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Kuwait's senior security, military chiefs hold coordinative meeting

MP urges govt to treat bedoons like immigrants in France

By B Izzak and Agencies

KUWAIT: Kuwait's defense ministry, interior ministry and national guard held a coordination meeting yesterday at the Operations and Planning Authority to discuss joint cooperation to address regional conditions. The defense ministry's directorate of moral guidance and public relations said in a statement that the joint meeting depicted the joint and ongoing cooperation between the security and military establishments for the service of homeland security and citizens.

The meeting was attended by Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Lt-Gen Mohammad Khaled Al-Khodir, Interior Ministry's Acting Undersecretary Lt Gen Essam Al-Nahham and Head of Operations and Planning at the National Guard Maj Gen Faleh Shujaa, the statement added. The security and military officers briefed the meeting on the latest precautionary measures and steps taken to tackle the latest regional developments. They examined common plans, missions and joint training programs as well as coordination mechanisms, it said.

Taking part in the coordinative meeting were Deputy Chief of Staff Gen Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nawaf

Al-Sabah, Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations and Planning Brig Gen Mohammed Al-Kandari, MoI's Assistant Undersecretary for Operations Maj-Gen Jamal Al-Sayegh and a number of high-ranking military officials.

Separately, MP Saleh Ashour yesterday urged the government to benefit from employing thousands of stateless people or bedoons, recalling the example of how naturalized African immigrants won the World Cup for France. "France won the World Cup thanks to naturalized Africans. Here we have hundreds of doctors, engineers, teachers, technicians and administrators from the bedoons but they are not being employed to benefit the country. This is unfair," Ashour wrote on his Twitter account. He also questioned the "wrong policy" being adopted by the government over the bedoons.

There are around 120,000 bedoons living in Kuwait who claim the right to Kuwaiti citizenship. The government says that a majority of the bedoons or their ancestors arrived from other countries and destroyed their identification documents to claim the right to citizenship. The government however admits that around 34,000 of the bedoons qualify for consideration for citizenship while the rest have no right.



KUWAIT: Senior defense ministry, interior ministry and national guard officials hold a coordination meeting yesterday. — KUNA

Meanwhile, liberal MP Omar Al-Tabtabaei yesterday called for a solution that is in line with the constitution over the jailing of opposition MPs and activists who were convicted of storming the National Assembly building around seven years ago. Tabtabaei said the lawmakers and activists had been sentenced to jail for their political positions and after fighting corruption, adding that their action of entering the Assembly was a

reaction to corruption scandals.

The lawmaker called for resolving the issue by closing this chapter to strengthen domestic stability and national unity amid destabilization factors in the region. Tabtabaei said he totally respects the Kuwaiti judiciary and its verdicts but called for a solution under the Kuwaiti constitution in a bid to prevent any unwanted negative consequences.

News in brief

KFH, AUB mull possible merger

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has invited Bahrain's Ahli United Bank (AUB) to sign a memorandum of understanding and non-disclosure agreement to pursue strategic opportunities for global growth and expansion. The deal, if confirmed, aims to establish a new banking entity that will accommodate the rapid developments in the world banking industry. KFH said in a statement posted on Kuwait Stock Exchange's (Boursa Kuwait) official website. Meanwhile, the Bahraini bank released a statement confirming that it has received the offer. KFH said that it would provide further updates on the matter in due course. — KUNA



ISTANBUL: Ebru Ozkan (left) arrives at Ataturk Airport yesterday after she was released by an Israeli court. — AFP

Israel frees Turkish woman

JERUSALEM: Israel has released a Turkish woman who had been arrested while visiting on a tourist visa and accused of helping the Palestinian militant group Hamas, in a case that angered Ankara, Israel and her lawyer said yesterday. Turkey threatened retaliation after Ebru Ozkan's detention last month. Ozkan, 27, arrived overnight on a scheduled flight from Tel Aviv, the state-run Anadolu news agency said. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has already called Ozkan to pass on his best wishes after her return, said his spokesman Ibrahim Kalin, describing her incarceration as "unfounded". Anadolu quoted Ozkan, upon landing, as thanking Erdogan for having been "kind enough to be very interested in my case". — Agencies

Indian woman gang-raped, killed

NEW DELHI: Indian police arrested two men yesterday over the gang rape and burning to death of a woman, the latest shocking crime against females in the country, officials said. Five men allegedly took it in turns to rape the woman after barging into her home early on Saturday, before dragging her to a Hindu temple where they burned her to death in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh. Initial investigations found the men, who are members of the same extended family as the victim and from the same locality, were "annoyed" with the 35-year-old for meeting a particular man, local police chief Radhey Mohan Bhardwaj said. Police said the mother-of-two revealed the identities of the accused to her husband over the phone after the alleged rape and before they took her to the nearby temple and murdered her. — AFP

Trump, Putin tout reset in ties at summit

HELSINKI: Presidents Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin vowed a fresh start to troubled relations between the world's greatest nuclear powers at their first summit yesterday, as the American leader rejected a chance to condemn Moscow's alleged manipulation of US elections. The US and Russian leaders came out of their meeting in Helsinki expressing a desire to cooperate on global challenges, after talks on an array of issues from Syria, Ukraine and China to trade tariffs and the size of their nuclear arsenals.

Standing alongside Putin at a joint news conference, Trump said he had "spent a great deal of time talking about" election meddling, without going into detail or explicitly condemning any interference, after 12 Russian agents were indicted in the United States. Rather, when pressed about the verdict of his own intelligence chiefs, Trump stressed that Putin had delivered a "powerful" denial of any Russian vote meddling and said the US investiga-

tion by special counsel Robert Mueller had been a "disaster" for the United States.

Trump again denied any collusion between his campaign and the Kremlin, while Putin insisted: "The Russian state has never interfered and is not planning to interfere in the USA's internal affairs." The US leader, bent on forging a personal bond with the Kremlin chief despite the election allegations, went into the summit blaming the "stupidity" of his predecessors for plunging ties to their present low. Afterwards, both men were determined to accentuate the positive. "Our relationship has never been worse than it is now. However, that changed as of about four hours ago. I really believe that," Trump said, vowing the summit was "only the beginning".

Putin said: "It is obvious to everyone that bilateral ties are going through a difficult period. However there are no objective reasons for these difficulties, the current tense atmosphere." Praising the "frank and business-like atmosphere" of the summit, the Russian leader said he considered the talks "very successful and useful". The two leaders met one-on-one for more than two hours in the Finnish capital for the historic summit, with just their interpreters present, before they were joined by their national security teams.



HELSINKI: Russian President Vladimir Putin (right) and US President Donald Trump shake hands before a meeting yesterday. — AFP

Many in Washington were agog at Trump's decision to sit alone with Putin, worried about what he might bargain away to the former KGB spymaster, after previously cosying up to the autocratic leaders of China and North Korea. Indeed, some domestic critics wanted the Helsinki summit called off entirely, after the 12 Russians were indicted by Mueller under a long-running probe into

Moscow's alleged hacking of Democratic emails in a bid to drive Trump to victory.

But Trump, convinced his unique brand of diplomacy could make inroads with Putin, pressed ahead and looked forward to "having an extraordinary relationship" as the pair sat down to discuss the global hotspots. Putin, basking in congratulations from Trump and other

Continued on Page 24

Muslims in China fear eradication of Islam

LINXIA, China: Green-domed mosques still dominate the skyline of China's "Little Makkah", but they have undergone a profound change - no longer do boys flit through their stone courtyards en route to classes and prayers. In what

locals told AFP they fear is a deliberate move to eradicate Islam, the atheist ruling Communist Party has banned minors under 16 from religious activity or study in Linxia, a deeply Islamic region in western China that had offered a haven of comparative religious freedom for the ethnic Hui Muslims there.

China governs Xinjiang, another majority Muslim region in its far west, with an iron fist to weed out what it calls "religious extremism" and "separatism" in the wake of deadly unrest, throwing ethnic Uighurs into shadowy re-education camps without due process for

Continued on Page 24



GUANHE, China: This picture taken on Feb 27, 2018 shows ethnic Hui Muslim men arriving at a mosque in this city in China's Gansu province. — AFP

Mogherini: We share a common vision with Kuwait

BRUSSELS: European Union High Representative Federica Mogherini yesterday described her meeting with Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, in Brussels on Friday as "excellent" and announced that the 28-member bloc will open an embassy in Kuwait. "We had an excellent meeting with the foreign minister of Kuwait as always. It is a country with whom we share a common vision in the region and in international work," she told reporters ahead of a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Brussels.

"By the way, Kuwait is doing an excellent work in the Security Council. We are cooperating closely with them. I announced to the foreign minister our intention to open a European Union delegation (embassy) in the country. So good news. And to strengthen more our cooperation," declared the EU foreign policy chief. "It is going to be very important as we need friends and partners and we are cultivating friendships in a very consistent manner," she added.

In reply to a question on comments



BRUSSELS: EU High Representative Federica Mogherini talks to reporters yesterday. — KUNA

made by US President Donald Trump that the EU is a foe of the US, Mogherini replied that "US is for sure a friend and partner. Change in the administration does not change friendship with countries and people." Mogherini added that she will brief the EU ministers on her visit to Libya on Saturday, and discuss the situation in North Korea. — KUNA

Local

Crown Prince meets National Security chief

Deputy FM discusses bilateral relations with Indian envoy

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Seif Palace President of the National Security Bureau Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. Separately, Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah met yesterday with India's Ambassador to Kuwait K Jeeva Sagar to discuss bilateral relations and recent regional and global developments. The talks were attended by Director of Undersecretary Office Ayham Al-Omar. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with President of the National Security Bureau Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. — KUNA



Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with India's Ambassador to Kuwait K Jeeva Sagar.

Govt assigns committee to implement China agreements

KUWAIT: The Cabinet yesterday assigned its economic committee to implement recent agreements signed with China without delay, while urging private sector to make use of positive opportunities of these deals. The Cabinet's meeting, chaired by Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah at Seif Palace, said the private sector should "deal in a positive and serious manner with outcome" of the agreements in a drive to have common benefits. Deputy Premier and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh said in a statement after the meeting.

The agreements were signed during His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's official visit to China. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled commended His Highness the Amir's vision during his visit, praising its outcome which aimed at establishing strategic partnership as well as cementing economic and political relations and cooperation. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said Kuwait enjoyed economic and commercial potentials that enabled it to be a haven for investment in the north of the Arabian Gulf.

Strategic partnership

The Cabinet meanwhile reviewed outcome of talks

between His Highness the Amir and Chinese President Xi Jinping, which focused on establishment of strategic partnership. The two countries signed seven agreements during the visit. His Highness the Amir also participated in the China-Arab Cooperation Forum. The two countries signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on consultation and coordination over regional and international issues, as well as boosting strategic collaboration on Belt and Road Initiative to honor Kuwait's 2035 vision. They signed a protocol on defense industry, aimed at promoting cooperation in purchase and transfer of equipment, spare-parts and raw materials related to weaponry and technology, joint research and development, and providing logistic and technical support for military equipment.

They signed framework agreement for cooperation in planning for the Silk City, five islands of Kuwait, energy, transport infrastructure, and improving domestic and regional transport networks. Kuwait and China signed e-commerce agreement to encourage sustainable development, explore possible e-commerce opportunities, support trade in high-quality products, create conducive environment to develop communications over trade-related policies and training, in addition to providing jobs and development SMEs. They signed an MoU to encourage direct investment, designed to empowering business communities to develop exhibitions and activities to expand direct investment cooperation. The two countries signed an agreement to foster cooperation on oil, gas, petrochemicals and renewable energy, as well as providing credit backing to Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) regarding financing of projects and exports.

They also signed an MoU between Huawei Company and Communication and Information Technology

Regulatory Authority. The MoU aims at exchanging expertise in strategic planning for smart cities, and providing state-of-art designs, consultations, communications' application in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port.

On the other hand, the Cabinet took note of His Highness the Amir's speech at China-Arab Cooperation Forum, where he emphasized on improving joint cooperation to achieve genuine partnership. President Xi said the Arab countries were a true partner for the Belt and Road Initiative.

Anti-IS meeting

Meanwhile, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled briefed the Cabinet about outcome of a meeting of the Global Coalition to Counter the so-called Islamic State (IS), which took place at NATO headquarters. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said participants discussed means of boosting cooperation among coalition members to confront IS, Saleh said in a statement.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said this cooperation ultimately aimed at achieving peace and security in the Middle East. Sheikh Sabah Khaled attended the meeting at the invitation of US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg.

The participants discussed the latest efforts to fight IS, and ways of supporting stability in Iraq and the entire region. Addressing the meeting, the Kuwaiti minister hailed the international coalition members' efforts and effective participation in a ministerial meeting held in Kuwait on February 13, 2018. He pointed to world wars and armed conflicts that have affected societies and peoples, adding that it is the shared responsibility of all member states to address relevant ramifications. — KUNA

Minister signs contract for roads, bridges completion



KUWAIT: Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Hussam Al-Roumi. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Hussam Al-Roumi signed a KD14.722 million (about \$48.5 million) contract yesterday related to the design, construction, maintenance of roads, bridges, sewerages, waterways and other services between the Fifth Ring Road, Al-Ghazali Road and Muhammad bin Qasim Street.

Roumi said in a press statement that the implementation of this contract will take place in 730 days and includes the development of Al-Ghazali intersection with the Fifth Ring Road via an overpass. The contract also includes expansion of the sub-route connecting the Airport Road 55 to the Fifth Ring Road in the direction of Jahra. It also includes the expansion and development of an upper bridge connecting the internal road to the Fifth Ring Road, he noted. — KUNA

Council adopts new policy to promote cooperation with govt

KUWAIT: Kuwait's municipal council chief Osama Al-Otaibi has stressed the importance of paying visits to governmental bodies and institutions so as to promote bilateral ties and open new horizons of action. Otaibi said in a press statement that the council has adopted a new policy through visiting institutions, which have close relations with the council. The aim of this move is to boost and develop ties, and break any possible impasse, as routine is the main reason for delaying the accomplishment of some governmental projects, he noted.

The council met on Sunday with head of Public Authority of Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources Sheikh Mohammad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, and discussed several common interest issues, he said. The council also visited Environment Public Authority, and will make a tour next Wednesday to Public Authority for Industry for the same purpose, Otaibi made clear. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the Cabinet's meeting yesterday. — KUNA



Local

20,000 citizens hired annually in private sector jobs: MGRP

Efforts to separate Municipal Council chairman's office from ministry

By Meshaal Al-Enezi and A Saleh

KUWAIT: There are 20,000 citizens who are annually appointed in private sector jobs, including those appointed for the first time and those reappointed in different areas, the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP) Secretary General Fauzi Al-Majdali said yesterday. Majdali added that with new developmental projects opened and putting proposals ensuring the protection of national labor rights in the private sector into practice, this number would increase over the coming few years. Majdali stressed that citizens would be prioritized in utilizing job opportunities to be created by the developmental projects, followed by children of Kuwaiti women and bedoons.

Chairman's office

Municipal Council Chairman Osama Al-Otaibi urged Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Public Works Hossam Al-Roumi to undo a decision subjecting the Municipal Council chairman's office to the minister until further studies are made. Otaibi argued that the decision would make it harder to run the council properly.

Separately, Municipal Council member and head of its Jahra committee Ahmed Hadyan Al-Enezi stressed that an alternative land plot would be allocated soon for the fodder market along Salmi highway.

Enezi said that in support of the livestock and fodder trade, the new location would substitute the current one which was destroyed in a recent fire. Enezi said he met Sheikh Mohammed Al-Yousif, Director of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR), who promised to allocate the new location soon.

In other news, Municipal Council member Abdullah Al-Roumi filed an inquiry concerning schools in private and ideal residential areas, their total number, licensed ones, ones with expired licenses and the process of applying to open new ones.

Food bank

Kuwait Food Bank (KFB) launched an initiative to

establish an international union for food banks in the Muslim world with the aim of widening KFB's vision to create a world without hunger through the land of humanity. KFB's deputy board chairman Meshaal Al-Ansari said that the initiative was a voluntary one made in response to instructions from KFB's board chairman and businessman Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, who called for supporting the efforts exerted by various food banks in the Arab and Muslim world and coming up with creative solutions for various humanitarian issues in those countries.

Ansari added that the main reason to establish the union was to exchange expertise concerning all forms of voluntary and humanitarian activities and projects. "Being a center for humanitarian work under the leadership of HH the Amir, Kuwait embraced the initiative," he underlined. KFB's Manager Salem Al-Hamar expressed his joy over the initiative and stressed that it aims at professionally providing food supplies and basic needs as well as boosting public awareness in Muslim communities, limiting food waste, helping poor and needy families and using excess food for the benefit of Muslim communities. Notably, KFB had suggested the initiative in a meeting with Al-Azhar Grand Imam Ahmed Al-Tayyeb, who highly welcomed the idea and approved it.

Oil sector

Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Bakheet Al-Rasheedi announced his full support of oil sector employees, responding to their rightful demands and resolving any problems they are facing. Rasheedi's statements came on receiving the Chairman of Oil and Petrochemical Industries Workers Confederation (OPIWC) Mohammed Hamad Al-Hajri and Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) workers syndicate member and OPIWC executive board member Adel Al-Fadl, who conveyed a number of demands. Speaking during the meeting, Hajri called for amending the contracts of employees appointed from Aug 8, 2014 until Dec 31, 2014. He also expressed his total rejection of discriminating amongst oil sector employees and stressed that law number 110/2014 was a clear violation

men, women and children, then returned back home. Officers took care of the stranded passengers and transported them to the airport. The passengers had to travel to Kuwait by land because of the situation in Iraq, but the driver abandoned them in Mutlaa.

Smuggling foiled

Kuwait International Airport customs officers arrested a passenger for attempting to smuggle cannabis balls into the country. An officer who grew suspicious of the Asian man searched his luggage and found five bags containing balls of the drug. The suspect was handed to concerned authorities.

Theft charges

Naeem police investigator placed the names of two Filipinas on the wanted list after they were accused of stealing a ring and necklace from the house of a services ministry employee.

Accident

A pedestrian was rushed to Adan Hospital after he was run over in an accident in Mahboula. Police and paramedics rushed to the area and found the victim, Syrian, in critical condition. The driver, Indian, was detained at Fintas police station for further legal action.

Contrabands

Ahmadi police arrested a Kuwaiti man who had liquor, Tramadol and bullets in his possession, and sent him to the Drugs Control General Department. Police on patrol in Fintas and noticed the suspect driving erratically, so he was pulled over and the illicit material was found. Meanwhile, airport traffic police sent a man to the DCGD after catching him with hashish near Kuwait International Airport. He claimed it was for his personal use.

Indecent acts

A citizen saw a couple committing indecent acts, and as he came close to them, they turned their attention to him, so he escaped and called for police's help out of fear of being harmed. Police did not find the couple.



Zbaidi fishing underway



of oil sector employees' rights and the private and oil sector labor acts.

Zbaidi fishing

Chairman of Kuwait Fishermen Union Thaher Al-Sowayyan stressed that local Zbaidi (silver pomfret) is back on sale with the beginning of its fishing season yesterday after a 45-day suspension. He also expected large numbers of consumers to attend the morning auction as this type of fish is the most favored amongst Kuwaitis.

Poisoning

The Ministry of Health (MoH) announced that a large number of construction workers who were poisoned while working at the Mutlaa residential city project have been discharged from hospitals and only a few of them are still receiving treatment, with none of them in critical condition.

Free trade zone

Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) is currently preparing to take over assets in the free trade zone in Shuwaikh and run them instead of the public authority of industry, said governmental sources. The sources also announced a plan to build

five more free trade zones with a primary cost of \$8.5 billion to include warehouses, rentable storage areas, construction areas, display areas, banks, hotels, post offices and insurance companies. A report by KDIPA stressed that studies and international talks are underway to develop free trade zones in collaboration with well-experienced GCC and Turkish partners with the aim of providing a minimum of 14,000 job opportunities for Kuwaitis. KDIPA stressed that foreign companies investing in these areas would be given remarkable exemptions as well as the privileges of getting commercial and industrial licenses without having a local sponsor.

Pilgrimage

The Public Authority for Minors Affairs announced accepting all the minors it patronizes who applied to perform hajj this year upon direct instructions from Minister of Justice and Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Fahd Al-Afasi. The authority announced it would pay all the expenses for those who cannot afford it as well as the cost of a companion for each minor. "One hundred minors and companions applied this year and they were all accepted," the authority underscored, noting that they were all registered in one of the hajj convoys.

Ministry ordered to compensate driver for rain-damaged vehicle

By Meshaal Al-Enezi, Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

KUWAIT: A court yesterday ordered the Ministry of Public Works (MPW) to pay a citizen the sum of KD 3,000 in compensation for his vehicle, which was damaged when it submerged in rainwater. Meanwhile, the court of appeal yesterday acquitted an expatriate man who had been sentenced to death for procuring drugs from a neighboring country. In the meantime, the court of cassation yesterday rejected a contest by former chairman of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, and ordered fining him KD 3,000 for slandering Sheikh Mazen Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah on Facebook. Separately, the court of appeal acquitted former MPs Musallam Al-Barrak, Mubarak Al-Waalan, Salem Al-Namlan and Abbas Al-Shaabi in a case filed by the state security accusing them of slandering the Jordanian monarch.

Security plan

The general security department launched an integrated security plan at markets, malls and entertainment centers to coincide with the summer break. The Interior Ministry's relations and security information department said the security presence aims at maintaining security and order and to prevent fights and harassment.

Passengers abandoned

Authorities found 50 persons who crossed the border from Iraq to Kuwait but were abandoned by their driver half way through. Al-Anbaa reported. The Iraqi driver reportedly dropped the passengers, who include



KUWAIT: Police tour a mall as part of a plan to maintain security during the summer.

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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A woman takes a photo of boys participating in the "habab and shouna", an event that precedes the 30th annual pearl diving expedition which starts this Thursday. — Photo by Joseph Shagra

Zain strategic partner of LOYAC for over 14 years

Company contributes to developing youth skills and education sector

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced its strategic partnership of LOYAC, a non-profit organization that aims at developing the youth's talents and skills. This year, Zain's partnership with LOYAC continues for over 14 consecutive years.

Zain's sponsorship and support to LOYAC's programs and initiatives since its inception comes in line with the company's corporate sustainability and social responsibility strategy, which centers around the development of the education and youth sectors. The company is keen on partnering with various public, private, and non-profit entities that cater to the youth's talents and skills, ultimately contributing to the further progression of the national economy.

This year, Zain's support to LOYAC will extend to a great number of educational initiatives and programs that cater to developing the youth's skills and talents. This includes the support to KON, a social entrepreneurship program that is brought to Kuwait in collaboration with Babson College in Boston, considered the most prestigious entrepreneurship college in the United States and the number one institution in the world for entrepreneurship education. The programs also include the IFAD Internship Program, where young Kuwaiti talents are sent

abroad to learn from international experts. Zain's support to LOYAC will also include the LOYAC AC Milan Soccer School, which has become one of the leading soccer schools in the region over the past nine years. The school's training staff consists of highly qualified coaches from Italy and various regions of the world, and features a professional training atmosphere. The LOYAC AC Milan Soccer School was the first Arab team to ever participate in the International Youth Peace Tournament.

Through its strategic partnership with LOYAC, Zain also trains hundreds of students as part of the LOYAC Summer Internship Program. The students take part in completing tasks, learning new skills, and go through professional training in the real business world at various departments and divisions within the company. Zain also offers the students financial rewards in recognition of their efforts and as an encouragement to their dedication.

Zain is proud to be one of the strategic partners of LOYAC since its inception, especially that it is considered one of the most prominent national programs that cater to the youth and offers them a healthy and empowering environment to develop their skills and talents in an edu-



KUWAIT: Waleed Al-Khashtji and Fetouh Al-Dalali with Zain and LOYAC officials.

ational, fun, and social atmosphere. Since its inception in 2002, LOYAC has grown to be the first choice of the youth in Kuwait when it comes to innovative and high quality educational programs.

LOYAC runs several programs for the youth to develop their professional skills, enhance their personal growth and to help them find their sense of purpose by

extending themselves to others. Zain believes in the development of the communities in which it operates, and it is a very important part of the company's overall success. The company considers education as a core element in the community development process, and it will continue to support it to contribute to the further progress of the country's youth.

NCCAL Kuwait's window to culture at int'l arenas

KUWAIT: The cultural scene in Kuwait receives great care from the political leadership and thus issued a decree back in July 13 of the year 1973 to establish the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL). In remarks to KUNA, NCCAL's Assistant Secretary General for Arts Sector Dr Bader Al-Duweesh said yesterday that the Council is responsible for various cultural tasks including developing the intellectual domain, offering proper atmosphere for cultural production, issuing publications, dictionaries and translated collections of remarkable translations.

NCCAL also works on boosting cultural exchange and taking part in cultural events, fairs and conferences, as well as offering prizes to cultural distinguished productions and holding Arab and inter-



Dr Bader Al-Duweesh

national cultural weeks. Meanwhile, NCCAL's Assistant Secretary-General for Cultural Sector Dr Essa Al-Ansari said that the Council signed a number of cultural agreements worldwide, like protection and promotion of cultural expression diversity agreement. He hailed the great care provided by the government in supporting the young youth's cultural contributions, as Kuwait is a window to the world with its diverse authentic culture that depicts the unique Kuwaiti identity.

Kuwait also takes part in many international cultural annual meetings including United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and The International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM). — KUNA

ICRC praises Kuwait's relief efforts in Yemen

GENEVA: President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Peter Maurer yesterday praised Kuwait's support for the Committee's programs in Yemen. This came in a statement made by Maurer after meeting with Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN and International Organizations headquarters in Geneva Jamal Al-Ghunaim to discuss the Committee's programs in Yemen. Yemen is one of the exceptional cases that the ICRC is dealing with now because of the war and violence and its reflection on the deteriorating health situation, Maurer said.

The State of Kuwait always gives best example in dealing with humanitarian crises through its support for ICRC's programs, especially in Yemen, he added, stressing that this support enables the Committee to provide safe drinking water and sanitation services to displaced people. He stressed that the Committee is keen on neutrality and credibility in all programs, especially those in areas of conflict and tension.

Meanwhile, Ambassador Ghunaim said in



GENEVA: ICRC President Peter Maurer meets with Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN and International Organizations headquarters in Geneva Jamal Al-Ghunaim. — KUNA

similar statement that his meeting with ICRC chief tackled the mechanisms of distributing Kuwaiti relief supplies in Yemen. Ghunaim added that Maurer would visit Kuwait soon for further consultations on the Kuwaiti sup-

port for the committee's program in conflict zones. The Kuwaiti ambassador underlined ICRC's role in Yemen and its neutrality in the distribution of its services to the needy Yemenis. — KUNA

Local

Educational Technology Conference kicks off Dec 2

Registration for scholarship at AUD on July 22-26: Ministry

KUWAIT: Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Hamid Al-Azmi will sponsor a conference and exhibition entitled 'Educational Technology... A Future Vision' and organized by Kuwait Public Relations Society (KPRS) on December 2, 2018.

"The development of education has become one of the fundamentals to be relied on by development plans of the world countries amidst the development and technological revolution in the world, so it is necessary to keep pace with this development to serve the educational process and develop it," Jamal Al-Nasrallah, KPRS' chairman, said yesterday.

He pointed out that the conference, in which many local and international educational institutions are involved, stems out of keenness to build a comprehensive strategy for education in Kuwait in cooperation with educational institutions and related parties and to develop and benefit from electronic curricula in the educational system in cooperation with the Ministry of Education.

Nasrallah explained that the conference seeks to benefit from information and communication technolo-

gy and electronic education in the integration of people with special needs in society in cooperation with associations of non-profit public societies and evaluation of Arab and foreign experiences and practices in the applications and content of e-learning.



Modern technology in institutional communication

He pointed out that in light of the importance of the role of public relations in the ministries and institutions of the state, the conference addresses the issue of modern technology in institutional communication and their

role in the work of strategies to build effective communication and how public relations can design and build communication programs to qualify public relations to reach international quality in performance.

Scholarship

In other news, Kuwait's Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) announced yesterday the opening of registration for a scholarship offered by UAE to American University in Dubai (AUD) from the 22nd to 26th of July, 2018 to complete the bachelor's degree. The ministry said in a press statement received by KUNA that the admission will be according to a number of conditions where the student must submit all official records for the last three years and the certificate from MOHE and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of Kuwait and the Embassy of UAE.

The student must pass the exam to determine the level of English in university or pass the TOEFL or IELTS test. Some additional requirements for engineering is to pass the exam in computer science and mathematics, they added.



Dr Hamid Al-Azmi



Jamal Al-Nasrallah

Some requirements for admission to architecture, a portfolio submitted online via e-mail (archportfolio@aud.edu), which includes three works of art from the student's production of paintings or drawings or pictures of models with a short paragraph commenting on each work, the ministry noted. —KUNA

Youth sports centers attract large numbers of people in summer



KUWAIT: As summer arrives, sports and entertainment centers attract large numbers of youth to spend their time in something beneficial. These centers, belonging to the Public Authority for Youth (PAY), spread across all of the country's governorates, allow youth to engage in different sports and fun activities.

PAY aims to invest in the skills of youth and develop their abilities, head of youth centers departments in the authority Musaad Al-Kuraibani said in a press statement released yesterday.

He noted that as part of the summer's activities, PAY organized a football tournament that kicked off

early this month, with the participation of 70 players. PAY will also launch a competition to memorize Quran and Hadith today, to boost religious values among youth, he said. The authority had also set a number of programs and activities to cover different fields for youth until the end of summer, he added. —KUNA

Wataniya Airways concludes first year of re-operation with exceptional results

KUWAIT: Having resumed its flights back in July 11, 2017, Wataniya Airways celebrates its one-year anniversary of re-operation. The revamped company and current curators achieved a major breakthrough during this year reaching nearly 400,000 passengers.

On this occasion, Wataniya Airways is gifting its customers unique offers including discounts and social media competitions, further to several other surprises throughout this summer season and until Eid Al-Adha. The company is seizing this opportunity to extend its gratitude and appreciation to the leader behind Kuwait's development process and economic growth, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, may Allah protect him, for his overwhelming support to the construction, development and expansion process the whole country is witnessing, especially in the civil aviation and air transport sectors. On the other hand, Wataniya Airways is thankful to the Directorate General for Civil Aviation, led by Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud and other administrative overseers for lifting the barriers standing in the way of Kuwaiti and foreign companies operating at Kuwait International Airport.

