

Friday Times

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Heavy travelers



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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As a frequent traveler, I have new findings that show many major differences between Arab, Asian and Western tourists. In the past, I thought Arab travelers, especially families with children and domestic helpers, were the only heavy travelers with a large number of bags, but now I have another opinion that this theory is incorrect because I often see single people or a small family or a couple with a large number of bags, especially Arabs and Asians. Is it a cultural issue or a psychological feeling for showing off? I believe heavy travelers lose the spirit and joy of travel. Here is why.

This article comes at a time when the subject of tourism and traveling are the perfect topics, as it is the summer holidays for students and everything is quiet. Many people see travel as a way to reward themselves, yet this should not be limited to booking tickets and cheap hotels, but planning and selecting so as not to end the vacation with unexpected problems.

The Western tourist is usually accurate in determining the appropriate time for travel and not just because the summer is hot and everyone goes on leave. He usually plans and arranges his trips in order to be balanced in all aspects, away from chaos and financial loss, while making sure to enjoy himself and fulfill his needs. Therefore, they spend time reading about where to go, the places to visit, currencies and prices of hotels and cheap tourism providers.

In contrast, many Arabs prefer to visit the same place every year, either because they know the place or because their friends are there, except for some who own an apartment or a house in that country. They tend to be obliged to go to the same place every year. If the purpose of traveling is to change the place, it is possible to do this without leaving the country and wasting too much money.

Tourists usually make a comparison between their country and other countries. I believe the most important value that the Arab tourist should accept and learn when traveling is freedom, which teaches you to respect differences in culture and accept yourself and others, because no one is responsible for anyone, and no one is your guardian and everyone is equal before the law. This is the freedom that we miss in most Arab countries and in a culture of violence, we need these ethics as lessons of travel.

Another key point is that unfortunately, many of the world's leading tourist destinations are risky, either because of the high rate of crime, theft and many other manmade reasons. When travelers ignore travel tips such as travel insurance or keeping copies of passports and not carrying a lot of cash and jewelry, then they become a target for thieves.

There are many countries where the local water is contaminated and not directly drinkable without filtration, such as some Asian and African countries. So before you go to these areas, make sure that the water is safe for use. Some people pack a lot of things, thinking they will need them while traveling, and thus fill the bag with a lot of items. The bag hinders their movement and they also pay money for excess weight. Worse, some people take food-stuff or hairdryers in their bags!

A heavy traveler is likely to waste a lot of money and time and may be robbed because of carrying many things they do not need. Travel is a cultural activity and an opportunity to learn about yourself and others.

PHOTO OF THE DAY



KUWAIT: Kuwait Towers seen through the remains of the 'Sheikh Khazaal Palace' in Kuwait City. — Photo by Hassan Mahmoud (KUNA)

Experience is the perfect learning tool

IN MY VIEW

By Janeen Reyna Lucban

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There is a quotation, "Nothing beats experience as the perfect learning tool." We all know that practical experience is the best, and internships give students that hands-on experience they need. Every student is required to undergo a taste of the 200 hours of on-the-job training - a glimpse of working in the real world. As a student trainee, this gives you opportunities to know if the course you enrolled in is exactly what you want. It makes you realize what you're up to and the path you're taking. It basically provides the student an opportunity to prepare for their actual field of work.

I feel that internships are essential to develop key skills that you can't learn in classrooms. Skills such as multi-tasking, communicating, dealing with different people, deadlines, working with someone else and a lot more. It also helps reinforce your knowledge of responsibility, staying focused, being on time, dressing up professionally, communication skills and ambition. I know we experience this in our schools but it's really different from what you do in your internship.

Also, I encourage other students that it would be beneficial to find an internship that would really help to improve their selves on their future goals. It's not always necessary to stick to what's listed. For me, I found my internship on my own. I am studying for a Bachelor of Science in Development Communication in the Philippines. I wanted to do my internship in Kuwait, my home country at heart. I know that it will be perfect for me and it will really prepare me for my chosen career path. Besides, my parents are here to guide me in my journey. So, I encouraged my professor to let me do my intern abroad. And

thankfully, I got accepted at Kuwait Times.

When you're new in your internship, it might be really intimidating and nervous to ask questions, because it is really hard to admit that you don't understand something or you need extra help. But during the journey, I overcame my fear. Asking is the only way to learn. I also found out that people appreciate it more if you ask questions to make sure you really understand. By asking questions, you get answers. Because without open communication, I don't see how any work can be done.

Furthermore, there will be days where you just feel tired and don't want to get out of bed. I will be the first to admit, I am not a morning person! But my internship at Kuwait Times changed me a lot. I have never got out of bed so fast when my alarm clock rings. Especially when I'll be tagging along with field reporters, shadowing them on how they do their jobs. It is really exciting going to different places I've never been before, meeting new people and experiencing their culture. I could not have asked for a better internship. This experience opened my eyes to the real world.

Based on my experience, for students who are taking up communication media or any media-related course, I highly recommend Kuwait Times. It might be difficult at the start, but through hard work and patience, it is definitely worth it. It is very challenging and fun and you will get to practice your communication skills and boost your self-confidence by socializing with other people.

Lastly, the feeling of having to finish your on-the-job training is very overwhelming, knowing that you gain so much knowledge before going back to school. The feeling gets even warmer when you know that there are people who are so proud of what you have accomplished. This just helps us, as students, to be more inspired with a positive outlook in mind and to do the best in everything that we do. Working as an intern at Kuwait Times, I was encouraged to be more focused and to do everything wholeheartedly. I'm glad that I experienced my first work as an intern in this prestigious company.

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Minister for National Assembly Affairs Adel Al-Kharafi greets a young participant.



Young participants prepare for sale.

'Dasha' marks start of the 30th Pearl Diving expedition

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: At least 175 Kuwaiti youngsters, aged between 10 to 18, embarked on the 30th Pearl Diving Expedition which kicked off yesterday. A traditional send-off ceremony, known commonly as 'Dasha', (Arabic for start of journey) was held at the Kuwait Sea Sports Club (KSSC) in Salmiya, attended by parents and several local officials. The event is held annually under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The sailors embarked on their trip aboard 13 wooden ships, including four donated by His Highness the Amir and by the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

This annual tradition is considered a milestone for reviving the Kuwaiti sea heritage and culture on the national, regional, and international arenas, State Minister for National Assembly Affairs Adel Al-Kharafi said in the statement to the media, adding that the trip has gained a wide popularity and interest on the public, official, and media levels. "I was really honored to represent His Highness the Amir in this ceremony which reminds us of the heritage of our ancestors; a ceremony that was made possible 30 years ago by late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah," he said.



KUWAIT: Ships set sail on the 30th annual Pearl Diving expedition. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

Local



Participants bid farewell to their families.



Kharafi praised KSSC's efforts in making this journey a success. Khalil, 13, is participating in the event for the first time. "I was supposed to join last year, but my family went for vacation to Thailand instead. But thank God, we stayed in Kuwait this summer, so I told my parents that I am joining this year. We registered and I am here with my cousin," he said. "I want to learn the art of pearling as practiced by our forefathers. I am sure this is not just about pearling, it is about being in the group, helping each other and getting the job done without the help of our parents."

KSSC had organized the first traditional pearl diving trip in 1986, starting with five vessels provided by the Ministry of Information. In 1990, all of the club's sea activities, including the pearl diving trips, were halted due to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August. In 1991, the club resumed its activities after the liberation of the country, and organized the fifth pearl diving trip on board of a ship donated by a prominent Kuwaiti sailor.

Furthermore, the event represents an opportunity to remind Kuwaiti youngsters of the historic sacrifices made by their fathers and grandfathers, who journeyed into regional seas and oceans, risking their lives to provide prosperous life and welfare for their families and country.



The participants board the ships ahead of the start of the expedition.

Coming down from Football Fever



KUWAIT: People watch the group stage match between Russia and Egypt in the 2018 FIFA World Cup, at a cafe in Kuwait. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Aakash Bakaya

What a month it has been for football fans. Even for those like myself who watch and follow the sport 365 days a year, the World Cup creates a magical and often indescribable atmosphere that is felt all around the globe. Kuwait is most definitely included in that list. Russia 2018 was all the more special because I got to experience it here, in Kuwait, after almost a decade. I wasn't working here during the last World Cup and even though I had fun memories of watching it in my home country, few things can come close to experiencing the thrills and passion of the sport in a football-crazy nation that is Kuwait.

Cafes and shisha houses buzz with excitement long before the game is even started and even the smallest of locales make accommodations and decor changes to get everyone pumped and in the mood for football. As we did back in 2010, my friends and I searched for the most ideal places to watch the games. Even though none of them were fancy or posh, they all had the best and biggest crowds of fans ready to support their teams.

As I am writing this, the World Cup is finished and already sketched into the history books of the planet's most beloved tournament of sport. Even though the delirium and excitement has slowly begun to die down, this edition's special moments will be firmly embedded in memory for a long, long time to come. Most, if not all were made so much more memorable because of the places we ended up watching them in. These were some of those moments :

Spain vs Portugal

The very second day of the World Cup set up this titanic clash in the Group Stages. Spain was reeling from a manager debacle that would soon leave their World Cup dreams in tatters. On the other hand, Portugal was looking even more reliant on their talisman to carry them through. All the pieces

were set up for a superb game and it delivered in spades. Spain came flying out of the gates with Striker Diego Costa looking even more like his bullish, driven self. His opening goal neutralized Ronaldo's penalty who ended up taking Portugal even further ahead due to Spanish goal-keeper David De Gea fumbling a straight-forward shot. The momentum didn't stop in the second half but it was the ending crescendo from CR7 that capped off the legendary encounter. Trailing by a goal and on the verge of his first World Cup hat-trick, the cafe we were at, filled with over a hundred people crammed in, was drowned in a tense silence. When the ball crashed into the back of the net, the entire place erupted. In those early days each and every one of us thought we witnessed a historic moment. Love him or hate him, we believed this would be the global stage Cristiano leaves his mark on. Alas that would not out to be true but the belief in the air that night was palpable.

The Egyptian emotional roller coaster

Egypt's journey to the World Cup was a ride in itself. No matter where you went you could not escape the crowds even during the qualifying stages. So when the day finally came for them to prove themselves to the entire world there was a lot at stake. Unfortunately for our Egyptian brothers and sisters, their team completely capitulated. You could feel the biting tension in the air in their opening game against Uruguay. I made sure we went to a traditional Egyptian shisha cafe because I knew the environment would be unmatched.

That opening game at least managed to meet expectations. Egypt defended like soldiers on the front-line as they faced down a barrage of Uruguayan attacks and the crowd responded in kind. People had brought drums, sung along to the national anthem and applauded everything from a well-made pass to an interception. It really felt like we were watching the game on a street in Cairo.

They lost that game but the following match where they

faced Russia had a glimmer of hope. That hope was named Mohammed Salah and the dreams of a nation rested on his injured shoulder. That game was the equivalent of watching a car crash. Egypt simply could not get a foot-hold into a game they had to win and each Salah attempt that went wayward was followed by gasps and defeated sighs. Russia slammed three goals in the second half and slowly all hope faded. Even a divisive penalty call that Salah capitalized on could only muster a tiny bit of cheers. Whether it was planned or not, I experienced the roller coaster that was Egypt's World Cup campaign and it's not one I will soon forget.

Croatia and the rise of the underdogs

One aspect that most people will remember from Russia 2018 are the blistering performances of the tournament's smaller teams. To my surprise, a lot of crowds in Kuwait were completely in support of them. South Korea smashing Germany in their final group stage match was my personal highlight with England (another small team) winning a penalty shoot-out, something I have never seen before in my life, coming second. But I think it is safe to say that it was the achievement of little Croatia that brought the under-dogs to the forefront. Croatia, the perpetual 'dark horses' finally rose against that title and took the tournament by storm. Their game against Argentina, a team with a large support in Kuwait, was easily the World Cup's boldest statement of intent.

Their campaign was capped off in an extremely fun final against France and by that time, the little team that could, created a fan-base that was 100 percent behind them. Very rarely does a team manage to keep their spirits high after a World Cup final loss and Croatia managed to do just that. As the final whistle blew and the French team began their celebrations. The entire cafe we were in gave the defeated Croatians a hefty round of applause. They came close but never stopped believing and playing to their strengths and those aspects are respected no matter where you're from.

Doctor talks stereotyping nationalities in Kuwait

Phenomenon common in Kuwait due to its small population: Dr Hands

By Ben Garcia

Stereotyping individuals based on their nationalities is common in many parts of the world, and is evident in Kuwait too. Dr Joana Hands, Director of Kuwait Counseling Center, told Kuwait Times about some of the reasons behind such behavior. Dr Hands is the lead doctor of the center and the president of the Middle East Psychological Association. She said stereotyping nationalities is almost similar to stereotyping people who visit psychologists. "If you visit a psychologist, people will automatically think you're crazy - a psycho. This is similar to stereotyping nationalities, discrimination and racism," she said.

She said stereotyping nationalities in Kuwait is more common due to its small population, and geographically speaking, Kuwait is a very small country. "So, people are labeled according to what is visible to them," she said. Dr Hands said it is normal and natural for human beings to make assumptions. "Stereotyping is very typical in this region because this country is very small and what we see here is measured according to our understanding," she said.

"This is connected to the way of thinking, of people's mindsets. In psychology, we have what we call a concept of pairing. It is the tendency of human minds to pair everything with anything - any subjects to people, and any people to any subject and so on to make our own concept of it. This is normal based on repetition and what we are familiar with. We tend to pair something with something familiar to us," she explained.

Concept of pairing

Dr Hands explained that in order to understand things, the easiest way is to compare or pair it with something. "In marketing strategy, in order for a product to be patronized, they

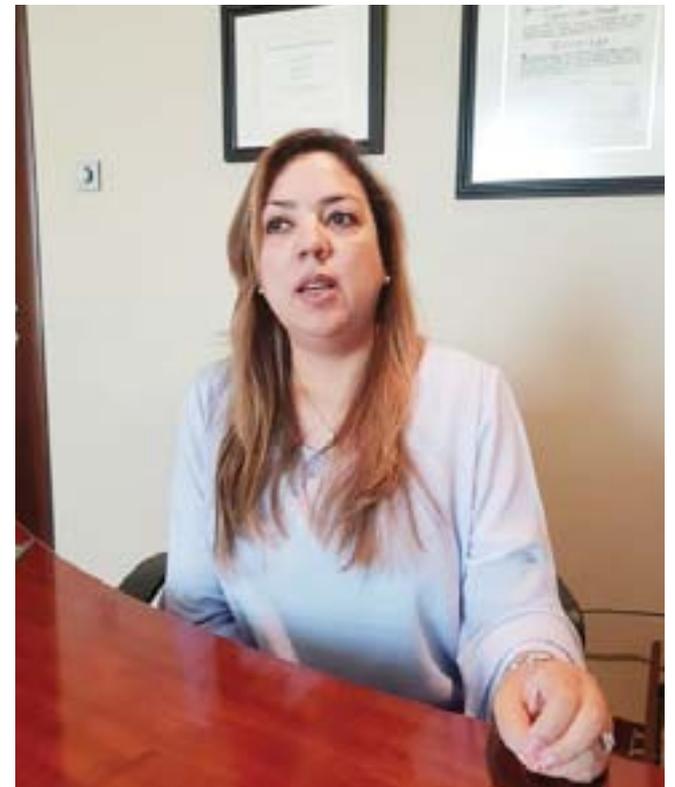
have to have a concept of pairing. For example, why are advertisements for soft drinks or colas partnered with cheese, fruits and veggies? Because what they are trying is to project that it's OK to drink colas - it's healthy like those products. So, this is like playing with minds," she said.

"What I am trying to say is that it is a familiar norm to us as humans - we pair. Indians and Filipinos - people automatically assume they are housemaids, and they would be labeled immediately as domestic helpers. This is also the concept when we see Bangladeshis - we pair them with a specific job they are commonly associated with, like cleaners or janitors. We do not do sensible research or investigation - maybe that Bangladeshi is a bank manager, a professor or even a CEO. We do not bother ourselves to do some sort of questioning before reaching a conclusion," she argued.

On the other hand, Hands stressed that it is also the job of the other party to object, but not too defensively. "We know that this is wrong, but if we do not cooperate and continue to defend ourselves, we are missing the opportunities to stop it," she said. "Maybe you should try to talk to them politely and introduce yourself that you are so and so. By this you are helping them to recognize the fact that not all Filipinos or Indians are housemaids. The world is not only run by Americans or the English, French or Spanish - we are citizens of the world. There are more nationalities moving around. For example, Filipinos are all over the world, but they are not only into performing household chores - they are teachers, engineers, doctors and other professionals too," she said.

"We need to try harder to move away from the comfort zone that we are familiar with. Let us help people to not be impulsive and irrational. Assuming things is one of the biggest human weaknesses. Be rational - this is what that separates us from machines and animals. So how can we help? Through proper education and exposure. If you see

“ We need to move away from the comfort zone ”



KUWAIT: Dr Joana Hands, Director of Kuwait Counseling Center, speaks to Kuwait Times.

stereotyping, try to correct people - don't be afraid to educate them. It's an opportunity to explain and reach out and talk about it. Awareness has to start, even in a small way," she noted. The Middle East Psychological Association along with the Kuwait Counseling Center will host the biggest psychological conference to be held in Kuwait in March next year.

Popular sawt singer Khalifa passes away

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti popular sawt singer and performer Hamad Khalifa, considered one of the icons of traditional Kuwaiti music, passed away on Wednesday at the age of 89. The late singer was renowned for performing old folk songs in the traditional Kuwaiti musical styles of sawt and samry. He was also known for his mastery of oud and other string instruments.

Khalifa, whose full name is Hamad Khalifa Ali Al-Saqer, was born in 1929 in Al-Mawash neighborhood in the old area of Jibla in Kuwait City. Following his parents' death at a



The late Hamad Khalifa

young age, Khalifa grew up as an orphan living at his relatives' home in the Murqab area of Kuwait City. He received his education, which consisted merely of memorizing the Holy Quran, reading, and writing Arabic, from

the schools of Sayed Hashem Al-Henayan, Mulla Marshad, and Al-Mubarakaya.

His interest in music began when listening to old vinyl records of sawt music, played at public coffee houses. Sat inside these cafes, he would listen passionately for hours to the songs and melodies, prompting him to develop a love for oud - a necessary component of this type of music. It was then he decided to learn how to play this diverse instrument, which he mastered soon after.

Khalifa joined other fellow musicians and began to play at samras - a Kuwaiti word used to describe private in-door sessions which combine sawt ensembles. As his performances developed over time, Khalifa began to perform at major community-renowned samras alongside other prominent counterparts, such as Saud Al-Arouj. He also performed at wedding parties and concerts,

sponsored by state-owned enterprises, such as the Kuwait Oil Company, to which he was employed. Strangely enough, the late singer's first opportunity on the microphone was not in Kuwait. While on transit as a member of a Kuwaiti dhow naval merchant expedition he performed a sawt song for the first time on a radio station in the East African archipelago of Zanzibar. He was accompanied on the mirwas, a small double-sided hand-held drum, by Majed Awadh, who happens to be a kin to the famous Awadh Doukhi, an iconic Kuwaiti singer.

Khalifa released his first record in 1949 under the Bahrain-based Taha Records, owned by fellow Kuwaiti Taha Sabry. He also recorded for Bahrain Phone Records, owned by Ibrahim Taqi. In 1954, Khalifa released another record under independent label, Bou-Zaid Phone Company, in Kuwait. — KUNA

Local

Central Bank issues BOP report for Q1 2018

KUWAIT: The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) published yesterday the preliminary data of the Balance of Payments (BOP) of the State of Kuwait for the first quarter of 2018 and the revised data of the fourth quarter of 2017. The Data show that the Current Account surplus (summing up receipts and payments between domestic economy and other economies in terms of goods, services and income) recorded a surplus of KD 1.6 million during the first quarter of 2018 against a surplus of KD 1.158 million during the previous quarter, representing a hike of KD 521.8 million, i.e. 45.1 percent.

The upturn in the current account surplus is due to the appreciation in the surplus of balance on goods and the depreciation in the surplus of primary income on one hand, and the increase in both services account deficit and secondary income deficit on the other. The surplus in the current account mainly reflects a surge in the surplus of the balance on goods (merchandise exports minus merchandise imports) to KD 3.3 million during the first quarter of 2018, compared to KD 2.2 million during the previous quarter.

Furthermore, deficit in the Services Account (net value of services transactions between residents and nonresidents, the most important of which are transportation, travel, communications and

construction) increased by KD 294.8 million or 17.8 percent to KD 1.9 million during the first quarter of 2018, compared to a deficit of KD 1.6 million during the previous quarter. As for the developments in the Financial Account (that records transactions involving transfers of financial assets and liabilities between residents and nonresidents) of the State of Kuwait's BOP during the first quarter of 2018, the net value of residents' external assets included in the Financial Account grew at a better pace by KD 1.4 million against a growth of KD 4 million during the previous quarter, i.e. a surge of KD 2.5 million or 63.8 percent.

As a result of the developments in the main BOP accounts, the overall position of Kuwait's BOP recorded a surplus of KD 471 million during the first quarter of 2018 against a surplus of KD 415 million during the previous quarter. From a broader perspective, the overall position of the State of Kuwait BOP that takes into consideration the change in the net value of external assets of some institutions listed under 'General Government' item, the overall position of BOP, in a broad definition, indicates a surplus estimated at KD 939 million during the first quarter of 2018 against a surplus of KD 1.9 million during the previous quarter.— KUNA



The Central Bank of Kuwait.

Kuwait's MoU with China to expand SMEs: Ministry

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Ministry of Commerce and Industry has confirmed that the memorandum of understanding signed recently with China in the field of e-commerce will expand the activities of small and medium-sized enterprises across the borders and promote the investment of emerging technology companies. Assistant Undersecretary for International Organizations and Foreign Trade Sheikh Nimr Al-Sabah said that the memorandum signed by the Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan during the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to China will encourage and develop trade, especially electronic trade in services and electronic goods, including entertainment, tourism and the creation of new jobs.

Sheikh Nimr added that the actual enforcement of this memorandum will start after the constitutional ratifications in Kuwait take place, pointing out that the memorandum is a great starting point for cooperation between the Kuwaiti and Chinese sides. "We are committed to supporting the growth of emerging businesses in the e-commerce sector and building strong brands that will enable us to be present in the GCC markets first and then stabilize them in the global markets with new ways to sell and promote online," he said. The provisions of the memorandum also included the expansion of SME activities outside the boundaries in the sale and purchase, as well as the investment of emerging technology companies and the service of entrepreneurs and small and medium enterprises that had begun to operate through electronic commerce as well as the training of national cadres in that area, he noted.

The MoU will also promote the sustainable and stable development of bilateral trade and activate the strategic relationship between Kuwait and China on the basis of mutual benefits, including the exchange of experiences and information in the field of e-commerce through holding workshops and training sessions, as well as launching joint projects and initiatives that serve the interests of both countries. Sheikh Nimr said that China is very advanced in the field of e-commerce and the great benefit of this memorandum will be in the interest of the country including the exchange of experiences and training of national cadres on e-commerce through workshops.

He predicted that there will be "huge investments through this memorandum in this vital field in the long run and after its entry into force." He pointed out that working to promote and develop e-commerce services will improve the business community, especially as the world has begun to rely on them. He pointed out that e-commerce is one of the new economies in the region and is of great importance so the State of Kuwait signed a memorandum of understanding in the field of electronic commerce with China, which has great experience in this area.— KUNA

Speaker participates in Arab Parliament session in Cairo



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Parliament Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem leaves for Cairo to lead the Kuwaiti delegation in the 28th extraordinary session of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union.— KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Parliament Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem headed yesterday to Cairo to lead the Kuwaiti delegation in the 28th extraordinary session of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union, scheduled tomorrow. Ghanem was escorted to the airport by Minister of State for National Assembly Adel Al-Kharafi, National Assembly Secretary Allam Al-Kandari and Egypt's Ambassador to

Kuwait Tareq Al-Gouny.

Ghanem is scheduled to speak in the urgent meeting, which discusses the latest developments and the continuous hostility in the occupied Palestine by the Israelis. Ghanem will hold a series of sideline economic meetings with Parliament speakers participating in the session.— KUNA

State Audit Bureau participates in sustainable development panel

NEW YORK: A delegation from the Kuwaiti State Audit Bureau (SAB), headed by Acting President Adel Abdulaziz Al-Sarawi, participated in a high-level panel discussion on the experiences of the Supreme Audit Institutions (SAI) in implementing the goals of sustainable development and their implications for the future organized by the Austrian and Canadian missions to the United Nations and the INTOSAI Secretariat.

Sultan Al-Otaibi, chief auditor of the performance control department, said that the event was held on the sidelines of the second meeting organized by the International Organization of

Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. He added that the seminar discussed the contribution of supervisory bodies in the 2030 agenda of the goals of sustainable development effectively, transparently and responsibly.

He pointed out that the supreme institutions of financial supervision are pillars of development and an important source of information on the gains of development and progress towards sustainable development goals. He said the supreme audit institutions contribute to maintaining financial sustainability by monitoring public spending and providing information on the performance of development programs. He pointed out that through their audits, they can monitor progress and identify improvements and positive points.

Otaibi pointed to the central role of the Supreme Audit Institutions to achieve the goals of sustainable development by enhancing accountability, transparency and good leadership, especially after they were recognized by the UN General Assembly resolutions of 2011 and 2014.— KUNA

Local

\$1.8 billion bad debts for laid off expatriates

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Kuwait's efforts to create more jobs for nationals by releasing foreigners working in the public sector has created a problem when thousands of laid off expatriates became unable to fulfill their financial obligations towards local banks.

Recent Central Bank of Kuwait data shows the total bad debts for expatriates during the past four year reached \$1.8 billion, a sizable portion of which comprise the debts of foreigners who were laid off by the government, according to sources. Eighty five percent of those debts are owed to local banks, while the remaining 15 percent are owed to financial facilities companies.

The number of expatriate employees in state departments dropped by 70 percent in the past six months, according to official statistics released by the Central Statistical Bureau and Civil Service Commission, thanks in principle to the government's 'replacement policy' that targets the complete 'Kuwaitization' of the public sector's manpower by 2022. The number of expats in the public sector dropped to 80,000, compared to around 340,000 Kuwaiti employees as of the end of June.

Screen allowance

The Information Ministry decided to pay a KD 30 monthly allowance for each of its employees who have to sit at their desks and face a computer throughout the duration of their working hours. The decision also includes paying a special KD 15 'screen allowance' to employees who do not have direct contact with the public as well. The stipulations to obtain the allowance include that the employee must be a Kuwaiti, and that he or she sends an e-mail from his or her ministry-operated user account and signed by his direct supervisor and department director, requesting the allowance's payment.

Grants' budget

A government financial report revealed that grants in the state's general budget for the fiscal year 2018/2019 reached KD 5,247,390 billion, at an increase of 12 percent compared to the previous estimation. The grants chapter makes up 24 percent of the total expenses; the second largest after the first chapter, dedicated to the public sector's payroll. The total capital and current grants for foreign governments for the fiscal year 2018-2019 reached KD 217 million. Meanwhile, total grants for international organizations reached KD one million. The total grants for



government units reached KD 4.995 billion, while grants to other foreign entities were KD 34 million.

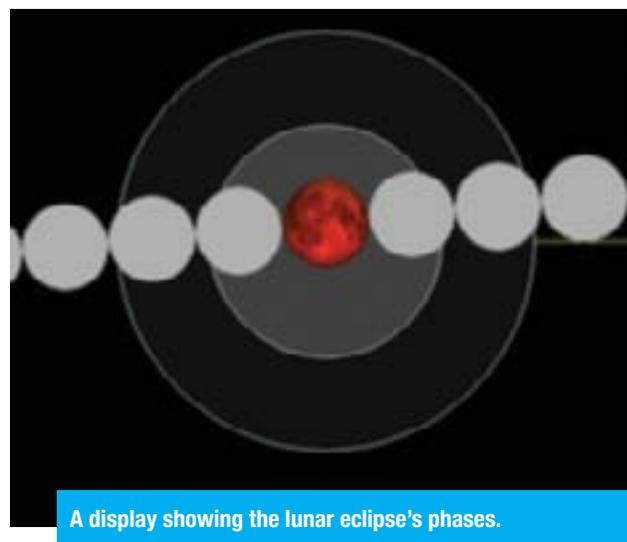
Model gardens park

Director General of Kuwait Institute for Sci-

entific Research (KISR) Dr Sameera Al-Sayyed Omar asked Kuwait Municipality's General Manager about what has been done in regards to allocating a site to construct the model gardens park at the sea front.

