

Friday Times

ISSUE NO: 17593

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Give her a day off



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai
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Every time I hear negative comments or racist opinions about labor rights, I feel sorry and ashamed of those who despise the poor, who are forced to work abroad due to poverty. Recently I heard the views of some Filipino friends and their feelings with regards to comments by a Kuwaiti woman who posted a video on Instagram on July 10 in which she rejected the new rules that were introduced in May to give Filipino domestic helpers a day off every week and prevent employers from keeping their passports.

On May 11, Kuwait and Manila signed an agreement regulating domestic labor following a diplomatic crisis that led to a ban on Filipino workers heading to work in the country. "Don't we have the right to have a day off for ourselves once a week?" A good observation and fair call by my Filipino friend. Another said: "If the maid receives good treatment from the sponsor, she wouldn't think of escaping even if she has her passport."

The story began when the Kuwaiti girl expressed her personal opinion on social media about the subject of granting Filipino maids weekly leave and the right to retain their passports. I believe the domestic worker is a hardworking human who needs to communicate with friends on her day off and have a social life. She is an employee and not a slave or a prisoner. But it seems not everyone agrees on this.

The lady's comments in the deleted clip sparked outrage on social media, with calls to make an apology and likening her comments to those of "a slave owner". The blogger tried to defend her opinion and told AFP by phone that the outcry was "unjustified" and did not require an apology. "All I said was that the employer is entitled to keep the servant's passport, and that many Kuwaitis and Gulf nationals agree with me," she said. I don't know what is the exact interpretation of the term "many", because I see this as a personal opinion. I am very much a Kuwaiti and this is an insult and racist.

When someone denies the basic social right of a human, then they do not recognize that this person - no matter what job they occupy - is not less than them and has the same needs. Do the "many" employers who refuse to give the worker a day off and their passport enjoy any day off themselves, or not? I believe domestic workers are no different than other employees with fixed working hours. Having a worker in your house doesn't mean you are entitled to own her flesh and blood and treat her like a machine, because she is human as I am and you are and not less. The working hours must not be more than eight per day, plus a day off too weekly. If this does not please the sponsor, then they should depend on themselves and clean their own houses.

I hope people think twice before uttering racist and reprehensible opinions that represent them only and not the entire society, especially those who defend the rights of poor workers. We have to improve their working and living conditions because being far from their families is already a suffering, so let's not deprive them of their human rights too.

PHOTO OF THE DAY



KUWAIT: Kuwait's shrimping season will kick off on August 1, expected to bring loads of the popular shellfish to local fish markets. — File photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Don't block the highway for fender benders



IN MY VIEW

By Nawara Fattahova
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Drivers in Kuwait who experience minor car accidents (often referred to as 'fender benders') often block thinking that they should not move their cars until the police arrive. The opposite is actually the case. The interior ministry issued a decree recently forbidding drivers involved in minor traffic accidents from blocking the road waiting for a police patrol to arrive.

According to the decree, the motorists should go to the police station if nobody is injured and if the vehicles are not seriously damaged and can move. In case of death or injuries during the accident, or if the vehicles are seriously damaged, then the drivers should wait for the police and ambulance.

"The drivers can swap their driving licenses before heading to the police station. They are free to take photos of their vehicles if they want, but it's not obligatory. If the drivers block the road over a minor accident, they will be ticketed," Head of the Media Security Department at Interior Ministry Lt Col Nasser Buslaib told Kuwait Times. "At the police station, if the drivers have a dispute over whose fault it was, they have to wait for the investigator. If they don't have a conflict, then they can just get a report

from officers at the police station to fix their cars," he said.

Sometimes the accident location is inside an urban area so it will be resolved by the police station of this area. But on highways, the area of jurisdiction might be confusing, as several districts can flank the road. "If the road is between two or more areas, the police station in charge will be the one on the right side of the accident. If the drivers are not sure, they can drive to the nearest police station, which will then direct them to the one in charge," explained Buslaib.

A traffic accident occurs every 10 minutes in Kuwait on average and the majority of these are minor. To reduce the burden on traffic police and free up roads, authorities have now implemented the regulation that allows drivers to exchange details and then move to the nearest police station to complete the necessary paperwork, pay fines and obtain the papers needed for insurance and car repair.

If the accident is serious or the vehicles are rendered immobile, the drivers need to call the emergency hotline 112, which is connected to other departments in charge including police, ambulance and the fire department.

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Young sailors return from pearl diving expedition

Families await the return of young sailors from the annual pearl diving expedition. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



By Faten Omar

Around 175 participants onboard 13 dhows returned to the shore yesterday to a warm welcome and effusive praise after the conclusion of the 30th annual pearl diving expedition. The ceremony to mark the day of return, known as 'Al-Quffal', was held in the presence of HH the Amir's representative and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Adel Al-Kharafi at the Kuwait Sea Sports Club (KSSC) in Salmiya. Also present for the festivities was US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman.

Al-Quffal day marked with festivities, heritage exhibition

The ceremony began with a tour of a marine heritage exhibition, which included diving images and art and heritage collections. After the dhows arrived, the sailors displayed their harvest of pearls. The Al-Quffal day concluded with a flag ceremony marking the end of the diving season.

This annual tradition is considered a milestone for reviving Kuwaiti marine heritage and culture on the national, regional and international arenas. Kharafi praised the participation of young people in this journey despite its hardships and difficulties in very unstable and hot weather, pointing out this participation reflects the authenticity of the Kuwaiti youth and their sincere desire to preserve the heritage and past of their forefathers.



Local



Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Adel Al-Kharafi and US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman examine the harvest of pearls.



Sailors take part in various Al-Quffal ceremonies.

Secretary General of KSSC Khalid Al-Foudari said “HH the Amir is the one who encourages us to continue - he cares, supports and orders the club to take part”. He praised the effectiveness and historical significance of the trip, adding that Kuwait participated last year in diving trips in Bahrain. “We hope that GCC youth will participate in the 31st annual pearl diving trip next year,” he added.