During a statement to the press, the company announced that obtained results were accomplished thanks to Allah the Almighty and to its employees' outstanding efforts. The airline's growing network of destinations encompassed during the first year nearly 16 landing places connecting Kuwait and the Gulf with the Middle East and Europe. Wataniya Airways' first flight took off last year on July 11, 2017 heading towards the Georgian capital Tbilisi, followed by flights to Baku in Azerbaijan, Sarajevo in Bosnia, Bahrain, Doha, Najaf in Iraq, Beirut, Kathmandu in Nepal, and to the Greek capital Athens. Moreover, the company recently launched a number of new destinations, including Malaga in Spain,



Istanbul and Trabzon in Turkey, and lastly four destinations in the Arab Republic of Egypt which are Alexandria, Sohag, Asyut and Luxor.

The company pointed out that it is currently operating a fleet of four Airbus A320 aircrafts and will be receiving additional two of the same model by the end of this month. It is noteworthy to say that Wataniya Airways owes attained positive outcome during first

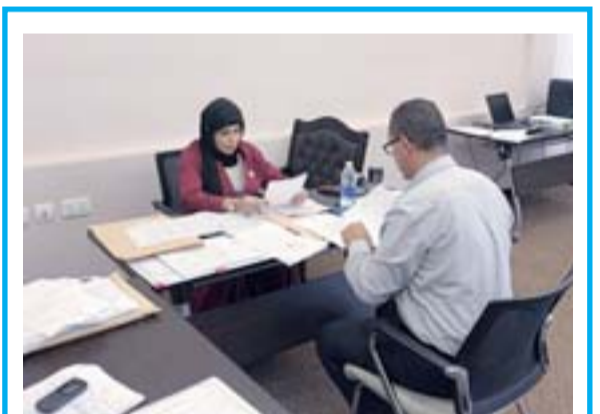
year of re-operation to its highly qualified and experienced team.

Kuwait's newest airline promised its customers to constantly provide them with the best-in-class services for maximum comfort, yet at very competitive prices through its comprehensive network of destinations, which the company is planning to expand during the upcoming year.

UNICEF appreciates Kuwait's donation for children in Yemen

AMMAN: The UN children's agency UNICEF has thanked Kuwait for its "continuous and generous support of children in the Middle East," citing a sum of \$59 million the Gulf state has provided in financial aid to the UN program. "Kuwait's generosity is truly exemplary and is in line with its commitments," Geert Cappelaere, UNICEF's Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa, said in a statement yesterday.

Since 2013, Kuwait has contributed over \$200 million, making it "one of UNICEF's largest donors in the Middle East and North African region," he pointed out. He praised Kuwait's latest humanitarian initiative to provide much needed help to hapless Yemeni children, most of whom suffer from ailments such as cholera. According to UN statistics, nearly two million children in Yemen were forced out of school, while the impoverished nation continues to grapple with an acute cholera outbreak. —KUNA



AMMAN: A delegation from Kuwait's Ministry of Education started interviewing candidates in Amman, Jordan as part of its plan to hire 120 Jordanian teachers to teach in public schools in Kuwait during the 2018/2019 academic year. —KUNA



Walk the talk: India's opposition urges Modi to pass women's bill

Ex-minister backs new Brexit vote as eurosceptics pressure PM May

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ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (L) and President Isaias Afewerki of Eritrea (R) celebrate the opening of the Embassy of Eritrea in Ethiopia reopened following the official visit after twenty years. — AFP

Eritrea reopens embassy in Ethiopia

Filled with dusty furniture that appeared untouched for years

ADDIS ABABA: Eritrea's President Isaias Afwerki reopened his country's embassy in Ethiopia yesterday, the latest in a series of dizzying peace moves after two decades of war between the neighbors. The embassy inauguration caps Isaias's historic visit to the Ethiopian capital aimed at cementing peace less than a week after the former enemies declared an end to the conflict.

State-run Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) showed Isaias raising the Eritrean flag at the embassy in downtown Addis Ababa and Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed handing him keys to the building, filled with dusty furniture that appeared untouched for years. The embassy visit marked the end of Isaias's three-day stay in Ethiopia which also saw him visiting an industrial park and attending dinner and a concert on Sunday evening.

Thousands of Ethiopians packed an exhibition hall,

waving Eritrean flags and chanting Isaias's name as both leaders pledged commitment to their newfound unity. "Both nations have chosen peace as opposed to war," said Abiy, as Isaias also voiced his support, saying: "We won't allow anyone to stop this from happening." The 71-year-old Eritrean strongman left Addis shortly after the embassy opening, EBC reported.

'Another milestone'

Writing on Twitter, Eritrean Information Minister Yemane Gebremeskel said the trip had "inexorably elevated bilateral ties of both countries to new, promising, heights." He described the embassy opening as "yet another milestone in the robust (and) special ties of peace and friendship both countries are cultivating with earnestness in these momentous times."

Once a province of Ethiopia, Eritrea voted to leave in 1993 after a bloody, decades-long independence struggle. Ethiopia and Eritrea expelled each others' envoys at the start of a 1998-2000 border war that killed around 80,000 people. Relations remained frozen after Ethiopia declined to accept a 2002 United Nations-backed border demarcation, leading to years of cold war between the two countries. Last month, Abiy announced Ethiopia would accept the demarcation and cede land to Eritrea. However, it has not yet announced the withdrawal of troops from the area.

Breakneck reforms

Abiy has pursued an aggressive reform agenda since taking office in April, including making peace with Eritrea, releasing jailed dissidents and liberalising parts of the economy. After declaring his intention to make peace on

June 5, events have moved at breakneck speed. Abiy visited Asmara a month later, announcing the normalisation of diplomatic and economic ties, and on July 9, the two leaders signed a joint declaration declaring the end of the war.

Telecommunications links were quickly restored and Ethiopian Airlines will on Wednesday make its first passenger flight between the nations in 20 years. Ethiopian foreign ministry spokesman Meles Alem told AFP Ethiopia had not yet reopened its embassy in the Eritrean capital Asmara. Amnesty International has said the newfound peace should be a catalyst for change in Eritrea, one of the world's most isolated nations. Since the end of the war, Isaias has used the threat of Ethiopian aggression to justify a rash of repressive policies, including an indefinite national service programme the UN has likened to slavery. — AFP

Iraqis demand change as protests run into second week

BASRA: Protests in Iraq continued into their second week yesterday following days of clashes that left eight people dead, with demonstrators rallying to put social problems in the spotlight. Months after Iraq declared victory over the Islamic State group, attention has turned from the military battle to the fight for jobs and public services.

Thousands of people rallied in fresh protests Monday in the eastern province of Diyala and the southern city of Nasiriyah, according to AFP correspondents. Iraqis already made their dissatisfaction with their leaders known through massive abstentions in May's national elections, and now citizens are taking to the streets to demand they see benefits from the country's vast oil reserves.

"These oil fields belong to us, yet we get nothing," said Hussein Ghazi, a 34-year-old protester in the port city of Basra. The oil sector accounts for 89 percent of the state budget and 99 percent of Iraq's export revenues, but only one percent of jobs, as the majority of posts are filled by foreigners. Officially, 10.8 percent of Iraqis are jobless, while youth unemployment is twice as high, in a country where 60 percent of the population is aged under 24.

For the demonstrators, who have taken their campaign to the headquarters of political parties across the southern provinces, setting some on fire and ripping down political posters, corruption is central to their plight. Following the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, the country's new leaders and public servants reaped the benefits of public funds



NAJAF: Passengers from Iran arrive to Najaf airport after it reopened on July 16, 2018. The airport was closed after dozens of protesters forced their way into the waiting room on July 13 despite a heavy police presence. — AFP

and natural resources, leaving citizens with only basic infrastructure, according to protesters.

"We hear a lot of grand words, but we don't see anything coming," said Basra demonstrator Aqil Kazem, an unemployed 27-year-old. Chronic electricity cuts continue to leave Iraqis without respite from summer temperatures, which during the protests have reached 50 degrees Celsius (122 Fahrenheit). Iraqis have also suffered from water shortages this year from drought and dams built by neighboring countries.

Promise of state cash

Since the daily protests began on July 8 in Basra, eight people have been killed in various cities, according to the health ministry. The ministry did not however give details on the circumstances of the deaths, but according to different sources at least one person was shot dead by security forces in Basra.

That death, as youths demonstrated in Basra

demanding jobs and against electricity cuts, fuelled the protest movement and it spread to provinces across the south: Dhi Qar, Karbala, Maysan, Muthana and Najaf. Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi flew into the city on Friday in an effort to restore calm, a day later announcing investment worth \$3 billion (2.6 billion euros) for Basra province.

He also pledged additional spending on housing, schools and services in the oil-rich but neglected region. As demonstrations continued, Abadi on Sunday met with security and intelligence chiefs in Baghdad and warned them to be on alert "because terrorists want to exploit any event or dispute". The prime minister also ordered security services not to use live fire against unarmed civilians. On Saturday the internet was cut across the country, as demonstrations threatened to spread. Authorities said the shutdown was owing to maintenance work and Iraq was back online Monday. — AFP

Syrian regime advances fast on rebels in south

BEIRUT: Syrian regime forces backed by Russia made sweeping advances yesterday against rebels holding out in the country's vital southern zone. For nearly one month, Syria's government has worked to capture the provinces of Daraa and Quneitra with a mix of heavy bombardment, ground attacks and surrender deals brokered by Moscow.

Despite an international outcry, government forces have retaken swathes of the area including the border with Jordan and are inching closer to the sensitive frontier with the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. Regime troops made another "quick advance" against rebels yesterday, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based war monitor which relies on a network of sources inside the country.

"Regime forces took a number of towns in western parts of Daraa province, some through clashes with those refusing to join the handover deals, and others after agreements were reached," said Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman. A string of towns—Al-Hara, Samlin, and Zimrin—had agreed to fall back into regime control, while troops overran Al-Tiha militarily. "With that advance, the regime holds more than 90 percent of Daraa

province," Abdel Rahman told AFP. Citing a military source, Syrian state news agency SANA also said the army had captured new territory, including Al-Tiha and Zimrin.

Key hilltop hit

Heavy fighting had been raging over a hilltop known as Tallet Al-Hara and held by Al-Qaeda's former affiliate, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), said the Observatory. HTS had refused a surrender, ushering in a wave of regime and Russian shelling that killed 30 jihadists since Sunday. An HTS ambush then left 12 regime forces dead, Abdel Rahman said.

An AFP photographer there saw a plume of smoke emerging from the sloping hilltop overlooking agricultural plains yesterday. By the afternoon, Syrian state news agency SANA said government forces had captured Tallet Al-Hara. Beyond the hilltop, the sliver of Daraa that still escapes regime control includes the rebel town of Nawa and a small pocket held by an Islamic State group affiliate.

Rebels in Nawa, where tens of thousands of people live, are in talks with Russia for a potential handover deal too, according to the Observatory.

Moscow has helped the regime secure these negotiated surrenders in several key areas, including second city Aleppo in 2016 and the rebel bastion of Eastern Ghouta outside Damascus in April. For the south, it pressured rebels to agree to hand over eastern parts of Daraa province in early July and the provincial capital last week. — AFP

International

Long-absent Syrian expats in emotional visit home from US

'Thank God we've reached a period of safety in Syria'

FAIROUZAH: Victoria Mubarakah sits in the shade of a grapevine in her ancestral village in Syria, nostalgic and happy after a long trip from her home in the United States. The 53-year-old used to visit her motherland every few years, but since 2011 the war put a stop to those trips. "All these years, I longed to visit my country and see my relatives, but the feeling of fear controlled me," says Mubarakah, gathered with relatives in a tiled courtyard behind a traditional Syrian house. "I didn't even dare think about it."

Fairouzah, a Christian village, remained relatively insulated from the violence raging in nearby Homs city and elsewhere, but reaching it was too dangerous. "We followed the news and were scared of coming back to the country," says Mubarakah, whose last visit was in 2007. That all changed in recent months, after Syrian troops reasserted control over many of the country's main highways and cities, including the capital.

Watching from California, Mubarakah decided to make the long-awaited trip. With her eldest son Issa, his pregnant wife and young child, and her other son Mark, Mubarakah flew to Lebanon, then drove for hours across the land border into Syria.

"Thank God we've reached a period of safety in Syria. We encouraged each other and decided to come this summer," says Mubarakah, one of tens of thousands of people from modern-day Syria who

have emigrated to the US in the last century.

'Like a wedding'

A return to Fairouzah means warm family reunions, a somber visit to her husband's tomb, and plenty of food. On a July morning, Mubarakah emerges from the kitchen carrying a platter of small plates: strained yoghurt, white cheese, olives, and stuffed peppers, alongside mountains of plump homegrown grapes.

Fairouzah is locally famous for its bountiful vineyards-and for having a large representation in Syria's diaspora. Around 3,000 people live in the village itself but thousands more have emigrated, most to the United States. All along the idyllic village's streets are posters and banners welcoming its prodigal sons and daughters.

One, featuring a dove and the government's two-star flag, "welcomes our expatriates in beloved Syria." And at the main entrance of the St. Elias Syriac Orthodox church is a plaque thanking emigrants from Fairouzah for funding the church's construction beginning in 1957. There are six churches in Fairouzah alone, which hosts hundreds of Christian families who fled nearby Homs city. The wave of visiting Syrian-Americans has rejuvenated the village, says parish priest Thomas Kassuha. "It's like a wedding," he says.

Kassuha estimates around 300 families have

returned to Fairouzah this summer and the number could double. They felt safe after "the return of security and peace," he tells AFP from the cool, marble-floored church.

'People don't know'

At the village swimming pool, 14-year-old Alicia Medea is reconnecting with cousins she has not seen in eight years. "When I arrived, I couldn't remember them that well. It felt like I was meeting them for the first time," the blonde teenager says in Arabic with an American twang. She arrived just days ago with her father and brother to spend nearly three weeks in their homeland.

"I knew the village was safe, but the rest of the country wasn't. I'd always think about visiting again, but I never knew when we'd be able to," she says. "Compared to what we hear in America about the war here, it's been amazing to find the country safe." Since Syria's uprising began, the US has called on President Bashar al-Assad to resign and has carried out retaliatory air strikes on his army's positions.

That tore at Micheline Maalouf, a 22-year-old visiting her native Fairouzah from Pennsylvania. "I hated myself then. I didn't know why they did those air strikes," she says, puffing on a water pipe near the pool. "People outside don't know how people live here," adds Maalouf.



FAIROUZAH: Micheline Maalouf (C-L), a 22-year-old Syrian emigrant visiting from Pennsylvania, poses for a "selfie" picture with relatives while sitting by the Masaya swimming pool in the Christian village of Fairouzah, southeast of the central city of Homs. — AFP

While living in Syria in 2015, Maalouf married a Lebanese man she met on Facebook—"a chance to escape," she says. "The situation wasn't reassuring. It was all fear and nervous people," she recalls. The scene today couldn't be more differ-

ent. Against a backdrop of squealing poolside children, Maalouf takes a few selfies to post on Instagram. "We used to stay at home starting at 7:00 pm every night-but now we stay out until 3:00 am." — AFP

Heat and power cuts force Gazans onto polluted beaches

GAZA: Maher Taha, his wife and six children sit enjoying the breeze on beach in Gaza, doing their best to ignore the rubbish and raw sewage floating a few yards off shore. The water is polluted and the smell is unpleasant but they need a break from the oppressive heat at home - and there are few other options for a family on their budget with a power supply that only works four hours a day.

"We can see the sewage clearly, and we still come here - it costs us nothing," says Taha, 46. "Life is depressing and difficult and people have no escape but the sea." Warning signs tell people to stay out of the water at the beach near Nusseirat refugee camp in central Gaza Strip. Lifeguards go up to people and tell them about the dangers. "We advise people not to go into the sea and to stay on the beach but they do not listen. We tell them the seawater is mostly polluted and they do not listen," said lifeguard Khader Abu Jreban. Power shortages in the territory of two million people have severely disrupted operations at sewage treatment facilities, leading to the discharge of wastewater into the sea.

Pools for rent

Gaza, whose main power supplier is Israel,

has suffered problems with its electricity for the past decade. Some citizens blame the shortages on a political rivalry between Hamas, the Islamist group that runs Gaza, and the Palestinian Authority based in the occupied West Bank. Others point an accusing finger at Israel, which along with Egypt imposes tight border restrictions.

UN figures showed 108 million liters of wastewater poured into the sea off Gaza every day in May. Pollution levels are four times higher than the international standard, according to the data. Some richer Gaza families have responded to the pollution by building swimming pools - and renting them out for 300 to 700 shekels (\$85 to \$200) per day.

A Gaza water park, with several swimming pools and mechanical waves, offers another clean alternative to those who can afford the 10-shekel admission price.

"Water is treated with chlorine and the whole place is computerized," said Hani Abdelbari, the facility's executive director. Vendors selling boiled corn and fried potatoes give visitors a taste of Gaza's traditional beach food. "It is something that we were used to and lost," says Reham Shaik, out for a day with her three children. — Reuters

HRW urges Lebanon to investigate alleged torture of actor

BEIRUT: Lebanon must investigate the account of a prominent actor who says he was forcibly disappeared and tortured by state security forces last year, Human Rights Watch said yesterday. Ziad Itani was arrested in November and held for several months, accused of "collaborating" with Israel, which is formally still at war with Lebanon. He was released in March after it appeared that a top Lebanese security official had framed him, but the time he spent in detention haunted him, he told HRW.

The actor and writer said he was held for nearly a week in what appeared to be an informal jail, where men in civilian clothes punched and kicked him, forced him into stress positions and threatened to sexually assault him. "There was no doctor who saw me, my body was all blue and I was spitting blood," he told the rights group. "I couldn't

speak properly." Itani says he was then handed over to military police and held in solitary confinement for nearly two months, during which he was not able to meet privately with his lawyer or family. "Itani's allegations of torture and disappearance demand a thorough investigation into his treatment in detention and why he was arrested in the first place," said Lama Fakih, HRW's deputy Middle East director. "If Itani was indeed framed, then this was a massive miscarriage of justice, and authorities should guarantee that this can never happen again."

According to rights groups, Lebanese authorities have used torture to extract confessions from detainees. Itani himself told HRW that his physical abuse began when he refused to sign a written confession that he was collaborating with Israel. Over the next week, his captors chained him, hung him from his wrists, broke one of his teeth, and threatened to "insert a rod into his anus if he didn't sign," he said. He finally agreed to sign the confession. That same month, Lebanon passed a new law to criminalize torture, investigate such allegations and compensate victims. "Torture is not only illegal but also ineffective, because it can lead to false confessions," Fakih said. "This case presents a clear litmus test for whether Lebanon's new torture law will help end impunity for torture or remain on paper only." — AFP

Spain Socialist's bid for gender neutral constitution

MADRID: Spain's Socialist government is seeking to erase gender bias in the constitution but the head of the Royal Spanish Academy, the custodian of the language, yesterday said the plan was unworkable. Last week, Deputy Prime Minister Carmen Calvo asked the Academy to study updating the 1978 constitution with "inclusive" language.

"We have a constitution in the masculine which dates back to 40 years ago," she said, noting that it referred to "ministers and deputies" with the male form of the noun. The traditional Spanish use of male pronouns and noun forms to refer to both genders collectively has raised the hackles of some, who say it makes women invisible. But Dario Villanueva, the head of the Royal Spanish Academy, on Monday told

El Pais newspaper: "The problem is confusing grammar with machismo."

"Languages are governed by the principle of economy. The systematic use of duplicate words destroys this. "Some false solutions have been proposed like replacing the end of a word with E in place of the (masculine) O and the (feminine) A but this appears to me to be absurd, ridiculous and absolutely unworkable." However one member of the academy, Arturo Perez-Reverte, has already threatened to resign over the issue. When a user on Twitter suggested he should storm in on protest if the proposal went ahead, he replied: "You have my word." "The reaction of Arturo Perez-Reverte, who has placed the cart before the horse, has not helped in easing tensions," Villanueva said. — AFP

Ghana national cathedral plan sparks unholy row

ACCRA: Ghana may be one of the most religious countries in the world, despite being constitutionally secular, but a project to build a new national cathedral has not met universal approval. Plans for the building, designed by the Ghanaian-British architect David Adjaye and to be located on some six hectares (14 acres) near Accra's parliament, were unveiled earlier this year.

Designs showed landscaped gardens and a concave structure housing a chapel, baptistry and 5,000-seat auditorium, as well as Africa's first bible museum and documentation centre. The building is intended to be "a house of prayer for all people", and will host state occasions which are usually held at Independence Square or the president's official residence. Chika Okeke-Agulu, a professor of art history at US university Princeton, wrote in The New York Times in April that the cathedral was "a huge deal".

"It signals that the country is poised to consolidate the gains of decades of democracy," he added, predicting it would give Ghana a "globally architectural landmark". He hoped it would spark similar projects across Africa but reaction has been mixed, with calls for the money to be better spent elsewhere. "So we need to build a cathedral so we can boast that we have arrived? Rubbish," wrote one user on Twitter. "When did it get to the point that people would rather spend money on the way a church looks than spending money on the sick, poor, homeless and the people of the community," wrote another.

Religious fervor

Adjaye is certainly acclaimed: he was knighted in Britain and is best known for designing the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington DC. He called it "an immense honor to be granted the opportunity to contribute some-



CAPE COAST: In this file photo taken on February 17, 2013 a man walks toward the St. Francis de Sales Cathedral in Cape Coast, Ghana. — AFP

thing of this scale and import to my home country". Religion plays a major role in life in Ghana and there are churches, mosques, street preachers and shrines to traditional faiths across the country.

In a 2012 WIN/Gallup poll of 57 countries, an overwhelming 96 percent of Ghanaians said they were religious. The last national census in 2010, 71.2 percent of Ghana's population of 23.6 million were recorded as Christian and 17.6 percent as Muslim. President Nana Akufo-Addo has appointed a 13-member board of religious leaders to raise funds for and manage the new cathedral. The overall cost has not been revealed.

The government has donated land for the project and insists that all they are contributing. But that has not convinced some who suspect public money could be used. "We should render under Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's," said the general-secretary of the Christian Council of Ghana, Cyril Fayose. Fayose stressed he was not against the cathedral but said more details were needed. "The government meddling in church matters sometimes

raises eyebrows to wonder why they are doing it... We are not so sure, the motives behind it are not very clear to us," he added. James Kwabena Bomfeh junior is hoping to stop it before a stone is laid and has mounted a legal challenge to the state's involvement, arguing it is unconstitutional. The government should be religiously neutral but was showing preferential treatment to the Christian faith by supporting the project, he argued.

The presidential liaison for the cathedral, Clara Napaga Tia Sulemana, said Bomfeh's court case had stalled progress on fundraising and development. She denied suggestions of favoritism, pointing to a government donation of land for a national mosque. The government has also funded Muslim activities, including to the annual Hajj pilgrimage. For cultural critic, Nii Kotei Nikoi, the question was less about government involvement. "In one neighborhood you can have five to six churches. The fundamental problem is that Accra is saturated with churches," he said. He also said it showed that followers of the major religions were being catered for but those of minor faiths or none were rarely considered. — AFP

US Republicans target elections with more deficit-boosting tax cuts

WASHINGTON: As November's US elections approach, Republicans in the House of Representatives and the Trump administration are planning another deficit-financed tax-cut plan, but one widely seen as a vote-getting exercise with little chance of becoming law.

The plan, coming on the heels of deep tax cuts already approved in December, underscores both the Republican Party's steadfast confidence in tax cuts as a winning political tool and its recent shift away from fiscal policy conservatism. House tax committee Chairman Kevin Brady says his panel and the White House are considering a measure that would make permanent \$1.1 trillion in tax cuts that were approved on a temporary basis in December for individuals, families and private businesses. The cuts are set to expire in 2025.

Brady, of Texas, says he aims to unveil a proposal before Congress departs Washington on July 26 for a summer campaigning break. He says he expects the House to vote on the measure before the Nov. 6 congressional elections. "This is largely a 2018 re-elect-driven effort for House Republicans," said Rohit Kumar, a tax policy expert at accounting and consulting group PwC and former senior aide to Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has already warned that making permanent the temporary individual tax cuts would further expand the federal deficit and debt. Both measures of red ink on the US taxpayers' ledger ballooned with the Republicans' \$1.5 trillion December tax cuts package and a \$1.3 trillion spending bill

approved in March. Brady says he does not expect the Republicans' new bill to be "revenue neutral," meaning it will expand the deficit.

'Help American families'

Florida Republican Representative Carlos Curbelo, who sits on Brady's committee, called the bill "a good second chapter for tax reform that's going to help American families." Republicans see the second tax bill as helping to focus voters on the growing economy, with Trump's focus otherwise shifting haphazardly from immigration to tariffs, federal investigations, North Korea, US NATO participation and Russia. The temporary cuts approved in December were part of a sweeping tax package, formally known as the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, that was passed by Republicans, who have majorities in both chambers of Congress, over Democrats' unanimous opposition. The package gave individuals temporary tax relief, but cut taxes permanently for corporations.

Months later, the package is viewed favorably by only 36.4 percent of Americans, according to a polling average compiled by RealClearPolitics.com, which tracks political trends. Some Republicans say the December package has fared better in parts of the country. "In my district, it polls very high," said Republican Representative Don Bacon of Nebraska. Representative Richard Neal of Massachusetts, the top Democrat on the House tax committee, said, "I hope the new legislation is as popular as their last tax cut."

The new bill is not without political risk, said



WASHINGTON DC: Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) speaks about health-care while flanked by 6-year-old Charlie Wood who has complex medical needs from being born 3 months early, during a news conference on Capitol Hill. — AFP

analysts. House Republicans in competitive districts with lots of Democrats and independents may encounter voter concern about the deficit and giveaways to the rich, analysts said. The hastily drafted December package has resulted in some unanticipated complications for multinational corporations, but a bill to fix those was not expected until after the elections.

In any case, prospects for passage of another round of tax cuts are low, with the fall legislative session already crammed full of other issues. Even if House Republicans win passage, a new tax bill could die in the Senate, where Republicans hold only 51 of 100 seats and would need help from Democrats, who do not seem to be inclined to offer any. The idea of more deficit-financed tax cuts already faces opposition from Republican Senator Bob Corker of Tennessee, one of the few remaining fiscal hawks in the party. — Reuters

International

Ex-minister backs new Brexit vote as eurosceptics pressure PM May

May has repeatedly ruled out a second referendum

LONDON: British Prime Minister Theresa May drew fire from all sides yesterday over her Brexit strategy as a former minister described it as a "fudge" and called for a second EU referendum while eurosceptics readied a parliamentary challenge. Former education secretary Justine Greening, who opposed Brexit, said May's plan to follow European Union rules on trade in goods without being able to influence them was "the worst of both worlds".

Noting the deep divisions in government and parliament on the way forward, Greening said voters must decide-becoming the most senior member of May's Conservative party to back the idea. "The only solution is to take the final Brexit decision out of the hands of deadlocked politicians, away from the back-room deals, and give it back to the people," she wrote in an article in The Times.

May has repeatedly ruled out a second referendum, after Britons voted by 52-48 percent for Brexit in 2016, but Greening's support for a so-called People's Vote will give the campaign a huge boost. Her intervention is also another blow for May's compromise plan for close ties with the EU, which had already come under fire from Conservatives who want a clean break with the bloc.

Two top ministers, Boris Johnson and David Davis, quit in protest last week followed by a string of junior walkouts, including another yesterday.

Eurosceptics will have a chance to show their strength in the House of Commons later Monday by voting on amendments to a bill setting up May's new customs regime after Brexit. Downing Street declined to say if it would accept some of the changes put forward by Jacob Rees-Mogg and other hardline Brexit MP's, in a bid to get them to drop

“Give it back to the people”

one in particular that would have the effect of wrecking May's plan.

If no compromise is struck, there is a risk the eurosceptics could vote against the bill in its entirety. If opposition parties join them, May would have a major crisis on her hands. At the same time, the prime minister is also testing her plan with the EU, as Brexit negotiations resumed in Brussels yesterday.

Split the party

May spent the weekend defending her plan, and did so again in a speech at Farnborough airshow yesterday, insisting it would protect trade in goods with the EU and avoid border checks in Ireland. She said it would allow Britain to control migration, end the jurisdiction of EU courts and forge its own trade policy—despite US President Donald Trump saying the prime minister's plan could "kill" a US-UK trade deal.

Eurosceptics believe it keeps Britain too close to the EU, and Davis, the former Brexit secretary, warned in the Financial Times yesterday it would deny the government the "freedom to run our own economy". "It would be profoundly dangerous to leave the EU but remain subject to regulations made by institutions in which we have no say," he wrote. In an article in the Mail on Sunday, May urged eurosceptics to keep their "eyes on the prize", warning: "If we don't, we risk ending up with no Brexit at all." Rees-Mogg, the leader of the powerful European Research Group of eurosceptic Conservative MPs, said May still had time to change course and warned the current plan would split the party.

"The inevitable consequence of the parliamentary arithmetic is that she will need to change it to keep the party united," he told BBC television. Pro-Europeans also dislike May's plan, particular her goal to have looser ties with the EU for Britain's dominant services sector. A cross-party group of MPs have tabled amend-



LONDON: In this file photo taken on July 13, 2018, Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May waits for the arrival of US President Donald Trump for a meeting at Chequers, the prime minister's country residence. —AFP

ments to yesterday's bill—the Taxation (Cross-border Trade) Bill, also known as the customs bill—seeking a new customs union with the EU. But one MP told AFP they would likely not push it to a vote yesterday, instead waiting to see what the eurosceptics do. They can hold their fire for today when the same amendment is tabled to a separate trade bill. —AFP

Reuters journalist takes the stand as Myanmar trial begins

YANGON: One of two Reuters journalists charged in Myanmar with breaking a state secrets law while reporting on the Rohingya crisis protested his innocence yesterday on the first day of a trial that has provoked global condemnation. Myanmar nationals Wa Lone, 32, and Kyaw Soe Oo, 28, were arrested in December and accused of possessing documents linked to security operations against Rohingya militants in Rakhine state.

More than 700,000 of the stateless Muslim minority have fled the western state in response to a campaign that the US and UN have described as ethnic cleansing. The reporters have spent seven months behind bars during pre-trial hearings but were informed last week that the case would go ahead. If convicted, they face up to 14 years in jail. Wa Lone, the first to testify, told the court that he had followed standard reporting procedures and not broken any laws. "I reported the news as I saw the facts and I reported right," he said.

At the time of their arrest the journalists had been investigating the massacre of 10 Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine a week after militants attacked police posts on August 25, triggering a brutal response from police and troops. "I understood that the security forces who were on duty in that area were responsible for that case. That's why I tried to meet the police who were on duty," he told the court. "I wanted to confirm that situation. I did not try to meet them to take any documents."

The military acknowledged the massacre after the journalists were arrested and rare convictions were handed down for seven soldiers. Reuters says their reporters have done nothing wrong. It has pointed to the pre-trial testimony of a policeman who said he was ordered to incriminate them. Rights groups have slammed the case as an attempt to stifle reporting on the crisis and have called for their release. The trial has made international headlines and has sparked criticism of the administration of Aung San Suu Kyi, who came to power in 2016 after decades of military rule.