Longest lunar eclipse in century July 27

KUWAIT: The world will witness the longest lunar eclipse in this century, Kuwaiti astronomer and researcher Adel Al-Saadoon said yesterday. The moon will start its partial eclipse at 21:24, and would be fully eclipsed at 22:30, he added. "The full duration of the eclipse would be an hour and 43 minutes, which is considered the longest in the century," Saadoon noted. A lunar eclipse occurs when the moon passes directly behind the Earth and into its shadow, this can occur only when the sun, Earth, and moon are aligned (in syzygy) exactly or very closely so, with the planet in between. Hence, a lunar eclipse can occur only on the night of a full moon. — KUNA



A display showing the lunar eclipse's phases.

Kuwait strengthens AU's vision of peace, progress, prosperity

NEW YORK: Kuwait will continue to strengthen the African Union's (AU) vision of peace, progress and prosperity to prevent and resolve conflicts and maintain peace, security and regional stability, Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi said. He added in a speech on Wednesday evening at the Security Council session that the cooperation between the UN and the AU will be based on Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.

Kuwait's link with the African continent is historic and

rooted in the pre-establishment of diplomatic relations. This link further strengthened after Kuwait joined as an observer member of the AU since December 2011. Former Secretary-General Kofi Annan's report said that there can be no peace without development and there can be no development without peace, Otaibi said. This vision is consistent with one of the basic principles of Kuwait's foreign policy especially the development policy pursued by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development since 1961.

The fund's contributions to 51 African countries amounted to about \$10 billion. He called for cooperation between the Security Council, AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the close cooperation between UN and AU representatives. Otaibi respects the AU's constant commitment to cover 25 percent of the cost of peace support operations. Kuwait looks forward to strengthening cooperation between the Security Council and the League of Arab States by preventing conflicts and resolving them in peaceful ways as stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations. — KUNA

Kuwait Food Bank launches water project in India

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Kuwait Food Bank (KFB) launched a project to dig wells in India, in order to provide clean water to residential areas where people suffer from diseases related to water transport. Director General of KFB Salem Al-Hamar said that the project aims at collecting donations to dig wells in India. It is a first stage of KFB's plan to cover the needs of poor families around the world with basics that help them live, and making drinking water available, Hamar said, adding that the cost of each well starts with KD 50. "There are giant artesian wells that cover entire areas, but they cost a lot," he said, adding that donations can be made through KFB's website or at its premises. Residents of remote areas in India are Muslims who are in need of fresh water wells, Hamar said. He noted that those people are suffering a lot to have access to water, but now the KFB is carrying out its largest drinking water project by digging wells in order to help stop their suffering.



International

FRIDAY, JULY 20, 2018



19 drown, dozens missing as migrant boat sinks off Cyprus

Eritrean troops withdraw from militarized Ethiopian border

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ALEPPO: Busses transporting residents and fighters from the towns of Fuaa and Kefraya arrive in the Syrian regime-held territory of the al-Eis crossing point south of Aleppo yesterday. — AFP

Assad poised to recover Golan frontier

Surrender deal follows swift Russian-backed offensive

BEIRUT/AMMAN: President Bashar Al-Assad is set to recover control of the Syrian frontier with the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights in a major victory over rebels who have agreed to surrender terms, sources on both sides said yesterday.

Backed by Russian air power and unopposed by Assad's foreign adversaries, government forces have swept through southwestern Syria in the last month in one of the swiftest campaigns of the war, forcing surrender on massively outgunned rebels.

The campaign, which has already restored Assad's control over a critical portion of the frontier with Jordan, marks another milestone in his efforts to recover control of the country fractured by more than seven years of conflict. There was no government confirmation of the Quneitra agreement. State media cited "reports" a deal had been reached. It was not clear when implementation would begin.

A copy of the agreement sent to Reuters by a rebel source said insurgents had negotiated the deal with Russia. Echoing surrender terms imposed on rebels elsewhere, opposition fighters agreed to give up heavy and medium-sized weapons. Those wishing to stay in the area will "settle" their status with the state, meaning accepting a return of its rule.

Those who reject the deal will be given safe passage out to the opposition-held province of Idlib in the northwest, according to terms that were also reported by a military news outlet run by Lebanon's Hezbollah. The Iran-backed group Hezbollah is fighting in Syria in

support of Assad. Once the southwestern campaign is finished, Assad's focus will likely turn to the two remaining areas outside his grasp. These are the rebel-held northwest, where the presence of Turkish forces will complicate any military campaign, and swathes of the northeast and east that are held by Kurdish-led militias, supported by some 2,000 US troops on the ground.

As Damascus and its allies pursue military victory, there appears little chance of the kind of negotiated peace which Assad's adversaries say is needed to stabilize the country and encourage millions of refugees to return. The war is estimated to have killed hundreds of thousands of people, displacing 11 million and forcing some six million abroad as refugees. A Reuters witness on the Israeli side of the Golan frontier said fighting continued in the area of Tel Al-Haara, a strategically vital hilltop seized by government forces this week. The sound of planes could be heard as shelling continued.

Syrian army

The campaign near the Golan frontier has been particularly sensitive because of Israeli concerns. Israel has signaled it has no problem with Assad recovering the area as long as his Iranian and Iran-backed allies were kept away from the frontier.

Israel has also said it would demand strict adherence to the 1974 disengagement deal with the Syrian army on the Golan, threatening a "harsh response" to any attempt by Syrian forces to deploy in that

zone. The deal, concluded after the 1973 Middle East war, created a buffer zone patrolled by the UN Disengagement and Observer Force. The report by the Hezbollah-run military news outlet said the surrender agreement stipulated "the return of the Syrian army, represented in the 90th and the 61st brigades, to the positions that it was in before 2011".

Details of the deal sent by the rebel source included a provision that Russian military police would accompany the same two Syrian army brigades "to the ceasefire line and the demilitarized zone, according to the 1974 agreement".

The provisions did not elaborate on any implications of the deployment of military units on the 1974 agreement. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, during a visit to Russia to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin this month, indicated his country did not object to Assad's return to the Golan as long as Iranian force and Hezbollah stayed away. In a briefing with Israeli reporters, he said Israel had not had a problem "with the Assad regime for 40 years", noting that "not one bullet was fired on the Golan Heights" in that time.

Israeli media accounts of the meeting with Putin also quoted him as saying that the Russians had succeeded getting Iranian and Hezbollah forces to move dozens of kilometers (miles) away from the Golan frontier. US President Donald Trump said at a news conference with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday in Helsinki that both had agreed to work together to help ensure Israel's security. — Reuters

International

19 drown, dozens missing as migrant boat sinks off Cyprus

More than 100 rescued in joint operation

NICOSIA: At least 19 migrants drowned and up to 30 were missing on Wednesday after their boat sank in the Mediterranean off the north of Cyprus, local security forces said. The boat was carrying 150 people, reportedly Syrians, when it went down off the coast of the breakaway Turkish Cypriot-controlled portion of the island, which is only recognized by Ankara.

More than 100 people were rescued in a joint operation by Turkish Cypriot and Turkish coastguards after the boat sank off the village of Gialousa (Yeni Erenkoy in Turkish) on the panhandle Karpas peninsula. At least 19 drowned and between 25 and 30 were still missing, the Turkish Cypriot security forces (GKK) said in a statement. The Turkish coastguard said in a statement that the accident took place 30 kilometers (18 miles) off the shore of northern Cyprus. It said that 103 survivors had been rescued. One was taken by helicopter to Cyprus in grave medical condition, the GKK added.

The other 102 were taken by boats to the port of Tasucu in Turkey's southern Mersin region where they arrived Wednesday evening, Turkey's state-run Anadolu news agency said.

The 19 bodies of the dead were also taken to Tasucu for autopsies. One of the survivors was a three-year-old child, while a woman who drowned was pregnant, the Hurriyet newspaper

said. Search efforts were underway to recover the missing with commercial vessels also taking part, according to reports. Turkey's DHA news agency said those on board the vessel were Syrians seeking to go to Europe but this had yet to be confirmed.

'Cemetery for refugees'

Cyprus, some 160 kilometers (100 miles) from Syria's coast, has not seen the massive inflow of migrants experienced by Turkey, Greece and Italy although asylum applications have risen sharply.

According to the International Organization for Migration, 47,637 migrants and refugees entered Europe by sea up to July with only 47 entering Cyprus. In the same period, 1,404 people lost their lives in the crossings, mostly those trying to cross from Africa to Italy or Malta. Cyprus has been divided since 1974 when Turkish troops invaded and occupied the northern third of the island in response to a Greek military junta-sponsored coup. "The Mediterranean must stop being a cemetery for refugees," Turkish Cypriot president Mustafa Akinci said after the disaster. Turkey has however been one of the hubs for migrants and refugees fleeing Syria and other trouble spots like Afghanistan and Iraq.

More than a million people, many fleeing the



MERSIN, Turkey: Turkish first aid officials carry injured refugees as a man holds his child at Tasucu port in Mersin, south-central Turkey, on Wednesday after a boat carrying migrants sank in the Mediterranean Sea off the north of Cyprus. — AFP

war in Syria, crossed to European Union member Greece from Turkey in 2015 after the onset of the bloc's worst migration crisis since World War II. Turkey struck a deal with the EU in 2016

in an effort to stem the flow of migrants, and agreed to take back illegal migrants landing on Greek islands in exchange for incentives including financial aid. —AFP

Kuwait Times

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International

Eritrean troops withdraw from militarized Ethiopian border

Eritrea appoints first ambassador to Ethiopia in two decades

ADDIS ABABA: Eritrea has pulled troops back from its heavily militarized border with Ethiopia as a “gesture of reconciliation”, the pro-government Eritrean Press agency said on its Facebook page.

There was no immediate confirmation from the government in Asmara, but the move would be consistent with rapidly improving ties between the Horn of Africa neighbors, whose 1998 war killed tens of thousands and led to two decades of military stalemate.

Ethiopia’s Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Eritrea’s President Isaias Afwerki signed an agreement in Asmara on July 9 to restore ties and have since taken steps to put it into practice including reopening embassies in each other’s countries. “It is imperative for all those who care about the long-term stability and economic viability of the region to do everything they can to help the two countries move beyond the senseless war that wrought so much suffering on both peoples,” the agency said.

Earlier yesterday, Ethiopia appointed its first ambassador to Eritrea in two decades, the state-affiliated Fana news agency said. An online report from Fana said Redwan Hussien, formerly

Ethiopian ambassador to Ireland, had become Addis Ababa’s representative in Asmara. Abiy became prime minister in April and said he wanted to implement a peace deal that ended the war. The surprise decision was part of a broader effort to reform economics and politics in Ethiopia, the second-most populous country in Africa and east Africa’s largest economy.

Border war in 1998 followed by stalemate



The reforms included releasing thousands of political prisoners, a big step in a tightly controlled country ruled by a coalition of parties that drove the previous regime from power in 1991. Better relations between the

two countries could eventually give landlocked Ethiopia access to Eritrea’s ports and lay the groundwork for an easing of the political isolation of Eritrea.

Both leaders have visited each other, and Isaias this week reopened his country’s embassy in Addis Ababa. Ethiopia’s national carrier Ethiopia Airlines on Wednesday made its first flight to Asmara in two decades and was greeted by dancers waving flags and flowers as families separated for decades had emotional reunions.

Ethiopian Airlines is in talks to take a stake in



ASMARA: Azmera Addisalem (second left) and her family get emotional after meeting her father (who is an Ethiopian journalist) for the first time in twenty years, upon his arrival at the Asmara International airport, on Wednesday. — AFP

Eritrean Airlines, Tewolde GebreMariam, chief executive of Ethiopian Airlines, said in an interview on Thursday, adding that a study would be conducted to determine the size of the stake.

In another sign of change, the new Ethiopian central bank governor met the business community

and heads of major banks and listened to their complaints for two hours while private TV cameras rolled and journalists took notes. “We are open to listen to the challenges of the business community unlike in previous days,” said Yinager Dessie, who was appointed last month. — Reuters

Freed Mauritanian anti-slavery activists vow to keep fighting

DAKAR: Two anti-slavery activists freed from prison in Mauritania vowed an all-out fight to rescue their nation from one of the world’s worst slavery rates, saying jail and torture were no deterrent.

Mauritania was the last nation to abolish slavery, outlawing it in 1981, and more than two in every 100 of its people still live as slaves, according to the 2018 Global Slavery Index.

Human rights groups say the government has made no effort to stamp it out and arrests people who speak out against it. Abdallahi Matallah Saleck and Moussa Biram were jailed for their alleged role in a protest and charged with inciting riots and rebellion. They spent two years in a remote desert prison where they say they suffered horrible abuse.

“They tortured us, they did everything they could so that we would back down. But we will never, ever back down,” Biram told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone.

Less than a week after being released, the two men were back on the streets of the capital Nouakchott, encouraging fellow members of the Initiative for the Resurgence of the Abolitionist Movement (IRA) to stay strong.

“The fight has just begun,” Biram said, laughing, although he added that he is not in good health and has injuries from torture and beatings. “I can’t even stand up because of my legs which people hit with batons.” A government spokesman said the allegations of torture were false and that an independent body called the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture had visited the detention site in 2017 and found no human rights violations.

The government has previously denied making arbitrary arrests and said that it only prosecutes “unlawful and unregistered organizations that... provoke riots, chaos and insecurity.”

Because the government has refused to register the IRA as an organization, the men could be thrown back in jail at any moment, said Francois Patuel of Amnesty International.

“We know that we’re not safe, but we are not afraid,” Saleck told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. “This is our country no matter what, and we have to fight against discrimination and slavery,” he said. Slavery in Mauritania follows racial lines, with black descendants of ethnic groups from the country’s south typically enslaved by lighter-skinned Mauriticians. Some Mauriticians are born into slavery and spend their whole lives as domestic or farm workers. More than 40 million people were enslaved around the world as of 2016, according to an estimate by the human rights group Walk Free Foundation and the International Labour Organization. — Reuters

Palestinians in Jerusalem raze own homes rather than see Israelis move in

JERUSALEM: Two Palestinian families yesterday demolished the homes they had lived in for nearly two decades, saying they would rather destroy them than face the prospect of Israeli settlers moving in.

Within two hours, two mechanical diggers smashed through the ceilings, walls and floors of the two buildings in Beit Hanina, a village on the outskirts of East Jerusalem, territory that Israel captured in the 1967 Middle East war and then annexed in a move not recognized internationally.

Jihad Shawamreh, 50, a taxi driver, said that he built his six-room house in 2000 and that his ex-wife Fawzia, their six children and other relatives lived there until Thursday. The demolition was the culmination of a lengthy legal battle. Israel’s Supreme Court ruled in January that the land on which the homes were constructed had been under Jewish ownership since 1974 and that documents presented by the Palestinian families to support their claims had been forged.

The families argued they had bought the plots in good faith and believed they were the rightful owners. “I built (my house) with my own hands. It is where I brought up my

children. This is where they grew up,” Shawamreh said, as the Hyundai digger went to work. “We took down the houses for fear of seeing settlers move in, and having to see them inside the house.”

The Israel Land Fund, whose stated goal is “acquiring all the Land of Israel for the Jewish people”, advertised on its website after the court decision six months ago for “4 idealistic families” willing to move into the homes. The group’s director Arie King told Reuters there were no immediate plans for new construction. He said the land had been sold by its original Israeli owners to other Israeli buyers, but did not identify them. Most countries consider settlement activity, on territory Israel occupied in 1967, as illegal. Israel disputes this.

Settlement in Jerusalem is a particularly sensitive issue. Palestinians want East Jerusalem as capital of a future state, while Israel regards all of Jerusalem as its capital, a claim that has not won international recognition. Shawamreh said the demolition cost 30,000 shekels (\$8,200) and that he had turned down offers of money from Israeli settlers to leave the buildings standing.

Friends, neighbors and the newly homeless families watched glumly on a hillside in Beit Hanina as dust rose into the air.

Shawamreh’s neighbor Zeinat Abu Rumeileh, 62, cried as she sat beside the other demolished home, in a tent that she said had been provided by the Palestinian Authority, which exercises limited self-rule in the occupied West Bank. — Reuters

International

EU urges member states to gear up ahead of Brexit next year

Negotiations could fail and cause greater disruptions

BRUSSELS: The European Union yesterday urged EU member countries and businesses to “step up preparations” for Britain’s exit next year from the bloc, underlining fears the negotiations could fail and cause even greater disruption.

The appeal came before Britain’s new Brexit negotiator Dominic Raab was due in Brussels following a rebellion in Prime Minister Theresa May’s government over strategy.

The European Commission, the EU’s executive arm, urged “member states and private parties to step up preparations... for all outcomes” by the March 30 withdrawal deadline. It said “there is still no certainty that there will be a ratified withdrawal agreement in place on that date,” even though the EU is working around the clock for a deal.

“The UK’s withdrawal will undoubtedly cause disruption - for example in business supply chains - whether or not there is a deal,” the commission added. It highlighted checks at a new border, the validity of licenses, certificates and authorizations issued by Britain as well as data transfers.

Britons voted to leave the 28-nation bloc in June 2016, but negotiations were only launched a year later and have bogged down frequently since then. Stumbling blocks include the future of the border between EU member Ireland and the British province of Northern Ireland against a backdrop of discord in London.

Raab was to meet EU negotiator Michel Barnier later yesterday for the first time since his predecessor David Davis and Foreign Secretary

Boris Johnson quit. The pair rejected May’s Brexit blueprint, which would keep Britain economically close to the EU. May is battling to unite her Conservative Party around her blueprint, formally unveiled last week following months of cabinet infighting. It would see Britain ask the European Union for a free trade area for goods through a “facilitated customs arrangement” alongside a “common rulebook”.

‘Volatile’ situation

Brexiters believe that keeps Britain too close to the EU, while pro-Europeans think it fails to protect the country’s dominant services sector, among other gripes. The backlash has seen the prime minister face persistent rumors Tory MPs are planning to topple her. Barnier has warned that it will be difficult to reach a conclusion in the negotiations by the October target, which would give parliaments on both sides time to endorse the deal.

The EU aims to give Britain a transition period until the end of 2020 to give businesses and others time to adjust to a post-Brexit future. The 16-page commission document warns “there will be no transition period and EU law will cease to apply to and in the United Kingdom on March 30” in the event of no deal.

It also warned of possible disruption to transport, including aviation, as well as to the flow of goods as a result of customs checks. On Wednesday, the Irish government said it had stepped up preparations for Britain’s departure, including what



LONDON: A video grab from footage broadcast by the UK Parliament’s Parliamentary Recording Unit (PRU) shows Britain’s former Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union (Brexit Minister) David Davis (R) listen as Britain’s former Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson stands and speaks in the House of Commons in London. — AFP

it called the “unlikely case of a ‘no deal’ Brexit.”

These include Ireland’s plans for at least 902 new customs and veterinary inspectors at ports and airports to tackle changes in the trading relationship with Britain.

Barnier is due to brief the 27 European affairs

ministers on Friday about the latest in the Brexit negotiations. An EU source said all the negotiators sought a withdrawal agreement the cost is “disproportionately high” without one. And with the situation so “volatile” in London, the source said, they will “try not to put oil on the fire.” — AFP

Italian PM calls for EU body to coordinate migrant arrivals

ROME: Italy has asked the European Commission to set up an agency to oversee the distribution of migrants rescued in the Mediterranean, Prime Minister Giovanni Conte said yesterday.

The new Italian government is looking to limit the number of migrants it lets into the country and has shut its ports to humanitarian rescue ships, saying it is bearing an unfair burden within the European Union for dealing with asylum seekers.

On Sunday, Rome allowed some 450 migrants to disembark in Sicily, but only after Germany, France, Malta, Spain, Portugal and Ireland had agreed to take in many of the newcomers - the first time such an ad hoc deal was struck between EU partners.

“What happened on Sunday should become the norm,” Conte told *Il Fatto Quotidiano* newspaper, adding that he had written to the European Commission

asking it to set up a crisis committee “which can then mediate with the various governments”.

The United Nations yesterday welcomed the weekend move to send the latest batch of migrants to various countries, saying it set a “positive example” of how the EU could manage its borders.

“However, solutions are needed that go beyond piecemeal or ‘ship-by-ship’ arrangements,” said Filippo Grandi, head of the U.N. refugee agency, the UNHCR, calling on EU leaders to make good on promises to be more collaborative.

Some EU countries, such as Hungary and the Czech Republic, have refused to let in migrants.

The European Commission said on Thursday it had decided to refer Hungary to the EU Court of Justice for failing to respect EU immigration and asylum rules.

Conte said he was trying to persuade both Budapest and Prague to do more to tackle the migration issue.

“I am trying to convince them ... that even they, who do not border the Mediterranean, are not immune to this problem.”

Italy has seen more than 650,000 migrants reach its shores since 2014. However, numbers have fallen off sharply over the past year, with Italy putting pressure on Libya to do more to halt the exodus from its shores. — Reuters

Nigerian police say 8 Boko Haram suspects confess to Chibok abduction

MAIDUGURI, Nigeria: Eight suspected members of Islamist militant group Boko Haram have confessed to involvement in the 2014 abduction of some 270 girls from the town of Chibok, the Nigeria Police Force said on Wednesday. The mass abduction of girls from their school caused global outrage and drew attention to the militant group which has killed more than 30,000 people since 2009 in an insurgency aimed at creating an Islamic state in northeast Nigeria.

Abba Kyari, deputy commissioner of police, said 22 suspected members of the militant group were arrested in different locations in the neighboring northeastern states of Yobe and Borno.

“Eight of them, including a commander, have confessed to being involved in the planning and kidnap of Chibok girls,” Kyari said. “It was an intelligence-led operation. We have been monitoring them for about six months to one year,” said Kyari, who led the team.

Nigerian authorities have convicted this year two alleged Boko Haram members to 15 and 20 years in prison for their purported role in the kidnapping of the Chibok girls.

The convictions are part of mass trials of more than 1,600 suspected members of the insurgency. Rights groups had criticized the court hearings for their secretive nature, with initial trials held behind closed doors.

With presidential elections due in February, President Muhammadu Buhari’s administration is under pressure to show success in the fight against Boko Haram, a group he had vowed to defeat when campaigning for 2015 elections.

The government and military have repeatedly said since late 2015 that the insurgency has been defeated. Despite that, authorities do not control all of the territory in Nigeria’s northeast, particularly around Lake Chad, and the militants frequently stage deadly, sophisticated attacks on the army and civilians. Nigerian police are frequently accused of prisoner abuse and malpractice, claims they deny.

Many of the Chibok girls managed to escape in the hours following their abduction or were released in the last few years, including 82 who were released in an exchange deal that included several imprisoned senior members of Boko Haram. But around 100 are still missing and their condition is unknown. — Reuters

International

Putin slams US forces ready to 'sacrifice' Russia-US ties

Trump's embrace of Putin drew outrage across US

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday slammed "forces" in the US who were willing to sacrifice Russian-US ties, two days after a summit with his US counterpart Donald Trump who has since faced a storm of criticism. "We see that there are forces in the US that are easily ready to sacrifice Russian-American relations for their own ambitions," Putin said in a speech to Russian ambassadors gathered in Moscow.

"We see that there are forces in the US that put their narrow party interests higher than national ones," Putin went on to say.

He added that Russia is "nevertheless open to developing contacts with the US on the basis of equality." "We need a new positive agenda, aimed at working together and finding common ground," he said. "We talked about this of course while meeting President Trump."

The US leader's embrace of Putin this week drew derision and outrage across the US political spectrum.

On Monday, Trump appeared to accept Putin's denial of Russian interference in the US 2016 presidential election at their joint press

conference in Helsinki, sparking uproar in Washington. The US leader later said he misspoke when he appeared to take Putin's denial of interference at face value and said he accepted the US intelligence community's view that Moscow sought to influence the 2016 vote. "I thought it would be obvious but I would like to clarify just in case it wasn't. In a key sentence in my remarks I said the word 'would' instead of 'wouldn't,'" Trump said in an extraordinary postscript to the Helsinki conference on Tuesday.

"The sentence should have been, 'I don't see any reason why I wouldn't, or why it wouldn't be Russia.'"

Yesterday, FBI director Christopher Wray said the US intelligence community stands by its view that Russia meddled in the 2016 US election, despite Putin's denial.

The two major American political parties appear largely united in their desire to keep the Kremlin in check. While Trump's position on Russian interference has shifted repeatedly in recent days, some in Trump's party signaled they had had enough of his wrecking ball diplomacy and sought to take steps to box him in. —AFP



MOSCOW: Russia's President Vladimir Putin attends a meeting with Russian ambassadors and representatives to international organizations in Moscow yesterday. —AFP

France's Macron under fire after aide caught hitting May Day protester

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron came under fire yesterday after his office suspended one of his aides who was caught on camera striking a May Day protester, but did not inform law enforcement authorities.

Critics said the incident reinforced perceptions of a leader out of touch with ordinary people in France, coming on the heels of controversies over government spending on official crockery, a swimming pool built at a presidential retreat, and cutting remarks by Macron about the costs of welfare.

A video from a May Day rally released by Le Monde newspaper showed a man wearing a police helmet and identification tag dragging a woman away and then striking a demonstrator. He was later recognised as a member of the French presidency staff. "The staff member, Alexandre Benalla, had been given permission to witness the demonstrations only as an observer," presidential spokesman Bruno Roger-Petit said in a hastily arranged video statement.

"Clearly, he went beyond this...He was immediately summoned by the president's chief of staff and given a 15-day suspension. This came as punishment for unacceptable behaviour."

The Paris prosecutor, which was unaware of the matter before Thursday, launched a preliminary investigation against Benalla on suspicion of violence, usurping the function of a police officer and using signs reserved for public authorities.

On a trip to southwestern France yesterday, Macron declined to answer questions from reporters on the subject. The presidency's handling of the matter was condemned by opposition parties, which argued that not only was the punishment too lenient but that the incident should have promptly referred to judicial authorities.

"This video is shocking. Today we have the feeling that in Macron's entourage one is above the law," Laurent Wauquiez, president of the conservative Republicans, told Europe 1 radio.

Far-left leader Jean-Luc Melenchon told reporters: "If we accept that anybody can be a policeman alongside the police then we no longer have the rule of law. 'This man is the eyes and ears of the prince (Macron).' Labor unions hold demonstrations every year on May 1 in France and clashes with police are not uncommon.

After the 15-day suspension, Benalla was brought back into the president's immediate entourage. He appears in multiple Reuters' photos alongside Macron during public events. Benalla also helped organize the festivities surrounding the return home of France's World Cup champion soccer team earlier this week and is seen next to the team bus. —Reuters

UK police identify Novichok suspects as Russians: Report

LONDON: British police believe they have identified the suspects who carried out the Novichok nerve agent attack on a former Moscow double agent and his daughter and that they are Russian, the Press Association news agency reported yesterday.

"Investigators believe they have identified the suspected perpetrators of the Novichok attack through CCTV and have cross-checked this with records of people who entered the country around that time," a source with knowledge of the investigation told PA. "They (investigators) are sure they (suspects) are Russian," the source added. Scotland Yard police headquarters refused to comment on the report when contacted by AFP.

Ex-Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia collapsed in the southwestern English city of Salisbury on March 4 after being exposed to the nerve agent Novichok.

Both have since recovered. Britain blamed Russia for the poisoning of Skripal, a former military intelligence colonel who was jailed for betraying Russian agents to Britain's MI6 foreign intelligence service.

He left Russia for Britain in a 2010 spy swap. Russia has strongly denied involvement in the Skripal attack, sparking a row that has led to tit-for-tat diplomatic expulsions between Britain and its allies and Moscow.

Russia's ambassador to Britain Alexander Yakovenko told the BBC yesterday he had heard nothing official from the government. A spokes-

woman for Prime Minister Theresa May said: "This is an ongoing and complex investigation and I can't comment on the speculation around it."

Perfume bottle

Two Britons fell ill last month in a town near Salisbury after being exposed to Novichok, one of whom died. Experts are seeking to establish whether the toxin was from the same batch used against the Skripals.

Dawn Sturgess, 44, and her 45-year-old partner Charlie Rowley collapsed at his house in Amesbury within hours of each other on June 30. Sturgess died on July 8, prompting police to open a murder investigation, while Rowley has regained consciousness and is in stable condition. The Press Association said investigators believe Sturgess was exposed to at least 10 times the amount of nerve agent as the Skripals came into contact with.

Police have said it was detected in a "small bottle" at Rowley's house. Rowley's brother Matthew told the BBC that the 45-year-old had told him the Novichok was contained in a perfume bottle. Investigators are working to the theory that Sturgess sprayed Novichok straight onto her skin, the PA source said.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons earlier this week said its inspectors had collected samples in the Amesbury case and were analysing them.

Fingertip search

An inquest into the death of Sturgess opened yesterday in Salisbury and was adjourned until a pre-inquest review on January 16, pending further investigation. The short hearing heard evidence that Sturgess suffered "respiratory distress" and her body has now been released to the family for her funeral. —AFP

International

Republicans mull curbing Trump after Putin summit

Televised submissiveness 'a betrayal of US intelligence agencies'

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump's unsettling embrace of Russia's Vladimir Putin this week drew derision across the US political spectrum, but it remains to be seen whether Republicans have the will to rein in their president.