The diving trip began last Thursday with the “Dasha” ceremony, in which the dhows left the club for Khairan, where there are abundant oysters, to take part in the actual diving process over the course of a week in the old traditional way. The trip was held in difficult weather conditions with high temperatures and humidity. KSSC has hosted the annual pearl diving trip for the last 30 years, and young sailors from Kuwait and other Gulf countries take part in this traditional activity. Under the leadership of experienced captains, the young men embark on a weeklong sea voyage where they anchor off Khairan and dive for pearls.



Local and expat groups work hand in hand to support cancer patients



By Ben Garcia

Al-Sidra Center, a refuge for cancer patients at the Kuwait Cancer Control Center (KCCC), is a symbol of struggle - but mostly hope - for patients of all nationalities. The center, founded by consultant and oncologist Dr Shafika Al-Wadhi, is part of the Al Sidra Association for the Psychological Care of Cancer Patients. The center's activities are supported by Sheikha Azza Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah. The success of the center's activities can also be attributed to some organizations and communities trying to collaborate and work with them.

There are many local businesses and organizations that help support the organization. Two of the many organizations expat groups that are active in supporting cancer patients at the KCCC are the Kabayan Cancer Support Group (KCSG), headed by Marcelino Mallari, and the Kuwait Filipino Mothers Organization (KFMO), headed by Elnie Tejero Talledo.

"There are a number of Filipino patients treated and cared for here at the KCCC but we are not exclusive for any particular nationality. We care for everyone suffering in the hospital regardless of their nationality," said Sarah Yousef, Founder and Project Adviser at KFMO, which labels itself as a group for volun-

teering, sharing, giving encouragement and bridging patients with their families back home.

"Since we are from the Philippines, we concentrate on helping our own kabayans. There are many kabayans who are cancer patients and some of them are disconnected with their families. We are supporting them in many ways - if they have families and if their children back home need something, we contribute and send them money. Some patients are undergoing treatment for months now, so we support them as much as we can to ease the suffering of their families back home," she said.

"We care for everyone suffering in the hospital regardless of their nationality"



teering, sharing, giving encouragement and bridging patients with their families back home. KFMO offers support not just in the form of money and encouragement, but in many other ways. Fely Torio, another KFMO member, uses her talent for cooking home-made Filipino foods and shares them with Filipino patients. "I just sit there for some time to talk to them and give them encouragement. Last week, we visited terminally ill patients at Sheikha Badriya Al-Sabah Center. We see them today, and probably the next day they are gone. If this is so painful to witness, what about their families? We are all humans, and are also affected. In this small way, we are helping to ease their suffering.

Mostly, we visit as volunteers to make them feel comfortable, give them some advice and some motivation and encouragement so they keep fighting. We are thankful that even if not all the time, their physical and emotional burdens are lightened," she said.

KCSG founder Mallari said the group was created to support and help Filipino cancer patients in Kuwait. "Currently, we have more than 100 Filipino cancer patients. We help and support all cancer patients in Kuwait in whatever way we can," he said. "We are physically and emotionally close to them. We are here as nurses - walking and talking with them almost every day. The idea came to me during a Christmas celebration organized for them in 2014. I saw the happiness and smiles of Filipino patients, so I said: Why not to sustain the happiness of these people. I know this would not be possible alone, so I held a meeting with some Filipino nurses at KCCC, and a few weeks after Christmas the Kabayan Cancer Support Group was born," he said.

Al-Sidra organizes several activities such as yoga, meditation, breathing, look good feel good programs, massage therapy session, lectures on stress management and other educational seminars, trainings and workshops.

1st



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Dawakhana: The first pharmacy in Kuwait's history



KUWAIT: Kuwait's first pharmacy or 'dawakhana' as Kuwaitis used to call it, was opened in 1919 by Abulelah Al-Qenai. The dawakhana, fully operated by Qenai back then, provided complete medical services including preparing different medicines, treating regular diseases and vaccinations against epidemics that would spread every now and then. In his book titled 'Dawakhana' published by the Center For Research and Studies on Kuwait in 2005, Dr Khaled Al-Jarallah said Abdulelah's father Abdullah Al-Qenai was a prominent figure in Kuwaiti society. He noted that Abdulelah learned English, literature, religion, science and document preservation from his father.

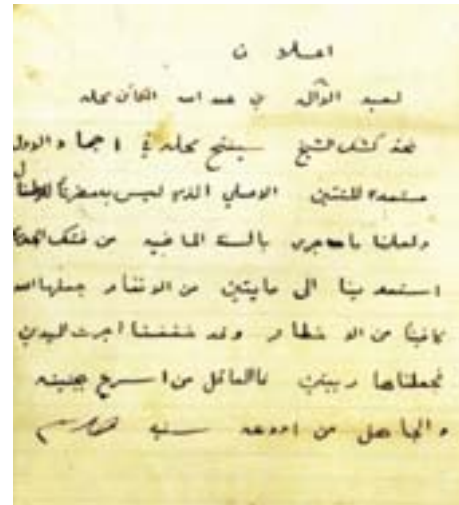
Abdullah Al-Qenai used to work for the British political commission in Kuwait in 1904 and was honored by an award for his efforts. This had given Abdulelah the chance to work as an assistant doctor in the commission's clinic in 1909, Jarallah said. He kept working at the clinic until late 1918, when he decided to benefit from the knowledge and skills he had gained to work on his own. In 1919, Qenai travelled to Bombay

in India to learn about different medicines and medical equipment. He then went to merchant Hussein bin Essa, who was living in India, to ship all drugs and equipment needed for his pharmacy in Kuwait.

