, he turned to the south, bombing rebel towns heavily and making significant ground

gains. But the government simultaneously opened negotiations with rebel factions through its ally Russia, offering a halt to bombardment if rebels hand over territory.

More than a dozen towns and villages have agreed to a regime takeover in recent days, doubling the area under government control in the main province of Daraa to 60 percent since operations began on June 19. But other opposition bodies have rejected the deals. In a statement yesterday, the civilian half of the opposition's delegation said they had withdrawn from talks. "We did not attend negotiations today. We were not party to any agreement and we never will be," said the statement, accusing those who agreed to such handovers of trying to selfishly secure personal interests.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said yesterday there were "divisions among rebel groups" over whether to agree to the terms proposed by Russia. Under the deal offered, rebels would hand over medium and heavy weapons and Syrian state institutions would resume work. Displaced families could return with guarantees by Russian military police. Men who defected from Syria's armed forces or who did not complete their compulsory service could regularize their status with the regime within six months. And regime forces would take over the Nasib border crossing with Jordan as well as deploy along the frontier with the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

## Acts of revenge

But many residents were worried a deal struck with Russia would only be violated later on, said Daraa activist Omar Hariri. Since the terms did not include mass population transfers to other opposition-held zones like in previous deals, residents feared the regime would abduct or arrest its opponents in "acts of revenge," he said.

**"The noose is getting tighter and tighter"**

## Turkey marks 25 years since mob attack on Alevi intellectuals

**ISTANBUL:** Turkish activists and opposition yesterday marked a quarter of a century since the massacre of 33 intellectuals largely from the Alevi minority in a mob attack on a hotel, one of the most shocking crimes in Turkey's modern history. The writers and artists, along with two hotel staff, were killed on July 2, 1993 when an angry mob set fire to the Madimak hotel in the Anatolian city of Sivas, where they had been holding a conference as part of an Alevi cultural festival.

The Islamist protesters had been angered by the presence of the writer Aziz Nesin who had questioned the authenticity of the Koran and also sought to translate Salman Rushdie's controversial novel "The Satanic Verses". Nesin survived the massacre but died of a heart attack in 1995. Two protesters were also killed, bringing the total death toll to 37.

The massacre has become a major cause for Turkey's community of Alevi who adhere to what is usually seen as an offshoot of Shia Islam and make up the biggest religious minority in the mainly Sunni country. After a long and convoluted legal process, 33 suspects were eventually given life sentences although activists contend that many of those responsible escaped justice.

## Look with hope

Turkish opposition MPs joined thousands marching through the centre of Sivas yesterday, watched by a heavy contingent of 2,600 police, reports said. At an official ceremony, the government-appointed governor of the Sivas region Davut Gul laid flowers by a memorial at the former hotel, now a cultural centre. He said the grief was shared by Sivas and all of Turkey. "It is not possible to change the past but it is in our power to build a peaceful and happy future with unity and togetherness," said Muharrem Ince of the opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), who last month ran against President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in elections.

"From taking lessons from the suffering we experienced, we will all rebuild Turkey," he wrote Twitter, where the

level permitted in the deal—"within days" if the deal falls apart.

Rouhani's trip will be of "prime importance" as it could "provide a more precise picture of cooperation between Iran and Europe," Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Bahram Ghassesemi said in comments carried by the semi-official ISNA news agency on Saturday. Austria on Sunday took over the European Union's six-month rotating presidency, while Switzerland represents US interests in Iran owing to the absence of diplomatic relations between Washington and Tehran. Vienna is also the home of the United Nations' nuclear watchdog, the IAEA, which monitors Iran's compliance with the accord.

## 'Clear words'

The nuclear deal has been the cornerstone of Rouhani's policy of greater openness with the West, and the US move has seen him severely criticized by ultra-conservatives at home. Even before Trump's decision, Iranians had long complained that the hoped-for uptick in foreign investment after the deal had not materialized.

Washington's decision paves the way for new US sanctions against Tehran, which will encompass businesses from third countries that continue to operate in Iran. A number of foreign firms have already announced they would cease their Iranian activities in light of the looming imposition of sanctions. Rouhani is scheduled to attend a meeting on Tuesday with the Swiss chamber of commerce on innovation in the health sector. The two governments are also due to sign agreements on economic cooperation.

There will be a similar focus on finances in Vienna, where the Iranian president is expected to sign memorandums on economic cooperation according to Austrian media. Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said he will speak plainly with Rouhani about Iran's



**SIVAS:** Turkish activists and opposition members gather with pictures of victims killed in Madimak Otel 25 years ago yesterday in Sivas. —AFP

hashtag #unutMADIMAKlimda ("I didn't forget Madimak, it's on my mind") was trending. The main association for Turkey's Alevi, the Cem Vakfi, said in a statement that "we will not and must not forget Madimak to protect peace and brotherhood in society and to look to tomorrow with hope". The opposition

Cumhuriyet daily said yesterday several defense lawyers for the suspects in the case had gone on to key roles in the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP). The mayor of Sivas at the time, Temel Karamollaoglu, is now the leader of the Islam-based Saadet (Felicity) Party. —AFP



**SWITZERLAND:** Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, left, stands with Swiss Federal President Alain Berset as they listen to the playing of national anthems after disembarking from an aircraft after his arrival at an airport in Kloten - Zurich Canton - yesterday, during an official visit to Switzerland. —AFP

role in the Middle East, as Tehran continues to deny accusations it is destabilizing the region. Kurz told the Austrian news agency APA he will also find "clear words" to discuss the human rights situation in Iran. Last month the United States urged fellow Security Council members to punish Iran for "malign behavior" in the Middle East.

## Failure 'very dangerous'

The European tour is part of a broader diplomatic effort by Tehran to rally support in the wake of Trump's May 8 withdrawal from what is formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Last month Rouhani visited

China, while Zarif embarked on a tour of Britain, France, Germany, China and Russia. The foreign minister on June 24 warned that failing to save the nuclear deal would be "very dangerous" for Tehran. But the Iranian government has said it will not continue to abide by the agreement if doing so goes against its economic interests. Iran's supreme leader Ali Khamenei has demanded that Europe provide a number of economic guarantees in order for Tehran to continue its commitments. Increasing the pressure on Iran's European partners, he ordered preparations be made to quickly restart nuclear activities in case talks collapse. —AFP



**NASIB, Syria:** A displaced Syrian child from the Daraa province fleeing shelling by pro-government forces waits in a makeshift camp to cross the Jordanian border, near the town of Nasib, southern Syria. —AFP

"The situation is tough, and the rebels and all opposition entities in Daraa are facing very difficult choices. The noose is getting tighter and tighter," Hariri said. Eight towns fell to regime control on Saturday and another five on Sunday, including the key town of Bosra al-Sham. It was held by Shabab al-Sunna, one of the south's most powerful factions, and its willingness to agree to a deal stirred fierce criticism of its leader Ahmad Al-Awdeh.

Rebel supporters repeatedly referred to him as a "traitor" in posts on Twitter yesterday. An opposition source from the south with close knowledge of the talks said Russia's piecemeal approach to the deals had hamstrung the negotiating committee. "Its position was weakened by localised, individual deals, Ahmad Al-Awdeh's individual agreement with the Russians over Bosra al-Sham, and Russia's successful military advance on the ground," the source told AFP. —AFP

## Trial delayed for Frenchman accused of Gaza gun-running

**BEERSHEBA, Israel:** A French employee of his country's Jerusalem consulate accused of smuggling dozens of guns from Gaza to the West Bank in an official car appeared in an Israeli court yesterday, but had his trial delayed. Romain Franck, a 24-year-old French citizen, is accused along with several Palestinian suspects of belonging to a gun-running network. He appeared in court in the southern city of Beersheba in a grey t-shirt. His parents and a French embassy representative also attended the hearing.

After Franck's lawyer requested more time to prepare his case and asked for an official translation into French of the charge sheet, the judge adjourned the trial to September 16. Palestinian suspect Muwafaq Al-Ajlouni appeared alongside Franck. A translator was present to interpret from Hebrew to Arabic for him, but a French translator was absent from the court. Franck allegedly took advantage of reduced security checks for consular vehicles to transport the weapons out of the Gaza Strip to the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

He is accused of receiving the guns from a Palestinian in Gaza who worked at the French cultural centre in the strip. Israeli officials have stressed he acted on his own without the consulate's knowledge, adding that diplomatic relations with France were not affected. According to the Shin Bet domestic security agency, he was motivated by money and paid a total of around \$5,500. It said Franck, who was arrested on February 15, had transferred 70 pistols and two automatic rifles in five trips. A total of nine suspects have been arrested. —AFP

## France aids Egypt repression through arms sales

**PARIS:** France has "participated in the bloody Egyptian repression" for the past five years by delivering weapons and surveillance systems to President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's government, rights groups charged in a report published yesterday. The study was released as Egypt's Defense Minister Mohamed Zaki was due to undertake an official visit to Paris yesterday and comes after France's Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian met Sisi in Cairo last week.

Zaki would "meet senior military officials in France to discuss ways to strengthen joint co-operation", Egyptian army spokesman Tamer al-Refai said yesterday. Commissioned by four French and Egyptian human rights groups, the report found French arms sales to Egypt had leapt from 39.6 million to 1.3 billion euros between 2010 and 2016. In addition, "by supplying Egyptian security services and law enforcement agencies with powerful digital tools, they have helped establish an Orwellian surveillance and control architecture that is being used to eradicate all forms of dissent and citizen action," the groups said.

They charged that French companies were also complicit in what they called a "relentless crackdown" since Sisi overthrew Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in 2013. The report cited companies selling technology used for mass data interception and crowd control, as well as a surveillance system under which tens of thousands of opponents and activists had been arrested. —AFP



## International

# France seeks gangster after helicopter jailbreak

## Govt launches manhunt involving some 2,900 officers

**PARIS:** The French government admitted possible security failings yesterday after a notorious gangster used a helicopter to stage the second brazen jailbreak of a crime career inspired by films such as "Scarface". The latest dramatic escape by Redoine Faïd, who had multiple convictions for armed robbery, has left French authorities red-faced, and a manhunt involving some 2,900 officers has been launched to track him down.

The 46-year-old movie buff was sprung from a prison near Paris by two accomplices who used smoke bombs and angle grinders to break through doors and whisk him to a waiting helicopter. Justice Minister Nicole Belloubet told Europe 1 radio that she had sent a team of inspectors to the prison "to see whether the security measures were defective so that we can rectify them". She suggested that Faïd had been left in the same prison for too long, giving the serial fugitive, who had professed to have reformed, time to plot his escape.

"We must be careful not to leave the same people in the same places for too long when we're dealing with this type of individual," she said.

The two accomplices hijacked the helicopter on Sunday by posing as aspiring students at a flight school, ordering a terrified instructor to pick up a third accomplice before continuing on to the prison. On arrival at the high-security facility in Reau the pilot headed toward the courtyard—the only part of the prison not fitted with anti-helicopter nets.

Two black-clad men armed with assault rifles then alighted and set off smoke bombs before breaking into the visiting room, where Faïd was talking to his brother. The wardens, who were unarmed, fled and raised the alarm. But within 10 minutes Faïd was gone, with his fel-

low inmates reportedly cheering as the helicopter lifted off. Belloubet said Sunday that the gang probably used drones to stake out the seven-year-old prison, which was built on a site surrounded by fields to give a clear view in every direction—specifically to prevent breakouts.

The helicopter was found later in a northeastern suburb of Paris about 60 kilometers from the prison, along with the pilot, who had been beaten and was taken to hospital in a state of shock. The men then continued their getaway by car, changing vehicles along the way from a hatchback found burnt out in a shopping mall carpark to a white van. Investigators are looking into whether Faïd, who had been at the Reau prison since November, had inside help. Journalist Jerome Pierrat,

who co-wrote a book with Faïd about his life, told the Parisien newspaper he was a "charmer" who was popular with his guards and had even lunched with prison officials after a previous stint behind bars.

### Cult following

Born into a family of 11 brothers in the gritty Paris suburb of Creil, Faïd dabbled in crime from an early age, stealing a supermarket trolley filled with sweets at the age of six. By the age of 12 he had found what he called his "vocation": he would become a robber. After starting out as a small-time drug trafficker the smooth talker, who described his rise from petty criminal to crime boss in two books, specialized in cash-in-transit heists. "He liked adrenalin and wanted to be like the big guys," a police officer said.

Along the way, police sources said, Faïd picked up some tricks from former soldiers in Israel, where he hid out from the law on one occasion and said he dreamed of living. Faïd also claimed to have learned from



**PARIS:** This file photo shows guards walking in the Centre Penitentiaire Sud-Francilien prison in Reau, outside Paris.—AFP

Hollywood heist movies, writing that he had watched the 1995 film "Heat" starring Al Pacino and Robert De Niro dozens of times to make notes. His latest escape comes five years after he blasted his way out of a prison in northern France, using dynamite to blow up five doors.

Faïd briefly took four guards hostage with a pistol before escaping in a getaway car but was recaptured six weeks later at a hotel on the outskirts of Paris. In

2017 he was sentenced to 10 years over the escape, which earned him a cult following in the tough suburbs where he grew up, and 18 years for an attack on an armored car in 2011. But his stiffest sentence came this year, when he was sentenced to 25 years over a botched 2010 robbery in which policewoman Aurelie Fouquet was killed. Arguing he was "not a cop killer", Faïd had complained that the sentence was unfair.—AFP

“ He wanted to be like the big guys ”

## Belgium charges two for attack plot on Iran opposition



**PARIS:** People attend the 'Free Iran 2018 - the Alternative' event on June 30, 2018 in Villepinte, north of Paris during the Iranian resistance national council (CNRI) annual meeting.—AFP

**BRUSSELS:** Belgium yesterday charged a husband and wife over a plot to bomb a weekend rally by an exiled Iranian opposition group in France where close Donald Trump ally Rudy Giuliani was in attendance. Amir S., 38, and Nasim N., 33, both Belgian nationals, "are suspected of having attempted to carry out a bomb attack" on Saturday in the Paris suburb of Villepinte, during a conference organized by the People's Mojahedin of Iran, a statement from the Belgian federal prosecutor said.

The couple, described by prosecutors as being "of Iranian origin", were carrying 500 grams (about a pound) of the volatile explosive TATP along with a detonation device when an elite police squad stopped them in a residential district of Brussels. Belgian prosecutors said an alleged accomplice was under arrest in France, while two others were released after questioning by French police. The statement said that an Iranian diplomat at the Austrian embassy in Vienna, a contact of the couple, was also arrested in Germany.

Police carried out five raids across Belgium on Saturday linked to the affair, authorities said, though they refused to detail any results of the operation. The developments came on the day Iranian President Hassan Rouhani arrived to Switzerland for a trip Tehran said was of "crucial importance" for cooperation between the Islamic Republic and Europe after the US withdrawal from the Iranian nuclear agreement. President Rouhani is also due to visit Austria, the country holding the six-monthly presidency of the EU.

At the rally, Trump allies Newt Gingrich and Rudy Giuliani urged regime change in Iran, saying the prospect was closer than ever after the Islamic Republic was hit by a wave of strikes and protests. Former House speaker Gingrich and ex-New York mayor and lawyer Giuliani also told opposition supporters that Trump needed to turn up the heat on European countries still seeking to do business with Tehran despite reimposed US sanctions. The Belgian statement said about 25,000 people attended the rally in France.

The People's Mojahedin (MEK), formed in the 1960s to overthrow the shah of Iran, fought the rise of the mullahs in Tehran following the 1979 Islamic revolution. It earned itself a listing as a "terrorist organization" by the US State Department in 1997 and was only removed from terror watchlists by the European Union in 2008 and Washington in 2012. Belgium has been on high alert since the smashing of a terror cell in the town of Verviers in January 2015 that was planning an attack on police.—AFP

## AU summit overshadowed by 'security failings' in Sahel after attacks

**NOUAKCHOTT:** African leaders gathered in the Mauritanian capital yesterday for the final day of a summit overshadowed by security issues after jihadist rebels hammered two fragile Sahel states in successive attacks. French President Emmanuel Macron, making an exceptional appearance at an African Union (AU) summit, was expected to discuss hurdles facing a five-nation French-backed anti-terror unit, the "G5 Sahel" force.

As the summit focusing on free trade, funding and corruption opened on Sunday, a bomb aimed at French soldiers in Mali's troubled north killed four civilians and injured over 20 people, including four soldiers. In Niger, Boko Haram insurgents targeted a military position in the southeast of the country, killing 10 soldiers—a reminder of the peril that Nigeria's notorious jihadists pose to neighboring countries.

On Friday, a suicide bombing hit the Mali headquarters of the G5 Sahel, fuelling concerns about its ability to tackle jihadist groups roaming the region. It was the first attack on the headquarters of the five-nation force, which was set up with French backing in 2017 to fight jihadist insurgents and criminal groups in the vast and unstable Sahel region. In total, four separate

attacks killed 15 people in Mali in three days, as the vulnerable West African nation prepares to go to the polls on July 29. The G5 Sahel leaders—from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger met Sunday to prepare for talks with Macron.

"These attacks should strengthen our determination to fight terrorism to ensure our populations' security," Niger's president, Mahamadou Issoufou, told AFP on the sidelines of the summit. Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, hosting the gathering of more than 40 heads of state and government, said Friday's bombing "hit (at) the heart" of security in the Sahel and lashed out at a lack of international help. The Al-Qaeda-linked Support Group for Islam and Muslims, the main jihadist alliance in the Sahel, claimed the attack in a telephone call to the Mauritanian news agency Al-Akhbar.

### UN doors closed

"It was a message sent by the terrorists at this precise moment when we are getting organized to stabilize and secure our region," Aziz told France 24 television. "If the headquarters was attacked, it is because there are so many failings we need to fix if we want to bring stability to the Sahel." The G5 aims to have a total of 5,000 troops from the five nations but has faced funding problems and lack of equipment. It is intended to operate alongside France's 4,000 troops in the troubled "tri-border" area where Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso meet, and alongside the UN's 12,000-strong MINUSMA peacekeeping operation in Mali. Aziz said the G5 was a "sovereign initiative" of Sahel states that face not only

## Malta detains charity ship as death toll rises

**VALLETTA:** For the second time in a week, Malta yesterday detained a humanitarian vessel that normally rescues boat migrants off the coast of Libya, where two shipwrecks have claimed the lives of as many as 200 people in recent days. The Sea Watch 3 vessel, operated by a German charity, requested to leave port after undergoing maintenance and the port authority refused, a Sea Watch spokeswoman said. The port authorities said only that the vessel's status was under review.

Another humanitarian ship, Lifeline, was detained last week after Malta for the first time in years opened its port to a large number of migrants, some 230, when Italy refused it safe haven. A new Italian government including the League, a far right anti-immigrant party, took power last month and has shut Italian ports to charity ships carrying migrants.

Lifeline's captain attended a court hearing in Malta yesterday in which the prosecutor said the ship was not properly registered. The groups operating both ships deny any wrongdoing. "They are creating the conditions to make it impossible for non-governmental groups to operate at sea," Sea Watch's Giorgia Linardi said. "Against this background, people are dying and no one seems to care."

In two separate incidents, as many as 204

migrants have drowned since Friday after being packed into unsafe vessels by smugglers, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has said. The incidents raised the toll for this year above 1,000 people lost at sea. The humanitarian groups say they are being wrongly targeted by governments—Malta and Italy—that are seeking to stem migrant arrivals to Europe, and they say the policy spearheaded by the new Italian government is causing deaths.

Italy's far-right interior minister says the rescue ships are colluding with Libyan smugglers, a charge never proven in court and denied by the rescuers. Malta said last week it would no longer provide logistical support to the vessels under the suspicion they were acting illegally.

The flow of migrants into Europe has abated since a 2015 peak, with the number attempting the dangerous sea crossing from North Africa to Italy falling to tens of thousands from hundreds of thousands. The other main route, from Turkey to Greece, used by more than a million people in 2015, was shut two years ago.

But the journey by land through the Sahara and then across the Mediterranean remains world's deadliest migration route, and as polarising as ever in European politics. In addition to Italy, anti-immigrant parties are now firmly entrenched in the ex-Communist states of central Europe and won seats in the German parliament for the first time since the 1940s last year. In Germany, the issue threatens to bring down Angela Merkel's ruling coalition.

### Spain

A humanitarian boat run by Spanish



**MALI:** Smoke and flames ascend from an army armored vehicle in Gao, northwestern Mali, following an explosion.—AFP

security problems but drought, poverty, unemployment and trafficking.

### Free trade

The string of attacks in the vast Sahel region hijacked an AU summit meant to focus on free trade, funding, corruption as well as the continent's other security crises. Rwandan President Paul Kagame, who holds the presidency of the 55-nation AU, will make a call to promote free trade. Currently, African countries only conduct about 16 percent of their business with each other, the smallest amount of intra-regional trade compared to Latin America,

Asia, North America and Europe.

In March, 44 nations signed a pact in March to create the African Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) — billed as the world's largest in terms of participating countries. The fruit of two years of negotiations, the CFTA is one of the AU's flagship projects for greater African integration. If all 55 AU members eventually sign up, it will create a bloc with a cumulative GDP of \$2.5 trillion (two trillion euros) and cover a market of 1.2 billion people. But two of the continent's economic heavyweights, South Africa and Nigeria are notable CFTA absentees.—AFP



**AT SEA:** Migrants look at the sea from the deck of the boat of the NGO Proactiva Open Arms.—AFP

charity Proactiva Open Arms is heading for Spain carrying 59 migrants after Italy and Malta refused it a port, the third such case in less than a month. During a hearing on Monday, Malta police inspector Mario Haber questioned whether the Lifeline ship, which says it operates under a Dutch flag, should have been registered as a yacht instead of a commercial vessel.

"The yacht is not registered with the Netherlands. It is registered with a Dutch yacht club but it isn't the flag state," Haber

said. The court appointed "experts" to board the ship and inspect its contents, including its computers, with the prosecution saying it could not rule out charges.

Magistrate Joe Mifsud set bail at 10,000 euros for Lifeline captain Claus-Peter Reisch, adding that he must stay on his ship and cannot leave the small island state. Another hearing will be held on Thursday.

"What kind of world are we living in when sea rescuers are criminalised?" Reisch said in a statement before the hearing.—Agencies



International

# Leftist 'AMLO' sweeps to Mexican presidency

## Lopez Obrador makes history, wins more than half the vote

**MEXICO CITY:** Anti-establishment leftist Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador swept to victory in Mexico's presidential election Sunday, in a political sea change driven by voters' anger over endemic corruption and brutal violence. The sharp-tongued, silver-haired politician known as "AMLO" won 53 percent of the vote, according to an official projection of the results. It is the first time in Mexico's modern history a candidate has won more than half the vote in a competitive election, and a resounding rejection of the two parties that have governed the country for nearly a century.

"This is a historic day, and it will be a memorable night," Lopez Obrador said in a victory speech in Mexico City's Alameda park, as thousands of ecstatic supporters flooded the capital's central district, chanting "Yes we did!" and partying to mariachi music. Lopez Obrador, 64, sought to downplay fears of radicalism, after critics branded him a "tropical Messiah" who would install Venezuela-style policies that could wreck Latin America's second-largest economy.

"Our new national project seeks an authentic democracy. We are not looking to construct a dictatorship, either open or hidden," he told cheering supporters, promising to safeguard freedoms, respect the private sector and work to reconcile a divided nation. He also vowed to pursue a relationship of "friendship and cooperation" with the United States, Mexico's key trading partner—a change in tone from some comments during the campaign, when he said he would put US President Donald Trump "in his place."

Trump, whose anti-trade, anti-immigration policies have infuriated Mexico, appeared ready to start off on the right foot. "I look very much forward to working with him," he tweeted. "There is much to be done that will benefit both the

United States and Mexico!" Canada's Justin Trudeau echoed the congratulations while emphasizing his country's work with Mexico to renegotiate the NAFTA trade pact—an effort that has stalled over attempts to satisfy Trump's demands. "Canada and Mexico are close friends and longtime partners. We share common goals, strong people to people ties, and a mutually beneficial trading relationship that is the envy of the world," Trudeau said.

### Congressional majority in reach

Lopez Obrador successfully tapped voters' anger over a seemingly never-ending series of corruption scandals and horrific violence that left a record 25,000 murders last year—an orgy of bloodshed fueled by the country's powerful drug cartels. His coalition-led by the Morena party he launched in 2014 — appeared to be on track for a strong showing in state and congressional races as well, winning six of the day's nine governor's races, according to exit polls. That included Mexico City, where a woman was elected for the first time ever, the scientist and environmentalist Claudia Sheinbaum.

Two other states were too close to call, according to polling firm Mitofsky. Lopez Obrador's coalition will have a majority in the lower house, and possibly in the Senate as well, according to the firm's exit polls—a coup for a party contesting its first national elections. Runner-up Ricardo Anaya of the conservative National Action Party (PAN) and third-place candidate Jose Antonio Meade of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) both congratulated Lopez Obrador and wished him success. It is a major shift in Mexican politics: the PRI and PAN have governed for nearly a century, and Lopez Obrador will be the country's first leftist president in recent history when he takes office on December 1.

### Political sea change driven by voters' anger



from militant Islamist groups, prompting thousands to move to India, their spiritual homeland. Following the Jalalabad attack, some Sikhs have sought shelter at the city's Indian consulate.

"We are left with two choices: to leave for India or to convert to Islam," said Baldev Singh, who owns a book-and-textile shop in Jalalabad. India has issued long-term visas to members of Afghanistan's Sikh and Hindu communities. "They can all live in India without any limitation," said Vinay Kumar, India's ambassador to Afghanistan. "The final call has to be taken by them. We are here to assist them." Kumar, who was in the Indian capital, New Delhi, to discuss the security situation, said the government was helping organise the last rites of Sikhs killed in the blast.

### 'We are not leaving'

But other Sikhs, with land or businesses and no ties to India, say they do not plan to leave, as Afghanistan remains their country. India has offered to take the dead bodies, but at least nine were cremated according to Sikh rites in Jalalabad. "We are not cowards," said Sandeep Singh, a Sikh shopkeeper in Kabul. "Afghanistan is our country and we are not leaving anywhere."