Reuters hired prominent rights attorney Amal Clooney to join the legal team, although she has not appeared in court. The north of Rakhine state has largely been sealed off from independent journalists and observers since August last year. Hundreds of Rohingya villages were burned to the ground in the crackdown and refugees arriving in Bangladeshi camps have described widespread murder, rape and torture.

The military insists its campaign was a legitimate response to attacks that left about a dozen border guard police dead, but international pressure for accountability is building. The European Union last month sanctioned seven Myanmar security officials accused of serious crimes including sexual violence and killings. Ahead of the announcement Myanmar says it sacked one of them, Major General Maung Maung Soe, the former head of the western command in Rakhine. —AFP

Obama visits Kenyan home to launch youth center

KOGELO: Former US president Barack Obama recounted fond memories of his family home in Kenya on a visit yesterday to launch a state-of-the-art youth center run by his half-sister. Obama is on his first trip to Kenya since he was president in 2015, when he was unable to visit his ancestral home as his jet was too big to land in the western city of Kisumu, he recalled. "It is a joy to be back with so many people who are family to me, and so many people who claim to be family. Everybody's a cousin!" he joked, to hoots of laughter from the audience.

After a visit to the home of his step-grandmother Sarah Obama in the village of Kogelo, where his father was born and is buried, Obama recalled his first trip to Kenya at the age of 27. From Nairobi he took first a "very slow train" and then a bus with "some chickens in my lap and some sweet potatoes digging into my side". Then he had to pile into a matatu—a minibus taxi—"even more crowded than

the bus", before a long walk to "Mama" Sarah's house. He remembered having to catch a chicken for dinner, which he was "a little squeamish" to kill himself, visiting his father's grave and bathing outdoors. "And I looked up at the stars and... it gave me a sense of satisfaction that no five-star hotel could ever provide," he said.

Boosting Kenya's youth

Obama was speaking at the launch of the Sauti Kuu (Swahili for "Strong Voices") center set up by his half-sister Auma Obama. He said that looking back on those memories, he "couldn't be prouder of what my sister has built". Auma said the state-of-the-art center would give local youth access to books, internet and sporting activities.

They will also be able to benefit from classes on work ethics, civic education, environmental conservation and financial literacy. The center includes an international standard size football pitch sponsored by the German ministry of development cooperation, a basketball court funded by the Giants of Africa Foundation and other facilities, including a library and IT lab.

"The reason I put this center up is for my community to realize how wealthy they are. I don't want my community to be beggars... let us start depending on ourselves," said Auma. Obama said the center



KOGELO: Former US President, Barak Obama with his step-grandmother Sarah (C) and half-sister, Auma (2ndR) and some of the local youth are pictured yesterday following the unveiling of a plaque during the opening of the Sauti Kuu Resource Centre, founded by his half-sister, Auma Obama at Kogelo in Siaya county, western Kenya. —AFP

would empower and educate young Kenyans so they could hold their leaders to account and do "remarkable, world-changing things". Hailing "real progress" in Kenya in recent years, he highlighted corruption, tribalism and rocky elections as challenges that remain. Upon his arrival in Kenya on Sunday, Obama paid courtesy calls on President Uhuru Kenyatta and

main opposition leader Raila Odinga, who have mended fences after a deadly election season last year. Obama is linked to his Kenyan family via his father Barack senior, a pipe-smoking economist who Obama has admitted he "never truly" knew. He walked out when Obama was just two and died in a car crash in Nairobi in 1982, aged 46. —AFP

Mandela's legacy cherished by some, challenged by others

SOWETO: A black and white photo of Nelson Mandela in boxing attire greets visitors to the gym where the liberation hero trained in the 1950s before delivering the knock-out blow to apartheid decades later. "He used to train here, I feel strong... Physically and mentally I get some strength," said gym-goer Kgotso Phali, 18. The red and white walls of the gym, located in South Africa's Soweto township, smell of fresh paint.

The Donaldson Orlando Community Centre (DOCC) has been restored to its former glory to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Mandela's birth. Mandela, South Africa's first black president known locally by his clan name "Madiba", died in 2013. "People had to carry passes—all these things are gone now. We are free," thanks to him, said Andy Zameko, who said he was proud to work out in the same gym as Mandela.

Mandela would visit the gym several times a week to train and forget the ordeal that was the fight against the white supremacist regime. "The walls of... the DOCC are drenched with sweet memories that will delight me for years," Mandela wrote to his daughter Zindzi from his cell on Robben Island where he was imprisoned for 18 years. A copy of the letter, dated December 9, 1979, is displayed on a wall in the gym.

Nearby, young musicians seek to catch the attention of passing tourists in front of Mandela's former home which has been transformed into a museum. "(He) makes

us united. Now we are all united. (Blacks) can perform in theatres like the Joburg Theatre now—it was not the case before," said guitarist Vincent Ncabashe, 49.

'Not living his dream'

Others recognize the achievement but are disappointed in the post-apartheid reality. "Madiba is so inspiring for me," said hip-hop singer Thobane Mkhize who sported a striking bouffant haircut. "But we are not living his dream," said the 24-year-old musician. "The parliament is like a (sitcom), it is no longer a parliament because politicians are busy with corruption. Instead of being united, we are busy looking at the colors of the skin," he added. "There was need for a figure to reconcile black and whites," said Genevieve Assamoi, a 45-year-old from Ivory Coast. "He was crucial in ensuring that blacks did not take revenge on whites and to allow the whites to feel safe." "Without him, we would still be stuck in the same place," said policeman and father-of-three Mpho Ngobeni.

'He did his best'

At a nearby petrol station in Soweto, two white men in khaki outfits completed the purchase of a car from two young black men—an unusual scene in the sprawling black-majority township. "The white people also got a chance (to stay in South Africa)," said Kaalen Viljoen as he struggled to hide the handgun clipped to his belt.

The 22-year-old had also brought along a baseball bat, perched on the front seat of his 4X4. "I always have a weapon with me and I would not have left it at home when I came here," said Viljoen, visiting Soweto for the first time in his life. "We called a lot of guys and we were very worried to come here, because he said there are a lot of black people here, and white people driving around here, is going to be a big problem.

pected of leading a network charged by Osama bin Laden to attack American interests in France and is considered by French officials to have been a mentor for several generations of aspiring jihadists. His activities have also highlighted the struggle by French authorities to prevent Islamic radicalisation in prisons, which have proved fertile recruiting grounds for jihadist fighters.

Beghal, now 52 and stripped of his French nationality, was freed from the Vezin-le-Coquet prison near the western city of Rennes early yesterday. He was brought to Charles de Gaulle airport near Paris for a flight to Algiers, a source close to the case he said. Beghal had been under surveillance for suspected radicalism by French intelligence agents since the mid-1990s, following his arrival in the country from his native Algeria when he was 21 years old. While serving his first prison sentence Beghal met Cherif Kouachi, one of the broth-



SOWETO: Mtate Phakela (19), a fashion photographer, speaks about the legacy of anti-apartheid icon, Nelson Mandela in Soweto on July 11, 2018. —AFP

"(But) after we met the guys we bought the car from, we actually love it, they are very friendly." Maxwell Huis, 44, a homeless father-of-two said the reality delivered by Mandela was starkly different to that which he had promised. "He sold the black people to the whites. There should have been a civil war it would have changed things," he added as he foraged for wood to burn. Mtate Phakela, 19, sees Mandela's legacy very differently.

"He gave us a revolution without a war. He gave us the idea of freedom through peace," said the teenager. "But we are not economically free." Economic divisions still plague the country with the median monthly salary for whites at around 10,000 rands (\$753, 638 euros) but just 2,800 for the black community. "He did his best," continued Mtate. "The people who came after could have done better to free us economically." —AFP

ers who massacred 12 people in an attack on the Charlie Hebdo magazine in January 2015. Amedy Coulibaly, the man who killed a policewoman and then four shoppers at a Jewish supermarket just outside Paris that same month, also came under Beghal's influence at the Fleury-Merogis prison south of Paris, where he also met Kouachi.

After their release, both Kouachi and Coulibaly visited Beghal while he was serving out his sentence under house arrest. Beghal was arrested again in 2010 as part of a plot to free him as well as Smain Ait Ali Belkacem, an Algerian who helped carry out Paris bomb attacks in 1995 which killed eight people. France has suffered a wave of deadly terror attacks since January 2015 which have claimed nearly 250 lives, prompting the government to make permanent several state of emergency measures as part of a tough new anti-terror law enacted last year. —AFP

France expels 'mentor' of the 2015 jihadist attackers to Algeria

PARIS: France yesterday expelled a radical Islamic preacher to Algeria after his release from prison, where he became a mentor to at least two jihadis who carried out deadly attacks on a satirical newspaper and a Jewish supermarket in January 2015, officials said. Djamel Beghal was given a 10-year jail term in 2005 after being sent to France following his arrest in the United Arab Emirates shortly after the September 11, 2001, terror attacks in the US. He was sus-

International

Walk the talk: India's opposition urges Modi to pass women's bill

'Send India a message that we believe the time for change has come'

NEW DELHI: India's opposition leader yesterday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to "walk his talk" by passing a long-pending bill that aims to give women a stronger voice in parliament. Rahul Gandhi offered his party's "unconditional support" to push through the Women's Reservation Bill, which provides for one-third of the seats in national and state assemblies to be reserved for female candidates.

"Our PM says he's a crusader for women's empowerment? Time for him to rise above party politics, walk-the-talk & have the Women's Reservation Bill passed by parliament. The Congress offers him its unconditional support," Gandhi tweeted. The bill was passed by the upper house in 2010, but has since been sidelined after vehement resistance from some male lawmakers. Women hold only 12 percent of seats in both the lower and upper houses of parliament in the world's largest democracy, compared to the global average of 23 percent, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Gandhi asked Modi in a letter attached to his tweet to take advantage of his party's majority in parliament to "send India a message that we believe the time for change has come." "Women must take their rightful place in our state legislatures and in parliament, where they are at present abysmally represented," he said. The BJP yesterday refused to say whether it would clear the bill in the next parliament session which begins tomorrow.

“They have to first sort out this issue”

A stronger voice

Prakash Javadekar, a minister and BJP spokesman, said Congress counted opponents of the bill among its allies. "They have to first sort out this issue," he told reporters. The country already reserves at least a third of village council seats for women, and this has given over one million women a say in how their communities are developed. But campaigners say a stronger voice for women at the top of government is also needed to bring in policies and laws that would help ordinary women fight abuse, discrimination and inequality.

The challenge came amid renewed debate about women's safety in India after experts surveyed by the Thomson Reuters Foundation ranked it the most dangerous country in the world for women. India's tourism ministry has now launched its government's overseas offices to highlight that women are safe in India. There is no reason to stop the passage of the legislation when Modi's government has more than 300 of the 545 seats in parliament, said Kavita Krishnan, an activist with the All India Progressive Women's Association. "This government has no excuse to not pass this bill. I think it is really overdue," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "At least put it to vote and let the whole country know who is voting for it and who is not." —Reuters



MIRZAPUR: India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (C) speaks during his visit in Mirzapur. —AFP

Pakistan Rights group warns of 'blatant' bid to manipulate vote

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's human rights commission yesterday slammed "blatant, aggressive and unabashed" attempts to manipulate the upcoming election, as politicians expressed security fears following one of the country's deadliest attacks. A string of attacks has killed 175 people across the country in the past week, and there have been widespread allegations that the powerful military is meddling in the run-up to the July 25 vote.

The Election Commission has vowed to go ahead with the vote "at all costs". But the independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan warned it was "gravely concerned over what it sees as blatant, aggressive and unabashed attempts to manipulate the outcome of the upcoming elections". "While it is critical that the polls are held as scheduled, there are now ample grounds to doubt their legitimacy—with alarming implications for Pakistan's transition to an effective democracy," it said in a statement.

A suicide blast at a political rally in the southwestern province of Balochistan last Friday killed 149 people. It was the second deadliest militant attack in Pakistan's long battle with violent extremism, surpassed only by an assault on a school in 2014 which left more than 150 people dead. The attack and others have spurred a surge in criticism of the army. It has overseen a dramatic improvement in security but in recent months has been widely accused of what one think-tank termed a "silent coup".

"The attacks are taking place because the security agencies are involved in politics and not doing their



KARACHI: Supporters of Pakistani militant organization Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) gather during an election campaign rally for the upcoming general election. —AFP

job," Mushahidullah Khan, a senior leader with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), told AFP. "The elections are being contested in an environment of fear," the chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, said during a visit to the Balochistan provincial capital Quetta on Monday.

"Security should be the top priority for the government," he said, adding: "I hope that the election will be held on July 25". Other politicians from parties across the political spectrum have echoed his concerns. The accusations against the military were heightened Friday, when former PML-N premier Nawaz Sharif returned to the country from London and was impris-

oned, heightening political tensions.

Sharif was ousted from power last year following a corruption investigation. He was sentenced in absentia to 10 years in prison for alleged corruption earlier this month. He and his party say they are being targeted by the military, which has also faced accusations from the media, analysts and other politicians that it is using threats and intimidation to steer votes towards Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party. The military denies the allegations and says it is taking "no direct role" in the election. It has already warned of a security threat in the run-up to the vote and said it will deploy more than 370,000 soldiers on polling day. —AFP

Massive drugs haul intercepted in Bali

DENPASAR: Bali police said yesterday they had intercepted a huge haul of Australia-bound cold relief tablets that contained a key ingredient for making illicit drugs. Some 600,000 pseudoephedrine tablets being sent from South Korea to Australia were found during a stopover on the Indonesian resort island, they said. The bust happened in January but was announced yesterday.

Indonesian authorities said they were tipped off by their counterparts in

Australia. Bottles of the pills, weighing nearly 140 kilograms (310 pounds) in total, were labeled as health food, authorities said. Lab tests done on the seized drugs confirmed they contained pseudoephedrine, a precursor for making methamphetamine and other illegal drugs, said Indonesian customs director general Heru Pambudi.

A resident of Australia, who was not identified, had been arrested by Australian police over the haul, Pambudi added. Indonesia has some of the toughest drug laws in the world. Foreigners are regularly caught trying to bring drugs into Bali and some have been sentenced to death. In the first half of 2018 alone Bali's customs office said it had seized 3.9 tons of drugs and ingredients used as methamphetamine precursors that were being smuggled through the island. —AFP



BALI: An Indonesian customs officer speaks to journalists during a press conference after they seized cold relief tablets that contained a key ingredient for making illicit drugs at Ngurah Rai International Airport on Indonesia's resort island of Bali. —AFP

EU warns Sri Lanka over death penalty

COLOMBO: EU ambassadors warned Sri Lanka yesterday against ending its 42-year moratorium on capital punishment and said the island risked losing trade concessions if it went ahead. Last week President Maithripala Sirisena said repeat drug offenders would be hanged as part of his administration's new crackdown on narcotics.

"The diplomatic missions have requested the President to maintain the moratorium on the implementation of the death penalty and to uphold Sri Lanka's tradition of opposition to capital punishment,"

the EU ambassadors said in a joint statement. The communique was supported by their colleagues from Canada and Norway.

Police believe the Indian Ocean island is being used as a transit point by drug traffickers. More than a ton of cocaine seized in recent years was destroyed by police in January. The main Welikada prison said it was advertising this week for two hangmen to carry out the first execution in 42 years after refurbishing the gallows. Diplomats said they expected Sirisena to roll back the decision, but should the island go ahead it would lose preferential access for its exports to the 28-member EU bloc.

"If Sri Lanka resumes capital punishment, Colombo will immediately lose the GSP-Plus status," an EU diplomatic source told AFP. This refers to its generalized system of

preferences (GSP Plus) — a favorable tariff scheme to encourage developing nations to respect human rights—restored by the EU in May 2017 after a seven-year hiatus. Sri Lanka was denied GSP Plus status in 2010 after failing to meet its rights obligations. The Sirisena administration reapplied after coming to power in 2015. EU diplomats have estimated that Sri Lanka gains an estimated 300 million euro (\$350 million) advantage annually thanks to the GSP-Plus system. Prison spokesman Thushara Upuldeniya said there were 373 convicts on death row in Sri Lanka, including 18 for serious drug crimes. Death sentences are still handed down for crimes including murder, rape and drug-related crimes, but the last execution was in 1976. Nearly 900 people are currently in prison after been sentenced to death, although many have had their sentences commuted to life or are appealing. —AFP

British caver may take legal action after Musk 'pedo' tweet

BANGKOK: A British caver who helped rescue 12 boys from a Thai cave said yesterday he may take legal action against Elon Musk after the entrepreneur called him a "pedo". Tesla CEO Musk launched the extraordinary tirade against Vernon Unsworth without providing any justification or explanation, after the cave expert slammed his offer of a miniature submarine to extract the footballers from the Tham Luang cave as a "PR stunt".

The "Wild Boar" team were rescued last week by an international team of divers through a narrow network of twisting, flooded tunnels. Unsworth, who provided mapping knowledge of the cave to rescuers, said Musk's prototype would have had "absolutely no chance of working". Musk responded Sunday in a bizarre series of tweets referring to Unsworth without using his name as "pedo guy". "Pedo" is short for pedophile.

He then doubled down on the claim, tweeting from his official account to more than 22 million followers: "Bet ya a signed dollar it's true". Musk later deleted the tweets and did not immediately respond to a request for comment through Tesla. Unsworth told AFP yesterday he had not reviewed the tweets in full and had only heard about them. Asked if he would take legal action against Musk over the allegation, Unsworth said: "If it's what I think it is, yes."

The caver told AFP he would make a decision when he flies back to the UK this week, but said the episode with Musk "ain't finished". "He's just a PR stunt merchant—that's all he is," Unsworth added. Unsworth, who lives part of the year in Thailand, took part in the gargantuan 18-day effort to retrieve the 12 boys and their coach, a mission that ended on July 10 when the last five members were extracted. —AFP

Indian trafficking survivors push for a new law

CHENNAI/MUMBAI: Human trafficking survivors are urging Indian lawmakers to support proposed legislation to fight the crime, after an opposition leader said it could be used to target consenting adults working in the sex industry. Congress party leader Shashi Tharoor called for further consultations before the bill is presented to parliament, which resumes this week.

He raised his concerns to Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi in a petition endorsed by thousands of sex workers, hundreds of activists and 30 civil society groups. Trafficking survivors and activists have rejected the petition, saying the draft legislation focuses on victims and that the law would not be used against sex workers unless they were forcing others into the practice. Campaigners noted the bill was drafted after years of consultations.

"We urge the government not to hold back passage of this law," said a 23-year-old who was trafficked as a teenager. "Our lives depend on this and we cannot be held hostage to demands of adult sex workers, who choose to work," she said in a statement by the survivors' organization Utthana, which has been advocating for the legislation.

Tharoor's petition comes two years after the government released the first draft of the bill, initiating consultations with experts and feedback through social media. The bill was scheduled to be discussed in March, during the last parliament session. But it was not tabled, raising concerns about further delays as political attention shifts to the general election scheduled in 2019. —Reuters

Analysis

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Triumph could be the start of a memorable era

Energetic, disciplined and clinical, France won the World Cup on Sunday with a 4-2 victory over Croatia that, even in such a moment of achievement, still left the feeling there may be much more to come from Didier Deschamps' outstanding young team. With key talent Kylian Mbappe just 19 years old and the second youngest squad in the tournament, this triumph could be the start of a memorable era for French football.

Deschamps was lambasted for being over-functional, even boring, two years ago when France lost to Portugal in the Euro 2016 final in Paris but his critics will be silent now. While he has remained a coach who focuses on creating a solid organizational structure, this time he had the additional threat of Mbappe's pace and skill to go with the cleverness of Antoine Griezmann and the physical presence and positional awareness of Olivier Giroud.

This is not the France of 1984, the European champions with the creative genius of Michel Platini and Jean Tigana and it is a less expressive team than the 1998 World Cup winners dominated by the brilliance of Zinedine Zidane. It is, however, a thoroughly modern team, with technically accomplished young players, a distinct identity and no obvious weak points. "We did not play a huge game but we showed mental quality. And we scored four goals anyway. They deserved to win," Deschamps said and it was hard to argue.

Their triumph is indeed fully deserved - there simply was no better all-round team than France in this tournament. Having topped their group, they revealed their counter-attacking flair and the thrill of Mbappe in beating Argentina 4-3 but games which truly showed their character were the expertly-managed quarter-final and semi-final victories over Uruguay and an excellent Belgian team.

Long stretches

France were not at their best in the final, with Croatia enjoying the better of the possession for long stretches and their defense struggled at times against the directness and speed of winger Ivan Perisic. It was an own goal and a harshly-awarded penalty, after video review, that put Deschamps' side in front but once Paul Pogba had driven in the third and Mbappe added a superbly-taken fourth, the title was in their grasp.

Impressively, they won the final without a major contribution from Ngolo Kante, their defensive anchor and the best protector of a back-line in the game, who has formed such an excellent partnership with Pogba in the center of the field. Kante was booked in the 27th minute and wasn't his normal self afterwards but the strength in depth available to Deschamps was evident when he was able to bring on the always reliable Steven Nzonzi in the 55th minute. With Nzonzi dominating central midfield France were stronger and their last two goals coming after that switch.

As he has done throughout this tournament, Pogba played with great tactical discipline in a largely defensive role but still managed to pop up with the crucial goal to make it 3-1 in the final. But the player who captures the imagination in this team is without doubt Mbappe, whose terrifying pace sometimes masks his excellent touch and skill. With experience, his decision-making will improve and he should be an even bigger threat in the 202 European Championship.

The relative youth of the France side is no guarantee of improvement and they will need to show the same kind of hunger and desire that Croatia have shown throughout the tournament. But it is hard not to feel that Deschamps' side have another gear available to them and are capable of something really special if they need to. Argentina and Croatia both pushed France hard and both ended up conceding four goals. That truly is the stuff of champions. — Reuters



France's forward Kylian Mbappe holds the World Cup trophy as defender Samuel Umtiti kisses it after winning the World Cup final football match between France and Croatia at the Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow on Sunday. — AFP



'Highway to nowhere' haunts Montenegro

Perched atop massive cement pillars that tower above Montenegro's picturesque Moraca river canyon, scores of Chinese workers are building a state-of-the-art highway through some of the roughest terrain in southern Europe. The government has described the 165 km highway, with its imposing bridges and deep-cut tunnels, as the construction of the century and a pathway to the modern world. It is designed to link the port of Bar on Montenegro's Adriatic coast to landlocked neighbor Serbia. But once the first, challenging 41 km stretch through mountains north of the capital is completed, the government faces a difficult choice.

A Chinese loan for the first phase has sent Montenegro's debt soaring and forced the government to raise taxes, partially freeze public sector wages and end a benefit for mothers to get its finances in order. Despite those measures, Montenegro's debt is expected to approach 80 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) this year and the International Monetary Fund says the country cannot afford to take on any more debt to finish its ambitious project. "There is a big question about how they complete it," said an EU official who requested anonymity. "Their fiscal space has shrunk enormously. They have strangled themselves. And for the time being this is a highway to nowhere."

The road is at the heart of an intense debate about Chinese influence in Europe, both within EU member states and countries aspiring to join the bloc such as Montenegro and its Western Balkan neighbors Serbia, Macedonia and Albania. As Beijing extends its economic reach under the ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), poor countries across Asia and Africa have seized on attractive Chinese loans and the promise of transformative infrastructure projects.

This has allowed them to develop in ways that may not have been possible without access to China's vast foreign exchange reserves. But some countries, such as Sri Lanka, Djibouti and Mongolia, have found themselves weighed down by debt and ever more reliant on Beijing's largesse. Montenegro is the first country in Europe to find itself in this position as its government presses on with its dream of a gleaming new highway to lead the nation to a brighter future.

"This highway is a big deal in Montenegro. It reminds people of Tito and the days of grand socialist projects in the region," said academic Mladen Grgic, referring to former Yugoslavia's long-time communist leader Josip Broz Tito. "But it's a trap. Now that it's been started, the politicians can't stop it - no matter how harmful it might be. And frankly they don't want to," said Grgic, author of a 2017 study on the highway.

'Not bankable'

The idea of building a highway from the coast to Serbia can be traced back to 2005, a year before Montenegro's vote for independence from its neighbor. The project was championed by Milo Djukanovic, who has served as president or prime minister of Montenegro nearly uninterrupted since 1991. The government hopes the highway will give an economic boost to the country's underdeveloped north, bolster trade with Serbia and improve road safety as Montenegro's narrow, winding mountain roads are notoriously dangerous.

Having recognized that there is little scope to take on more debt, the government's options for building the next three phases of the highway are limited. The option it now favors is a public private partnership (PPP) in which an outside partner would build and operate the highway, then run it under a concession from the state for 30 years to get a return on their investment. China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC), the large state-owned Chinese company that is building the first section, signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in March to complete the rest of the road on a PPP basis.

But European lenders worry that Montenegro would need to offer costly revenue guarantees to make that work, potentially deepening its financial woes. "We told them that their PPP model was not bankable, that they would be taking on risks they don't know how to manage," said an official from the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Union's lender. The IMF cau-

tioned the government in May against a PPP solution that could introduce large contingent liabilities. One official suggested Montenegro would be better off waiting until it joined the EU before finishing the highway. Once it is part of the EU, Montenegro would have access to more structural and cohesion funds from Brussels. But the process of joining the bloc could take a decade or more, despite a loose target date of 2025 floated by the EU this year.

Feasibility studies

Doubts about the highway surfaced after two feasibility studies, conducted in 2006 and 2012, showed it was not economically viable. Reuters reviewed copies of the studies, the first carried out by French firm Louis Berger for the Montenegrin government, and the second by US company URS for the EIB. Both concluded



Chinese loan funding most of first stretch

there would not be enough traffic to justify a concession. Louis Berger estimated the government would have to pay 35 million to 77 million euros a year in subsidies to make a toll-based system attractive to outside investors.

URS looked at each section of the highway and concluded that all possible combinations were economically unworkable. It recommended a more modest upgrade of existing roads. "The low current traffic volumes and the weak economic forecasts mean that the economic benefits of the proposed route do not provide adequate return on the investment," URS said. To justify the grand highway envisioned by the Montenegrin government, URS said internal rates of return of 8 percent would be required but it estimated they would be below 2 percent.

Ivan Kekovic, an engineer who was involved in the project in its early years but later issued an open letter to parliament warning against it, told Reuters that average traffic of 22,000 to 25,000 vehicles a day would be needed to justify a highway of the proposed scale. Daily traffic on the busiest stretch, from the capital Podgorica to the port of Bar, is less than 6,000 vehicles. Early attempts to build the highway, first with a Croatian consortium and then with a Greek-Israeli one, collapsed after both groups failed to provide bank guarantees in time. Critics breathed a sigh of relief, convinced the project was dead. Then China appeared on the scene.

China fills void

Economics professors at the University of Montenegro were paid by the state-funded Export-Import Bank of China to conduct a new feasibility study. This one found the highway was viable, according to the government. But this study has never been made public and attempts by Reuters to see it were unsuccessful. China Communications Construction Co, CRBC's parent firm, did not respond to a request for comment about the studies.

MANS, an EU-financed anti-corruption watchdog, pressed the government to provide members of parliament with data to support its vision before a vote to approve the highway in 2014. It refused. "We have no doubt that the data that the ministry of transport used in order to justify the construction of the highway are fabricated," said Dejan Milovac, deputy executive director at MANS. The government denies manipulating the numbers and says the highway will deliver long-term economic and social benefits that prove the sceptics wrong.

Zorana Mihajlovic, deputy prime minister of Serbia, which is building a stretch of highway with Chinese help to link with the Montenegrin road, took a similar view. "There are investments that may not be economically

justifiable from a short-term perspective, but which are strategically important," she told Reuters. The six Western Balkan countries - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia - are surrounded by EU member states. But the region has suffered from under-investment and poor governance since the independence wars of the 1990s, making it an economic laggard.

Over the past decade, as the EU struggled with a succession of crises and put enlargement of the bloc on hold, other powers, including Russia and Turkey, have moved in to fill the void. China has been especially active. In 2012, it began holding annual "16+1" summits with eastern and southern European states to discuss investment opportunities, infuriating Brussels. A year later, it unveiled BRI, its grand plan to secure land and maritime trade routes from Asia to Europe and Africa.

The Western Balkans, strategically positioned on Europe's southern flank, is a key access point for China to reach central Europe and beyond. China's investments in the region total more than €6 billion - including highways, rail lines and power plants. Serbia, the largest economy in the region and Beijing's long-standing ally, has received the lion's share. Montenegro could be attractive to China for a number of reasons. It gives Beijing a port of entry into Europe from the Adriatic, and close economic and political ties with the government in Podgorica could prove valuable for China if Montenegro becomes an EU member.

'Disbelievers'

The €809 million Montenegro received from China's Export-Import Bank covers 85 percent of the cost of the first section of the road. The dollar-denominated loan carries a 2 percent interest rate, 20-year repayment schedule and 6-year grace period - attractive terms but a major long-term burden for a country of roughly 620,000 people. Under the terms of the contract, an arbitration court in China would have jurisdiction in the event of any legal dispute. CRBC won commitments that all imported construction materials, equipment and other goods be exempt from customs and value-added tax. Chinese workers were given 70 percent of the work.

Some 3,605 workers are busy building the first section of the highway. Roughly two-thirds of them are from CRBC, one of the largest engineering and construction firms in the world. Four camps of neat blue-roofed bungalows house the Chinese workers. Dotting the area are billboards in Chinese and English exhorting them to be meticulous and responsible. "CRBC expects to build the future sections of this project," Kang Shifei, deputy project manager for CRBC, told Reuters on a blazing hot afternoon in June, beneath the giant pillars that will support a kilometre-long bridge above the Moraca canyon.

Because the government did not hedge against currency swings and omitted a vital turnpike from its original blueprint, the cost has continued to rise. It is now approaching €1 billion, nearly a quarter of Montenegro's GDP. A March report from the Washington-based Center for Global Development which examined the debt risks associated with BRI listed Montenegro as one of eight highly vulnerable countries, alongside Djibouti, the Maldives, Laos, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan. The remaining three-quarters of the highway will plough through less mountainous terrain. The IMF estimates it will cost another \$1.2 billion to complete.