Jarallah said the dawakhana, located in the middle of the souq under the kiosk of Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah, served people throughout the '20s and '30s. From there on, Qenai showed great skills in treating diseases in different fields including the digestive system, urinary tract, lungs, dermatology and ophthalmology. He also treated wounds and toothaches and performed simple surgeries. Moreover, Abulelah provided vaccinations against smallpox that was widely spreading in Kuwait and the Gulf



Abulelah Al-Qenai operated the first 'dawakhana'.



region back then. The dawakhana gave way to the opening of other pharmacies later, including the national Islamic pharmacy in 1927 by Abdullatif Al-Duhaim and many others. — KUNA



Kuwait's first pharmacy opened in 1919.

Drug smugglers arrested at sea

KUWAIT: A citizen and a non-Kuwaiti were arrested with 22 kg of hashish they fished out from the sea, said security sources. Case papers indicate that coastguards and narcotics police had been tipped off concerning the suspects' plans to smuggle drugs by sea into the country. The sources added that detectives closely watched the site where the drugs had been floating and waited for the suspects until they pulled the entire consignment into their boat, before arresting them. The suspects confessed that the drugs belong to an Iranian drug dealer who had given them the coordinates to pick up the consignment and deliver it in Kuwait, in return for a commission. Separately, an Egyptian was rushed to hospital when a police patrol found him sleeping in the street after overdosing on drugs. Security sources said the man is an illegal resident and had 10 hashish joints and 36 illicit pills.

Technician falls to death

An interior design technician was killed after he lost his balance and fell from an under-construction building in Mahboula, said security

sources, noting that on arriving at the scene, paramedics found the man had suffered multiple fractures and serious injuries that killed him instantly.

Cig smuggling foiled

Nuwiseeb custom inspectors arrested a Gulf national with of 3,000 packs of cigarettes hidden in his vehicle in an attempt to smuggle them into Saudi Arabia, said security sources, noting that each traveler is only permitted to have 20 packs on departing.

Diesel thieves nabbed

Two Pakistanis were arrested for stealing diesel from rig number 108 in Um Naga desert, said security sources, adding that the suspects were arrested red-handed and referred to relevant authorities.

Liquor busts

Two Asians were arrested in Jleeb with 33 liquor bottles hidden in their vehicle. Security sources said the suspects are illegal residents and they were immediately sent to Talha prison pending deportation. Another Asian was arrested while drinking in the Amghara scrap yard, said security sources, noting that the suspect was spotted by a police patrol walking in an unsteady manner with a liquor bottle in his hand. — Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai and Al-Anbaa

Hot, dusty, windy weather forecast

KUWAIT: Kuwait Metrological Center announced yesterday that the country is currently affected by the Indian seasonal trough, accompanied by dry and hot masses of air, with dusty weather and low to zero visibility in some areas, with high sea waves. Meteorologist Yasser Al-Bloushi said in remarks to KUNA yesterday that the weather yesterday was extremely hot, with temperature ranging between 46-48 degrees Celsius, and sea with light to moderate waves of two to six feet in height, and northwesterly winds, of moderate to active speed, ranging between 20-50 km per hour, accompanied with dust.

The weather yesterday night was rela-

tively hot and dusty, with temperature ranging between 32-35 degrees Celsius, and northwesterly winds, of moderate to active speed, ranging between 25-55 km per hour, and sea with moderate to high waves of four to seven feet, Bloushi added.

The weather today morning will be dusty and very hot, with temperature ranging between 47-49 degrees, and strong winds ranging between 30-70 km per hour, while the sea will be with moderate to high waves of four to eight feet in height, he said. The weather tonight will be relatively hot and dusty with temperature ranging between 31-34 degrees, and northwesterly winds of moderate to active speed, ranging between 25-55 km per hour, while the sea will be with moderate to high waves of four to seven feet in height, Bloushi said.

The weather tomorrow morning will be very hot and dusty, with temperature ranging between 47-49 degrees Celsius, with northwesterly winds of moderate to active speed, ranging between 25-55 km per hour. — KUNA

Local

KOTC: Bab al-Mandeb tensions minimally affect Kuwait exports

Saudis halt oil shipments through waterway after Houthi attack

KUWAIT: The situation and tension at Bab al-Mandeb strait has minimally affected Kuwaiti oil exports, said Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC) yesterday. KOTC CEO Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah said that around 90 percent of Kuwaiti oil exports to Southeast Asia did not go through Bab al-Mandeb, indicating that only around 10 percent of tankers, filled mostly with oil byproducts, took the strait's route.

KOTC, said Sheikh Talal, will and always take the necessary precautions to make sure its tankers are safe and secure, adding that contingency plans are in place to address any possible situation or emergency. He added that the oil sector evaluates, on a daily basis, the situation in the strait - one of the most important global oil transportation routes linking the western hemisphere with the east. KOTC was founded in April 1957 as a company dealing with the marine transportation of Kuwaiti oil.

Saudi Arabia said yesterday it was suspending oil shipments through the Bab al-Mandeb strait after Yemen's Iran-aligned rebels attacked two tankers in the waterway, underscoring the risk of an escalation in tensions in the region. Brent crude futures rose 59 cents to \$74.52 a barrel by 1008 GMT, extending their rally into a third day but falling from a 10-day high in earlier trading. The Houthis, who have previously threatened to block the strait, said yesterday that they had the naval capability to hit Saudi ports and other Red Sea targets. Iran has threatened to block another strategic

shipping route, the Strait of Hormuz.

Saudi Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih said the Houthis attacked two Saudi oil tankers in the Red Sea on Wednesday, one of which sustained minimal damage. "Saudi Arabia is temporarily halting all oil shipments through Bab al-Mandeb strait immediately until the situation becomes clearer and the maritime transit through Bab al-Mandeb is safe," he said. The chairman of KOTC said the country was studying whether to follow suit. "All options are possible but there is nothing confirmed so far," Badr Al-Khashti told Reuters, adding no decision had been taken.

"The Saudi halt will cause prices to increase slightly and for a limited period," Kuwaiti oil expert Kamel Al-Harami said. "It will cause a 15-day delay in oil shipments as they have to re-route through south of the African continent," Harami told AFP. The main impact of the incident appears to be military, according to Harami. "It could be a reason for increased naval presence for many countries, mainly the United States and Russia, thus resulting in an escalation of tensions," he said.