The attack targeted "Afghanistan's multicultural fabric", Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said yesterday. He is expected to hold a meeting to discuss the security threats to Indian and religious minorities. India, a long-standing ally of Afghanistan, has invested in several large development projects, but heightened security risks have prompted its companies to cut back operations. The two countries' officials have not been able to free seven Indian engineers kidnapped in May in the northern province of Baghlan.—Reuters



MEXICO CITY: Newly elected Mexico's President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, running for "Juntos haremos historia" party, cheers his supporters at the Zocalo Square after winning general elections, in Mexico City.—AFP

After a campaign of lofty but vague promises, Mexico is now keen to see what the change will actually look like. In his victory speech, Lopez Obrador cited one overriding priority: eradicating the country's festering corruption. "We are absolutely convinced that (corruption) is the cause of our social and economic inequalities, and corruption also unleashed the violence our country is suffering," he said. It will not be easy, warned Mark Weisbrod, co-director of the

Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington. "That will be one of his biggest challenges, given the power of the drug cartels and their connections to government and the armed forces," he said. "There is a very entrenched, corrupt and powerful political class." The incoming president's fans were undeterred. "I'm here to celebrate Lopez Obrador's triumph, the new transformation in our country," said one supporter, Omar Ibarra.—AFP

## Afghanistan's Sikhs weigh future after suicide bombing

**KABUL:** Many among Afghanistan's dwindling Sikh minority are considering leaving for neighboring India, after a suicide bombing in the eastern city of Jalalabad on Sunday killed at least 13 members of the community. The victims of the attack claimed by militant group Islamic State included Avtar Singh Khalsa, the only Sikh candidate in parliamentary elections this October, and Rawail Singh, a prominent community activist.

"I am clear that we cannot live here anymore," said Tejvir Singh, 35, whose uncle was killed in the blast. "Our religious practices will not be tolerated by the Islamic terrorists. We are Afghans. The government recognizes us, but terrorists target us because we are not Muslims," added Singh, the secretary of a national panel of Hindus and Sikhs. The Sikh community now numbers fewer than 300 families in Afghanistan, which has only two gurdwaras, or places of worship, one each in Jalalabad and Kabul, the capital, Singh added.

Although almost entirely a Muslim country, Afghanistan was home to as many as 250,000 Sikhs and Hindus before a devastating civil war in the 1990s. Even a decade ago, the US State Department said in a report, about 3,000 Sikhs and Hindus still lived there. Despite official political representation and freedom of worship, many face prejudice and harassment as well as violence

## Philippine mayor who held drugs war 'walk of shame' shot dead

**MANILA:** A Philippine mayor who paraded suspected drug dealers through the streets was shot dead yesterday while attending a weekly flag-raising ceremony, police said. Mayor Antonio Cando Halili was hit by a single bullet to the chest as he and civil servants sang the national anthem in Tanauan, a city in Batangas province southwest of the capital, Manila. "We are shocked, we are saddened," Vice Mayor Jhoanna Villamor, who was standing beside Halili, told radio station DZBB.

What appeared to be a smartphone video of the shooting went viral on social media, showing a single shot ringing out as the anthem played, then screaming and pandemonium. The video could not be immediately verified. Halili gained prominence for introducing a "walk of shame" parade of alleged drug dealers through Tanauan.

Police say they have killed more than 4,200 suspected drug dealers during shootouts in a bloody war on drugs launched by President Rodrigo Duterte two years ago, a campaign condemned by domestic and international human rights groups. Halili was stripped of his supervisory powers over local police in October 2017 due to a proliferation of illegal drugs in his city, amid allegations by the national police that he may have been involved.—Reuters

### News in brief



KOTA TINGGI: Malaysian rescuers carry a body retrieved from the sea during a search operation on a boat carrying Indonesian immigrants capsized in Kota Tinggi, southern Malaysia.—AFP

### 18 missing in boat capsized

**KUALA LUMPUR:** One person died and 18 others were missing after a boat carrying dozens of Indonesian illegal migrants capsized in the South China Sea off the Malaysian coast, officials said yesterday. The boat with 44 people on board capsized Sunday night off the southern state of Johor as it headed for Malaysia from the Indonesian island of Batam. Senior coast guard official Sanifah Yusof said a woman was found drowned while another 25 people were rescued by the authorities. "There are 18 people left (missing), we are still doing the search and rescue," he said.—AFP

### S Korea president to visit India

**SEOUL:** South Korean President Moon Jae-in will visit India from July 8 to 11, his presidential office said yesterday, and hold a summit with Prime Minister Narendra Modi where their discussions are expected to focus on economic cooperation. Having been invited by Modi, Moon will also meet with President Ram Nath Kovind on his first visit to the country, the statement said. South Korea's presidential Blue House added India is becoming a crucial partner for Seoul not only in terms of the economy, but regarding its plans for peace and prosperity on the Korean peninsula as well.—Reuters

### One dead in plant explosion

**TOKYO:** An explosion at a Japanese chemical plant has killed one person, officials said. At least a dozen people were injured after the incident at the facility in central Japan's Fukui prefecture, according to fire authorities. "A total of 12 people were sent to hospitals after the explosion, one died and another is seriously injured," a fire station official said. An image on NHK's website showed a hole on the plant's roof and some broken windows. Yellow smoke was reportedly seen billowing from the plant after the explosion but there was no immediate indication that chemicals were leaking from the facility.—AFP

### Interpol issues warrant for Nirav Modi

**NEW DELHI:** Interpol yesterday issued an arrest warrant for India's billionaire diamond merchant Nirav Modi, tightening the noose on one of the main suspects in a \$1.8-billion fraud at a major state-run bank. India last month requested Interpol to issue a so-called red corner notice to help trace Modi after the fugitive diamond merchant was last spotted in Britain. A red corner notice seeks the arrest or provisional arrest of wanted persons with a view to extradition. Indian authorities have charged Modi with money laundering and several Indian courts have issued arrest warrants over his failure to appear before them since he fled the country in February.—AFP



NOIDA: In this photograph taken, Indian laborers load ice blocks into a transportation van in an ice factory in Noida, some 20km east of New Delhi.—AFP

## Keeping Delhi cool, one ice block at a time

**NOIDA:** Keeping people cool in Delhi's baking summer is hot work—just ask Shreeram Yadav, supervisor at a factory supplying the Indian capital with tons of ice per day. Yadav toils away alongside fifty other workers inside a dark and humid hangar in Noida just outside the city, rushing to meet booming demand from the markets and small shops serving Delhi's 20 million inhabitants. "Some will buy 50 blocks, some will buy 10, some five, some 25," he told AFP, taking a break from the back-breaking work. "They go everywhere, and they're sold in different quantities. We sell it to the distributors, and then the distributors sell them in pieces."

The process is anything but state-of-the-art. Workers first fill up large rectangular containers, a bit rusty on the outside, with filtered water. Once sealed the vessels are placed for 24 hours in large tanks filled with salt water, which has a lower freezing point than ordinary water and is chilled with ammonia. The containers are then taken out and workers extract the ice blocks, each weighing around 50 kilograms. "The whole capacity of the tanks is 1,100 slabs of ice. It takes 55 liters of water to fill one tank and get one slab of ice," says Babloo, the factory's manager.

"There are coils in the tanks, and the motor keeps rotating the salt water inside. The temperature has to be 10 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 12 degrees to freeze the water," Yadav explains. Once extracted the blocks are moved and slid about with large metal tongs along the floor into the back of clients' waiting refrigerated lorries, each chunk costing 130 rupees. Otherwise the blocks go into large machines that break them up and churn out thousands upon thousands of ice cubes that are gathered into bags, sent out for delivery and scooped into the drinks of thirsty Delhiites.—AFP

## Myanmar court to rule on whether to charge jailed Reuters reporters

**YANGON:** A Myanmar court will rule next week on whether to charge two Reuters reporters accused of obtaining secret documents, after prosecutors and defense lawyers delivered final arguments yesterday in the pre-trial phase of the landmark case. The court in Yangon has been holding hearings since January to decide whether Kyaw Soe Oo, 28, and Wa Lone, 32, should be charged under the colonial-era Official Secrets Act. A conviction under the act carries a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison.

At the time of their arrest in December, the reporters had been working on an investigation into the killing of 10 Rohingya Muslim men and boys in a village in western Myanmar's Rakhine State. The killings took place during a military crackdown that U.N. agencies say led to more than 700,000 Rohingya fleeing to neighboring Bangladesh.

Defense lawyers asked the judge to throw out the case, arguing the prosecution had failed to provide sufficient evidence to support the charges. They said the reporters were arrested in a sting operation by the police that was aimed at blocking their reporting. "Journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo were the victims of an orchestrated scheme by some members of the security forces to trap them and silence truthful reporting. Their six-month imprisonment is an ongoing miscarriage of justice that violates Myanmar's stated commitment to the rule of law," defense lawyer Khin Maung Zaw told judge Ye Lwin.

The defense lawyer said the prosecution has neither established how the alleged documents had come into the reporters' possession, nor showed how they posed a threat to national security. It also did not name the "enemy" the reporters were allegedly aiming to support, Khin Maung Zaw said. The information in the documents had already been made public and therefore was not secret, he said.

Lead prosecutor Kyaw Min Aung urged the judge to charge the reporters. He said the documents found on them pertained to the movement of the security forces, while those found on their mobile phones ranged from confidential to top secret. "The information in the documents could be used to attack Myanmar security forces and the reporters knew it better than other people," Kyaw Min Aung said.—Reuters



## Analysis

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The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

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## Aid groups pick photos with impact

The photograph of a drowned Syrian child lying face down on a Turkish beach has been ranked the most powerful of recent times in a survey of aid agencies by the Thomson Reuters Foundation. The image of Aylan Kurdi has been credited with giving a human face to the refugee crisis that engulfed Europe in 2015, triggering intense public debate that is still shaping politics on the continent.

Representatives of four charities placed the image top in a survey asking aid agencies to rank the five most powerful photos related to a humanitarian issue, while several others had it in their top five.

"Researchers have shown that the image was shared millions of times on social media, and in its wake, people were more likely to use the term 'refugee' instead of 'migrant'," said Oxfam communications director Matthew Sherrington. "It was a rare moment of moral outrage and empathy that demanded an answer," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by email. Matthew Saltmarsh of the United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR), which considered the image too distressing to publish at the time, said it had brought about a "sea change" in public attitudes towards migrants coming to Europe.

It also boosted funding for charities as it went viral on social media and sent shockwaves around the world, said the spokesman for the UNHCR, one of 10 groups to respond. The survey came after an image of a crying Honduran toddler at the US border swept social media last month, swelling the tide of outrage that pushed President Donald Trump to back down on a policy of separating families. The haunting photograph of Omran Daqneesh, a bloodied child covered in dust sitting stunned in an ambulance in Aleppo, was also ranked highly by aid agencies.

"The conflict in Syria has raged for a long time, there was a sense that the UK public had become immune to stories of what was happening on the ground," said Hannah Richards of CARE International UK. "The photograph gave the conflict a human face, it cut through all the words written about the suffering and made it feel real to people." Jemilah Mahmood, under secretary general for partnerships at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), said both images had helped bring about a more humane discussion of migration. But her top pick was an image of volunteers in Liberia during the Ebola crisis wearing blue smocks and yellow gloves, their hands locked in prayer.

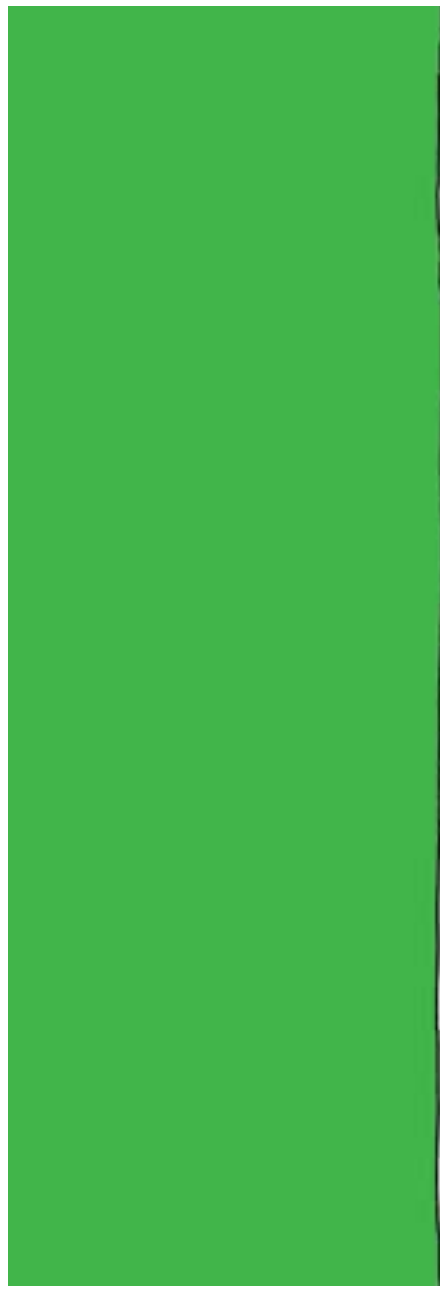
### Impact on donations

Some charities said specific images had a measurable impact on financial support. A black and white close-up of a Rohingya boy who had climbed onto an aid truck in Bangladesh was the top choice of Bangladeshi development agency BRAC, which said it had galvanized opinion overnight. "Almost immediately, we saw a surge in public interest, financial support, grassroots advocacy initiatives, and peer-to-peer campaigns," said Sharad Aggarwal, vice president of BRAC USA.

The Catholic Relief Service (CRS) highlighted an image of Yazidi girls posing in sparkly dresses in the Iraqi city of Erbil after fleeing Islamic State fighters that went viral when it became the first photo to be tweeted by Pope Francis. "Following his tweet over the next six months, CRS received donations from over 7,000 private donors totaling \$3.3 million," said communications director Kim Pozniak.

Older images also drew attention, with Islamic Relief USA highlighting photographer Steve McCurry's portrait of Sharbat Gula, the green-eyed "Afghan Girl" who featured on the front cover of National Geographic in 1985. "It's a deservedly iconic picture because even though it shows suffering, it shows a classic beauty that the suffering can't entirely eviscerate," said spokesman Syed Hassan.

Despite the power of a heartbreaking photograph, positive images can also effect change, said the Danish Refugee Council. The picture of the Olympic Refugee Team in 2016 showed smiling faces of athletes brought together for the games in Rio de Janeiro, waving white flags. "It was a strong way to remind us all that refugees are people with resources, talents, and ambitions," said Secretary General Christian Friis Bach. "That they should not primarily be treated as victims, but as fellow human beings who have been deprived of their right to a safe and dignified life." — Reuters



## Violence, crime, Trump: New Mexican president's inbox

Anti-establishment leftist Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador won a resounding victory in Mexico's presidential election Sunday—but he won't have much time to celebrate. From endemic corruption to record crime, from a lackluster economy to the phenomenon that is Donald Trump, the man known as "AMLO" inherits a messy to-do list when he takes office on December 1.

### Violence

Lopez Obrador vowed in his victory speech to change the government's current strategy for fighting the country's powerful drug cartels. The blowback from the military crackdown the authorities launched in 2006 has been enormous. Fragmented cartels battling each other and the authorities have unleashed a wave of violence. Last year, a record 25,000 people were murdered. Lopez Obrador promised to combat "the root causes of violent crime," citing inequality and poverty—though his speech was short on details. But the violence is unlikely to end soon, said Mike Vigil, former head of international operations for the US Drug Enforcement Administration. "Criminal groups are fighting each other for control of opium poppy crops, heroin distribution networks, and I think the violence won't decrease for a long while," he told AFP. The keys, he said, will be training local police forces and rooting out corrupt officials who are allied with the cartels.

### Corruption

This is Lopez Obrador's number one issue. Outgoing President Enrique Pena Nieto's government and party were mired in a seemingly bottomless series of scandals. Lopez Obrador calls corruption the root of all Mexico's evils, from inequality to poverty to violence. "The issue of corruption was the outlet where much of Mexican society's dissatisfaction was channeled," said Arturo Sanchez of the Technological University of Monterrey. "People will be expecting immediate results."

### Trump

Mexico's relations with its powerful neighbor the United States have been rocky since President Donald Trump won the White House in 2016, on a platform that featured anti-Mexican insults and promises to build a massive border wall. Lopez Obrador has lashed out at Trump in the past, vowing to "put him in his place." But he said in his victory speech he wanted a relationship of "friendship and cooperation." Trump meanwhile tweeted he was "very much looking forward to working with" Lopez Obrador. "AMLO is not going to pay for the wall, that's for sure," said Mark Weisbrot, co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington. "But he has made it clear that he wants good relations with the US."

### Economy

Latin America's second-largest economy, after Brazil, has had lackluster growth in recent years. And Lopez Obrador faces deep skepticism from the business sector—though both sides extended tentative olive branches

## Can Saudi pump much more oil?

The leader of Saudi Arabia has assured US President Donald Trump that the Kingdom can raise oil production if needed and the country has 2 million barrels per day of spare capacity that could be deployed to help cool down oil prices to compensate for falling output in Venezuela and Iran. In a tweet on Saturday, Trump said Saudi Arabia had agreed to increase output by up to this amount, although a subsequent statement from the White House rowed back on this assertion.

Either way, the kingdom, OPEC's biggest member, can barely raise output by 1 million bpd to 11 million bpd and even that would be difficult, according to industry analysts who forecast a further oil price rally due to a lack of new supply. Below are comments from some leading OPEC analysts: PIERRE ANDURAND, hedge fund manager - "I guess the Saudis want to give the confidence to Trump to go very hardcore on Iran. Exports to zero or an attack. It will be interesting to see what the Saudis can really do and

for how long. It seems that Iranian regime change is priority number one for the Saudis."

AMRITA SEN, Chief Oil Analyst at Energy Aspects - "We will be in uncharted territory. While Saudi Arabia has the capacity in theory, it takes time and money to bring these barrels online, possibly up to 1 year". GARY ROSS, head of global oil analytics at S&P Global - "The Saudis do not have 2 million bpd of spare capacity as it would imply production of 12 million bpd. They can likely produce a maximum of 11 million and even that will be running their system at stress levels," said Ross. He added that with a potential output fall of up to 1.5 million bpd in Iran and further outages in Venezuela and Libya, the world could be short of 2 million bpd of oil output without an increase in Saudi output by the end of the year.

Negotiators from the three countries failed to strike a deal before the elections, and may now have to start over with a new, trade-skeptical Mexican president in charge. The deal is crucial for Mexico, which sends some 80 percent of its exports to the United States. The ongoing NAFTA talks are expected to resume this month and run into 2019. "Reaching some sort of deal will depend mostly on

the US softening its stance and abandoning some of its most controversial proposals," said consulting firm Eurasia Group.

### Migration

Trump has also lashed out over the issue of Mexican and Central American migrants arriving in the United States. His administration's "zero-tolerance" policy on undocumented migrants and separation of migrant families have newly strained ties. Lopez Obrador said under his government, "those who want to migrate will do so because they want to, not because they have to."

But he has been short on specifics. The new president will need to support regional development and ensure Mexico itself is "treating Central American migrants humanely," said Laborde. — AFP



MEXICO CITY: Newly elected Mexico's President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, running for 'Juntos haremos historia' party, cheers his supporters at the Zocalo Square after winning general elections, in Mexico City. — AFP

bpd but they can increase exports by digging into their reserves."

"It does however also increase Middle East tensions and with Iran controlling the Strait of Hormuz there is a risk that this could escalate to a point where 2 million bpd would not be enough." "In the short-term, however, a busy night on Sunday can be expected, with traders and funds getting caught on the long side. Not least in WTI, where we saw a collapse in the gross short last week while the net-long jumped by 25 percent and the long/short ratio hit a 7-year high."

GIOVANNI STAUNOVO, commodity analyst at UBS - "While US President Trump's tweet is very clear on how much oil he intends to see from Saudi Arabia, the Saudi Press Agency statement was more vague - no volume increase reference." "The statement seems to suggest the Kingdom stands ready, but first wants to see larger disruptions materializing." "A 2-million-bpd Saudi production increase would move the Kingdom's oil production into uncharted territory and would wipe out completely the kingdom's spare capacity." "Prices are likely to become more volatile over the coming months, caught between two narratives: Oversupply concerns and dwindling spare capacity/oil market tightness concerns." — Reuters



## Business

TUESDAY, JULY 3, 2018

**12** Shares sliding on trade war, German coalition concerns**13** British strawberries in a jam over picker shortage**13** Largest US business group attacks Trump on tariffs

**BAGHDAD:** An Iranian construction worker walks on an unfinished steel floor at a site for a future bank tower in the Iraqi capital Baghdad's central Abu Nawas street on June 28, 2018. Traditional construction in Iraq generally depends on the use of concrete, as opposed to steel structures which are novel in the country and require Iranian expertise. —AFP

## Portugal: The country that wants more migrants

### 'We won't tolerate any xenophobic rhetoric'

**LISBON:** Unlike most European nations, who are trying to reduce the influx of migrants, Portugal is bucking the trend by looking to immigration as a way to counter its declining population. "We need more immigration and we won't tolerate any xenophobic rhetoric," Prime Minister Antonio Costa told activists at a party conference in May, drawing resounding applause.

Demonstrating this openness, Portugal was one of the first that volunteered to take in some of the migrants on board the Lifeline, a rescue ship which had been stranded at sea since June 21 after Italy refused it safe harbor. And as European leaders struggled to reach a deal at a summit last week over who should take in migrants rescued off the coast of North Africa, Portugal's socialist government was already taking steps to make itself a more attractive destination.

"It was a very difficult summit and the apparent consensus reached in the deal did not hide the deep divisions which are today threatening the European

Union," Costa said after leaving the summit. And Friday's election of former Portuguese minister Antonio Vitorino as head of the International Organization for Migration "demonstrates the great importance that Portugal places on dialogue about the issue," the foreign ministry said.

#### Aim: 75,000 per year

Costa, whose father was a well-known communist writer descended from an aristocratic family in the former Portuguese colony of Goa in India, has made reviving the declining population a key element of his political program. And it will be a central issue for him as the country heads into elections next year in which Costa is the frontrunner.

According to studies quoted by the government, Portugal needs at least 75,000 new residents every year simply to maintain a stable working population, which today numbers just 10.4 million people. In this context,

Satinder Wadhwa, a watch seller who attended the Delhi demonstration, said a cash-rich Flipkart will be a major threat to small businesses like his own, which were already suffering due to a ban on high-value currency notes in Dec. 2016 as well as a nationwide sales tax that was introduced a year ago.

In Guwahati, one of the main cities in the northeastern Assam state, about 300 traders gathered to protest against the Walmart-Flipkart deal. They also demanded simplification of the nationwide sales tax, said Rupam Goswami, vice president of CAIT. Bentonville, Arkansas-headquartered Walmart announced in May that it was acquiring roughly 77 percent of Flipkart, a deal that now awaits the approval of India's anti-trust regulator.

Multiple sources and lawyers close to the deal have previously told Reuters that while the Competition Commission of India will consider all arguments, the CAIT did not pose a challenge to the acquisition. Walmart, which currently runs 21 cash-and-carry stores in India, said on Monday it had been supporting local manufacturing in India by sourcing from small and medium suppliers, farmers and businesses run by women. "Our partnership with Flipkart will provide thousands of local suppliers and manufacturers access to consumers through the marketplace model," Rajneesh Kumar, senior vice president, Walmart India, said in a statement. —AFP

the government on Thursday adopted a raft of new regulatory measures to simplify the procedures for getting a visa for students or those wanting to create a start-up. And it also opened the way to regularize the status of some 30,000 foreign nationals who arrived legally in Portugal but do not have any authorization to work.

During the three years of recession which followed the financial crisis of 2011, more than 300,000 Portuguese left in search of a better standard of living, many of them young university graduates. In 2017, Portugal registered a positive migration balance—the difference between those leaving and those entering the country—for the first time in six years, the National Statistics Institute said.

#### Lack of skilled labor

Last year, the Portuguese authorities issued 61,400 new residency permits, an increase of 31 percent from 2016, which reflected a six percent increase in the

number of foreigners living in the country, a border police report said last week. The country has also returned to growth, notably thanks to a boom in tourism and foreign investment in property, but business leaders have warned that it could be easily reversed by the lack of skilled labor.

The hard-won deal reached by EU member states on Friday stipulates that migrants rescued at sea should be redistributed among the different member states—on a voluntary basis. Portugal is already part of a voluntary program for the redistribution of refugees proposed in January by the European Commission which aims to resettle at least 50,000 refugees over the next two years. Within the framework of an earlier program, which ran from 2015 to March 2018, Portugal took in 1,552 refugees. However, only about half of those who entered Portugal stayed, with the rest leaving for countries offering better economic opportunities. —AFP

## Indian shopkeepers protests against Walmart's Flipkart buy

**MUMBAI/NEW DELHI:** Indian shopkeepers and traders affiliated to a local lobby group began sit-in protests across the country yesterday against Walmart Inc's proposed \$16 billion acquisition of e-commerce firm Flipkart. The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) says the US retail giant's buyout of Bengaluru-based Flipkart will create a monopoly in the retail market and drive mom-and-pop stores out of business.

Praveen Khandelwal, the secretary general of CAIT, told Reuters he expected one million people to join yesterday's sit-in protests across hundreds of cities, including in the country's financial hub of Mumbai and cities in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state of Gujarat. "This is the first phase of our protest. And if the government doesn't listen, we will decide our future course of action at our national convention in Delhi later this month," Khandelwal said.

The sit-in in Delhi though, where CAIT is based, attracted just about 50 traders and shopkeepers by noon (0630 GMT), according to a Reuters witness.

## EU delivers stark warning to US over auto tariffs

**BRUSSELS:** The EU has warned Washington that a threat to slap Europe with major auto tariffs could inflict serious damage to the US economy and would prompt strong retaliation. The admonishment, written in a letter to US authorities dated Friday, came as US President Donald Trump said Europe is "possibly as bad as China" on trade in one of his biggest provocations to his country's longtime transatlantic allies.