Prime Minister Dusko Markovic has said it will be finished at any cost and promised to deepen cooperation with China in other areas, including hydropower and tourism. He has dismissed critics as "disbelievers". But opposition politicians are worried - about the country's finances and about China's role. Dritan Abazovic, head of the United Reform Action opposition party, said it was normal for an economic power such as China to seek a role in the region, alongside the EU, United States and Russia. But because of the scale of the project, he worries the deal with the Chinese will end up giving Beijing much more influence over Montenegro. "It puts the Chinese in a very very comfortable position," he said. — Reuters

Business

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LONDON: Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May (center) is accompanied by Airbus CEO Tom Enders (right) on her arrival at the Farnborough Airshow, south west of London yesterday. — AFP

UK seeks to allay Brexit fears at air show

Airbus, Boeing announce a raft of deals amid optimistic outlooks

FARNBOROUGH: Britain sought to project an image of aerospace prowess long after it leaves the European Union, at the Farnborough airshow yesterday, as Airbus and Boeing announced a raft of deals and issued optimistic outlooks for the global industry.

China's Sichuan Airlines said it will be buying 10 A350 long-haul planes with a list price of \$2.8 billion, while India's Vistara signed a letter of intent to purchase 13 single-aisle A320neo aircraft.

Taiwan's Starlux Airlines, which is developing a network across Asia and North America, said it had signed a memorandum of understanding for the purchase of 17 Airbus planes — 12 A350-1000s and five A350-900s.

The Airbus deals announced at Farnborough, southwest of London, would add up to more than \$17 billion at catalogue price for the planes if all orders are confirmed and prior to large discounts traditionally handed to purchasers.

Airbus's US rival Boeing also announced a series of impressive deals including 14 777s to DHL for \$4.7 billion, 30 737 MAX for Jackson Square Aviation for \$3.5 billion.

"We continue to see the aerospace market grow very strongly," Boeing's chief executive Dennis Muilenberg said on the eve of the Farnborough show, echoing similar comments by Airbus.

No-deal warnings

But Farnborough is taking place in the shadow of a trade war between China and the United States as well as Britain's stalled negotiations to exit the European Union. Airbus, which employs some 15,000 people in Britain, has warned it would reconsider investments in Britain if it crashes out of the European Union next year with no deal.

Airbus chief executive Tom Enders last month said the government had "no clue" over its Brexit plans. After Prime Minister Theresa May unveiled more conciliatory proposals last week for Britain to retain strong trading ties with the EU after Brexit, Enders however said that the government was now "going in the right direction". In a tweet he urged EU negotiators in Brussels and other European countries to be "similarly pragmatic &

fair". Organizers also warned that aircraft could stop flying if May fails to clinch an adequate Brexit deal with Brussels. "Our worst case scenario is genuinely—and it is not alarmist or scare mongering—that aircraft will not fly," said Farnborough International chairman Paul Everitt, who is also head of aerospace, defense and space trade body ADS. May sought to play down concerns with an optimistic message in her inaugural speech at the show. "We're leaving the European Union and forging a new future for our country and, as we do so, want to ensure that the UK remains one of the best places in the world for aerospace companies to do business," she told participants. She said Britain wanted to "continue as world leaders in innovation" and announced £343 million (\$456 million, 389 million euros) in public-private investment in innovative research and development, including new electric aircraft technology.

'Future fighter'

May also announced a new £2.0 billion program with Italy's Leonardo to design a new generation fighter jet, following speculation that Brexit could disrupt cooperation in this field. "Today I can announce that the government will join with BAE Systems, Leonardo, MBDA and Rolls Royce to fund the next phase of the Future Combat Air System Technology Initiative through a ground-breaking partnership known as Team Tempest," she said.

Uncertainty over no-deal prospects



IMF warns of rising risks to global growth amid trade jitters

WASHINGTON: The global economy is still expected to grow at a solid pace this year, but worsening trade confrontations pose serious risks to the outlook, the International Monetary Fund said yesterday.

The IMF's updated World Economic Outlook (WEO) forecast global growth of 3.9 percent this year and next, despite sharp downgrades to estimates for Germany, France and Japan. The

US economy is still seen growing by 2.9 percent this year, and the estimate for China remains 6.6 percent, with little impact expected near term from the tariffs on tens of billions of dollars in exports the countries have imposed on each other so far. "But the risk that current trade tensions escalate further—with adverse effects on confidence, asset prices, and investment—is the greatest near-term threat to global growth," IMF Chief Economist Maurice Obstfeld said.

The fund warns growth could be cut by a half point by 2020 if tariff threats are carried out. Although the global recovery is in its second year, growth has "plateaued" and become less balanced, and "the risk of worse outcomes has increased," Obstfeld said in a statement.

Addressing 'disenchantment'

The report comes as US President Donald Trump has imposed steep tariffs duties on \$34

billion in imports from China, with another \$200 billion coming as soon as September, on top of duties on steel and aluminum from around the world including key allies. China has matched US tariffs dollar for dollar and threatened to take other steps to retaliate, while US exports face retaliatory taxes from Canada, Mexico and the European Union.

"An escalation of trade tensions could undermine business and financial market sentiment, denting investment and trade," the IMF report said. In addition, "higher trade barriers would make tradable goods less affordable, disrupt global supply chains, and slow the spread of new technologies, thus lowering productivity." The IMF said growth prospects are below average in many countries and urged governments to take steps to ensure economic growth will continue. The fund said global cooperation and a "rule-based trade system has a vital role to play in

preserving the global expansion." However, without steps to "ensure the benefits are shared by all, disenchantment with existing economic arrangements could well fuel further support for growth-detracting inward-looking policies."

Europe, Japan slowing

The sweeping US tax cuts approved in December will help the economy "strengthen temporarily," but growth is expected to moderate to 2.7 percent for 2019. And while the fiscal stimulus will boost US demand, it is also will increase inflationary pressures, the WEO warned. China's growth also is seen slowing in 2019 to 6.4 percent.

After upgrading growth projections for the euro area in the April WEO, the IMF revised them down by two-tenths in 2018 to 2.2 percent, due to "negative surprises to activity in early 2018," and another tenth in 2019 to 1.9 percent.

The estimates for Germany, France and Italy were cut by 0.3 points each, with Germany seen expanding by 2.2 percent this year and 2.1 percent in 2019. France's GDP is expected to grow 1.8 percent and 1.7 percent. Meanwhile, Britain is now forecast to grow 1.4 percent this year, 0.2 points less than the April estimate, and 1.5 percent in 2019.

Japan's GDP is seen slowing to 1.0 percent this year, two-tenths less than previously forecast, "following a contraction in the first quarter, owing to weak private consumption and investment." It should grow 0.9 percent the following year. India remains a key driver of global growth, but the GDP outlook was cut one-tenth for this year and three-tenths for next year to 7.3 percent and 7.5 percent, respectively. Brazil saw an even sharper 0.5-point downward revisions from the April forecast, to 1.8 percent this year. — AFP



FARNBOROUGH: A visitor tries on a Striker II helmet mounted display at the BAE Systems showroom during the Farnborough Airshow, south west of London yesterday. — AFP

Defense Secretary Gavin Williamson said Britain had "a vision for developing next generation systems of weapons". He said the project would be carried out by a "ground-breaking partnership".

"This is a future fighter... a virtual cockpit, either manned or unmanned," Williamson said. — AFP

Business

World needs 43,000 more planes in 20 years: Boeing

Airbus announces deals with Chinese, Indian and Taiwanese airlines

LONDON: The world needs to produce 43,000 new aircraft over the next two decades to meet booming demand, Boeing's CEO forecast here on Sunday. Dennis Muilenberg, chief executive of the US aerospace giant, revealed the outlook upgrade to reporters in London before the sector's Farnborough Air Show yesterday.

"We continue to see the aerospace market grow very strongly," said Muilenberg. "We see \$8.1-trillion market-place in the next ten years" for commercial, defense and services, he added. "We further increased our estimates in the next 20 years. "We expect the world to need roughly 43,000 new commercial airplanes. That's up from last year's estimates."

Boeing will publish exact details of its latest outlook today, the second day of the Farnborough event held southwest of London. European arch-rival Airbus had forecast last week that the world's passenger fleet would more than double to 48,000 aircraft over the next 20 years, on the back of keen demand from emerging economies and low-cost airlines.

In a revised market outlook, Airbus had put the value of nearly 37,400 new aircraft required to meet global demand at \$5.8 trillion by 2037. In 2017, Airbus had estimated the world would need 35,000 new planes by 2036, valued at \$5.3 trillion. Airbus and Boeing meanwhile continue their head-to-head dogfight at the biennial Farnborough event, locked in a battle for lucrative multi-billion-dollar jet orders. Airbus strikes deals in China, India amid Brexit concerns.

Upbeat note

European aerospace giant Airbus announced deals with Chinese, Indian and Taiwanese airlines yesterday, kicking off the Farnborough airshow in Britain on an upbeat note despite concerns about the effects of Brexit.

China's Sichuan Airlines said it will be buying 10 A350 long-haul planes with a list price of \$2.8 billion (2.4 billion euros), while India's Vistara signed a letter of intent

to purchase 13 single-aisle A320neo aircraft. Taiwan's Starlux Airlines, which is developing a network across Asia and North America, said it had signed a memorandum of understanding for the purchase of 17 Airbus planes — 12 A350-1000s and five A350-900s.

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"We continue to see the aerospace market grow very strongly," Boeing's chief executive Dennis Muilenberg said on the eve of the Farnborough show, echoing similar comments by Airbus. But Farnborough is taking place in the shadow of a looming trade war between China and the United States as well as Britain's stalled negotiations to exit the European Union. Airbus, which employs some 15,000 people in Britain, has warned it would reconsider investments in Britain if it crashes out of the European Union next year with no deal.

Airbus chief executive Tom Enders last month said the government had "no clue" over its Brexit plans.

After Prime Minister Theresa May unveiled more conciliatory proposals last week for Britain to retain strong trading ties with the EU after Brexit, Enders however said that the government was now "going in the right direction". He urged EU negotiators in Brussels and other European countries to be "similarly pragmatic & fair".

Organizers also warned that aircraft could stop flying if May fails to clinch an adequate Brexit deal with Brussels. "Our worst case scenario is genuinely—and it is not alarmist or scare mongering—that aircraft will not fly," said Farnborough International chairman Paul Everitt, who is also head of aerospace, defence and



LONDON: Boeing Commercial Airplanes CEO, Kevin McAllister (left) looks on as Qatar Airways CEO, Akbar Al Baker announces the purchase of planes for their cargo department at the Farnborough Airshow, south west of London yesterday. —AFP

space trade body ADS.

May sought to play down concerns with an optimistic message in her inaugural speech at the show.

"We're leaving the European Union and forging a new future for our country and, as we do so, want to ensure that the UK remains one of the best places in the

world for aerospace companies to do business," she told participants. She said Britain wanted to "continue as world leaders in innovation" and announced £343 million (\$456 million, 389 million euros) in public-private investment in innovative research and development, including new electric aircraft technology. —AFP

EU urges big powers to avert trade 'conflict and chaos'

BEIJING: The European Union yesterday urged the United States, China and Russia to work together to ease worsening global trade tensions, warning that they could otherwise spiral into "conflict and chaos". The comments from EU Council President Donald Tusk come as Washington and Beijing stand on the brink of a trade war which many fear could hammer the global economy, while the US has also picked fights with allies in Europe and Canada.

"It is the common duty of Europe and China, but also America and Russia, not to destroy (the global trade order) but to improve it, not to start trade wars which turned into hot conflicts so often in our history," Tusk said in Beijing. "There is still time to prevent conflict and chaos." Tusk spoke at an annual EU-China summit held yesterday against the backdrop of the deepening trade discord. The EU—the world's biggest single market with 28 countries and 500 million people—is trying to buttress alliances in the face of the protectionism unleashed by US President Donald Trump's "America First" administration.

The meeting between Chinese and European officials in Beijing, which also included European Commission head Jean-Claude Juncker, came as Trump prepared to hold talks in Helsinki with Russian leader Vladimir Putin.

Trump fuelled the rising rancor in an interview aired

Sunday in which he labelled the EU, Russia and China as "foes" of the United States.

'Multilateralism under attack'

Tusk said the world needs trade reform and not confrontation. "This is why I am calling on our Chinese hosts, but also on Presidents Trump and Putin, to jointly start this process from a thorough reform of the WTO (World Trade Organization)," Tusk said, without specifying the reforms.

"Today we are facing a dilemma: whether to play a tough game, such as tariff wars and conflict in places like Ukraine and Syria, or to look for common solutions based on fair rules," Tusk said.

In a meeting later with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Juncker said that "multilateralism is under attack, an attack unprecedented since the end of World War II." "We cannot accept that through unilateral attacks, the multilateral system should be damaged," he said, also stressing the need for WTO reform.

French President Emmanuel Macron had called in late May for talks on overhauling the WTO at a time when European companies were bracing for punishing US tariffs on steel and aluminum imports that ultimately went into effect on June 1. Besides the steel and aluminum tariffs on the EU, Russia and major US trading partners, Trump earlier this month implemented tariffs on \$34 billion worth of Chinese imports, drawing a tit-for-tat response from Beijing.

Washington last week threatened yet more measures on another \$200 billion in Chinese goods.

Beijing has said it would retaliate for that, and yesterday the Commerce Ministry said it had added the \$200



BEIJING: China's Premier Li Keqiang (Right) shows the way for European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker (left) as they attend the China-EU Business Roundtable at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday. —AFP

billion tariff threat to existing WTO complaints which it has lodged against Washington. The back-and-forth has heightened fears that trading powers will hunker down into a destructive all-out trade war that could hit global growth. China said yesterday that its economic growth rate had slowed slightly to 6.7 percent in the second quarter of this year, from 6.8 percent the previous quarter, and a government spokesman warned that a trade conflict threatens all the countries concerned.

"The China-US trade friction unilaterally provoked by the United States will have an impact on the Chinese and US economies," said Mao Shengyong, a spokesman for the national statistics bureau.

"Now that the world economy is deeply integrated, industrial chains have become globalised, and many related countries also will feel an impact." —AFP

Stock markets, dollar mixed with all eyes on Trump, Putin meet

LONDON: Stock markets were mixed yesterday, with traders reacting to weaker Chinese economic data and upbeat earnings at Deutsche Bank. The dollar was up versus the yen but down against the euro and pound, with all eyes on US President Donald Trump's summit with Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Helsinki. Oil prices slid more than one dollar.

"It's been a slow start to the trading week in Europe after a rather mixed Asia session saw Chinese" growth slow, noted Michael Hewson, chief market analyst at CMC Markets UK. US markets opened slightly higher with a rise in retail spending in June helping sentiment. After a positive end to last week's roller-coaster ride for equities, investors shifted back into defensive mode, with concerns about the impact of tit-for-tat tariffs on the world's top two economies, China and the United States. —AFP

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Business

Burgan Bank re-certifies with 'ISO 9001:2015' across all of its operations

Bank striving for excellence through high quality products and services

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, one of the most dynamic banks in Kuwait, recently announced that it has successfully re-certified with ISO 9001:2015 certification across all of its operations. Through this re-certification, Burgan Bank has once again demonstrated its ability to effectively and efficiently provide an internationally recognized quality management system, while continuously advancing its products and services.

The prestigious certification is testament to Burgan Bank's pursuit of excellence, prudence and compliance to the highest quality standards, and is an important accolade that solidifies the bank's position in the local and international market. The re-certification mechanism and methodology followed in this regard was granted after a comprehensive review and careful auditing of all its departments by Bureau Veritas in accordance with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

International Organization for Standardization "ISO" is the world's leading developer of international standards, which specify the requirements for state-of-the-art products, services, processes, materials and systems, and for good conformity assessment, managerial and organizational practice. As a professional standard, it is utilized to certify Quality Management systems focusing on continuous improvement, complete customer satisfaction, and the active involvement of both the management and employees in a stringent process-based approach. Developed by an association of governmental and non-governmental organizations from more than 160 coun-

tries, ISO certification serves as a vital tool that ensures that operational risks are identified and addressed prior to occurrence, thereby attributing to high quality assurance of operations.

Venkat Menon - Group Chief Operations & Technology Officer commented on the accomplishment, "Achieving the re-certification is a proud moment for all of us at Burgan Bank. This encourages us to continue to focus on achieving excellence in all our processes so as to effectively and consistently meet the needs and expectations of our customers. We will continue to innovate and adopt the latest standards in banking to sustain success and excellence across the board".

Burgan Bank is one of the first banks in the GCC to receive such a certification for the fifth consecutive period. The Bank received its first ever ISO 9001 certification in 2003, becoming one of the first banks in the Middle East to receive the ISO 9001 certification across all of its business functions, operating units and branches.

The re-certification marks the beginning of a new 3-year Quality Management cycle during which the bank is required to continually maintain and enhance its quality assurance and high level proficiency of operations.

The latest recognition of Burgan Bank's high quality products and services falls in line with its strategic objective and solid commitment to its customers and stakeholders, also re-confirming the bank's successful investment in its human resources, customers, processes, and technologies, that continue to ameliorate over the years.



Redeem points and travel to your favorite destination with NBK Miles World Mastercard

KUWAIT: As part of its continued commitment to providing leading products and services as well as rewards and exclusive features, the National Bank of Kuwait offers Miles World Mastercard Credit Card, enabling customers to earn NBK Miles Points every time they use it for retail purchases, cash advances and online transactions when in Kuwait or abroad.

The NBK Miles World Mastercard gives you supreme flexibility. Cardholders can fly to any destination on any airline, from any point of origin, and at any time of the year. They can redeem their NBK Miles Points to book flights with more than 800 airlines, 150,000 hotels, and renowned car rental agencies around the world. New cardholders receive 10,000 free bonus points upon using their new NBK Miles World Mastercard for the first time.

"We are always focused on providing customers

with products and services that are advanced and safe," explained Hanadi Khazal, Chief Marketing Officer, National Bank of Kuwait. "We offer our customers the very rewarding NBK Miles World Mastercard that allow them to easily redeem points earned and plan their next trip entirely from: booking tickets to hotel accommodation, and even transportation."



Hanadi Khazal

Khazal added: "The NBK Miles World Mastercard gives you supreme flexibility. Cardholders also benefit from many other rewards and services including the NBK Rewards Program and access to the best lounges across the globe."

NBK Miles World Mastercard Credit Card holders earn 3 NBK Miles Points for each KD 1 spent in Kuwait and 5 NBK Miles Points for each KD 1 spent while traveling abroad. You earn points while redeeming miles and the redeemed miles can be used to book travel anywhere and anytime. Even ticket taxes can be paid using your miles points. There are no blackout dates, and no limit on the number of seats.



Cardholders are also eligible for the NBK Rewards Program, the largest loyalty program in the region with more than 700 partner outlets in fashion, dining, lifestyle and entertainment. They are also eligible to numerous other benefits including travel insurance, free valet parking, concierge service, travel offers, discounts and much more.

Customers can learn more about NBK credit cards by visiting the award-winning redesigned NBK.com website. Check out the 'Right for me' comparison tool to help choose the right card to receive the rewards, promotions and benefits that suit your individual lifestyle, banking and travel needs.

Bank of America profits up on lower taxes, higher lending



NEW YORK: A sign for Bank of America is seen on Third Avenue in New York City. —AFP

NEW YORK: Bank of America reported a jump in second-quarter earnings yesterday, boosted by higher interest rates, increased lending and lower US tax expenses. Currently the second biggest US bank by assets after JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America reported net income of \$6.5 billion, up 36.3 percent from the year-ago period.

Revenues were \$22.6 billion, down one percent. Higher interest rates have been a source of profit growth in the sector by permitting banks to charge more for loans. Analysts say over time, this benefit will erode once banks are pressured to raise interest payments to depositors. Other positive points in the second quarter included an increase in overall loans, as well as higher revenues in key equity and fixed income trading divisions.

Like other large banks, earnings were also lifted by much lower tax expenses after the US cut its tax rate last December. "Solid operating leverage and client activity drove earnings higher this quarter," said Bank of America chief executive Brian Moynihan. "Responsible growth continued to deliver as a driver for every area of the country."

Earnings translated into 63 cents per share, six cents above analyst expectations. Shares rose 0.5 percent to \$28.70 in pre-market trading. —AFP

Eurozone yields near lows as China slowdown puts trade war in focus

LONDON: High-grade eurozone bond yields hovered near recent lows yesterday as softening Chinese growth kept investors wary about the potential global economic impact of a trade dispute between the United States and other major countries.

China's economy expanded at a slower pace in the second quarter as Beijing's efforts to contain debt crimped activity, while June factory output growth weakened to a two-year low in a worrying sign for investment and exporters as a trade war with the US intensified.

Better-rated eurozone government debt usually benefits from a flight to safety in troubled times, and yesterday their yields - which move inversely to price - remained close to their lowest levels in weeks, and in some cases, months. "The question is what happens when tariffs spill over into real data. I heard my economist saying that some of the Fed regional reports already point to some worries there," said ING strategist Benjamin Schroeder.

"So this makes the Powell speech important this week, if he makes any comments on how the trade tariffs may affect the US economy," he said, referring to

Some manufacturers feeling trade war pinch: Survey

WASHINGTON: Some US manufacturers are delaying investments and raising prices as President Donald Trump escalates trade wars with key US economic partners but most companies report no change, according to a survey released yesterday.

The National Association for Business Economics also found in its monthly report that members unanimously expected economic growth to continue in the next year, with most forecasting inflation adjusted growth of more than two percent. "Labor market conditions are tight with skilled

US Federal Reserve chair Jerome Powell's scheduled testimony to lawmakers today.

Benchmark euro zone bond yields were mostly flat or marginally higher on Monday, with Germany's 10-year government bond yield unchanged at 0.285 percent. Some investors are now treating a recently issued German August 2028 bond as the new 10-year benchmark; that bond was yielding 0.34 percent yesterday.

French and Belgian 10-year benchmark yields rose 1-2 basis points, but were still close to their lowest levels since at least early January hit on Friday.

Italy relief

Elsewhere, Italian EU Affairs Minister Paolo Savona is reported to have said that Rome has proposed to the EU to be allowed to spend an extra 50 billion euros, which is approximately 2.7 percent of the country's GDP. "The news that Italy asks for more spending is not a surprise, but the tone from Savona was a lot more conciliatory, so that is reassuring," said Mizuho strategist Antoine Bouvet.

"The end game is to get more spending, not get out of the EU, so if one of the most eurosceptic members takes a pragmatic approach that's more positive," he said.

Italian yields came off morning highs and 10-year yields turned flat on the day while two-year yields were lower 5 basis points at one point to hit a near two-week low of 0.65 percent, before settling at 0.67 percent. Analysts at ratings agency DBRS said in a statement that came out ahead of the Savona headlines that the expected deviations from current fiscal targets are unlikely to undermine Italy's public debt sustainability materially. —Reuters

labor shortages driving firms to raise pay, increase training and consider additional automation," Sara Rutledge, chair of the quarterly survey, said in a statement.

Companies reported rising profits and higher sales expectations. But despite the scarcity of workers, a survey index of wage growth slowed after hitting a record in April.

The survey, which polled 98 economists at private companies and trade associations, also found signs of rising prices, a possible sign that inflation and Trump's new import duties were filtering into the economy. An index of prices charged hit a 12-year record, jumping 14 points, while a measure of materials costs hit a seven-year record, soaring 15 points.

Trump this week began the process to impose tariffs on up to \$200 billion in additional imports from China, adding to the levies

Jehad Al-Humaidhi appointed as AUB Deputy CEO - Banking Support Group

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB) has announced the appointment of Jehad Saud Al-Humaidhi as Deputy CEO - Banking Support Group as of 28 June 2018, after obtaining the approval of the Central Bank of Kuwait.

Jehad was formerly Senior General Manager - IT & Operations at Ahli United Bank and was appointed to succeed Ahmed Zulficar, who has recently retired.

Jehad is one of the most experienced and distinguished Kuwaiti banking professionals. With more than 33 years of experience in banking at Ahli United Bank, she was able to drive an extensive range of initiatives that helped transform AUB's IT & Operational capabilities.

Jehad joined the Bank immediately upon her graduation from university in 1984. She started her career as an IT programmer and held various managerial positions related to Operations, Administration, Technical Facilities and Data Processing and Development. Since 2011, she was appointed as General Manager - IT & Operations, to be promoted to Senior General Manager in 2016. In addition she is also board member of K-NET, Vice-Chairman of Ci Net, and member of the Board of Directors of the Gulf Custody Company. Ms. Jehad holds a degree of Bachelor of Science - Mathematics, from Kuwait University.

Jehad was recently awarded the "Women Entrepreneur of the Year 2017" in the field of IT, Banking & Finance by the prestigious International Finance magazine, in a grand celebration that was held in Dubai on Jan 18, 2018.

On this occasion, AUB's CEO Richard Groves said "The appointment of Jehad Al-Humaidhi to this position is a confirmation of the stability and strength of the succession plan in AUB's management team. I am delighted to have Jehad move into this senior position which reflects her enormous experience and ability, and her full commitment not only to AUB, but also to the wider banking industry in Kuwait".



Jehad Saud Al-Humaidhi

imposed on \$34 billion in goods which took effect earlier this month.

Economists say this could boost inflation, which already is beginning to rise after a decade of economic recovery, albeit gradually.

Still, a majority in the NABE survey, 65 percent, said trade concerns were not causing their companies to change plans for investment, hiring or pricing.

Things were chillier in the goods producing sector, however, with only 37 percent reporting no change.

Among manufacturers, 26 percent said they were delaying planned investments and 16 percent reported having to raise prices. And, as the same survey had found April, most respondents, or 65 percent, said they were not changing plans to hire or invest because of December's sweeping corporate tax cuts. —AFP

Technology

Power to drones: Utilities place bets on robots

Flying robots, next big thing for power companies

MILAN/FRANKFURT: Flying robots that can travel dozens of kilometers without stopping could be the next big thing for power companies. Utilities in Europe are looking to long-distance drones to scour thousands of miles of grids for damage and leaks in an attempt to avoid network failures that cost them billions of dollars a year. However the technology faces major safety and regulatory hurdles that are clouding its future in the sector.

Snam and EDF's network subsidiary RTE have tested prototypes of long-distance drones that fly at low altitudes over pipelines and power lines. Italy's Snam, Europe's biggest gas utility, said it is trialing one of these machines - known as BVLOS drones because they fly "beyond the visual line of sight" of operators - in the Apennine hills around Genoa. It hopes to have it scouting a 20 km stretch of pipeline soon.

France's RTE has also tested a long-distance drone, which flew about 50 km inspecting transmission lines and sent back data that allowed technicians to virtually model a section of the grid. The company said it would invest 4.8 million euros on drone technology over the next two years. At present, power companies largely use helicopters equipped with cameras to inspect their networks. They have also recently started occasionally using more basic drones that stay within sight of controllers and have a range of only about 500 meters.

However an industry-wide shift towards renewable energy, and the need to monitor the myriad extra connections needed to link solar and wind parks to grids, is forcing utilities to look at the advanced technology. "It's a real game changer," Michal Mazur, partner at consultancy PwC, said of drones. "They're 100 times faster than manual measurement, more accurate than helicopters and, with AI devices on board, could soon be able to fix problems." In-sight drones cost around 20,000 euros each and BVLOS ones will cost significantly more, according to executives at tech companies

that make the machines for utilities, and a fleet of dozens if not hundreds would be needed to monitor a network. Power grid companies are expected to spend over \$13 billion a year on drones and robotics by 2026 globally, from about \$2 billion now, according to Navigant Research. But that is still dwarfed by the amount of money the sector loses every year because of network failures and forced shutdowns - about \$170 billion, according to PwC.

Regulatory risks

The growing demand from utilities is coming at a time of swift technological advances in civilian long-distance drones. The prototypes, which are about a meter long and wide, not only have aircraft systems but can avoid obstacles, detect other flying objects - from helicopters to hang gliders - while mapping grids with thermal and infrared sensors. However the future of these flying robots in the utility sector hinges on regulation.

BVLOS drone flights are largely prohibited because of safety concerns. However over the past year European watchdogs have for the first time granted special permits to allow utilities - namely RTE and Snam - to test prototypes. The European Commission is working on new Europe-wide regulations to govern the use of civilian drones, including long-distance ones, but has disclosed few details. A Commission source said the EU executive expected to put forward the rules by the end of the year, with a view to adoption in early 2019.

The new regulations should make it simpler for companies that need to operate BVLOS drones to receive clearance, the source said. "The objective is to speed up the opening of the drone services market," the source added.

Yet without any clear guidance as to how the new rules will look, or will work in practice, many companies have adopted a wait-and-see approach. The situation is mirrored in the United States. As in Europe, special permits are needed for BVLOS

flights but the aviation regulator, the FAA, is looking to simplify and speed the process of winning such waivers, including by automating it.

Xcel Energy in April became the first American utility to gain approval for BVLOS flights. ULC Robotics, which provides technology for the energy sector, said a growing number of U.S. utilities were looking at the technology. "While only a handful of beyond visual line of sight flights have been granted in the utility space, we believe developments in long-range flight are going to advance within the next two to three years," said business development manager Tom Barracca.

Chain reaction

It is still early days for drones in the utility sector, which is known for its slow pace of change. Companies have only started using in-sight drones over about the past two years. While their short range limits them to specific tasks, such as inspecting a known problem, utilities say they are more efficient at that than helicopter surveys. "You are not only saving time but also money," said Sven Bender, key account manager at Innogy, Germany's second-largest energy group by market value, adding that the use of drones in the industry would pick up further in the coming years.

The company's Westnetz grid unit has a handful of in-sight drones, which can stay in the air for as long as 30 minutes, to inspect parts of its 182,000 km of power lines in Germany. France's RTE said it avoids 1,400 days of interruption of high-voltage lines each year because it uses drones alongside its helicopters. Out-of-sight drones is set to be the next frontier for grid operators with their miles of pipes and pylons to inspect. Most energy infrastructure players manage assets scattered over large areas, located often in hard-to-reach places like mountains or deserts.

As the industry gradually moves from large conventional power plants to smaller, more frag-



GERMANY: Workers operate a drone to survey high-voltage power lines of electric company Westnetz near Wilnsdorf, Germany. — Reuters

mented green energy sources, such as wind turbines and solar panels, it also increases the number of assets and connections that need to be maintained. A drone flying along a gas grid can detect methane leakage, while along a power line it can do a lidar survey to map the lines, the health of the cable and the vegetation on either side. "We've identified that it can save as much as \$180 for every mile of data capture when compared with traditional methods," said Michael Chasen, CEO of drone maker PrecisionLawk.

It was a tree too close to high tension power lines at the Italian-Swiss border that led to Italy's most extensive blackout in 2003 triggering a chain

reaction across the grid experts say could have been averted with drone technology. Thomas Nicholls, chief marketing officer at French drone company Delair, said power groups in France and Italy were most advanced with regard to the technology. He added that safety played a major role because inspecting power lines could be a hazardous job for humans. Dor Abuhasira, CEO of Israel's Percepto, which supplies drones to utilities such as Europe's biggest group Enel, sees the technology as ultimately providing a kind of private satellite service to grid operators. "We are their Google Maps with a few high-tech bells and whistles on top." — Reuters

Wireless networks: Big benefits for small business



By Osama Al Haj-Issa
Regional channel director, Aruba

Very few Small and Medium Business (SMB) owners in Kuwait have a fully functioning IT department. But they are still expected to provide modern and engaging experiences for their customers, using the latest technology. And the network is where it all begins.