The powerful commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards Quds force, Qassem Soleimani, criticized the US role in the world's top oil exporting region. "The Red Sea, which was secure, is no longer secure with the American presence ... (US President Donald) Trump should know that we are nation of martyrdom and that we await him," Soleimani was quoted as saying yesterday. Industry and shipping sources said the suspension was



ADEN: In this file photo taken on Nov 30, 2010, a fishing boat is seen entering the harbor in this southern city, situated at the mouth of the Red Sea. — AFP

unlikely to impact Saudi crude supplies to Asia, but could add shipping costs to Saudi vessels heading to Europe and the United States due to a longer transit.

The Bab al-Mandeb strait is only 28.97 km wide, according to the US Energy Information Administration (EIA), making hundreds of ships potentially an easy target. Falih's statement said the two Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCCs) attacked were operated by Saudi shipping company Bahri,

which identified the damaged vessel as the Arsan. "The two million barrels capacity for each tanker were full of crude oil cargo at the time and were headed for export. One of the VLCCs sustained minimal damage," Falih said. Most exports from the Gulf that transit the Suez Canal and the SUMED Pipeline also pass through Bab al-Mandeb. An estimated 4.8 million barrels per day of crude oil and refined petroleum products flowed through the waterway in 2016, the EIA said. — Agencies

Chicken got spoilt due to poor storage

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Following up the case of foul chicken found in two subsidized food centers, Chairman of the Food and Nutrition Authority Essa Al-Kandari said that authority's inspectors yesterday inspected the two concerned chicken companies' slaughterhouses to make sure full hygiene conditions are applied, which was verified. Kandari added frozen chicken samples from Taima and Jahra centers were examined and found safe, which confirms earlier reports that the foul chicken found in the other two centers was the result of bad storage conditions.

Policeman censured

The criminal court yesterday sentenced a policeman to five years in jail with labor plus dismissal from his job, reclaiming the sum of KD 233,000 and fining him with twice as much for using a fake degree to get promoted.

Blogger sentenced

The criminal court also sentenced blogger Sager Al-Hashash in absentia to 10 years in jail with labor in a case filed against him by the state security department, which adds up his total jail sentences to 70 years.

Jahra bachelors targeted

A number of citizens living in Jahra formed a special group to conduct a survey about houses rented to "bachelors" and expatriates, then submitted the results to the Municipality director to take proper eviction measures.

Cleaner killed after garbage truck flips

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Fire Service Directorate's PR and media department said an Asian was killed and two others were injured when the garbage truck they worked on met with an accident and flipped in Daher.

Woman injured in blaze

A fire broke out in a building in Hawally, said security sources, noting that on arriving at the scene, firemen evacuated the entire building and started fighting the fire in a fifth-floor apartment. They rescued an 18-year-old Arab expatriate woman, who was immediately rushed to Mubarak Hospital's ICU after inhaling a large quantity of smoke. The sources added the girl is in critical condition.



Some teachers get exemption from being terminated

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The education ministry recently cancelled some expat teachers' termination decisions for humanitarian reasons. Assistant undersecretary for administrative affairs Fahd Al-Ghaiss urged his counterpart for public education Fatima Al-Kandari to contact the concerned teachers and inform them of the exemption. In a letter he sent to Kandari, Ghaiss included a list of the exempted teachers' names, explaining the reason for each case. Kandari said the exempted cases include teachers who have children studying in grade 11, two currently receiving medical treatment and a number of Syrian teachers who cannot go back to their country due to the situation there.

MPs reopen old bills

Well-informed parliamentary sources said that a number of lawmakers agreed to hold a meeting to be initially attended by 14 MPs with the aim of accelerating the process of passing some laws the government has been stalling. The sources expected that the meeting to be held in October and that the concerned MPs were dissatisfied with the government's attempts to obstruct the early retirement bill already passed by parliament. The sources said lawmakers also intend opening other proposals rejected by the government, such as imposing fees on expats' remittances, reducing the number of expat government employees, citizens' employment and preventing appointing expats in administrative positions.

International

FRIDAY, JULY 27, 2018



IS leaves Syria Druze reeling from heaviest losses of war

Heatwave grips northern Europe as Greece burns

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ISLAMABAD: A Pakistani motorcyclist rides past a billboard featuring an image of Pakistan's cricketer-turned politician Imran Khan, head of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (Movement for Justice) party, a day after the general election. — AFP

Imran Khan claims victory in tense election

Calls elections the 'most transparent' in the country's history

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan cricket hero turned politician Imran Khan claimed victory yesterday in the country's tense general election, following accusations of "blatant" vote-rigging by rival parties. There was no official confirmation of results from Pakistan's election commission almost 24 hours after polls closed in Wednesday's vote but partial, unofficial tallies showed Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party enjoying a clear lead. "We were successful and we were given a mandate," Khan, 65, said during a live broadcast, adding that there was "no politician victimization" in the acrimonious contest.

He went on to call the elections the "most transparent" in the country's history. During the broadcast, Khan vowed to tackle corruption that was "eating our country like a cancer". He also touched on promises to balance relations with the US that would be "beneficial" for both countries. Khan's statement came several hours after his supporters took to the streets to celebrate winning an election that opponents have said the powerful military rigged in his favour.

The unprecedented delay in counting votes, along with a surprisingly strong lead for Khan, have fuelled widespread fears over the legitimacy of the exercise. Newspapers and television channels have been predicting victory for PTI since late Wednesday. By Thursday partial, unofficial results gave him at least 100 seats so far in the National Assembly, the lower house. A majority of 137 seats is needed to form a government. Khan's ex-wife, British film producer Jemima Goldsmith, tweeted her congratulations.

"22 years later, after humiliations, hurdles and sacrifices, my sons' father is Pakistan's next PM," she wrote. The Election Commission of Pakistan dismissed allegations of manipulation, blaming the delay on glitches in new, untested counting software. "These elections were 100 percent fair and transparent," said Chief Election Commissioner Sardar Muhammad Raza early Thursday as the outcry grew.