The two major American political parties appear largely united in their desire to keep the Kremlin in check, particularly after Trump made the startling assertion in Helsinki on Monday, with Putin at his side, that he believed the Russian leader when he said Moscow did not interfere in US elections.

That globally televised submissiveness to a strongman was interpreted by many as a betrayal of US intelligence agencies, which had collectively declared that Putin and Russia launched a coordinated attack on the American electoral process in 2016.

"We walked away from basic reality," an angry Republican Senator Ben Sasse told colleagues, as he accused Trump of coddling a "thug turned Russian despot."

While Trump's position on Russian interference has shifted repeatedly in recent days, and fresh comments about NATO cast doubt about the alliance's mutual defense premise, some in Trump's party signalled they had had enough with his wrecking ball diplomacy and sought to take steps to box him in.

Republican Senator Jeff Flake, with a Democratic co-sponsor, on Wednesday introduced a non-binding resolution that would reaffirm the intelligence community's assessment of Russian

interference, and assert that Moscow be held accountable for its actions. A meatier measure would be a bill, introduced months ago by Republican Senator Marco Rubio and Democrat Tim Kaine that is gaining traction now, that would automatically sanction Russia for any future election meddling.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell suggested Tuesday that he could allow a vote on the legislation. "I think the dam is breaking as it relates to people realizing that we need to have some significant push backs," Senator Bob Corker told reporters Wednesday.

"Doing nothing is political malpractice," added Senator Lindsey Graham. Russian meddling "is a 9/11 type scenario that we can actually prevent."

Corker has been adamant about passing legislation that would restrict Trump's ability to impose tariffs, arguing that taxing US allies pushes them away while strengthening Putin.

But while Corker serves as the powerful chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee—where Secretary of State Mike Pompeo testifies next week and will certainly be grilled about Helsinki—he is not running for re-election, and neither is Flake.

They are liberated to a degree to voice their frustration, but there is little upside in speaking out for other Republicans seeking re-election this November. Anti-Trump vitriol has backfired on some lawmakers, notably South Carolina congressman Mark Sanford. Trump raged about

On Tuesday Trump walked back his comments, saying he accepted the view of US spies that Moscow had in fact meddled. "I accept our intelligence community's conclusion that Russia's meddling in the 2016 election took place," Trump said, reading a statement from the White House.

Yet Trump continued to suggest doubts, adding: It "could be other people also; there's a lot of people out there."

Wray, who was speaking at the Aspen Security Forum in Colorado, also took issue with Trump's suggestion on Wednesday that Russia has not continued to interfere this year as the United States prepares for congressional elections in November.

Wray said that the FBI has not yet seen any specific actions targeting US election infrastructure—compared to 2016, when Russian hackers targeted voter registration and voting management computers across the country, according to US intelligence.

"But certainly other efforts, what I would call malign influence operations, are very active. And we could be just a moment away from going to the next level," he said.

"For me, it's a threat that we need to take extremely seriously and respond to with fierce determination and focus." Asked if he saw, like Trump, that other countries were involved, Wray said some countries would indeed try to influence US politics in various ways "going forward." —AFP



MARYLAND: US President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump (right) arrive at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland, on Wednesday to pay their respects to fallen US Secret Service Special Agent Nole Edward Remagen. —AFP

him on Twitter, and the lawmaker ultimately lost his Republican primary last month to a Trump loyalist.

'Wave of alarm'

There is little sign that Republicans are ready to go nuclear against the president. But with Senate Republicans holding a slim 51-49 majority, and Senator John McCain absent while battling brain cancer, a single defector has the power to gum up Trump's agenda.

Republicans "should use their leverage to stop the administration's priorities" until the Senate passes legislation that protects special counsel Robert Mueller and his Russia probe, and bolsters election security, Senate Democrat Brian Schatz told Politico. "In a 51-49 Senate, all we need is one person who wants to be on the right side of history." The pressure is building. "I think there's a growing wave of alarm" in both parties, Democratic Senator Richard Blumenthal said. —AFP

FBI chief reiterates: Russia meddled, whatever Putin and Trump say

WASHINGTON: FBI director Christopher Wray said Wednesday that the US intelligence community stands by its view that Russia interfered in the 2016 US election, despite Vladimir Putin's denial this week to President Donald Trump.

"He's got his view, he has expressed his view," Wray said when asked about Putin's denial to Trump at their summit in Helsinki on Monday. "The intelligence community's assessment has not changed. My view has not changed, which is that Russia attempted to interfere with the last election and that it continues to engage in malign influence operations to this day."

Those acts "aimed at sowing discord and divisiveness in this country," he added. On Monday, Trump appeared to accept Putin's denial in a press conference after their meeting in Helsinki, sparking outrage in Washington and a rare statement of disagreement by the head of the US intelligence community, Director of National Intelligence, Dan Coats.

Montenegro says 'contributes to peace' in response to Trump attack

PODGORICA, Montenegro: Montenegro's government yesterday defended its contribution to peace in response to a verbal attack from US President Donald Trump, who said this week that the tiny Balkan nation's "aggressive" people were capable of triggering "World War III".

The rebuttal comes after Trump ignited outrage across Europe with his broadside, which many interpreted as the latest sign of the US president's shaky commitment to the NATO alliance, which Montenegro joined last year. In a statement on Thursday Montenegro defended its history of "peaceful politics," saying the country "contributes to peace and stability not only on the European continent but worldwide, along with US soldiers in Afghanistan."

It also added that it has served as a "stabilizing" force in the region, which was ravaged by wars during the break-up of the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

Alongside Macedonia, Montenegro was the only ex-Yugoslavian country whose decision to split from the federation did not trigger a war, though its soldiers fought against Croatia's war of independence in the 1990s as part of the Yugoslav army. The alliance with the US remains "strong and permanent," the statement added. Trump made his controversial comments during a Fox News interview on Tuesday in response to a question about NATO's Article 5, which states that an attack on one member is an attack on all. "Why should my son go to Montenegro to defend it from attack?" Fox News host Tucker Carlson asked the US president about the country of 620,000. Trump responded: "I understand what you're saying. I've asked the same question."

"Montenegro is a tiny country with very strong people... They're very aggressive people. They may get aggressive, and congratulations, you're in World War III," Trump added.

A former US ambassador to NATO slammed the comments as "a gift" to Russian President Vladimir Putin, while senior Republican senator John McCain said Trump was playing into the Russia's hands by "questioning our obligations under NATO." Montenegro, whose troops number about only 2,000 personnel, joined NATO in June 2017, despite strong opposition from part of the population and violent demonstrations in 2015. —AFP

International

Russian tourist allegedly drugged and gang-raped in South India

Hostel manager among six arrested

NEW DELHI: Indian police were holding six men yesterday after a Russian tourist was allegedly drugged and gang-raped in a popular southern tourist town, officials said. Media reports said the 21-year-old had bite marks on her face and arms when she was found naked and unconscious on the floor of her hostel room early on Monday.

"Six men have been detained over the rape and drugging of the woman," investigating officer Mangayar Karasi told AFP.

The woman, who was travelling on her own, had arrived in the town of Tiruvannamalai in Tamil Nadu state, 190 kilometers (120 miles) from Chennai, last Thursday. Those in custody included the hostel manager and her tourist guide, who told police he found her on the floor hours after they had consensual sex, another investigator said. She said the woman was being treated in hospital for a drug overdose and minor injuries, with efforts being made to record her statement. The medical report has confirmed sexual assault, the officer said.

Local and foreign tourists flock to Tiruvan-

namalai for its 9th-century Annamalaiyar Temple, one of the largest Hindu temple complexes spread over 10 hectares (25 acres).

Sexual violence is rife in India with nearly 110 rapes reported every day but activists say that figure is the tip of the iceberg as most cases go unreported. Several foreign tourists have been sexually assaulted in India in recent months. Last month a Japanese tourist was raped by a taxi driver in a north Indian town, followed by the rape of a 20-year-old Canadian tourist by her guest house owner in Delhi.

India's junior interior minister Wednesday told the national parliament that 110,333 rape cases were reported in the country between 2014 and 2016.

The country's dire record on sexual violence has been in the global spotlight since the 2012 gang-rape and murder of a woman on a New Delhi bus sparked angry protests. The incident led to tougher sentences and reforms in the country's rape laws but sexual crime against women, as well as against minors, remains rampant. —AFP



SHILLONG: Indian villagers carry umbrellas at the Behdienkhlam festival in Tuber village in the northeastern state of Meghalaya yesterday. Behdienkhlam, a traditional Pnar festival, is celebrated after sowing crops and aims to promote a good harvest and to drive away plague and disease. Young men also symbolically drive away evil spirits by beating the roof of every house with bamboo poles. —AFP

India's ministry slams proposal to 'privatize' forests

BANGKOK: In a rare rebuke of another government agency, India's Tribal Affairs Ministry has sent a letter to the forest ministry warning that its proposed policy would lead to the "privatization" of forests and undermine indigenous rights.

The draft National Forest Policy 2018, released by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in March, suggests allowing plantations of teak, eucalyptus and bamboo in forest lands under public-private partnerships.

That could open the door for private firms to grow and harvest commercial plantations, which would hurt the ecology and deprive tribal communities of their livelihoods, analysts say. "The policy has disregarded the traditional custodians and conservationists of the forests, namely tribals," the Tribal Affairs Ministry said in a June 19 letter, a copy of which was provided to the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

A spokesman for the forest ministry acknowledged receiving the letter, and said on Thursday: "All feedback on the draft policy is being considered. We will incorporate suggestions where feasible."

The draft forest policy ignores existing laws that give tribal people and forest dwellers rights over the resources, said the

letter signed by Leena Nair, former secretary in the tribal ministry, who has since retired. It ignores the "intrinsic and symbiotic link" between forests and the communities living there, and instead allows "increased privatization, industrialization and diversion of forest resources for commercialization", the letter said.

India has pledged to keep a third of its total land area under forest and tree cover, but a growing population and increasing demand for industrial projects are placing greater stress on these lands.

Under the 2006 Forest Rights Act (FRA), at least 150 million people could have their rights recognised to about 40 million hectares (154,400 sq miles) of forest land.

But progress has been slow, and campaigners say many states have rejected the recognition of community rights.

The new policy seeks to amend the 1988 forest law "by incorporating elements of ecosystem security, climate change mitigation, participatory forest management (and) robust monitoring," according to the draft. But campaigners say it would undermine a 1996 law, which gives indigenous people the right to govern their lands, as well as the FRA, which gives them the right to inhabit and live off forests.

In its letter, the Tribal Affairs Ministry has "unequivocally reminded" the forest ministry that it must be consulted on policies affecting indigenous people, said Geetanjoy Sahu, who has researched forest rights. "This is a speed-breaker for the policy, but it is unclear if it can change the direction of the policy," said Sahu, who works with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai. —Reuters

Pakistan's main parties openly campaign in Karachi now

KARACHI: For over 25 years, maverick political leader Altaf Hussain had an iron grip on Karachi, able to bring Pakistan's largest city to a standstill with a single phone call.

But much has changed in the last five years in the coastal metropolis of 20 million people, and the transformation is playing out in the run-up to Pakistan's general election next week.

The country's three main national parties now campaign openly in the teeming, financial hub, once considered one of the world's most dangerous cities and dominated for decades by Hussain's Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), even though he himself has lived in self-imposed exile in London since 1992. "Karachi is peaceful today," said Shehla Raza, a candidate for the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in one of Karachi's parliamentary constituencies. "I am going to bazaars (markets), multi-storey apartment blocks, I am getting a tremendous response."

At the last election in 2013, the MQM won 16 of Karachi's 20 seats, and critics say they were aided by a campaign of intimidation and violence.

Some months after the election, a paramilitary crackdown transformed Karachi, sharply bringing down murder and kidnapping rates, while splits within the MQM's leadership in 2016 broke the grip of Hussain. Hussain's rep-



QUETTA: Pakistani activists of Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) chant slogans during a protest in Quetta, following a suicide attack in southwestern Pakistan. —AFP

resentatives in London did not respond to requests for comment. Hussain has denied charges in the past of exhorting his supporters to violence. He has said hundreds of MQM members have been arrested and killed in extra-judicial operations.

Authorities say they have targeted criminals and militants irrespective of political affiliation, and brought down crime rates considerably.

Violence

According to the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies, at least 57 people were killed and nearly 300 injured in violence in Karachi from January 2013 until the election in May that year. This year, police say, just two murders have been reported.

The change is palpable in the city - people throng to shopping malls and restaurants until past midnight. In earlier years, the city would essentially shut down soon after dark. With elections coming up, Karachi is festooned with party flags and posters and small neon-lit trucks scurry around the city with photographs of leading candidates. —Reuters

International

EU intensifies legal action against Hungary over asylum-seekers

Orban pledges 'zero tolerance' for anti-Semitism on Israeli visit

BRUSSELS: The European Union yesterday intensified legal action against Hungary in a bid to make it comply with EU asylum rules, denouncing a law to punish activists who support asylum seekers.

The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, has clashed repeatedly with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban's government, especially since the migration crisis erupted in 2015.

The clashes come amid broader fears that Hungary, Poland and other eastern countries from the former Soviet-bloc were turning away from the democratic values on which the EU is built. The commission denounced as illegal the so-called "Stop Soros" laws passed last month, which include a punishment of up to a year in prison for anyone assisting any other person who entered Hungary illegally. It sent a "letter of formal notice" to Budapest, the first step of a procedure that could go before the European Court of Justice, the bloc's top tribunal.

"The Hungarian authorities have two months to respond to the Commission's concerns," the commission said. The legislation was dubbed the "Stop Soros" laws after liberal US billionaire George Soros, accused by Orban's government of orchestrating migration to Europe.

In other action, the commission said it was taking Hungary to the top court for failing to resolve complaints made in December 2015 that it held asylum seekers for too long in transit centers and did not treat them properly. "The border procedure implemented by Hungary is not in compliance

with EU law as it does not respect the maximum duration of four weeks in which someone can be held in a transit center," the commission said.

In violation of EU rules, it added, irregular migrants were escorted back across the border even if they want to apply for asylum. Following US President Donald Trump's administration, Hungary said Wednesday it was withdrawing from a UN pact on migration, saying that the global deal encourages movements of people which are "dangerous for the world."

Israeli visit

Meanwhile, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban pledged "zero tolerance" for anti-Semitism yesterday during a controversial visit to Israel after facing accusations of stoking anti-Jewish sentiment back home. Orban and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have found common cause in their right-wing views despite controversy surrounding the Hungarian leader's nationalist rhetoric.

The two men greeted each other warmly in Jerusalem, but Orban faced a somewhat tougher audience later when he met Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, who warned against "neo-fascism."

Meeting Netanyahu, Orban said "I can assure the prime minister that Hungary has a policy of zero tolerance towards anti-Semitism." His Israeli counterpart also defended Orban against accusations of stoking anti-Semitism.

"I heard you speak as a true friend of Israel about the need to combat anti-Semitism," Ne-

The high in Tokyo was 34.8 degrees Celsius (95 F), while in the ancient capital of Kyoto it stood around 39.8 Celsius (104 F) on the sixth straight day of temperatures at 38 degrees or more, a level unseen since record-keeping began. With the heat wave expected to continue for at least one more week and perhaps even until month-end, the products on display at the trade fair held out the prospect of relief.

A jacket that cools the wearer had side panels carrying two built-in battery-operated fans, to draw in air, and help evaporate sweat.

"It's so cool it feels like you're wearing an air conditioner on your back," construction worker Ryunosuke Furusawa, 45, said of the jacket, developed by inventor Masanori Hara at NSP Corp. "There's lots of times where we work outside with no shade, so this is the best thing outside of staying hydrated to fight off heat stroke." —Reuters

A long coastline makes Vietnam prone to destructive storms and flooding, with 389 people last year in natural disasters such as floods and landslides, the General Statistics Office said. Son Tinh weakened to a tropical low pressure event by the time it reached Vietnam late on Wednesday, curbing fears of immediate and widespread damage, but raising concerns of flooding.

"Heavy rain is forecast to continue in northern and central provinces, and threatens to cause flash floods and landslides in Hoa Binh, Son La, Lai Chau and Lang Son provinces," the national weather forecaster said. —Reuters



THESSALONIKI: Migrants from Iraq demonstrate holding placards as they complain about the delay of their promotion process in other countries, in Thessaloniki. Greece will process 1,500 asylum applications from Germany as part of a deal signed between the two countries, Greece's migration minister said. —AFP

tanyahu said, noting that Hungary has spent millions of dollars renovating synagogues, among other moves.

Orban, who described Netanyahu and himself as "a Jewish patriot and a Hungarian patriot", lauded cooperation between the two nations. Netanyahu has sought closer ties with European nations willing to provide strong backing to Israel.

Hungary in December abstained when the United Nations General Assembly voted over-

whelmingly to reject the US recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

It also joined the Czech Republic and Romania in blocking a European Union statement criticizing Washington's decision to move its Israel embassy to Jerusalem. "You have stood up for Israel time and time again in international forums," Netanyahu said. He will visit the Western Wall in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem today before departing. —Agencies

Japanese inventors step up to offer relief from sweltering heat

TOKYO: A jacket with built-in fans, a road coating to rein in heat and factory mist sprayers were on offer at a trade fair in the Japanese capital yesterday as it struggles with record heat two years before it hosts the Summer Olympics. Summer in Japan has always been hot and humid, but a heat wave this year has brought unprecedented scorching temperatures in some areas, killing at least 14 in Tokyo since the start of July and sending thousands nationwide to hospital.

Vietnam warns of floods, landslides after tropical storm Son Tinh hits

HANOI: Vietnam has warned of floods and landslides triggered by heavy rains after tropical storm Son Tinh made landfall in northern coastal areas, although no casualties were reported yesterday.

N Korea, Eritrea have highest rates of modern slavery: Report

NEW YORK: North Korea and Eritrea have the world's highest rates of enslaved people, said a global survey released yesterday that focused on the roles of conflict and government repression in modern slavery.

The Central African nation of Burundi also has a high prevalence of slavery, according to the 2018 Global Slavery Index published by the human rights group Walk Free Foundation.

"Each of these three countries has state-sponsored forced labor, where their government puts its own people to work for its own benefit," said Fiona David, research chair of Minderoo Foundation, which led the data collection. More than 40 million people were enslaved around the world as of 2016, according to an estimate by the Walk Free Foundation and the International Labour Organization.

India was home to the largest total number with an estimated 18.4 million slaves among

its 1.3 billion population, according to the Walk Free Foundation's 2016 index. China, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Uzbekistan rounded out the top five nations, accounting for about 58 percent of people living in slavery globally, the Walk Free Foundation said at the time.

But North Korea had the highest percentage of its population enslaved, and that remains the case today. "In North Korea, one in 10 people are in modern slavery with the clear majority forced to work by the state," according to the 2018 Global Slavery Index.

Researchers interviewed 50 North Korean defectors living in South Korea who described long hours and inhumane conditions during mandatory unpaid labor for adults and children in agriculture, construction and roadbuilding.

The Eritrean government is "a repressive regime that abuses its conscription system to hold its citizens in forced labor for decades," the report said. Burundi's government also imposes forced labor, according to the report, while groups including Human Rights Watch have implicated its security forces in murders and disappearances.

Other countries with the highest rates of modern slavery were the Central African Republic, Afghanistan, South Sudan and Pakistan. —Reuters

International

Home comforts greet 'Wild Boars' captain after Thai cave rescue

Rescued boys return home on Wednesday

MAE SAI, Thailand: Happiness is a birthday cake, a meal of pork-knuckle rice, a warm bed and a trip to buy a new mobile telephone. Those were some of the treats enjoyed by Duangpetch Promthep, captain of the Thai boys' soccer team rescued last week from a flooded cave, during his first hours at home.

"My bed felt warm," the 13-year-old, also known as Dom, told Reuters. The 12 boys, aged 11 to 16, and the 25-year-old coach of the "Wild Boars" soccer team returned home on Wednesday after being discharged from hospital and appearing on national television to describe their ordeal inside the Tham Luang cave.

"When I first came back home, there were so many people waiting for me. I was very surprised," said Dom, who was welcomed by relatives from as far as China.

His first meal was stewed pork knuckle over rice, a dish he had yearned to eat while stranded in the cave, where the boys had no food for days and survived only on water dripping from stalactites. Dom also blew out candles for a belated celebration of his 13th birthday on July 3, a day after the boys were found by two British divers about 4 km (2.5 miles) inside the cave.

Authorities have asked that the boys be allowed to recover at home, away from the public glare, so that they can return to their normal lives. Dom, who lives with his aunt, uncle and grand-

mother, wrote on Facebook that he had to create a new account because of to a surge in requests to befriend him. He also bought a new mobile telephone to replace the one he lost in the cave.

Getting back to normal means homework on weekends and soccer practice after school, said Thanaporn Promthep, Dom's 41-year-old aunt whom he calls mother. "He's a good, very responsible student," she said, adding that meant no girlfriend for two more years. The boys embark on a course of study this month to become novice Buddhist monks, in honor of Samarn Kunan, a volunteer diver and former Thai navy SEAL who lost his life during the mission to rescue them.

"It's a very important thing to do," Dom said. Thais view the team as national treasures, but three of the boys, and the coach, are technically stateless. Mongkol Boonpiam, 13, whose parents are from neighboring Myanmar, could qualify for citizenship because there is evidence he was born in Thailand, an official handling his case said.

"Even though his parents are not Thai they have been in Thailand more than 10 years," Kitchai Charoenyong, a municipal official in the northern province of Chiang Rai, told Reuters.

The cave ordeal highlighted the plight of people from Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar living in Thailand who are denied some rights and opportunities because they are not citi-



CHIANG RAI: Some of the 12 Thai boys who were dramatically rescued from deep inside a cave after being trapped for more than a fortnight, bow before novice Buddhist monks during a religious ceremony at a temple in Chiang Rai yesterday following their discharge from the hospital after recovering from the ordeal. — AFP

zens. More than 486,000 people are registered as stateless with the Thai government, official data show. Of them 146,269 are - like three of the "Wild Boars" soccer team - younger than

18. Rights activists blame bureaucratic obstacles for the slow pace of Thailand's verification process, but authorities have promised to shepherd through the newly-famous four. — Reuters

Malaysia arrests seven people over suspected militant links

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia has detained seven people for suspected militant-linked activities, including a man who allegedly made death threats against the country's king and prime minister, police said yesterday.

The Muslim-majority country has been on high alert since gunmen allied with the Islamic State (IS) militant group carried out a series of attacks in Jakarta, the capital of neighboring Indonesia, in January 2016. Four Malaysians and three Indonesian men were arrested in four states between July 12 and 17, Inspector-General of Police Mohamad Fuzi Harun said in a statement.

A 34-year-old unemployed man was arrested in the Malaysian state of Johor, north of Singapore, for allegedly posting death threats on social media against Malaysia's King, Sultan Muhammad V, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, and the minister in charge of religious affairs Mujahid Yusof Rawa.

Police believe the threats were made based on the belief the targets were "un-Islamic lead-

ers, whose methods of ruling the country were not based on Shariah law", Muhamad Fuzi said. A 42-year-old technician was picked up for allegedly making threats to launch bomb attacks in Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines after the Muslim holiday of Eid Al-Fitr.

The other Malaysian suspects were a man and a woman in their 20s. The woman allegedly sent funds to a known Malaysian militant in Syria, while police believe the man had planned to travel to Syria to join the Islamic State, Muhammad Fuzi said. One of the Indonesians arrested had allegedly pledged allegiance to and received military training from the Islamic State of Indonesia (NII), an Indonesian militant group in Bandung. Police believe the 26-year-old man, married to a Malaysian woman, had also planned to take his wife and step-children to Syria to join the Islamic State, Mohamad Fuzi said.

Another Indonesian suspect was allegedly linked to a member of Jemaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) who was involved in the May 10 killing of an Indonesian police officer at the mobile police brigade headquarters in West Java, Muhamad Fuzi said.

A third Indonesian, who police said admitted to being a Islamic State member, was detained for saving about 190 videos and photos of the militant group's activities on his mobile phone, and uploading similar images to his Facebook account. Malaysia has arrested hundreds of people over the past few years for suspected links to militant groups, but has never suffered a major attack. — Reuters

Tongue-lashings from N Korea's Kim underscore shift in focus to economy

SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's strident rebukes of officials during recent trips to industrial sites were aimed at rallying support at home for his economic drive and convincing outsiders about his willingness to denuclearize.

After racing toward his goal of developing a nuclear-tipped missile capable of hitting the United States, Kim in April shifted his focus to the economy. In June, Kim held an unprecedented summit with President Donald Trump in Singapore, where he lauded the city-state's economic progress and "world-class" amenities.

This month, the young leader has toured industrial facilities and special economic zones near North Korea's border with China, often lambasting officials over delayed construction projects or lacklustre modernization of production lines, according to state media.

Kim has openly slammed executives on previous economic field trips, unlike his reclusive father. The latest criticisms appear an attempt to spur economic development nationwide - and shift

blame to bureaucrats where progress has lagged, experts say. "Now that economic development is made a main party line, he needs to show results but could have realized things were not so beautiful on the ground," said Koh Yu-hwan, a professor at Dongguk University in Seoul. "To the people inside, he's trying to say it's not the fault of himself or them but that of the party executives, while encouraging ordinary citizens to work hard."

With nuclear talks with Washington under way, Kim may also want to dispel suspicion about denuclearization by highlighting his zeal for economic development. Kim made a broad commitment at the Singapore summit to "work toward denuclearisation," but fell short of details on how or when he would dismantle the nuclear programmes. "While trying to win the people's heart, Kim would want to show that he's making an all-out effort on the economy and he really means it, and defuse suspicions about denuclearisation," said Lee Woo-young, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul.

This week, Kim blasted "shameless" and "pathetic" executives at a power plant site in the northeastern Hamkyong Province, "speechless" after realizing that only 70 percent of construction was completed since it started 17 years ago, the official KCNA news agency reported.

Earlier this month, Kim berated managers of a textile mill in the border city of Sinuiju for blaming the lack of raw materials and money despite their poor work at the planned upgrade of the factory, according to KCNA. After Kim's reported criticism, Pak Pong Ju, premier of North Korea and a top economic official, followed up with visits to a number of sites, including the Sinuiju textile mill factory. — Reuters

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Friday Times

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Lifestyle

The mural painting depicting French national symbol (Marianne) designed and painted by French-British street artist Yseult Digan aka YZ, is pictured during the inauguration in the district of Bas-Toulon in Périgueux yesterday. —AFP

Giant statue of bare-chested Jeff Goldblum pops up in London

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AT LEADING US MUSIC SCHOOL, A QUEST TO REVIVE FRENCH INFLUENCE

The music teachers spending the summer in the mountain air of Aspen can tell you all about that most famous instructor of them all, Nadia Boulanger, the Parisian whose roster of pupils reads like a historical list of 20th-century composers. But while the Aspen Music Festival and School, long a premier training ground for US classical musicians, now draws artists through tie-ups with conservatories around the world, it has little relationship with Paris. And the French repertoire, while still loved by many, has taken a back-seat for the young generation in the United States.

Aspen is on a mission to change that. The festival—which brings 600 students each summer to the posh ski resort in the Colorado Rockies to study and hobnob with top musicians—has devoted its season to Paris, hoping to highlight the musical contributions of the City of Lights but also to revive its influence on US classical music. “We realized, looking at Paris, how many cities would there be where you have that richness through so many periods?” said composer Alan Fletcher, who is president and CEO of the festival.

“Even Vienna is primarily important in two places. But Paris has been important to the world of music for centuries,” Fletcher said in his office above a crystal-clear stream some 2,400 meters (8,000 feet) above sea level. As for music in Paris today, “I don’t see there being any decline—there is, though, a decline in the way American musical life responds to Paris.”

The eight-week season takes a broad look at the musical legacy of Paris. Under a wind-swept giant tent, the Aspen Chamber Symphony performed Mozart’s Symphony No. 31, a witty revision of established conventions written by the onetime child prodigy when he returned to Paris in 1778 in a frustrating search for employment. Aspen musicians are also putting on a range of works by French composers from Ravel’s “La



A crowd gathers on top of the Aspen Mountain in Aspen, Colorado, to watch a student brass band perform as part of the Aspen Music Festival. — AFP photos

Valse,” his fierce take on waltz form interjected with echoes of World War I’s devastation, to a swath of pieces by Debussy that examine parallels with the Impressionist movement in painting.

Fletcher said that while US audiences are familiar with celebrated works such as Berlioz’s “Symphonie Fantastique,” which will close the festival on August 19, more contemporary composers draw blank stares. If one asked audience members “how much Dutilleux do you know, they would say I have no idea who this person is,” Fletcher said. “To me as a composer, Dutilleux is absolutely one of the greatest composers of the 20th century and early 21st centuries, and all we need is to show that music to people.”