But how many non-IT people know the first thing about how to set up and secure a network? It's time we addressed the demands of the smaller business, and made network management simple. Recent studies suggest that 66 percent of small to medium businesses (SMB) consider the use of the cloud, applications and mobile devices to be a strategic priority.

They recognize that they stand a good chance of improving their customer experience by making such investments. But it's down to us, the technology providers, to make that investment as easy as possible. A truly robust network requires you to manage filtering for a million websites, create individual user profiles and set security protocols for different applications. That's too much for many business owners - so they need management tools and software that does the hard work for them.

From a retailing perspective, consumers are constantly using their smartphones in store, creating the obvious need for network speed, security, and availability. From here businesses can not only be sending push notifications, but analyzing the data provided by consumer devices, helping shape in store layout for example. In a larger business, you will find a network that has a solid infrastructure, with the ability to keep incorporating new applications as the business grows.

Why shouldn't smaller businesses have the same features as well? Your wireless solution, as an SMB, should be able to handle any business application easily. It has to accommodate a growing number of mobile users and have built-in security as a given. And quite simply, it should just

work. This is why straightforward set up and quick, precise remote monitoring and troubleshooting should be a feature for all new technology made available to the SMB.

Opportunities for small businesses

Smaller businesses, by nature, employ fewer people. But there are still opportunities for these smaller teams to reap the same benefits from technology. With a network that is securely and simply managed, SMBs can benefit from:

Ease of management

Customers now expect to use apps to get a simpler and quicker technology experience, so why should managing the network be different? Through using automated management software, the business owner will now be able to easily set network controls through a mobile app, and even sign in using social media profiles.

Super-fast, reliable Wi-Fi

To keep employees connected and productive, have critical applications running at top speed, creating mobile experiences that customers can rely on super-fast and reliable Wi-Fi is necessary. Like an automated and intelligent network that can act as an instant security barrier by detecting and isolating, any device that displays a potential risk.

Future of SMBs

With the technology back-end taken care of, businesses are left free to innovate. With the rapid shift to create new customer experiences, for example using location-based services via mobile apps, it's important that tech admin does not get in the way. Your network must work at the pace of your ideas. To enable this, the support you receive from a technology provider is as important as the solution. For example, any business owner that doesn't want to manage their own cloud can have a partner do this as a managed service.

From a reseller point of view, there is increased opportunity to work closer with the small business market and offer a high-value solution, while at the same time improving their own offerings. And for the time-strapped, cost-conscious businesses who are looking for wireless solutions they can count on, it's important to have access to technology providers that can deliver. Just because you're small, doesn't mean you shouldn't have a network that can deliver everything your customers need.

Silicon Valley eyes Africa as new tech frontier

LAGOS: With its colorful hammocks and table tennis table, a new tech hub in the Lagos metropolis wouldn't look out of place among the start-ups on the other side of the world in Silicon Valley. But the NG_Hub office is in the suburb of Yaba-the heart of Nigeria's burgeoning tech scene that is attracting interest from global giants keen to tap into an emerging market of young, connected Africans. In May, both Google and Facebook launched initiatives nearby.

This week, Nigeria's Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo was in California to court US tech investors for what he said could herald a "fourth industrial revolution" back home. But it isn't just Nigeria that is piquing the interest of tech giants. Last month, Google said it would open Africa's first artificial intelligence lab in Ghana's capital, Accra. Demographics are a key factor behind the drive: Africa's population is estimated to be 1.2 billion, 60 percent of them under 24. By 2050, the UN estimates the population will double to 2.4 billion.

"There's a clear opportunity for companies like Facebook and Google to really go in and put a pole in the sand," said Daniel Ives, a technology researcher at GBH Insights in New York. "If

Global regulators start monitoring crypto assets

LONDON: Global regulators have published a framework for "vigorously" monitoring risks from crypto assets like bitcoin and ether, even though they don't pose a major risk to financial stability for now. Wild swings in crypto asset prices have prompted central bankers to warn investors they could lose every penny. It is unclear at times which financial rules, if any, apply to the sector or if there is legal authority to regulate it.

Rolls-Royce plans for take-off in flying taxi market

FARNBOROUGH, England: British jet engine maker Rolls-Royce has designed a propulsion system for a flying taxi and is starting a search for partners to help develop a project it hopes could take to the skies as soon as early next decade. Rolls-Royce said on Sunday it had drawn up plans for an electric vertical take-off and landing (EVTOL) vehicle, or flying taxi, which could carry four to five people at speeds of up to 250 miles per hour for approximately 500 miles.

The company, which makes engines for planes, helicopters and ships, joins a variety of companies racing to develop flying taxis, which could revolutionize the way people travel. Long the stuff of science fiction and futuristic cartoons such as "The Jetsons", aviation and technology leaders are working to make electric-powered flying taxis a reality, including Airbus, U.S. ride-sharing firm Uber and a range of start-ups including one backed by Google co-founder Larry Page, called Kitty Hawk.

Rolls-Royce's design will be showcased in

you look at Netflix, Amazon, Facebook, Apple, where is a lot of that growth coming from? It's international," he said. Facebook is operating from the NG_Hub as it doesn't yet have a permanent office in Nigeria. The company's Africa head of public policy, Ebele Okobi, said at the opening of the premises that the goal was to cultivate the nascent technology community.

The social network has pledged to train 50,000 people across the country to "give them the digital skills they need to succeed", she added. In exchange, Facebook, which currently has some 26 million users in Nigeria, gets more users and access to a massive market to test new products and strategies. "We are invested in the ecosystem. Just the fact that they are engaging... that in of itself is a goal," she added.

Cyber colonialism?

Many African governments have given the tech titans an enthusiastic welcome. In California, Osinbajo said the Nigerian government will "actively support" Google's "Next Billion Users" plan to "ensure greater digital access in Nigeria and around the world". Few sectors in Africa inspire as much hope as technology, which has the potential to revolutionize everything from healthcare to farming.

Examples include Ubenwa, a Nigerian start-up that has been described as "Shazam for babies", after the application that identifies music and films from snippets.

Ubenwa analyses a baby's cry using AI to diagnose birth asphyxia, a major cause of death

Start ups have begun issuing new digital currencies via initial coin offerings (ICOs), raising concern among regulators over investor protection. The aim of the new framework is to spot any financial stability risks early enough to take action. The Financial Stability Board (FSB), which coordinates financial regulation for the Group of 20 Economies (G20), said the framework focuses on how risks from crypto asset markets could spread to other parts of the financial system.

"Monitoring the size and growth of crypto-asset markets is critical to understanding the potential size of wealth effects, should valuations fall," the FSB said in a statement yesterday.

"The use of leverage, and financial institution exposures to crypto-asset markets are important metrics of transmission of crypto-asset risks

to the broader financial system." The aim of the new framework is to spot any financial stability risks early enough to take action.

But the FSB cautioned that data is still patchy at times in a rapidly developing market that can be fragmented and opaque. It would assess whether the framework will need extra data at a later stage.

Moves to formally monitor the sector forms part of a compromise in March between G20 members like France, who wanted more radical action, and other countries who preferred treading lightly for now. The FSB framework also includes trading volumes, pricing, clearing and margining for derivatives linked to crypto assets, such as the bitcoin futures launched by CME Group last December.

Facebook has also been at the centre of a storm for failing to protect user data in connection with claims of manipulation in the 2016 US presidential election and the Brexit referendum. Global Justice Now, an anti-poverty group, fears tech companies are being given free rein to create a global surveillance state. — AFP

Britain backs Scottish spaceport plan with \$40 million in grants

FARNBOROUGH, England: Britain wants to build its first spaceport for launching satellites in Scotland, with the government kick-starting the project by handing almost 30 million pounds (\$40 million) in grants to companies including Lockheed Martin. UK Business Minister Greg Clark said the new site at Sutherland on the northerly-most tip of mainland Scotland would provide facilities for vertically-launched space rockets and satellites to take off into orbit.

Under the plans announced yesterday, US group Lockheed and its partners will receive 23.5 million pounds in grants from the UK Space Agency which will go toward establishing launch operations at Sutherland and developing a new system for deploying small satellites in

Reading, southern England. London-based Orbex has received 5.5 million pounds to build a new rocket launch from the site at Sutherland, which will help develop its orbital launch vehicle to deliver the small satellites into orbit.

The government said the investments were the first steps to developing a national space program. "We want Britain to be the first place in mainland Europe to launch satellites as part of our Industrial Strategy," Clark said in a statement. Britain is keen to boost its space sector at a time when it faces a challenge because of the country's departure from the European Union next year. This has meant some UK-based companies have been excluded from future work on the EU's 10 billion euro Galileo satellite program. — Reuters



DERBY: Britain's Prince William, visits the Rolls Royce XWB engine assembly line with Simon Middlebrough, Director of Assembly and Aerospace Testing during a visit to the Rolls Royce factory in Derby. — Reuters

digital form at the Farnborough Airshow, which started. The company is looking for an air-framer and a partner to provide aspects of the electrical system to help commercialize the project. Rolls-Royce said in a statement it was well-placed to play a leading role in the "personal air mobility" market.

"The initial concept vehicle uses gas turbine

technology to generate electricity to power six electric propellers specially designed to have a low noise profile," the company said, adding the design used its existing M250 gas turbine. Rolls's design would not require re-charging because the battery is charged by the gas turbine, it said, adding it could use existing infrastructure such as heliports and airports. — Reuters

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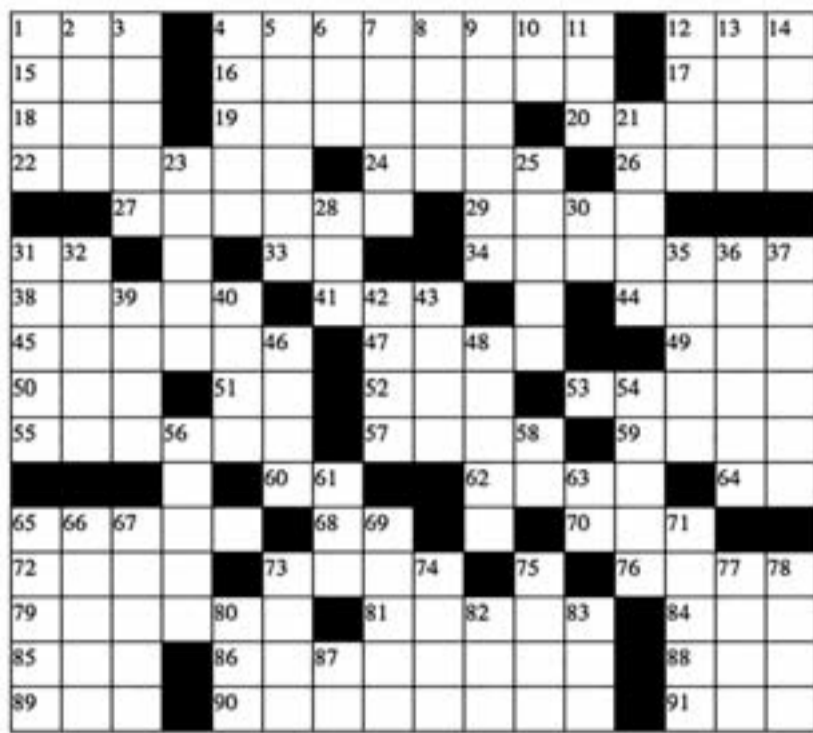
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ACROSS

- Of or relating to a member of the Buddhist people inhabiting the Mekong river in Laos and Thailand.
 - Clear refuse from.
 - The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
 - Electrical conduction through a gas in an applied electric field.
 - An owner or manager of hotels.
 - The month following February and preceding April.
 - (British) A waterproof raincoat made of rubberized fabric.
 - Small genus of dioecious tropical aquatic plants.
 - Jordan's port.
 - A port city in southwestern Iran.
 - Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
 - According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
 - A percussion instrument consisting of a pair of hollow pieces of wood or bone (usually held between the thumb and fingers) that are made to click together (as by Spanish dancers) in rhythm with the dance.
 - An Eskimo hut.
 - A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
 - A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
 - Genus of North American and east Asian perennial herbs.
 - An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
 - Having undesirable or negative qualities.
 - A tiny or scarcely detectable amount.
 - Physically and mentally fatigued.
 - The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
 - An early form of modern jazz (originating around 1940).
 - Experiencing or showing sorrow or unhappiness.
 - A soft yellow malleable ductile (trivalent and univalent) metallic element.
 - A lyric poem with complex stanza forms.
 - A drawing illustrating the relations between certain quantities plotted with reference to a set of axes.
 - Something that baffles understanding and cannot be explained.
 - A metabolic acid found in yeast and liver cells.
 - An elaborate song for solo voice.
 - A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
 - (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
 - A colorless and odorless inert gas.
 - Relating to or concerned with a city or densely populated area.
 - A soft heavy toxic malleable metallic element.
 - The cry made by sheep.
 - Not far distant in time or space or degree or circumstances.
 - Avatar of Vishnu.
 - Conqueror of Gaul and master of Italy (100-44 BC).
 - A woman of refinement.
 - A unit of absorbed ionizing radiation equal to 100 ergs per gram of irradiated material.
 - A digital display that uses liquid crystal cells that change reflectivity in an applied electric field.
 - A genus of herbs and shrubs belonging to the family Euphorbiaceae.
 - Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.
 - The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.
 - In a rakish manner.
 - Game in which matchsticks are arranged in rows and players alternately remove one or more of them.
- DOWN**
- A Tibetan or Mongolian priest of Lamaism.
 - An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
 - English scholastic philosopher and assumed author of Occam's Razor (1285-1349).
 - (physics) A deformation of an object in which parallel planes remain parallel but are shifted in a direction parallel to themselves.
 - High quality grape brandy distilled in the Cognac district of France.
 - Goddess of criminal rashness and its punishment.
 - A more whose fertile portion resembles a bell and is attached to the stipe only at the top.
 - English essayist (1775-1834).
 - A B vitamin essential for the normal function of the nervous system and the gastrointestinal tract.
 - A brittle gray crystalline element that is a semiconducting metalloid (resembling silicon) used in transistors.
 - A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
 - A woman hired to suckle a child of someone else.
 - A small cake leavened with yeast.
 - Decapod having eyes on short stalks and a broad flattened carapace with a small abdomen folded under the thorax and pincers.
 - An island of Hawaii northwest of Oahu.
 - The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
 - Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
 - A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
 - 16 ounces.
 - The fifth month of the Hindu calendar.
 - Of or relating to or affecting a lobe.
 - A book by Sir Thomas More (1516) describing the perfect society on an imaginary island.
 - The second month of the Moslem calendar.
 - The basic unit of money in Ghana.
 - The biblical name for ancient Syria.
 - On, to, or at the top.
 - An informal term for a father.
 - The basic unit of money in China.
 - Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
 - Measuring instrument in which the echo of a pulse of microwave radiation is used to detect and locate distant objects.
 - Wheelwork consisting of a connected set of rotating gears by which force is transmitted or motion or torque is changed.
 - A public promotion of some product or service.
 - A drug combination found in some over-the-counter headache remedies (Aspirin and Phenacetin and Caffeine).
 - The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
 - Show a response or a reaction to something.
 - English monk and scholar (672-735).
 - Valuable fiber plant of East Indies now widespread in cultivation.
 - American professional baseball player who hit more home runs than Babe Ruth (born in 1934).
 - Type genus of the family Arcidae.
 - The time during which someone's life continues.
 - Tropical woody herb with showy yellow flowers and flat pods.
 - A landlocked republic in northwestern Africa.
 - (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
 - A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
 - A doctor's degree in preventive medicine.
 - The month following April and preceding June.
 - A state in northwestern North America.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

A little escape may be coming your way. You may find yourself in a dreamy mood with a desire to let reality escape you. You don't often have this feeling, and this is a great time to just roll with it. You may find a movie, a road trip, or something as simple as lighting the candles and soaking in the tub, may bring you a needed rest. We all need to take time to ourselves and you are no exception. Rest your mind, body, and soul, Aries. You may find you are highly productive after taking a day for yourself. This may be just the escape you needed to regroup and focus on success.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

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.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Today is a great day to clean out that closet or organize that cabinet. You may be in the mood to declutter and organize. The includes mental and physical aspects of your world. It may be a time you find it necessary to bite your tongue. Be sure and think before you speak to prevent yourself from offending someone today. This may be harder than you think. You find yourself being leaned upon for emotional support or someone may confide some very personal issues with you. You are sympathetic and very compassionate with those you care about and today you may find satisfaction in being able to make a difference in someone's life.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

It seems you have come to a crossroad in your life. A decision faces you and you are torn between two ways of thinking. You may see an opportunity for wealth and fortune but know this path will lead you down a road that is opposed to your values. You should put much thought into your decision and follow your heart. Nothing good can come from going against what you value, and feel is right. This is a great time to team up with your co-workers and you may find yourself being asked to lead the team or be offered a new position in the workplace. Cancer: Take time this evening to celebrate who you are and spoil yourself. You deserve it.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You find yourself becoming the go to person as others seek your advice for very personal issues. Many complicated issues you may face will cause deep feelings within to stir. Your level of sensitivity should reach new heights. Great harmony will be experienced. Now is a great time to surround yourself with friends and loved ones and may be surprised how easily you are able to work together. Leo: You may find yourself very talkative and eager to share your thoughts and ideas with others. Your mind may seem to be in overdrive and your words can't keep up with your ideas. This should be a very productive day for you.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You may not find much excitement in this day. You may feel as though you are just going through the motions and find yourself quite bored with your surroundings. An escape is in order and you may find yourself to be quite content with getting lost in a good book or it may be a great time to sit back and relax while watching a movie. We all need an escape from reality from time to time and today seems just the day for this. You will feel much love and support from those closest to you today. You will know your efforts have not gone unnoticed and you are special to those close to you. Relax and clear your mind today.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You are really feeling a need to be needed. You desire to be the shoulder that is leaned on a listening ear to those in need. You may find others are drawn to your compassion and eagerness to assist them with their problems. Not only are you a wonderful friend to those close to you, but strangers are drawn to you also. You always make time to listen and help whenever possible. This is very rewarding for you as it fulfills this need to be needed desire you seem to be feeling. You may find yourself being looked to for advice and being admired for your ability to make decisions.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Sometimes you find yourself craving appreciation and longing to be the center of attention. Today may just be one of those days for you. You may not only feel like expressing your feelings with material gifts, but you may also feel led to give your time, a listening ear, or a shoulder to cry on to those in need around you. You may find today to be a wonderful day and find many opportunities to nurture your close relationships. It is a great day of kindness and love for you, Scorpio. You may find by doing for others your own needs will be met and you will receive great reward.



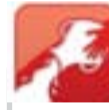
Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You are finding your highest priority is someone rather than something. You see marriage and possibly a partnership as a great focus. This is your key to success and happiness. You may find you have plenty of lessons to learn in dealing with these relationships. You may find yourself being challenged concerning the way you present yourself. You may feel a lack of support or even insulted by this person. Remind them there is a reason we are all different and continue to be yourself. No one can make decisions for you and there is nothing wrong with expressing yourself the way you are comfortable doing so.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may find yourself struggling between what is best for your personal life and what is best for your career. The strong bond you feel with your family and your desire to make that foundation stronger than ever may outweigh and hinder any professional decisions you are trying to make. You may find it best to put off any career decisions to a later date. You may find you desire to belong on a deeper intimate level with those close to you. Your relationships and the security of your family is your driving force. This may be a good time for decisions concerning real estate and a great time to focus on investments for the security of your future.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You are wise beyond your years and that is what counts for you right now. You find yourself extremely sympathetic and understanding of those around you. Your past experiences help you not only relate to what others are going through, but have given you the wisdom to help them through their troubles. You are able to come to grips with your past as you share your experiences with others. This is a great time for you to communicate with those close to you. You may find they are really eager to hear what you have to say. You may find you gain much satisfaction from helping those close to you today.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

This is a great time of reflection for you. The past is what made you who you are. You are beginning to realize and appreciate that every obstacle in your path and every problem you have experienced were all lessons learned. A new outlook and a positive attitude may be coming your way. Deep understanding of your past can ensure a much more stable and peaceful future. You may find you are able to help bring peace into the lives of others by sharing what you learn. You may not feel as though you are receiving the support you need from others. Be proud of your strengths and be confident in who you are, and know you can do this on your own.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Thanksgiving (U.S.)

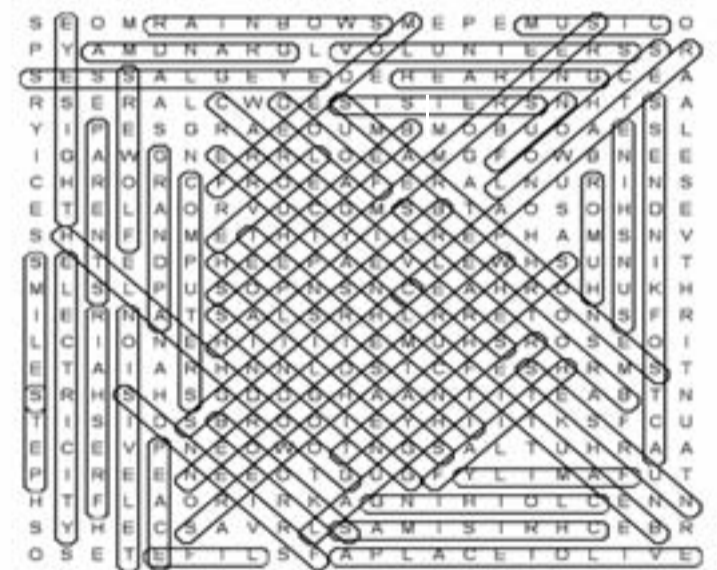
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 26 letters spell a popular Thanksgiving Day event.



- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|--------------|
| ANNUAL | GRAVY | RELATIVES |
| AUTUMN | HARVEST | REUNION |
| CELEBRATION | HOLIDAY | SQUASH |
| CORN | LONG WEEKEND | STUFFING |
| CRANBERRY | MASHED POTATOES | SWEET POTATO |
| FAMILY | MEAL | THURSDAY |
| FEAST | NOVEMBER | TRADITION |
| FESTIVAL | PARADE | TRAVEL |
| FOOD | PILGRIMS | TURKEY |
| FOOTBALL | PLYMOUTH | WAMPANOAG |
| FRIENDS | PUMPKIN PIE | YAMS |
| GATHERING | | |

Yesterday's Solution

Thankful For...



- | | | | |
|------------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|
| ACTS OF KINDNESS | ELECTRICITY | GRANDPA | PETS |
| A PLACE TO LIVE | EYEGLASSES | HAPPY MEMORIES | RAINBOWS |
| BEACHES | EYESIGHT | HEARING | SCHOOL |
| BEAUTIFUL NATURE | FAITH | HOLIDAYS | SINGING |
| BLESSINGS | FAMILY | HUMOR | SISTERS |
| BOOKS | FLOWERS | INTERNET | SMART PHONES |
| BROTHERS | FOOD | LAUGHTER | SMILES |
| CARE GIVERS | FREEDOM | LIFE | SUNSHINE |
| CHILDREN | FRESH AIR | LOVE | TEACHERS |
| CHRISTMAS | FRIENDS | MUSIC | TELEVISION |
| CLEAN WATER | FUN | NURSES | VOLUNTEERS |
| CLOTHING | GOOD HEALTH | PARENTS | WARM SHOWERS |
| COMPUTERS | GRANDMA | PEACE | |

The hidden message is: SOME PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS GRUMPING BECAUSE ROSES HAVE THORNS; I AM THANKFUL THAT THORNS HAVE ROSES.

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

Lifestyle

TUESDAY, JULY 17, 2018



Palestinian artists display artwork in the yard of the damaged Arts and Crafts Village, which was hit by Israeli air strikes two days before, in Gaza City yesterday. — AFP

La Paz's colorful cable car system: No traffic and a great view



“Now I’m going to get to work faster!” exulted a smiling Rosa Lima, 52, one of the first passengers on a new cable car line in La Paz that reaches into the heart of the Bolivian capital. Draped in a bright orange blanket typically worn by indigenous people here, Rosa says she lives in a neighborhood on the southern outskirts of La Paz and that it takes her more than an hour to reach the building where she works as a cleaner in the city center. With the new cable car line, she says, she can be there in half the time.

“I’m going to save a lot of time, especially when there are blockades”

The opening of the new “Celestial,” or sky-blue line was timed partly as a tribute to the revolution of July 16, 1809 and to the heroes of the struggle against Spanish colonizers. With a route from the city’s south to its administrative heart, site of the main public and private-sector offices—and above the noisy, winding and traffic-clogged streets—the line’s opening was highly anticipated. This is the seventh line in the city’s modern cable car system, inaugurated in 2014 and with 16 kilometers (10 miles) of cable in La Paz and reaching to the mountaintop communities of El Alto, at over 4,000 meters (13,100 feet). It is the most extensive such network anywhere, certified as such by the Guinness World Records site, according to the state-run Mi Teleférico (My Cable Car) company, which manages the system. The new line offers excellent views of the city and

of snow-capped Mount Illimani (6,462 meters, or 21,200 feet), while allowing passengers to escape the capital’s steep and crowded streets.

106 million passengers

In its four years in operation, the system has transported more than 106 million passengers. It now averages 159,000 a day. Each line in the system is identified by a color. The first three lines opened were identified as red, yellow and green, in homage to the Bolivian flag. New lines were given the colors of white, blue, sky blue (the Celestial line) and orange, corresponding to the wiphala, the checkered banner of the indigenous people here. The new line, inaugurated at a festive event featuring music and dance, is 2.6 kilometers (1.6 miles) long and includes 26 towers, four intermediate stations and 155 cabin cars, while connecting with other lines that lead to El Alto.

The new line is expected to be the network’s busiest and will travel 20 percent faster than other lines (86 meters, or 282 feet, per second), with a capacity of 4,000 passengers per hour, said Cesar Dockweiler, Mi Teleférico’s general manager. “The line will primarily benefit public-sector employees, because the main government offices are in the city center,” he said. Hipolito Mamani, 45, works in a government office a few blocks from a Celestial station and, like Rosa, plans to take advantage of it. “I’m going to save a lot of time, especially when there are blockades,” he said, referring to the frequent roadblocks and closures in the city center caused by demonstrations. Construction of the system has been overseen by Austrian company Doppelmayr, at a cost so far of \$750 million. In the next few months two other lines—the purple and the brown—are to be opened, with the former also serving the city center. — AFP



The Bolivian car cable state-company “Mi teleférico” inaugurates to the public the Light Blue line that connects the south hillside with the centre of La Paz. — AP

‘Who is America?’ Cohen splits critics with TV return

“Who is America?” is both the title of Sacha Baron Cohen’s first foray into television satire in more than a decade and the existential question on the lips of liberals living through the Trump presidency. Trailed by a blaze of pre-launch publicity and a furious backlash from public figures who believe they have been pranked, its splashy debut won most attention Sunday for hoodwinking Republican politicians into endorsing a made-up plan to train pre-schoolers how to fire a gun. The series brings seven episodes to pay-to-view channel Showtime years after the British comedian was last on television with “Da Ali G Show”—his wannabe-rapper character interviewing the powerful and famous.

In “Who is America?” Cohen conjures up four new characters. Billy Wayne Ruddick Jr. is an opponent of “mainstream” media who debates healthcare with left-leaning Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders. There is Nira Cain-N’degeocello, a pink-hat wearing, ultra-liberal hippy, who dines at the home of a Trump-voting couple. Rick Sherman is an ex-con turned artist who works in the medium of human feces and bodily fluids, and who meets a totally accepting California gallery owner who donates pubic hair to his paint brush.

Finally, Israeli “anti-terror expert” Colonel Erran Morad pranks Republicans into endorsing a concocted plan to teach children as young as three and four how to fire a firearm, along with a “Puppy Pistol.” Teasers for the new series saw US former vice president Dick Cheney signing a “waterboard kit” and Sarah Palin unleash a furious Facebook attack, upset to have been one of Cohen’s pranked subjects. Palin, the former vice presidential nominee and ex-Alaska governor who did not appear in the first episode, slammed the comedian’s “evil, exploitive, sick humor.”

But if early reviews are more muted, they are also mixed. The New York Times called the first episode “tepid and inconsequential,” and ill-suited to the times. If The New Yorker waxed lyrical about “sporadically excellent conceptual art,” trade magazine Variety warned Cohen’s nihilism can “itch and irritate more than enlighten and entertain.” The Guardian praised “one moment of viral gold” but otherwise lamented “mostly a frustrating experience.”

After “Da Ali G Show,” which transferred from Britain to America, Cohen found success with hit movie characters such as bumbling Kazakh reporter Borat and gay Austrian fashionista Bruno. His 2012 movie, “The Dictator,” starring himself as a Moamer Kadhafi style tyrant was less well reviewed. — AFP



Actor Sacha Baron Cohen

Lifestyle | Gossip



Taylor Swift styles out stage malfunction

Taylor Swift suffered a stage malfunction at her Philadelphia concert. The 28-year-old pop star has travelled in a sparkly cage across from the main stage to a smaller stage inside every stadium on her 'Reputation Tour' so far, but she got stuck midway through singing 'Delicate' at Lincoln Financial Field on Saturday night. Taylor told the crowd: "Pretty sure I am stuck up here. It's a nice view though." The 'Getaway Car' singer kept her cool and instead joked with her fans, before she treated them to an impromptu a capella performance of her 2007 song 'Our Song' and 'Wildest Dreams', whilst the crew worked to free her from the air and put her in a new cage to complete the show. She laughed: "So what you just saw was me going like straight up and down in this sparkly basket. It's supposed to take me to the other side of the stadium. So what happens now is basi-

cally I'm just chilling waiting to figure out what happens next." Taylor has pulled out all of the stops so far on the extensive tour, bringing out her showbiz pals Niall Horan, Selena Gomez, Shawn Mendes, Troye Sivan and Robbie Williams for duets. And her support acts Charli XCX and Camila Cabello have joined her on stage for a rendition of 'Shake It Off' every night on the second stage after 'Delicate'. A number of stars have witnessed Taylor's dazzling set including Amber Rose, Julia Roberts, Viola Davis, Lena Dunham and David Beckham's daughter Harper. The 'Reputation Stadium Tour' will conclude at Tokyo Dome in Japan on November 21.