Election authorities have not yet confirmed when they expect to announce the results. Some reports suggested it would not be until yesterday evening at the earliest. Election observers including a mission from the European Union are due to give their own observations on the voting process today. The military, which had been accused of seeking to manipulate the vote in Khan's favour in the months leading up to the polls, has yet commented on the situation. It and Khan have previously denied allegations of intervention.

'Outright rigging'

Late Wednesday, the once-mighty Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), which had been in power since 2013, rejected the results because of "outright rigging", and vowed it would use "all political and legal options for redressal of these glaring excesses". "What they have done has pushed Pakistan back 30 years... People will not bear it," the party's leader Shahbaz Sharif, brother of jailed former premier Nawaz Sharif, said. He said the party was due to meet Thursday to decide a way forward. Other major parties also alleged

fraud, including the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), whose chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari echoed the PML-N's claim that party representatives were barred from monitoring the count. The size of Khan's lead against the PML-N, when many analysts had predicted a coalition would be likely, was also increasing concern over the process, analysts said. "The surprisingly high seat total for PTI, even as the votes continue to be counted, will be enough to trigger the suspicions of the PPP and PML-N," said Michael Kugelman, an analyst at the Wilson Center in Washington.

At least one party — Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan (TLP), which blockaded the capital Islamabad for weeks last year over blasphemy — has already announced it is planning protests. "This is complete chaos," said political analyst Azeema Cheema, saying she was "very concerned" about what comes next.

PTI supporters were ecstatic at the projected results. First-time voter Fahad Hussain, 21, said the party had "motivated the youth" as he hit the streets in Islamabad to celebrate with friends. The controversy follows a campaign already considered by some observers to be one of the "dirtiest" in Pakistan's history because of the allegations against the military, and marked by the increased visibility of extremist religious parties. Wednesday's elections were meant to be a rare democratic transition from one civilian government to another in the young, nuclear-armed country which has been ruled by the military for roughly half its history. — AFP

Israeli strikes in Gaza kill 3 after soldier wounded

GAZA CITY: Israeli strikes killed three Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip on Wednesday after a soldier was wounded by gunfire in a fresh flare-up of violence despite a United Nations-brokered ceasefire deal. The Israeli army said the strikes targeting Gaza's Islamist rulers Hamas were in retaliation for the shots fired at its soldiers along the border earlier Wednesday. One soldier was moderately wounded and taken to hospital, the army said.

The latest bloodshed comes five days after the UN and Egypt brokered a deal to halt a surge in violence that once again raised the spectre of a new round of conflict between Hamas and Israel. The three men were killed in strikes east of Gaza City, the health ministry in Gaza said. In a statement Hamas's military wing hailed them as its fighters from the Shejaiya area in northern Gaza, saying they were killed during strikes on one of their observation points.

The Israeli army said it carried out artillery strikes against seven military targets belonging to Hamas. "A short while ago, terrorists fired at (Israeli) soldiers in the southern Gaza Strip," an army statement said. "In response... artillery targeted seven military posts in Gaza belonging to the Hamas terrorist organization." A spokesman for Hamas said in a statement the group would "not abandon its duty to defend and protect our people and to respond to aggression."

'False alarm'

Shortly after the Israeli strikes, sirens

sounded near the Israeli city of Ashkelon close to Gaza, the Israeli army said. There was no immediate confirmation of any rocket fire from Gaza, which typically sets off such sirens, and the military said it appeared to be a "false alarm". More sirens were reported later in the evening. Israeli media reported that Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman had called an emergency meeting of army generals to discuss the situation. The shooting on the border Wednesday was the second such sniper incident reported by Israel in days.

The Israeli military said "a Palestinian sniper in Gaza fired at IDF troops under the cover of 20 children that were sent towards the border fence as decoy". On Friday an Israeli soldier was shot dead on the border, sparking a fierce wave of bombing in Gaza. It was the first time an Israeli soldier had been killed in or around Gaza since a 2014 war between Hamas and the Jewish state and sparked fears of a new round of confrontation. The violence ended late Friday after Egypt and the United Nations helped broker a tense ceasefire.

Since then the truce had largely held, though young Palestinians have continued to attach incendiary devices to kites and balloons and try to float them across the border. The kites have caused hundreds of fires inside Israel in recent months, according to Israeli officials. There has however been a reduction in the number of the firebombs since the ceasefire.



GAZA CITY: Palestinian mourners carry the body of Obada Farwana, during his funeral. — AFP

Israeli politicians have called for tougher measures against those launching the kites and balloons and earlier Wednesday Israeli aircraft fired towards a group of people preparing them, the army said. Israel and Hamas have fought three wars since 2008.

Tensions have spiked since Palestinians began protesting along the Gaza border in late

March, with Israeli forces shooting dead over 150 people since then during clashes and demonstrations. Israel has maintained a crippling blockade of Gaza since 2007 which it says is necessary to isolate Hamas. UN officials and rights groups say it amounts to collective punishment of the strip's two million residents and feeds poverty and radicalization. — AFP

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International

IS leaves Syria Druze reeling from heaviest losses of war

IS retains ability to mount deadly attacks against civilians

BEIRUT: The death toll in coordinated Islamic State group attacks in Syria's Sweida neared 250 yesterday, the Druze-majority province's heaviest loss of life of the seven-year civil war. Sweida, which is mainly government-held, had been largely insulated from the conflict raging in the rest of the country since 2011. But Wednesday's onslaught shattered the relative calm and showed that IS retains the ability to mount deadly attacks against civilians, despite being ousted from its last remaining urban pockets in recent months.

Four suicide bombers struck the city of Sweida, while other IS fighters attacked villages to its north and east with guns and explosives. The death toll reached 246 yesterday, 135 of them civilians, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based monitoring group. The others killed were pro-government fighters or residents who had taken up arms to defend their villages.