Encouraging individual voice

The festival is also throwing a spotlight on

composers who studied under Boulanger, one of history’s most consequential piano instructors. Students in “La Boulangerie,” as her school came to be known in a pun on the French word for bakery, ranged from Aaron Copland, who popularized an American vernacular style in symphonic music, to leading living US composer Philip Glass to Quincy Jones, the peerless pop producer who worked on some of Michael Jackson’s greatest hits.

Boulanger, who died in 1979, was perhaps best known for her years of detailed advice to Stravinsky. She brought his works around the world as a conductor, often becoming the first woman whom audiences saw with the baton. Before Boulanger, US musicians looked largely to Germany whose exacting teachers would rigorously enforce the rules of music.

“They adopted the German symphonic

sound. The difference with Nadia is that she was much more interested in the individualistic voice of the person rather than their ability to imitate a school,” said Asadour Santourian, the Aspen festival’s vice president for artistic administration who selected the season’s works. Santourian said that Paris remained the city that produced “art for art’s sake.” “In London, of course, there are brilliant composers. But my sense is that in London, or in Berlin, there is new music because someone wants something new—it’s tailored to someone—whereas in Paris they just create it, and it gets performed.”

Influencing young generation

The fate of Paris in US classical music is tied inextricably to geopolitics. Americans flocked to Boulanger at a time that the world wars made Germany unattractive. But after the fall of the Third Reich, plenty of German as well as Eastern bloc musicians—many of whom were Jewish—stayed in the United States, where they enjoyed major roles in teaching and the growing field of Hollywood film music. Boulanger, who had fled to the United States during the German occupation of Paris, returned home.

While leading 20th-century French composers Boulez and Messiaen spent time in the United States, French penetration faded in American musical life where, for many orchestras, Mahler towers above all other modern composers with his highly structured symphonies. Fletcher hoped that the focus on Paris would help shape the mindset of students at Aspen, which has generated an overwhelming number of young conductors rising the ranks of US orchestras. “For the French, there is much more about mood and color and texture,” he said. “I think it is completely plausible that young American composers will say, we care more about the French way.” — AFP

Giant statue of bare-chested Jeff Goldblum pops up in London



People take photos by a 25ft statue of actor Jeff Goldblum in a pose from a scene in the first Jurassic Park movie, which has been created by a TV channel to celebrate the film’s 25th birthday, at Potters Fields Park, London. — AP

Londoners and tourists alike have been bemused to find a giant statue of a bare-chested Jeff Goldblum next to the city’s iconic Tower Bridge. The 25-foot (7.6-meter) statue, depicting the actor in the reclining pose he made famous in “Jurassic Park,” is meant to mark that film’s 25th anniversary.

Sky’s subscription service Now TV installed the temporary “Jurassic Jeff” statue on the south

bank of the Thames Wednesday. The outlandish stunt prompted many selfies and social media posts — though some Twitter users called it “far-fetched,” pointing out that the movie wasn’t filmed in London and nor is Goldblum a London native. Goldblum played the scientist Ian Malcolm in Steven Spielberg’s dinosaur thriller, and returned to the role this year for “Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom.” — AP

Dax Shepard finds creative fulfillment with new podcast

Dax Shepard acts, writes and directs but his latest creative venture is fulfilling him in ways he didn’t expect. He’s begun recording podcasts called “Armchair Expert” in a guest house attic on property he owns with his wife, Kristen Bell. New episodes drop Mondays. Shepard said his experience as a guest on other podcasts including “WTF with Marc Maron,” “The Nerdist” and “Off Camera with Sam Jones” sparked the idea of starting his own.

“I just really enjoyed being able to talk for an hour or two hours and not be confined to an 8-minute produced segment on a talk show,” he said. “We were able to veer off into much more profound or personal topics. And you felt like you had the time to give some context to your opinions.” Shepard’s first episode was with Bell on a day when they were bickering. (They’re a popular Hollywood pair, appearing in commercials together.) He’s since added conversations with other celebs including Ellen DeGeneres and Jimmy Kimmel and has branched out to experts of their fields, like a clinical psychologist who can talk about parenting strategies.



In this file photo, Dax Shepard poses for a portrait in West Hollywood, Calif. — AP

He describes that particular interview as his “most stimulating” so far and aims to speak with more “intellectuals, experts, doctors and psychologists.” His wish-list for guests is “never-ending” and the multi-hyphenate performer Donald Glover is ranked No. 1. Two episodes that also stand out are with Shepard’s mother, Laura Labo, and actress Erika Christensen. Labo has had an interesting life and was candid about overcoming toxic and abusive past relationships and with loss, after the recent death of her husband. Shepard managed to keep the conversation moving but not interject too many of his own memories into Labo’s story, which would be easy to do since he was there for much of it.

Christensen and Shepard played siblings for six seasons on NBC’s “Parenthood.” Besides a familiar rapport, the two had a respectful conversation about Scientology (she is a member). “There’s so many topics in our culture that seem to be binary where you have to pick one side or the other and Scientology certainly seems to be one of those,” said Shepard. — AP



Billy Joel (left) and New York Governor Andrew Cuomo pose with a framed commemoration in front of the banner honoring Joel's 100th Lifetime Performance at Madison Square Garden in New York City. — AFP photos

Billy Joel celebrates 100th show at Madison Square Garden

New York on Wednesday feted Billy Joel as he played a record 100th concert at Madison Square Garden, although the Piano Man himself was modest about his achievement. "Let's be real—I'm from New York," the 69-year-old engine of pop favorites, donning a baseball cap, told a news conference ahead of his 100th performance at the Midtown Manhattan arena. "This is my venue. Fortunately for me, Madison Square Garden is a world venue. You can play almost any other arena in the country and nobody else in the world is going to know about it," he said. "So I'm very fortunate just because of where I'm from—not to take the shine off of it." More than two million people have seen Joel at Madison Square Garden, according to the iconic venue. He has cruised past Elton John after surpassing the English legend's record when Joel performed his 65th show in 2015.

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, a professed fan and friend of Joel who in 2015 officiated the singer's fourth wedding, issued a proclamation declaring July 18 "Billy Joel Day." Cuomo called Joel a "quintessential New Yorker" who embodied the values of the city's middle class. "Forty years in this town, which is one of the toughest audiences on the globe, and after 40 years, the same tough, hometown crowd loves him," Cuomo told the news conference. "Why? Because there is an authenticity about Billy and his music. You can't fool New Yorkers for 40 years," he said. With a stream of hits from "Uptown Girl" to "We Didn't Start the Fire," Joel has sold more than 150 million records around the world, according to his representatives. — AFP

Review: Ty Segall & White Fence reunite for frenzied 'Joy'

The ever-prolific Ty Segall reunites with White Fence (Tim Presley) on "Joy," a freaky, fragmented album where squeaks and barks interrupt delightful harmonies and psychedelic power pop, totaling 15 tracks in just over 30 minutes. "Joy" is a slightly less frenzied follow-up to their 2012 collaboration, "Hair." In parts, the album is like sweeter-sounding 13th Floor Elevators and the tunes could be excerpts from a rock opera for people with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. Get distracted for a minute or two and whole songs may have passed you by. There's a lot of great music on "Joy" but the interludes unnecessarily break the flow.

While this album's "Other Way" and the 17 seconds of "Prettiest Dog" are reminiscent of its predecessor's "Crybaby" and "Scissor People" in their intensity, the duo also emphasizes the layers of Who-like vocals and plenty of acoustic guitars. "Do

Your Hair" is a prime example of this approach. The psychedelic introductory, "Beginning," has bird noises, surf-rock drums, angelic singing and guitars in stereo, while the brief "Room Connector" sounds like the instrumental demo version of a catchy song. "Body Behavior" and "Good Boy" both cross the finish line around the 2-minute mark, packing a wealth of rhythms, guitars and weird lyrics.

"A Nod" could be an outtake from "Tommy," a reflective moment from the pinball wizard/spiritual leader: "My friends say I need followers/But I want to believe in me." The lovely, heartfelt "My Friend" - "I see you falling down again/But I'm still around my friend" - is a melange of acoustic guitars and stays around long enough, nearly 4 minutes, to become one of the album's most gratifying highlights. Bird sounds end it, so if you listen to the album on repeat it creates a loop with "Beginning." — AP



This cover image released by Drag City shows "Joy," a release by Ty Segall & White Fence. — AP

Jay-Z unhappy 'Made in America' leaving Philadelphia parkway

Jay-Z said Wednesday he's disappointed that Philadelphia is booting his annual music festival from the city's grandest boulevard, accusing the mayor of having "zero appreciation for what Made In America has built alongside the phenomenal citizens of this city." Writing in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, the music mogul rapped the city for making a decision before consulting organizers, calling it a failure on the part of Democratic Mayor Jim Kenney. The mayor said he thought the city's position had been communicated to Jay-Z. "I love Jay-Z," Kenney said at a news conference. "We love the concert and we want to keep it." He said the city is looking at alternative sites and hopes to resolve what he termed an "unfortunate misunderstanding."

Held each year since 2012, Made in America has drawn as many as 50,000 people to the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, a heavily visited expanse of museums, monuments, fountains and the famed "Rocky" steps at the



File photo shows entertainer Jay-Z smiles after a news conference at Philadelphia Museum of Art in Philadelphia. — AP

Philadelphia Museum of Art. But the city said the festival is no longer welcome on the parkway after this year. "We had some operational difficulties on the parkway because of how long it takes to set up and take down," Kenney said. Made in America was originally intended to attract people to Philadelphia on Labor Day weekend, traditionally a slow time for tourism, said city spokeswoman Sarah Reyes. But the growth in tourism since then means "the need for an event of this scale at this location may no longer be necessary," she said in an email. The two-day festival has also drawn noise complaints from some neighbors, philly.com reported.

Nicki Minaj, Meek Mill and Post Malone are set to perform at this year's festival. Jay-Z wrote that Made in America has generated an economic impact of nearly \$103 million since 2012. "Do they regularly reject minority-owned businesses that want to continue to thrive and grow alongside his city's people?" Jay-Z wrote. — AP

Bruce Springsteen surprises audience at Billy Joel concert

Bruce Springsteen propped himself on top of Billy Joel's piano to sing a duet with The Piano Man, who was celebrating his 100th concert at Madison Square Garden on Wednesday night. Joel told the energetic crowd he had a guest coming onstage who has won a Grammy, Oscar and Tony. Springsteen emerged, surprising the feverish and fanatic audience, who loudly cheered "BRUCE." "Congratulations Billy on your 100th show," Springsteen yelled. "Ready, Billy?" he asked, as Joel began to play while sitting at the piano. Springsteen encouraged the crowd to cheer louder and then sang "Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out."

He jumped onto Joel's piano - making it on his second try - and sat on it while Joel played and the piano slowly spun. Springsteen then rocked his guitar for "Born to Run." Joel, 69, and Springsteen, 68, hugged after their two-song performance,



Musician Billy Joel sits with his daughter Della Rose Joel during his 100th lifetime performance at Madison Square Garden. — AP

and The Boss kissed Joel on his head as he walked offstage. A banner celebrating Joel's 100th performance at MSG rose to the ceiling near the top of the two-hour-plus concert. Joel started performing a monthly residency at the arena in 2014. No artist has performed at the famed venue more than Joel. "Good evening to you New York City," said Joel, whose two-year-old daughter, Della Rose Joel, sat on his lap. "I want to thank you all for coming to our show."

Joel was excited throughout his set, going from piano to harmonica to guitar. He put on his sunglasses while he passionately sang "New York State of Mind" and twirled his microphone stand in the air and danced happily after singing "Uptown Girl." He said he had to think of a special song to sing to celebrate his new milestone, and then performed "This Is the Time." "Maybe it'll hit me later," he said of his new feat. — AP

TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE? SLUM GRAFFITI WARNS KENYANS ABOUT TRAFFICKING RISKS



Graffiti shows a man beating a woman in Mathare slum, Nairobi, Kenya. — Reuters photos



Graffiti shows a girl in chains with a caption "Human trafficking is the new way of exploiting people for money" in Mathare slum.

Brutal images of a woman cowering as a man beats her and of a terrified girl in chains sprayed on the walls of Kenya's Mathare slum bring a hidden crime into view - human trafficking. The graffiti scenes in the capital's second largest slum are part of a series of pictures, paintings and poems curated by the charity HAART Kenya to get people talking about modern slavery. "Trafficking is all around us but people just don't see it," said Winnie Mutevu, a project officer with the charity, which supports survivors, many of whom were kept under lock and key and sexually and physically abused. "A simple picture or graffiti showing one of the many forms of slavery can be a powerful way to catch people's attention."

Kenya is a source, transit and destination country for men, women and children who are trafficked into forced labor and sexual slavery, according to the US State Department. Children - mostly ado-

lescent girls - are often trafficked from Kenya's impoverished villages to towns and cities for domestic labor, sex work, street-vending and begging due to poverty and lack of access to secondary education.

Human trafficking is particularly rife in poverty-stricken slums, said Kissmart Bakra, a musician from Mathare and an anti-trafficking ambassador for HAART Kenya. "When you're poor and unemployed, it's easy to be tempted by someone selling you a dream job," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation from a corrugated iron shed in Mathare. "But if the job seems too good to be true, then it probably is." In 2015, the charity enlisted the help of painters, street artists and musicians like Bakra to create representations of human trafficking, culminating in an annual exhibition.

False promises

High fertility rates, coupled with rural poverty

and land scarcity, drive more than 250,000 Kenyans into cities each year, according to the World Bank, which predicts that the majority of Kenyans will live in urban areas by 2033. In Nairobi's sprawling slums, which house two-thirds of the city's 4 million people, trafficked children work in brothels, bars and the drug trade, sometimes simply in exchange for food, according to charities. Many slum dwellers who have migrated to Kenya - East Africa's largest economy - from neighbouring Uganda and Tanzania looking for jobs are "ideal prey" for traffickers, Bakra said. "Their families often don't know where they are so no one checks in or follows up on them," he said.

HAART Kenya gives free trainings to slum residents to teach them about the risk of trafficking as many are often "completely unaware of their rights" and are easily duped by recruiters, particularly if they are people that they know and trust. "Traffick-

ers just pose as recruiters and lure people into forced prostitution or domestic work with false promises of jobs," Mutevu said. "Having never heard of trafficking, most victims do not even realize they are being exploited," she said, adding that the art project had also made the police and government officials more aware of the problem.

Kenya must also better equip law enforcement to "outsmart traffickers", said Patricia Nduta Gituanja, chief immigration officer at Kenya's interior ministry. "Traffickers are getting better at covering up their tracks, for example, by using technology," she said at a workshop on trafficking run by the German state development agency GIZ and the Thomson Reuters Foundation in Nairobi. Modern technology, from messaging apps to cryptocurrencies, is fuelling the modern-day slave trade by enabling traffickers to ensnare more victims, expand their illicit empires, and outfox law enforcement, experts say. — Reuters

Trimming and tidying: Perennials need care too

By Lee Reich

The great attraction in growing perennial flowers is that you never have to replant them, at least in theory. This doesn't make all perennials care-free, though. Few of them let you just sit back to enjoy them year after year once they're planted. Take coreopsis, for example, a wonderful perennial that ends its first flush of bright yellow blossoms around midsummer. Like a number of other perennial flowers, coreopsis can be overly exuberant in some gardens - mine, for instance. Right now, the plants are threatening to take over the whole flower bed in which they were planted.

Some perennials wander

Coreopsis spreads very effectively by self-sown seeds and by roots that travel underground and then send up shoots ("suckers") some distance from the mother plant. Both seedlings and root suckers are beginning to elbow out dianthus and other more sedate neighbors. Agastache (sometimes known as anise hyssop), also in that bed, is one plant that can stand up to coreopsis. As a matter of fact, agastache is so aggressive that I might call it a weed, tempting me to remove it altogether once and for all. Like coreopsis, it spreads by seeds and suckering roots. As I pull on those licorice-minty stems, though, their aroma beck-



This undated photo shows delphinium flower stalks being cut back in New Paltz, NY. — AP

ons me to leave in at least a few plants. I give in.

Fortunately, keeping agastache, coreopsis, and similarly exuberant perennials in line is satisfyingly easy. A quick tug on a stem or two will wrench a wayward plant from the ground, roots

and all, causing little disturbance to nearby plant roots. (Tug on too many stems at once and they don't release so easily, or they pull along too big a clump of soil.) If I did want to plant more of any of these perennials, those dislodged stems re-establish quickly at a new site or in flower pots to plant out later.

Some perennials need tidying up

Oriental poppy is another perennial needing some attention in summer. Excess plants may need to be weeded out, but - more important - this plant needs tidying up. Oriental poppy dies back in summer, so I cut back the sad-looking, dying flower stalks and leaves and cart them over to the compost pile. I mentioned that dianthus is well-behaved, yet even this plant needs some attention. Shearing back the stems now that the first flush of bloom is past helps coax another flush of bloom this season or, at least, better bloom next year.

Shearing stimulates growth of new, flower-bearing stems and diverts energy that otherwise would go into ripening seeds to new growth and blossoms. Thwarting seed production also prevents at least one means of spread - by seedlings - of some perennials. Shearing is useful for creeping stems, but cutting back individual flower stalks is the treatment for clump-forming plants. Other plants slated for shearing or cutting back include snow-in-summer, delphinium and columbine. — AP

Lifestyle | Feature



Brandon Keller of San Diego, poses as a zombie from the television series 'The Walking Dead' as he waits in line for Preview Night of the 2018 Comic-Con International at the San Diego Convention Center.



Paul Nestor of San Diego, poses next to cut-out figures of President Donald Trump and his daughter Ivanka at a booth for the satirical comic book series 'Trump's Titans'. — AP photos



Women dressed as Supergirl walk along a downtown San Diego street on Preview Night of the 2018 Comic-Con International.

A Comic-Con without Marvel, HBO gives others a chance to pop

Comic-Con fans know one thing to be true: Where there is fun, there's usually a line that precedes it. And hours before the annual pop culture convention officially kicked off Wednesday night in San Diego, there were lines everywhere - to get onto the convention floor to buy merchandise at the stroke of 6 p.m., to have the life scared out of them at the DC Universe Swamp Thing "experience," to gaze at pretty Laika characters, to get into a Hall H panel Thursday morning and even to take a photo with an Andrew Lincoln lookalike.

Over 130,000 pop culture devotees will come to San Diego's Gaslamp District for the annual four-day comic book convention Comic-Con, the big, bright and very heavily branded confab of costumed superfans and the corporate sponsors vying for their attention - and dollars. Interested in dining at a working replica of the "Demolition Man" Taco Bell for the movie's 25th anniversary? Or witness a mock court-martial of Star Wars' Poe Dameron for leading a mutiny in "Star Wars: The Last Jedi"? Or a "Ready Player One" experience with retro gaming stations and recreation of Room 237 from "The Shining"? If you like pop culture, it's highly likely there is something tailor-made for you at Comic-Con 2018.

"I'm blown away by everyone, everything," said first-time attendee Jeffrey Potts, of Los Angeles. "It's like an amusement park in the middle of town." Right outside the convention center, across the train tracks, DC Universe has set up a massive space with props and costumes from various movies and tv shows in DC history, like the giant rubber ducky cart from "Batman Begins," and some elaborately-staged "experiences" like a menacing Harley Quinn-themed escape room in a paint-splattered asylum.

What started as a 300-person event in 1970 has evolved into a massive operation with events year-round. But San Diego Comic-Con is the marquee occasion. Tickets for four-day access plus preview night can set attendees back \$276, before hotel, travel costs, food and any souvenirs. Loicia Ware, a San Diego resident who has been coming to Comic-Con for at least 10 years, likes to venture onto the convention center floor right when it opens Wednesday evening for preview night, heading straight for Artists Alley and Small Collections on the 460,000 square foot space. It allows her to focus on panels for the rest of the week.

Exclusive footage

As it has grown, attendees have come to expect a lot from Comic-Con, like exclusive merchandise on the convention center floor, newsy announcements from some of Hollywood's biggest studios, and screenings of anticipated films and television shows. This year Warner Bros. is coming armed with stars and footage from "Aquaman," "Shazam!," "Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald" and "The LEGO Movie 2"; Sony is hyping its Spider-Man spinoff "Venom"; and Universal Pictures will be teasing "Halloween" and M. Night Shyamalan's "Glass." On the television side, fans will get a glimpse of new "Doctor Who" star Jodie Whittaker and have a chance to check out "Star Trek: Discovery" and

"Riverdale." And streaming services like Netflix and Hulu will be back with properties like Marvel's "Iron Fist" and the new J.J. Abrams-produced "Castle Rock," based on Stephen King stories.

But a few of the major players are conspicuously absent from Hall H, the 6,500-seat room in the San Diego Convention Center that boasts the highest-profile presentations and attracts an enthusiastic fan base willing to camp out overnight in line to secure a coveted seat - as of mid-day Wednesday there were at least 300 people already in line for panels that don't begin until Thursday morning. Those skipping this year include Marvel Studios, HBO ("Game of Thrones") and Star Wars. "It's a huge deal when major properties like Marvel, Star Wars or HBO don't show up," says Germain Lussier, an entertainment reporter for io9/Gizmodo who has been attending the convention for 15 years. "For the past decade, Marvel Studios panels have consistently been the No. 1 most anticipated thing for movie fans at Comic-Con. Their panels never failed to disappoint with exclusive footage, huge news and big surprises."

Production schedules are more to blame than anything else, however. Lussier notes that each of the absent brands has a big (and intensely secretive) installment coming in 2019, including "Avengers 4," "Star Wars: Episode IX" and the final season of "Game of Thrones." "Instead of showing up and disappointing fans, they're simply bowing out to not bolster expectations," he says. Also, other brands and properties could benefit from an unusually open runway. "Every year, there's always one or two things everyone is talking about. And if it's not 'Avengers 4' or 'Star Wars,' what's it going to be?" says Lussier. "I think this is a huge opportunity for Warner Bros to steal every headline with major news and exciting footage." — AP



Sculptor Sam Gao works on a clay model.



An oversized lego action figure from Marvel's 'Avengers: Infinity War' is displayed on the convention floor.



Louis Ramos (left) of San Diego takes a picture of his son Alek, 6, third from right, and daughter Anabel, 11, second from right, and their friends Emiliano Beltran, 12, fourth from right, and Isabel Beltran, 10, before Preview Night at the 2018 Comic-Con International.



Dean LeCrone of San Diego wears his Dr Artemus Peepers costume as he walks past attendees to Preview Night of the 2018 Comic-Con International.

Homegirl Cafe offers 'platos' by ex-gang members with hope

By Russell Contreras

In a different time, at another place, and under other circumstances, you might have run away from Latisha Valenzuela and Glenda Alvarenga. But at Homegirl Cafe, a Los Angeles breakfast and lunch spot with a Latino twist, the two waitresses welcome you with smiles and friendship. "You alone?" Valenzuela asked when I recently visited. "Don't worry. We'll keep you company." After seating me, she tells me, "you'll want our cinnamon coffee. We make it ourselves." She says it as if we've been friends since middle school.

Here, in the City of Angels, Homegirl Cafe offers a unique dining experience with food prepared by former gang members gaining new skills. It's a haven for them, to be sure. But the popular cafe in the city's Chinatown is a special place for visitors, too, providing carefully crafted meals along with inspiration from ex-inmates who willingly tell stories about how they are seeking a better life. And where these hands once hurt others, now they are steering their energies to serve pleasurable, satisfying dishes made with love and perseverance.

Gang-plagued regions

The hip cafe is an offshoot of the Homeboy Industries social enterprises founded by Jesuit priest Greg Boyle. After working in one of the city's poorest and most gang-plagued regions, he quickly found out that businesses wouldn't hire former gang members and inmates, even when they had marketable skills. So, he formed nonprofit businesses aimed at giving jobs and training to the "least of these," as the poor and vulnerable are described in Scripture. He formed Homeboy tortillas, Homeboy bakery and then, Homegirl Cafe. Trainees learn all aspects of culinary arts while developing social skills that create tender encounters with visitors. In addition to job training, the former gang members can take advantage of tattoo removal, anger management classes and drug treatment.

Former enemies become friends. Instead of trading gunshots, they shoot playful texts to each other. That tenderness is passed along to customers, who include writers, lawyers, actors and teachers. When a new staffer shows up, "you can tell she's scared and ready to fight," Alvarenga told me during my visit. "We make sure we hug her and show nothing but love. Most of the time, they just start crying." Plates like the chilaquiles - fresh crisp tortilla chips tossed with warm tomatillo salsa, egg, crema fresca, and queso cotija - are made from ingredients that come from urban farms. The Manoy's, a sandwich made of braised shredded chicken prepared Central American-style with pickled cabbage, onions and mayonnaise, is another unique option. The homegirls can tell you exactly how it's prepared. In addition to the food are the stories.

Boyle has told this one many times in speeches, interviews and his latest book: Actress Diane Keaton once came in for brunch with a guest. A waitress, a former gang member who'd spent time in prison, went to serve her. Keaton asked for advice on platos and the waitress gave her suggestions. Then, it hit the waitress. "Wait, I feel like I know you," the waitress reportedly said. "You so look familiar." "Oh I don't know," Keaton said. "I must have that face." "No. Now I know," the waitress said. "We were locked up together!"



A Metro Line Train passes by Homegirl Cafe.

Love without judgment

The story always gets a laugh, but Boyle retells it to highlight the power of kinship, and how a former gang member and an Oscar winner connected in a most unlikely place. Boyle has authored two books, and his inspirational quotes are on T-shirts and fliers around the cafe. To some of the homies, he's the first person who ever showed them unconditional love without judgment. "Ah man, when Father Boyle walks down the street and into this place ... people follow him like Jesus," said Erika Carlos, a woman who spent eight years in prison who now helps run the gift shop.

"All the homies want him to give them a blessing." At the gift shop, visitors can buy an array of Homeboy Industries or Homegirl Cafe shirts, hoodies, hats and bags. The clothing is designed by former gang members who are being taught new job skills. Workers like Carlos are happy to share their stories, or those of others who inspired them. After my first visit, I returned for a Mother's Day special with my Texas-born mother, father and sister. My mother, who was abandoned briefly as a baby before being adopted by an immigrant woman from Mexico, recognized immediately that she was among the forgotten and feared. "This feels like home," she told Valenzuela. Valenzuela smiled, then replied, "You are home." — AP



Maria Hidalgo, 26, talks to her co-worker while preparing in the kitchen at Homegirl Cafe in Los Angeles. — AP photos



Yanet Rodriguez, 33, wears a t-shirt with words of encouragement while working in the kitchen at Homegirl Cafe.



A selection of pastries is arranged at Homegirl Cafe.



Elvia Hernandez, 30, prepares food in the kitchen at Homegirl Cafe.



Mario Lundes pours a cup of coffee for a customer at Homegirl Cafe.



Diners are lit by morning sunlight as they look at the menu at Homegirl Cafe.



Photo provided by Lee Broom shows the Eclipse 3 piece chandelier in Broom's new Observatory collection.



Photo provided by Elli Popp shows the wallpaper 'Golden Slumbers' by Elli Popp, aka Katja Behre.



This undated photo provided by Lee Broom shows the Eclipse table lamp in Broom's new Observatory collection.



Photo provided by Heath Ceramics shows their Cosmos glazed vases, which evokes midnight skies and star-filled galaxies. — AP photos

Right at home: Designers look skyward for inspiration

Designer Lee Broom was vacationing at a friend's house in the Cotswolds, an idyllic bit of rural England. "I'm a city boy, brought up in the Midlands and living in London for the past 25 years, so had never really experienced that intense blanket of stars that you find on a beautiful, clear night in the countryside, with the constellations so clearly marked," he says.

Broom was so captivated that when he got home, he began designing a lighting collection named Observatory. Since its debut at Salone di Mobile in Milan in the spring, Broom has brought the collection to NYCxDesign 2018. It goes on to London's Design Festival in September.

The designs interpret the characteristics of sun and star reflection and light refraction in sculptural, spherical forms. Mirror-polished stainless steel and gold spheres are incorporated with concealed LEDs and acrylic discs and tubes, creating light sculptures in the form of pendants, table lamps and wall sconces. The names pay homage to the heavens: Eclipse, Orion, Tidal, Aurora.

The firmament has often been a source of inspiration for decor and furniture designers, and we're seeing lots of examples right now. Part of the appeal lies in a moody, dramatic palette of blues, blacks and spectral hues, as well as silhouettes that evoke a modernist élan. London-based designer Katja Behre presented a new wallpaper at the International Contemporary Furniture Fair this spring in New York for her Elli Popp line. A matte black background is dotted with vertical, metallic threads, like a meteor shower, or falling rain against a night sky.