Jessie Ware: Motherhood made me more 'honest' with lyrics

Jessie Ware says becoming a mother has made her more "honest" with her music. The 33-year-old star gave birth to her daughter - whom she has with husband Sam Burrows - in September 2016, and motherhood allowed her to get more personal on her 2017 LP 'Glasshouse', which features the track 'Sam' about her family. Jessie explained: "I really felt I was improving as a songwriter as I had all this inspiration and I could be so honest. "Things changed and I had a lot of new feelings to write about. "It's been really wonderful and cathartic to see these songs out and be taken back to that place, it's really like a memory book." Jessie worked with Ed Sheeran on 'Sam', and would love to get the opportunity again after he helped her find her confidence on the record. She told the Daily Star newspaper: "I'd love more work with Ed. He's a friend and he's been so good to me, I've learnt a lot so hopefully we can keep working together." The brunette beauty previously admitted she wouldn't have been able to pen such a "confessional" track without the 'Shape of You' hitmaker's help, and that it would have been impossible to do before having her little girl. She spilled: "Ed is so gifted and helped me find the confidence I needed. "I adore writing with him. He said it was important for me to address how my life was changing - that I was to be a mother and that it was phenomenal. "I wouldn't have been able to write this sort of song before I had the baby. "But I also don't think I was ready to write a confessional song until this third record." The 'Say You Love Me' singer penned the track with Ed when she was eight months pregnant and the songwriter really pushed her to be honest on the track. She said previously: "Ed could see that I was ready to pop, and so he was like, 'Let's go there.' "The father line, he definitely pushed. I said, I don't know, am I p***ing my father off? He said, if it feels uncomfortable, maybe you should be doing it. And so I went for it."



will.i.am and Jones to feature on Lott album?

Will.i.am and Danny Jones look set to feature on their fellow 'The Voice Kids' coach Pixie Lott's new album. The Black Eyed Peas star and McFly vocalist-and-guitarist have both individually approached the 'Mama Do' hitmaker's team to discuss the opportunity to team up with Pixie on her first record since her 2014 eponymously titled LP. will told the Daily Star newspaper: "I've been talking to her manager about working with her." And Pixie added: "And Danny has too!" The 27-year-old beauty - who released 'Baby' and 'Won't Forget You' in 2017 - previously said she was focusing on releasing singles before launching an album. She said last year: "I'm not sure on an album date yet because it moves around all the time and there will be a lot of singles this time before the album comes out." After 'Won't Forget You' there will definitely be more music to come." Meanwhile, the British singer previously said she'd jump at the chance to pen a song with her old pal Ed Sheeran. Pixie first met the 'Thinking Out Loud' hitmaker a decade ago when they both unsuccessfully audi-

tioned for ITV drama 'Britannia High' and described him as "an amazing songwriter". She said: "I have been speaking to Ed about doing something together. I love Ed. He is brilliant and an amazing songwriter. "We first met when we were 16 and auditioned for a TV drama called 'Britannia High'. We've been friends for the past 10 years." And another star on her collaboration bucket list is Eminem. The pop star witnessed the rap legend perform his new song 'Walk On Water' with Skylar Grey filling in for Beyonce at the MTV EMAs at The SSE Arena, Wembley, last year and would love the chance to get into the studio with the 'Lose Yourself' hitmaker. Asked who she'd like to work with, she said: "It's a tough one because I would like to collaborate with so many great people, but Eminem performed at the EMAs recently and I'm a big Eminem fan. "It's great he's having a sort of comeback moment, that would be really cool."

Take That to tour next year

Take That are going on tour next year to celebrate their 30th anniversary. The 'Rule the World' hitmakers - comprised of Gary Barlow, Howard Donald and Mark Owen - have announced plans to drop a new album comprised of all their greatest hits over the past three decades and hit the road with it in 2019 to mark the milestone. Speaking to Sarah-Jane Crawford at the first ever Hits Radio Live at the Manchester Arena over the weekend, Gary said: "We have a Greatest Hits coming out, we have a few new songs and next year we're doing a Greatest Hits tour." Mark added: "It's thirty years this year! We're making a record, we're always celebrating, we've been celebrating for thirty years!" And it looks like the trio could be planning more than just a tour and album as Robbie Williams - who left the band for a second time in 2014 in order to go solo - recently teased that

he'd love to do a reunion to mark 30 years but he'd only be willing to do it if his former band mate Jason Orange - who left in the same year - agreed to return. He said: "I can genuinely say I don't know. I'm up for it. But I don't know what their calendar says, what my calendar says. I don't know what their manager says. "We'd all love to do it. I'd love to get Jason back involved, realistically I don't think so. "If we could get Jay back it would be perfect. But we shall see, watch this space." Meanwhile, Howard previously said he'd love to see them as a five-piece again. He explained: "A five-piece would be incredible. Whether that ever happens or not, that's a different story. My gut's telling me no. I'd love it to happen. "That's the nice thing, that we can all hope it will happen but, you know, no pressure on anybody to do anything."



Chance the Rapper will record album with Kanye West in Chicago

Chance the Rapper and Kanye West are going to record their joint album in Chicago together. The pair are to make what has been described as a "very personal" LP which will see Kane return to his hometown so the pair can be in the studio together to lay down the hip hop tracks. Chance - who also hails from Chicago, Illinois - told local TV news show Windy City Live: "Working under him, working with him on his albums is crazy, but having him tell me that he wants to produce my album and come to Chicago is like... This month, we're working in Chicago." Chance, 25, also revealed that work has already begun on some of the record, claiming that it is already "30 per cent complete". The 'I'm the One' hitmaker first announced his project with Kanye, 41, in June, also spilling he's working on a project with Childish Gambino - aka Donald Glover. Announcing the two LPs, he said: "I've been actively working on the project with Childish. I'm going to do a seven-track with Ye (Kanye)." On the work he's made with Glover, he added: "We've got six songs that are all fire, but I think the album is going to be more than 14 songs."

David Bowie: First Five Years documentary being made

David Bowies' early career is set to be the focus of a new documentary. The upcoming film 'The First Five Years' is being produced, and it will act as a prequel to 'David Bowie: Five Years' and 'David Bowie: The Last Five Years', which both aired on the BBC. Although no more details have been made available yet, David Bowie News reported that the documentary will air in 2019 as fans can look forward to another insight into the life of the 'Space Oddity' musician. The late rock icon tragically passed away in 2016 aged 69 following a secret battle with cancer. He was honored over the weekend at 'The Muppets Take The O2', as Dr. Teeth and the Electric Mayhem performed his track 'Suffragette City' as part of their run of musical numbers during the puppet troupe's first ever live show outside the US. Despite that tribute - and Bowie's enduring popularity and influence - it comes after Neve Campbell had "no idea" who David Bowie was when they appeared on 'Saturday Night Live' together. The 'Skyscraper' actress - who grew up in Ontario, Canada - was totally clueless about American pop culture until she got involved in the movie industry and admitted hosting the iconic comedy series at the height of her fame in 1997 was "wasted" on her as she was so "clueless". She said: "I just didn't know American pop culture at all. "And then suddenly I became an actor and suddenly these things were happening to me. "I wasn't that familiar with [SNL]. I was terrified! And then I found out that my musician was David Bowie, and my friend was like, 'David Bowie? Oh, my God!' And I was like, 'Who's David Bowie?' I had no idea. That experience was so wasted on me, 'cause I was clueless! Like, absolutely clueless!"



Lifestyle | Gossip



Cardi B snubs mega-money magazine deals for daughter

Cardi B has reportedly turned down mega-money deals to photograph her daughter. The 'Be Careful' hitmaker and her husband Offset welcomed their baby girl Kulture into the world earlier this month but, although they happily announced her arrival, the couple are adamant that they're going to keep their little one out of the public eye for as long as possible and have reportedly snubbed a number of magazine offers. A source told TMZ.com: "Multiple magazines, websites and photo agencies have reached out with offers for Kulture's first photo shoot. The offers have been in the \$100k neighborhood. They won't consider a deal until Kulture is six months old." Cardi just wants to focus on being a mom and bonding with her baby. So, Kulture's gonna be on the low, for now, but we also know she's already living the high life." Although she doesn't want to show the world Kulture's face, the 25-year-old rapper has been keeping fans updated with her transition into motherhood. Taking to Instagram, she shared: "Lmaaaaao too funny. Thank you everybody for the congrats we really appreciated.

Thank you to family and friends that's been hitting me up checking on me. It's been a little hard for me to reply back cause this mommy job requires full day, all day, all night attention. I love you guys. Thanking all my fans as well for the love and support. I love you guys!! I'll try to post more often. (sic)" Cardi chose the unusual moniker of Kulture Kiari Cephus for her daughter as she didn't want her to have a "basic" name. She said recently: "Kulture anything else woulda been basic Okrrrr (sic)" The mother-of-one recently shelled out \$7000 on luxury baby items for her little girl including a Fendi stroller for \$1,600 and a Versace changing bag at \$600. There was also a pricey Stokke Xplore stroller, which retails at over \$1000 and a customized recliner at \$3,000. Offset has three other children from previous relationships.

Beyonce and Jay-Z showed support for France

Beyonce and Jay-Z showed their support for France by screening the World Cup final before their Paris concert on Sunday. As part of their 'On the Run II Tour' the Carters performed at the Stade de France but they ensured that any soccer fans wouldn't miss seeing France play Croatia in the final by showing the match. The gesture made their fans very happy and Beyonce - who performed with Jay-Z with them both wearing France jerseys - shared a number of photos of fans celebrating Les Bleus' 4-2 victory over Croatia on her Instagram account. Fans took to Twitter to comment on the experience, with one user saying: "Watching France win the World Cup inside the Stade de France before Beyonce and Jay Z is something I will never ever forget." Another tweeted: "Beyonce and Jay-Z played in Paris today. Opened

the stadium early and played the World Cup final on massive screens. Then performed in French kits with 2 stars. Amazing." The couple, who are parents to Blue Ivy and twins Rumi and Sir Carter, recently filmed their music video for 'Ape S**t' at the Louvre in Paris, which showed the couple and a group of dancers among some of the most famous artwork in the world. The 'Hold Up' singer posted a series of photo's on Instagram of her dancers in front of artworks such as the Mona Lisa, and it has recently been announced that the French museum will now be providing a new Beyonce and Jay-Z themed tour. The tour will spotlight the 17 artworks shown in the music video, such as context for each artwork, as well as pinpointing exact locations of exhibits.



James got such a high from dancing on Mamma Mia!

Lily James has "never felt a high" like the one she experienced when she got to dance on the set of 'Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again'. The 'Baby Driver' actress plays the Young Donna in the musical sequel and for one scene she and her co-stars Alexa Davies and Jessica Keenan Wynn, who play Young Tanya and Young Rosie, get to perform a dance routine and she admits it was one her favorite ever moments she's committed to a film. Speaking at the 'Mama Mia! Here We Go Again' press conference held in London, Lily said: "I have to say, getting into rehearsals with Alex and Jess and dancing by their side. I have never felt a high like that in my life. "We became like this girl band and the power of that and the strength and the joy, was just amazing - dynamos forever! But all of us were supporting each other weren't we there was a really beautiful, beautiful energy on set." Co-star Amanda Seyfried, who is reprising her role as Sophie, also spoke about the good feeling on set, and the support the cast members all provided to one another. She said: "Yeah it was crazy coming back after 10 years and you guys had really started shooting. You set the tone for the entire shoot by doing the bulk of your stuff before we even came, before we descended upon Croatia. Then when we got there you guys were all warm and cozy and you made us feel like warm and cozy, because, you know, it's still daunting. It felt like we all fused at the perfect time and the perfect place". The 'Les Misérables' actress also revealed that she will be going to watch the sequel - which is soundtracked by the music of ABBA - at the cinema with her mother Ann, but she will be in disguise. Amanda, 32, said: "It's my mom's birthday on the 20th of July so - because she couldn't be here because she's a beautiful, wonderful grandmother to my daughter - I'm going to take her myself. Just the two of us, and I'm gonna wear a hat and a wig and take her to this one."



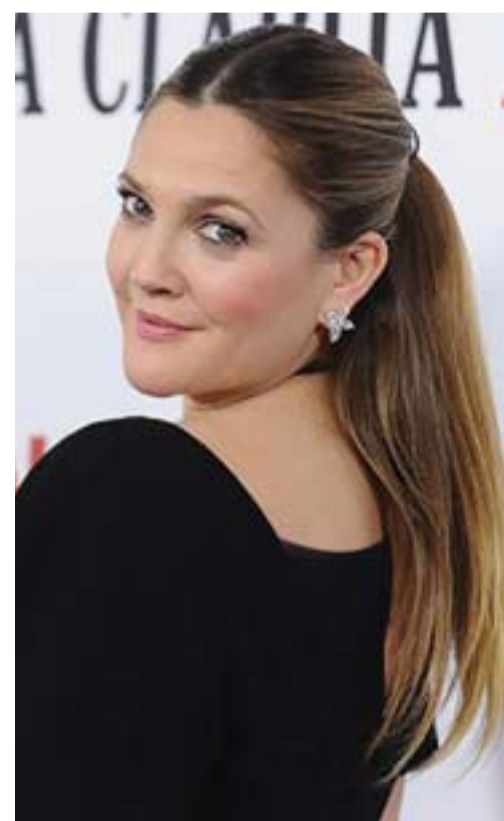
Iggy Azalea can't date vegan because she loves sausage

The 'Fancy' hit-maker has joked that she has a "crush" on a man who follows a plant-based diet but she thinks she should "give him up" and accept that they may never date because she can't stop munching on hotdogs. Taking to her Twitter account, she wrote: "Yes, iam eating tater tots and a hot dog for dinner.. at home, in my house. YES. iam 28 years old. "I seriously need to get it together. at least i have solace in the fact iam not alone." "Its true, iam a millennial and i dont want three children." "and my crush is vegan. clearly i need to give it up. him i mean. im not gonna live life without hotdogs.(sic)" But it looks like their relationship wouldn't work out anyway because the 28-year-old rapper has claimed she can't date anyone without her nail technician putting her off. She explained: "There is literally no one in this world i can like without my nail tech knowing someone they already made a mistake and at least one shady ass

story about them." "and if she doesnt know this week...i bet she knows something by the time i have a fill-in appointment. damn bitch. can i have anything nice." "My nail girl is the Olivia benson of my universe. "Anyway... im just glad none of these guys go to my girl for mani's cause she sure could ruin my life. (sic)" The blonde bombshell was rumored to be getting close to rapper Tyga - who previously dated Kylie Jenner - but she's claimed they could never date because she knows too much about him and his relationship history. She said recently: "I'm still single... We've been friends for so long. He's a nice guy-I just feel like people you know for so long you just know too much about him."

Barrymore come off dating sites

The 43-year-old actress split from her husband Will Kopelman, with whom she has children Olive, five, and Frankie, four, in August 2016 following four years of marriage and, although she initially tried to fill her time by swiping backwards and forwards on the dating apps, she's since decided she likes the single life and doesn't have time for love. Speaking to 'Entertainment Tonight', she said: "I got off [dating apps]. It was fun to try though. I've been working out there in the public since I was young so that myth of the blind date alluded me and I always wanted to do it so that was like a dating app for me. But then it's not blind on my side so it just, I don't know, doesn't work." And, even though she was desperate to get out there again after her split, Drew was shocked that



none of her friends attempted to set her up with anyone. She explained: "None of my friends ever set me up! I think I have the same old friends for so long, were all in such a rhythm, we don't even think like that." The '50 First Dates' star is now using her spare time to look after herself. She said: "Working mums forget to put a little bit [of time and effort] into ourselves but the tiniest little bit of concealer can make such a difference in your self-confidence. So even one minute or 30 seconds, can just sort of boost your self-esteem, and it's important to remember to take that time to do that." Drew is now on a mission to prove to her two daughters that she's a strong woman. She explained: "I think that it's good for little girls to see that being self-employed, self-generated, self-inspired is a really important thing. But to remember there is no I in team, you do nothing on your own and it really takes a village to accomplish anything."

Cooper loved working with ex Seyfried on mamma Mia sequel

Dominic Cooper insists it was "lovely" working with his ex-girlfriend Amanda Seyfried on 'Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again'. The 40-year-old actor and Amanda, 32, first met on the set of the 2008 musical movie 'Mamma Mia!' and started dating but their on/off romance ultimately came to an end until 2010. The pair were reunited for the new film playing married couple Sky and Sophie and Dominic insists it was wonderful to get to work with Amanda again, because they had remained friends despite their break-up. In an interview with UK TV show 'Lorraine', he said: "It was lovely. We stayed in contact. We've worked together so much in the past. With everyone in that cast, getting back together after that amount of time, the only way I could really think of what it must be like is like a school reunion." Amanda is now married to Thomas Sadoski, with whom she has a 16-month-old daughter, whilst Dominic split up from his long-term partner Ruth Negga in April. Dominic stars in the film - which is soundtracked by the music of ABBA - with an all-star cast which includes Lily James, Julie Walters, Meryl Streep and Pierce Brosnan among others. Screen and stage icon Cher is a newcomer to the franchise, playing Ruby Sheridan, Donna's mother and

Sophie's grandmother, and Dominic admits it was a "surreal" experience to get to work with her. He said: "It was just, I don't know, so many parts of it were so surreal. Seeing her approach the set ... she was quite frightened as well in terms of going in to act on a show where the cast all knew each other very well. "Everyone was very welcoming. We all got on tremendously well. There was a moment when all the lights went down on the set - everyone was there that day as it was towards the end where we all get back into our purple Lycra. She walked up onto this platform, she'd chosen her own costume - she'd brought with her own wonderful hot pants with sequins in them - and all the lights went out and this spotlight came on her and she started to sing 'Super Trouper' and it was one of the most mesmerizing moments I've ever been part of on a film set. You could feel the atmosphere vibrating. Seeing a woman doing what she does best so wonderfully, I think it was just genius she was part of it."



Lifestyle | Features



Janine Agarwal, right, stands next to a 122-foot-long model of Patagotitan mayorum, a giant herbivore dinosaur that lived in Argentina 100 million years ago, during the adult-only sleepover.



Monica Seebom, left, and Renee Brown, right, explore the Hall of Ornithischian Dinosaurs in their Tyrannosaurus rex onesies during the adult-only sleepover in New York.



Visitors at the American Museum of Natural History prepare to spend the night under the blue whale exhibit in the Milstein Hall of Ocean Life during the adult-only sleepover.— AP photos

TravelLab: Adults take over science museums when night falls

Sometimes, in the middle of the night, nocturnal creatures are allowed to roam the halls of New York's American Museum of Natural History, free from shouting and swarming children. They are adult humans, known to sometimes quietly contemplate science with a cocktail. "If you go to a natural history museum during the day, it's definitely a space for people who are under 4 feet tall. And that's clear in every way - from the soup they serve at the cafeteria to the height of the label," said Victoria Cain, a museum historian at Northeastern University in Boston. "It's kind of fun to reclaim that space for adults."

On a recent June evening, 175 grown-ups signed up for a slumber party at the New York museum, which has capitalized on the hype created by Ben Stiller's "Night at the Museum" franchise. The museum's first sleepovers were aimed at kids. Then in 2014, people 21 and up were invited to explore its darkened exhibit halls. The experiment was so popular that other science centers followed suit. Aquariums and museums in Atlanta, Milwaukee, Portland, Oregon, and elsewhere have hosted pajama parties for grown-ups. And they've become a hot ticket, according to Cain. "When I saw that we could do it and that there was also alcohol, we were like, 'Oh my gosh. Someone read our diary,'" said Janine Agarwal, 29, who attended the sleepover at the American Museum of Natural History to celebrate her husband's birthday.

The experience

During the night, guests have dinner in a room full of moon rocks and a 15-ton meteorite, and can wander around the 45 permanent exhibition halls. They can also

join guided tours, visit the planetarium, meet with curators and chat with museum scientists about their research - all while the city rests. "I don't think there's any way you'd be able to experience this place in such a special way as doing this kind of overnight," said Giancarlo Bruni, of Toronto, as he played with the control panel of a full-size submarine. "It's phenomenal."

While only adults are allowed, there is still childish fun to be had. Monica Seebom and her friend Renee Brown came in hooded T. rex onesies. "We're always looking for some adventure, and we thought bringing a dinosaur costume was appropriate," Seebom said. "We like to dress for the occasion."

Lights go out at 2 a.m. People can sleep in their own sleeping bags or the museum's cots, aligned right below the belly of a 94-foot-long blue whale that hangs from the ceiling of the Hall of Ocean Life. Those who feel restless can get cookies and coffee at the Hall of Planet Earth. Michael Nedell, 53, recalled being afraid of the whale as a child. "When I was younger, that blue whale freaked me out. I'd been scared of (it) until I grew into a teenager," he said. "Now I get to sleep under her."

The science behind it

Silence greets those who venture into remote exhibits. That stillness makes a difference for visitors hoping to learn something, said biologist John Karavias. "During the day, you're fighting crowds. You feel like you're being rushed and all you're doing is getting an 'Ooh!' and an 'Ah!' but you're not learning," said Karavias, who studies the effects of climate change on marine life. "When you go to these at night, all the background noise is quieted down and you're



Giancarlo and Cheryl Bruni look at a fish tank in the Unseen Oceans exhibit.



Marine biologist John Karavias, right, shows visitors the anatomy of a sea star at the American Museum of Natural History.

able to digest the science behind everything that you're looking at." He was recently invited to show off acrylic bowls filled with weird-looking sea stars and sea urchins. Bright red spikes covered the body of one big star. Another one had arms so thin that they looked like noodles.

Some visitors were awed; others recoiled when they touched the marine creatures. Starfish like these depend on a healthy ocean to survive, Karavias explained. But carbon dioxide from the burning of coal and natural gas is making the ocean more acidic. That means sea urchins, mussels, corals and other organisms have a hard time creating their shells or skeletons, which affects their development.

A few floors above, tour guide Arlene Katz taught visitors about animals that glow. She approached a tank with an eel snuggled in the rocks. Its camouflaged body was

hard to pick out from the sandy bottom. But an ultraviolet film made it glow greenish-blue. It's not making its own light, like a firefly does. Instead, it absorbs light and releases it as a different color that's invisible to predators but obvious to other eels. "It's a hidden language," she explained. "Sometimes you gotta hide and sometimes you gotta show off. They're doing it simultaneously. It's a brilliant solution." Katz said the sleepover is an opportunity for guests to be surprised by nature. "We want people to have so much fun that they almost forget they're learning," she said. "But this is not an amusement park. We are sneaking in a lot of information." — AP

In Mozambique, classes come alive in local languages

About 50 children sit on a bare classroom floor in front of their teacher in what could be any lesson in Mozambique, except that they are not learning in Portuguese, the country's official language. The class is being taught in Changana, a local language spoken in southern Mozambique and in the capital Maputo that is closely related to Tsonga spoken across southern Africa. Wearing backpacks and surrounded by a pile of books, the children aged six and seven are gripped by the teacher's every word—a concentration level almost impossible to achieve in Portuguese.

told AFP that only 10 percent of children start school knowing Portuguese but now around 1,300 primary schools out of 13,000 offer some bilingual teaching.

'They express themselves'

In Arguenha's class, only one child spoke Portuguese at the start of the year. But speaking in Changana, communication between teacher and pupils is fast and lively, with children throwing their hands up high to answer questions. "In Changana the students are more creative, they understand better and they are not shy. They speak freely, they

taught exclusively in Portuguese. They later switch to the official language at about the age of 10, after children have had time to learn it.

"We could see that these kids got better results than the kids who had monolingual, Portuguese teaching," Gina Guibanda, the government's director of primary education, told AFP. "When the teacher in the class spoke a language that the kids had never heard spoken, for the kid that was horrible." The UN education agency UNESCO has long encouraged mother tongue instruction in primary education, with research showing that it is the optimal language for literacy and learning. In the developing world, children are more likely to enroll and succeed in school. In particular, girls and rural children with less exposure to a dominant language stay in school longer and repeat grades less often if they learn in their native language.

Specialist training needed

Guibanda said training is the major problem holding local-language teaching back. Many rural schools have no trained teachers to give lessons in local languages or any translated books. Government policy is for teachers to have three years of training, but that has been cut down to one year due to budget shortages and the nationwide shortage of all teachers. "It is not enough. Teachers graduate while still having a number of problems," said Francisca Samboca, education officer at Associacao Progresso. "In reality, in all the rural areas these schools can only be found in the district capitals."

For Arguenha, the new approach was made easier because ADPP and FFK provided specialist training and materials in both Changana and Ronga, the other local language spoken around Maputo. ADPP and FFK now work with 101 schools in four districts in Maputo province, with more than 5,000 children taking part in the program and more than 67,000 books have been distributed. But the difficulties for teachers switching between languages cannot be estimated. "In the beginning it was a challenge," said Arguenha. "I really needed to concentrate when using the material and I needed to use vocabulary I didn't normally use." — AFP

express themselves," Arguenha said. "When it is in Portuguese they are very shy, they are scared to speak and hide themselves." The NGO Associacao Progresso, which works to improve literacy in the country, has first-hand experience of how much children struggle when they have to learn in a language they do not speak fluently. "What often happens is that there is no communication because the teacher speaks Portuguese, but the student doesn't understand," said Alcina Siteo, education officer at Associacao Progresso.

"If you don't understand what is being taught, it is difficult to learn anything." The Mozambican government has acknowledged the problem and in 2017 introduced reforms aimed at having classes taught in local languages, although some parents often want their children to be



"Kids are breastfed by mums speaking Changana and grow up until the age of five speaking Changana." Helena Joaquim Arguenha, their teacher at Mitilene primary school in the rural district of Manhica, about 80 kilometers (50 miles) from Maputo, told AFP. "It is very important that the children learn in their native language because it opens up the kid to learn more." Arguenha has taught at the government school for six years, but only last year started teaching in Changana as part of a Food for Knowledge (FFK) project funded by US aid and the local action group ADPP Mozambique.

Almost all teaching in Mozambique is in Portuguese—a legacy of the country's colonial era before independence in 1975 — but the majority of Mozambicans speak one of more than 40 local languages. The ministry of education



Tissot T-Race Cycling
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A watch for all

Cycling is a sport of endurance and speed that touches many people from those looking for a healthy and environmentally friendly way to travel, to enthusiasts all the way to professionals. It is one of the reasons Tissot has been involved in the world of cycling for over 50 years. This watch is inspired by the discipline and dedicated to one of its most popular races, the Tour de France, for which Tissot is the Official Timekeeper. It has an unmistakably athletic design and bears the yellow and black colours of the race, with its official logo engraved on the caseback.

All the way

The Tissot T-Race Cycling Tour de France Special Edition has a fitting aerodynamic and ergonomic design. The large hands make time precise and easy to read. It has a sporty dial with three counters on a black tar effect background, illustrating the roads. Details of the bicycles, such as the fork in the frame, are reflected in the bracelet and lugs, while the outside of the dial and the tachymeter bezel represent the wheel, that is set on a carbon ring. Features go all the way to brake levers integrated in the pushers and the cassette on the caseback and on the crown. The back of the bracelet reminds us of the chain. It's time to grab your bike, your watch and be on your way!

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Classifieds

Tuesday, July 17, 2018

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

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

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot with light to moderate freshening at times over coastal areas north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 16/07/2018 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	48 °C	36 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	48 °C	36 °C		
ABDALY	47 °C	33 °C		
BUBYAN	--- °C	--- °C		
JAHRA	48 °C	36 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	46 °C	31 °C		
SALMIYAH	41 °C	35 °C		
AHMADI	41 °C	36 °C		
NUWAISIB	44 °C	34 °C		
WAFRA	47 °C	31 °C		
SALMY	45 °C	33 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Tuesday	07/17	Very hot + raising dust over open areas	47 °C	35 °C	NW	20 - 45 km/h
Wednesday	07/18	Very hot + raising dust over open areas	47 °C	34 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h
Thursday	07/19	Very hot	48 °C	33 °C	NW	12 - 40 km/h
Friday	07/20	Very hot + raising dust	48 °C	35 °C	NW	20 - 50 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:26
Sunrise	04:59
Zuhr	11:54
Asr	15:29
Sunset	18:49
Isba	20:19

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	48 °C
MIN. Temp.	30 °C
MAX. RH	18 %
MIN. RH	07 %
MAX. Wind	NW 50 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
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Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
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Emirates	22921555
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Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
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PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1

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DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Flight Schedule

Arrival Flights on Tuesday 17/7/2018				Departure Flights on Tuesday 17/7/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15	JZR	144	Doha	13:55
WAN	886	Sarajevo	00:20	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
KAC	102	London	00:50	JZR	124	Bahrain	14:00
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	PFA	572	KTM	14:05
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00	JZR	562	Sohag	14:10
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
RJA	642	Amman	01:25	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	JZR	552	Alexandria	14:20
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	FEG	342	Sohag	14:50
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	ETD	9890	SGN	15:00
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00	KNE	234	Riyadh	15:00
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
JZR	267	Beirut	02:10	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
WAN	416D	Beirut	02:40	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:55
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	KNE	530	Jeddah	16:00
THY	768	Istanbul	02:40	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:00
JZR	553D	Alexandria	02:50	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
KAC	607	Kochi	02:55	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
JZR	418	Manila	03:05	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KAC	619	Doha	16:15
MSR	606	Luxor	03:05	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:40
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	FDB	052	Dubai	17:20
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:25	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	QTR	8512	Doha	17:45
LMU	5510	Cairo	04:00	FEG	242	Alexandria	17:45
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	KAC	381	Delhi	17:45
KAC	152	Istanbul	04:20	NIA	362	Alexandria	17:50
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30	KAC	331	Trivandrum	17:55
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
THY	069	Dubai	05:05	KAC	283	Dhaka	18:00
THY	1414	TZK	05:05	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:10
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:25
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15	JZR	184	Dubai	18:20
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:20	JZR	608	Hyderabad	18:25
JZR	603	Mumbai	05:25	JZR	240	Amman	18:30
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	JZR	512	Sharm el-Sheikh	18:30
JZR	561	Sohag	05:55	JZR	538	Cairo	18:35
KAC	362	Colombo	06:00	JZR	650	Lahore	18:35
RUN	6376	Istanbul	06:10	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
BAW	157	London	06:10	WAN	135	Doha	19:25
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:25	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:25	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
KAC	204	Lahore	06:30	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
KAC	678	Dubai	06:45	RJA	641	Amman	20:00
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
WAN	342	Sohag	06:55	RBG	556	Alexandria	20:20
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	NIA	0162	Cairo	20:30
JZR	605	Ahmedabad	07:05	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
JZR	143	Doha	07:20	JZR	602	Mumbai	20:30
JZR	529	Asyut	07:30	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
KAC	122	AGP	07:35	JAI	215	Delhi	20:35
KAC	358	Kochi	07:40	KAC	153	Istanbul	20:45
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	DLH	624	Dammam	20:50
KAC	384	Delhi	08:05	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:35
WAN	312	Asyut	09:05	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
IRA	675	Lar	09:40	KAC	205	Islamabad	21:55
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:05
SYR	341	Damascus	10:00	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:10
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	JZR	1540	Cairo	22:10
SAW	703	Damascus	10:30	KAC	543	Cairo	22:15
JZR	531	Asyut	10:40	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	THY	1403	AYT	22:25
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	383	Delhi	22:25
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
JZR	541	Cairo	11:05	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
WAN	134	Doha	11:10	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:50
JZR	165	Dubai	11:45	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:00
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:20	KAC	795	Madinah	23:00
MSC	411	Asyut	12:30	KAC	411	Bangkok	23:15
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
THY	766	Istanbul	12:45	PIA	240	Sialkot	23:35
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50	WAN	337	Alexandria	23:40
JZR	239	Amman	13:00	JZR	560	Sohag	23:45
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00				
ETD	995	Abu Dhabi/Bahrain	13:00				
JZR	1543	Cairo	13:05				
PFA	571	KTM	13:05				



ISTANBUL: People gather on 15 July Martyrs Bridge to attend the July 15 coup's second anniversary on Sunday. — AFP

Mob butchers hundreds of crocs in revenge attack

SORONG, Indonesia: A club-and-machete wielding mob in Indonesia butchered nearly 300 crocodiles in an act of revenge after a local man was killed by one of the reptiles, authorities said yesterday. Images from the scene showed dozens of dead crocodiles lying on top of each other and covered in blood after the attack at a breeding farm in Papua province. The incident happened Saturday following the funeral of the 48-year-old man who was killed after he entered an enclosure while looking for grass to feed his livestock, police and conservation officials said.