Trump's taunt was the latest salvo in an escalating trade war that saw the EU slap duties on US-made jeans and Harley Davidson motorcycles in a tit-for-tat response to US tariffs on European steel and aluminum exports. The US tycoon has also threatened to slap a 20 percent duty on EU car imports, based on highly disputed national security concerns, which could be confirmed in the coming months.

"The European Union is possibly as bad as China,

only smaller," Trump said on Fox News' "Sunday Morning Futures" program. "They send a Mercedes in, we can't send our cars in. Look what they do to our farmers. They don't want our farm products. Now in all fairness they have their farmers... But we don't protect ours and they protect theirs," he said. The comparison is particularly painful to Europeans, which are attempting to forge common ground with the Trump administration on the idea that the real danger to fair trade is China.

#### 'De-dramatize'

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker is to visit Washington by the end of July to help resolve the bitter trade dispute. "We should de-dramatize these relations," Juncker told a press conference following a European Union summit on Friday, the same day the letter was delivered to Washington. In the letter to US authorities, the European Commission, which handles trade policy for the bloc's 28 members, painted a stark picture of what the US economy would face if Trump followed through on his threat. "Economic analysis confirms that an increased tariff on these products will be harmful first and foremost for the US economy," said the letter, seen by AFP yesterday. —AFP



Business

# Shares sliding on trade war, German coalition concerns

## Markets on edge before July 6 tariff deadline

LONDON: A renewed slump in Chinese shares and a sobering set of global factory surveys sucked world markets lower yesterday, while the euro and Mexican peso were both jolted by political developments. It was the first trading day of the new month, quarter and half-year but there was no let up for bruised investors after the worst start to a year for world shares since 2010.

Shanghai's "bear" market lurch had continued overnight, with losses of up to 3 percent as firms await some \$34 billion of US tariffs this week and new business surveys showed some worrying signs of deterioration. Europe suffered a thud too, with the STOXX 600 share index dropping as much as 1 percent and the euro down 0.5 percent to \$1.1630 as differences over immigration threatened Angela Merkel's German coalition government.

The trade strains meanwhile were compounded by an EU threat to hit the United States with almost \$300 billion in retaliatory tariffs, lingering concerns over President Donald Trump's dislike for the World Trade Organization and by data showing the weakest euro zone manufacturing

sector growth in 18 months. "There are a lot of uncertainties out there," said Rabobank's Head of Macro Strategy Elwin de Groot. "It is pretty unclear what is going to happen in Germany and the trade concerns are really top of mind at the moment, so we are seeing quite a lot of weakness in emerging markets."

All the concerns meant more demand for safe-haven bonds. US Treasuries and German Bund both saw buying, whereas Wall Street looked set to go lower when it reopens. Shanghai blue chips had resumed their slide overnight with a fall of 2.9 percent. That, alongside another flop by the yuan hot on the heels of its weakest month on record, soured sentiment across Asia.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan fell 0.6 percent, adding to a 2 percent drop last week. Japan's Nikkei shed 2.2 percent to an 11-week low, with a survey of manufacturers showing sentiment there had also darkened a shade in the face of trade war threats. Tension is growing ahead of a July 6 deadline when Washington is due to impose US\$34 billion of tar-

iffs on Chinese exports. A new report from Oxford Economics warned that tariff threats, if realised, would extend high tariffs to over 4 percent of world imports - a more than tenfold rise versus the 0.3 percent of imports hit by the new tariffs imposed so far. "The threat to world growth is significant" it said. "In a scenario of escalating tariffs, our modeling suggests world GDP could be cut by up to 0.4 percentage points in 2019."

Two surveys of Chinese manufacturing out in the last few days showed a softening in activity, partly due to softness in exports. A slew of US factory readings are due on Monday, while the U.S. ISM report is out on Tuesday. Minutes of the last Federal Reserve policy meeting came on Thursday and the week closes with US payrolls for June.

### German angst

In currency markets, the euro was knocked back on reports German Interior Minister Horst Seehofer had rejected a migration deal Merkel negotiated at an EU summit on Friday. The currency then partly bounced on news Seehofer had offered to step down as minister and as chair of his Christian Social Union (CSU) party, only to slide back again after the euro zone manufacturing data came in weak.

Seehofer's move makes the future of Merkel's government even more uncertain. Her Christian Democrats (CDU) rely on the CSU to maintain power through a coalition formed three months ago to end a political vacuum. The euro was 0.5 percent lower at \$1.1640, having skidded as far as \$1.1628 at one stage. The US dollar gained 0.25 percent on a basket of currencies to 94.891, but was still below Friday's top of 95.324. It was flat on the yen at



TOKYO: A pedestrian looks at a stock indicator displaying numbers of the Tokyo Stock Exchange. — AFP

110.74 having been as high as 111.06 at one stage.

The Mexican peso see-sawed after leftist Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador won a decisive victory for president. Dealers said the clear win might settle one source of political uncertainty, but Obrador was also expected to sharpen Mexican divisions with Trump. After an initial retreat, the dollar soon rebounded to top 20 pesos, up from last week's trough around 19.5580 per dollar.

Trump also loomed large in oil markets with crude taking a spill after he tweeted that Saudi Arabia had agreed to lift oil production by "maybe up to 2,000,000 barrels". The missive was later played down by the White House and Saudi Press Agency. Brent crude lost 85 cents to \$78.26 a barrel, while US crude fell 30 cents to \$73.88. The pullback was still modest given US crude rallied more than 8 percent last week, while Brent gained more than 5 percent. — Reuters

## Hedge funds continue selling oil and fuels

LONDON: Hedge funds became much more bullish about the outlook for US crude prices last week, following an outage on Canada's Syncrude system, which supplies the US Midwest, and a drawdown in crude stocks around Cushing. But in the rest of the petroleum complex, the persistent liquidation of formerly record bullish positions continued for the tenth week running, according to an analysis of exchange and regulatory data.

Hedge funds and other money managers

raised their combined net long position in the six most important petroleum futures and options contracts by 36 million barrels in the week to June 26. Net long positions in NYMEX and ICE WTI climbed by 75 million barrels, the largest one-week increase since OPEC decided to cut its production levels at the end of November 2016.

Gross short positions in NYMEX WTI were slashed by 30 million barrels to leave just 20 million barrels remaining, the smallest number of short contracts since Feb 2013. The rush of short covering and the creation of fresh long positions sent nearby futures prices surging and has pushed the six-month WTI calendar spread to a backwardation of more than \$6 per barrel. But bullish in WTI was linked to specific locational factors. Elsewhere, fund managers continued to realise profits and

liquidate long positions.

Net long positions were cut in Brent (-5 million barrels), U.S. gasoline (-8 million barrels), US heating oil (-11 million barrels) and European gasoil (-15 million barrels) in the week to June 26. Net length in Brent has fallen by a total of 179 million barrels since peaking in early April while net length in refined products is down by 131 million barrels since peaking in mid-May. Portfolio managers remain essentially bullish about the outlook for oil prices in the second half of 2018, with long petroleum positions outnumbering short ones by a margin of 9 to 1. But funds have become more cautious since the middle of April, when the margin was almost 14 to 1, given the significant rise in prices over the last 12 months and potential for a slowdown in consumption growth. — Reuters

## Locals lose out in Rwanda's second-hand clothes war

KIGALI: Across Rwanda, markets selling piles of cast-off clothes once worn by Americans have become the unlikely centre of a trade war that vendors say is ruining their livelihoods. Kigali, determined to boost its domestic textiles industry, in 2016 raised tariffs on the importation of secondhand clothes, disrupting a multi-million dollar industry and setting it on a collision course with the United States.

Friends Celestin Twagirayezu, 33, and Merelle Dusabe, 35, began selling second-hand clothes a decade ago at adjacent stalls in Kigali's popular Nyabugogo market in Kigali. It was a good business which expanded quickly, allowing them to buy homes and get married. Then Rwanda slapped a 12-fold increase on import tariffs on used clothes and a 10-fold increase on used footwear, a price hike that amounts to a de facto ban for cash-strapped traders. "The decision took everyone by surprise, at first we relied on the stocked clothes but after a few months reality kicked in, and things went from bad to worse," said Twagirayezu. "I am soon throwing in the towel".

### Second-hand economy

East Africa imports around an eighth of the world's used clothing into an industry that employs some 355,000 people who earn \$230 million a year, according to a study by the American development agency,

USAID. The large majority of these clothes come from the US and regional leaders, including Rwanda's Paul Kagame, blame the cast-offs for stymieing development of their own clothing industries.

While Twagirayezu has watched his business wither, Dusabe switched to selling Chinese imports, but is not faring much better. "You can't imagine how many customers I have lost by switching to selling Chinese clothes! Many people still come asking for second-hand clothes, when they don't find them they don't come back," he said.

Twagirayezu agreed, saying customers prefer second-hand clothes to Chinese imports, citing the lower price and higher quality. Initially, the East African Community regional bloc was united in its battle against used clothes. But the alliance cracked as Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda balked at the prospect of retaliatory loss of access to US markets via the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) whereby some countries can export some products to the US duty free.

### Trade freeze

Rwanda, alone, did not capitulate and in 2016 its imports of used clothing dropped by a third. In late March this year the US told Rwanda it would lose some of its AGOA benefits within 60 days as a result. The deadline since passed and no action was announced, but with President Donald Trump on the warpath over trade Rwanda is unlikely to be forgotten.

Rwanda's clothing industry is nascent, with only a couple of players, which means there are some surprising victims of the trade spat. One of those losing out is Chinese garment maker C&H which set up in Kigali's special economic zone in order to enjoy AGOA benefits. Many of its US clients

have put orders on hold until the AGOA issue is resolved. "We have lost market in the US because of the AGOA situation," said manager Emmy Iraguha.

C&H has an annual turnover of \$154 million and has been producing exclusively for export. It has not yet bowed to Rwandan government pressure to produce clothes for the local market to fill the gap left by the dearth of second-hand clothes. Rwanda's other clothes producer is Uterxwa, which specializes in industrial clothing and uniforms, has welcomed the "positive move" to ban second-hand clothes.

### Chinese winners

"Once the companies making clothes locally are many the products will be competitive, not only in Rwanda but even in the neighboring countries," said managing director Ritesh Patel, alluding to the difficulty of producing clothes cheaply enough for the domestic market. "The alternatives to second-hand clothes are very expensive," said Kevin Uwamahoro, a motorcycle taxi driver who crosses into Uganda to go clothes shopping at its still-thriving second-hand markets.

The big winner in this David and Goliath trade war might well be Chinese companies whose flood of cheap garments are set to replace used clothing while continuing to stifle local industrialization. "Considerable imports of Chinese clothing, both legitimate and undeclared, constitute the real threat to the East African textile industry," said the USAID study. However, Andrew Mold of the UN's Economic Commission for Africa, said high import tariffs on clothes from China and India mean there is a "margin for regional firms to compete". In the meantime, however, it is ordinary Rwandans-buyers and sellers of second-hand clothes-who continue to suffer. — AFP

| National Bank of Kuwait         |                | البنك الوطني  |             |                     |                      |             |                 |                   |
|---------------------------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Financial Markets               |                | NBK           |             |                     |                      |             |                 |                   |
| Daily Report                    |                |               |             |                     |                      |             |                 |                   |
| At 02:00 PM Previous Day        |                |               |             |                     |                      |             |                 |                   |
| Global Stock Indices            |                |               |             |                     |                      |             |                 |                   |
| Index                           | Previous Close | Last Price    | Change      | Daily Performance % | Yearly Performance % |             |                 |                   |
| Dow Jones                       | 24,216.05      | 24,271.41     | 55.36       | ▲                   | 0.23                 | -1.81       |                 |                   |
| NASDAQ                          | 7,503.68       | 7,510.30      | 6.62        | ▲                   | 0.09                 | 8.79        |                 |                   |
| SBP 500                         | 2,716.31       | 2,718.37      | 2.06        | ▲                   | 0.08                 | 1.70        |                 |                   |
| Financial Times                 | 7,636.93       | 7,568.73      | -68.20      | ▼                   | -0.89                | -1.55       |                 |                   |
| DAX                             | 12,306.00      | 12,265.18     | -40.82      | ▼                   | -0.33                | -5.05       |                 |                   |
| CAC 40                          | 5,323.53       | 5,275.05      | -48.48      | ▼                   | -0.91                | -0.71       |                 |                   |
| Swiss                           | 8,609.30       | 8,520.77      | -88.53      | ▼                   | -1.03                | -9.18       |                 |                   |
| Nikkei 225                      | 22,304.51      | 21,811.93     | -492.58     | ▼                   | -2.21                | -4.18       |                 |                   |
| Topix                           | 1,730.89       | 1,695.29      | -35.60      | ▼                   | -2.06                | -6.73       |                 |                   |
| Hang Seng                       | 28,497.32      | 28,955.11     | 457.79      | ▲                   | 1.61                 | -3.22       |                 |                   |
| Straits Times                   | 3,268.70       | 3,238.94      | -29.76      | ▼                   | -0.91                | -4.82       |                 |                   |
| MENA Stock Indices              |                |               |             |                     |                      |             |                 |                   |
| Index                           | Previous Close | Last Price    | Change      | Daily Performance % | Yearly Performance % |             |                 |                   |
| Kuwait                          | 4,894.55       | 4,904.24      | 9.69        | ▲                   | 0.20                 | 1.59        |                 |                   |
| Saudi Arabia                    | 8,339.86       | 8,274.95      | -64.91      | ▼                   | -0.78                | 14.51       |                 |                   |
| Dubai                           | 2,864.42       | 2,829.16      | -35.26      | ▼                   | -1.23                | -16.05      |                 |                   |
| Abu Dhabi                       | 4,621.15       | 4,577.04      | -44.11      | ▼                   | -0.95                | 4.06        |                 |                   |
| Bahrain                         | 1,313.57       | 1,309.56      | -4.00       | ▼                   | -0.30                | -1.66       |                 |                   |
| Qatar                           | 9,114.23       | 9,142.28      | 28.05       | ▲                   | 0.31                 | 7.11        |                 |                   |
| Oman                            | 4,347.05       | 4,556.02      | 208.97      | ▲                   | 4.81                 | -10.66      |                 |                   |
| Lebanon                         | 1,048.79       | 1,048.79      | 0.00        | -                   | 0.00                 | 0.00        |                 |                   |
| Jordan                          | 2,063.36       | 2,069.68      | 6.32        | ▲                   | 0.31                 | -2.76       |                 |                   |
| Egypt                           | 16,348.55      | 16,371.59     | 23.04       | ▲                   | 0.14                 | 9.00        |                 |                   |
| Morocco                         | 11,878.65      | 11,946.44     | 67.79       | ▲                   | 0.57                 | -3.57       |                 |                   |
| Tunisia                         | 8,059.10       | 8,057.05      | -2.05       | ▼                   | -0.03                | 28.27       |                 |                   |
| Global Currencies Exchange Rate |                |               |             |                     |                      |             |                 |                   |
| Currency                        | Kuwaiti Dinar  | Saudi Riyal   | US Dollar   | Euro                | Sterling Pound       | Swiss Franc | Japanese Yen    | Australian Dollar |
| Kuwaiti Dinar                   |                | 12.2782       | 3.2879      | 2.8236              | 2.4972               | 3.2635      | 364.13          | 4.4648            |
| Saudi Riyal                     | 0.08145        |               | 0.2678      | 0.2300              | 0.2034               | 0.2658      | 29.66           | 0.3636            |
| US Dollar                       | 0.30415        | 3.7344        |             | 0.8588              | 0.7595               | 0.9926      | 110.75          | 1.3580            |
| Euro                            | 0.35415        | 4.3483        | 1.1644      |                     | 0.8847               | 1.1560      | 128.97          | 1.5813            |
| Sterling Pound                  | 0.40044        | 4.9167        | 1.3166      | 1.1303              |                      | 1.3072      | 145.83          | 1.7880            |
| Swiss Franc                     | 0.30642        | 3.7622        | 1.0075      | 0.8651              | 0.7650               |             | 111.59          | 1.3681            |
| Japanese Yen                    | 0.00275        | 0.0337        | 0.0090      | 0.0078              | 0.0069               | 0.0090      |                 | 0.0123            |
| Australian Dollar               | 0.22398        | 2.7500        | 0.7364      | 0.6324              | 0.5593               | 0.7310      | 81.56           |                   |
| MENA Currencies Exchange Rate   |                |               |             |                     |                      |             |                 |                   |
| Currency                        | US Dollar      | Kuwaiti Dinar | Saudi Riyal | Bahraini Dinar      | Qatari Riyal         | Omani Riyal | Emirates Dirham | Egyptian Pound    |
| US Dollar                       |                | 0.30415       | 3.7344      | 0.3764              | 3.6270               | 0.3831      | 3.6575          | 17.8300           |
| Kuwaiti Dinar                   | 3.2879         |               | 12.2782     | 1.2377              | 11.9250              | 1.2596      | 12.0253         | 58.6224           |
| Saudi Riyal                     | 0.2678         | 0.08145       |             | 0.1008              | 0.9712               | 0.1026      | 0.9794          | 4.7745            |
| Bahraini Dinar                  | 2.6545         | 0.80796       | 9.9203      |                     | 9.6350               | 1.0177      | 9.7160          | 47.3648           |
| Qatari Riyal                    | 0.2757         | 0.08386       | 1.0296      | 0.1038              |                      | 0.1056      | 1.0084          | 4.9159            |
| Omani Riyal                     | 2.6101         | 0.79388       | 9.7473      | 0.9826              | 9.4670               |             | 9.5466          | 46.5389           |
| Emirates Dirham                 | 0.2734         | 0.08316       | 1.0210      | 0.1029              | 0.9917               | 0.1047      |                 | 4.8749            |
| Egyptian Pound                  | 0.0561         | 0.01706       | 0.2094      | 0.0211              | 0.2034               | 0.0215      | 0.2051          |                   |
| Global Interest Rates           |                |               |             |                     |                      |             |                 |                   |
| Currency                        | 1-Week         | 1-Month       | 3-Month     | 6-Month             | 1-Year               |             |                 |                   |
| Kuwaiti Dinar                   | 1.19           | 1.75          | 2.00        | 2.19                | 2.50                 |             |                 |                   |
| US Dollar                       | 1.97           | 2.09          | 2.33        | 2.50                | 2.76                 |             |                 |                   |
| Euro                            | -0.42          | -0.39         | -0.35       | -0.31               | -0.23                |             |                 |                   |
| Sterling Pound                  | 0.48           | 0.50          | 0.67        | 0.78                | 0.96                 |             |                 |                   |
| Swiss Franc                     | -0.79          | -0.78         | -0.73       | -0.64               | -0.52                |             |                 |                   |
| Australian Dollar               | 1.70           | 1.99          | 1.87        | 1.86                | 1.89                 |             |                 |                   |
| Japanese Yen                    | -0.07          | -0.07         | -0.05       | 0.01                | 0.12                 |             |                 |                   |
| Global Bond Yields              |                |               |             |                     |                      |             |                 |                   |
| Country                         | 2-Year         | 5-Year        | 10-Year     | 30-Year             |                      |             |                 |                   |
| United States                   | 2.51           | 2.71          | 2.83        | 2.97                |                      |             |                 |                   |
| Europe                          | -0.71          | -0.31         | 0.31        | 1.01                |                      |             |                 |                   |
| United Kingdom                  | 0.70           | 1.01          | 1.26        | 1.73                |                      |             |                 |                   |
| Commodities                     |                |               |             |                     |                      |             |                 |                   |
| Index                           | Previous Close | Last Price    | Change      | Daily Performance % | Yearly Performance % |             |                 |                   |
| Kuwait Oil                      | 75.95          | 75.95         | 0.00        | -                   | 0.00                 | 16.43       |                 |                   |
| Brent                           | 76.80          | 76.10         | -0.70       | ▼                   | -0.91                | 12.66       |                 |                   |
| West Texas                      | 74.18          | 74.08         | -0.10       | ▼                   | -0.13                | 18.50       |                 |                   |
| Gold                            | 1252.25        | 1249.05       | -3.20       | ▼                   | -0.26                | -4.02       |                 |                   |
| Silver                          | 16.08          | 15.97         | -0.11       | ▼                   | -0.70                | -5.40       |                 |                   |

## EXCHANGE RATES

### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

| CURRENCY           | BUY      | SELL     | America  | Taiwan   |
|--------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| British Pound      | 0.392403 | 0.406303 | 0.224844 | 0.009827 |
| Czech Korune       | 0.005574 | 0.014874 | 0.299350 | 0.008857 |
| Danish Krone       | 0.043324 | 0.048324 | 0.299850 | 0.009407 |
| Euro               | 0.345613 | 0.359313 |          |          |
| Georgian Lari      | 0.123169 | 0.123169 |          |          |
| Hungarian 0.000981 | 0.001171 |          |          |          |
| Norwegian Krone    | 0.033026 | 0.038226 |          |          |
| Romanian Leu       | 0.068785 | 0.075635 |          |          |
| Russian ruble      | 0.004802 | 0.004802 |          |          |
| Slovakia           | 0.009055 | 0.019055 |          |          |
| Swedish Krona      | 0.029722 | 0.034722 |          |          |
| Swiss Franc        | 0.299084 | 0.310084 |          |          |
| Australia Dollar   | 0.215430 | 0.227430 |          |          |
| New Zealand Dollar | 0.199128 | 0.208628 |          |          |
| Canada Dollar      |          |          | 0.233844 |          |
| US Dollars         |          |          | 0.304650 |          |
| US Dollars Mint    |          |          | 0.304650 |          |
| Bangladesh Taka    |          |          |          |          |
| Chinese Yuan       |          |          | 0.003925 |          |
| Hong Kong Dollar   |          |          | 0.044267 |          |
| Indian Rupee       |          |          | 0.036587 |          |
| Indonesian Rupiah  |          |          | 0.003813 |          |
| Japanese Yen       |          |          | 0.000017 |          |
| Korean Won         |          |          | 0.002654 |          |
| Malaysian Ringgit  |          |          | 0.000261 |          |
| Nepalese Rupee     |          |          | 0.071688 |          |
| Pakistan Rupee     |          |          | 0.002661 |          |
| Philippine Peso    |          |          | 0.001916 |          |
| Singapore Dollar   |          |          | 0.005492 |          |
| Sri Lanka Rupee    |          |          | 0.216641 |          |
|                    |          |          | 0.001625 |          |
| Bahraini Dinar     |          |          |          | 0.789487 |
| Egyptian Pound     |          |          |          | 0.014325 |
| Iranian Riyal      |          |          |          | 0.000084 |
| Iraqi Dinar        |          |          |          | 0.000197 |
| Jordanian Dinar    |          |          |          | 0.423694 |
| Kuwaiti Dinar      |          |          |          | 1.000000 |
| Lebanese Pound     |          |          |          | 0.000150 |
| Moroccan Dirhams   |          |          |          | 0.020554 |
| Omani Riyal        |          |          |          | 0.781864 |
| Qatar Riyal        |          |          |          | 0.079060 |
| Saudi Riyal        |          |          |          | 0.079833 |
| Syrian Pound       |          |          |          | 0.001286 |
| Tunisian Dinar     |          |          |          | 0.112345 |
| Turkish Lira       |          |          |          | 0.060159 |
| UAE Dirhams        |          |          |          | 0.081193 |
| Yemeni Riyal       |          |          |          | 0.000986 |



Business

# British strawberries in a jam over picker shortage

'They are not going to be able to fill any vacancy after August'

**FAVERSHAM:** After weeks of uninterrupted sunshine the strawberry season is in full swing in the so-called Garden of England. But with a shortage of seasonal laborers to pick the fruits, a trend exacerbated by Brexit, there are growing fears many may be left to rot on their stems. "We will end up with a problem," said Alastair Brooks, who runs a 60-hectare farm near the town of Faversham in the southern fruit-growing county of Kent. "The agencies that we use for recruiting are saying now that they are not going to be able to fill any vacancy after August."

This operation in Kent produces about 1,200 tons of strawberries and 400 tons of raspberries annually from April to November. "There's definitely a tightening of the labor market," added Brooks, 50, who employs 20 permanent and 180 seasonal workers. "If you go back even to last year, there were four or five applicants for every job, and this year we have to chase people. "We will see fruits left, not only in this farm, but across the country," he predicted.

A recent study by British Summer Fruits, the biggest industry body, found three out of five soft fruit growers are struggling to recruit the 30,000 seasonal staff needed. Around 95 percent of the workers currently come from Eastern Europe. "At the moment berry farms are typically between 10 and 15 percent short of people," its chairman Nick Marston said.

"Growers say they expect that position to be worse next year."

**'Really struggled'**  
Soft fruit production in Britain has grown over the past 20 years by 131 percent—largely as a result of an increase in home-grown strawberries. The industry is now worth more than £1.2 billion (\$1.6 billion; 1.4 billion euros). The staff shortage is not restricted to fruits, with the entire horticultural sector buffeted by Brexit and improvements in labour markets in Eastern Europe.

As unemployment has fallen in Bulgaria and Romania, the number of people applying to work in England's fields has dropped, with Britain's impending departure from the European Union now amplifying the trend. It has led to uncertainty over future immigration rules, while fears of encountering xenophobia and a weakened British currency—giving less money to send home—have also deterred arrivals.

Maria Parnic, 37, who has been working for Brooks' operation for seven years, said a hard Brexit would likely lead her and other Eastern Europeans to leave. "They say 'I don't go anymore in England, I go in Italy, I go in Germany,'" she said foreign colleagues and neighbors tell her. Stephanie Maurel, CEO of recruitment agency Concordia, confirmed it has "really struggled" to find staff, starting from last year.

"(It) has become even more difficult from May this year," she added, noting the firm usually brought over around 10,000 seasonal workers annually. The labor squeeze is occurring despite workers being mostly paid at the national living

wage of £7.83 (\$10.34; 8.84 euros) an hour and some given airline tickets, housing support and productivity bonuses.