Transforms telescopic imagery

New Yorker Sarah Merenda has done a clean, crisp, eight-point-star-patterned wallpaper that's offered in several colorways on a white or black background. Brooklyn, New York-based Calico Wallpaper offers several celestial-themed designs. Lunar is has fog-, smoke- and midnight-hued backgrounds with silver overlay that evoke the moon's surface as seen through a telescope. Aurora,

with a soothing palette in an ombre pattern, depicts the sky's constant transformation from dawn to dusk. And Inverted Spaces, a collaboration with Amsterdam's BCXSY studio, transforms telescopic imagery of constellations into abstracted, matte-painted

plate collection, Cosmic, with patterns evoking Jupiter, Venus, the sun and the moon. Also from Seletti: the whimsical Lunar brass tabletop storage containers shaped like retro spaceships. Luceplan took home an NYCxDesign award in May for Norwegian de-



This undated photo provided by Lee Broom shows the Orion Tube and Orion Globe lights hung horizontally and are part of Broom's new Observatory collection.

signer Daniel Rybakken's Amisol, an oversize pendant fixture composed of translucent white film or metallized mirror stretched inside an aluminum circle. The large, almost weightless disk resembles a solar sail, either reflecting or diffusing the light. Antiqued brass turns an eight-pointed star pendant fixture at Arteriors into a warm yet dramatic fixture: its shallow profile makes it a great option for low ceilings. — AP

Health Ceramics, a studio in Sausalito, California, has a new glaze - Cosmos - that evokes deep space and star-filled galaxies for a vase collection. The swirling mixture of dark and light blues and glossy black create the effect. There are more starry ceramics at West Elm: A collection of inky blue salad plates is scattered with pinpoints of gold constellations.

Avant-garde Italian design house Seletti collaborated with Diesel Living on a porcelain

A SIMPLE CHICKEN TIKKA MASALA THAT'S NEITHER MUSHY NOR DRY

Chicken tikka masala is arguably the single most popular Indian restaurant dish in the world. Turns out, it's not an authentic Indian dish: it was invented in a London curry house. Without historical roots, there is no definitive recipe. The variations we found had mushy or dry chicken and sauces that were unbearably rich and/or over spiced. We wanted an approachable method for producing moist, tender chunks of chicken in a rich, lightly spiced tomato sauce.

CHICKEN TIKKA MASALA

Ingredients

Servings: 4-6

Start to finish: 30 minutes

6 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 onion, chopped fine

1 tablespoon garam masala

1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger

2 garlic cloves, minced

1 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes

2/3 cup heavy cream

1 cup plain Greek yogurt

Salt

1 teaspoon ground cumin

1 teaspoon ground coriander

1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper

2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts, trimmed

1/4 cup minced fresh cilantro

Preparation

Combine oil and onion in Dutch oven and cook over medium-high heat until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in garam masala, ginger, and garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in tomatoes, cover, and simmer gently, stirring occasionally, until flavors meld, about 15 minutes. Stir in cream, cover, and keep warm.

Meanwhile, adjust oven rack 6 inches from broiler element and heat broiler. Line broiler-pan bottom with aluminum foil and lay slotted broiler pan on top. Combine yogurt, 1 teaspoon salt, cumin, coriander, and cayenne in medium bowl. Pound thicker ends of breasts as needed, then pat dry with paper towels.

Using tongs, dip chicken into yogurt mixture (chicken should be coated with thick layer of yogurt) and arrange on prepared broiler-pan top. Discard excess yogurt mixture. Broil chicken until lightly charred in spots and chicken registers 160 F, 10 to 18 minutes, flipping halfway through cooking. Transfer chicken to cutting board, let rest for 5 minutes, then cut into 1-inch chunks. Stir chicken into warm sauce and let heat through, about 2 minutes. Stir in cilantro and season with salt to taste. Serve.

Nutrition information per serving: 456 calories; 236 calories from fat; 26 g fat (8 g saturated; 1 g trans fats); 149 mg cholesterol; 533 mg sodium; 15 g carbohydrate; 3 g fiber; 9 g sugar; 40 g protein.





Meeting a descendant of the Mahatma

By Abigail Mathias

Rude cab drivers, broken promises, when things just aren't your fault... There are times when you are so angry you just want to lash out. On a warm sunny day at this year's Emirates Literature Festival, I met the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi and his words make anger seem so futile. Arun M Gandhi is an 83-year-old man who has lived, learnt, and studied the art of non-violence (Ahimsa) from a very young age. His book, 'The Gift', The Sunday Times bestseller, is filled with real life experiences.

It is by no means an easy path, but he offers a few guidelines. Gandhi is also an internationally renowned activist and speaker. He set up the MK Gandhi Institute for nonviolence in 1987 and spent 30 years as a journalist. As he joined his hands in a humble namaste greeting, before a room filled with listeners from around the world, I felt inexplicably proud of my Indian-ness.

Becoming the change

Following the news these days often leaves me with angst. Innocent victims tortured. Infrastructure that is shoddy. Scam after scam. As a journalist I often wonder if reporting the news itself has become inhumane. While most of us prefer to be armchair activists, how many can become the change we want to see in the world? "Violence is destroying the humanity in us. Our lives and speech have become so violent," says Arun Gandhi. Do you hurt people through your actions and inactions or through passive violence? Do we even have the time to introspect?

We first need to understand that we are not here by accident. - Arun Gandhi.

The author resides in the US where he often visits prisons to speak to inmates. He discusses how gun control has gotten out of hand precisely because we cannot control our minds. Growing up in South Africa wasn't easy for Arun. Just like his grandfather, he often faced racial discrimination. "I fought back many times. But of course, that wasn't the answer. "I was overpowered by bullies who said I didn't belong and I could not defeat them all," he says. At many times he did hit back.

His parents then sent him to India to live with his grandfather who although loving, had strict rules of conduct. The Mahatma wanted his grandson to learn the perils of poverty and encouraged a young Arun to teach other children who weren't privileged enough to go to school.

"Anger is like electricity you have to use it intelligently, channel it for the good of humanity. If you feel angry, no one is asking you to do nothing or say nothing. Journal your anger but with the aim of finding a constructive solution. Figure out how it can be resolved peacefully," he told a teacher in the audience who asked how nonviolent ways can be applied to everyday life.

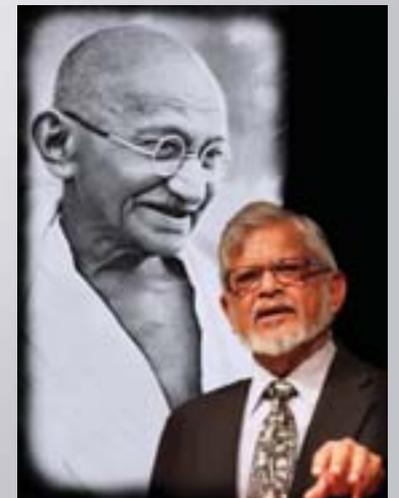
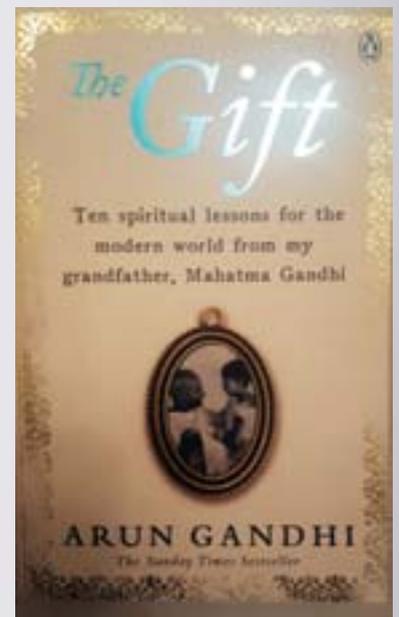
Anger and grief

While making notes, I too had a question for this fellow writer. Unfortunately, the moderator was ignoring my raised hand, for some time even though I sat in the front row. Discrimination? I disregarded it. The lady sitting by my side finally spoke up. "You better allow her to ask her question," she yelled. Thanks to a complete considerate stranger, I asked my question.

With trembling hands, I said. "Sir, I stand here as a proud Indian. Your grandfather always advocated non-violence and was killed so brutally. How were you and your family able to deal with this loss when the entire nation and the world was also dealing with grief?"

The author smiled and said, "I was just 14 years old when I learnt that my grandfather was assassinated. It took me a long time to get over my feelings of anger. In fact, at the time I was very bitter. However, my family knew that my grandfather would have wanted to forgive the person who did this. We made our peace with it; though, we were forced to abide by the law of the land which called for his public execution. Many films have depicted the difficulty dealing with such a highly principled man as the Mahatma. While many of us can't perhaps emulate as many virtues, I wonder if we have gone completely astray. Is violence and terror the only way forward? I sure hope not.

— Abigail Mathias is a freelance writer based in the UAE



Enter the dragon: Exploring Komodo National Park

Christmas Island crabs? The adorable quokkas of Rottnest? There's perhaps no place in the world as synonymous with its animal inhabitants as Indonesia's Komodo National Park. A 603 sq km archipelago, Komodo National Park is part of the Lesser Sunda Islands, dotted between the Indonesian provinces of East and West Nusa Tenggara. Here the remarkable Komodo dragon - a beastly monitor lizard measuring up to 3m long - thrives on paradisiacal islands surrounded by a sparkling blue sea.



There is nothing like seeing Komodo dragons in their eponymous home.



The only way into Komodo National Park is by boat.

But spotting this famed lizard is only one of the park's deluge of nature-based highlights, with visitors also treated to rich marine life, amazing (and accomplishable) forest hiking trails and pristine swimming beaches with strikingly-colored sands. To help in making the most of your visit, here's our guide to experiencing Komodo National Park's multitude of wildlife attractions.

Making an entrance

The small town of Labuanbajo on the large island of Flores isn't actually part of the park but functions as the gateway where all boats depart from, making it one of the most scenic transport hubs in the world: a fishing village staving off development and offering epic Indo sunsets and a ramshackle, tropical vibe to those passing through.

Highlights here include eating fresh lobster (for a few rupiah) at the night market, a selection of lovely snorkelling and swimming spots and - if the bright, burnt yellow coastal landscape starts to make your eyes ache - a placating trek through rural villages and farmland to the pale blue pools of Cunca Waterfall, hidden in the island's interior.



The formidable Komodo dragon can smell blood miles.

Diving in

You can only enter Komodo National Park on an organised boat trip from Labuanbajo. Some tours will tell you it's possible to whip around 'everything' in a day, but it's far more rewarding, relaxing and responsible to stretch the adventure

out to at least a few nights on a weather-beaten but sturdy liveaboard boat. A voyage around the Unesco-protected reserve with an experienced local crew not only gives a sense of authenticity to the adventure, but also directly benefits the local community and economy.

This style of touring also gives you more freedom over where you spend time in the water. The park may be named after its land-dwelling inhabitants, but the wildlife below the surface is equally as mesmerizing. The waters here are rarely much deeper than 3m, so you can easily duck-dive through great schools of colorful fish that appear like crystals shimmering through translucent tides. Manta Point lives up to its title, with divers pretty much guaranteed to see manta rays gliding along the ocean floor. There are actually two spots commonly known as Manta Point, but they each have similarly gentle currents and high visibility. Popular sites like Batu Balong and the Cauldron require a high level of experience to negotiate the swirling waters, but Castle Rock is a more manageable series of ledges where you're likely to spot black and white reef sharks, seriously sizeable giant trevally and perhaps a dolphin or two.

Beautiful green and hawksbill turtles frequent these waters too - expect at least a few to drift into your dive path at some point. It's worth noting the water moves a lot between the islands, so you should be a decent open water swimmer with some snorkeling experience to feel completely safe. A good captain will move with the current, so be ready to jump in at short notice.



A sea turtle - sporting a somewhat suspicious look - in Komodo National Park.



Manta rays are just one of the many marine creatures that call the park home.



Padar Island offers some of the most beautiful vistas in the entire park.

The other islands

Many visitors to the park don't actually make it to Komodo Island, especially if short on time, and instead opt for Rinca Island where dragon spotting is possible (and arguably easier due to the largely barren landscape) while undertaking hikes around the island. Other wildlife on offer includes buffalo, Timor deer, wild pigs and eagles. But it does heat up quickly, so come prepared with plenty of water and sun protection.

More popular for keen trekkers is Padar, a small, narrow island beside Komodo that boasts a wonderful 2-hour hike to a dramatic viewpoint that offers one of the best panoramic views in the entire park. Padar is also home to blissful Pink Beach which has, you guessed it, pink sand. The effect, which can also be seen on some of the park's other beaches, is caused by a red coral which thrives just off shore and stains the otherwise bright white sand. Smaller and less well-known, Kalong Island is home to one of the park's more eerie wildlife displays. Around sunset, 'Bat Island', as it is known in English, is enveloped by vast clouds of the nocturnal creatures rising above the mangroves in search of food. It's a spectacular natural treat that typifies the visceral experience of visiting Komodo National Park.

Entering the dragon's lair

Komodo Island is a juggernaut when it comes to wildlife destinations. The isle is home to some 25 endangered species, plus thousands of migratory birds that nest in the dense foliage scattered beneath Mount Satalibo. Then, of course, there are the dragons. Spotting one is a bucket-list experience for many nature enthusiasts and there's an added romance to seeing these beasts in their eponymous homeland.

Known as oras to the roughly 2000 local Muslim Bugis fishermen, this prehistoric monitor lizard pretty much has the lay of the land. Because the locals don't eat the ubiquitous Timor pigs - the dragons' main food source (alongside deer and water buffalo) - the reptiles have been left to flourish. It also helps that the Komodo dragon is enshrined in ancient folklore, stemming from an



A Komodo dragon, the largest lizard in the world, can grow up to 3m long.

old legend that tells of a man falling in love with a dragon princess, who gives birth to twins: a human boy and a female komodo dragon. The story paints the animals and native humans as kindred spirits, and thus should live in harmony. The fact the Indonesian government banned hunting them in 1915 may have also had something to do with the reptile's long-term survival.

The dragons on Komodo Island are not as easy to spot as Rinca, even though they are larger and more plentiful. But it shouldn't take long on a guided hike - and you must visit with a guide - to come across these scaly monsters, especially in the early morning when they move about their natural habitat with a quiet confidence. By noon, the dragons tend to rest in small groups in the forest shade or in their burrow. You don't need to be closer than 10m or so to get a sense of the animal's prehistoric origins, with their thick scaly skin and powerful whipping tails. A word of warning though: the dragons can smell blood for miles, so be careful what's in your rucksack and to clean any wounds before venturing out. The dragons have a fierce bite and have been known to startle and even attack some wayward travellers. Keep your wits about you.

Treading carefully

Komodo National Park is a living case study on the benefits of sustainable tourism. The wildlife here has been able to prosper thanks to progressive policies governing its management and the awareness of local communities on the need to protect and nurture their livelihood.

Tourist numbers are increasing though - the mood in Labuanbajo is a little restless - so it's crucial to be mindful of how your visit impacts the local environment and economy. Stay on liveaboard boats, avoid plastic waste, employ local guides and celebrate the great biodiversity of this ancient playground (after all, tourism can be a force for good, too). If we don't tread lightly, the Komodo dragon may - like its mythical, fire-breathing cousin - soon exist only in works of fantasy. (www.lonelyplanet.com)

Comic

WORD SEARCH

Tools

Find and circle all of the Tools that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message - a Henry David Thoreau quotation

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

- | | | | |
|-------------|-----------|-------------|---------------|
| BAND SAW | FILE | POLISHER | SPRAY GUN |
| BOLT CUTTER | GRINDER | PROTRACTOR | SQUARE |
| BRUSH | HAMMER | PRY BAR | STAPLE GUN |
| BUFFER | HAND SAW | PUNCH | STUD FINDER |
| CALIPER | HEX KEY | RASP | TABLE SAW |
| CHALK | JIG SAW | RATCHET | TAPE MEASURE |
| CHISEL | JOINTER | ROUTER | TAPS AND DIES |
| CLAMP | KNIFE | SANDER | TENSIPS |
| COPING SAW | LATHE | SAWHORSE | VICE |
| CROWBAR | MALLET | SCREWDRIVER | WOOD RULE |
| DADO | MITER BOX | SCROLL SAW | WRECKING BAR |
| DIVIDER | PLANE | SOCKETS | WRENCH |
| DRILL PRESS | FLIER | | |

Yesterday's Solution

The Raven

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

- | | | | | |
|-----------|----------|------------|-----------|----------|
| ANGELS | DOOR | GRIM | NAPPING | QUOTH |
| BEAK | DREAMS | HEART | NEPENTHE | RADIANT |
| BEGUSLING | DREARY | HORROR | NEVERMORE | RAPPING |
| BIRD | EBONY | LATTICE | OMINOUS | RAVEN |
| BLACK | ENTRANCE | LENORE | PALLAS | RUSTLING |
| BLEAK | EYES | LORE | PALLID | SHADOW |
| BURNING | FEATHER | MAIDEN | PERCHED | SHUTTER |
| BUST | FIEND | MELANCHOLY | PLACID | SOUL |
| CHAMBER | FLITTING | MIDNIGHT | PLUME | TAPPING |
| CROAKING | FLUTTER | MORTAL | PLUTONIAN | VISITOR |
| DARKNESS | FOWL | MYSTERY | PROPHECT | WEARY |
| DECEMBER | GHASTLY | NAMELESS | QUAFF | WIND |

Hidden sentence: WITH ME POETRY HAS NOT BEEN A PURPOSE, BUT A PASSION

CROSSWORD 1964



ACROSS

- Game in which matchsticks are arranged in rows and players alternately remove one or more of them.
- Titmice and chickadees.
- United States tennis player who was the first Black to win United States and English singles championships (1943-1993).
- The compass point midway between northeast and east.
- A nonstandard form of American English spoken by some American Black people.
- Bony flesh of herring-like fish usually caught during their migration to fresh water for spawning.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- A performer (or composer) of rock music.
- Distinctive and stylish elegance.
- Terrestrial or epilithic ferns of tropical rain forests.
- Large shrimp sauteed in oil or butter and garlic.
- The (prehensile) extremity of the superior limb.
- North American republic containing 50 states - 48 conterminous states in North America plus Alaska in northwest North America and the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific Ocean.
- A board game in which players try to move their pieces into their opponent's bases.
- Greek mythology.
- Profane or obscene expression usually of surprise or anger.
- A corporation's first offer to sell stock to the public.
- A kitchen utensil that cuts or chops

- flows generally northward to the Atlantic Ocean.
- (informal) Roused to anger.
- A less than average tide occurring at the first and third quarters of the moon.
- Any tree or shrub of the genus *Inga* having pinnate leaves and showy usually white flowers.
- How a result is obtained or an end is achieved.
- Type genus of the Percidae.
- A unit of resistance equal to a billionth of an ohm.
- A parenteral cephalosporin (trade name Rocephin) used for severe infection of the lungs or throat or ears or urinary tract.
- A liquid used for printing or writing or drawing.
- Having relatively few calories.
- A unit of area (4840 square yards) used in English-speaking countries.
- A radioactive transuranic element produced by bombarding plutonium with neutrons.
- Having an oblique or slanted direction.
- A broken piece of a brittle artifact.
- A Loloish language.
- Tropical starchy tuberous root.
- The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.
- A dull persistent (usually moderately intense) pain.
- An informal conversation.
- A state in midwestern United States.
- The second month of the Moslem calendar.
- United States physiologist (born in Germany) who did research on parthenogenesis (1859-1924).
- Made from residue of grapes or apples after pressing.
- United States psychologist who studied the intelligence of primates (1876-1956).
- Become of.
- Hawaiian dish of taro root pounded to a paste and often allowed to ferment.
- Before noon.
- (astronomy) The angular distance of a celestial point measured westward along the celestial equator from the zenith crossing.
- A member of the Siouan people of the Missouri river valley in NE Nebraska.
- The United Nations agency concerned with civil aviation.
- (Old Testament) Cain and Abel were the first children of Adam and Eve born after the Fall of Man.
- Unhappy in love.
- Ratio of the hypotenuse to the opposite side.
- A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
- A small flat triangular bone in front of the knee that protects the knee joint.
- A member of the people inhabiting an area of northern Mongolia and eastern Siberia.
- A public promotion of some product or service.
- The basic unit of money in Gambia.
- A person afflicted with leprosy.
- Squash bugs.
- Cause annoyance in.
- An informal term for a father.
- (Islam) The man who leads prayers in a mosque.
- An amino acid that is found in the central nervous system.
- Toward the mouth or oral region.
- A hotel providing overnight lodging for travelers.
- A long thin fluffy scarf of feathers or fur.

Yesterday's Solution

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

Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

TV Listings



01:10 American Ninja
02:50 Dangerous Lessons
04:20 Patriot Games
06:20 Acts Of Vengeance
07:50 San Andreas Quake
09:20 American Ninja
11:05 American Ninja II: The Confrontation
12:40 Acts Of Vengeance
14:20 Lost & Found
15:55 Independents' Day
17:30 Beyond Skyline
19:20 Railroad Tigers
21:30 Hell Or High Water
23:15 Under Siege



00:45 North Woods Law
01:40 I'm Alive
02:35 Austin Stevens: Snakemaster
03:25 Lone Star Law
04:15 North Woods Law
05:02 Wildest Middle East
05:49 Pit Bulls & Parolees
06:36 Escape To Chimp Eden
07:00 Escape To Chimp Eden
07:25 Rugged Justice
08:15 Untamed & Uncut
09:10 Lone Star Law
10:05 North Woods Law
11:00 Wildest Middle East
11:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees
12:50 Austin Stevens: Snakemaster
13:45 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
14:40 North Woods Law
15:35 I'm Alive
16:30 Rugged Justice
17:25 Untamed & Uncut
18:20 Austin Stevens: Snakemaster
19:15 The Bronx Zoo
20:10 Saba And The Rhino's Secret
21:05 Life On Earth: A New Prehistory
22:00 Dodo Heroes
22:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees
23:50 The Bronx Zoo



00:10 Death In Paradise
01:05 Holby City
02:00 Father Brown
02:45 Dickensian
03:30 Dickensian
04:15 Stella
05:00 Call The Midwife
06:00 EastEnders
06:30 EastEnders
07:00 Holby City
08:00 Casualty
08:50 Father Brown
09:40 Death In Paradise
10:40 Casualty
11:35 Casualty
12:30 Holby City
13:25 Father Brown
14:15 Death In Paradise
15:15 Casualty
17:05 Holby City
18:00 Holby City
19:00 Death In Paradise
20:00 Silent Witness
21:00 Shakespeare And Hathaway: Private Investigators
21:50 Poldark
22:50 Holby City
23:45 Father Brown



00:05 Inside Amy Schumer
00:30 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
00:55 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
01:20 The Meltdown With Jonah And Kumail
01:45 Tosh.0
02:10 Inside Amy Schumer
02:35 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah

03:25 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
04:05 The Dude Perfect Show
04:55 I Used To Be Fat
05:45 Disaster Date
07:05 Punk'd (Bet)
07:30 Punk'd (Bet)
07:55 I Used To Be Fat
08:45 Bondi Ink
09:35 House Of Food
10:25 Hillbillies For Hire
11:15 Disaster Date
12:30 Impractical Jokers III Jokers Wild
13:35 Impractical Jokers VI Special - Happy Father's Day
14:00 Idiotsitter
15:15 The It Crowd
16:55 The It Crowd Special
17:45 Takeshis Castle Thailand
18:10 Friends
20:02 Takeshis Castle Thailand
20:25 Graves
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 Teachers
22:00 Roy Wood Jr: Father Figure
22:50 Chappelle's Show
23:15 Teachers
23:40 Comedy Central Stand Up Presents



00:45 Diabolical: Deadly Love
01:40 Blood Relatives
02:35 Forbidden: Dying For Love
03:30 Evil Talks: Chilling Confessions
04:25 Swamp Murders
05:20 I Almost Got Away With It
06:10 Murder Chose Me
07:00 California Investigator
07:25 I'd Kill For You
08:15 Swamp Murders
09:10 Murder Chose Me
10:05 Your Worst Nightmare
11:00 Disappeared
11:55 I'd Kill For You
12:50 I Almost Got Away With It
13:45 Murder Chose Me
14:40 Your Worst Nightmare
15:35 Evil Talks: Chilling Confessions
16:30 I'd Kill For You
17:25 Swamp Murders
18:20 I Almost Got Away With It
19:15 Murder Chose Me
20:10 Your Worst Nightmare
21:05 Married With Secrets
22:00 Evil Online
22:55 Forbidden: Dying For Love
23:50 Swamp Murders



00:00 Hank Zipzer
00:25 Alex & Co.
00:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
00:50 Evermoor Chronicles
01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:05 Binny And The Ghost
02:30 Binny And The Ghost
02:55 Hank Zipzer
03:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
03:20 Hank Zipzer
03:45 Alex & Co.
04:10 Alex & Co.
04:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
05:25 Binny And The Ghost
05:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
05:50 Rolling With The Ronks S1 Splits
06:00 Stuck In The Middle
06:25 Tangled: The Series
06:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
06:55 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
07:20 K.C. Undercover
07:45 Bunk'd
08:10 Kitty Is Not A Cat
08:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
09:25 Tangled: The Series
09:50 Tangled: The Series
10:15 Bizaardvark
10:40 Bizaardvark

11:05 Liv And Maddie
11:30 Liv And Maddie
11:55 K.C. Undercover
12:20 K.C. Undercover
12:45 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
13:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
14:00 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
14:15 Bunk'd
14:40 K.C. Undercover
15:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
15:10 Kitty Is Not A Cat
15:35 Elena Of Avalor
16:00 Tangled: The Series
16:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
16:50 Raven's Home
17:15 Stuck In The Middle
17:40 K.C. Undercover
18:05 K.C. Undercover
18:30 Bunk'd
18:55 Descendants Wicked World
19:00 Raven's Home
19:25 Liv And Maddie
19:50 K.C. Undercover
20:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
20:20 Tangled: The Series
20:45 Bizaardvark
21:10 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
21:35 Stuck In The Middle
22:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
22:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
22:50 Lolirock
23:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
23:35 Binny And The Ghost



00:00 Trulli Tales
00:30 PJ Masks
01:00 PJ Masks
01:25 PJ Masks
01:50 The Hive
02:00 Zou
02:15 Zou
02:30 Henry Hugglemonster
02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
03:20 The Hive
03:30 The Hive
03:40 Zou
03:55 Zou
04:10 PJ Masks
04:35 The Hive
04:45 Henry Hugglemonster
05:10 Henry Hugglemonster
05:35 The Hive
05:45 Zou
06:00 Zou
06:15 PJ Masks
06:30 PJ Masks
07:00 Trulli Tales
07:25 PJ Masks Shorts
07:30 Puppy Dog Pals
07:45 Doc McStuffins
08:00 Jake And The Neverland Pirates
08:15 PJ Masks
08:30 Vampirina
09:00 Doc McStuffins
09:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
09:55 Unbungalievable
10:00 Puppy Dog Pals
10:25 Puppy Dog Pals
10:50 Puppy Dog Pals
11:20 Puppy Dog Pals
11:45 Puppy Dog Pals
12:15 Puppy Dog Pals
12:40 Puppy Dog Pals
13:10 Vampirina
13:35 PJ Masks
14:00 PJ Masks Shorts
14:05 The Legion Of Pirate Villains
14:50 PJ Masks Shorts
15:00 PJ Masks
15:30 PJ Masks
16:00 PJ Masks
16:30 PJ Masks
17:00 Vampirina
17:30 Claude
17:45 Puppy Dog Pals
18:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
18:25 Unbungalievable
18:30 PJ Masks
18:45 Vampirina

19:00 Sofia The First
19:30 Doc McStuffins
19:45 The Lion Guard
20:15 Mission Force One
20:30 Vampirina
21:00 Trulli Tales
21:30 Sofia The First
22:00 Doc McStuffins
22:30 Puppy Dog Pals
22:55 Minnie's Bow-Toons
23:00 Miles From Tomorrow
23:30 Trulli Tales



06:00 Marvel's Spider-Man
06:32 Lab Rats
07:00 DuckTales
07:32 Big City Greens
07:45 Furiki Wheels
08:00 Phineas And Ferb
08:25 Phineas And Ferb
08:50 Disney Mickey Mouse
08:55 Milo Murphy's Law
09:20 Milo Murphy's Law
09:45 Phineas And Ferb
10:00 Gravity Falls
10:25 Gravity Falls
10:50 Disney Mickey Mouse
10:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
11:00 Lab Rats
11:32 Lab Rats
12:00 Phineas And Ferb
12:32 Phineas And Ferb
13:00 Phineas & Ferb: Mission Marvel
13:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:00 Phineas And Ferb
14:32 Phineas And Ferb
15:00 Supa Strikas
15:32 Supa Strikas
16:00 DuckTales
16:32 Big Hero 6 The Series
17:00 Big City Greens
17:32 Furiki Wheels
18:00 Lab Rats
18:32 Lab Rats
19:00 Disney11
19:30 Mech-X4
20:00 DuckTales
20:32 Big Hero 6 The Series
20:55 Marvel's Spider-Man
21:20 Star Wars Rebels
21:45 Phineas And Ferb
22:00 Furiki Wheels
22:15 Big City Greens
22:30 Phineas And Ferb
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA



00:10 Couples Come Dine With Me
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 The Chase
03:25 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs At Christmas
04:20 One Night With My Ex
05:15 Couples Come Dine With Me
06:15 Tonight At The London Palladium
07:10 The Chase
08:05 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs At Christmas
09:00 One Night With My Ex
09:55 Couples Come Dine With Me
10:55 Tonight At The London Palladium
11:50 The Chase
12:45 Emmerdale
13:45 Coronation Street
14:15 Martin Clunes: Islands Of Australia
15:10 The Chase
16:00 One Night With My Ex
16:55 Martin Clunes: Islands Of Australia
17:50 Couples Come Dine With Me
18:50 Emmerdale
19:15 Emmerdale
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 The Chase
21:00 One Night With My Ex
21:55 Martin Clunes: Islands Of Australia
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Emmerdale
23:40 Coronation Street



00:15 The Middle
01:05 The Drew Carey Show
01:55 The Mick
02:20 Ghosted
02:45 Us And Them
03:10 Late Night With Seth Meyers
04:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
04:50 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
05:40 Ghosted
06:05 Us And Them
06:30 Black-ish
06:55 Brooklyn Nine-Nine
07:20 Late Night With Seth Meyers
08:10 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
09:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
09:50 Modern Family
10:15 New Girl
10:40 Ghosted
11:05 Us And Them
11:30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
12:20 Black-ish
12:45 Brooklyn Nine-Nine
13:10 The Middle
14:00 The Drew Carey Show
14:50 Ghosted
15:15 Modern Family
15:40 New Girl
16:05 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
17:00 Grown-Ish
17:30 Brooklyn Nine-Nine
18:00 The Middle
19:00 The Drew Carey Show
20:00 Modern Family
20:30 American Housewife
21:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
22:00 Future Man
22:30 Family Guy
23:00 Hit The Road
23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers



00:15 The Muppets
02:00 Underdog
03:30 The Little Mermaid: Ariel's Beginning
05:00 Pirates Of The Caribbean: At World's End
08:00 Underdog
10:00 The Muppets
12:00 Muppet Treasure Island
14:00 Mulan
15:30 Finding Nemo
17:30 The Princess Diaries
19:30 Ice Princess
21:30 Mulan
23:00 Finding Nemo



00:00 This Is Us
01:00 Star
01:50 The Good Doctor
02:40 Quantico
03:30 9-1-1
04:20 This Is Us
05:20 Timeless
06:10 Grey's Anatomy
07:00 Good Morning America
09:00 The View
10:00 9-1-1
11:00 The Good Doctor
12:00 Grey's Anatomy
13:00 Supernatural
14:00 Quantico
15:00 The View
16:00 Live Good Morning America
18:00 Grey's Anatomy
19:00 The Good Doctor
20:00 Supernatural
21:00 The Amazing Race
22:00 Station 19
23:00 WWE Experience



00:00 Waiting
01:45 They Came Together
03:15 Fan Girl

05:00 Overboard
07:00 Planes, Trains And Automobiles
08:45 Fan Girl
10:30 Overboard
12:30 Planes, Trains And Automobiles
14:15 Tyler Perry's Boo: A Madea Halloween
16:15 Don Verdean
18:15 Big Trouble
20:00 Coyote Ugly
22:00 The Lovers
23:45 Rock The Kasbah



00:30 Quest For A Heart
02:00 Gamba
03:40 The Elf Who Stole Christmas
05:05 Felix All Around The World
06:40 A Doggone Hollywood
08:15 A Doggone Adventure
09:50 The Wheelers
11:20 Deep
13:00 Gamba
14:40 Felix All Around The World
16:15 Krazzy Planet
17:35 The Wheelers
19:05 Funny Little Cars
20:15 Rainbow Valley Heroes
21:55 Krazzy Planet
23:15 A Doggone Adventure



01:50 Roman Holiday
03:50 Healing
05:50 Down With Love
07:50 The Big Year
09:40 Madagascar 2
11:10 Chitty Chitty Bang Bang
13:40 Spotlight
14:00 Aloha
16:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Out Of The Shadows
18:00 Sahara
20:05 99 Homes
22:00 Gone Girl



00:05 Food Factory USA
00:30 Home Factory
00:55 Home Factory
01:20 Smash Lab
02:10 NASA's Unexplained Files
03:00 How It's Made
03:24 How It's Made
03:48 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
04:36 Home Factory
05:01 Home Factory
05:24 How Do They Do It?
05:48 Food Factory USA
06:12 Smash Lab
07:00 How Do They Do It?
07:26 How It's Made
07:50 How It's Made
08:14 Home Factory
08:39 Home Factory
09:02 NASA's Unexplained Files
09:50 How Do They Do It?
10:14 Food Factory USA
10:38 How It's Made
11:02 How It's Made
11:26 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
12:14 Home Factory
12:39 Home Factory
13:02 Smash Lab
13:50 NASA's Unexplained Files
14:38 How Do They Do It?
15:02 Food Factory USA
15:26 How It's Made
15:50 How It's Made
16:14 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
17:02 NASA's Unexplained Files
17:50 Smash Lab
18:40 How Do They Do It?
19:05 Food Factory USA
19:30 How The Universe Works
20:20 Home Factory
20:45 Home Factory
21:10 The Unexplained Files
22:00 How The Universe Works
22:50 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?

Stars



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You desire intimacy. You desire control of all aspects of your life at this time. You could be feeling driven and determined to gain power. You may feel hungry for knowledge. You desire the answers of life's mysteries. You may feel as if you are in touch with everyone and everything around you. Aries. Today may leave you feeling much love and support from those around you. Spend time with your special someone. Something as simple as opening up and sharing the details of your day may help you bond. You may find much peace and harmony coming into your life from this simple change.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may be feeling drawn and even turned on by that which is taboo. Sex, power, and the pursuit of wealth are beginning to be a driving force behind your emotions. You are fascinated by people. What makes them do the things they do? What makes them tick? You desire a fresh start in your life and major changes. You know this may only be accomplished by turning your back on all you believed and starting over with an open mind and a new outlook on life in general, Taurus. You may discover that the only way to a fresh start is the complete destruction of your old ways.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Your marriage or partnership or lack thereof seem to be a major focus for you. You feel the need to be needed and need to be loved. You want someone by your side and someone to share your life with. You crave a beautiful relationship and the word soulmate takes on great meaning for you. You desire someone you can share your deepest thoughts and dreams with and someone to always be there to love and support you. You find all these feelings beautiful and desire this type of harmony in your life, Gemini. Love is what seems to make your world go around at this time. Surround yourself with as much as possible.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You desire intimacy. You desire control of all aspects of your life at this time. You could be feeling driven and determined to gain power. You may feel hungry for knowledge. You desire the answers of life's mysteries. You may feel as if you are in touch with everyone and everything around you, Cancer. Today may leave you feeling much love and support from those around you. Spend time with your special someone. Something as simple as opening up and sharing the details of your day may help you bond. You may find much peace and harmony coming into your life from this simple change.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You may find yourself getting carried away and not as focused on the reality of what is best for you. You may be too focused on your wants rather than what you truly need. You may find that others will be quick to offer unsolicited advice when your actions aren't what they expected nor see as the best option for you. You may feel as the world around you is one big blur. This is a nice time to take a step back and focus on the decisions you are making and possibly put them off for a time your mind is clear, Leo. You may find that others are not as drawn to you when you are in this dreamy state. You could greatly benefit from some time alone tonight.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Play it safe. This is a time when being conservative can be used to your advantage. You should find that with very little effort success can be achieved through your steady devotion and dedication. Your relationships with family seem to be closer now than you have ever experienced in the past. The support you receive from family leaves you with a great sense of stability and confidence. You may especially feel support from an older family member, someone you view as a mentor. You have taken the slow and steady path and you can expect great rewards, Virgo. Sometimes patience works greatly in your favor, and this is one of those times.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This is a time you may receive some sort of recognition. You have worked hard and are a dedicated leader. You may feel as if communication is easy with others and you may feel as if your relationships are going wonderfully. You feel much support from your peers. It is a great time for you to work with others and you may find yourself being selected for a new position or to head up a special project. Your management skills are obvious, and you are very focused and dedicated. You devoted much of your time to figuring out just what makes people do what they do and be who they are. This is a very intriguing past time for you.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may feel like taking a chance today. Stepping out of your comfort zone could bring great reward your way. Your communication skills are at all time high and you have the ability to interact with ease to all who surround you. Today is a day you may find yourself full of energy and ready to take on the world. High energy days like today always find you very productive in the workplace and you are a force to be reckoned with, Scorpio. Use this energy in the most positive way possible. Do not let anyone dull your shine today.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

It seems that sex, money, and power are powerful aphrodisiacs in your world now. You are drawn to the mysterious and secretive people in your life. You want to figure out what drives them. Knowing what makes them tick is what you focus on finding out. You may feel a need to wipe your slate clean and start from scratch. Emotionally and physically you desire to rid yourself of all that does not contribute to your well-being. You may find that a fresh start is what you need to truly get ahead in your life. If it does not benefit you and make you happy, get rid of it. Once you rid your life of these things you will begin to heal.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

It seems you may find yourself developing a deep connection with a group of younger people today. Your motto has always been, if I knew then what I know now. This is a great time to share your experiences and knowledge with a younger crowd and know you may just make a difference in a life today. This is a great time for you to help others. You may feel this is a time you are comfortable sharing some of your deepest, darkest secrets with others. You may feel as if you need to get to the root of all emotions that drive you. A need for a fresh start and a clean slate seem to be an overwhelming desire in your life at this time.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Today finds you in a great mood. This is a great time to surround yourself with the ones you love and spend some special time together. You may find this feeds a longing desire you have to feel loved and needed. You feel as though you may be in touch with the real you. Those close to you seem to be so supportive of your decisions and the recent choices you have made in your life. This is a very good time for you filled with love, peace, and harmony. You feel more alive than you have felt in years and seem to be able to communicate on very deep and emotional levels with those closest to you. Not only are your needs being fulfilled but you are able to sense the needs of others around you and are doing an excellent job catering to those you care about.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Today may find you on a search for a little romance. You are in a romantic mood and that is where your thoughts are at. You may find yourself hungry to obtain information. Social media may be drawing you in as you investigate page after page of those close to you. You may be wanting to learn more about them or find yourself downright nosy today. You could find sitting on the porch with neighbors this evening to be greatly satisfying. A bit of friendly gossip and really getting to know each other. You will find emotional satisfaction in truly opening up to others and letting them get to know you.

COUNTRY CODES

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

CLINIC PAGE



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

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

Salmiya, Belajat Street, Tel: 1881122

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

ACADEMIC CERTIFICATES:

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

SPECIALIZED IN:

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

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DR KHALED ALMERRI
Consultant Interventional Cardiology
Department: Heart & Vascular Center

Specialized in:

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

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Otorhinolaryngology (E.N.T)
Dr Hamoud Abdullah Alarouj
ENT Specialist

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

Specialized in:

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

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Scope of Clinical Practice:

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

Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:

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

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

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

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

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

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Health

Shooting stars on demand: Japan start-up plans 2020 meteor shower

‘Our stockpile of shooting stars will be in space’

TOKYO: A Japanese start-up developing “shooting stars on demand” says it will be ready to deliver the world’s first artificial meteor shower in a spectacular show over Hiroshima in early 2020. ALE, based in Tokyo, is in the final stages of developing two micro-satellites that will release tiny balls that glow brightly as they enter the atmosphere, simulating a meteor shower.

The first satellite will hitch a ride into space on a rocket being launched by Japan’s space agency by March 2019. The second will be launched in mid-2019 on a private-sector rocket. “We are targeting the whole world, as our stockpile of shooting stars will be in space and can be delivered across the world,” ALE chief executive Lena Okajima told reporters on Wednesday.

Each satellite will be able to carry 400 tiny balls whose chemical formula is a closely-guarded secret. Ejected from the satellite, the balls will glow as they plunge through the atmosphere. The 400 balls will be enough for 20-30 events, according to the company, and the satellites will be able to stay in space for around two years.

The company is also exploring the possibility of using satellites already in space that are no longer operational to create “giant” shooting stars, officials said. “We are planning to push a used satellite into the atmosphere on a targeted orbit to create a giant

artificial shooting star,” ALE chief engineer Ko Kamachi, adding that the idea was still in the basic research phase.

Put on a show

ALE’s two satellites will start orbiting the Earth by February 2020, preparing for the world’s first delivery of artificial shooting stars in spring 2020, over the western Japan city of Hiroshima. The satellites can be used separately or in tandem, and will be programmed to eject the balls at the right location, speed and direction to put on a show for viewers on the ground.

Tinkering with the ingredients in the balls should mean that it is possible to change the colours they glow, offering the possibility of a multi-coloured flotilla of shooting stars. Each star is expected to shine for several seconds before being completely burned up — well before they fall low enough to pose any danger to anything on Earth. They would glow brightly enough to be seen even over the light-polluted metropolis of Tokyo.

If all goes well, and the skies are clear, the 2020 event could be visible to millions of people, ALE said. Okajima said the company chose Hiroshima for its first display because of its good weather, landscape and cultural assets. ALE is working in collaboration with scientists and engineers at Japanese universities as well as local government officials



and corporate sponsors. It has not disclosed the price for an artificial meteor but it may not come so cheap, with the company

spending about \$20 million for the development, production, launch and operation of the two satellites. — AFP

CLINIC

PAGE





248 33 199



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DR. WALEED S BUHAIMEED

Consultant of General Surgery
Laposcopic and Bariatric Surgery

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

Scope of clinical Practice.

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



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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h with a chance for haze.

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

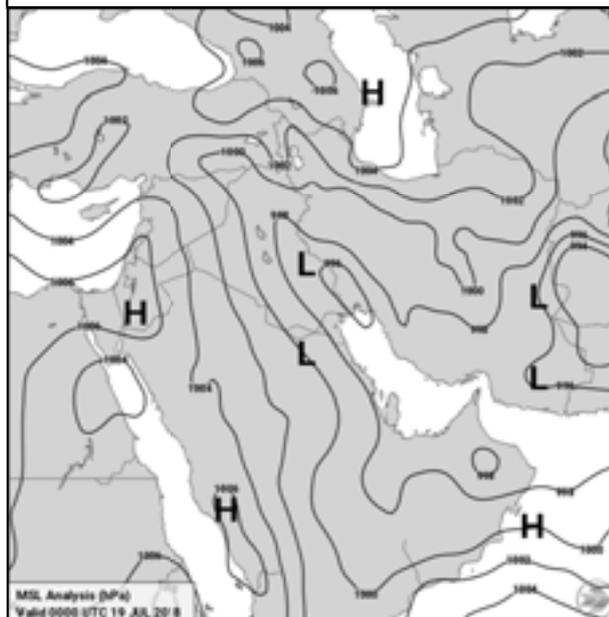
WEATHER WARNING

No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	46 °C	36 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	46 °C	31 °C
ABDALY	45 °C	31 °C
BUBYAN	--- °C	--- °C
JAHRA	45 °C	33 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	45 °C	30 °C
SALMIYAH	43 °C	37 °C
AHMADI	43 °C	35 °C
NUWAISIB	47 °C	32 °C
WAFRA	45 °C	31 °C
SALMY	42 °C	29 °C

SFC. CHART

19/07/2018 0000 UTC



4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	07/20	Very hot + rising dust over open areas	47 °C	34 °C	NW	20 - 45 km/h
Saturday	07/21	Very hot + rising dust	47 °C	36 °C	NW	25 - 55 km/h
Sunday	07/22	Hot + Dusty	45 °C	35 °C	NW	25 - 60 km/h
Monday	07/23	Very hot + rising dust over open areas	47 °C	34 °C	NW	25 - 50 km/h

PRAYER TIMES

Fajr	03:28
Sunrise	05:00
Zuhr	11:54
Asr	15:29
Sunset	18:48
Isha	20:17

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

MAX. Temp.	45 °C
MIN. Temp.	31 °C
MAX. RH	23 %
MIN. RH	07 %
MAX. Wind	NW 50 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

REQUIRED

Administrative employee

- Fluent Arabic and English
- Computer literate.

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alhudaida@gmail.com

Donor Required

Kidney donor required with blood type

O-

For inquiry call:
99386668

EMERGENCY



112

For labor-related inquiries and complaints:

Call MSAL hotline
128

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is

1889988



AIRLINES

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
American Airlines	22087425
	22087426
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9

Business

FRIDAY, JULY 20, 2018

39 AirAsia announces a \$30bn deal for 100 Airbus planes



40 Mexico's 'AMLO' should learn to love energy reform: Analysts



41 Uruguay marks first year of pot pharmacies - 'like selling aspirin'



LIWA OASIS: Emirati men check baskets of Dabas and Khalas dates which are displayed at the annual Liwa Date Festival in the western region of Liwa on July 18, 2018. Date experts judge the quality of different types of dates which are produced by the Emirati farmers to choose the best date farmers during the annual Liwa Festival. —AFP

China, UAE ink trade, oil deals

DP World announced agreement to build a new trade zone in Dubai

DUBAI: China and the United Arab Emirates yesterday announced oil and trade deals ahead of a state visit by President Xi Jinping to the Gulf state. State-owned Abu Dhabi National Oil Co said it had awarded two contracts worth \$1.6 billion to BGP Inc, a subsidiary of China National Petroleum Co, for a seismic survey in the emirate.

The survey is to search for oil and gas in on-shore and offshore sites covering an area of 53,000 square kilometers (20,463 square miles), the statement said. State-run CNPC already has two concession rights contracts with

ADNOC worth around \$3 billion. The UAE's state-owned DP World also announced an agreement by the two countries to build a new trade zone in Dubai. The deal between the global port operator and the Zhejiang China Commodities City Group will see a "traders' market" built at Dubai's Jebel Ali free zone.

The project is part of China's trillion-dollar "One Belt, One Road" infrastructure initiative, an ambitious plan to revive the ancient Silk Road trading routes with a global network of ports, roads and railways. The new facility will cover three square kilometres (1.2 square

miles) at the Jebel Ali site, which is the Middle East's largest trade zone, DP World said in a statement. The market will host a vast range of goods from food and cosmetics to building materials and technology.

DP World, which operates in 40 countries, did not announce the value of the deal or provide a timeframe for its construction. Xi is due to arrive in the UAE capital Abu Dhabi later on Thursday for talks with officials, his first stop on a tour also including Senegal, Rwanda and South Africa. China is the United Arab Emirates' top trading partner, with non-oil trade in 2017 rising 15 per-

cent year-on-year to over \$53.3 billion (46 billion euros) — more than 90 percent of it Chinese exports to the UAE, according to Abu Dhabi's finance ministry.

The UAE is also one of the top 15 crude suppliers to China, exporting some \$4 billion worth of oil to Beijing last year. Ninety-six percent of the country's oil reserves are located in Abu Dhabi. In a further sign of strengthening ties between the two countries, Dubai-based real estate developer Emaar Properties on Wednesday announced plans to build the Middle East's largest Chinatown in the UAE. —AFP

Business

Stock markets mostly drop while pound extends losses

‘Continuing the general trend of the week’

LONDON: Stock markets mostly fell yesterday, as the US Federal Reserve chief's upbeat assessment of the economy failed to allay concerns about a global trade war, analysts said. The dollar rose across the board, with the pound slumping under \$1.30 for the first time in 10 months as weak UK retail sales data dented the chances of an interest rate hike from the Bank of England in August, experts added.

“A drop in retail sales... has sent the pound sharply lower, continuing the general trend of the week,” noted Chris Beauchamp, chief market analyst at IG trading group. In Paris, shares in advertising group Publicis slumped 6.8 percent to 54.32 euros after the French firm said sales tumbled in the second quarter. However Iliad, the parent company of mobile operator Free, jumped 8.5 percent to 145.85 euros after the company said it signed up one million clients since launching service in Italy at the end of May.

Across the Atlantic, Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell on Wednesday expressed optimism over the US economy. But during a second day of congressional testimony, he warned that the spiralling global trade row was having a negative impact on companies in the US. “We hear from our extensive network of business contacts a rising chorus of concerns,” he said.

President Donald Trump has imposed steep tariffs on products from China worth tens of billions of dollars, and has threatened to target hundreds

of billions more, on top of import taxes on steel and aluminium that have angered allies including the EU. “Powell was pretty straightforward on the risks from the trade policy uncertainty though he tried to stay out of the political debate,” said Greg McKenna, chief market strategist at AxiTrader.

The Fed chief said US businesses were already being hurt by reciprocal tariffs on key products, pointing out: “The bottom line is a more protectionist economy is less competitive, less productive.” However, he also said that if Trump's trade policy resulted in lower tariffs, that would be good for the US economy. In a sign of worsening tensions over the trade dispute, a senior economic adviser to Trump attacked Chinese President Xi Jinping for blocking an agreement to resolve the issue. “I think Xi is holding the game up,” said Larry Kudlow, director of the White House National Economic Council. “I don't think President Xi has any intention of following through on the discussions we've made.” Elsewhere yesterday, oil prices reversed minor gains won thanks to US government data showing a fall in stockpiles of motor fuel. “The gasoline numbers... raise supply concerns”, said Stephen Innes, head of Asia-Pacific trading at Oanda trading group.

Key figures at 1045 GMT

Frankfurt - DAX 30: DOWN 0.4 percent at 12,714.03



NEW YORK: An American flag is reflected in the window of a building across from the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE). — AFP

Paris - CAC 40: DOWN 0.5 percent at 5,419.80
EURO STOXX 50: DOWN 0.3 percent at 3,475.51
Tokyo - Nikkei 225: DOWN 0.1 percent at 22,764.68 (close)
Hong Kong - Hang Seng: DOWN 0.4 percent at 28,010.86 (close)
Shanghai - Composite: DOWN 0.5 percent at 2,772.55 (close)
New York - Dow: UP 0.3 percent at 25,199.29

(close)
Pound/dollar: DOWN at \$1.2996 from \$1.3069 at 2030 GMT
Euro/dollar: DOWN at \$1.1604 from \$1.1639
Dollar/yen: UP at 112.97 yen from 112.86 yen
Oil - Brent Crude: DOWN 96 cents at \$71.94 per barrel
Oil - West Texas Intermediate: DOWN 87 cents at \$67.89 per barrel — AFP

Russian MPs approve pension reform amid protests

MOSCOW: Russian lawmakers yesterday approved a hugely unpopular government plan to hike the pension age that has led to protests and a record slump in Vladimir Putin's approval ratings. In a rare move, usually pliant Kremlin-friendly opposition parties—the Communists, the Liberal Democratic Party and A Just Russia—rejected the legislation to raise the pension age to 65 for men and 63 for women.

A total of 327 lawmakers in the lower house or State Duma, voted in favour of the bill in its first reading, with 102 against. The planned pension age hike—a first in nearly 90 years—has led to a rare outburst of public anger at Putin. A legacy of the USSR, Russia's retirement age—set at 55 for women and 60 for men since Stalin—is currently among the lowest in the world. Given Russians' low life expectancy, many will not live long enough under the new system to receive a state pension but the gov-

ernment says the burden is simply too much for its stretched finances. Analysts say that growing popular discontent over the change amid plunging living standards may present the most serious challenge to Putin during his nearly 20 years in power.

In early July several thousand people rallied in dozens of Russian cities in protests organised by Kremlin-friendly political parties and Putin's top critic Alexei Navalny. On the eve of the vote around 1,000 people protested against the reform in Moscow and on Thursday around 200 people gathered outside the Duma itself.

“We are living quite badly, people's patience is running out,” said 54-year-old accountant Natalya, declining to give her last name. “We are sick of bearing this,” she added at Thursday's protest ahead of the vote. “This is a vile, inhumane law for Russian citizens,” said Valery Rashkin, one of the many Communist MPs who came out to support the protesters. The government says the pension age increase is unavoidable as the current system represents a growing weight for the cash-strapped federal budget. Speaking in parliament, Labour Minister Maxim Topilin defended the bill, saying Russia's current pension system was rooted in the 1930s when life expectancy was “completely different.” “Times are changing. The economy is changing,” Topilin said. “We cannot be stuck in the 1930s.”—AFP

Unilever sales, profits slump with London move looms

THE HAGUE: Anglo-Dutch consumer giant Unilever yesterday revealed a drop in both sales and profits in the first half of 2018, saying markets remained “challenging” amid moves to leave its London base this year. Sales fell some 5.0 percent to 26.4 billion euros (\$30.7 billion) in the first six months, down from 27.7 billion euros on the same period in 2017.

Net profits also slid by 2.4 percent to 3.2 billion euros, down from 3.3 billion euros from January to June last year, as the company took a hit from a 11-day truckers strike in Brazil and currency fluctuations. Unilever, which has over 400 household brands in its portfolio, said however the first half showed “a solid, all round performance with some challenging markets.”

Chief executive Paul Polman insisted “our expectation for the full year is unchanged,” adding the Rotterdam-based company believed it would have underlying sales growth in the 3 percent to 5 percent range” in 2018. He also announced that Unilever had completed the sale of

its margarines and butters division to US private equity giant KKR by its July 2 deadline, saying in a conference call it was “one of the most involved and complex transactions in Unilever's history.”

The first half of a six billion euros buy-back scheme also ended on Thursday, with the next three billion euros to start on Friday. Unilever was founded in 1930 after the Dutch margarine producer Margarien Unie merged with British soapmaker Lever Brothers. Its brands include such household names as yeast extract Marmite, PG Tips tea and Persil washing powder, Knorr soup as well as Dove beauty products and Magnum ice cream.

Unilever's shares added 0.3 percent in morning trading in London, in line with gains on the blue chip FTSE 100 index. For over a century, Unilever has maintained a dual-headed structure, with listings on the London, Amsterdam and New York stock exchanges. But in March, the company announced it was choosing The Netherlands over London to host its headquarters, dealing a blow to Britain's efforts to keep multinational companies following Brexit.

“The simplification of our dual-headed structure is an important next step to unlock the flexibility needed for future portfolio change,” Polman said, adding “it makes us simpler and further strengthens our corporate governance.” The decision followed a failed hostile bid by US rival Kraft Heinz last year, which analysts said played a key role in Unilever's decision as the Netherlands has stronger rules to protect companies against takeovers.—AFP

Business

AirAsia announces a \$30bn deal for 100 Airbus planes

'Will allow us to expand our low fares offering to the rest of the world'

SEPANG: Malaysian budget airline AirAsia yesterday announced an additional order of 34 Airbus A330neo planes, bringing the total value of its expanded 100-plane order to \$30 billion as it sets its sights on European routes. The first delivery of the jets will arrive towards the end of 2019 and will allow the airline to take on longer non-stop routes to Europe, AirAsia boss Tony Fernandes said at a media event. These will be used by its long-haul arm, AirAsia X, replacing its older first-generation A330s.

"We can now start the London route... This plane allows us to fly to Brazil, Namibia and anywhere we want," he said. The Kuala Lumpur-London route was dropped in 2012 due to low demand and high fuel prices. "We lobbied hard for the A330neo after seeing the success of the A320neo, and working closely with Airbus, we have arrived at an aircraft that we are confident will allow us to expand our low fares offering beyond Asia Pacific to the rest of the world," AirAsia X chief executive Kamarudin Meranun said.

The deal makes AirAsia the biggest Asian customer of European aviation giant Airbus, which has been locked in a tight battle for dominance with US rival Boeing. The twin-aisled A330neos are a fuel-efficient upgrade of the current A330s operated by AirAsia. Fitted with

Rolls Royce Trent 7000 engines, the planes will reduce fuel consumption by 25 percent, the planemakers said. But the jet has been edged out by the newer Boeing 787 and was depending on AirAsia to revive sales of the upgraded long-haul plane.

Overhaul facility

Boeing yesterday said it had firmed up an order for at least 10 787s from Hawaiian Airlines after the airline cancelled an order for the A330neo. Fernandes also said AirAsia and Airbus have begun "talks" to explore cooperation to develop an industrial aviation centre in Malaysia which will include a repair and overhaul facility and a training centre.

AirAsia is Asia's largest budget carrier by fleet size but has been hit by some negative publicity recently. In May, Indian authorities raided the airline's local offices and accused Fernandes of illegally obtaining operating licenses. Earlier that month, Fernandes apologized for a controversial stunt endorsing Malaysia's scandal-tainted prime minister Najib Razak in the country's general election, in which he suffered a stunning defeat. Fernandes, a millionaire ex-music executive, has styled himself as Asia's answer to British tycoon Richard Branson. —AFP



Hyperloop project goes to China

BEIJING: Hyperloop Transportation Technologies said yesterday it will team up with a south-western Chinese city to build a new 10-kilometre test track for its high speed hyperloop transportation system. California-based HyperloopTT is one of several ventures to take Elon Musk's idea for a new type of transport system propelling capsules through vacuum-sealed tunnels and attempt to make it a reality.

It has struck similar agreements with several other countries, with construction of its first

capsules — intended to magnetically levitate in low friction tubes — underway at its innovation centre in France. The remote city of Tongren in China's impoverished Guizhou province will host the latest demonstration project, according to the plans.