"One of the crocodile farm employees... heard someone screaming for help and ran to the scene where they saw a person being mauled by a crocodile," said Basar Manullang, head of Indonesia's Natural Resources Conservation Agency in West Papua. The man's family and "hundreds" of other locals, angry over the farm's location near a residential area, marched to the police

station where they were told the breeder would pay compensation, he added.

But the mob was not satisfied and headed to the crocodile farm armed with clubs, knives, machetes and shovels which they used to slaughter some 292 crocs, ranging from palm-sized babies to two-metre adults, authorities said. Outnumbered police and conservation officials said they were unable to stop the grisly attack. Criminal charges may be laid, they said. "For now we are still questioning the witnesses," said district police chief Dewa Made Sidan Sutrahna.

The bloody incident highlighted the dangers of trespassing into a breeding farm and also raised concerns about its safety. "They have to make sure that the farm has good barriers and they need to step up security with CCTV and security signs to warn people" of the dangers, said Dwi Nugroho Adhiasto, program manager at the World Conservation Society's Indonesia office.

The Southeast Asian archipelago is home to a vast array of wildlife, including several species of crocodile that regularly attack and kill humans. In March authorities in Borneo shot and killed a six-metre long crocodile after it ate a local palm plantation worker. Two years ago, a Russian tourist was killed by a crocodile in the Raja Ampat islands, a popular diving site in Indonesia's east. — AFP



This photo on July 14, 2018 shows two men standing among dead crocodiles slaughtered by a mob in Sorong in Indonesia's Papua province. — AFP

CRISPR gene editing can cause risky collateral DNA damage

LONDON: Scientists studying the effects of the potentially game-changing gene editing tool CRISPR/Cas9 have found it can cause unexpected genetic damage which could lead to dangerous changes in some cells. The findings, published in the journal *Nature Biotechnology* yesterday, have safety implications for gene therapies that are being developed using CRISPR/Cas9 - a type of molecular scissor technology that can be used to edit DNA. They also add to findings published last month which suggested the CRISPR gene editing tool may inadvertently increase cancer risk in some cells.

"We found that changes in the DNA have been seriously underestimated before now," said Allan Bradley, a professor at Britain's Wellcome Sanger Institute who co-led the research published yesterday. Shares of gene-editing companies CRISPR Therapeutics AG,

Editas Medicine Inc, Sangamo Therapeutics and Intellia Therapeutics Inc fell sharply yesterday. "Intellia does not believe that these findings significantly impact the path forward for CRISPR-based therapeutics," it said in a statement. Editas said the company was "not specifically concerned" about the latest findings. CRISPR and Sangamo did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

CRISPR/Cas9, one of the newest genome editing tools, can alter sections of DNA in cells by cutting at specific points and introducing changes at that location and is seen by many as a promising way to create treatments for diseases such as HIV or cancer. Experts say treatments like these could inactivate a disease-causing gene, or correct a genetic mutation, but much more research is still needed to ensure techniques are safe.

Bradley's team carried out a full systematic study in both mouse and human cells and discovered that CRISPR/Cas9 frequently caused extensive mutations including large genetic rearrangements such as DNA deletions and insertions. These could lead to important genes being switched on or off - as intended by the therapies - but could also have major unexpected implications, the scientists said. They warned that some of the changes seen in this study were too far away from the target site to be picked up with standard analysis and testing methods. — Reuters

Trump, Putin tout reset in...

Continued from Page 1

world leaders for the successful staging of the World Cup in Russia, said: "The time has come to talk in a substantive way about our relations and problem areas of the world." Trump added: "Frankly, we have not been getting along for the last number of years. And I really think the world wants to see us get along. We are the two great nuclear powers."

Trump began the day by firing a Twitter broadside at his domestic opponents, blaming the diplomatic chill on the investigation into alleged Russian election meddling. "Our relationship with Russia has NEVER been worse thanks to many years of US foolishness and stupidity and now, the Rigged Witch Hunt!" Trump tweeted. Russia's foreign ministry tweeted in response: "We agree." Trump's US opponents tried, in turn, to gain traction for the sarcastic hashtag lampooning his reluctance to criticise the Kremlin: #BAF (Blame America First).

After a stormy NATO summit in Brussels last week, Trump was accused by critics of prioritizing his ties to Putin over the transatlantic alliance. But over breakfast with Finland's President Sauli Niinisto, he insisted NATO "has never been stronger" and "never been

more together" thanks to his insistence on all allies paying their fair share.

In a weekend interview with CBS News, Trump admitted that Russia remains a foe, but he put Moscow on a par with China and the European Union as economic and diplomatic rivals. Yet after the bad-tempered NATO summit and a contentious trip by Trump to Britain, anxious European leaders will have been relieved if not much came out of the Helsinki meeting. Those leaders are already fuming over Trump's imposition of trade tariffs on various countries, including Russia.

Turning the tables, European Union President Donald Tusk said Trump was guilty of "spreading fake news" with his remark about foes, and warned that the trade tensions could spiral into violent "conflict and chaos". "Europe and China, America and Russia, today in Beijing and in Helsinki, are jointly responsible for improving the world order, not for destroying it," he tweeted. "I hope this message reaches Helsinki."

Protesters were on the streets of Helsinki to denounce the policies of both Trump and Putin. Greenpeace draped a giant banner down a church tower urging: "Warm our hearts not our planet." Trump was also under pressure from Britain to press Putin over the nerve agent poisoning of four people in southern England. One of the victims, Dawn Sturgess, has died and her 19-year-old son Ewan Hope told the Sunday Mirror newspaper: "We need to get justice for my mum." But at the news conference, Trump made no mention of the Novichok incident. — AFP

Muslims in China fear eradication...

Continued from Page 1

minor infractions such as owning a Holy Quran or even growing a beard. Now, Hui Muslims fear similar surveillance and repression. "The winds have shifted" in the past year, explained a senior imam who requested anonymity, adding: "Frankly, I'm very afraid they're going to implement the Xinjiang model here."

Local authorities have severely curtailed the number of students over 16 officially allowed to study in each mosque and limited certification processes for new imams. They have also instructed mosques to display national flags and stop sounding the call to prayer to reduce "noise pollution" - with loudspeakers removed entirely from all 355 mosques in a neighboring county. "They want to secularize Muslims, to cut off Islam at the roots," the imam said, shaking with barely restrained emotion. "These days, children are not allowed to believe in religion: only in Communism and the party."

More than 1,000 boys used to attend his mid-sized mosque to study Quranic basics during summer and winter school holidays but now they are banned from even entering the premises. His classrooms are still full of huge Arabic books from Saudi Arabia, browned with age and bound in heavy leather. But only 20 officially registered pupils over the age of 16 are now allowed to use them. Parents were told the ban on extracurricular Quranic study was for their children's own good, so they could rest and focus on secular coursework.

But most are utterly panicked. "We're scared, very scared. If it goes on like this, after a generation or two, our traditions will be gone," said Ma Lan, a 45-year-old caretaker, tears dripping quietly into her uneaten bowl of beef noodle soup. Inspectors checked her local mosque every few days during the last school holiday to ensure none of the 70 or so village boys were present. Their imam initially tried holding lessons in secret before sunrise but soon gave up, fearing repercussions. Instead of studying five hours a day at the mosque, her 10-year-old son stayed home watching television. He dreams of being an imam, but his schoolteachers have encouraged him to make money and become a Communist cadre, she said.

The Hui number nearly 10 million, half of the country's Muslim population, according to 2012 government statistics. In Linxia, they have historically been well integrated with the ethnic Han majority, able to openly express their devotion and center their lives around

their faith. Women in headscarves dish out boiled lamb in mirror-panelled halal eateries while streams of white-hatted men meander into mosques for afternoon prayers, passing shops hawking rugs, incense and "eight treasure tea," a local specialty including dates and dried chrysanthemum buds.

But in January, local officials signed a decree - obtained by AFP - pledging to ensure that no individual or organization would "support, permit, organize or guide minors towards entering mosques for Quranic study or religious activities", or push them towards religious beliefs. Imams there were all asked to comply in writing, and just one refused, earning fury from officials and embarrassment from colleagues, who have since shunned him.

"I cannot act contrary to my beliefs. Islam requires education from cradle to grave. As soon as children are able to speak we should begin to teach them our truths," he explained to AFP. "It feels like we are slowly moving back towards the repression of the Cultural Revolution," a nationwide purge from 1966 until 1976 when local mosques were dismantled or turned into donkey sheds, he said.

Other imams complained authorities were issuing fewer certificates required to practice or teach and now only to graduates of state-sanctioned institutions. "For now, there are enough of us, but I fear for the future. Even if there are still students, there won't be anyone of quality to teach them," said one imam. Local authorities failed to answer repeated calls from AFP seeking comment but Linxia's youth ban comes as China rolls out its newly revised Religious Affairs Regulations.

The rules have intensified punishments for unsanctioned religious activities across all faiths and regions. Beijing is targeting minors "as a way to ensure that faith traditions die out while also maintaining the government's control over ideological affairs," charged William Nee, China researcher at Amnesty International. Another imam said the tense situation in Xinjiang was at the root of changes in Linxia. The government believes that "religious piety fosters fanaticism, which spawns extremism, which leads to terrorist acts - so they want to secularize us," he explained.

But many Hui are quick to distinguish themselves from Uighurs. "They believe in Islam too, but they're violent and bloodthirsty. We're nothing like that," said Muslim hairdresser Ma Jiancai, 40, drawing on common stereotypes. Sitting under the elegant eaves of a Sufi shrine complex, a young scholar from Xinjiang explained that his family had sent him alone aged five to Linxia to study the Holy Quran with a freedom not possible in his hometown. "Things are very different here," he said with knitted brows. "I hope to stay." — AFP

Sports

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Minnesota Twins grab a wild victory over Tampa Bay Rays

Pirates edge Brewers 7-6; Indians beat Yankees

MINNESOTA: Brian Dozier hit a walk-off grand slam with one out in the bottom of the 10th inning to give the Minnesota Twins a wild 11-7 victory over the Tampa Bay Rays Sunday afternoon at Target Field in Minneapolis. It was the 16th homer of the season and fourth career grand slam for Dozier who drove a 1-1 changeup from Matt Andriese into the left field stands to give the Twins their ninth victory in 11 games. Dozier finished with two hits, five RBIs and two runs scored.

Eddie Rosario had three hits, two RBIs and scored twice, Robbie Grossman had two hits and Jorge Polanco also scored two runs for Minnesota, which bounced back from a 19-6 thrashing by the Rays on Saturday afternoon. Jake Cave opened the 10th inning with a leadoff double off Andriese (2-4), the ninth pitcher used by the Rays. After Mitch Garver sacrificed Cave to third, Joe Mauer and Rosario were both intentionally walked setting the stage for Dozier's heroics.

Pirates 7, Brewers 6 (10 innings)

Josh Bell hit a walk-off two-run double in the 10th inning as Pittsburgh won its sixth straight game, 7-6 over visiting Milwaukee, to sweep a five-game series. Facing Brewers reliever Dan Jennings (3-3), Bell drove the ball to the wall in center as rain began to pour, bringing home Gregory Polanco and Colin Moran, who had each singled. The Brewers, who have lost six in a row and eight of 10, had taken a 6-5 lead in the top of the 10th against Tanner Anderson (1-0) on an RBI single by Brett Phillips, who hit a tiebreaking three-run triple in the eighth inning.

Cardinals 6, Reds 4

Matt Carpenter and Dexter Fowler homered, and Tommy Pham had two hits and two RBIs as St. Louis beat visiting Cincinnati in interim manager Mike Shildt's debut. Right-hander John Gant (3-3) pitched four innings of hitless relief as the Cardinals broke a three-game losing streak in their first game under Shildt, who was promoted from bench coach when Mike Matheny was fired after 6 1/2 seasons following Saturday's loss to the Reds. Shildt joined the major league staff in 2016 after winning three minor league titles in eight seasons in the Cardinals' minor league system. Yadier Molina also had an RBI single for the Cardinals (48-46), who had lost six straight home games and were in danger of falling to .500 for the first time since April 13, when they were 7-7.

Red Sox 5, Blue Jays 2

Xander Bogaerts provided an encore to Saturday's walk-off grand slam with a solo home run and two RBIs to help Boston beat visiting Toronto in the finale of a four-game series. Bogaerts' 10th-inning slam gave the Red Sox a 6-2 win Saturday and secured at least a series split. Boston won Thursday's opener 6-4, but lost to Toronto 13-7 Friday to snap its major league-best 10-game win streak. Brock Holt drove in two runs and Jackie Bradley Jr. added an RBI for the Red Sox, who enter the All-Star break with an MLB-best 68-30 record. Boston won 12 of its last 13 and 19 of 23 games before the break. The Red Sox lead the AL East by 4 1/2 games over the New York Yankees.

Rockies 4, Mariners 3

Trevor Story led off the bottom of the ninth with a

game-winning homer, lifting surging Colorado over visiting Seattle. Story capped a rainy afternoon when he drove a 2-2 cutter from Nick Vincent (3-2) 434 feet into the right-center field seats, touching off the celebratory fireworks. It was the 20th homer of the season for the All-Star shortstop and his first career game-ending homer. Story's homer helped the Rockies head into the break with a flourish, lifting Colorado to its 10th win in 12 games and 13th win in 16 games. The Mariners lost for the eighth time in 11 games.

Indians 5, Yankees 2

Michael Brantley led off the bottom of the eighth inning with a tiebreaking home run as Cleveland beat visiting New York. Brantley helped the Indians get a split of the four-game series with his 12th homer of the season. He gave Cleveland its first lead of the game by lifting a 94.5 mph fastball from Chad Green (5-2) high enough to clear the right-center field fence. The ball traveled an estimated 387 feet and Brantley needed every inch as right fielder Giancarlo Stanton scaled the fence in an ill-fated attempt to make the catch. Masahiro Tanaka gave up two runs on six hits in 6 1/3 innings in his second start since returning from two strained hamstrings.

Cubs 7, Padres 4

The Cubs jumped to a 5-0 lead after two innings and Jon Lester picked up his 12th win of the season as Chicago completed a three-game sweep of San Diego. Lester (12-2) allowed three runs on six hits and three walks with seven strikeouts in 5 1/3 innings. With the win, the Cubs head into the All-Star break with a 2 1/2-game lead in the National League Central. All five of the Cubs' runs in the first two innings were scored against Padres rookie left-hander Eric Lauer, who fell to 5-6. He allowed five runs on five hits and one walk and departed after the second.

Athletics 6, Giants 2

Visiting Oakland strung together four consecutive singles in a four-run fourth inning to hand San Francisco its first home series loss since April in the battle of interleague rivals. Sean Manaea (9-6) outdueled Andrew Suarez (3-6) in a matchup of left-handers, helping the A's complete a 4-3, 6-2 weekend sweep after the Giants had prevailed 7-1 Friday night in the series opener. Piscotty had two hits, scored twice and drove in two runs for the A's. The Giants had won (10) or tied (two) their last 12 home series dating back to April 11 against Arizona. The teams will meet in a three-game rematch immediately following the All-Star break in Oakland.

Tigers 6, Astros 3

John Hicks slugged a two-run homer to ignite a surprising power surge and Detroit averted a series sweep with a win at Houston. Hicks' 400-foot blast off Astros right-hander Justin Verlander (9-5) keyed a three-run second inning and set the tone for Detroit, which ended a seven-game losing skid. The Tigers slugged four home runs, all against Verlander, after entering the game last in the majors in dingers with 76. Facing his former team for the first time since a waiver deadline trade shipped him to Houston last August, Verlander became just the fifth pitcher in history to allow at least four home runs in a start where he posted 12-plus strikeouts. He allowed a season-high six runs (five



MINNEAPOLIS: Daniel Robertson #28 of the Tampa Bay Rays steals second base against Brian Dozier #2 of the Minnesota Twins during the ninth inning of the game at Target Field in Minneapolis, Minnesota. — AFP

earned) on six hits without walking a batter.

Dodgers 5, Angels 3

Kiké Hernandez's seventh-inning home run snapped a 3-3 tie and helped lead the hosts over the Angels at Dodger Stadium. Andrew Toles' two-out RBI single in the eighth inning provided an insurance run, helping the Dodgers take two of three in the series and win their fourth of five games heading into the All-Star break. Dodgers starter Clayton Kershaw gave up a three-run home run to Jeffrey Marte, but otherwise held the Angels scoreless in 6 2/3 innings. Kenta Maeda (7-5) relieved Kershaw in the seventh and got the final out of the inning, a brief appearance but enough to earn the victory. Kenley Jansen pitched a 1-2-3 ninth for his 27th save.

Braves 5, Diamondbacks 1

Right-hander Julio Teheran took a shutout into the seventh inning as Atlanta salvaged one win in its three-game home series against Arizona. Dansby Swanson and Freddie Freeman each hit RBI doubles to a four-run third inning against Diamondbacks left-hander Patrick Corbin (6-4), giving Teheran and three relievers all the offensive support they would need. Teheran (7-6), who had won just twice in nine starts after opening the season 4-1, limited the Diamondbacks to four hits in 6 1/3 innings. He walked three and struck out six.

Nationals 6, Mets 1

Daniel Murphy continued to haunt his former team when he laced a two-run pinch-hit single to spark a five-run seventh inning that lifted Washington to a win at New York. The Nationals opened and closed the four-game series with wins to reach the All-Star Break at .500. The Mets have lost 34 of their last 48 during their worst first half of a full season since 1993, when they were 27-60 at the All-Star break. The teams traded run-scoring fielder's choice groundouts in the second inning before matching zeroes until the Nationals

unloaded against three Mets relievers in the seventh.

Marlins 10, Phillies 5

Brian Anderson hit a three-run homer as part of an eight-run fifth inning, and last-place Miami defeated visiting Philadelphia. Anderson went 3-for-5 and has 109 hits, the most by a major league rookie before the All-Star break since two players did it in 2003. In their last game before the All-Star break, the Marlins completed a week in which they took two out of three games from a pair of first-place teams, the Milwaukee Brewers and then the Phillies. Marlins reliever Eliaser Hernandez (2-5) earned the win, pitching one scoreless inning.

Orioles 6, Rangers 5

Adam Jones lined a three-run double as part of a five-run third inning as Baltimore scored a come-from-behind victory over visiting Texas. The Orioles used a bullpen format, after likely starting pitcher Jimmy Yacabonis became ill in recent days. So, manager Buck Showalter began with Miguel Castro, who struggled right from the start. He walked the first three batters and Ronald Guzman hit a grand slam over the wall in right for a quick 4-0 lead. But the Orioles battled back, getting a solo homer from Manny Machado in the bottom of the first and doubles from Caleb Joseph and Jones in the third to take a 5-4 lead. Zach Britton came on and closed the game in the ninth for his fourth save.

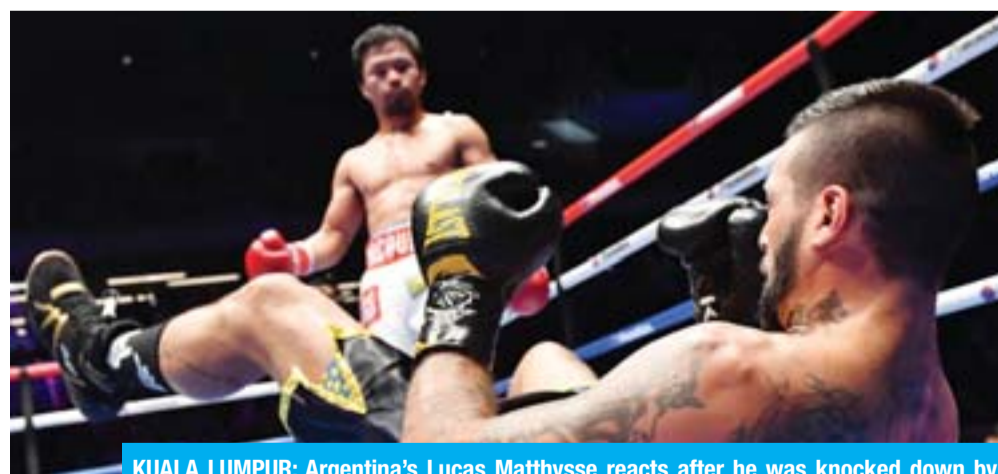
White Sox 10, Royals 1

Lucas Giolito pitched 6 1/3 scoreless innings as Chicago walloped visiting Kansas City, which lost for the 13th time in 15 games. Daniel Palka and Yoan Moncada each had three hits and a home run for the White Sox, who took two of three games in the weekend series. Giolito (6-8), a right-hander, allowed two hits, walked three and struck out six as he improved to 3-0 in his career against the Royals. It was his first scoreless start of the season and his best at home, as he entered the game at 2-4 with an 8.65 ERA at Guaranteed Rate Field.— Reuters

Pacquiao wants second crack at Mayweather

KUALA LUMPUR: Manny Pacquiao has called on Floyd Mayweather to come out of retirement for a rematch, saying "let's do a second one" after powering to his first KO win in nine years. The fighting Philippines senator known as "Pac-Man" took on the dangerous Argentine WBA welterweight champion Lucas Matthyse in Kuala Lumpur on Sunday knowing a defeat could have lowered the curtain on one of the greatest careers in boxing history. Instead he opened a glorious new act in a 23-year story that has seen him become the only man to move up through eight weight divisions and win world titles in all of them.

Despite racing towards his 40th birthday, Pacquiao looks like he is back to being the devastatingly quick and ruthless power-puncher who earned the sobriquet of world's "best pound-for-pound fighter" between 2000 and 2010. In 2015 Pacquiao, with a win-loss-draw record of 60-7-2, lost a unanimous points decision to the unbeaten Mayweather (50-0) in one of the richest fights in boxing history, but then needed surgery on a damaged shoulder that he claimed had restricted his movement and punching power.



KUALA LUMPUR: Argentina's Lucas Matthyse reacts after he was knocked down by Philippines' Manny Pacquiao during their world welterweight boxing championship bout at Axiata Arena in Kuala Lumpur. — AFP

After rolling back the years to pummel Matthyse into seventh-round submission, the Filipino legend is already considering the options for his next fight, which could take place as early as November or December. "Mayweather? If he decides to go back to boxing then that is the time we are going to call the shots," an effervescent Pacquiao told reporters at the Axiata Arena in Kuala Lumpur after his stunning win. "I have the belt, so it's up to him. If he wants to come back in boxing let's do a second one," he grinned.

Pacquiao also highlighted British former light welterweight world champion Amir Khan as a

potential opponent. "My next fight, I want to defend my belt," Pacquiao said. He also said he would carry on fighting past his 40th birthday in December, despite the demands of juggling life in the ring with a political career outside it. "If boxing is not my passion, I would not fight again," Pacquiao said. "It's like I'm addicted to boxing and I really love to fight and bring honor to my country."

Three-weight world champion Terence Crawford is another possible money-spinning bout, as is a rematch with Jeff Horn, who wrestled the WBO belt from Pacquiao in an ugly contest in Brisbane a year ago. — AFP

Joshua to defend titles against Povetkin

LONDON: Britain's Anthony Joshua will defend his World Boxing Association, World Boxing Organization and International Boxing Federation heavy-weight titles against Russia's Alexander Povetkin at London's Wembley Stadium on September 22, promoter Eddie Hearn announced Monday. Povetkin is the mandatory challenger for Joshua's WBA title and a successful bout against the Russian would give the London 2012 Olympic champion greater freedom to choose his next opponent. Joshua had been hoping to fight fellow unbeaten heavyweight champion Deontay Wilder, who holds the World Boxing Council belt, but he could yet face the American in April 2019.

"I can't wait to get back in the ring. The end of March feels a long time ago

now," said Joshua, who beat Joseph Parker of New Zealand by unanimous points decision in Cardiff on March 31. "Povetkin is a serious challenge that I will prepare meticulously for. He has serious pedigree and only a fool would underestimate what he brings to the table. "Training hasn't stopped for me, but the next 10 weeks ahead will be intense both mentally and physically. "I will push myself to breaking point to make sure I am in peak condition for another huge night for British boxing at Wembley Stadium on September 22nd." Joshua, 28, won his first world title in 2016 and has made five defenses, taking his record to 21-0 with 20 knockouts.

Wilder, 32, improved to 40-0 with 39 knockouts when he knocked out previously unbeaten Cuban Luis Ortiz in the tenth round in Brooklyn, New York, on March 3. Meanwhile Povetkin, 38, knocked out David Price on the undercard of Joshua's victory over Parker. He previously fought for the titles Joshua now holds in a 2013 defeat by Wladimir Klitschko. "The battle for the world title has always been my goal," Povetkin said. "I fought for the moment to face the strongest in the world and on September 22nd I get my opportunity.—AFP

Sports

American Michael Kim romps to his first PGA Tour victory

Kim claims spot in British Open; Finishes tournament at 27-under

ILLINOIS: American Michael Kim cruised to his first PGA Tour victory and a trip to the British Open with a runaway win in the John Deere Classic on Sunday. Kim birdied his first three holes and was never challenged as he shot five-under 66 to win by eight strokes at TPC Deere Run in Silvis, Illinois a day after his 25th birthday. With all four rounds in the 60s, the South Korean-born golfer finished on 27-under 257, a tournament record.

Italian Francesco Molinari (64) and Americans Joel Dahmen (65), Sam Ryder (66) and Bronson Burgeon (69) tied for second at 265. "I just got off to a fantastic start," Kim, who had missed the cut in five of his previous six tournaments, told PGA Tour Radio. "The putter was hot again today. To finish with no bogeys today, I am so proud of myself." The trip to the British Open, which begins on Thursday at Carnoustie in Scotland, will be Kim's second career major. He tied for 17th and was the low amateur at the 2013 US Open, the same year he was the national collegiate player of the year.

Kim, who joined the PGA Tour full-time in 2016,

began the final day with a five-stroke lead after four consecutive birdies to complete the third round on Saturday and added three more to start Sunday's play. He collected two more birdies, on the eighth and 16th

holes, before sinking a five-foot putt for a par at the last with his family looking on. "I didn't get much sleep last night," he said. "I probably went through a million scenarios in my head. "One of those scenarios was if I get off to a great start on the first two, I'll really show those guys not much to look at, which would be great." Kim, whose previous career best finish was a

tie for third at the Safeway Open in late 2016 and was ranked 473rd in the world at the beginning of the week, added he felt it was only a matter of time before his game clicked. He got off to a great start on Thursday with a 63, the lowest round of the tournament, and backed that up with 64s on Friday and Saturday. "Even the last couple of weeks, I felt like the game was getting there," Kim told CBS Sports. "I felt like I just needed a couple of good starts with the rounds, a couple of swings. I felt like it was going to switch." — Reuters



Kim birdied his first three holes



ILLINOIS: Michael Kim celebrates with the trophy after winning the John Deere Classic during the final round at TPC Deere Run in Silvis, Illinois. — AFP

Briefs

NHL's Emery dies at 35

MONTREAL: Ray Emery, who helped the Chicago Blackhawks win the 2013 Stanley Cup during an 11-season National Hockey League career, died Sunday in his hometown of Hamilton, Canada. He was 35. Police said Emery was reported missing while swimming with friends at Hamilton Harbor. His body was found Sunday afternoon near the spot where he was last seen, the victim of an apparent drowning, although an official cause of death is pending. Emery, a fourth round pick by Ottawa in the 2001 NHL Draft, played for Ottawa, the Philadelphia Flyers, Anaheim Ducks and Blackhawks before retiring in 2016 with a career record of 145-86-28 with a 2.70 goals-against average, .906 save percentage and 16 shutouts in 287 NHL games. — AFP

NFL's Sproles to retire

WASHINGTON: Philadelphia Eagles running back Darren Sproles, who missed most of the team's Super Bowl championship campaign, says in a blog posting he will retire after the upcoming season. The 35-year-old rusher wrote that he had planned to retire after the 2017 season but will go "one more year" after suffering a torn knee ligament and broken arm in the third week of last season. "Didn't want to go out like that," Sproles said. Carrying the ball for the reigning Super Bowl champions helped make the decision for him. "I'm excited to come back and I'm even more excited to come back to the defending Super Bowl champion Eagles," Sproles wrote. "We have something special here with the team, the fans, and the city... now we want to go back-to-back." —AFP

Chandimal, coach banned

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka captain Dinesh Chandimal, coach Chandika Hathurusinghe and manager Asanka Gurusinha have been banned for four one-dayers and two tests for acting against the spirit of the game, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said yesterday. The trio admitted breaching the ICC's code of conduct, which relates to "conduct that is contrary to the spirit of the game", after their team refused to take the field on the third day of the second test against West Indies at St Lucia last month. Match officials had accused the team of altering the condition of the ball. The visitors eventually resumed play under protest. The ban means the trio will miss the ongoing home two-test series against South Africa and the first four ODIs of the five-match series starting on July 29. —Reuters

Kendricks' double success

LONDON: American pole vault world champion Sam Kendricks completed a double triumph over the weekend by winning at the inaugural World Cup in London 48 hours after Diamond League success in Rabat on Friday. Many of his compatriots, like sprinters Christian Coleman, Ronnie Baker and Noah Lyles, chose to only compete in Morocco but the Mississippi native took the challenge to double up and help spearhead America's 57-point win in the eight-nation event. "I jumped in Rabat on Friday to secure my spot in the Diamond League then I came here but I am a professional jumper so I can do it and I've got to keep jumping," said Kendricks. —Reuters

Dixon wins IndyCar race

MONTREAL: New Zealand's Scott Dixon, chasing his fifth IndyCar season title, won his third race of the year at Sunday's Indy Toronto event, nearly doubling his edge in the points chase. Dixon won his 44th career IndyCar race, third on the all-time list, and took his third win in six races since taking third at the Indianapolis 500 after triumphs in Detroit and Texas. "I'm stoked. It was a big win," Dixon said. "We were pretty sweet." A week shy of his 38th birthday, Dixon was a winner for the third time in his career over 85 laps on the 11-turn, 1.786-mile temporary street course at Toronto's Exhibition Place. Dixon, who won Toronto twice in 2013 when a pair of races were staged on back-to-back days, kept the lead through two intense restarts. —AFP

Woods still working on \$10m Mickelson match

CARNOUSTIE: Tiger Woods said Sunday that he and longtime rival Phil Mickelson are "still working" on a \$10 million "winner-takes-all" match. "We are still working on it and it's not there yet but we are trying to make it happen," said Woods after playing several practice holes at the Carnoustie course in Scotland, where this year's British Open starts on Thursday.