The prospect of British fruit pickers replacing them is remote, with the country close to full employment and those in search of jobs mainly in urban areas. "We had two (British applicants) this year, in six months," said Maurel, adding there is "absolutely no appetite" for the jobs. "It's really, really hard work."

**'No business would invest'**  
Producers are calling on the government to open the immigration system to more seasonal workers from countries outside the EU, as Germany, Spain, Portugal and Ireland have already done. Maurel noted that Britain, whose citizens voted to leave the bloc partly to put a brake on European immigration, "is ironically perhaps the only country to recruit only within the (EU)."

Without government intervention, British Summer Fruits is warning the impact on the industry could be devastating. "Our growers are investing millions of pounds every year in their businesses and actually they don't know now whether they will have any seasonal staff," Marston warned. "No business would invest under those circumstances," he said, adding a third had already decided to scale back investment, while others were looking at expanding in different countries.

A spokesman for the Department of Agriculture said it is working closely with the



FAVERSHAM: A seasonal worker from Romania moves boxes of selected class 1 strawberries at BR Brooks & Son farm in Faversham, south east England. — AFP

Home Office, which is in charge of immigration policy, "to ensure the labor needs of the agriculture sector are met once we leave the EU". "We are determined to get the best deal for the UK in our EU negotiations, not least for our world-lead-

ing food and farming industry which is a key part of our economic success." But if foreign seasonal workers continue to ebb away, Marston predicts another scenario: Britain turns to imports of strawberries instead. — AFP

## Largest US business group attacks Trump on tariffs

**WASHINGTON:** The US Chamber of Commerce, the nation's largest business group and customarily a close ally of President Donald Trump's Republican Party, is launching a campaign today to oppose Trump's trade tariff policies. With some of America's tightest trading partners imposing retaliatory measures, Trump's approach to tariffs has unsettled financial markets and strained relations between the White House and the Chamber.

The new campaign, detailed first to Reuters, is an aggressive effort by the business lobbying giant. Using a state-by-state analysis, it argues that Trump is risking a global trade war that will hit the wallets of US consumers. "The administration is threatening to undermine the economic progress it worked so hard to achieve," said Chamber President Tom Donohue in a statement to Reuters. "We should seek free and fair trade, but this is just not the way to do it."

The Chamber, which has 3 million mem-

bers, historically has worked closely with Republican presidents and praised Trump for signing business tax cuts in December. But mounting trade tensions have opened a rift with the president. Trump has implemented billions of dollars in tariffs targeted at China, Canada, Mexico and the European Union, saying such moves are needed to offset trade imbalances.

Nations have begun retaliating. On Friday, Canada struck back at US steel and aluminum tariffs, vowing to impose punitive measures on \$12.6 billion worth of American goods until Washington relents. China is expected to impose a new 25-percent tax on soybeans in July. Mexico is adding duties to pork imports. The EU has targeted \$3.2 billion in American goods exported to the 28-member bloc, including bourbon and Harley Davidson motorcycles.

Pushing back on Trump, the Chamber based a state-by-state analysis on data from the US Department of Commerce and



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump cross the South Lawn upon arrival at the White House. — AFP

government agencies in China, the EU, Mexico, and Canada. Trump has previously been persuaded to back off of trade threats with the argument that states that backed him in the 2016 presidential campaign will

be hard-hit. For example, the Chamber said Texas could see \$3.9 billion worth of exports targeted by retaliatory tariffs; Tennessee, \$1.4 billion; and South Carolina, \$3 billion. — Reuters

his 66.53-percent stake in India and Africa-focused Vedanta through his holding company Volcan.

"I am pleased to announce this initiative, which is a natural progression of our journey to simplify the Vedanta Group's corporate structure," Agarwal said in the statement.

"We are very proud to have been the first Indian company to be listed on the London Stock Exchange in 2003, which

was a major milestone for the Vedanta Group." Agarwal added that given "the maturity of the Indian capital markets... a separate London listing is no longer necessary to achieve the Vedanta Group's strategic objectives".

The news sent Vedanta's share price rocketing as high as 828.8 pence, above the offer price. At 1300 GMT, the stock stood at 817.40 pence, up 26.38 percent from Friday's closing level. — AFP

## App-bank Monzo counts cost of growing popularity

**LONDON:** Digital bank Monzo, whose distinctive coral-colored card has become a common feature in the wallets of young, tech savvy and mainly urban Britons, could hit 1 million users within months. But the app-only bank, which has already reached 750,000 users and is valued at \$336 million by its investors, needs them to do more than just sign up or encourage friends to join in order to "Monzo" one another funds and split restaurant bills.

To succeed in taking on Britain's big banks, Monzo needs customers to treat it as their main account, where they deposit their salary and pay their bills. At present only 1 in 5 of its users deposit their salary, with average balances of 1,400 pounds per month, its chief executive Tom Blomfield said. And popularity comes at a cost for Monzo, whose annual losses had more than quadrupled to 33.1 million pounds (\$44 million) by February - when its user base stood it had around 500,000 users, its annual report released yesterday shows.

Blomfield said Monzo, which launched in 2015, had made "real progress towards building a sustainable business" by cutting its costs from 65 pounds per account in September 2017 to 15 pounds per account this month. But net operating income, at 1.8 million pounds, fell far short of covering its overall costs, Blomfield said the bank could hit the million user mark by September or October. To make money, it hopes to use their spending data to nudge its customers towards third party products or services and to take a commission every time it is successful. It does this by tracking customer spending habits in order to understand, for instance, how moving to a different provider for services like energy can save them money. But to do this, it needs its customers to pay for things like energy from their Monzo account. It had hoped that a switch from a pre-paid card - its beta product - to a fully-fledged current account by April this year, would encourage this. — Reuters

## Indian billionaire seeks full control of miner Vedanta

**LONDON:** Indian billionaire Anil Agarwal yesterday launched a bid for full control of metals mining group Vedanta, sending its share price soaring. London-listed Vedanta said in a statement that

management has backed the deal pitched at 825 pence per share and valuing the entire group at £2.3 billion (\$3.0 billion, 2.6 billion euros). Agarwal is seeking to buy out minority shareholders, adding to

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## Business

# Dell brings tech to new heights in Marvel's 'Ant-Man and The Wasp'

## VFX Studio DNEG leverages end-to-end Dell technology to bring the visual effects to life

**DUBAI:** Dell is proud to announce it has teamed up with Marvel Studios' "Ant-Man and The Wasp" this summer. With similar fan bases, the two companies will come together to bring excitement around technology into pop culture. From Ant-Man's and The Wasp's suits to Hank Pym's Lab, technology plays a lead role throughout the film.

"What's great about this partnership is that it allows our on-screen tech to become a bit more tangible to viewers," said Mindy Hamilton, Marvel's Senior Vice President of Global Partnerships & Marketing. "We might not be able to replicate Hank Pym's advancements quite yet, but we hope that the film inspires people to continue pushing the boundaries of what's possible just like our heroes do."

### Stunning visual effects

This exciting collaboration extends behind the camera, where Dell hardware plays a vital role in creating the visual effects in the film. Marvel Studios enlisted VFX vendors, several of which utilised a breadth of Dell technologies, including Dell EMC PowerEdge servers, and Dell Precision

workstations, as the core infrastructure to provide the immense computing power and storage capacity necessary for visual effects designers to bring the movie's characters and places to life.

Among others, artists at the VFX studio DNEG, who worked on Marvel Studios' "Ant-Man and The Wasp," rely on Dell Precision workstations for front-end operations.

Dell's Precision line is a leader in the industry, allowing creators to edit and create in new storytelling methods. In the company's Vancouver studio alone, more than 300 Dell Precision workstations are used to create compelling effects. Imagine an adrenaline-fueled car chase through San Francisco, moments of Ant-Man and The Wasp shrinking, or an intricate lab scene featuring Ghost phasing in and out of walls - technologies from Dell help make these ideas reality.

### The full list of Dell technology DNEG leveraged to create the film includes:

- Dell Precision 7910 workstations
- Dell EMC PowerEdge R630 rack servers with MD3460 RAIDs

- Dell EMC PowerEdge M1000e Blade Server Enclosures
- Hundreds of Dell monitors

### Dell's new technology stars in the film

Technology plays an integral role in Marvel Studios' "Ant-Man and The Wasp," so it's fitting that fans will be able to see the new Dell G5 15, a powerful gaming laptop that enables great in-game performance and stunning visuals, and the award-winning XPS 13, on the big screen when the film hits theatres this summer. In the film, Dell devices make several appearances in settings like Hank Pym's lab and at the X-CON security offices.

"We are thrilled to team up with Marvel Studios on Ant-Man and The Wasp and demonstrate the super powers of technology," said Gerri Tunnell, senior vice president, Client Solutions Marketing at Dell. "There are a lot of similarities between our brands and fan bases. For example, our goal is to empower our customers, from gamers to visual effects artists, with high-performance technology to drive human progress just like Ant-Man and The Wasp rely on tech to make the world a better place."



Based on Dell's 2030 research findings, Computer Science and Computational Thinking will be a needed skill in the workplace, however, Dell sees gaps in supply to meet this demand. To support the next generation, Dell has committed more than \$50 million to science, technology, engineering and math - or STEM - initiatives globally since 2014. Through partnerships and customer collaborations, millions of children and underserved youth have access to the technology and resources needed to explore STEM fields.

Dell plans to leverage Marvel Studios' "Ant-Man and The Wasp" to encourage Boys & Girls Clubs members to explore STEM with a focus on computer science and computational thinking. The Boys & Girls Clubs will also incorporate Marvel University's "Ant-Man and The Wasp" video series into their summer curriculum, teaching kids about STEM topics in a fun and engaging way. The series, which will include numerous videos featuring host John Urschel, will dig into technology and STEM concepts using comic book iterations of the Marvel heroes. Marvel will release one video every few weeks during the summer.

## VIVA launches 'VoLTE Plus'

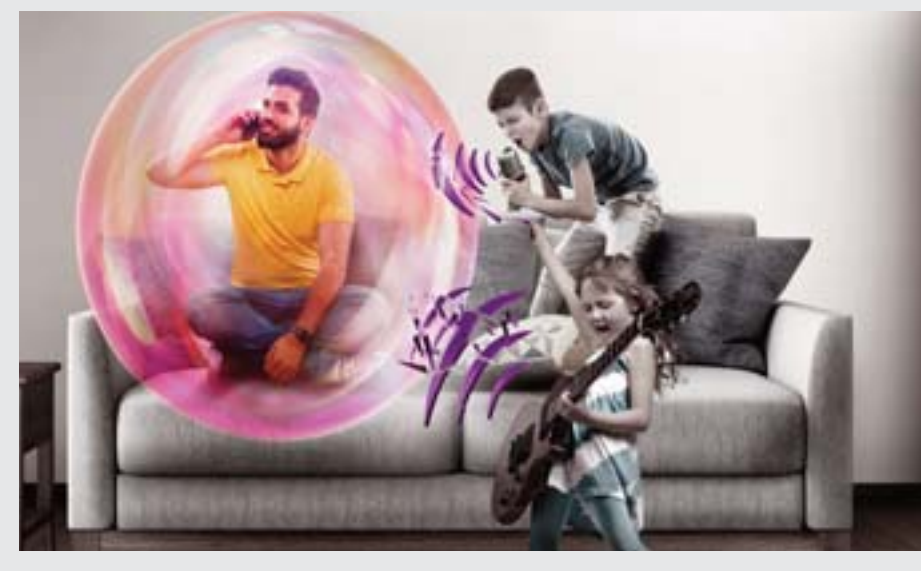
**KUWAIT:** VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, launched Voice over Long Term Evolution Plus 'VoLTE Plus' technology for users of iPhone 8, iPhone 8 Plus, and iPhone X and iOS 11.3 or higher (both caller and receiver). VIVA is first telecom operator in the region to offer this new service to its customers.

Through VoLTE, VIVA's customers will be able to experience combined voice and internet traffic seamlessly and simultaneously on LTE network. This allows customers conduct high-quality calls and video calls with no buffering and less background noise and enjoy unbeatable voice clarity experience. VIVA aims to provide its customers with an integrated and complete

voice and data solution as well as the latest in the world of technology.

Mr Abdulrazaq Bader Al-Essa, Corporate Communications Director at VIVA, commented: "We are always proactive at VIVA, providing unique and unrivaled services and products to our customers. We have pledged to enrich their lives through our innovative strategy and vision not only as a technology leader, but also as a truly customer-centric company." Starting today, iPhone customers on VIVA can make wideband, high-quality phone calls using Voice over LTE (VoLTE). Please see [www.viva.com.kw](http://www.viva.com.kw) for more details.

It's noteworthy to mention that VIVA was the first telecom company in the state of Kuwait to launch Voice LTE on June 2015 for Samsung users. To find out more about this new service, customers can visit one of VIVA's 89 branches, or VIVA's official website at [www.viva.com.kw](http://www.viva.com.kw), or access round the clock assistance from team of specialists available on the VIVA's customer care line.



## Malabar strengthens its new retail concept 'MGD - Lifestyle Jewelry'



**KUWAIT:** Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one among the largest jewelry retailers globally continues to expand and strengthen its latest retail concept: MGD - Lifestyle Jewelry by opening 27th store globally in Qatar. The latest store located at Mirqab Mall, Qatar was inaugurated by Shamlal Ahamed, Managing Director - International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds in the presence of Mr. Abdul Salam KP, Group Executive Director, Malabar Group, Santhosh TV, Regional Head - Qatar, Naufal Thadathil, Zonal Head - Qatar, other management team members, media & well-wishers on 29th June, 2018.

This concept focused on offering trendy and light weight jewelry that represents the independent and modern woman through its designs and collections. The vision of this retail concept is to be the preferred one-stop destination for lifestyle jewelry, offering unique designs and styles. The jewelry showcases at MGD - Lifestyle Jewelry are sourced from various parts of the world like Europe, Far East and Asia. The designs are inspired by the spirit of the youth and young adults keeping in mind what they would love in jewelry.

This concept will be seen at malls, depart-

ment stores, hotels, travel retail, inflight and high streets. Further to successfully operating the outlet, the group expanded the network internationally and currently operates 27 outlets across India, UAE, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Malaysia & Singapore. The group also has the plans to expand in the Middle East and Far East in the coming months.

MGD - Lifestyle Jewelry offers a wide range of trendy and light weight jewelry that includes 18K, 21K and 22K gold jewelry, diamond jewelry, uncut diamond jewelry, precious gem jewelry and pearl jewelry. These pieces of jewelry are designed in a way where can be used as practical, convenient and simple jewelry for daily use without compromising on service or quality. This concept targets the young at heart teenagers, working women and those fashion and style oriented individuals who are interested in new and unique jewelry at competitive prices. Also, the key features of this retail concept like transparency and assure quality, light weight, trendy and unique, and competitive pricing makes it an ideal gift for oneself and their loved ones. Furthermore, this concept also offers other benefits like cash buy back and lifetime free maintenance on jewelry.

## QNB organizes event at the Kuwait Center for mental health

**KUWAIT:** QNB Kuwait has recently organized a special celebration at the Kuwait Mental Health Center in the presence and participation of a large number of the Center's members and employees, supervisors and the



Bank's management. The event is part of QNB's commitment to supporting corporate social responsibility initiatives and programs aimed at promoting communication, social inclusion, and empowerment as an integral part of its overall strategy.

The celebration, which included a number of entertainment and various competitions, has given the participants a unique opportunity to interact. Valuable gifts were also distributed to the large number of partakers.

At the end of the event, the Kuwait Mental Health Center has awarded QNB Kuwait for organizing this humanitarian initiative and in recognition of its continuous support for vari-

ous health and social events in Kuwait.

It is worth mentioning that QNB has opened recently its second branch at the Avenues shopping mall of Kuwait, making it the first non-Kuwaiti bank to get the approval of the regulatory authorities in Kuwait to open a second branch.

QNB Group's presence through its subsidiaries and associate companies extends to more than 31 countries across three continents, providing a comprehensive range of advanced products and services. The total number of employees exceeds 28,000 operating through more than 1,200 locations, with an ATM network of over 4,300 machines.

## Al Tijari announces winner of the KD 500K Al-Najma draw

**KUWAIT:** Commercial Bank of Kuwait announced the winners of Al-Najma account's half yearly KD 500,000 and weekly draws live on 88.8 FM. The draw was conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Mr Abdulaziz Ashkanani. The Al Najma draw winners announced are as follows:-

Half Yearly Draw prize KD 500,000 - Taherah Abdullah Ghuloum Afeefi.

Weekly Draw prize KD 5,000 - Mohammad Aslam Fazal Hussain.

Mr Hameed Salman, GM- Retail Banking Division stated that the account prizes this year are featured by the highest cash prize and diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that Al-Najma Account will offer a weekly prize of KD 5,000, a monthly prize of KD 20,000 and a semi-annual prize of KD 500,000 in addition to the grand prize (the biggest prize in the world) of KD 1,500,000 for which the draw will be held in January 2019.



Mr Salman also stated that Al Najma Account can be opened by depositing KD 100, and customers should maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 to be eligible to enter all draws on Al-Najma Account prizes. As for the chances of winning, the more balance a customer maintains in Al Najma Account, the more chances the account holder will get to win, where each KD 25 will give the customer one chance to win, the account also offers additional benefits like the ATM card, a credit card against customer's account and all CBK banking services that customer can enjoy.

Now CBK existing customers can open an Al-Najma Account through Al-Tijari Online

and enter all draws without visiting the Bank's branch. However, CBK non-customers can submit account opening applications via the Bank's website where the Bank's Sales Unit will call them to arrange a visit to the customers to complete the account opening formalities.

Customers can obtain further information on Al-Najma Account by either calling the Service Center or by visiting the Bank's website [www.CBK.com](http://www.CBK.com) and they can also visit their nearest CBK branch where the Bank staff will be ready to serve them and respond to their queries. For more information related to the latest offers and services launched by the Bank please visit the Bank's social sites.

## Jazeera Airways introduces Starbucks onboard all flights

**KUWAIT:** Jazeera Airways, Kuwait's leading low-cost airline, operating regionally and internationally, yesterday started offering Starbucks coffee to passengers in its business class and economy class. Available on the Jazeera Cafe menu for economy class and complimentary for business class starting July 1st, 2018, the airline serves a range of Frappuccino beverages and other coffees whether hot or cold.

Jazeera Airways CEO Rohit Ramchandran said: "We are constantly upgrading our offering at Jazeera Airways and we are glad to partner with the brand of choice for coffee lovers around the world to bring premium quality products to our customers. We look forward to



a long-term partnership with Starbucks." Coffees served onboard the Jazeera Airways flights comprise the Starbucks VIA Colombia,

Frappuccino Mocha Chocolate, Frappuccino Coffee, Frappuccino Caramel, Frappuccino Vanilla and cold Doubleshot Espresso.



## Business

# Nicaragua's crisis deals a crushing blow to businesses large and small

## Business closings have left 200,000 people jobless

**MANAGUA:** With hotels, restaurants, bars, stores, workshops and even tortilla sellers driven out of business or struggling to survive, and with thousands of people left jobless, the turbulent political crisis sundering Nicaragua has taken a broader toll, plunging its economy into a tailspin. The wave of violence unleashed during harshly repressed anti-government protests has left some 220 people dead.

What had been a vibrant tourism industry has been devastated, with ripple effects on the broader economy in a country that was already one of the poorest in the Americas. Business closings have left 200,000 people jobless, and unless the crisis ends soon, some 1.3 million of Nicaragua's 6.2 million people "risk falling into poverty," according to a study by the Nicaraguan Foundation for Economic and Social Development (Funides).

The Nicaraguan central bank (BCN) has sharply lowered its projection for economic growth this year, from 4.9 percent to one percent, while the productive sector—including manufacturing and farming—has accumulated losses of \$430 million, with more than 85,000 jobs lost. But for Funides, the situation in the private sector is even "more dramatic." If the crisis continues into August, the foundation predicts the economy will contract by a jolting 5.6 percent, with losses of \$1.4 billion in GDP.

The demonstrations, which began April 18, were sparked by an unpopular social security reform. But after government forces responded with a repressive crackdown, protesters stepped up their demands, calling for the ouster of

President Daniel Ortega and his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo. "Ortega has no choice but to move up the elections" that are now set for 2021, as the Catholic bishops serving as mediators have suggested, former central bank president Mario Arana of Funides told AFP.

### Adios to the tourists

Tourism had been growing for the last decade, with more than a million visitors a year, luring foreign and domestic investment in hotels and airstrips, mainly along the Pacific coast. But now touristic areas like Granada, on the shores of Lake Nicaragua in the south, as well as the Pacific resorts and beaches, so recently teeming with visitors, are nearly empty.

Some tourist areas seem on the verge of collapse. The Hotel Mukul, part of the Auberge Resorts Collection on the southern Pacific coast, once attracted the likes of movie stars Michael Douglas, Catherine Zeta-Jones and Morgan Freeman. It has now "indefinitely" closed its doors. "The crisis... has negatively and dramatically affected the hospitality industry throughout the country, and Mukul is no exception," said a statement on the website of the hotel owned by multi-millionaire Carlos Pellas. "It has become necessary to suspend operations due to the country's loss in tourism and due to the lack of visits to the resort." No less dramatic was the closing of the famous Casa de los Mejia, owned by singer-songwriters Carlos and Luis Enrique Mejia Godoy, after 20 years in operation. A hostel owner in

Managua who gave his name only as Marcos said that the credit card company had sent someone to check his payment terminal because it had been inactive for so long. "They thought the machine was damaged, but we haven't had a guest in two months," he said.

Tour operators are reporting cancellation rates of more than 90 percent, said Claudia Aguirre, president of the Nicaraguan Association for Incoming Tourism. While the sector had been expecting revenues of \$924 million, it instead faces losses of \$231 million, the central bank said. According to the Nicaraguan Chamber of Tourism, at least 700 of the 2,000 bars and restaurants it counts as members have had to close their doors, along with 400 small hotels. Some 60,000 workers have lost their jobs.

### Like an earthquake

The crisis has hit big and small businesses alike. Many have tried to survive by cutting corners, trimming staff or sending workers on forced, unpaid vacations while they try to ride out the worst of the troubles. "I thought this was going to be over faster, but it has dragged on," the owner of a small plastics factory told AFP, requesting anonymity. He said his revenues had plummeted, and he has been unable to pay wages or make tax or social security payments.

"It breaks my heart" to lay off long-time employees, he said. His company has been in business for 50 years, even surviving the earthquake that destroyed central Managua in 1972. In



**MANAGUA:** A man works at a bucket factory in Managua on June 29, 2018. Hotels, restaurants, bars, small factories, stores and even tortilla vendors have lowered their sales leaving thousands unemployed in Nicaragua after 72 days of political crisis. — AFP

Masaya, in the south, Daysi Mercado's small dress-making business "collapsed" because there were no more customers. Because of the crisis, food — not clothing—has become the priority, she said.

On a street in Managua, Marina Oviedo, who buys and sells dollars, waves bundles of bills to attract customers. But no one comes. Her daily

average of \$30,000 in transactions before the crisis has fallen to a mere \$1,000. Oviedo explained that most of her customers are the owners of small businesses that have gone bust during the protests. "No one is investing," she said. "They say they're going to wait for everything to blow over." — AFP

## As stocks deplete, Greek fishermen scrap boats, livelihoods

**ASPROVALTA:** Panagiotis Pagonis stands on the deck of his fishing boat off Asprovalta in northern Greece, grimacing at another empty catch. "It's all gone to hell," the 72-year-old mutters as the early glimmer of dawn lights up the waters. Ten days later, he looks on as the mechanical arm of a bulldozer rips through his vessel, the Katerina, crushing a lifetime of memories. He has been at sea since he was a child. But the scrap yard takes just minutes.

Hundreds of fishermen like him are turning in their boats and their licences, partly because catches are down, partly because the EU and the Greek government are offering them cash to leave the trade, under a scheme to protect fish stocks. Europe's environment agency says those stocks have reached a critical level in the Mediterranean, with serious

implications for the people living on its shores who have found their food there for centuries.

Pagonis says the catch has fallen by 50 percent in recent years, a repercussion he believes of over-fishing, lack of regulation and pollution. That, together with higher running costs for his boat, forced his hand. "I have been doing this job for 67 years. I have travelled to practically all of Greece, and now, I have reached my limitations," he says. "I feel sad, I didn't want it to end this way."

Squeezed by an economic crisis which has sapped salaries and pensions and left a fifth of adult Greeks jobless, many fishermen have found the compensation too tempting to ignore. Payments range from 6,000 to 260,000 euros (\$7,000 to \$302,500), depending on the size of the boat. People can

simply turn in their licences and find something else to do with their vessel. But to get the full payment, they have to take their boat to the scrap yard.

"This is the option chosen mainly by the fishermen. While there is an option to switch its use, from a fishing vessel to a tourist or passenger vessel, there is a reduced subsidy," an agriculture ministry official says. It has had a knock-on effect on traditional shipbuilders. "They want to stop (over) fishing to protect the sea. But destroying boats will destroy us as well. So I think they are not doing something right," says shipbuilder Yannis Prasinos.

It is a painful process for Stelios Didonis, another fisherman giving up his boat at the scrap yard. "The sea is my entire life," the 48-year-old says. He is looking forward to resting for a month, tired from getting up at 4.00 a.m. for 30 years. But he is not sure what he will do after that. "I will think about it and see, I will do something, but whatever it is, it will be something that has to do with the sea. I cannot stay away from the sea." — Reuters

## German bond yields near five-week lows

**LONDON:** German 10-year bond yields dipped to five-week lows yesterday, pushed down by political uncertainty in Germany, trade war fears and an expectation that the ECB could buy more long-dated bonds from next year to keep euro zone borrowing costs in check. Analysts put the move down to a combination of factors, starting with political uncertainty at home.

Merkel is trying to solve a migration row with her conservative allies by holding more talks with her interior minister, whose offer to resign has cast doubt over whether her fragile government can survive. Escalating trade tensions globally also boosted demand for bond market safe havens.