"China leads the world in the amount of high-speed rail constructed by far, and now they are looking for a more efficient high speed solution in hyperloop," HyperloopTT chairman Bibop Gresta said in a press release. "We have spent the past few years finding the right partners to work with in China and now, with a strong base network of relationships in place, we are ready to begin work to create the system," he added. —AFP

Japan's Kobe Steel indicted over fake data scandal

TOKYO: Japanese prosecutors yesterday indicted Kobe Steel after it admitted to faking strength and quality data, one of the latest corporate scandals that have battered the country's reputation for quality. Japan's third largest steelmaker was charged with violating the country's unfair competition law in relation to data falsification up to September 2017, the Tokyo District Public Prosecutors Office said in a statement.

In October last year Kobe Steel said its employees had misrepresented strength and quality data, which had been submitted for products

sold to hundreds of clients worldwide. It was the latest in a string of revelations to have undermined faith in 'Japan Inc'. Local media reported that prosecutors have no plan to indict individual employees involved in the scandal at Kobe.

"We are taking this matter brought against us very seriously," the firm said in a statement apologising for the indictment. "The entire Kobe Steel Group is working together sincerely and straightforwardly to carry out the preventive measures and is making every effort to restore trust," it added. The products affected by the scandal included steel wires used in car engines and tyres, as well as aluminium used to manufacture Japan's famous bullet trains. It was just one of a long line of revelations that have rocked the nation's manufacturing industry after similar quality-control scandals hit industrial titans ranging from carmaker Nissan to Mitsubishi Materials. —AFP

EU warns it will retaliate if US imposes auto tariffs

BRUSSELS: The European Union will retaliate if US President Donald Trump imposes "disastrous" tariffs on automobiles, EU trade commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom warned yesterday. "We are preparing a list of rebalancing measures," Malmstrom said, as Washington studies imposing duties on cars following its tariffs on aluminium and steel. "Similar moves on cars would be disastrous," the Swedish commissioner told a conference in Brussels.

Her warning comes before her boss, European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker, travels to Washington next Wednesday to try to persuade Trump to drop tariffs on metals and avoid duties on cars. "Tariff measures on cars are neither wanted or warranted," Malmstrom said. "They are at best a solution in search of a problem. At worst

they are an illegal move to gain leverage in trade negotiations."

Trump imposed duties of 25 percent on steel imports and 10 percent on aluminium in March, but had given temporary exemptions to the EU and some other close trading partners as talks continued. But those exemptions were lifted in early June, prompting a raft of retaliatory tariffs by the EU, and Trump is now considering whether to impose hefty levies on European vehicles.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said last week that she would back opening talks with trading partners on lowering automobile duties, in what appeared to be an olive branch to Trump. But Washington has shown no sign of compromise as it pursues its "America First" policies across a range of issues, even if it means alienating traditional allies. Besides the tariffs, the US has threatened European companies with huge fines if they continue to operate in Iran, after Trump reimposed far-reaching sanctions while pulling out of the landmark 2015 deal on curbing Tehran's nuclear programme. Earlier this month Trump implemented tariffs on \$34 billion worth of Chinese imports, drawing a tit-for-tat response from Beijing. —AFP

Business

Mexico's 'AMLO' should learn to love energy reform: Analysts

President promises to restore the ailing Pemex to its glory days

MEXICO CITY: Mexican President-elect Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has been a harsh critic of the landmark energy reform that privatized the country's oil sector, but the anti-establishment leftist will need it more than he realizes, analysts say. Lopez Obrador, who won a landslide victory in Mexico's July 1 elections, is famous for bashing the 2014 reform, which ended a 76-year monopoly by state oil company Pemex and reopened the sector to private companies. He once called the reform, one of outgoing President Enrique Pena Nieto's proudest achievements, an act of "treason" comparable to the agreement to fork over half Mexico's territory to the United States after the Mexican-American War in 1848.

The new president is nostalgic for the days when Mexico was the world's largest oil exporter a century ago, and the nationalization of the sector in 1938 — an event still glorified with monuments and annual celebrations. But he will need the private investment he was so fond of criticizing on the campaign trail if he wants to fulfill his promises to restore the ailing Pemex to its glory days and make Mexico self-sufficient in gasoline for the first time in years, according to energy experts.

Pemex was long seen as a cash cow by the Mexican government, which depended on the company's revenues for more than a third of its budget. Weighed down by heavy taxes and unable to invest enough in production, the firm has struggled with declining production for years — from a peak of 3.4 million barrels per day in 2004 to around two million this year. Mexico has mean-

while fallen to 15th place on the list of world oil exporters.

One of the energy reform's main goals was to give Pemex a shot in the arm, by forcing it to face private competition, and also allowing it to strike lucrative deals with private partners. "This is a job that Pemex can't do alone. It's a job that's going to require help from the private sector," said Ixchel Castro, an analyst at the consulting firm Wood Mackenzie.

Auctions halted

The reform threw open the door to foreign firms like Shell, Total, BP, Chevron and Exxon-Mobil, which have all bid for Mexican oil and gas fields in a new auction process that has raised more than \$150 billion in investment commitments. So far, the government has held 14 auctions, attracting 75 companies from 20 countries and signing more than 100 contracts.

Lopez Obrador, who takes office on December 1, wants to halt the auctions while his government reviews all the contracts for evidence of corruption. That is giving foreign investors the jitters. But many analysts agree the auctions are likely to resume, even if Lopez Obrador has to do it through clenched teeth. After all, they will help raise the cash he needs to achieve other campaign promises, such as building new Pemex refineries so Mexico can stop importing US gasoline. "If they decide to do that alone, without help from the private sector, obviously the pressure it will put on the government's finances will be much greater," said Castro.



MEXICO CITY: Mexico's President-elect Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador speaks during a press conference at the party's headquarters. —AFP

Uncertainty is expensive

In the meantime, the uncertainty could be costly, as other oil producing countries compete to seduce investors. "Investors are looking for a system, for political and institutional stability that remains in place even when there is a change in government," said Javier Diaz, an analyst at S&P Global Platts. Mexico's National Hydrocarbons Commission (CNH) announced Wednesday it was postponing all three of its currently scheduled auctions until February 14, after Lopez Obrador takes office.

The move was aimed at giving it time to discuss the process with the incoming administration and also to drum up more interest from oil companies, it said. "This was likely caused by the limited interest of oil companies to participate in a tender right before the new government takes office or because of some kind of agreement between the current and incoming administration to stop the process from moving forward during this transition period," said the consulting firm Eurasia Group. —AFP

Clouds lift for SAP as it raises full-year forecasts

BERLIN: German software firm SAP raised its revenue forecasts for the full year yesterday, after sales of its cloud computing products and its bottom line swelled in the second quarter. The Walldorf-based firm reported net profits of 720 million euros (\$838 million) between April and June, up 8.0 percent year-on-year.

Operating, or underlying profits grew 13 percent, to 1.04 billion euros, on the back of revenues up 4.0 percent at 6.0 billion. Of those revenues, sales of SAP's cloud computing services—where customers pay a regular subscription fee to store and process their data on its computers, unlike its traditional one-off soft-

ware sales business—remained the star of the group's show, adding 30 percent to reach 1.2 billion euros.

Oracle competitor SAP also completed in April its acquisition of Californian firm Callidus Software, which makes customer relationship management (CRM) tools—the first outside firm it had snapped up in three-and-a-half years. The group's profits had paled in recent quarters as it invested in pumping up its cloud business.

But now, "we are increasing guidance as a signal that a new wave of growth has been unleashed," chief executive Bill McDermott said in a statement. Using non-IFRS accounting standards—which exclude certain costs—the group expects to increase overall currency-adjusted revenue by between 6.0 and 7.5 percent, to between 24.98 and 25.3 billion euros. Still in currency-adjusted terms, net profits should increase between 9.0 and 11 percent, to between 7.4 and 7.5 billion euros, the firm said. —AFP

UK shops pay penalty for World Cup fever

LONDON: British retail sales surprisingly fell in June as World Cup fever fuelled by England's strong start in Russia kept fans away from stores, official data showed yesterday. Sales by volume dropped 0.5 percent in June from May, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said. Analysts' consensus had been for a rise of 0.2 percent in June. Sales jumped 2.1 percent in the quarter to June.

"Retail sales grew strongly across the three months to June 2018 as the warm weather encouraged shoppers to buy food and drink for their BBQs," noted ONS senior statistician Rhian Murphy. "However, in June retail sales actually fell back slightly, with continued growth in food sales offset by declining spending in many other shops as consumers stayed away from stores and instead enjoyed the World Cup and the heatwave."

Sterling slumped on the data, falling below \$1.30 for the first time in ten months, with analysts saying that it lessened the prospect of an August interest rate hike from the Bank of England. "The (retail) weakness... appears to have offered the perfect excuse for traders to



KALININGRAD: In this file photo taken on June 28, 2018 England's coach Gareth Southgate applauds after the Russia 2018 World Cup Group G football match between England and Belgium at the Kaliningrad Stadium. —AFP

push the pound below the \$1.30 level for the first time since September," said Michael Hewson, chief market analyst at CMC Markets UK.

It "has also thrown some added shade on whether the Bank of England will be able to raise rates in two weeks' time", he added. Markets have widely expected the BoE to increase its main lending rate next month by a quarter-point to 0.75 percent, with inflation remaining above the bank's target. But some recent weaker-than-expected UK economic data and uncertainty surrounding Brexit has cooled those expectations, even if some analysts are still forecasting a rate increase to occur. —AFP

Business

Uruguay marks first year of pot pharmacies - 'like selling aspirin'

'Now it's much easier than when it started'

MONTEVIDEO: Enrique Curbelo is delighted. Selling cannabis has allowed the affable 76-year-old to keep his privately owned pharmacy in Montevideo open in a market dominated by big chains. "I had to sell what they didn't sell," he told AFP. "For me it's like selling aspirin." It's been this way for a year now.

Every Wednesday, Ismael Fernandez receives a WhatsApp message from his local pharmacist telling him a new stock of cannabis has arrived. After leaving work, he heads there and buys the 10 grams that Uruguayan law permits, costing 400 pesos, around \$13. Fernandez then heads home and rolls a joint "to relax" with his partner Stefania Fabricio. No longer do they need to surreptitiously contact a dealer and pay more for Paraguayan or Brazilian marijuana that's been "pressed, mixed (and is) sometimes very bad and full of chemicals." "Now it's much easier than when it started," Fernandez, a 31-year-old who works for a cleaning company, told AFP.

It has been four and a half years since marijuana use became legal in Uruguay and a year since it has been sold in pharmacies—up to 40 grams a month per person. Initially, there was insufficient supply, leaving people standing in long queues as stocks sometimes ran out. Pharmacies are better prepared now.

"They send you a message with a number which you use later to go and collect it, and in my pharmacy you can order it online," added Fernandez, the father of a three-year-old. Hairdresser Fabricio, also 31, says "it's good quality," but not too strong. "It doesn't send your head spinning, but it's not meant to. You get a hit but you can still do things perfectly."

Swatch makes up for lost time with record sales

ZURICH: Swatch, the world's top watchmaker, on Wednesday announced an all-time record in half-year sales, saying it has millennials to thank. Swatch is best known for its brightly colored plastic-cased watches, but also owns several luxury brands including Breguet and Omega. Long the world's biggest watchmaker, Swatch saw sales stumble in the middle of the decade.

At that time, luxury products had been hit by a Chinese crackdown on corruption, while a string of terror attacks and political unrest affected tourism flows in Europe and Hong Kong. But the tide is turning, driven by strong demand in Asia and North America, the Swiss giant said. "Consumer demand, particularly from millennials, for authentic innovative brand products is greatly increasing on a worldwide scale, re-

'Privileged'

She says she feels "privileged" to live in a country that enacted a law to "get tons of people out of the black market." As a result, she said, the stigma attached to those who smoke pot is changing, "albeit slowly." The system is simple: to buy cannabis in a pharmacy you must be at least 18, live in Uruguay and sign up as a "buyer" at the post office. An initial stumbling block arose when banks refused to work with establishments selling cannabis due to international rules against drug-trafficking. But the country plowed on, and last year it became the first in the world to fully legalize its sale. But Enrique Curbelo had to get over his own prejudices before deciding to join the select band of pharmacies selling the plant. There are 14, half of them in the capital, serving the 24,812 registered buyers.

'Normal people'

Users can choose between two brands and two types of cannabis—sativa and indica—both provided by an official distributor. Customers are generally not the stereotypical grubby-looking student or idle waster. On this day in Curbelo's store they include two young women, a man in his 50s and an older lady—"normal people," says the pharmacist.

Official statistics say 70 percent of buyers are male and 49 percent are between the ages of 18 and 29. To keep anyone from exceeding their monthly allowance, a fingerprint machine is used to register every sale. Along with the ability to purchase cannabis in a pharmacy, Uruguayans have the right to grow their own—up to a six-plant maximum—or to join a cannabis club, which can have up to 45 members and 99 plants.

ardless of region or price segment," Swatch said in a statement.

Group net sales increased by 14.7 percent at current exchange rates in the first half of 2018 to 4.27 billion Swiss francs (\$4.26 billion, 3.7 billion euros). Net profit rose by 66.5 percent to 468 million Swiss francs, with operating profit soaring 69.5 percent to 629 million Swiss francs, the statement said. The group added that it expects further growth in the second half of the year.

"Impressive acceleration in both sales and quantities sold was reported across the board by all brands and in all price segments, not only in the prestige and luxury segment, but also in the middle and basic price segment," Swatch said. "All regions contributed to the best first semester sales in the history of the Group, led by Asia with very high growth rates," it added. "In North America, a double-digit sales increase was also recorded." Swatch had a bad year in 2016, when Swiss watchmakers saw sales drop by 10 percent after a more than three percent fall in 2015. A strong franc also hurt Swiss watchmakers. The company returned to growth in 2017. — AFP



BARROS BLANCOS: Uruguayan marijuana grower Federico Corbo works with his plants in Barros Blancos, Canelones department. — AFP

Federico Corbo, a 41-year-old gardener, grows cannabis in his garden on the outskirts of Montevideo. He experiments by crossing species in an attempt to improve quality and optimize the flowering period. Corbo is not impressed with the quality on offer in pharmacies. "It's not the worst, but it's low," he said, insisting quality control needs to be improved. "Marijuana that doesn't reach the minimum standards—with crushed flowers, no

aroma, low quality—shouldn't be sold in the pharmacy. "Maybe, as I'm a grower, I'm very demanding, but there is a cost associated to the product and it must be offered to the public in the best way possible." According to the Institute of Cannabis Regulation and Control (Ircca), an average cultivator or club member supplies cannabis to two other people, while those who buy it in a pharmacy share it with one other.—AFP

Comcast drops bid for 21st Century Fox assets, letting Disney win

WASHINGTON: Cable and media giant Comcast said yesterday it is pulling out of the bidding war with Walt Disney Co. for film and television operations of Rupert Murdoch's 21st Century Fox. Comcast said in a statement it would instead focus on acquiring the European pay TV operator Sky, shifting its stand on how it approaches the latest round of consolidation in the media-entertainment sector.

The move by Comcast effectively ensures that Disney will be able to complete its \$71.3 billion tie-up with Fox that creates a new powerhouse in the sector as Murdoch slims

down his media empire. "Comcast does not intend to pursue further the acquisition of the Twenty-First Century Fox assets and, instead, will focus on our recommended offer for Sky," said a statement from group which is the leading US cable operator and also owns NBCUniversal.

Both Comcast and Disney had been coveting the prized assets being sold by Murdoch, which include the Fox studios in Hollywood and important film and television production operations. At the same time, the two giants have been aiming to take control of Sky, the British-based pay TV operator in which Fox holds a 39 percent stake. Disney launched its offer for Fox's assets last December at \$52.4 billion as Murdoch and his family announced they would reorganize to focus on Fox News, the Fox broadcast network and some sports operations. Comcast made its bid of \$65 billion in June, aiming to capitalize on what was seen as an easier regulatory path after AT&T successfully defended an antitrust challenge to its acquisition of media-entertainment group Time Warner. — AFP

Sports

Gallopin pulls out, adding to Bardet's Tour de France woes

Groenewegen joins Alps' list of casualties on Tour de France

L'ALPE D'HUEZ: The Tour de France hopes of Frenchman Romain Bardet suffered another setback on Friday after AG2R teammate Tony Gallopin pulled out during the grueling 12th stage to Alpe d'Huez. Bardet, who finished runner-up to Chris Froome in 2016 and in third place last year when the Briton took his fourth crown, saw his yellow jersey ambitions dented when teammate Alexis Vuillermoz pulled out due to injury on Sunday and Axel Domont abandoned last week. A short statement by Tour organizers said: "Tony Gallopin is the third AG2R-La Mondiale rider to pull out of the Tour de France after Axel Domont (stage 4) and Alexis Vuillermoz (stage 9)."

With teams restricted to eight riders on this 105th edition of the race, AG2R are now down to five riders—leaving Bardet with comparatively scant support for the remaining mountain stages in the Pyrenees next week. At the start of yesterday's 175.5 km 12th stage from Bourg Saint Maurice to Alpe d'Huez, Bardet sat in eighth overall at 2min 58sec behind overnight leader Geraint Thomas of Team Sky. Sky leader Froome, who is aiming for a fourth consecutive Grand Tour win having won the Tour of Spain in 2017 and the 2018 Giro d'Italia, is second overall at 1:25.

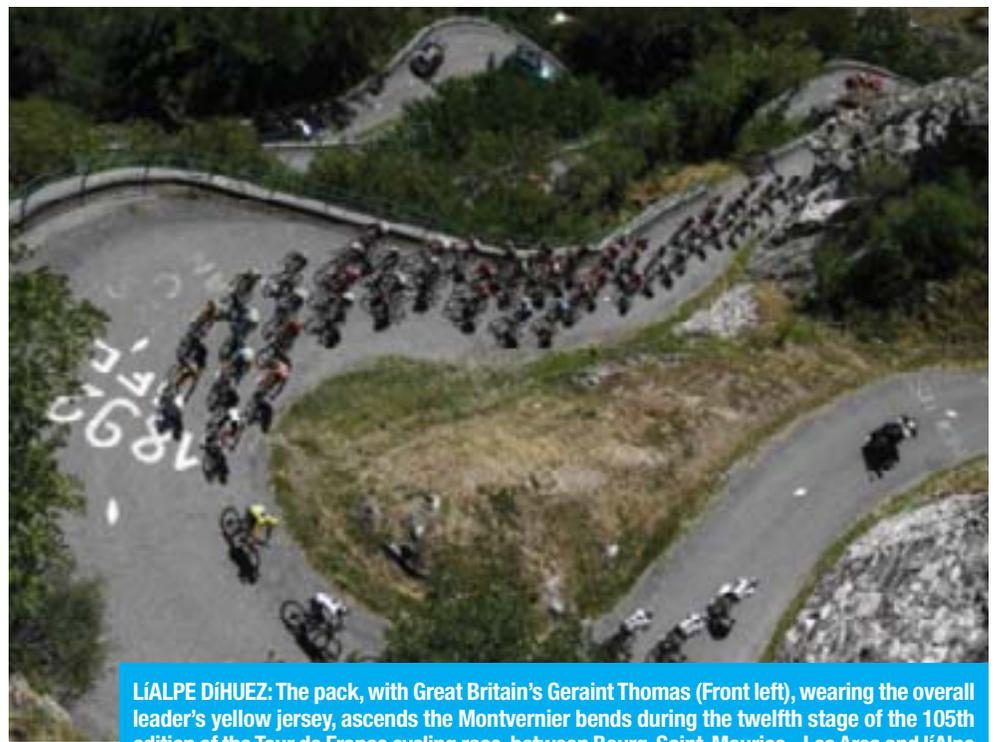
Alps' list of casualties

Meanwhile, Dutchman Dylan Groenewegen became the latest sprint star to fall victim to the gru-

eling Alpine stages of the Tour de France after pulling out on stage 12 yesterday. "A two-time stage winner in the opening week, Groenewegen has just abandoned," said a brief statement by race organizers. The Lotto-Jumbo rider, who claimed his maiden stage win last year with a famous victory on the Champs Elysees, was competing in his third Tour de France.

The 25-year-old from Amsterdam began his campaign in style, winning stages seven and eight. But a struggling Groenewegen was forced to call it a day before the halfway stage of the torturous 175.5 km stage between Bourg Saint Maurice and Alpe d'Huez. On Wednesday, British sprint star Mark Cavendish and his Australian teammate at Dimension Data, Mark Renshaw, as well as Katusha star Marcel Kittel—all sprinters—were eliminated after failing to make the time cut.

Kittel, a 14-time stage winner, and Renshaw both finished just under 45 minutes behind stage 11 winner Geraint Thomas of Team Sky. Cavendish, a 30-time stage winner who had been chasing Eddy Merckx's record tally of 34 wins, crossed the line 1hr 05min 33sec behind compatriot Thomas. Earlier, yesterday Tony Gallopin, a key helper for podium-chasing teammate Romain Bardet, pulled out to leave his AG2R team with just five riders. Last year's runner-up Rigoberto Uran, of EF-Dracpac, also abandoned as he continued to suffer from injuries suffered in a crash in the opening week.—Agencies



L'ALPE D'HUEZ: The pack, with Great Britain's Geraint Thomas (Front left), wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey, ascends the Montvernier bends during the twelfth stage of the 105th edition of the Tour de France cycling race, between Bourg-Saint-Maurice - Les Arcs and l'Alpe d'Huez yesterday. — AFP

Philippines, Australia fined; 15 suspended over 'basketbrawl'

MANILA: Basketball's governing body FIBA yesterday handed down hefty fines and suspensions over an ugly on-court melee in Manila between the Philippine and Australian national teams during a World Cup qualifier. Thirteen players and two coaches were suspended for unsportsmanlike behavior and a total of \$360,000 in fines issued, with most of the sanctions against the Philippine hosts of the July 2 match. The crew officiating the game, which degenerated into wild punches and flying kicks before stunned spectators, were also suspended from competition.

Shocking footage showed chaotic scenes, including a white-shirted attacker who appeared to slam a chair onto an Australian player as he was set upon by up to a dozen people. "FIBA wishes to emphasize that it condemns any form of violence, both on and off the court," it said in a statement. "Respect, sportsmanship and professionalism are expected from players, coaches, officials." What was already a bad-tempered game erupted in the third quarter

when Philippine player Roger Pogoy knocked Australia's Chris Goulding to the ground and Aussie Daniel Kickert retaliated by flattening Pogoy with a flying elbow.

In yesterday's ruling, Ten Gilas Pilipinas players were suspended, including a five-game stretch for Pogoy and two of his teammates over the violence hashtagged #basketbrawl as footage and condemnation went viral. Switzerland-based FIBA hit the Philippines basketball federation SBP with a fine of 250,000 Swiss Francs (\$250,000) and another 10,000 Francs against head coach Vincent Reyes, who was accused of urging his players to fight.

"In a way I think FIBA has been quite fair in the process," SBP head Al Panlilio told journalists in Manila. "Honestly, it (the punishment) could have been much worse." The violence in Manila, which made international headlines, left the Australian team fearing for their safety, and they sought embassy help to fast-track their departure from the Philippines. Only three players from the Boomers side were suspended, with the heaviest sanction of five games out handed to Kickert. Basketball Australia, the national federation, got a 100,000 Swiss Franc (\$99,800) fine.

Basketball Australia Chief Executive Officer Anthony Moore welcomed "FIBA's finding in its report that no discriminatory or racist language was used by Australian Boomers players, nor did it incite the incident as has been alleged." He told journalists in Melbourne the federation was unlikely to appeal the sanctions but would consider it at their meeting today. —AFP

Dodgers acquire All-Star shortstop Manny Machado

LOS ANGELES: All-Star shortstop Manny Machado was traded to the Los Angeles Dodgers from the Baltimore Orioles on Wednesday, filling a key need as the reigning National League champions seek their first Major League Baseball title since 1988. "The Los Angeles Dodgers today acquired four-time All-Star shortstop Manny Machado from the Baltimore Orioles in exchange for Rylan Bannon, Yusniel Diaz, Dean Kremer, Zach Pop and Breyvic Valera," the Dodgers said in a statement posted on Twitter - confirming a deal that had been reported to be in the works for days. The Orioles, with the second-worst record in the major leagues, received five prospects in a deal hammered out two weeks before the trade deadline, one which helps Baltimore to rebuild for the future and the Dodgers to chase a championship now.

At 53-43, the Dodgers are only one-half game ahead of the Arizona Diamondbacks and two games atop Colorado in a tense Na-

tional League West division fight with the campaign to resume Friday for most clubs after a break for the 89th MLB All-Star Game. The Dodgers, who lost to Houston in last year's World Series in a seventh-game winner-take-all showdown for the crown, lost shortstop Corey Seager just a month into the 2018 campaign to elbow reconstruction surgery, ending his season after only 26 games.

While Los Angeles has battled to the top of the division with fill-ins at shortstop, going 17-9 in June and 10-4 to start July, landing a superstar shortstop in Machado would be just what the Dodgers need. Machado, an American of Dominican heritage, was considered the top impact player on a struggling team that would be available for a move. The 26-year-old is a four-time All-Star who boasts a .283 batting average with 977 hits and 162 home runs with 471 runs batted in over a seven-season career, all with the Orioles. He entered the All-Star break with a .315 batting average for the season, 24 home runs and a .963 on-base-plus-slugging percentage - ranking among the American League's top six in each category.

Machado had said at the All-Star Game that he looked forward to knowing where he would go after weeks of speculation about his fate with half a dozen clubs involved. The Dodgers sent to Baltimore in exchange outfielder Yusniel Diaz, pitchers Dean Kremer and Zach Pop, second baseman Breyvic Valera and third baseman Rylan Bannon.—AFP

Sports

Fiji chase sevens glory; World Cup kicks off in San Francisco

Olympic champions determined to wreck New Zealand's aim

SAN FRANCISCO: The Rugby World Cup Sevens will break new ground here today when the tournament kicks off in San Francisco with Olympic champions Fiji determined to wreck New Zealand's aim of becoming the first side to successfully defend the title. The seventh edition of the 24-team seven-a-side tournament, which is being staged at AT&T Park, home of baseball's San Francisco Giants, is the first Rugby World Cup event of any kind to be staged in the United States. The three-day extravaganza is taking place as rugby enjoys a surge in popularity in the United States, buoyed by the success of the men's sevens team and greater exposure of the sport than ever before.

World Rugby chief executive Brett Gosper told AFP in an interview that the tournament, which will be broadcast free-to-air on NBC television, could ultimately prove to be a "game-changer" for rugby in the United States. "It's something that can ignite the sport in the US," Gosper told AFP. "We're realistic. It's only three days. And you can't change the world in three

days. But you can light something and create a detonator for greater things later." Taking the tournament to uncharted territory could in theory be a risky move. The last edition of the World Cup Sevens was staged in Moscow in 2013 before swathes of empty seats in the Luzhniki Stadium.

Tournament officials however are confident of a better turnout in California this weekend, one of the traditional hotbeds of American rugby. A sell-out crowd is expected for Friday's opening day of action. The tournament is also unveiling a new single-elimination knockout format. Unlike most sevens tournaments, which divide teams into round-robin groups before they advance to knockout rounds, this weekend's tournament will leave teams on a knife-edge from the opening game. Sixteen teams will face off in a preliminary round for the right to advance to the knockout rounds, where eight seeded teams—New Zealand, Fiji, South Africa, Australia, England, Argentina, Scotland and the United States await.

South Africa's "BlitzBoks" are seeded in first place after a successful season which saw them defend their World Sevens Series title with victory in the Paris Sevens last month. However the South Africans have never lifted the World Cup crown, with their sole appearance in the final coming in a memorable 24-21 defeat to a Waisale Serevi-inspired Fiji in the 1997 final in Hong Kong.

"We don't have the greatest of records in this tournament, but that said, we know we will be a very competitive team if we play to our strengths," Blitzboks coach Neil Powell said. Yet while the South Africans are top seeds, the smart money is on Fiji to capture their third crown after wins in 1997 and 2005. The 2016 Rio Olympics gold medalists have named a formidable squad which contains France-based stars Semi Radradra and European Player of the Year Leone Nakarawa. Fiji will face either Uruguay or Japan in Friday's opening round.

Holdings New Zealand meanwhile have only two survivors from their win in Moscow five

years ago, captain Tim Mikkelsen and Kurt Baker. Joe Ravouvou will be the main attacking threat for the New Zealanders, who are undaunted by the challenge of attempting to become the first team in World Cup Sevens history to win consecutive titles. "No team has ever won back-to-back World Cup titles since it's started so we have certainly talked about that and about being the first team to change that," said coach Clark Laidlaw.