"Phil and I are friends and we are always trying to make each other uncomfortable and needle each other," Woods added. Between them, the two Americans have won 19 major championships, although Woods has 14 to Mickelson's five. The pair's hauls include both British Open and US Masters titles. Patrick Reed, this year's Masters champion, recently joked he would only watch Woods tackle Mickelson if they each put up their own money. When this point was put to him on Sunday, a laughing Woods replied: "Of course, that is what Patrick would like to see and it would be good of him to put up that money."

Meanwhile, Tiger Woods, back at the British Open this

Thidapa wins her first LPGA title

LOS ANGELES: Thailand's Thidapa Suwannapura edged two-time major champion Brittany Lincicome in a playoff on Sunday to win her first LPGA title at the Marathon Classic in Ohio. Thidapa thrust herself into title contention with an eagle-birdie finish at Highland Meadows Golf Club in Sylvania, carding a final-round 65 for a 14-under par total of 270. She could only wait and watch for more than an hour as Lincicome and overnight leader Brooke Henderson of Canada tussled for the lead, Lincicome closing with a four-under par 67 for 270 as Henderson settled for a 69 that left her in third place on 271.

"I did not think or expect that 14 (under) would be good enough, because I know there were two par-fives coming in on 17 and 18, and it's a good opportunity for

After Wimbledon, reborn Djokovic targets US happy hunting ground

LONDON: With his Grand Slam reputation and place back in the world top 10 restored, Novak Djokovic will now target a third career Wimbledon/US Open double after clinching his fourth title at the All England Club. Djokovic defied the odds and even stunned himself by cruising to a 13th major title on Sunday to go fourth on the all-time list of Slam winners. Only Pete Sampras (14), Rafael Nadal (17) and Roger Federer (20) are ahead of him following his 6-2, 6-2, 7-6 (7/3) victory over Kevin Anderson.

Now the 31-year-old heads for the North America hard court season where he has traditionally thrived. Of his 69 career titles, 51 have been on hard courts with 17 of those in the United States. When he won his first Wimbledon in 2011, he was to add his maiden US Open, repeating the grass court/hard court double four years later. His desire to repeat that feat burns even deeper after he missed last year's New York showpiece with the elbow injury which threatened to torpedo his career after his 2017 Wimbledon bid ended prematurely at the quarter-final stage.

"Well, I understand that people are questioning whether I can consistently play at this level. Trust me, I am, too," said Djokovic. "If you asked me a month and a half ago whether I think I can win Wimbledon, part of me yes, I hope, but maybe I wasn't that sure at that time of my level of tennis. "But this is going to be a huge confidence boost and springboard for whatever is coming up. I like to play

week for the first time since 2015, will begin his campaign in Thursday's opening round at Carnoustie in a three-ball with Japan's Hideki Matsuyama and Russell Knox of Scotland. "It has been a while and I've certainly missed it," former world number one Woods told reporters on Monday. "This is the oldest tournament we have in our sport. "Carnoustie is special. This is my fourth time playing it as a tournament.

From my first time coming here as an amateur to being back now, it's just amazing how this course doesn't change. "It's probably the most difficult one we play in the whole rotation," added Woods. The 42-year-old American, world number 16 Matsuyama and Knox, winner of the Irish Open two weeks ago, will tee-off at 1521 local time. Fourteen-times major champion Woods, who won the British Open in 2000, 2005 and 2006, has missed the last two editions because of a back problem.

Fellow American Jordan Spieth launches his title defense at 0958 along with Justin Rose of England and Thailand's Kiradech Aphibarnrat. Northern Ireland's Rory Mclroy must wait until 1253 to tee-off with Australia's Marc Leishman and Thorbjorn Olesen of Denmark. World number one Dustin Johnson will be joined in the 1304 group by Sweden's Alex Noren and fellow American Charley Hoffman. The honor of striking the first shot of the championship falls to 1985 winner Sandy Lyle. The 60-year-old Scot, making his 43rd appearance in the tournament, will tee-off at 0635 in the company of Germany's Martin Kaymer and Andy Sullivan of England. — Agencies

them to make birdie," she said. "I was just chilling in the clubhouse, being silly and stuff, trying to relax, just watching the Golf Channel and see what they're doing." Suddenly, Thidapa said, she realized "Oh, I have to go warm up and try to win the tournament!"

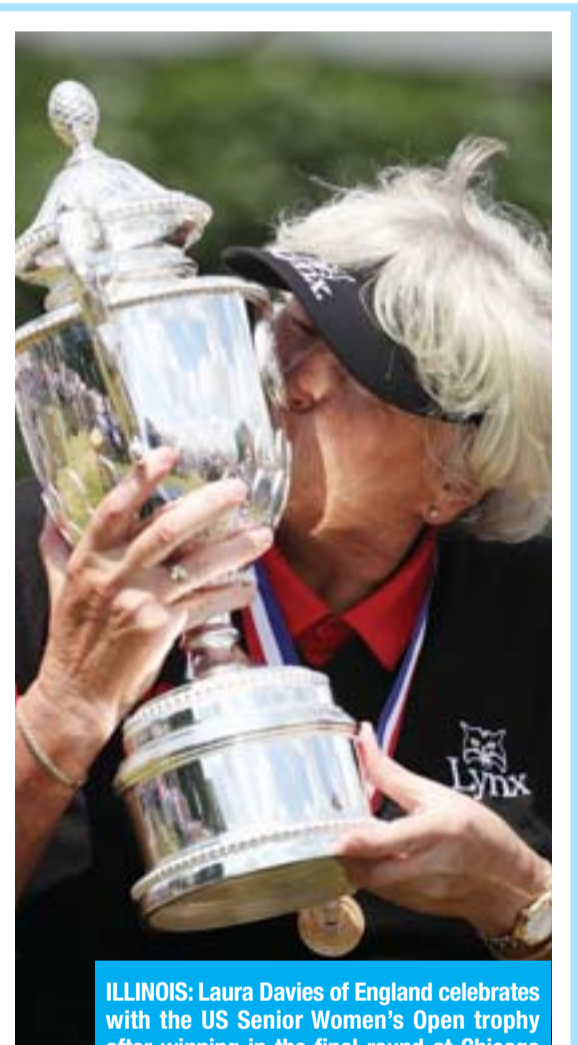
The 25-year-old, who chipped in for eagle at the par-five 17th then birdied the par-five 18th in regulation, put her tee shot at the first playoff hole—the 18th-in-the-fairway as Lincicome found a fairway bunker. Lincicome then blasted into the water hazard, as Thidapa put her third shot five feet from the pin. Lincicome kept the pressure on as best she could, rolling in a six-foot putt to save par, but Thidapa calmly made her birdie putt for a long-awaited first victory. "I never expected it was going to be today at all," said Thidapa, a Ladies European Tour winner who had only two prior top-10 finishes on the LPGA Tour. "I've been struggling the whole year, trying to keep my tour card, trying my best. And finally all my work I've been doing has come out and shown today," added Thidapa, who joined sisters Ariya and Moriya Jutanugarn as the only Thai players to win on the LPGA Tour. —AFP



LONDON: 2018 Wimbledon Men's and Women's singles champions Serbia's Novak Djokovic (left) and Germany's Angelique Kerber dance on the stage at the Champions Dinner. — AFP

on hard courts. "The US Open was always a successful tournament for me. I didn't play it last year. I'm looking forward to go out there and play my best."

Djokovic's title triumph on Sunday, against a weary Anderson who had spent 21 hours on court becoming the first South African man in the final in 97 years, was his first at the majors since Roland Garros in 2016 when he completed the career Grand Slam. He arrived at Wimbledon in a prolonged slump after undergoing elbow surgery and with his ranking at 21, his lowest for 12 years. But with two-time champion Andy Murray missing, eight-time winner Federer defeated by Anderson in the quarter-finals and Djokovic beating world number one Nadal, the 2008 and 2010 champion in a 5-hour 15-minute semi-final, the stage was set for the Serb. —AFP



ILLINOIS: Laura Davies of England celebrates with the US Senior Women's Open trophy after winning in the final round at Chicago Golf Club in Wheaton, Illinois. — AFP

Davies wins inaugural Senior Women's Open

CHICAGO: England's Laura Davies cruised to a 10-stroke victory Sunday at the inaugural US Senior Women's Open, firing a bogey-free five-under par 68 to complete the rout at Chicago Golf Club. The 54-year-old World Golf Hall of Famer birdied all five par-5 holes to finish 72 holes on 16-under 276, capturing her 85th career triumph worldwide. "It's great, seeing this trophy paraded down for the very first time and I get my name on it first," Davies said. "This championship will be played for many years and there will only be one first winner. Obviously quite a proud moment for me to win that."

American Juli Inkster was second on 286 after a closing 73 with England's Trish Johnson third, two strokes further adrift after a 73 in the showdown for the world's top 50-and-over women golfers. Davies led Inkster by six as they reached the par-3 10th, where the American missed a 15-foot birdie putt and the Briton scrambled to salvage par from 70 feet.

"That to me was when I really started to think I might have one hand on the trophy and just had to get the other one in there," Davies said. Davies, the 1987 US Women's Open champion, has won 20 LPGA titles and taken 45 Ladies European Tour trophies. But she had not won any title since the 2010 Hero Honda Women's Indian Open on the Ladies European Tour. "I hadn't won for eight years, so the pressure you're playing under when you're trying to just do something for yourself, prove to yourself you can still win, makes this win rank highly up there," Davies said. "It's hard to compare tournaments, but this is very high on my list of achievements, I can assure you." — AFP

Sports

Thank you heroes, You gave us everything! Media hails Croatia

Croatia fly flag for the little guys

ZAGREB: Croatian media yesterday hailed their team as heroes after the small country's historic success in reaching the World Cup final where France beat them 4-2. "Thank you, heroes! - You gave us everything!" read the Sportske Novosti frontpage. "'Vatreni' (the 'Fiery Ones' in Croatian), you are the biggest, you are our pride, your names will remain written in gold forever!" the newspaper said.

It showed a photo of captain Luka Modric who was awarded the Golden Ball for the best player at the tournament, holding a trophy, although with a sad face after the defeat. "Brave hearts - You made us proud," said Jutarnji List daily. "Croatia celebrates you, you are our gold!" echoed the Vecernji List. It noted that for the past month coach Zlatko Dalić's team "made Croatia better". "They restored pride, pulled it out of the pessimism" reigning in the country whose economy remains among the weakest in the European Union. More than 100,000 red-and-white-painted Croatian fans were expected to welcome the squad home later Monday in the capital Zagreb.

Croatia fly flag

A World Cup of surprises showed once again how small teams are finding a way to compete with the big boys, as was the case at the European Championship two years ago. It was Iceland and Wales who shook up the established order in 2016, now Belgium and Croatia have shown that smaller nations can dream of footballing success as the gap to the traditional powers continues to narrow. "Every team is set up so well now and properly prepared that there is not much between anybody," said France coach Didier Deschamps after his team overcame Croatia 4-2 in Sunday's World Cup final.

With a population of just over four million, Croatia punched considerably above their weight to reach the final, going down gallantly at Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium. Belgium reached the semi-finals with a golden generation of players despite a relatively modest footballing infrastructure and will have legitimate ambitions of claiming a first major international title at Euro 2020. At the European Championship two years ago, Wales were surprise semi-finalists and Iceland captured the imagination by beating England to make the last eight. With just over 300,000 people, Iceland followed that up by becoming the smallest nation to qualify for the World Cup.

On other continents too, there are growing examples of consistent challenges to the established order and particularly from countries whose playing resources are limited by the size of their population size. "On our bus there is a slogan that says 'We are a small nation with big dreams'," said Croatia coach Zlatko Dalić after the loss to France. "That's a good message to all. If you work hard, you can produce good players and get results. You have to believe it is possible. Maybe things have to fall into place. But you have to have a dream and ambition and follow them."

It is also essential to have key personnel, like player-of-the-tournament Luka Modric and fellow midfielder Ivan Rakitic, to inspire the rest of the squad. But teams like Iceland and Japan have shown that tactical discipline and mental fortitude can sometimes trump talent. Japan displayed as much when they almost upset Belgium in the round of 16, leading 2-0 before going down 3-2. Superpowers like Brazil, Germany, France and Spain will continue to be considered favorites at major tournaments but they will be very wary of the next "little guy" to pose a genuine threat.—Agencies



ZAGREB: Croatian national football team members ride an open-roof coach in Zagreb International Airport yesterday after their return from the FIFA World Cup 2018 in Russia in Zagreb International Airport on July 16, 2018. — AFP

Protesters invade pitch during final

MOSCOW: The World Cup final between France and Croatia on Sunday was briefly interrupted when four intruders affiliated to anti-Kremlin punk band Pussy Riot ran onto the pitch before being hauled off by stewards. The pitch invaders, who were dressed in police-style outfits, were later detained by police, one of them told Reuters by telephone from a police station near Moscow's Luzhniki stadium, venue for the match.

Police said they were investigating the four on suspicion of violating rules for spectating at a sporting event as well as for illegally wearing police uniforms, the Interfax news agency reported. The former infraction carries a maximum fine of up to 10,000 roubles (\$159.92) or 160 hours' community service with a ban on attending sports events of up to three years. Wearing a police uniform illegally carries a fine of 1,000 to 1,500 roubles.

The pitch invasion was the first significant security lapse in the five-week tournament that has won hosts Russia widespread praise for organization and efficiency. In a post on its Facebook page, the group said its action was intended to draw attention to what it said were human rights abuses in Russia. Three of Pussy Riot's original members were jailed in 2012 for staging a protest against Russian President Vladimir Putin in a church and the group has since become a symbol of anti-Kremlin direct action.

In the second half of Sunday's match, the three people wearing white shirts with police-style epaulettes, black trousers and police hats ran out on the pitch from the area behind the French goal. A fourth person tried to run onto the pitch but was tackled on the sidelines. The three ran about 50 meters, dispersing in different directions, before stewards wearing high-visibility jackets tackled them to the ground and dragged them off the pitch. One photograph on social media showed one of the pitch invaders, a woman with blonde hair tucked under a police cap, performing a high-five with France player Kylian Mbappe before being caught.

The match, watched from the stands by Putin and the



MOSCOW: A pitch invader with a sign on his t-shirt reading 'Putin time' runs in front of the French team after the Russia 2018 World Cup final football match between France and Croatia on July 15, 2018. — AFP

French and Croatian presidents, was halted, but resumed about 25 seconds later. A witness at the stadium said he had seen police escorting the pitch invaders out of the stadium grounds.

Pussy Riot member Olga Kurachyova told Reuters she was one of the pitch invaders and was being held at Luzhniki police station. She said she could not speak further because police were trying to take her mobile phone away from her. Croatian defender Dejan Lovren, who pushed the male intruder aside on the pitch, told reporters the incident had interrupted the game at an important moment for his team. "We'd been playing good football and then some interruption came," he said. "I just lost my head and I grabbed the guy and I wished I could throw him away from the stadium."

In its Facebook post, Pussy Riot complained of rights

abuses in Russia. It alluded to Oleg Sentsov, a Ukrainian filmmaker jailed for 20 years in 2015 for setting fire to two offices in Crimea, including one belonging to Russia's ruling party, after Moscow annexed the region from Ukraine. Pussy Riot said its demands included freeing political prisoners in Russia, freedom of speech on the internet, freedom to protest, and allowing political competition.

The group shared a video on social media recorded before the incident featuring three female activists, at least two of whom were among those detained. They wore police uniforms and one of them wore a pink bal-clava. "The World Cup has shown wonderfully what the police can be like in Russia, but what will happen afterwards?" one of the activists asked in the video, an apparent allusion to lenient policing noted by Russians during the tournament.—Reuters

Deschamps' WCup win - a triumph for substance over style

MOSCOW: Didier Deschamps' France side have not always won admirers for their way of playing at this World Cup, but that will not matter to the hundreds of thousands celebrating on the streets back home after their final victory over Croatia. France won 4-2 at the Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow on Sunday, with star men Antoine Griezmann, Paul Pogba and Kylian Mbappe all scoring as they lifted the trophy for the second time in their history.

They are the first team to score four times in the final since Pele's great Brazil side beat Italy 4-1 in Mexico in 1970, and the match was the highest-scoring World Cup final since England's 4-2 victory against West Germany back in 1966. It was achieved with a brilliantly talented set of players, embodied by 19-year-old Mbappe, not even born when France last won it in 1998 and now the youngest player to score in a World Cup final since Pele in 1958. He had already lit up this tournament with his electric performance against Argentina, scoring twice in his side's 4-3 win in Kazan in the last 16. However, these two high-scoring encounters do not provide an accurate picture of the way Deschamps' team have played in this competition.

In their five other games they scored a total of six goals, including two Griezmann penalties and one own goal. They were also involved in the only goalless draw of the tournament, against Denmark in their last group outing. Against Croatia, Griezmann's penalty that gave them a 2-1 lead in the 38th minute came from their first shot on goal of the game, with their opener a Mario Mandzukic own goal. France finished with just 39 percent of the possession. With a shrug, Deschamps asked after the game: "Are France beautiful champions? Well, we are world champions and will be on top of the world for four years."

Constant progress

Deschamps has regularly been criticized throughout this competition, and throughout his six-year reign in charge, for his style of football. Yet this win follows the near miss of Euro 2016, when as hosts they lost in extra time to Portugal in Paris. Deschamps became France's longest-serving coach during this tournament, and the progress has been constant since he took charge in 2012 and took the team to the quarter-finals at the 2014 World Cup, losing to eventual winners Germany. This time, while the Germans went out in the group stage, France went all the way.

Deschamps has always been a winner, going back to his playing days when he captained France to glory at the 1998 World Cup and Euro 2000 and won the Champions League with Marseille and Juventus. He is now only the third man in history to win the World Cup as both a player and coach after Brazil's Mario Zagallo and German Franz Beckenbauer. "I have never seen or experienced a World Cup like this one. There was a levelling off towards the top, and the so-called smaller teams came in so well prepared physically," he said as he defended his reactionary style. "They hurt the countries who I always remember as being the strongest. The teams who had most control in terms of possession were practically all punished by quick attacks."

"In football if you know how to defend well, you can be sure that you will get at least two or three chances on the counter-attack or from set-pieces." He added: "Against Denmark we were not very nice to watch. That would not have been enough had we kept playing like that, but we managed to keep raising our game." Had France fallen short in Russia, there would have been a growing clamor for the French Football Federation to approach Zinedine Zidane, a free agent since leaving Real Madrid. But now Deschamps will surely stay in the job as long as he wants it, with his contract running until 2020. "The plan is that I stay so I am going to stay," he told French radio station RTL.—AFP

Road accidents and clashes mar French WCup party

PARIS: Dozens of youths shattered windows at a popular store on the Champs Elysees avenue Sunday while hundreds of thousands of fans celebrated France's World Cup victory, according to an AFP journalist at the scene. About 30 people, many wearing ski masks, broke into the Publicis Drugstore and later left with bottles of wine and champagne, some smiling and filming themselves with cellphones.

Some also threw objects including bottles and chairs at police forces who responded with tear gas. "That's not how you celebrate," a tearful bystander wearing a French team jersey said. As the hundreds of thousands of revelers gradually left the famous avenue, police used water cannon to disperse remaining troublemakers at around 11:30 pm.

Elsewhere in France, authorities said clashes erupted in the southern city of Lyon between police and about 100 youths who had climbed on top of a police vehicle at an open-air showing of the match in the city centre. Police fired tear gas to disperse the youths who responded by throwing objects and setting rubbish bins on fire, with the unrest causing some stampeding. Ten people were arrested in Marseille, where two members of the security forces were injured in clashes, a police spokesman said. In Frouard, a town outside the eastern city of Nancy, a three-year-old boy and two six-year-old girls were seriously injured after being struck by a motorcycle during the celebrations. Authorities said the motorcyclist had fled the scene. In the southeast city of Annecy police said a 50-year-old man died after breaking his neck when he jumped into a shallow canal just when the final whistle blew to signal the end of the match.—Agencies

USA win inaugural athletics World Cup

LONDON: The United States of America recorded a comprehensive victory in the inaugural edition of the Athletics World Cup after dominating the second day of the event in London on Sunday. It might have lacked the prestige and visibility of football's World Cup final earlier in Moscow, hindered by the absence of many of track and field's most recognizable names and an unfortunate clash of dates with the final of the greatest sporting show on the planet.

Yet reasonable crowds, compared to much of the Diamond League circuit, and a rapid format with audience appeal, is worth extending, according to IAAF president Sebastian Coe, with three nations understood to have expressed interest in staging the next scheduled edition in 2020. "I've been very clear that I want new things to be tried," he said. "They are not always going to work out from the word go but that can't inhibit us from going 'we tried, it didn't do everything so we go back to the same old thing'." "There is a lot of work being done on the calendar and the Diamond Leagues. But while we're working that out, I didn't want the sport just to stop doing creative things."

"We will figure things out. They've already had interest in this from other cities. But I'm really pleased UK Athletics have taken up the challenge." The USA were virtually unopposed in landing the platinum winners trophy on a final tally of 219 points. They were well clear of Poland in second on 162 with the hosts consigned to third place when their men's 4x400 relay team were disqualified prior to the concluding event when first leg runner Cameron Chalmers pulled a hamstring in the warm-up. Holding a 24-point advantage overnight, the Americans kept extending their margin with Paul Dedewo running a personal best of 44.48 seconds to win the men's 400m.

Kenny Selmon took the men's 400m hurdles and Vashti Cunningham leapt to a season's best of 1.96m to reign in the women's high jump before their triumph was rounded



LONDON: The US team celebrates their win in the men's 4x100m relay during the Athletics World Cup team competition at the London Stadium in London. — AFP

off in the men's 4x400. Elsewhere, Jamaica's Tyquendo Tracey recorded a lifetime best of 10.03 seconds to win the men's 100m with South Africa's world champion Luvo Manyonga taking victory in the men's long jump with a leading effort of 8.51m. However at the conclusion, it was the Americans who took a lap of honour amid the fireworks at the London Stadium which will also host the next leg of the Diamond League circuit next weekend.

And among those in action, there appeared to be a consensus that the Athletics World Cup is an idea that could be replicated or extended in the future. "This sport needs one thing and that's more exciting events and this was certainly that," said Hendricks. "I know it conflicted with the soccer World Cup but to have this chance to come together as a national team is really cool. "Because what is great to have is competition when you have people in different vests competing against one another rather than just individuals in identical vests out there. "And I think in future editions, you'll see this grow and more people will want to be there. And I know I'd want to be a part of it."—AFP

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French team returns to a heroes' welcome

France celebrates World Cup victory as fans fill Champs-Elysees



PARIS: France's defender Raphael Varane (center) holds the trophy as he celebrates with teammates on the roof of a bus as they arrive on the Champs-Elysees avenue in Paris yesterday after winning the Russia 2018 World Cup final football match. — AFP

PARIS: The World Cup-winning French team returned home to a heroes' welcome yesterday as hundreds of thousands packed the Champs Elysees for their victory parade ahead of a presidential reception in the evening. France overcame a determined Croatia team to win 4-2 in Sunday's final, with teenager Kylian Mbappe applying the coup de grace and cementing his place as a new global superstar at the age of just 19. Millions of fans in France celebrated into the night, honking car horns and flying the tricolor flag while the Eiffel Tower and the Arc de Triomphe were lit up in the national colors of blue, white and red. Crowds began converging early yesterday on the Champs Elysees, the gathering point for all national celebrations, for a parade by the team atop an electric bus expected to start in the early evening. "We're so proud of this team, they have truly become our players," said Priscilla Lagneaux, 28, who was waiting with friends under a willing sun on the avenue. "We had to see them, and also the Cup."

The players arrived to a raucous welcome at Charles De Gaulle airport northeast of Paris, including a "water salute" by the fire brigade which sprayed arcs of water over the Air France jet as it taxied to the gate. Captain Hugo Lloris, flanked by coach Didier Deschamps, was the first to emerge from the aircraft, raising the famed golden trophy before

heading down the stairs and onto a freshly laid red carpet. Commentators have focused on the outpouring of patriotism and sense of national unity created by the multiethnic French team, many of whose stars including Mbappe and Paul Pogba hail from deprived and often overlooked suburbs of Paris. Laurent Joffrin, editor of the left-wing Liberation newspaper, said they had lived up to the ideal of "the republic that we love: united and diverse, patriotic and open, national without being nationalist."

After the parade France's newest idols will be welcomed at the Elysee Palace by Emmanuel Macron, whose office has already promised the Legion of Honor for the victors' "exceptional services" to the country.

'Champions of the world'

In Paris, the metro system temporarily renamed six of its stations in honour of the key players, with the Victor Hugo stop named after the famed 19th-century writer-becoming Victor Hugo Lloris after the team's goalkeeper. Two stations were rebaptised in tribute to Deschamps, who captained the national side to its first World Cup victory, won on home soil in 1998.

Alongside Mario Zagallo and Franz Beckenbauer, he has become only the third man to win the World Cup both as a

player and coach. Deschamps, who was soaked in champagne by his overjoyed players at a chaotic press conference Sunday, said afterwards that the win was "just as big and just as beautiful" as his 1998 triumph. "There are two things that matter-one is that these 23 players are now together for life, whatever happens, and also that from now on they will not be the same again, because they are world champions," he said.

Around 1,000 youths from local soccer clubs across the country, including the gritty Bondy suburb which produced Mbappe, are expected as guests at the reception at the Elysee presidential palace. "We're going to say thank you!" said Sacha, one of the young players already at the palace. "I don't regret not going on vacation this summer." The team will have a private meeting with Macron and his wife Brigitte, and then they will enter the palace's gardens where Macron is expected to make a speech.

Afterwards guests will be treated to the beats of DJ Snake, who has worked with pop stars including Lady Gaga and is part of the Pardon My French collective of French DJs. Macron had already celebrated with the team on Sunday-even doing "dab" dance moves with players in a video that has gone viral-after attending the final in Moscow. Some analysts believe the 40-year-old centrist

will benefit from the feelgood factor sweeping France, with Macron able to show a common touch after months of criticism from his opponents that he is distant and elitist. Later the team will attend a dinner in their honour at the posh Hotel du Crillon.

'Extraordinary soccer'

Macron will be relieved that an evening of joyous and occasionally chaotic celebrations across France passed off without any major incident following a string of terror attacks in France since 2015 that have claimed nearly 250 lives. There were 292 people arrested nationwide and isolated clashes between police and rowdy crowds in Paris, Lyon and Marseille. Several French supporters were involved in fatal accidents, including a man who threw himself into a shallow canal in the city of Annecy. For Croatia, a country of just four million people, the loss was bitter but their fans took solace in the best run in the nation's history, which featured a stunning win against Argentina and a semi-final victory against England. "Thank you, heroes! - You gave us everything!" read the Sportske Novosti front page. "Vatreni" (the "Fiery Ones" in Croatian), you are the biggest, you are our pride, your names will remain written in gold forever!" the newspaper said.— AFP

Juventus fans give Ronaldo a rousing welcome

ROME: Juventus fans gave Cristiano Ronaldo a rousing welcome yesterday as the club prepared to unveil the superstar summer signing they hope will bring the Champions League trophy back to Turin. Hundreds of fans gathered outside the Allianz Stadium in Turin from early morning singing "Ronaldo, bring us the Champions (League)" as the European competition's most lethal striker of all time made a brief appearance ahead of his medical Monday.

The 33-year-old emerged from the club's medical centre to sign autographs and shake hands amid raucous chants of his name before

shooting back inside for further tests. The five-times Ballon d'Or winner will be officially unveiled to the world's media at a press conference scheduled for 6:30 pm (16:30 GMT), in which he will sign a four-year deal that will earn him a reported 30 million euros a season.

Ronaldo fever hit Turin after the announcement last week of his 100 million-euro (\$117 million) transfer from European champions Real Madrid, which Italian media reports will cost Juve a total of 350 million euros. Many of the youngsters who came out to greet their new hero were wearing Juventus shirts emblazoned with "Ronaldo" and the number 7, which have been selling like hot cakes in the city. Others wore t-shirts with the message "Bem-vindo"- "welcome" in Portuguese-which 5,000 shopkeepers put up on posters around the north-western Italian city ahead of Ronaldo's arrival late Sunday. One ice-cream parlor in Turin has even invented a "CR7" cone, featuring a Portuguese cherry liqueur and chocolate shavings.

The mood of joy was not universally shared. His costly signing upset leaders of one minority union at an automobile plant in southern Italy owned by Fiat-Chrysler-in turn owned by the same holding company as Juventus. They called a protest strike for Monday but only five out of the plant's 1,700 workers turned out in support of the action dismissed as a "stunt" by bigger unions representing the workers in Melfi, in the Basilicata region. Juventus fans are hoping that Ronaldo's arrival will push them onto Europe's top table. Fresh from their seventh Serie A title in as many years and four straight domestic doubles, the Old Lady of Italian football have struggled to turn domestic dominance into European success as they strive for the continent's holy grail. "Our hope is to win the Champions League that for now is the only objective that we've not been able to conquer," says Francesco, 38, from the Tuscan city of Pisa. "Ronaldo coming will only bring good things to Juventus... He'll help others to learn things that only champions like him can do."—AFP



TURIN: Portuguese footballer Cristiano Ronaldo arrived yesterday, at the Juventus medical center at the Allianz stadium in Turin. Cristiano Ronaldo arrived in Turin ahead of his official unveiling as Juventus' superstar summer signing today.— AFP