"The toll keeps rising as civilians who were wounded are dying and people who were unaccounted for are found dead," Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman told AFP. It was the deadliest attack for the province and one of the highest tolls in IS attacks across the country. State television broadcast footage of the funeral processions in Sweida, showing men in the traditional white caps of the Druze minority

exchanging condolences. Men carried caskets draped in the two-star government flag and pictures of those killed, against a backdrop of the rainbow colours representing their community.

IS regroups

At least 56 jihadists died carrying out the assault, the Observatory said. IS claimed responsibility in a series of statements on its propaganda channels on Wednesday. It posted gruesome photographs showing jihadists beheading at least four men it said were government fighters it had captured in Sweida.

IS has suffered a series of defeats that saw it ousted from the last urban pockets of the sprawling cross-border "caliphate" it proclaimed in Iraq and Syria in 2014. But it retains a presence, including in a pocket of the eastern province of Deir Ezzor and in parts of the vast central Badiya desert, including in Sweida. Yesterday, Syrian foreign minister Walid Mualllem slammed the attacks as he hosted a delegation of Chinese diplomats in Damascus, according to state news agency SANA. He said "Daesh (IS) remnants coming from the Badiya committed a brutal, barbaric crime that left hundreds dead and wounded."

News websites in Sweida alleged that some of the jihadists who took part in Wednesday's attack had been given safe passage out of the



SWEIDA: A handout picture released by the official Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) shows Syrians carrying a coffin of one of yesterday's suicide attacks victims during a mass funeral in the southern city of Sweida. — AFP

Yarmuk refugee camp in the southern outskirts of Damascus. The last IS fighters in the camp were bused out with their relatives in May to desert territory still held by the group. The Sweida websites posted images that purported to show IS fighters killed in the assault

with identification cards showing they were from Yarmuk.

Zeina, a resident of the tiny village of Al-Matuna, said her family woke up to the sound of gunfire and grenade blasts at around 5:30 am (0230 GMT) on Wednesday. — AFP

Iraqi Airways suspends pilots who fought in-flight over food

BAGHDAD: Iraqi Airways has suspended two of its pilots for getting into a fight — over a food tray — during an international flight with more than 150 passengers on board. The row erupted on a flight to the capital Baghdad from the Iranian city of Mashhad, with 157 travelers on board plus crew. "Conversation with the pilot became heated because he forbade an air hostess from bringing me a meal tray, under the pretext that I hadn't asked him for authorisation," the co-pilot said in a letter addressed to Iraqi Airways management, seen by AFP.

After the pilot had taken his own meal, he "hit and insulted (the co-pilot), prompting the arrival of a security agent", according to the letter. The duo went on to land the plane safely in Baghdad, only to continue their quarrel after landing. "The pilot again hit and insulted" his colleague, the co-pilot said, admitting that he also lashed out: "I had to defend myself." AFP has not seen the pilot's account of the incident and the airline did not detail when the scuffle took place. "The transport ministry has opened an investigation with the two pilots who argued with each other in-flight," Iraqi Airways said late Wednesday.

Both have been suspended, the airline said, warning that the two employees "will not escape the toughest sanctions... such as a lifetime flying ban". — AFP

600 migrants storm Morocco-Spain border fence

MADRID: More than 600 African migrants reached the Spanish territory of Ceuta yesterday after storming a double border fence with Morocco and attacking police with caustic quicklime and excrements. The scramble over the barbed wire-decked barrier is the biggest in Ceuta since February 2017, when more than 850 migrants entered the overseas territory over four days.

The incident further increases pressure on Spain, which has now surpassed Italy as the number one destination for migrants crossing the Mediterranean by boat. More than 19,580 people have landed on Spanish shores so far this year, according to the International Organization for Migration. A spokesman for the Guardia Civil police force in Ceuta told AFP close to 800 migrants had stormed the double barrier, which is also covered in small blades, early on Thursday morning from Morocco. Moroccan police stopped around 100 of them, while 602 managed to climb over into Spain.

Some were caught by Spanish police between the double barrier or stuck on top, and returned to Morocco. Spain's new Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska said last month he would "do everything possible" to remove barbed wire from border fences that surround Ceuta and Melilla, another Spanish territory on Morocco's northern border. Both territories have the European Union's only land borders with Africa, drawing migrants trying to reach the bloc.

Aerosol 'flame-throwers'

The migrants scrambled over the fence "all of a sudden", some pelting officers with "plastic containers full of excrements and

quicklime... stones and sticks", the Guardia Civil police said. They also set spray cans on fire, using them as "flame-throwers." Fifteen police officers were injured in the violence, some sustaining burns to their face and arms.

Red Cross spokeswoman Isabel Brasero said 30 migrants also needed medical treatment, many of them cutting their hands and legs as they scrambled over the barbed wire. While 16 were taken to hospital, the rest were sent to a migrant arrival centre, the Guardia Civil said. Local television footage showed some migrants straddling the top of the barrier. One of them was seen stuck in barbed wire, with Spanish police using cutters to release him before helping him down.

More police needed

The Guardia Civil's AEGC union yesterday called on the government to clarify its "plan B" to maintain security if the barbed wire was removed. "We're one of the main entry points from the third world into Europe and none of those in charge at the interior ministry have wanted to see or resolve the problems this is causing," the union said in a statement. "Today demonstrated that these problems are going to worsen if more Guardia Civil and anti-riot and protection equipment fail to arrive when the barbed wire is removed."

Italy used to be the first entry point for migrants taking boats from Libya, an unstable country where armed factions vie for power and human traffickers proliferate. But new far-right Interior Minister Matteo Salvini has taken a tough stance on migration and denied entry to NGO ships rescuing migrants at sea.