Chinese shares notched up falls of up to 3 percent as firms awaited \$34 billion of US tariffs on Chinese goods this week and as new business surveys showed some worrying signs of deterioration. "Euro area yields are extremely compressed at the moment and what the market is trading off is tail risk," said Peter Chatwell, head of rates strategy at Mizuho in London. "The real momentum is because of trade wars and the impact on the economy and most significantly on the U.S. economy."

The yield on Germany's 10-year Bund fell 2 basis points to 0.284 percent, its lowest level in almost five weeks and towards more than one-year lows hit at the peak of a selloff in Italian bonds in late May. Later in the session there were reports that German Chancellor Angela Merkel was to meet with leaders of the other



**FRANKFURT:** Cupcakes are on offer during festivities to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Germany's share index DAX yesterday at the stock exchange. — AFP

parties that make up the coalition government yesterday. The German 10-year yield was set to close at 0.31 percent.

The gap between two and 10-year government bond yields in Germany, the euro zone's biggest economy and its benchmark debt issuer, narrowed to its tightest in a year at around 98 bps. "We are in an environment driven by increased uncertainty, whether that's trade wars or European politics or Italy," said Christian Lenk, a rates strategist at DZ Bank. "That adds to the picture that investors are happy to own safer assets over the summer months."

Most other 10-year euro zone bond yields were flat on the day, though Southern European bond yields edged lower by 3-4 bps towards the

end of the session. But the mood was still fragile — European stocks, for instance, were down 0.6 percent on the day. On Friday, Reuters reported that the European Central Bank is considering buying more long-dated bonds from next year to keep euro zone borrowing costs in check even after it stops pumping fresh money into the economy, according to sources.

The move would be reminiscent of the US Federal Reserve's Operation Twist of 1961 and 2011, which saw it replace short-dated paper with longer-term debt to support an ailing economy. Analysts said the ECB report helped support long-dated German bonds, although any further flattening in the German yield curve was likely to be limited. — Reuters

## US factory activity accelerates with construction spending up

**WASHINGTON:** A measure of US manufacturing activity surged in June likely as steel and aluminum tariffs caused disruptions to the supply chains, resulting in factories taking longer to deliver goods. The Institute for Supply Management (ISM) said yesterday its index of national factory activity jumped to a reading of 60.2 last month from 58.7 in May. A reading above 50 in the ISM index indicates an expansion in manufacturing, which accounts for about 12 percent of the US economy.

"Demand remains robust, but the nation's employment resources and supply chains continue to struggle," said Timothy Fiore, chair of the ISM Manufacturing Business Survey Committee. "Respondents are overwhelmingly

concerned about how tariff-related activity is and will continue to affect their business." The United States is engaged in tit-for-tat trade tariffs with its major trade partners, including China, Canada, Mexico and the European Union. Analysts fear the tariffs could disrupt supply chains, undercut business investment and potentially wipe out the fiscal stimulus from a \$1.5 trillion tax cut package.

President Donald Trump claims that the United States is being taken advantage of by its trade partners. The ISM's supplier deliveries sub-index soared 6.2 points to 68.2 last month. A lengthening in suppliers' delivery time is normally associated with increased activity, which is a positive contribution to the ISM index. The

survey's new orders index slipped as did the measure of factory employment. The prices paid index also fell last month. US financial markets were little move by the data. A separate report from the Commerce Department yesterday showed construction spending increased 0.4 percent in May. Data for April was revised down to show construction outlays rising 0.9 percent instead of the previously reported 1.8 percent surge. The government revised the construction spending data going back to January 2011 in the May report.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast construction spending gaining 0.5 percent in May. Construction spending accelerated 4.5 percent on a year-on-year basis. The downward revision to April data could see economists cut further their second-quarter gross domestic product estimates. Growth forecasts for the April-June period were slashed on Friday after the government reported weaker-than-expected consumer spending in May. — Reuters

## Iraq in talks with Turkey over Kirkuk oil exports

**BAGHDAD:** Iraq is still in talks with Turkey and Kurdish regional authorities to resume Kirkuk oil exports through the Ceyhan port, Iraqi Oil Minister Jabar Al-Luaibi told state-run newspaper Al-Sabah yesterday. "The decision to restart exports depends on the results of the talks," Luaibi was quoted by Al-Sabah as saying. Production from Iraq's Kirkuk oilfields is currently at 220,000 barrels per day, which is entirely diverted to local refineries, Luaibi said.

Exports from Kirkuk's oilfields were halted after an Iraq military offensive to retake the disputed territories which had come under Kurdish control in 2014. The offensive was a response to the independence referendum held on Sept 25 by the semi-autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), which Baghdad

opposed. Kirkuk oil exports had been transported by a Kurdish-operated pipeline that connects to the twin Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline at Khabur on the border with Turkey. Late last year, Iraq began diverting output from Kirkuk oilfields to local refineries to boost fuel production and help free up more oil for exports from southern oilfields.

Iraq also agreed last year to ship crude from Kirkuk to Iran for use in its refineries, after which Iran would deliver the same amount of oil to Iraq's southern ports. Iraq's oil minister said last month Iraq and Iran had not yet begun exchanging crude oil, for technical reasons. Kirkuk is one of the oldest and oldest oilfields in the Middle East, estimated to contain about 9 billion barrels of recoverable oil, according to BP. — Reuters



**BRUSSELS:** President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker looks on as he gives a joint press conference with European Council President and Bulgaria's Prime Minister on the sidelines of an European Union leaders' summit, without Britain, to discuss Brexit and eurozone reforms on June 29, 2018 at the Europa building. — AFP

## Three quarters of big UK firms down on Brexit

**LONDON:** A record 75 percent of major British companies are now pessimistic about Brexit, a survey showed yesterday, adding to signs of anxiety around the economy as Britain's divorce with the European Union draws near. Weak investment and waning expectations for sales marked Deloitte's latest quarterly survey of chief financial officers (CFOs), watched by the Bank of England as a gauge of business confidence.

The proportion of CFOs who said Brexit was likely to hurt the business environment was up from 68 percent in the previous Deloitte CFO survey published in April. With nine months to go until Britain leaves the EU, Deloitte said more large British companies than at any time since late 2012 had adopted a defensive financial strategy. The accountancy firm's report chimed with a Lloyds Bank survey last week that showed optimism across British businesses about the outlook has faded to its lowest level this year.

Britain will leave the European Union in March 2019 but a transitional trade agree-

ment has still to be finalized amid disagreements among Prime Minister Theresa May's team over Britain's future relationship with Europe. Last month, multinational companies Airbus and Siemens warned their investments in Britain could be at risk if Britain leaves the EU without a deal. They directly employ about 30,000 people in Britain.

"Uncertainty about the timing and the nature of the Brexit settlement has added to CFOs' worries about the final destination of the Brexit process," Deloitte Chief Economist Ian Stewart said. "The boost to CFOs' spirits we saw in the last survey, following the announcement of the Brexit transition deal, has been short-lived." A net 17 percent of large companies said they expected revenues to rise in the coming 12 months, down from 31 percent in the first quarter of the year, the survey showed.

And only 10 percent of large companies said increasing capital spending was a strong priority, down from 12 percent in the last survey. Official data last week showed business investment fell 0.4 percent in the first quarter, the sharpest fall since late 2016. The Deloitte survey took place between June 3 and June 14, with 103 CFOs, including 20 executives from FTSE 100 companies and 45 from the FTSE 250 group, taking part. Another closely-watched business survey, the IHS Markit/CIPS survey of the manufacturing industry, is due at 0830 GMT. — Reuters



Health

# Rising incidences of Inflammatory bowel disease in Kuwait: Experts

## IBD is associated with higher rates of anxiety and depression in patients

**KUWAIT:** On the occasion of World IBD Day, leading experts in Kuwait are raising awareness on the growing incidence of Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) among communities. Inflammatory bowel disease refers to two disorders, ulcerative colitis (UC) and Crohn's disease (CD), that involve chronic inflammation of the digestive tract. In IBD, the normal immune response is overactive in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract within the digestive system. This causes inflammation of the GI tract, which can result in swelling, blockage, and infections. There is no known cause for UC or CD, although many researchers believe that the interaction between genes, the body's immune system, and environmental factors may play a role. Often diagnosed during young adulthood, UC and CD are debilitating diseases that patients have to manage throughout their lives.

"Living with these conditions has a major impact on a patient's physical and emotional wellbeing, and can greatly affect social interactions with family life, work or studies. There are high unmet needs and challenges that people face, especially in managing the

disease progression. Gaining further insight into the complex science of these diseases and continuing the development of new treatment options is of critical importance," said Doctor Ahmad Awaad, Consultant Gastroenterology & Hepatology in Haya Al-Habib Gastroenterology Center in Kuwait.

**'Innovative medicines'**

Ulcerative colitis impacts only the colon and rectum, which is the large intestine, and is marked by ulcers (open sores). The most common symptoms of UC include abdominal discomfort and blood or pus in diarrhea. On the other hand, Crohn's disease can impact any part of the digestive tract. Common symptoms may include abdominal pain, diarrhea, rectal bleeding, weight loss, and fever.

"At Takeda, we aim to improve the lives of patients with gastrointestinal diseases through the delivery of innovative medicines that target the underlying disease drivers. Our ongoing dedication to advanced research in the field of IBD is rooted in our deep understanding of the challenges that dictate the unique needs for

both people living with IBD and the physicians who treat them. Going beyond medicine, we are taking a closer look at the patient experience from various perspectives and working to provide tools for better disease management," expressed Maged Kamel, Executive Director Medical & Regulatory & QA at Takeda Near East, Middle East & Africa.

When IBD is suspected based on someone's symptoms and medical history, a series of tests is used to confirm the diagnosis. These tests may include a blood test, stool sample, endoscopic procedure and an imaging procedure. Treatment may take the form of medications, surgery, nutritional supplementation, or a combination of these options. The goals of treatment are to induce remission, prevent disease flare-ups, and improve quality of life. Various stakeholders including governments, communities, hospitals and the pharmaceutical industry can play a collaborative role in increasing awareness about IBD in Kuwait and the region, and become active advocates in improving the lives of people living with ulcerative colitis (UC) and Crohn's disease (CD).



Dr Ahmad Awaad



Maged Kamel

CLINIC

PAGE





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Health

# Climate change leads to sinking of Arctic archeological treasures

‘Once destroyed, these resources are gone forever’

OTTAWA: A mad rush is needed to preserve or catalogue thousands of Arctic archeological sites before they are washed away by warming hastening the thaw of permafrost and coastal erosion, a study said Thursday. For millennia, the cold has conserved ivory artifacts, driftwood houses and human remains in often near-perfect conditions.

But with faster and more severe climate change in the poles than the rest of the world, the situation has become desperate, with far more sites that will soon be lost than scientists have the time or resources to document. “An increasing number of ancient sites and structures around the world are now at risk of being lost,” said the study published Thursday in the research journal *Antiquity*. “Once destroyed, these resources are gone forever, with irrevocable loss of human heritage and scientific data.”

There are at least 180,000 sites in an area that covers more than 12 million square kilometers (4.6 million square miles) in Canada, Russia, Alaska and Greenland. Researchers pointed to an Inuit village on the Mackenzie River delta that was the site of first European contact, as an example of lost heritage. In 1826, a member of explorer John Franklin’s famed Arctic expedition reported 17 winter houses and a communal structure there. Today, there is nothing left.

“It is often assumed that the remoteness and the climate associated with these sites provide protection enough... however, climate change means that this may no longer be the case,” the study concluded, noting that Arctic temperatures have risen twice as fast as in temperate regions. Paradoxically, their remoteness also make it hard for scientists to reach these sites.

**World’s ‘greatest heritage catastrophe’**

Thousands of years of heritage are being lost, Matthew

Betts, a curator at the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau, Quebec, who researches coastal erosion but was not involved in the study, told AFP. Last month, he organized a panel of 30 archeologists and indigenous leaders to brainstorm an emergency response to the “crisis.”

“It’s the greatest heritage catastrophe in the world right now,” he said. “It’s happening all over but Canada has the world’s largest coastline so we’re at the apex of the crisis.” Other effects of global warming cited in the study include storms, the growth of vegetation covering the landscape, tundra fires, resource development, and the arrival of tourists navigating increasingly ice-free Arctic waters and illegally picking over coastal archeological sites for souvenirs.

Preservation is the best option for saving these treasures, but is very costly. For most archeological sites, experts are recommending excavation and high resolution documentation—which includes the collection of artifacts, mapping out their exact locations and compiling the data for later study.

“People are saying there’s no time, we must just dig it out of the ground before it’s washed away,” Betts said. “That’s the level of crisis that we’re at now.” He noted also that indigenous rights are being negatively affected by the losses. In Canada, land claims must be supported by archeological evidence, he explained. “So as that heritage washes away, their ability to assert their rights is being destroyed,” he said.

Jorgen Hollesen, an environmental archeologist with the National Museum of Denmark, told the daily *Globe and Mail* that indigenous youth in southern Greenland were also losing out on opportunities to engage with their cultural heritage, as a result of the decay. “It will be a great shame if future generations will not have the opportunity to learn from the past as we have,” he said. — AFP



This handout photograph obtained June 28, 2018 courtesy of Parcs Canada shows a sonar scan of Arctic explorer Sir John Franklin’s lost ship, HMS Erebus, on the ocean floor. — AFP

## Air pollution plays significant role in diabetes: Study

PARIS: Air pollution caused one in seven new cases of diabetes in 2016, according to a US study, which found even low levels raised the chances of developing the chronic disease. Diabetes has primarily been associated with lifestyle factors like diet and a sedentary lifestyle, but research by the Washington University School of Medicine in St Louis said pollution also plays a major role.

The study estimated that pollution contributed to 3.2 million new diabetes cases globally in 2016 — or around 14 percent of all new diabetes cases globally that year. “Our research shows a significant link between air pollution and diabetes globally,” said Ziyad Al-Aly, the study’s senior author. Pollution is thought to reduce the body’s insulin production, “preventing the body from converting blood glucose into energy that the body needs to maintain health,” according to the research.

Al-Aly said the research, published in the *Lancet Planetary Health*, found an increased risk even with levels of air pollution currently considered safe by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the World Health Organization (WHO). “This is important because many industry lobbying groups argue that current levels are too stringent and should be relaxed. Evidence shows that current levels are still not sufficiently safe and need to be tightened,” he added.

**‘A strong link’**

Researchers working with scientists at the Veterans Affairs’ Clinical Epidemiology Center, examined data from 1.7 million US veterans who did not have histories of diabetes and were followed for a median of 8.5 years. Patient information from the veterans was compared to air quality



KANPUR: In this photograph taken on June 1, 2018, an Indian patient suffering from breathing problems undergoes an X-ray at the Murari Lal Chest Hospital in Kanpur. The city of three million people has been smarting since a World Health Organization (WHO) report last month put Kanpur at the head of 14 Indian cities in the world’s top 15 with the dirtiest air. — AFP

information to examine the relationship between pollution and diabetes risk.

The scientists found the risk of developing diabetes “exhibited a strong link to air pollution”. They then devised a model to gauge diabetes risks over different

pollution levels and used data from the annual worldwide Global Burden of Disease study, to estimate the prevalence of diabetes caused by bad air. Diabetes affects more than 420 million people globally and is one of the world’s fastest growing diseases. — AFP

## China aims to outstrip NASA with super-powerful rocket

BEIJING: China is working on a super-powerful rocket that would be capable of delivering heavier payloads into low orbit than NASA, a leading Chinese space expert was quoted as said yesterday. By 2030, the Long March-9 rocket under development will be able to carry 140 tons into low-Earth orbit—where TV and earth observation satellites currently fly—said Long Lehao, a senior official from the Chinese Academy of Engineering, according to the official Xinhua news agency.

This compares to the 20 tons deliverable by Europe’s Ariane 5 rocket or the 64 tons by Elon Musk’s Falcon Heavy, which in February catapulted one of the US entrepreneur’s red Tesla Roadster cars towards Mars. It would also outstrip the 130 tons of NASA’s Space Launch System, which is due to become operational in 2020.

China’s Long March-9 would have a core stage measuring 10 meters in diameter and boast four powerful boosters, each with a diameter of five meters. Xinhua quoted Long as saying the rocket could be used in manned lunar landings, deep space exploration or constructing a space-based solar power plant.

In addition, China is working on a reusable space rocket, which is expected to make its maiden flight in 2021. The first stage and the boosters will be retrieved after a vertical landing, Long said in a speech in Beijing. China is pouring billions into its military-run space program, with hopes of having a crewed space station by 2022, and of sending humans to the Moon in the near future. The Asian superpower is looking to finally catch up with the US and Russia after years of belatedly matching their space milestones. China is also planning to build a base on the moon, the state-run Global Times said in early March, citing the Communist Party chief of the China Academy of Space Technology.

**Airbus sticking to delivery targets**

In related news, Airbus said it is sticking to its target of 800 aircraft deliveries this year, despite problems with getting timely delivery of new fuel-efficient engines for its A320neo jets. “We’re sticking to our target of delivering 800 jets this year,” a spokesman for the European plane maker told AFP.

According to a report by Bloomberg yesterday, setbacks with the supply of engines by Pratt & Whitney, which are being fitted into nearly half of the medium-haul A320neo jets, could jeopardise Airbus’s overall annual delivery target.

The report sent Airbus shares into a tailspin on the Paris stock exchange yesterday, where they fell nearly three percent at the opening. At around 1100 GMT, they were showing a loss of around 2.1 percent at 98.09 euros, while the overall market was down by 1.1 percent. Problems with the engines of both the Pratt & Whitney and those jointly developed by Safran and General Electric have led to delays in the delivery of A320neo jets to clients.

Airbus had said in April that its ability to meet its delivery targets this year would depend on the engine makers meeting their deadlines. But engine delivery has been consistently late for two years. Nonetheless, in 2017, Airbus delivered a record 718 planes, exceeding the target of 700. The jet maker had also exceeded its objective in 2016, with 688 planes delivered to clients.

Airbus is now aiming even higher, as it seeks to increase the production rate of its A320neo in order to meet demand. “I say from a commercial point of view, from a demand point of view, we absolutely see a strong basis to support a rate even going higher,” CEO Tom Enders said in April. He also said Airbus expected to deliver 800 aircraft this year, even as he conceded: “It is not going to be a walk in the park”. The plane maker currently aims to produce 63 A320neo jets a month from now through to the second half of 2019. — AFP



TOKYO: This photo taken on June 22, 2017 shows a man smoking a cigarette at a Yakitori bar. — AFP

prevent the illegal trade in the first place, by obligating parties to for instance use non-removable markings and to coordinate globally to detect illegal tobacco trading. Agents, suppliers and tobacco manufacturers will all have to be licensed. Manufacturers will have to carry out checks on customers to ensure they are genuine or if they have associations with criminal organisations.

Under the pact, countries will also be obliged to establish “tracking and tracing” systems, at the national, regional and international levels, within five years. The European Commission’s Tobacco Products Directive has been criticised for allegedly relying on tobacco companies themselves to handle the tracing aspect, sparking questions over whether it might be forced to change track once the new treaty takes effect.

Asked about what role tobacco companies would be permitted to play under the new pact, da Costa e Silva said the final format would only be determined during a first meeting of the members of the treaty, in Geneva from October 8-10. “There are open questions that we will only be able to handle with the meeting of the parties,” she said. She insisted that the new treaty amounted to “a war against illicit trade.” The current parties to the protocol will have the instruments ... to implement provisions to exterminate, eliminate the illicit trade of tobacco products.” — AFP

## Amazon to buy PillPack in move into pharmacy

WASHINGTON: Amazon unveiled plans to get into the pharmacy business with the acquisition of the online service PillPack. Terms were not disclosed on the deal for PillPack, an online pharmacy which operates in all 50 US states and offers pre-sorted dose packaging and home delivery. Amazon has long been rumored to be interested in the pharmacy business, and its entry could disrupt a business dominated by large American chains such as CVS and Walgreens.

“PillPack’s visionary team has a combination of deep pharmacy experience and a focus on technology,” said Jeff Wilke, head of Amazon Worldwide Consumer. “PillPack is meaningfully improving its customers’ lives, and we want to help them continue making it easy for people to save time, simplify their lives, and feel healthier. We’re excited to see what we can do together on behalf of customers over time.”

CVS shares tumbled 8.6 percent in pre-market trade on the news, while Walgreens slumped 8.5 percent. Amazon and PillPack said they expected to close the deal by the end of the year, subject to regulatory approval. TJ Parker, co-founder and CEO of PillPack, said the company which specializes in handling dose packaging and coordinates refills and renewals will benefit from a tie-up with Amazon. “Together with Amazon, we are eager to continue working with partners across the healthcare industry to help people throughout the US who can benefit from a better pharmacy experience,” Parker said in a statement. — AFP

## Pact to curb illicit tobacco trade to take effect in September

GENEVA: The World Health Organization announced that a “game-changing” global pact to battle the illegal tobacco trade would soon kick into action, after Britain became the 40th country to join. The UN health body said that with the ratification by Britain and Northern Ireland on Wednesday, “the necessary number of parties to the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products has been reached.”

That means the treaty, which aims to create an international tracking system with the goal of halting the smuggling and counterfeiting of tobacco, will take effect after 90 days, or on September 25. “It’s a historic day in the fight against tobacco,” WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a Tweet, describing the entry into force of the treaty as “a vital step towards a tobacco-free world.”

When the pact was first announced in November, 2012, Tedros’s predecessor Margaret Chan described it as “a game-changing treaty”. “This is how we hem in the enemy,” she said at the time, addressing a meeting in Seoul of WHO’s Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), calling the new pact a major step towards “eliminating a very sophisticated criminal activity”.

About 10 percent of the global cigarette market is estimated to go through illicit trade, according to Vera Luiza da Costa e Silva, who heads the FCTC secretariat. Due to the shadiness implicit in the illicit trade, the scope of the problem is unclear, and WHO could not provide any specific numbers on how much it might be worth. According to Euromonitor International however, overall cigarette retail values in 2016 were worth \$683.4 billion, so the annual value of illicit cigarette sales alone could conceivably be valued at around a tenth of that, not to mention other tobacco products.

**‘Big public health problem’**

“Illicit trade in tobacco products is a big public health problem,” da Costa e Silva told journalists in Geneva, adding that “it also has an impact on countries’ revenues.” It is estimated that some \$30 billion a year are lost in tax revenues due to this illicit trade. A major aim of the new treaty is to



Stars

CROSSWORD 1949



ACROSS

- Thin fibrous bark of the paper mulberry and *Pipturus albidus*.
  - A tiny or scarcely detectable amount.
  - A strong emotion.
  - South American armadillo with three bands of bony plates.
  - (plural) Rare collector's items.
  - Someone who is morally reprehensible.
  - Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
  - Extraordinarily good.
  - An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
  - (meaning literally "born") Used to indicate the maiden or family name of a married woman.
  - (prosody) Of or consisting of iambs.
  - Deliberately arranged for effect.
  - Relating to or existing on or affecting the skin.
  - An open box attached to a long pole handle.
  - A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
  - Prolific Spanish playwright (1562-1635).
  - The capital of Morocco.
  - A historic division of Ireland located in the northeastern part of the island.
  - Clothing of a distinctive style or for a particular occasion.
  - A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
  - Any of various hard resins from trees of the family Dipterocarpaceae and of the genus *Agathis*.
  - A public promotion of some product or service.
  - The most common computer memory which can be used by programs to perform necessary tasks while the computer is on.
  - United States naturalist (born in Switzerland) who studied fossil fish.
  - A transparent optical device used to converge or diverge transmitted light and to form images.
  - A member of the North American Indian people formerly living in the Colorado river valley in Arizona and Nevada and California.
  - Made agreeably cold (especially by ice).
  - Growing a crystal layer of one mineral on the crystal base of another mineral in such a manner that its crystalline orientation is the same as that of the substrate.
  - An air pump operated by hand to inflate something (as a tire).
  - The cry made by sheep.
  - Malayan tree bearing spiny red fruit.
  - A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
  - A mature blood cell that contains hemoglobin to carry oxygen to the bodily tissues.
  - (especially of plants) Developed without chlorophyll by being deprived of light.
  - A serve that strikes the net before falling into the receiver's court.
  - Owed and payable immediately or on demand.
  - Located farthest to the rear.
  - An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
- DOWN**
- The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
  - Someone who copies the words or behavior of another.
  - A metabolic acid found in yeast and liver cells.
  - A peninsula between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.
  - A soft silver-white or yellowish metallic element of the alkali metal group.
  - Pouch used in the shipment of mail.
  - A heavy brittle metallic element of the platinum group.
  - English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
  - Any of numerous agile ruminants related to sheep but having a beard and straight horns.
  - An Asian river.
  - A person who travels through the water by swimming.
  - The formation of frost or ice on a surface.
  - (the feminine of raja) A Hindu princess or the wife of a raja.
  - Having a specified kind of border or edge.
  - An independent ruler or chieftain (especially in Africa or Arabia).
  - Fodder harvested while green and kept succulent by partial fermentation as in a silo.
  - A port in northern Belgium on the Scheldt river.
  - (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
  - The amount that a container (as a wine bottle or tank) lacks of being full.
  - Dutch navigator who was the first European to discover Tasmania and New Zealand (1603-1659).
  - A hard brittle blue-white multivalent metallic element.
  - Of or relating to or containing barium.
  - Lower in esteem.
  - Brought from wildness into a domesticated state.
  - Adornment consisting of a bunch of cords fastened at one end.
  - A radioactive element of the actinide series.
  - A Chadic language spoken in northern Nigeria.
  - Accumulation in the blood of nitrogen-bearing waste products (urea) that are usually excreted in the urine.
  - An uproarious party.
  - Reproduce someone's behavior or looks.
  - Old World vine with lobed evergreen leaves and black berrylike fruits.
  - The dynasty that ruled much of Manchuria and northeastern China from 947 to 1125.
  - A place where ships can take on or discharge cargo.
  - An edge tool with a heavy bladed head mounted across a handle.
  - A manicurist who trims the fingernails.
  - French painter whose work influenced the impressionists (1832-1883).
  - (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
  - The front of the head from the forehead to the chin and ear to ear.
  - Informal or slang terms for mentally irregular.
  - An island in Indonesia east of Java.
  - In bed.
  - A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
  - European cave-dwelling aquatic salamander with permanent external gills.
  - An adherent of any branch of Taoism.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You may find your priorities shifting today. You may be determined to make all right in your world. Forgiveness and understanding others seems to take the front seat today. You may be finding yourself looking deeper when it comes to other's feelings. You desire to know what makes them act and react to situations the way they do. You start to realize everyone has a story and everyone has a past and just as your past guides your decisions they are allowing theirs to lead them. When you start to put this into perspective you find yourself being more tolerant to others around you. It is much easier to forgive when you feel you have been done wrong when you realize the reasons for other's actions.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Don't be surprised if you cross paths today with someone who just doesn't sit right with you. You have a feeling that something about them just isn't right. You may feel as if you want to get away from this person as soon as possible. Your virtues are simple. You prefer this way of life. Today may be a day you are having difficulty with focus and performing your daily tasks. You seem in a dreamy mood and unable to snap back. Deep in thought you seem to have too much on your mind. This may be a good time to sit back and reorganize and restructure your surroundings and goals. You are in a way shutting down due to an emotional overload.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Today finds you talkative and ideas are flowing freely. What a great time to let your creative juices flow! You may find yourself feeling overloaded with ideas and others may not be able to keep up or totally understand what you have to say to them. Don't forget to step back and take a breath. You may find yourself easily excitable and over emotional as these ideas run through your head. Even though your communication skills may not be on point today and you may find yourself at odds with those close to you, your day will be very productive and self-satisfying. Gemini. Today would be great for writing or journaling. These are ideas you value and want to make note of.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may find yourself entering a period of soul-searching. You may feel as if you are feeding off of the mystical, emotional, and instinctive qualities you possess. There is great depth to these feelings. You feel led to be forgiving, understanding, and compassionate to all in your life. You may experience relationships being mended today and barriers dissolving. This is a time of peace in your life. You also start to turn your focus to your health and diet. This decision will pay off with great reward. Today would be a great day to join the gym, start working on meal planning, or get out and take a walk to jumpstart your plan.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You may find yourself entering a period of soul-searching. You may feel as if you are feeding off of the mystical, emotional, and instinctive qualities you possess. There is great depth to these feelings. You feel led to be forgiving, understanding, and compassionate to all in your life. You may experience relationships being mended today and barriers dissolving. This is a time of peace in your life. You also start to turn your focus to your health and diet. This decision will pay off with great reward. Today would be a great day to join the gym, start working on meal planning, or get out and take a walk to jumpstart your plan.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You may find yourself entering a period of soul-searching. You may feel as if you are feeding off of the mystical, emotional, and instinctive qualities you possess. There is great depth to these feelings. You feel led to be forgiving, understanding, and compassionate to all in your life. You may experience relationships being mended today and barriers dissolving. You may find yourself analyzing situations and experiences you have had and developing a greater understanding of exactly what led you to the position you were you are in your life today. This will lead to an emotionally healthier you.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Today may find you feeling as you encounter a road block at every turn. Perhaps, today is not the day for big decisions. You may find yourself a bit frustrated and preferring a bit of isolation. You are simply not in the mood for people. You may feel as if you are not able to get your point across to anyone and may feel greatly misunderstood. You could find yourself at odds with those close to you and should remember to try and remain calm as conflict and confrontation seem to be seeking your company today. Today would be a great day for reorganizing and reflection to get yourself back where you want to be.