New Zealand's female counterparts in the women's tournament meanwhile will kick off on Friday as the team to beat. The top seeds were convincing winners of the 2013 tournament and won three of the five events on this year's world sevens circuit. The Kiwi women will have the most potent tryscorer of the season in their ranks in the shape of Portia Woodman, who crossed for 43 tries this year. "We have had a good year, but this group is strict on themselves, we think we have room to improve and those last bits we need to get right are the toughest," said New Zealand coach Allan Bunting.—AFP

Hamilton signs blockbuster deal, ends speculation

LONDON: Lewis Hamilton finally ended speculation over his future yesterday as the four-time world champion signed a blockbuster two-year contract extension with Mercedes. Hamilton's deal is worth a reported £40 million (\$52 million) per year, cementing the British star's status as Formula One's highest paid driver and his country's top earning sportsman. Following months of speculation about the negotiations and whether Hamilton would move to another team, the 33-year-old is now tied to Mercedes until the conclusion of the 2020 season.

Hamilton insisted he had always been on course to remain with Mercedes, telling the team's website after the announcement: "This contract extension has basically been a formality since Toto and I sat down during the winter, so it's good to put pen to paper, announce it and then get on with business as usual. "I have been part of the Mercedes racing family for 20 years and I have never been happier inside a team than I am right now. "We are on the same wavelength both on and off track - and I am looking forward to winning more in the future and shining even more light on the three-pointed star. I'm very confident that Mercedes is the right place to be over the coming years.

"Although we have enjoyed so much success together since 2013, Mercedes is hungrier than ever - from Dr Zetsche and the board members at the top of Daimler, through Toto (Wolff) and the team management, to every single person I meet in the corridors of Brixworth and Brackley." Hamilton will be nearing his 36th birthday at the conclusion of his latest contract, and he has made no secret of his desire to forge a career in fashion or music. For now, Hamilton is chasing his fifth world crown this season to join Michael Schumacher and Juan Manuel Fangio as the only other driver to have won more than four titles.

He is second to Schumacher, in terms of Grand Prix wins, and holds the record for the most pole positions in the history of the sport. "The competitive passion that burns bright inside me is



SILVERSTONE: Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton drives during the qualifying session at Silverstone motor racing circuit in Silverstone, central England. Lewis Hamilton signs a two-year contract extension with Mercedes, his team said yesterday. —AFP

shared by every single member of this group—always chasing the next improvement and digging even deeper to make sure we come out on top," Hamilton added. "I can't wait to see what we can achieve together in the next two-and-a-half seasons."

Mercedes have dominated F1 since 2014, winning four consecutive drivers' and constructors' championship doubles. Hamilton has won three of those titles, with the fourth going to former teammate Nico Rosberg, who retired after becoming champion in 2016. Mercedes' announcement is a huge boost for the team ahead of the Grand Prix in Germany on Sunday, with Hamilton trailing Sebastian Vettel in the championship by eight points. Team boss Toto Wolff was relieved to get Hamilton to sign up for another two years and he believes the driver can make more history with the British-based outfit.

"We have been aligned with Lewis ever since we first sat down to discuss the details of this contract after last season, but there has understandably been a lot of interest and speculation around the whole process, so it's good to put all of that to rest and get this thing announced," Wolff said. "But what I enjoy most about working with him is getting to know the man inside the racing helmet - his relentless drive for self-improvement, his emotional intelligence as a team member and his loyalty to those around him. "Mercedes has become Lewis' home in Formula One and his story is linked forever with the silver and green of Mercedes-AMG Petronas. I am very confident that we have some incredible chapters of our story together still to come." —AFP

Brace for more spin, Sri Lanka warns Proteas

COLOMBO: Rangana Herath warned South Africa yesterday to expect yet more spin in the second Test after the visitors were skittled for their lowest total since the Proteas' readmission to international cricket. Sri Lanka are chasing their first Test series win against the Proteas since 2006 and need just a draw to clinch the honors against the world's second ranked Test side.

South Africa lost the opening Test in Galle inside three days after being dispatched for 126 in the first innings and 73 in the second. Herath said pitch conditions were ripe for a repeat of last week's drubbing, in which the left-arm spinner took five wickets and off-spinner Dilruwan Perera returned overall match figures of 10-78. "If you see the surface, it's dry. It will be more of a spin friendly surface," the 40-year-old veteran spinner said ahead of the final Test starting Friday in Colombo.

"We have Dilruwan (Perera) and if we require we also have Dhananjaya (de Silva). He couldn't bowl in Galle, but he is certainly ready to bowl during games," Herath told reporters. Proteas skipper Faf du Plessis top-scored with a gritty 49 while paceman Kagiso Rabada impressed with four wickets in Sri Lanka's first innings. Rabada, who returned figures of 4-50, was ably supported by Dale Steyn and Vernon Philander in their first innings to bowl out the hosts for 287 runs, more than half of which were notched up by Sri Lankan opener Dimuth Karunaratne.

Du Plessis said his team will rely on their pace bowlers to come back hard at the hosts. "If it doesn't rain, then we will have a dangerous weapon in our fast bowlers. Once again we have to make a call as to whether we are playing three seamers or two spinners," Du Plessis said. —AFP

Sports

‘Wonderful start’ as Talisca lifts Guangzhou Evergrande

Brazilian hit a dazzling debut hat-trick

SHANGHAI: Anderson Talisca reveled in a “wonderful start” after the Brazilian hit a dazzling debut hat-trick for Guangzhou Evergrande as they try to resurrect their challenge for an eighth straight Chinese Super League crown. Talisca, who arrived on loan from Portuguese side Benfica during the summer transfer window, set up Guangzhou’s first goal and added three of his own in a 4-0 thrashing of bottom-dwellers Guizhou Zhicheng as the season resumed Wednesday after a two-month summer and World Cup break.

“God’s plans are wonderful! Great match by the whole team!” Talisca, 24, said in an Instagram post. “Wonderful debut: 3 goals, 1 assist,” he added. Talisca’s performance broke a six-game winless run for the champions which had seen them slide to fifth before the recess, piling the pressure on Italian World Cup-winning captain Fabio Cannavaro who rejoined the team as coach this year.

Guangzhou, who also brought back Brazil’s World Cup midfielder Paulinho from

Barcelona during the break for his second spell with the club, moved up to fourth as a result of the victory. Talisca headed in a corner in the 28th minute and ripped in a second goal from just outside the box in the 62nd after a move started by Paulinho. Talisca looped in a free-kick 15 minutes later. Other results helped Guangzhou as the top two Shanghai SIPG and Shandong Luneng drew 1-1 allowing Beijing Guoan to leapfrog them into first place, four points ahead of Evergrande.

Beijing enjoyed a 2-1 win at home to Henan Jianye with French-born Congolese striker Cedric Bakambu and Spanish import Jonathan Viera scoring for Guoan. Several other teams have acquired new foreign imports for the second half of the season. Morocco’s World Cup striker Ayoub El Kaabi has joined Hebei China Fortune while Serbian centre-back Dusko Tosic, who also saw action in Russia 2018, moved to Guangzhou R&F. Shanghai Shenhua acquired Senegalese former Chelsea striker Demba Ba and Italian international Eder moved to Jiangsu Suning.—AFP



GUANGZHOU: Guangzhou Evergrande’s Anderson Talisca (top center) heads the ball during their 2018 Chinese Football Association Super League football match against Guizhou Hengfeng in Guangzhou. — AFP

Rapes, beatings: The torments of S Korea athletes

SEOUL: When Kim Eun-hee was 10 years old, a primary school child with dreams of tennis stardom, her coach raped her for the first time. Then he did it again. And again. And again. The would-be South Korean champion was too young to even know what sex was. But she knew she dreaded the repeated orders to come to his room at their training camp, the pain and the humiliation. “It took me years to realize that it was rape,” Kim told AFP, adding: “He kept raping me for two years... he told me it was a secret to be kept between him and me.” Now 27, Kim spoke to international media for the first time and waived all rights to anonymity to reveal how female athletes in the South have silently suffered sexual abuse by their coaches. South Korea is perhaps best known for its technological prowess and K-pop stars, but is also a regional sporting power and besides Japan is the only Asian country to have hosted both summer and winter Olympics.

Despite its relatively small size and population, South Korea is regularly in the top 10 medal table places at both Games, and is globally dominant in archery, taekwondo and short-track speed skating, while packing the top positions in world women’s golf rankings. But it remains hierarchical and patriarchal in many respects, including a close-knit, male-dominated sports establishment—where personal connections can be almost as important as performances in forging a successful career. In a highly competitive society where winning is everything, many young athletes forego schooling or live away from families to train with their peers and coaches full-time, living in a dorm-like environment for years.

The training camp system—akin to models used by Communist sporting machines such as China—is credited with helping the South punch well above its weight on the global sporting stage. But it has proven to be the setting for abuse in several sports—especially of underage athletes whose existence is controlled by their trainers. “The coach was the king of my world, dictating everything about

my daily life from how to exercise to when to sleep and what to eat,” said Kim, adding that he beat her repeatedly as part of “training”. The coach was eventually dismissed after some parents complained of his “suspicious behavior”, but was simply moved to another school with no criminal inquiry.

Blind eye

Many victims are forced into silence in a world where going public often means the end of any aspirations to stardom. “This is a community where those who speak out are ostracized and bullied as ‘traitors’ who brought shame to the sport,” said Chung Yong-chul, sports psychology professor at Seoul’s Sogang University. A 2014 survey commissioned by the Korean Sports & Olympic Committee showed that around one in seven female athletes had experienced sexual abuse in the previous year, but 70 percent of them did not seek help of any kind. “Parents of many underage victims give up pressing charges after a sport official, usually a friend of the abuser, tells them, ‘Do you wanna see your child’s future as an athlete destroyed?’” said Chung Hee-joon, a prominent commentator on sporting issues.

At the same time, sporting organizations often try to hush up misbehavior, merely transferring the offender to a new institution, he added, blaming the country’s elitist sports culture. “Sports associations turn a blind eye as long as the sex abusers manage to produce high-performing athletes in this blind pursuit of medals above all—and their abuses are considered a small, insignificant price to pay in this process,” Chung said. In 2015, a former short-track Olympic champion was only fined for repeatedly groping female skaters he was coaching at the Hwaseong City team and sexually harassing an 11-year-old. Even top athletes have been affected.

Choi Min-suk, the coach of the women’s curling team for the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, resigned after the players accused him of sexual harassment—but he was later hired to coach another curling team. Abuse can sometimes be physical, rather than sexual. Earlier this year, Shim Suk-hee, a star short-track skater who has won four Olympic medals—including a relay gold at this year’s Pyeongchang Games—accused her coach of punching and kicking her dozens of times, leaving her needing medical treatment for a month. Cho Jae-beom admitted to police that he beat Shim and other national team skaters at their training camp to “improve their performance”.—AFP

AC Milan challenge UEFA ban

LAUSANNE: AC Milan’s senior executives were at the world’s top sports court yesterday fighting to overturn a European ban for breaking UEFA’s financial fair play rules. Managing director Marco Fassone, chief financial officer Valentina Montanari and a team of lawyers were set to lobby the Court of Arbitration for Sport to overturn the Italian club’s Europa League ban for the upcoming season. The hearing is expected to last a full day with a decision due within 24 hours, a CAS spokesperson has said.

AC Milan have spent a troubled 15 months since they were bought by Chinese businessman Li Yonghong from Silvio Berlusconi in April 2017. The takeover was partly funded by a high-interest loan of 300 million euros (\$348 million) from American hedge fund Elliott Management. When Milan failed to make a repayment at the start of July, Elliott moved to take over, a process which is due to be ratified by club shareholders on July 21. The Chinese owners spent more than 200 million euros on players last summer and that, combined with the terms of the Elliott loan, triggered the interest of UEFA.

At the end of June, UEFA ruled that Milan were in breach of “the break-even requirement.” That specifically bars clubs from taking on debt to fund day-to-day obligations such as wages or transfer fees. UEFA banned the club from its competitions. Despite the investment in players, the club finished sixth in Serie A and only qualified for the Europa League, Europe’s second tier tournament. Fassone has blamed the club’s woes on Berlusconi’s management. The seven-time European champions are the biggest club to have been punished under the fair play rules.—AFP

Neymar Jr set to return to the field for first time since Russia

Football season not over yet as Neymar Jr's Five takes centre stage in Brazil



Neymar Jr is getting ready to step back out on the football field as the second big tournament of his summer fast approaches.

After the disappointment of a World Cup quarter-final exit to Belgium, which he described as 'the saddest moment of my career', the Brazilian will lace up his boots once again for the third edition of his signature five-a-side football tournament at Instituto Projeto Neymar Jr in his hometown of Praia Grande.

The Paris Saint-Germain forward returned from foot surgery and a three-month injury layoff to score two goals and help Brazil to the last eight as they bid for a sixth title in Russia.

Now back home, goals and skills are the main focus once again as the 26-year-old welcomes the best five-a-side teams around the globe to Brazil to contest the World Final of Neymar Jr's Five between 20-21 July.

Kuwait National Champions managed to surprise participants and spectators alike at the national final held on May 4, as they secured the winning goal and will be headed to the World Final of Neymar Junior's Five in Brazil on July 21 to battle it out against over 60 other countries to outplay them all.

Here is all you need to know:

- Over 125,000 players signed up for a qualifier in this year's competition as elite five-a-side players battled it out in 62 countries across six continents.
- Some of the urban locations where players have shown their skills this year in qualifiers and national finals include Baku, Lima, Paris, Miami and Singapore.
- The national champions will get the chance to pit their wits against each other at the World



Final - held for the third time at Instituto Projeto Neymar Jr in Praia Grande, Brazil.

- There are five players on each team with no goalkeepers and, every time someone scores, their opponents lose one player until 10 frenetic minutes are up or one team runs out of players.

- The 2018 tournament is open to teams of five to seven players aged 16 to 25 with each team allowed two players over 25 in their squad, while a new women's competition has been launched in addition to the mixed tournament as well.

- Neymar Jr said: "What makes me really excited is that this edition brings more players from more countries so I'm glad to know that everyone wants to participate, and I feel happy to be part of it. More than that, I am excited to bring the joy of football and all the cultural diversity to the children here at the Instituto Neymar Jr that are attending

the Neymar Jr's Five's third edition! The fact that the finals take place in the neighbourhood where I grew up fills me with energy at this moment."

- In 2016, a team from Brazil were crowned world champions while Romania scooped the prize in 2017 and got to visit Neymar Jr in Paris in October.

- In previous years, Neymar Jr has brought some famous football friends such as Gabriel Jesus to play alongside him against the new world champions.

- Follow the World Final live on www.nemajr5.com

About Instituto Projeto Neymar Jr

The location of the World Final, Instituto Projeto Neymar Jr, is a private, non-profit association dedicated to social causes, set up by Neymar Jr and his family. It is located in Jardim Glória, in Praia Grande, where

Neymar Jr spent much of his childhood. The Institute is an 8,400m² education and sporting complex catering for 2,470 underprivileged children aged 7-14 and their families.

Competing Countries

Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Brazil, Cyprus, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Georgia, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Morocco, Mauritius, Republic of Moldova, Mexico, Namibia, Northern Ireland, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, South Africa, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, UAE, Ukraine, United Kingdom, USA.

Sports

Brazil World Cup legacy 'left little to celebrate'

A legacy of unfinished works, huge debts and missing funds

RIO DE JANEIRO: When Brazil hosted the World Cup in 2014 the country dreamt of glory, but the beloved national team was thrashed and the tournament left a legacy of unfinished works, huge debts and missing funds. Brazil were hoping to add a sixth trophy to their record five World Cup triumphs, while officials promised that private finance would spare taxpayers the budgetary pain.

The optimistic view seemed credible when the hosting rights were awarded to Brazil in 2007. The economy was booming and two years later Rio would be named to host the 2016 Olympics. But things turned out differently - and not just because the home side went out in a humiliating 7-1 semi-final defeat to Germany. The original budget of 17 billion reals ballooned to 27 billion reals (about \$11.5 billion at that time). And of the 8.3 billion reals

spent on building 12 stadiums, only seven percent came from private investors.

"Spending went greatly over projections, with a lot less being completed than had been promised," said Paulo Henrique Azevedo at Gesporte, which studies sports management at the University of Brasilia. "In numerous cities, transport infrastructure projects were not only unfinished but totally abandoned, despite having already cost millions of reals," he said. This included airports, tram lines and dozens of other projects that, according to a study by Folha de S Paulo newspaper, would eventually have brought benefits to 2.5 million people.

Rio de Janeiro was the one city that saw all its projects completed, but only in time for the Olympics rather than the World Cup. The mayor at

the time, Eduardo Paes, said the World Cup legacy was marked by "white elephants and feeble private investment." His own management of the Olympic legacy would later receive equally harsh criticism. Azevedo said the basic error committed in Brazil for the World Cup was "building too many stadiums for political reasons." Some of the 12 stadiums built, like in Manaus, Cuiaba and Brasilia, were in cities with no big team to take over the facilities once the tournament was over.

Corruption

For Brazil's notoriously corrupt local and federal politicians, the spending spree was a bonanza in overbilling, skimming and pay-to-play schemes with contractors. For example, organizers paid three times the market rate for concrete during

renovations at the famous Maracana stadium in Rio, which hosted the World Cup final and later the Olympic opening and closing ceremonies.

In 2012, former Brazilian star striker Romario, who is now a senator, was predicting that the World Cup would be "the biggest robbery in history." For ordinary Brazilians, the Germany defeat was probably the bitterest part of the experience. "In the collective memory, that 7-1 humiliation looms larger than all the mistakes committed by Brazil," wrote sports journalist Rodrigo Mattos in his 2016 book "Ladros de Bola," or "Thieves of the ball." On the plus side, the actual tournament passed off smoothly, an experience that paved the way for the equally successful hosting of the Olympics — despite the behind-the-scenes infrastructure and corruption problems. — AFP

French fans sentenced for robberies, violence

PARIS: A French court gave two men suspended sentences Wednesday and fined a third for robbery and violence on the sidelines of France's World Cup victory celebrations. One fan, wearing a shirt of the French football team, was given a six-month suspended sentence for breaking into a Piaggio scooter showroom near the Champs-Elysees boulevard where hundreds of thousands had gathered to welcome home the winning team. A witness had photographed the suspect sitting on a scooter in the showroom. The man, a 23-year-old fork lift driver, admitted to the robbery, but denied taking part in any violence, blaming his actions on excessive alcohol.

A 19-year-old student, who was caught stealing sunglasses from a Grand Optical store on the Champs Elysees, was ordered to pay a fine of 1,000 euros (\$1,200). "In the euphoria, everyone converged on the store. I followed. I was stupid," he told the judge. A third man was given a three-month suspended sentence for throwing bottles at police officers. "I don't know what went through my head. I'm sorry," he said. He also claimed to have been drunk, even if breathalyser tests had been negative. Nearly 300 people were arrested across the whole of France on the sidelines of the victory celebrations, with 57 arrests made in Paris, prosecutors said. — AFP

South Africa living with mixed legacy of 2010 World Cup

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa's turn as World Cup hosts in 2010 left the country with 10 world-class stadiums and an influx of tourists-but also vast bills to pay. Eight years on, the tournament is also held up as a rare moment of national unity in a country still deeply divided 24 years after the end of apartheid. Deputy sports minister Gert Oosthuizen still brims with pride at the organization of the first World Cup to be held on African soil.

"We built stadiums and infrastructure. We were way ahead of schedule, everything went perfectly, everything was in place," he said. "From that perspective it did give South Africa a great mark in the world." "But it was much more than that. More important was the nation-building and the social cohesion that we achieved. We felt proudly South African-and simply African." To prepare for the most-widely watched event on the planet, the government of the day spent 30 billion rands (3 billion euros, \$3.53 billion in today's money) on roads, airports, stadiums and other infrastructure.

The impact was felt almost immediately with a boost to economic growth as well as 60,000 new jobs created just from the construction of the 10 stadiums. From June 1 to July 11 when the tournament finished, South Africa welcomed 1.4 million foreign visitors-compared to 1.1 million a year earlier. But did South Africa truly benefit once the fans' noisy vuvuzela horns had been stored away and the FIFA bandwagon had moved on to Brazil? "The returns were much higher than the spending-much, much higher," said Gillian Saunders of the accountants Grant Thornton. "There is a lot of infrastructure that we got like telecommunications, roads around the stadium areas that we wouldn't have got," she said, adding that there had been a subsequent "World Cup effect".

'Good for S Africa's image'

"It was a good marketing exercise, that had put



JOHANNESBURG: In this file photo, light beams splay out from Soccer City stadium early in Soweto - a suburb of Johannesburg, during the World Cup 2010 in South Africa. South Africa's turn as World Cup hosts in 2010 left the country with 10 world-class stadiums and an influx of tourists-but also vast bills to pay. — AFP

us centre of the world stage-it was good for South Africa's image and for tourism," said Mike Schussler, director of market analysts Economists.co.za. "But we didn't make our money back from the use of stadiums. Some municipalities are left with a bill to pay-and they will be left for a long time." Following the tournament, the government handed control of the stadiums to their respective city councils-including responsibility for maintenance.

Those in the major cities like Cape Town and Johannesburg fared better, finding use as concert venues, rugby grounds while still attracting national and international football. Johannesburg outsourced the running of its ground to the private sector. "The responsibility put on stadium managers is to commercialize the venues, attract events, generate revenue, maintain the venues to a world-standard and share profits with the municipality," said the city's sport supremo Siyanda Mnu kwa. "The stadiums are not weighing heavily on the municipality." Elsewhere in South Africa, the stadiums have proved less productive.

'It's a burden'

"Initially we were told that the stadium will pay

for itself — (but) it's costing us between 15 and 18 million rand (\$1.11 million to \$1.34 million) a year," said Frank Haas, leader of the opposition in north-eastern Polokwane. "It's a burden, whether we can justify to the community the almost 20 million rand a year, that's actually the big question." For Oosthuizen, the deputy sports minister, the answer is an emphatic yes. "We're not talking billions here... It's not like it's draining the whole budget of little provinces or municipalities because of this monster that we have built," he told AFP at his office in Pretoria.

"You must see it as a good investment, it is part of a legacy, an instrument of getting people together and showcasing what we can do as the African continent." Oosthuizen listed several tournaments hosted in South Africa since the World Cup-mostly minor affairs except for the 2013 Cup of African Nations. In May nearly 85,000 packed into Johannesburg's FNB Stadium, known as Soccer City when it hosted the 2010 World Cup final between Spain and the Netherlands, to watch an exhibition match that featured stars from Barcelona. — AFP

Sports

Qatar ploughs ahead with WCup plans despite crises

Qatar expects up to 1.5 million fans

DOHA: Last year, Qatar's finance minister Ali Sharif Al-Emadi said his country was determined to have everything ready for the 2022 World Cup well before fans started landing in the Gulf. "We don't want to be painting while people arrive in the country," he said, before going on to reveal Qatar is spending almost \$500 million (430 million euros) a week on infrastructure projects for football's biggest tournament. It is highly unlikely that any visitor to the World Cup is going to see rushed last-minute preparations.

With four and a half years until the 2022 World Cup kicks off, Qatar is ahead of schedule when it comes to venues, related major projects and even paint. Of the eight stadiums it will build or renovate for 2022, one—Khalifa International—is already open and will host the World Athletics Championships next year. Two more, Al-Wakrah and Al-Bayt stadiums, are expected to be finished by the end of this year and officially opened early in 2019. Work is also well underway on Lusail Stadium, where the World Cup final and opening game will be played in 2022. Construction across Doha—the 2022 World Cup is effectively a one city tournament and the longest distance between venues just 55 kilometers—progresses despite the Gulf political crisis.

Swiftly replaced

In the 13 months since Saudi Arabia, the

United Arab Emirates and their allies froze all relations with Qatar, World Cup organizers have proved resilient. The embargo, in place since June 5, 2017, cut off the supply of construction materials from Saudi Arabia and the UAE, but they were swiftly replaced by imports from Malaysia and China. New roads, hotels, museums, neighborhoods even towns—including the estimated \$45 billion Lusail—have been built. Doha's first metro system, costing \$36 billion, is on track to open in 2019.

Qatar expects up to 1.5 million fans to attend in 2022 and they will be housed in a combination of hotels, Airbnb properties, tents and some 12,000 on cruise ships. Doha has proved very sensitive about accusations there will not be enough hotel spaces with claims it will fall short on the 60,000 hotel rooms FIFA requires a World Cup host nation to provide. Designated fan zones will be put in place as well as regulated areas where fans can drink. Qatar, a conservative Muslim country, permits alcohol but only under regulated circumstances.

Where the teams will stay in Qatar—and if all will stay in Qatar—for the moment is not clear. Iran has offered its Kish Island as a base for teams and use of that could depend on the tournament remaining a 32-nation World Cup or if FIFA brings forward plans to increase it to 48 sides. For security, Qatar will use foreign police



MOSCOW: A group of people display a banner reading 'See you in Qatar' in reference to the Qatar 2022 World Cup at the Red Square in Moscow. — AFP

officers to try and combat hooliganism, say organizers, as they aim to deliver "the safest World Cup in the world". British Typhoon

fighter jets bought last year by Qatar for \$8 billion will help provide security and patrol the skies during the event. — AFP

US host spars with French envoy over WCup African-ness

WASHINGTON: The host of America's late-night TV program "The Daily Show" has drawn the ire of France's ambassador to the US after joking that "Africa won the World Cup." Earlier this week Trevor Noah, a prominent comedy host in the United States, praised "Africa" for its World Cup victory, considering the immigrant heritage of many of the French squad's players and their families. The joke triggered controversy in France, with some social media users accusing the comedian Noah—a South African born to a black mother and white father—of racism.

French ambassador to the US Gerard Araud on Wednesday sent Noah a stern letter criticizing the joke, saying "nothing could be less true." "The rich and various backgrounds of these players is a reflection of France's diversity," Araud said. "Unlike in the United States of America, France does not refer to its citizens based on their race, religion or origin." "To us, there is no hyphenated identity, roots are an individual reality," the ambassador continued. "By calling them an African team, it seems you are denying their Frenchness. "This, even in jest, legitimizes the ideology which claims whiteness as the only definition of being French."

'Why can't they be both?'

Shortly after the letter was posted on Twitter, Noah volleyed back: "When I say they're African, I'm not saying it as a way to exclude them from their Frenchness." "I'm saying it to include them in my African-ness. "I'm saying, 'I see you, my French brother of African descent.'" Noah acknowledged that far-right groups in both France and the United States use the principle of heritage as a "line of attack" against immigrants to justify exclusion. But he explained that he found it "weird" to suggest the players couldn't simultaneously be African and French. "Why can't they be both?" he said to applause. "So what they're arguing here is, in order to be French, you have to erase everything that is African?" Saying that he "vehemently" disagreed with that notion, Noah appeared to double down on his original message.

"I watch what politicians say about African migrants when they are unemployed, when they may commit a crime, or when they're considered unsavory, they are 'African immigrants.' When their children go on to provide a World Cup victory for France, we should only refer to it as France," Noah added. "I will continue to praise them for being African because I believe they are of Africa—their parents are from Africa—and they can be French at the same time," he said. "And if French people are saying they cannot be both, then I think they have a problem and not me." "America's not a perfect country," Noah added. "But what I love about this place is that people can still celebrate their identity in their American-ness." — AFP

Miami voters will have say on Beckham's stadium plan

MIAMI: Miami voters will have their say in November on David Beckham's latest plan for a Major League Soccer stadium development in the city, after a vote by city commissioners on Wednesday. The Miami City Commission voted 3-2 to place a referendum on the November 6 ballot that would open the door for the complex on city-owned land that is now occupied by a municipal golf course.

The proposal by retired England star Beckham and his business partners includes a 25,000-seat stadium for an expansion MLS club, along with 23 acres of youth football pitches with artificial turf, a 750-room hotel, restaurant, retail and office space plus a 58-acre public park. The commission delayed a vote last week after a presentation by the investment group was followed by hours of public comment both for and against the plan.

Those opposed included a group from the First Tee Miami youth golf program based at the Melreese Country Club site. Wednesday's move by the commission will let voters decide whether to allow the city to change its laws and waive competitive bidding and authorize the commission to negotiate a 99-year lease of the site. If voters approve, a lease agreement must gain approval of four of the five commissioners. On Wednesday, Beckham business partner Jorge Mas went through a list of new provisions added since last week's presentation.

That includes an agreement that no city funding would be used for toxic soil cleanup, a cost that is estimated at \$35 million. The group also offered assurances that First Tee Miami could stay put, with a driving range on the site and access to a nearby 18-hole golf course. The Melreese site is just the latest that Beckham has seriously pursued. More than a year ago the England icon had proposed a stadium in a downtown Miami neighborhood in a project that drew criticism over lack of parking and potential increased traffic chaos and sparked fears that low-income residents would be displaced. — AFP

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MOSCOW: Two men pose for a picture in the Majlis Qatar pavilion in Moscow's Gorky Park in Moscow. Qatar will host of the FIFA World Cup in 2022. — AFP



Qatar ploughs ahead with WCup plans despite crises

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