He insists the country is overwhelmed even if arrivals have dropped by 80 percent compared to the height of the migration crisis, which erupted in 2015. Spain's Foreign Minister Josep Borrell on Wednesday criticised Italy for closing that migration route in a "questionable manner". He warned that more migrants would take the western Mediterranean route to Spain as a result of Rome's actions, calling on Europe to draw up a viable, long-term action plan or be faced with "very serious problems." — AFP

International

Heatwave grips northern Europe as Greece burns

A roundup of the devastation

ATHENS: Scorching hot weather set the conditions for Greece's wildfires — Europe's deadliest this century with scores killed — while record temperatures in the north of the continent have also sparked blazes causing widespread damage in recent days. Ten EU countries have mobilized firefighters and equipment to help battle the fires in Greece as well as Sweden and Latvia. Here is a roundup of the devastation.

Greece

The fires in Greece, which broke out Monday, are the deadliest in living memory. At least 82 people have been confirmed dead, while emergency crews were yesterday searching incinerated homes and vehicles for at least 27 missing, who include nine-year-old twin girls from the village of Mati. Coastal villages near Athens popular with holidaymakers were especially hard hit, with at least 300 homes destroyed or badly damaged.

Sweden

Sweden, experiencing an unprecedented drought and the highest temperatures in a century, is battling 23 fires across the country, down by half since last week. The fires have laid waste to at least 25,000 hectares (62,000 acres) including 13,000 hectares in the central Karbole region alone. Temperatures are still rising, with Pierre Schaller, the head of a French contingent helping the Swedes, telling AFP that with Thursday's predicted high of 34 degrees Celsius (93 degrees Fahrenheit) the fires could "take off again".

But cooling rains are forecast for the weekend, when two Italian water-dropping aircraft that were deployed in Sweden last week will head to Greece, Swedish authorities told a news conference.

Latvia

A Belarusian helicopter was headed to Latvia on Thursday to help Latvian and Lithuanian firefighters battle a blaze that broke out on July 17. It has ravaged around 1,000 hectares (2,500 acres) of peat bog, forest and scrubland in the west of the Baltic state but has not claimed any lives. Latvia has turned to neighboring Belarus for help because EU resources are stretched fighting the wildfires in Greece and Sweden, according to the local Baltic News Service BNS.

Britain

Britain has been in the grip of its longest heatwave in decades, sparking wildfires in northwest England, water restrictions in Northern Ireland and record-breaking temperatures in Scotland. Sun worshippers in London's Hyde Park lounged in deck chairs set out on parched grass. The city's fire chief Dany Cotton remarked: "I never thought I'd say this, but we are praying for rain." A new British temperature record may be set on Friday, topping the 38.5 Celsius (101 Fahrenheit) registered in Kent in August 2003. With just 47 millimeters (1.8 inches) of rain recorded in Britain between June 1 and July 16, fire chiefs have warned that parks and other grasslands are like a "tinderbox".



PARIS: People cool themselves at the fountain of the Louvre Pyramid in Paris on July 25, 2018, as a heatwave continues across northern Europe, with wildfires breaking out in northern Scandinavia and Greece. — AFP

The Netherlands

The Dutch meteorological institute on Thursday officially declared the Netherlands' first heatwave in three years, with the mercury hitting 36 degrees Celsius (97 Fahrenheit). The spell has lasted 12 days, making it the sixth longest heatwave since 1901. Authorities are planning for water shortages in several parts of the country.

Elsewhere in Europe

In Norway, which experienced its hottest May temperatures on record, one firefighter was killed on July 15 while battling one of a string of fires. Unaccustomed bikini weather has also come to Finland's northernmost Lapland province, the legendary headquarters of Father Christmas. — AFP

Nigerian governor in violence-hit state leaves ruling party

MAKURDI: The governor of a Nigerian state badly hit by violence between farmers and herders has quit President Muhammadu Buhari's ruling party, after a wave of defections by lawmakers. Samuel Ortom was elected as governor of Benue in 2015 for the All Progressives Congress (APC) party but has been openly critical of the government's response to the deadly clashes in his state.

The International Crisis Group said in a report yesterday that more than 1,300 people had been killed in the violence across central states since January. Ortom announced late on Wednesday that he was moving back to the main opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) after "due consultations with relevant stakeholders". "I have resolved that the way forward is to rejoin (the) PDP," he said.

Ortom's move comes after dozens of lawmakers in parliament in Abuja on Tuesday dumped the APC for the PDP in a sign of growing discontent at Buhari's leadership as elections approach. Buhari, 75, is seeking a second, four-year term of office in elections set for February, despite claims he is too old and questions about his health following a lengthy, undisclosed illness. The former military ruler has also been criticised for his handling of rising violence as well as the alleged use of security services to

target his perceived political opponents. Ortom has been one of the most vocal opponents of Buhari's response to the resource conflict, which has become polarised along ethnic, political and religious lines. The governor's ethnic Tiv kinsmen, who are Christian, have been targeted. The herders are mainly ethnic Fulani Muslims, as is Buhari. APC flags have now been removed from public places in Benue, according to an AFP reporter in the state. The ruling party said it was "somewhat surprising" Ortom had left and it was still working to try to reconcile disgruntled members. "Even with this development, we don't think it is too late for reconciliation," the party said in a statement. Buhari met APC senators in Abuja late on Wednesday as part of efforts to broker a truce in the party, which last month saw a splinter group emerge of disaffected members.

In separate unrest that is putting Buhari's government under pressure, cattle rustling gangs were suspected of killing 20 people in the northern state of Zamfara. Two residents told AFP that gunmen riding motorbikes stormed the herding and farming village of Kwaddi, in the Zurmi area of the state, and opened fire on a mosque. The attack happened at about 4:00 pm (1500 GMT) on Tuesday. "The bandits killed 20 people and injured several others in the attack," said Kalla Wadatau, who lives in the remote village. — AFP

Free bus travel across Estonia a first in Europe

TALLINN, Estonia: Estonia has become the first European country to offer free bus travel across nearly all of its territory, in a move aimed at limiting rural flight and fossil fuel consumption. "There are cities and regions in Europe where public transportation is free but so far there hasn't been a state-wide free public transportation solution of this kind," Kadri Simson, the minister of economics and infrastructure, said yesterday.