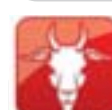
Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You are well aware that no one is perfect. Lately you have been deeply considering what others do what they do. Through much soul searching you have come to conclusion that are more compassionate approach to your relationships with others is in order. This new outlook on life will help you mean relationships and forgiveness will play a big role in your life. You seem greatly sensitive and possibly even more spiritual and in touch with your psychic abilities at this time. You see to sense what others need and find yourself being more sympathetic and giving. You may find yourself the recipient of many compliments.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You may find your life taking on a kind of mystical quality on the emotional and instinctive levels. Dreams and illusions, forgiveness and understanding of human frailties are the things that arouse deep feelings. The past and the future come together. The stumbling blocks between people seem to dissolve on their own. This is the key to the greater psychic and spiritual sensitivity that you may be feeling now. Everything surrounding you and everyone you encounter seem to bring out the best in you.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may find yourself entering a period of soul-searching. You may feel as if you are feeding off of the mystical, emotional, and instinctive qualities you possess. There is great depth to these feelings. You feel led to be forgiving, understanding, and compassionate to all in your life. You may experience relationships being mended today and barriers dissolving. This is a time of peace in your life. This could be a great day for breakthroughs and answers to questions you have been debating concerning your living situation may become clear.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

It seems this is a great time to surround yourself with friends and do a little partying. Get ready for a great time. You may find a great appreciation for where you are in life and the success you have gained. You find much support from close friends and family as this time in your life. Your life takes on an almost mystical quality. You focus on making your dreams a reality and you find yourself becoming very understanding and caring for others. It seems you have forgiveness in your heart and are determined to mend fences and repair relationships in your life that you have problems with. This new outlook brings much happiness and peace into your world.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Seems as if today may be a day of confrontation for you. You may be approached by someone who has something offensive or even inappropriate to you. There is something about this person that just doesn't sit right with you. This may be a time you have to exercise a great deal of patience to be able to deal with this person. Remember some things are best left unsaid and sometimes you just have to turn the other cheek and walk away. Keep your cool and remain calm when confronted today.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Songs From the Year 2001

Find and circle all of the songs from 2001 that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 22 letters spell an additional song title from 2001.

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

AGAIN ALL FOR YOU ANGEL AUSTIN BE LIKE THAT BEAUTIFUL DAY BUTTERFLY CONTAGIOUS CRAZY DANCE WITH ME DIFFERENCES DIG IN

DRIVE EMOTION EVERYWHERE FAMILY AFFAIR FIESTA FILL ME IN FOLLOW ME HERO I WISH IRRESISTIBLE JADEO

KRYPTONITE LADY MARMALADE LOVE MISSING YOU MOST GIRLS MUSIC MY BABY ONE MORE DAY ONLY TIME OOCHEE WALLY OUTSIDE

PLAY PROMISE RIDE WIT ME SOUTH SIDE STUTTER SURVIVOR THANK YOU U REMIND ME VIDEO WALK ON WHO I AM

Yesterday's Solution

Songs From the Year 2000

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

AMAZED AMERICAN PIE BACK AT ONE BACK HERE BAG LADY BE WITH YOU BEAUTIFUL DAY BEAT BREATHE BROADWAY BYE BYE BYE

DESERT ROSE FADED GIRL ON TV HIGHER HOT BOYZ I LIKE IT I NEED YOU I TRY I WANNA KNOW I WISH

CALIFORNICATION DESERT ROSE GIRL ON TV HIGHER HOT BOYZ I LIKE IT I NEED YOU I TRY I WANNA KNOW OTHERSIDE

INCOMPLETE JUMPIN' JUMPIN' KRYPTONITE LUCKY MARIA MARIA MEET VIRGINIA MINORITY MOST GIRLS MUSIC NO MORE OTHERSIDE

PINCH ME SAY MY NAME SEPARATED SHE BANGS SMOOTH STAN STRONGER THERE YOU GO TRY AGAIN WIFEY WONDERFUL

The hidden message is: SHOW ME THE MEANING OF BEING LONELY

Yesterday's Solution

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

Daily Sudoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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



# Lifestyle

TUESDAY, JULY 3, 2018



A model presents a creation by Schiaparelli during the 2018-2019 Fall/Winter Haute Couture collection fashion show in Paris, yesterday. — AFP

## To Infinity: Toy Story Land opening at Disney in Florida



A statue of the character Sheriff Woody greets visitors at the entrance Toy Story Land in Disney's Hollywood Studios at Walt Disney World in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. — AP photos



Buzz Lightyear stands near the entrance to the Aliens Swirling Saucers ride.



Buzz Lightyear interacts with guests at Toy Story Land.



The character Jessie pulls on a string of giant lights tangled around Rex the dinosaur at Toy Story Land.

For children of the mid-1990s, Disney's new Toy Story Land offers the opportunity to visit the imaginary world they grew up in. For their parents, it brings back sweet memories of a magical time of toys and make-believe. And for everyone else, the new theme park land offers a whimsical experience from the moment a nearly 20-foot (6-meter) statue of Sheriff Woody welcomes guests as if they are honorary toys in Andy's backyard. "We are welcoming everyone who has ever dreamed of being a part of their own 'Toy Story,'" said Bob Chapek, Disney's chairman of parks, experiences and consumer products, speaking Friday at an opening ceremony.

The new 11-acre land inspired by the movie "Toy Story" opens to the public Saturday at Disney's Hollywood Studios just outside Orlando. Tim Allen, the voice of Buzz Lightyear in the films, made a surprise guest appearance at the Friday event. "Somehow you never imagined you would be able to play in Andy's backyard," Allen said. "This is just amazing."

The opening of Toy Story Land is one of the most anticipated events at U.S. theme parks this year. And it continues Disney's tradition of bringing movies to life. Last year, Pandora-World of Avatar opened at the Florida theme park. Next year, lands themed on "Star

Wars" open at Disney parks here and in California. But visitors to Toy Story Land will never actually lay eyes on Andy, the human boy who owns the toys in the "Toy Story" films. According to the park's story line, he's just been called inside by his mother, leaving his toys - and you - scattered in the backyard.

"As in the 'Toy Story' films, when the humans go away, the toys come to life," said Dave Minichiello, executive creative director of Toy Story Land. "We've tried to include most of the moments and characters in the 'Toy Story' films in the new land." But you will find other favorite characters - Sheriff Woody, Buzz Lightyear, Jessie, Slinky Dog, Mr Potato Head and the Green Army Patrol - in the brightly colored land, along with two new rides: Slinky Dog Dash and Alien Swirling Saucers. They join the pre-existing Toy Story Mania ride, which has been one of the most popular attractions at Hollywood Studios since it debuted in 2008. Toy Story Mania gets a colorful new entrance in the new Toy Story Land.

### Female characters

Once inside, guests "magically make a transition," appearing to become equal in size to a toy because of the scale of the attractions, said Minichiello. In fact, he added, "you are about the size of the Green Army Men."

The movie's Green Army Men are called the Green Army Patrol here. They have been updated to be more inclusive and diverse - including female characters. They also interact with guests throughout the park, saluting and even performing fun games like "Sarge Says," inspired by the classic children's game "Simon Says."

In addition to the rides and characters, the Woody's Lunchbox eatery offers some modern-day twists on classic foods. There is the three-cheese grilled cheese sandwich, a brisket melt, old-fashioned soda floats and other refreshments which can be ordered from a walk-up window fashioned out of Andy's vintage lunchbox and thermos. The park features primary colors and larger-than-life versions of classic toys like Rubik's Cube, colorful Cootie bugs, Scrabble letters, building blocks and Tinkertoys. There are also benches built from Lincoln Logs.

"We wanted to make this for all generations," Minichiello said. "As you walk through you'll probably discover a lot of toys you played with as a child." There's a little bit of something for everyone, said Tom Vazzana, show director for Toy Story Land entertainment. "Buzz and Woody and Jessie ... are out on the avenue," interacting with guests, stopping for photo opportunities and signing autographs.



Guests ride the Slinky Dog Dash coaster at Toy Story Land.

Toy Story Land is the result of a collaboration between the Disney Imagineers and their storytelling partners at Pixar Animation Studios, said Chapek. "This new land will place guests inside the wondrous world of Woody, Buzz and their pals," Chapek said, "and invite everyone to experience the joy of being a toy." — AP

## Penn & Teller cancel shows after Teller hurts back

Penn & Teller's magic shows are on hiatus because Teller's back injury has flared up. The duo canceled a performance in Mississippi on Friday, with Teller tweeting an apology to fans. He wrote he's stopping work until Aug 18 and "getting my back surgery pronto."

Raymond Teller, who is 70, says he's "disoriented and befuddled" because he thinks they've had to cancel only four shows on short notice during their career. They've worked as a pair since 1981. Sixty-three-year-old Penn Jillette wrote "the boys will be back and bad!" — AP



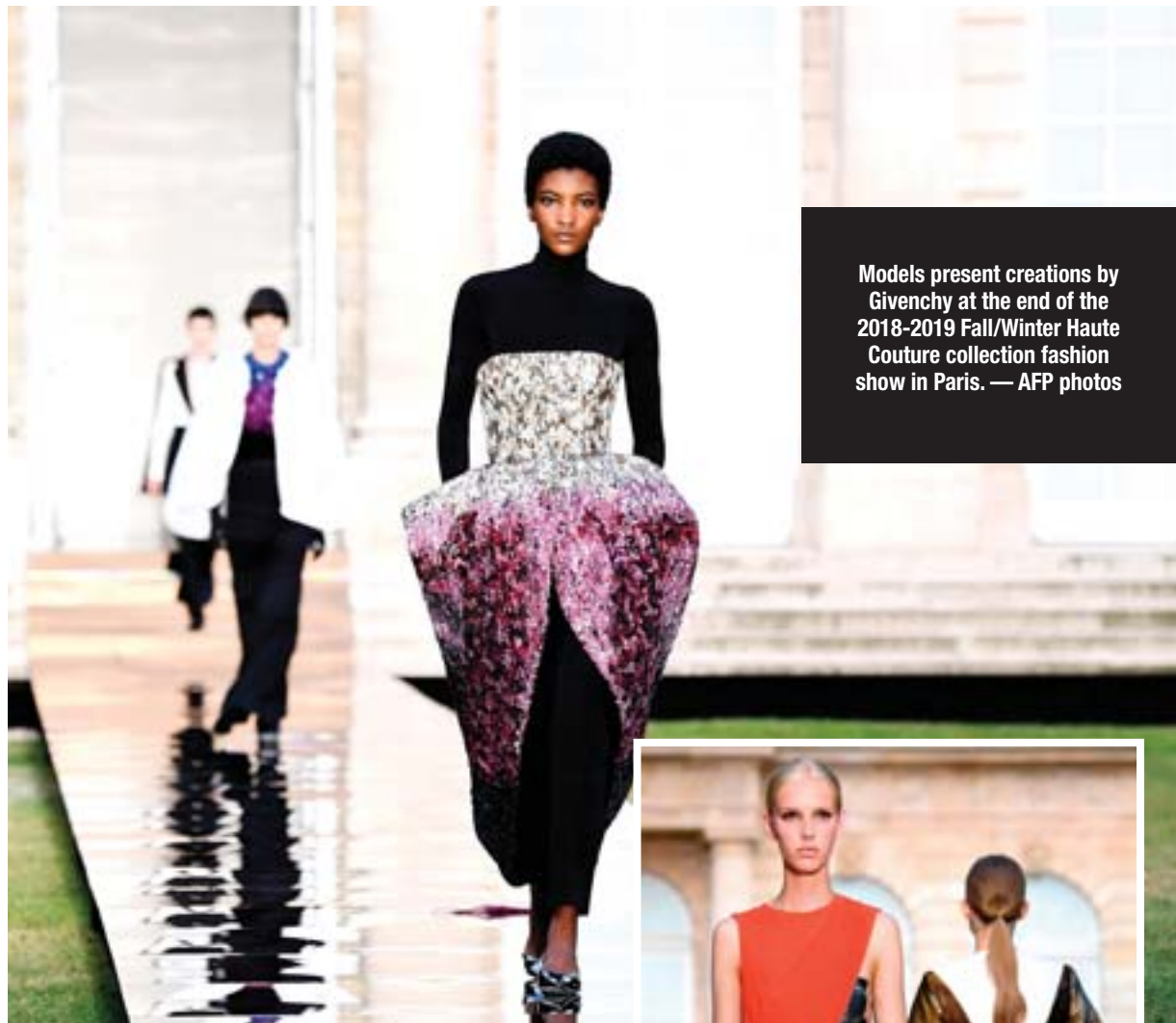
Photo shows Penn Jillette, left, and Raymond Teller perform their "Penn & Teller" act at the Vegas Strong Benefit concert in Las Vegas. — AP





# GIVENCHY HOMAGE

## ON FIRST DAY OF PARIS HAUTE COUTURE SHOWS



Models present creations by Givenchy at the end of the 2018-2019 Fall/Winter Haute Couture collection fashion show in Paris. — AFP photos



**C**lare Waight Keller, the Givenchy stylist who grabbed the global fashion spotlight by designing Meghan Markle's wedding dress, paid homage to the storied house's late founder in her latest haute couture collection. On the first day of Paris couture week, the Givenchy show, held in the gardens of the National Archives in the city's Marais district, was shrouded in mystery and old-school Hollywood glamour. It was Keller's first show since the house's founder Hubert de Givenchy died in March at the age of 91.



To the sound of Givenchy's muse Audrey Hepburn singing "Moon River", the models strutted down a catwalk that shimmered like a river. Draped dresses, voluminous jewels, and feathers dotted the collection—47-year-old Waight Keller's second haute couture offering since she succeeded Riccardo Tisci at Givenchy in March 2017, shortly after leaving rival label Chloe after six years at the helm. The colour palette was essentially black and white. Regal capes abounded—sometimes short, sometimes sweeping, sometimes hooded.

Gem-coloured sequins covered some dresses, evoking mermaid scales. Even the masculine silhouettes also sparkled with sequins. The British artistic director created the boat-necked, sculpted dress that Markle wore for her wedding to Prince Harry on May 19, featuring a five-metre (16-foot) train embroidered with flowers from all 53 Commonwealth countries. Markle also chose Givenchy for her first official engagement on June 14 alongside Queen Elizabeth II, sporting a beige wool crepe dress with a small cape.





Lifestyle | Fashion

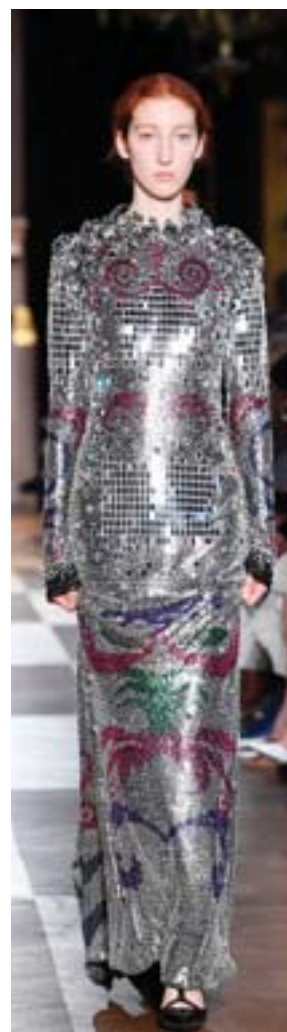


Models present creations by Schiaparelli.



**A Parisian affair**  
The official haute couture program includes 35 shows, running through Wednesday, with collections from 11 nations: Belgium, China, France, Israel, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Morocco, The Netherlands, Russia and the United States. Unlike ready-to-wear shows, haute couture rollouts in January and July are a solely Parisian affair. The prestigious "haute couture" label is accorded by the French industry ministry to acknowledge traditional craftsmanship in hand-sewn, custom-made garments using strict criteria.  
Only 14 fashion houses currently boast the recognition, including Chanel, Christian Dior, Giambattista Valli, Givenchy, Jean-Paul Gaultier, Maison Margiela, Schiaparelli, Alexis Mabille and Stephane Rolland. The catwalk displays of some of the world's most expensive clothes will be followed on Thursday by high-end jewelry collections by the likes of Anna Hu, Bulgari, Chanel, Chopard, De Beers, Dior, Louis Vuitton and Mikimoto. Off the official program, fashionistas on Sunday were treated to a show of exclusive creations by Sonia Rykiel, the fashion house founded by the influential French designer who died in 2016.

Although the house develops ready-to-wear lines, it worked up handmade, limited-edition items to mark its 50th anniversary for the show in the elegant courtyard of the Ecole des Beaux Arts. Artistic director Julie de Libran paid homage to some of the label's classics, with trademark mesh, black contrasted with bright colors, and lots of sequins and embroidery. See-through black tulle skirts were paired with big coats or wool pullovers, while a wedding dress was worn with jeans. The pioneering Rykiel was a fixture in the industry for half a century, buoyed by the Swinging Sixties craze in London and the emerging feminist movement across the globe. — AFP







Inija Trinkuniene, chief of Lithuania's Romuva Religion participates in fire rituals to the Lizdeika altar during the traditional Lithuanian summer solstice in Verkiai Park in Vilnius. — AFP photos



People participate in a traditional Lithuanian summer solstice in Verkiai Park in Vilnius.



People participate in a traditional Lithuanian summer solstice in Verkiai Park in Vilnius.



People take part in fire rituals to the Lizdeika altar during the traditional Lithuanian summer solstice.



People participate in traditional Lithuanian summer solstice in Verkiai Park.

## Lithuanians seek identity in their pagan roots

Dancing around a blazing fire with garlands of wildflowers in their hair, members of Lithuania's Romuva neo-pagan community mark the summer solstice, as the Baltic state undergoes a revival of its pre-Christian beliefs. Skipping to the steady beat of drums, other singing revelers at the feast, known locally as Rasa, pass under an arbor decorated with flowers before throwing salt on an altar as an offering to ancient Baltic gods.

"It's a beautiful tradition... at this time of year, everything's in full bloom and we feel close to nature," says Virginija Miceliene, a 40-year-old florist attending the solstice celebrations in the lush Verkiai Park, just north of Lithuania's capital, Vilnius.

The last nation in Europe to be converted to Christianity at the end of the 14th century, many Lithuanians are still deeply attached to pagan customs. Thousands celebrate Rasa each year and controversial moves are afoot in parliament to accord Romuva the legal status of a religion in the predominantly Catholic country. "Our religion is based on historical sources, archaeological discoveries and traditional culture transmitted orally," Romuva high priestess Inija Trinkuniene tells AFP, as she presides over Rasa rites.

Dressed in a white cowl and a dark green robe covered by a flowing white cape embroidered with traditional red and green geometric designs, Trinkuniene looks as if she has stepped straight out of the Middle Ages. "More and more people are discovering our practices and find that they feel close to them because it's something very Lithuanian," she

told AFP, surrounded by similarly-clad Romuva believers both young and old.

### Soviet suppression

A pantheistic religion based on the belief that the natural world is divine, Romuva holds the god of lightning and thunder, or Perkunas, and Zeme, or Mother Earth, as its top deities. Earth's cycles mark out its feast days. Suppressed by the Soviets after their occupation of Lithuania in 1940, Romuva and its Rasa feast was furtively revived in 1967 by ethnologist and dissident Jonas Trinkunas as a way to express Lithuanian national identity. But by 1973 the nascent movement was driven deep underground after Soviet authorities cracked down on its leaders.

Romuva has attracted thousands since 1990 when Lithuania broke free from the crumbling Soviet Union. However, the only official figures cite some 5,118 followers and date back to the 2011 census. Parliament is expected to formally recognize Romuva as a religious community later this year, giving pagan marriages and baptisms the same civil status as Christian, Jewish or Muslim ceremonies. Ramunas Karbauskis, a farming tycoon and leader of Lithuania's governing Peasants and Green Union party, is widely regarded as having masterminded moves to accord Romuva legal status in this Baltic eurozone state. Having won elections in 2016, his party's popularity was driven in part by his reputation for reviving ancient Baltic customs, most notably in his tiny home village of Naisiai. He transformed it from a derelict Soviet-era state farm into a pastoral wonderland boasting public gardens dotted with wooden statues of pagan-era Baltic gods.

### 'Political decision'?

The pagan renaissance is not without controversy in this nation of 2.9 million where 77 percent of the population identifies as Roman Catholic. Conservative politicians have questioned the legitimacy of Romuva as a religion, arguing that it lacks "historical continuity" and "written tradition". Philosopher Nerija Putinaite argues that the move to recognize Romuva is a "political decision related to the interests of the (governing) party" and has warned that it could be exploited to shape and control national identity.

For sociologist Milda Alisauskienė, the Romuva "religion is, in fact, a reconstruction... it is part of a global phenomenon in reaction to globalization that emphasizes the desire to preserve local traditions." Former conservative prime minister Andrius Kubilius is also a critic. He points out that the vote giving Romuva official religious status will likely come this autumn as Pope Francis visits to mark 100 years of Lithuanian independence.

For Migle Valaitiene, a 27-year-old housewife who is a Romuva "vaidila" or sage, politics and questions of national identity could not be further from her mind. "Some people may see this movement as a kind of patriotism, but it is a religion for me, and we emphasize the importance of both the male and female essence. "In the Christian religion, God created the human being and God is a man," says the young mother, who discovered Romuva as a teen. — AFP

## 'Big Bang Theory' star Kaley Cuoco marries equestrian

The "Big Bang Theory" star Kaley Cuoco is married. The 32-year-old posted a photo on Instagram of her kissing equestrian Karl Cook in a stable on Saturday. The caption read: "Legally KCSQUARED 6-30-18." Cuoco and her 27-year-old husband got engaged in November 2017. He's the son of Intuit co-founder Scott Cook.

Her TV husband, Johnny Galecki, congratulated the couple on Instagram. He wrote the service "brought us all to tears." — AP

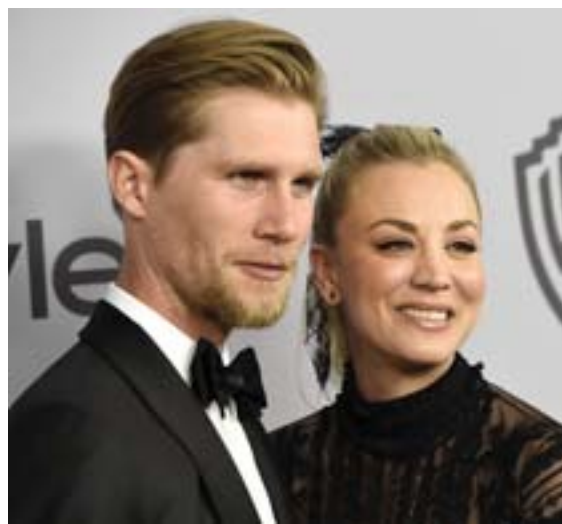


Photo shows Karl Cook, left, and Kaley Cuoco arrive at the InStyle and Warner Bros Golden Globes after party. — AP

## 'Cats' choreographer Gillian Lynne dies at 92

British choreographer Gillian Lynne, who was best known for her work on the long-running musicals "Cats" and "Phantom of the Opera," has died aged 92, her husband said. Lynne died on Sunday at the Princess Grace Hospital in London. "She leaves behind a huge legacy & is adored by many," her husband, actor Peter Land, said on Twitter, paying tribute to his "dearest wife & friend & love for 40 years". Composer Andrew Lloyd Webber wrote: "Farewell dearest Gillie, three generations of the British musical owe so much to you."

Lynne trained as a ballerina, working at the Sadler's Wells Ballet and the Royal Ballet, before starting her career in musicals. Lynne choreographed more than 50 productions on the West End and Broadway and was the recipient of two Olivier Awards. She was made a Dame by Queen Elizabeth II for her services to dance and musical theatre in 2014. — AFP

In this file photo taken on May 01, 2014 British dancer and choreographer Dame Gillian Lynne is pictured. — AFP

## Social realism and a 'new voice' in Nigerian cinema

A low budget comedy set in the working class suburbs of Nigeria's capital, Ema Edosio's debut film "Kasala!" is a world away from the usual style and glamour of Nollywood. Instead it almost oozes sweat, dust and marijuana with the smell of rotting meat and engine oil in what is effectively a love letter to Lagos that reflects a growing interest in social realism. The film, whose title means "problems" in local street slang, is set in the streets of Ojuelegba, a working class suburb in Lagos's densely populated "mainland".

Wandering through the neighbourhood, residents greet this 34-year-old director like a local. Even though Edosio herself lives on the "islands"—the more well-to-do area of this megacity of 20 million people—it is a reality she knows well after growing up in a similar area with her eight siblings. "Eighty percent of Lagos is like this but it's... under-represented in the cultural scene," she told AFP. "I want to be the voice that puts their life to the screen." The plot, which unfurls over 24 hours, involves four young friends who are out for a good time and steal a car belonging to one of their uncles. But they end up having to find 20,000 naira (\$55, 47 euros) to fix it when they have an accident.

TJ and his friends are typical teenagers but even a youthful error of judgment can have serious consequences in a poor neighborhood of Lagos. The uncle is up to his eyes in debt and risks being killed if he doesn't sell the car. The film shows young Africans stuck in poverty, debt and second-hand clothes, dreaming of a better life just like their idol, Afropop superstar Davido. Above all, it is a film about friendship in which the resourcefulness of Africa's big cities is ever-present.

### 'Social cinema'

Gritty realism is exactly what attracted Abiodun Kassim, who plays the poor, indebted uncle who is trying to make ends meet at his filthy meat stall in the local market. "My character represents the backbone people of Nigeria. It's the daily life story of all these people who force their way through life," he said. "These... are the majority, but people don't talk about them." Since its release, "Kasala!" has won critical acclaim in the Nigerian press. "2018 has not been a very good year for Nollywood," wrote Oris Aigbokhaebolo on the Bella Naija website. "But 'Kasala!' might yet save the year."

Writing on the Lagos Film Society website, Dare Dan hailed Edosio's "razor-sharp sensitivity to what life is like in these neighborhoods from the very first shot." "Comedy, rooted in realism, is not something we often come across on Nigerian screens," he said.

### 'Refreshing, authentic'

Yet no local cinema has agreed to show "Kasala!" "Everywhere I am told that people want to see inspiring movies," said Edosio, which for most Nigerians means showing wealthy people. "This kind of social cinema is struggling to emerge," said Serge Noukoue, the organizer of the annual Nollywood Week film festival in Paris. "It's not in the DNA of Nollywood, which aims to entertain. "We're still in the 'high life' wave of Nigerian cinema—very sophisticated, in fashionable areas, women wearing lots of make-up..." At the festival, however, "Kasala!" was singled out as one of this year's "must watch" films. "It's a refreshing, authentic film," said Noukoue. "Ema Edosio is a 'new voice' in the universe of Nollywood. That's a good and very positive thing."

### Counter-current -

Abba Makama, director of "Green White Green" (2016), said he was "sick and tired" of "glossy and shiny" productions using actors with British or US accents. He describes his film, whose title refers to the colors of the Nigerian flag, as his "mosaic of madness". It was one of the first examples of a small but growing movement of social realism to hit the cultural scene in Africa's most populous nation. The film has been shown at about 20 festivals across the world, including in Toronto, and is available on Netflix.

But again, it has never been shown on the big screen in Nigeria, despite its huge success. "In the 2000s, there were only about 20 cinemas in the whole country," said Makama. "Now, we have multiple portals, Africa Magic, YouTube, more cinemas... However the movies are pretty much the same. We do need an alternative cinema distribution platform." Edosio agrees, confident there is an audience for her films and those of others who are also swimming against the tide: it just requires success to prove it to distributors. — AFP



Nigerian film director of the Nollywood film "Kasala" Ema Edosio (left) and Nigerian actor Abiodun Kassim, pose in the Oju Elegba neighborhood where the film was shot in Lagos. — AFP









SAMARA: Brazil's forward Neymar (right) scores a goal during the Russia 2018 World Cup round of 16 football match between Brazil and Mexico yesterday. — AFP (See Page 28)

## In WCup's shadow, Rohingya refugees find freedom on the pitch

**KUALA LUMPUR:** They may lack the glitz and glamour of the World Cup, but football clubs for stateless Rohingya refugees in Malaysia offer something more—a 90-minute reprieve from a grinding existence on the fringes of society. Malaysia is home to more than 70,000 people from the Muslim minority who have fled discrimination and persecution in predominantly Buddhist Myanmar, often enduring horrific journeys at sea to escape.

And while many struggle to eke out a living and are deeply scarred by the traumas of their past, football offers a welcome respite from cold, hard reality. On a scruffy patch of ground on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur surrounded by dilapidated buildings, those painful memories seem a world away as players pass the ball and take shots before a small crowd of spectators. "Football takes away all of my stress for 90 minutes," Mohamad Ishak, a 17-year-old team member, told AFP. "It helps you to forget some of your problems." Nine teams took part in a recent tournament to mark the major Islamic festival of Eid-al-Fitr. There was a particular buzz as the tournament coincided with the World Cup. Play was punctuated by excited chatter about the latest matches in Russia and many wore shirts of their favorite teams, from Argentina to Germany.

Some expressed the hope a Rohingya team might one day compete in the world's most prestigious football tournament—an unlikely dream for an ethnic group that doesn't even have a country to call home. Relatively affluent Muslim-majority Malaysia has long turned a blind eye to the influx of Rohingya. Despite not officially being allowed to work, they have become a cheap source of labor in menial jobs, from cleaning to laboring on building sites. And while life is better than in Myanmar, getting by in Malaysia can still be tough for the Rohingya, who have no access to basic services such as education and healthcare.

In 2015 the Rohingya Football Club (RFC) was set up to give members something constructive to do in their free time, and provide some release from unfulfilling, insecure existences. Other Rohingya clubs have since sprung up across the country, playing against each other or local Malaysian sides. The three-day Eid

tournament gives the mostly young men something positive to focus on at a time when they may be missing family members back home and dwelling on dark memories, organizers say.

RFC secretary Mohammed Faruk said it is common for Rohingya to have flashbacks to traumatic experiences, such as military crackdowns back home that have driven one million members of the minority into vast refugee camps in neighboring Bangladesh. "There are a lot of Rohingya who lost their parents, who lost their siblings, who lost their homes," the 23-year-old said. "It's really awful when they think about their past." Rakhine in western Myanmar, the Rohingya's home state, has been repeatedly rocked by intercommunal violence over the years and the minority has often been targeted by the army and Buddhists.

Myanmar does not recognize Rohingya as citizens and officials often refer to them as "Bengalis", reflecting a widespread belief they are immigrants from Bangladesh. In the most recent violent convulsion, some 700,000 Rohingya fled Myanmar after the military launched a brutal operation against insurgents in August that the US and the UN have labelled ethnic cleansing. The UN has said there are possible "hallmarks of genocide" with refugees bringing with them consistent testimony of murder, rape and arson, although few of the Rohingya in Malaysia are believed to be from this latest wave.

Faruk wants to take a Rohingya squad to the CONIFA World Football Cup, a biennial competition for teams sidelined by the official competition, which includes sides representing minorities, isolated dependencies and cultural regions. Beyond easing day-to-day frustration, playing football has helped to tackle prejudice and break down barriers between Rohingya and the local population. "It eliminates discrimination," said RFC's Ishak, adding he had got to know many Malaysians through football. The Rohingya in Malaysia have had more reason to be optimistic recently—a surprise change in government at elections in May has brought to power an administration more sympathetic to their plight.

The new government pledged in its manifesto to ensure the "legal right to work" of refugees in the country, which—if honored—could help Rohingya find better opportunities than the few low-paying sectors currently willing to hire them. Mohamad Younus, a 44-year-old Rohingya watching the tournament, was philosophical about the lack of current opportunities in Malaysia. "Our country is already finished. Here in Malaysia, young people don't have proper work either," he said, welcoming the power of football to help younger refugees. When they play, "at least they have something positive in their minds," he said.— AFP

surveillance equipment it says President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's government is using to "eradicate all forms of dissent and citizen action." Their statement came as Egypt's Defense Minister Mohamed Zaki made an official visit to France, just a week after French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian met Sisi in Cairo last week.

But the defense ministry rejected such claims in its annual report. "These exports are carried out within a strict legal framework. They scrupulously respect to the letter the treaties and international commitments" signed by France, it said. The ministry also rejected 50 export contracts, mainly to governments in Central and Southern Asia. Defense chief Florence Parly will present the report during an audition Wednesday with lawmakers, some of whom are pushing for more parliamentary control on arms sales.— AFP

## France's arms exports halved; Middle...

Continued from Page 1

A March poll found 74 percent of French people against selling weapons to Saudi Arabia and 71 percent were against supplying to the United Arab Emirates. Humanitarian groups say Paris is violating the Arms Trade Treaty it ratified in 2014, which requires exporters to ensure their weapons will not be used for human rights abuses.

A group of four NGOs also denounced on Monday the surge in French arms exports to Egypt, including

## Nigeria's Fulani say they are being vilified for violence

**BARAKIN LADI:** At the small mosque in Luggere, nestled in an ethnic Fulani village surrounded by rolling green hills, an unusually large crowd has gathered for Friday prayers. Luggere's population has doubled in recent days to accommodate people who fled two neighboring villages that were attacked by armed men early last week. The attacks on the Fulani appeared to be reprisals for the June 23 massacre, where more than 200 ethnic Berom people, mostly Christian farmers, were killed.

"On Monday we were at home when people came and started shooting and burning our houses, food stores and shelters," said Harira Ibrahim, 35, who fled with her husband and 10 children. "We have nothing there, our brothers gave us some mattresses and clothes. We can't even go back home because the militias are still around." Over the past week, nearly 500 people have arrived in Luggere and have been sleeping in the classrooms of the school. Police confirmed the attack although they did not give a death toll but the influx has been largely ignored by Nigeria's media, which instead has focused on the weekend massacre.

The attack is part of an increasingly bloody cycle of violence between two communities over access to resources throughout Nigeria's central belt: Christian farmers, who claim indigenous privilege, accuse Muslim herders of ransacking their crops with their cattle and trying to grab land. Meanwhile, the herders say that the farms are encroaching on their traditional grazing routes that they need to access in order to survive. In the Plateau region, many of the cattle herders are semi-nomadic, raising livestock as well as farming, and claim years of service on the fertile land where corn, yams and all kinds of fruit and vegetables grow.

Adam Musa, 52, was born in Luggere, just like his father and grandfather before him. "I don't understand what is going on. When I was young, the Berom gave us

their children for rearing because of unemployment," said Musa. On the potholed road leading to Luggere, several Berom villages were abandoned in a hurry. In the yards of burnt-out houses, strewn with broken glass and plastic, the only occupants are a handful of chickens and frightened dogs. Fulani faces drop at the mention of the attacks against Christians. No-one says they know the identity of the assailants. The attack was brutal: the perpetrators torched homes with families inside and killed very young children, according to multiple witnesses interviewed by AFP.

According to one local official of the main Nigerian livestock union, the attack happened after a series of assaults on the Fulani since April. "Not less than 500 cattle were rustled by the Berom and from the ambushes and killings of our herdsmen in the bush (...) we are looking for almost 70 people dead, all of them have been killed," said Abubakar Gambo, of the Miyetti Allah Breeders Cattle Association of Nigeria (MACBAN). "This is how the situation started and how it went out of control." The Fulani are often described as invaders who come to "Islamize" the Christian areas of Nigeria, especially by newspaper columnists with reference to Usman dan Fodio, a Fulani jihadist who founded the Sokoto empire in the 19th century.

With the election of President Muhammadu Buhari, a Muslim Fulani, in 2015, the stigmatization has worsened. Detractors blame northerners and the Fulani of pursuing a secret program to eclipse the predominantly Christian south. Buhari's slow response to condemn the killings, which have steadily been increasing across the country for the last year, as well as the inability of security forces to protect lives, has fuelled frustration and resentment. He has been criticized for having appointed mainly Hausa and Fulani people to key positions in the army and police, which has encouraged impunity.

"In fact the herders are being seriously discriminated (against)," said Gambo, adding that the community feels marginalized and children have difficulty accessing education. At the end of the 1980s, the government set up "nomadic schools" in rural areas to combat illiteracy. Yet all that progress is under threat as a result of the latest outbreak of violence, Gambo said. "Luggere school, it is the community that gathered and built it, not the government," he said.— AFP



LUGGERE, Nigeria: A Fulani woman walks through the Fulani village of Luggere, in the Barkin Ladi area in Plateau State. Plateau State in Nigeria has seen days of violence where more than 200 people have been killed in clashes between Berom farmers and Fulani herders. — AFP

## Miracle rescue: Boys trapped in...

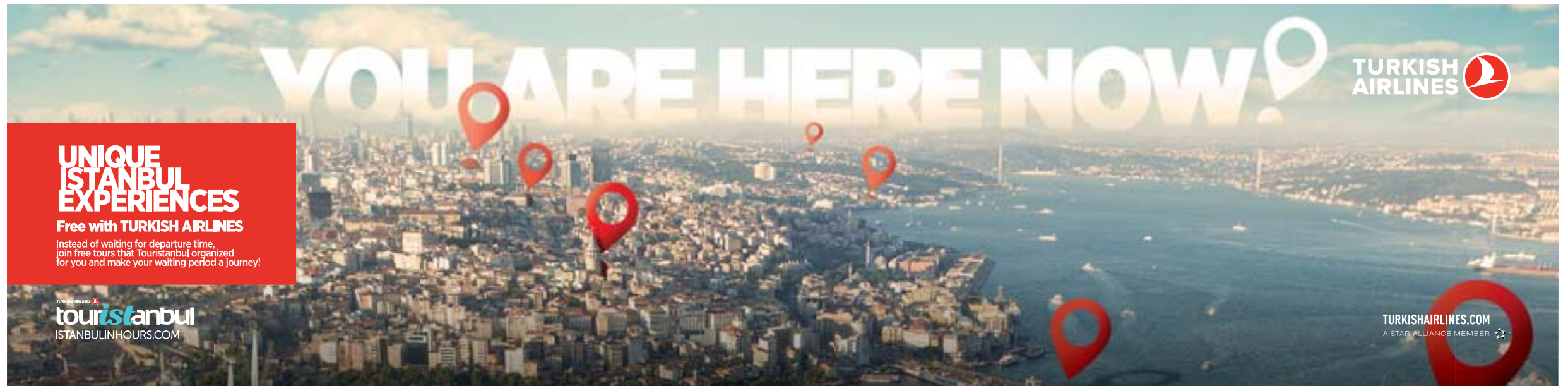
Continued from Page 1

The football team went into the cave on June 23 after a

training session and became stranded when heavy rains cut them off from the entrance. Rescuers found their bicycles, football boots and backpacks near the cave's entrance and discovered handprints and footprints further in. At 10 kilometers long, Tham Luang cave is one of Thailand's longest and one of the toughest to navigate, with its snaking chambers and narrow passageways. A sign outside the site warns visitors not to enter the cave during the rainy season between July and November.— AFP



Sports



# Andersson leads Swedes back to promised World Cup land

## Andersson's arrival has helped bring the side back to their roots

**SOCHI:** When Zlatan Ibrahimovic and coach Erik Hamren brought their time with the national team to an end after Euro 2016, Sweden turned to Janne Andersson, a man steeped in the country's footballing traditions, to lead them back to the World Cup stage.

Ibrahimovic's era in the gold and blue yielded spectacular goals and pithy soundbites but there was little in the way of World Cup success. The Swedes, who came second as hosts in 1958 and third in 1994, missed the 2010 and 2014 tournaments and while they qualified for Euro 2012 and 2016, they limped out at the group stage on both occasions.

But Andersson's arrival has helped bring the side back to their roots and they now stand ready for a World Cup last 16 tie against Switzerland today. "Why they decided to give me the job is not something I can answer, but I have long experience of Swedish leadership. I come from that movement," he told Reuters in Stockholm before the tournament began.

Like many of his predecessors, the 55-year-old has served his time in the Swedish game, keeping the books for small clubs and washing football kit before making the long journey to the country's most prestigious coaching job. A well-respected figure in the game, Andersson's stock rocketed when he guided IFK Norrkoping to a surprise title win in 2015, capturing the championship from under the noses of the mighty Malmo FF. Andersson says there is a lot more to his management style than tradition and he sees things his

own way. "I've looked outside of that. The starting point was being a normal safe, Swedish football employee, and from there I have developed and found my own way of looking at things," he explained.

"How Swedish or un-Swedish that is, or whether we have gone back to that kind of thing? I hope it has moved forward, in any case." The difference under Andersson could not be more obvious.

While Hamren's teams had to accommodate the ego and undoubted talent of Ibrahimovic, Andersson's sides are built on the collective. "The foundation for me is in how we should behave towards each other and how the group dynamic should work, the culture we should have together, I'm very clear about that. There's nothing complicated in it," he said. "You start off outside the pitch and decide on a culture, and then you can take it out on the field. You show great respect for one another, we are there for each other and we work for each other." The well-drilled, counter-attacking Swedes have been labelled boring by some but Andersson is capable of making adjustments to suit the challenge in front of him, as evidenced by the free-flowing football played by his Norrkoping side.

"My ultimate task is, with the players that are available, to find a way to play that suits them and gives us the biggest chance of achieving success," he told reporters at the team's Black Sea base. A victory over the Swiss and a place in the quarter-finals would certainly do that. — Reuters



**SAINT-PETERSBURG:** Sweden's coach Janne Andersson (C) addresses his players during a training session at Saint-Petersburg stadium yesterday, on the eve of the team's round of sixteen match as part of the Russia 2018 World Cup football tournament. — AFP

## Spain blame game begins after WCup penalty

**SAINT PETERSBURG:** Spain's World Cup roller-coaster ride finally ground to a halt on Sunday and the finger-pointing began after their third consecutive failure at a major tournament. Following humiliation at the hands of the Netherlands in 2014 and a limp defeat to Italy at Euro 2016, this was perhaps the most gauling exit of all, given it came at the hands of Russia, ranked 70th in the world, just above Macedonia and El Salvador.

It would be a stretch to say Russia deserved their win, with 26 per cent possession and only six attempts at goal compared with Spain's 25, but they had a plan, stuck to it, and fought to the bitter end. A 4-3 victory on penalties, after the sides were locked at 1-1 at the end of extra time, sends the hosts through to their first World Cup quarter-final since 1970.

Spain's dominance will do nothing to ease the disappointment following what can now be judged as a truly farcical

World Cup campaign. Julen Lopetegui, the coach fired two days before Spain's opening match, and Luis Rubiales, the Spanish Football Federation president who fired him, will be circled as the key offenders.

But Fernando Hierro, Lopetegui's replacement, and David de Gea, who endured a torrid tournament in goal, will take their share of the blame too. It was a pity that the last match of Andres Iniesta, who later confirmed his international retirement, in the end became little more than a footnote.

"What started badly, ended badly," wrote Marca. "All the problems began with the dismissal of Lopetegui and then continued with a team lacking in form and ideas." Rubiales was quick to make clear he felt no remorse for sacking Lopetegui, who was clumsy in the way he handled his pending move to Real Madrid, but seemingly dismissed because of hurt, personal pride. "Today there is pain, as we have been eliminated," Rubiales said. "But you can be calm when you know you have acted with responsibility, conviction and values. You cannot later look in hindsight because of a result on the pitch."

Many would argue it was clear at the time that changing the coach two days before Spain's opening game was unlikely to benefit the team. With Hierro in place, however, there were positive signs against Portugal, when Cristiano Ronaldo's free-kick overshadowed an assured Spain per-



**LUZHNIKI:** Spain supporters react after their team lost the Russia 2018 World Cup round of 16 football match between Spain and Russia at the Luzhnik Stadium in Moscow on Sunday. — AFP

formance in a 3-3 draw.

But defensive errors and tactical rigidity soon came to the fore as poor displays followed against Iran, Morocco and Russia. Sergio Ramos and Gerard Pique were both guilty, the latter because of a handball that gave Russia their equaliser, but De Gea left as the principal villain.

Against Portugal, he allowed Ronaldo's shot to slip through his hands. Against Russia, Igor Akinfeev starred in the

shootout while he failed to save at least two spot-kicks he might have kept out.

By the end, De Gea had made only one save all tournament. As the late stand-in, Hierro may be spared such stinging criticism but he dropped Iniesta and Dani Carvajal against Russia in Moscow, only to bring both on as substitutes, and then replaced Diego Costa with Iago Aspas, who arguably should have been on from the start. — Reuters

## Salah's new contract shows belief in Liverpool

**LONDON:**

Egyptian international Mohamed Salah's stunning first season with English Premier League side Liverpool earned him a long-term contract with the club yesterday. Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said the fact the 26-year-old striker—who scored 44 goals in just 52 appearances last season—signed such a deal reflected his belief the club were on course for a successful era.

Salah's goals played a large part in Liverpool reaching the Champions League final against Real Madrid. However, that proved a rare sour note for the player as Salah was slammed to the turf by Real Madrid's Sergio Ramos, causing a painful separation of his left shoulder.

Salah returned to action for the first time in three weeks against Russia at the World Cup in their group match last month but was a shadow of the player that had dazzled for Liverpool and earned him the Africa player of the year award. The new contract "demonstrates two things very clearly—his belief in Liverpool and our belief in him," Klopp told the Liverpool website. "I think this news can be seen for what it is: rewarding a person who performed and contributed greatly for the team and the club last season," said Klopp. "We want world-class talent to see they have a home at Anfield where they can fulfil all their professional dreams and ambitions - we are working hard together to achieve this. "When someone like Mo Salah commits and says this place is my home now, it speaks very loudly I think."

"Equally, our commitment to him says we see his value and want him to grow even more and get even better within our environment." Salah registered the second-highest total of goals in a season in Liverpool's history, just three behind Ian Rush's record of 47 and surpassing Roger Hunt's haul of 42.

Thirty-two of those came in the Premier League, setting a new record in a 38-game season and earning him the Golden Boot. Salah was named as both the PFA Players' Player of the Year and the Football Writers' Association's Footballer of the Year for his efforts in 2017-18. —AFP



Mohamed Salah

## S Korea's Park wins Women's PGA Championship

**CHICAGO:** South Korea's Park Sung-hyun birdied twice in a weather-disrupted playoff Sunday to win the Women's PGA Championship, capturing the second major women's golf title of her career. The 24-year-old from Seoul, last year's US Women's Open champion, defeated compatriot Ryu So-yeon, denying her bid to reclaim the world number one ranking, and Japanese teen star Nasa Hataoka in the playoff to capture the \$547,500 top prize.

"It was a really long round today and I still can't believe I'm sitting next to this trophy," Park said. Hataoka and the South Koreans each finished 72 holes at Kemper Lakes deadlocked at 10-under par 278. Fifth-ranked Ryu and sixth-ranked Park each birdied the first playoff hole, the par-4 18th, while Hataoka was eliminated with a par. The Koreans, who shared LPGA Player of the Year honors in 2017, reached the green at the par-4 16th, the second playoff role, when play was suspended for dangerous weather in the area, halting the drama at its peak for 20 minutes as the tension mounted. When play resumed, Ryu missed her birdie putt and Park sank hers for the victory then broke into tears. "I got less nervous during the play-

off. I was even joking," Park said. "I was a little worried, but even though it was a tough week, I feel like I played really well. All the hard work paid off and that's what made me cry." Park, last year's LPGA Rookie of the Year, won her second title of the year after the LPGA Texas Classic in May. It was her fourth LPGA title overall after last year's US and Canadian Women's Open crowns.

Ryu, who won last year's ANA Inspiration and the 2011 US Women's Open, took her first title of the year two weeks ago at the LPGA Meijer Classic and hoped to more one step closer to a career Grand Slam.

"I did my best," Ryu said. "If I look back, nothing I can do any better than that. I just did 100 percent effort. Every shot, every putt and still looking at the positive side. This is my best finish for this tournament, so hopefully it's going to keep improving, and one day I want to lift that trophy." Ryu, who turned 28 on Friday, would have overtaken Park Sung-hyun atop the rankings with a victory after starting the day with a three-stroke lead. Hataoka, 19, won her first LPGA title last week in Arkansas and with more than \$546,000 in the past eight days has eclipsed her prior career earnings. In the final round, Ryu stumbled with a double bogey at the par-4 second and Park birdied the par-3 third and par-5 fourth to seize a share of the lead. But Ryu birdied the par-3 sixth and par-5 seventh to restore a two-stroke edge at 11-under.

Ryu added a birdie at the par-5 11th but took a bogey at the par-3 13th to stand only one ahead of Hataoka, with Park closing to within one after a birdie at 14. Ryu responded with a birdie at the 16th, giving her a two-shot



**KILDEER:** Sung Hyun Park of South Korea celebrates with the trophy after winning the KPMG Women's PGA Championship at Kemper Lakes Golf Club on Sunday in Kildeer, Illinois. — AFP

lead, but found water at the par-3 17th and made a double bogey, falling back level with Hataoka and Park, who both parred 18 to force extra holes. — AFP



## Sports

# British rider Froome cleared of doping, free to race Tour de France

'I am very pleased that the UCI has exonerated me'

**AIGLE:** British rider Chris Froome was cleared of doping allegations yesterday and authorised to compete in the Tour de France after organisers lifted a ban on the four-times winner. Kenyan-born Froome, 33, said he is now looking forward to attempting to win a fifth Tour de France which gets underway on Saturday.

"I am very pleased that the UCI has exonerated me", Froome said after the Union Cycliste Internationale, the sport's ruling body, said a probe into Froome had been dropped. The UCI announced the decision a day after Tour de France organisers barred him from taking part in the 2018 edition of world cycling's biggest race over doping suspicions.

Froome's appeal against the ban was scheduled to be heard today by the French national Olympic committee in Paris. But within hours of the UCI announcement, Tour de France director Christian Prudhomme told AFP that the organisers had dropped their opposition to him taking part.

"We were awaiting this decision (from the UCI) and now he has been cleared," said Prudhomme. "When we are told he has done nothing wrong we are obviously not going to maintain (the ban). It's just a shame the decision came so late."

Team Sky leader Dave Brailsford said the way was now clear for Saturday's start of the three-week Tour from the Vendee. "Today's ruling draws a line. It means we can all move on and focus on the Tour de France," said Brailsford.

Earlier the Swiss-based UCI confirmed it had cleared Froome of doping suspicions that have circulated since he was found to have twice the permissible amount of the legal asthma drug Salbutamol in his sys-

tem during last September's Vuelta a Espana, which he won. Froome recorded an adverse analytical finding (AAF) for Salbutamol, meaning he exceeded the allowed dose of a permitted substance. The abnormal result triggered disciplinary proceedings by the UCI during which "Mr Froome exercised his right to prove that his abnormal result was the consequence of a permitted use," the UCI's statement added.

The World Anti Doping Agency informed the UCI four days ago that Froome's sample results did not in fact constitute an adverse analytical finding. "The UCI has considered all the relevant evidence in detail," the statement said.

"In light of WADA's unparalleled access to information and authorship of the salbutamol regime, the UCI has decided, based on WADA's position, to close the proceedings against Mr Froome." The UCI has been criticised for dragging its feet over the Froome case, but the statement said that it needed to ensure that Froome had "a fair process, as it would have done with any other rider, and that the correct decision was issued."

Team Sky have been heavily criticised for not suspending Froome while the doping probe was underway. But Brailsford said they had made the correct decision based on "total confidence in Chris and his integrity."

"This is why we decided that it was right for Chris to continue racing, in line with UCI rules, while the process was ongoing. We are pleased that it has now been resolved," he said. During the probe Froome continued riding and winning, notably with victory in the Tour of Italy in May. Froome's Giro win made him the first man to hold all three Grand Tours at once since



In this file photo taken on July 06, 2017 Great Britain's Christopher Froome arrives on the podium to celebrate his overall leader yellow jersey at the end of the 216 km sixth stage of the 104th edition of the Tour de France cycling race between Vesoul and Troyes.

Frenchman Bernard Hinault in 1983.

Hinault, five-times Tour de France winner, is one of Froome's harshest critics. He dubbed Froome a "cheat", and last week called on Tour riders to strike in protest if he starts the race on Saturday.

Froome is out to emulate five-time winners Hinault, Jacques Anquetil, Eddy Merckx and Miguel Indurain when he competes for a fifth win in the Tour. A win this year would also make Froome the second racer after Merckx to win four straight Tours. —AFP



LeBron James

## LeBron James to join NBA Lakers in four-year, \$154m deal

**LOS ANGELES:** LeBron James is to join the Los Angeles Lakers in a four-year \$154 million deal, his agents said Sunday, ending months of frenzied speculation about the NBA superstar's next career move. The blockbuster contract sends the 33-year-old four-time NBA Most Valuable Player to one of the league's most iconic clubs, adding to the legacy of such legends as Kobe Bryant and Magic Johnson.

"LeBron James, four time NBA MVP, three-time NBA finals MVP, 14-time NBA All-Star, and two-time Olympic gold medalist, has agreed to a four-year \$154 million contract with the Los Angeles Lakers," James' management company Klutch Sports Group said in a statement.

James is considered a rival of retired Chicago Bulls star Michael Jordan for the title of greatest player in NBA history. However, he had endured frustration with the Cleveland Cavaliers, culminating in last month's clean sweep defeat to the Golden State Warriors in the NBA Finals.

James and the Cavaliers have been beaten in three out of four NBA Finals against the Warriors since 2015. James had been linked to several franchises, with the Philadelphia 76ers and Houston Rockets reportedly in the running.

US media reports said the Lakers move was sealed following a meeting

late Saturday between James and the team's president of basketball operations, Magic Johnson. James, who has a home and production company in Los Angeles, now joins a club with money to spend and a desire to rebuild into a championship team. The Lakers have failed to reach the playoffs for the past five seasons. News of James' arrival at the Lakers sparked a delighted response on Sunday, with basketball legends and Hollywood celebrities lining up to welcome the move.

"Welcome to the family @KingJames #lakers4life #striveforgreatness," wrote Lakers legend Kobe Bryant on Twitter. "I am sure the Lakernation is rejoicing. The acquisition of LeBron James means that the Lakers are just a smidgen away from being real contenders," Lakers icon Kareem Abdul-Jabbar added.

Former Hollywood action hero and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger also weighed in. "It's so exciting that you're coming to the city of stars," Schwarzenegger said. "And you're without going to be the biggest star of all, on the court and off the court. I love it."

James, a two-time Olympic champion, left Cleveland before in 2010 for the Miami Heat, where he reached the NBA Finals four times, going 2-2, before departing for the Cavaliers, vowing to bring a title to Cleveland, his home region having grown up in nearby Akron.

That mission was accomplished when the Cavaliers won the 2016 crown with James in the starring role as Cleveland celebrated a sports champion for the first time in 52 years.

"Thank you Northeast Ohio for an incredible 4 seasons. This will always be home," James posted on Instagram with a photo of the Cavaliers' championship parade. —AFP

## Verstappen stars on Formula One's return to France

**PARIS:** Max Verstappen may have had a challenging start to his season, but the Dutchman has been in sparkling form of late and that continued as Formula One returned to France for the first time in a decade. This report highlights an excellent weekend for Aston Martin Red Bull Racing, as the team once again proved they have what it takes to regularly compete at the front.

Aston Martin Red Bull Racing arrived at Circuit Paul Ricard with a spring in their step, having signed an exciting two-year deal with Honda to use the Japanese manufacturer's engines from next season, alongside sister team Scuderia Toro Rosso.

Verstappen and Daniel Ricciardo looked quick in Friday practice, with the duo's one-lap speed second only to reigning world champions Mercedes, which boded well for qualifying on Saturday. Their long run pace, making use of Mobil 1 motor oil, developed for the RB14 to provide increased power, performance and protection, and a powerful blend of Esso Synergy race fuel, was pretty special, too. Around a tenth of a second separated Mercedes, Ferrari and Aston Martin Red Bull Racing.

Come Saturday, Verstappen delivered a cracking lap to line-up fourth on the grid, one place ahead of Ricciardo, and then made a stunning start in Sunday's Grand Prix to run second after the first lap. Aston Martin Red Bull Racing's decision to start on the supersoft tyres, like rivals Mercedes, while Ferrari were on the ultrasofts, proved to be right as Verstappen was able to deliver the kind of pace required to clinch second place. Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes eventually won the race. Ricciardo was running in the podium positions early on, after an impressive pass on Carlos Sainz, but faded in the closing stages when he sustained damage to his front wing from debris and was passed by Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen. However, the Honey Badger held on to finish fourth, which was enough to move back ahead of Valtteri Bottas into third place in the drivers' standings, with 13 races of the season still to go.

With two cars in the top four for the second successive race, Aston Martin Red Bull Racing closed the gap to second-placed Ferrari in the constructors' championship. Before the racing kicked off at Paul



Ricard, David Coulthard took a RB7 for a spin on the streets of nearby Marseille to build the fever while Scuderia Toro Rosso's Pierre Gasly gave team-mate Brendon Hartley, alongside Ricciardo and Verstappen, a lesson in French phrases - with varying levels of success! Formula One now heads to Austria, with the next Grand Prix taking place at the Red Bull Ring. "Finishing second here in Paul Ricard is better than we expected coming into the weekend. As soon as we got to Turn 2 I was relieved not to have had contact, so from there it was just about managing my own race, which was fairly straightforward. I could see Lewis managing the pace but we were still not far off without pushing the car too much. I think we got the strategy spot on. The soft tyres felt a little bit more robust and allowed me to find some good pace to make the final laps more comfortable. After two clean races and good result in a row it's important to carry this momentum forward. We have had a third and now a second so with the right track I am looking forward to a victory. I missed a good chance in Monaco but there are still some good opportunities coming up, but to score good points for the team at circuits that are not ideal for us is a big positive. It was nice to race here in France, to hear the national

anthem and see so many people in the grandstands made it feel like a traditional European grand prix."

"I'm obviously a bit disappointed and it's a shame to lose out on the podium today. We were definitely quicker than fourth place and it could have been a good battle with Max. I don't know why yet but the front wing was damaged during the race. Before the pit stop we had really good pace on the supersofts, I don't know how good compared to Lewis as he was so quick, but it seemed that we were pulling away from Kimi and catching Max. Then about two laps before I stopped I had damage to the left part of the front wing; I felt some understeer immediately and I don't know whether it was a failure or I hit some debris but the mechanics could see it during the stop. After the stop, the identical part on the right of the front wing also broke. Because of the damage we had less downforce, the car was understeering, and the tyres were suffering. Kimi was always going to catch us at the end of the race with that pace, the blue flags were also pretty bad, but we were a wounded car. It was a shame as we looked quite strong today. The positive is that we got some decent points but we were definitely quicker than fourth and just unlucky this afternoon."

"In the end an entertaining grand prix and we are happy to come away from our first run at Paul Ricard with a good haul of points for the team and a podium. Max had a good strong drive to complete a very good weekend finishing in second place and achieving back to back to podiums following on from a third place in Canada. From the start he managed to avoid the collision between Sebastian and Valtteri at Turn 1 and then settle into second place with a good clean race from there. It was a shame for Daniel whose car was stricken around the mid-point in the race when the top two elements of his front flap became dislodged, possibly through hitting some debris. A very frustrating race for him as he also looked good for a podium place. In summary, the French Grand Prix represents a solid start to the triple-header and we go directly to our home race in Austria where we hope we can be as

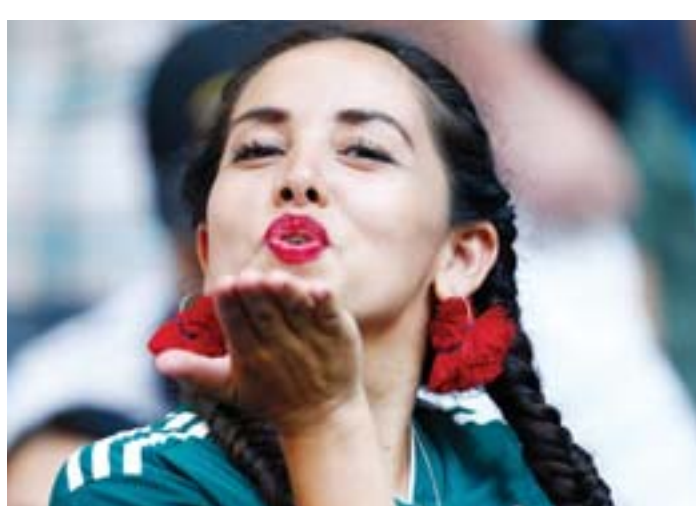




Sports



SNIPPETS



# Colombia motivated by England disrespect, warns Woodward

‘Nobody qualifying for the World Cup last 16 gets lucky’

**LONDON:** England manager Gareth Southgate has risked ratcheting up World Cup last 16 opponents Colombia's motivation by fielding a B team in their last group game believing that would earn them an easier route to the final, warns England's 2003 Rugby World Cup winning coach Clive Woodward.

England earned the right to play the Colombians today after a 1-0 loss to Belgium last Thursday to finish runners-up in their group. Woodward takes issue with the selection policy of Southgate—although his Belgian counterpart Roberto Martinez also made sweeping changes—but is more staggered by another facet of the thinking behind the policy.

“The thing I am really struggling with, though, is a much bigger point,” he wrote in the Daily Mail yesterday. “England have hardly covered themselves in glory in tournaments over the last two decades yet they were wasting time and energy and getting distracted thinking about possible quarter-finals and semi-finals.

“Don't even go there, just win the next match and the next after that.” Woodward drew on his experience of a tough first knockout stage match in the 2003 World Cup with Wales, after taking their pedal off the gas for their final two pool matches, to illustrate to Southgate the perils of tinkering with winning line-ups and taking the sharpness off the first team players.

“Who on earth ever thought that somehow Colombia would be the easy route, one of the best attacking teams in world football and a side who reached the Olympic quarter-finals?” “Nobody qualifying for the World Cup last 16 gets lucky.

“The one team who will be relishing all this is Colombia—what greater motivation than an England team believing playing them is an easier way to glory!

“I would love to be in charge of the Colombia team this week, reminding my players how England don't respect them. The England players will know this too.” Woodward, said there is no need to play players as Southgate



MOSCOW: England's coach Gareth Southgate smiles during a press conference at the Spartak Stadium in Moscow yesterday on the eve of the Russia 2018 World Cup round of 16 football match between Colombia and England. — AFP

did against Belgium to sew unity within the squad. “I have been amazed how former players used unity in the squad as a reason for Southgate's selection—well, if this is what creates unity, we have zero chance,” said Woodward. “Unity is simply everyone doing everything that is required of them to win the next match even if that is just carrying the water bottle.”

On the plus side, though, Woodward says Southgate has got his patriotic juices flowing like no previous England football manager. “This is the World Cup knockout stages and,

despite Belgium, I haven't been so excited about an England manager and his group of players for a long time,” said Woodward.

“They have built a genuine connection with the country and the opportunity of a lifetime is still there. “But there is no hiding place, this is when champion teams find a way of winning. I can't wait.”

Only Woodward and the late Alf Ramsey who managed England to 1966 World Cup success, have delivered a global trophy for the country that introduced the rest of the world to cricket, rugby and football. —AFP

## After shock Russia win, Moscow cleans up huge party mess

**MOSCOW:** Moscow city worker Nikolai Bardayev did not celebrate Russia's shock win against Spain on Sunday that sent scores of Russians to the streets to celebrate. He was too busy cleaning up the mess.

After a night of delirium as Russia reached the World Cup quarter-finals, on Monday morning clean-up crews tackled a mountain of trash, sweeping up cigarette butts and shards of broken glass left over from the celebrations.

On a pedestrian street behind the Bolshoi Theatre, a loader drove away with 21 black bags filled with garbage and torn cardboard boxes as commuters wobbled through the city centre with an enduring feeling of elation and, in some cases, hangovers. The smell of beer and urine lingered in the morning air.

“I've been working this job for two years and have never seen anything like this,” said Bardayev as he took a break from scrubbing the stained pavement. “I think it's related to Russia's win last night but also to people's upbringing.” Since the start of the World Cup last month, Moscow's streets have been packed with foreign

and local fans, wildly celebrating the soccer tournament until the small hours.

Celebrations broke out immediately after the final whistle of Sunday's match in the heart of the Russian capital, with cars tooting their horns and fans gleefully dancing in the streets, bringing traffic to a stand-still.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov compared Sunday night's festivities to the celebrations at the end of World War Two. “If we looked yesterday at the streets of many Russian cities, including Moscow, which I saw myself, it would probably be comparable in many respects to images of May 9, 1945,” Peskov told reporters.

Some fans in Moscow yesterday were still recovering from their emotional outbursts during and after the match. “We drank a lot. We drank and we sang,” said Maria Leonovets, a 22-year-old Russia fan from neighbouring Belarus with the Russian tricolour draped around her shoulders, carrying a water bottle to cure a light hangover. “My throat hurts.”

Lawmaker Vitaly Milonov, an outspoken lawmaker from the ruling United Russia party, suggested on Monday that Russians be given a day off to celebrate and recover after the national team's wins.

“We of course have to give people the opportunity to rest for a half-day or a day if they want,” Milonov told the Komsomolskaya Pravda tabloid's radio station.

Russia, the lowest-ranked team in the World Cup, automatically qualified for the tournament

as the host country. Convincing wins against Saudi Arabia and Egypt in the group stage saw Russia through to the round of 16 for the first time in the post-Soviet era.

After beating Spain 4-3 on penalty kicks at Moscow's Luzhniki stadium, Russia will face Croatia in the quarter-finals on Saturday in Sochi, one of 11 World Cup host cities. Until then, Moscow is relishing a nation's unexpected success.

“There were so many people, so much joy. I've never seen anything like it,” said street cleaner Klara Bubnova, as she rested on a bench on Nikolskaya street. “It reminds me of Victory Day,” she added, referring to annual celebrations across Russia to mark the anniversary of the end of World War Two. “Now we can say this about soccer too.” — Reuters

**WORLD CUP 2018**

**Today's Matches (All local timings)**

|          |       |             |
|----------|-------|-------------|
| Sweden   | 17:00 | Switzerland |
| Colombia | 21:00 | England     |

## Federer breezes in Wimbledon furnace, Stephens crashes

**LONDON:** Defending champion Roger Federer marked the start of his 20th successive Wimbledon with a new look and a comfortable 6-1, 6-3, 6-4 win over Serbia's Dusan Lajovic yesterday. Top seed Federer marched out on Centre Court dressed for the first time in gear designed by Japanese giant Uniqlo in a deal reported to be worth \$300 million after a two-decade association with Nike. But everything else was familiar for the 36-year-old, eight-time champion as the

Swiss cruised past world number 57 Lajovic in just 79 minutes. It was the second successive year that Federer had knocked out the Serb at Wimbledon.

“I'm very happy, I felt good from the start too which was nice and that was not the case last year against him. I remember I struggled early on a lot,” said Federer who hardly broke sweat in Monday's 30-degree hothouse. “It was a really nice feeling. I always got the early break in each set and was able to bring it home.”

After just 20 minutes to complete the first set, Federer went on to fire 35 winners past Lajovic, breaking serve five times, setting up a second round encounter against either Lukas Lacko of Slovakia or French qualifier Benjamin Bonzi.

US Open champion and fourth seed Sloane Stephens became the tournament's first big name casualty when she slumped to a 6-1, 6-3 loss to Croatia's world 55 Donna Vekic. For Stephens, fresh from making the French Open final last month, it was her second successive first round

loss at the tournament. Vekic, who sealed the upset on her fourth match point, faces Slovakia's Viktoria Kuzmova or Sweden's Rebecca Peterson in the second round. “I finally got through a match like that,” Vekic told the WTA after her first win over a top five player.

“The last couple of times I played against top players I was playing good but I would still lose. My team always said it's going to come and it did today,” Stephens shrugged off the loss.

“There isn't too much I can do—I'm not going to go and cry. Life goes on.” Third seed and 2017 runner-up Marin Cilic enjoyed a 6-1, 6-4, 6-4 win over Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka. Cilic, who won the Wimbledon warm-up event at Queen's Club last month, fired 21 aces and 44 winners past his 259th-ranked opponent. He will face Guido Pella of Argentina for a place in the last 32. Second seed Caroline Wozniacki, who has never got to the quarter-finals at Wimbledon, built on her Eastbourne title at the weekend with a 59-minute, 6-0, 6-3 win over Varvara Lepchenko. — AFP



**25** Andersson leads Swedes back to promised World Cup land

**26** LeBron James to join NBA Lakers in four-year, \$154 million deal

**27** Federer breezes in Wimbledon furnace, Stephens crashes



## Brazil cruise into quarter-finals

Stylish Neymar and Firmino on target



**SAMARA:** Brazil's defender Fagner (L) and Mexico's forward Hirving Lozano vie for the ball during the Russia 2018 World Cup round of 16 football match between Brazil and Mexico at the Samara Arena in Samara yesterday. — AFP

**SAMARA:** Brazil cruised into the quarter-finals of the World Cup yesterday as goals from Neymar and substitute Roberto Firmino gave them a 2-0 victory over Mexico to stay on course for a sixth title. Neymar was criticised for his early performances in Russia as he eased his way back to fitness after a broken foot bone, but he carved open a tough Mexican defence without quite reaching his dazzling best.

After a goalless first half on a hot afternoon in Samara, the world's most expensive player tapped in from the impressive Willian's cross for his second goal of the tournament on 51 minutes. As Brazil pressed their advantage, Neymar set up Firmino for another close-range finish that sealed the victory.

In between, he writhed in agony on the turf after a Mexican opponent appeared to stand on his ankle, but the referee ruled there had been no foul and Neymar was soon

on his feet.

Mexico threatened at times but their World Cup challenge was ended at the first knockout stage for the seventh consecutive tournament. Neymar said Mexico had made Brazil work hard: "We have to learn to suffer and we did suffer, it was a tough match. We knew they were a high-quality opponent."

Russian fans celebrated long into the night after they stunned 2010 winners Spain on penalties in an electric atmosphere at Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium on Sunday. Veteran goalkeeper Igor Akinfeev was the hero for the hosts, saving two spot-kicks.

The win sparked an outpouring of joy on the streets of the capital, with disbelieving locals cheering, waving flags, blowing horns and yelling "Russ-i-al!" Russia, ranked a lowly 70th in the world, will play Croatia in the last eight after similar drama in Nizhny Novgorod, where Luka

Modric saw his spot-kick saved late in extra time before they held their nerve to defeat Denmark in the penalty shootout.

Spain had been considered among the favourites but their preparations were wrecked when coach Julen Lopetegui was sensationally sacked on the eve of the tournament. "The KO in the last 16 is another dark chapter in our history," said Spanish sports daily Marca, adding that it was "incredible naivety" to think Lopetegui's abrupt sacking would not affect the team.

Spain join 2014 winners Germany, Argentina and European champions Portugal in exiting the competition, leaving just four former World Cup winners in the tournament. Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi, who have dominated the game for the past decade, have gone home, their hopes of ever winning the World Cup probably over.

Roberto Martinez's dangerous Belgian side have lived

up to their billing so far, winning all three group games. A host of key players including Hazard, Lukaku and Kevin De Bruyne will be fresh after being rested in the 1-0 victory against England.

However, Adnan Januzaj, who scored the winner in that match, suffered a knock to his knee in training. This is probably the best chance for Belgium's so-called golden generation to win a major trophy after they were eliminated in the last eight at the 2014 World Cup and Euro 2016.

"This is our time to shine, definitely. We have top players and we play as a group, especially after the win over England," Chelsea star Hazard said. "It's in our hands. We need to give everything and see what happens." Japan reached this stage in controversial manner, by virtue of collecting fewer yellow cards in the group phase than Senegal. They have never won a knockout-round game at the competition. — AFP

## Belgium snatch win over Japan to set up Brazil clash

**ROSTOV-ON-DON:** Belgium threw caution to the wind to reach the World Cup quarter-finals as substitute Nacer Chadli scored in the dying seconds against Japan to snatch a 3-2 comeback win yesterday and set up a clash with five-time champions Brazil.

The distraught Japanese, who went 2-0 up with goals by Genki Haraguchi and Takashi Inui early in the second half, fell to the turf after Chadli poked the ball home from Thomas Meunier's cross four minutes into added time at the Rostov Arena.

Belgium, who had taken a conservative approach to the game, got back into contention with late goals by Jan Vertonghen and substitute Marouane Fellaini before Chadli struck.

"That's what happens in the World Cup. It was a test of character and a test of the team. It

tells you everything about this group of players," said Belgium coach Roberto Martinez.

One of the most exciting teams of the group phase, Belgium faced an embarrassing exit but finally clicked to become the first team to win a World Cup knockout game from two goals down since West Germany beat England 3-2 after extra time in 1970.

Belgium's 'golden generation' have now scored 12 goals in four games in Russia ahead of a mouthwatering last eight clash with Brazil who beat Mexico 2-0 earlier yesterday. With centre back Vincent Kompany back in the lineup for the first time since picking a groin strain in a warm-up game, Belgium had looked safe at the back but uninspired up front.

Both teams fought a tight midfield battle but their forwards froze in the area and Belgium's wide players, Meunier and Yannick Carrasco, did not take risks going forward, effectively turning a 3-4-3 formation into a more conservative 5-2-3 system.

Japan got closest to a goal in a dull first half when Belgium keeper Thibaut Courtois let the ball slip from his hands and between his legs but recovered before it crossed the line. The

Japanese were ahead soon after the break, though, when Haraguchi beat the offside trap and ran into the area to beat Courtois with a cross-shot in the 48th minute.

Belgium responded but Hazard's shot rattled the post and Japan doubled their tally in the 52nd when Inui picked up the ball 25 metres out and fired a missile into the back of the net. The Red Devils were still struggling but they pulled a goal back after 69 minutes when Vertonghen looped a header from a high clearance back across goal into the far top corner.

The momentum had shifted and in the 74th, Eden Hazard's cross was met by Fellaini, who equalised from close range with a powerful header. Belgium continued to push forward and both Chadli and Lukaku forced Japan keeper Eiji Kawashima into a couple of spectacular saves with powerful headers four minutes from full time.

In stoppage time, Keisuke Honda's 30-metre free-kick was parried away by Courtois. The keeper then launched the ball to Kevin De Bruyne, who made a beeline through the field before finding Meunier, whose cross was met by Chadli for the winner. — Reuters



**ROSTOV-ON-DON:** Belgium's midfielder Marouane Fellaini (top) scores during the Russia 2018 World Cup round of 16 football match between Belgium and Japan at the Rostov Arena in Rostov-On-Don yesterday. — AFP