Eleven out of the small Baltic state's 15 counties began to offer the free regional bus transport this month. "We were looking at how to liven up rural regions, how to stop the exodus from the countryside to cities," said Simson, explaining that the program was born out of discussions between the central government and counties. "Free bus transport at the county-level is meant primarily to create mobility options for people in rural regions, to guarantee them access to everyday services," she said, adding that the program is also designed to help Estonia meet EU greenhouse gas emission targets.

To that end, Estonia's parliament resolved last

year to limit the country's fossil fuels consumption so that use in 2030 would remain at 2012 levels. "This means that we need to find ways to encourage people to travel in a more eco-friendly way, for example, by using public transport," Simson told AFP, insisting this could help limit the number of passenger cars.

Impact on trains?

Harly Kirspuu, a 30-year-old film festival organiser told AFP that the buses he uses to travel all over Estonia for work "haven't become worse" in terms of service since becoming free earlier this month. Free bus rides have been available in Estonia's capital Tallinn since 2013 and Mayor Taavi Aas insists the program is a success despite steady growth in the number of cars in the city.

Half of Tallinn public transport users say they began using the service more often since it became free, according to the city's 2017 annual citizen satisfaction survey. However, critics raised concerns that, among other things, free buses could negatively impact passenger traffic on the Elron state-owned railway network. But the train operator itself insists it isn't worried, boasting instead that passenger numbers have risen by eight percent so far this year. "The main question is whether the county bus network will support trains or compete with them, and this applies both to free and paid bus lines," Ronnie Kongo, Elron's director of sales and development, said. — AFP

International

US court deadline looms for family reunification

917 cases fall into 'ineligible cases' category

WASHINGTON: Hundreds of immigrant parents and children separated at the US-Mexico border were in limbo yesterday as a court-set deadline for family reunification was set to expire. A federal judge in California, Dana Sabraw, has ordered that all eligible migrant families be brought back together by 6:00 pm yesterday. But government lawyers acknowledged in court this week that not everyone will have been reunited by that time.

The controversial separations began in earnest in May under President Donald Trump's "zero tolerance" policy when migrants illegally entering the United States were detained en masse, and their children taken to shelters as a result. The policy triggered protests in the US and abroad, especially after the release of audio of small children in shelters crying for their parents, many of whom fled turmoil and gang violence in Central America.

An about-face from the Republican leader six weeks later led to hundreds of reunions, but the pace has been slow—children and their parents are being housed in different parts of the country, and some adults have been deported. Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen said Tuesday the government intended to "reunify all

families that are suitable."

Nielsen told Fox News her department was "working hand in glove" with the Department of Health and Human Services, which operates shelters all over the country where the kids—some toddlers or even infants—were sent. The government has identified 2,551 children ages five to 17 potentially covered by the order, and said that 1,634 families are expected to be reunited by the deadline.

917 ineligible case

The remaining 917 fall into the category of "ineligible cases"—meaning children cannot be reunited because family ties cannot be confirmed, or the parent has a criminal record, a communicable disease or cannot be found. And

of that number, government data indicates that more than 460 parents may already have been deported, some of them voluntarily—enormously complicating any possible reunion with their children.

"The other 917 — including the 463 who may not be in the US now—will not be reunited before the deadline, and it's up to Judge Sabraw to decide whether that is OK," said Adam Isacson, from the Washington Office on Latin America, a non-governmental research group. Asked how

“ Working hand in glove ”

North Korea, US at odds over path to peace

SEOUL: Washington's reluctance to declare an end to the Korean War until after North Korea abandons its nuclear arsenal may put it at odds not only with Pyongyang, but also with allies in South Korea. The 1950–1953 Korean War ended in an armistice rather than a peace treaty, leaving the US-led United Nations forces technically still at war with North Korea. Friday marks 65th anniversary of the truce, which will be commemorated by the United Nations Command in a ceremony in the fortified demilitarized zone that has divided the two Koreas since the war.

North Korean veterans of the war, which left more than 1.2 million dead, will gather in Pyongyang for a conference. In their April summit, the leaders of North and South Korea agreed to work this year with the United States and China, which also played a major role in the war, to replace the armistice with a peace agreement.

In June, US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un signed a statement saying they would seek "to establish new US-DPRK relations in accordance with the desire of the peoples of the two countries for peace and prosperity," using the initials of the North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Kim has broadly committed to the "denuclearization of the Korean peninsula" if the United States and its allies drop their "hostile" policies and the North has made clear it sees an official end to the state of war as crucial to lowering tensions. Many experts and officials in Washington, however, fear signing a peace deal first could erode the international pressure they believe led Kim to negotiate. It could also endanger the decades-long US military alliance with South Korea, and may undermine the justification for the US troops based on the peninsula. "Broadly speaking, one side wants denuclearization first, normalization of relations later, and the other wants normalization of relations first, then denuclearization later," said Christopher Green, a senior advisor at the International Crisis Group. North Korea says it has taken steps to halt its nuclear development, including placing a moratorium on missile and nuclear bomb testing, demolishing its only known nuclear test site, and dismantling a rocket facility.

American officials have praised those moves, but remain skeptical. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told Congress on Wednesday North Korea was continuing to produce fuel for nuclear bombs. A spokesperson for the US State Department said while "peace on the Korean Peninsula is a goal shared by the world," the international community would not accept a nuclear armed North Korea. "As we have stated before, we are committed to building a peace mechanism with the goal of replacing the Armistice agreement when North Korea has denuclearised," the spokesperson said in an emailed statement. —Reuters



WASHINGTON: In this file photo, protesters demand that children be reunited with their immigrant parents during a demonstration in San Diego, California. —AFP

the government will return children to parents who have been deported, Nielsen answered: "If the parents contact us that they would like to be reunited, of course we'll work with them."

But finding these parents in Mexico or Central America will be a long, painstaking task, said Stephen Kang, an attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union, which had filed suit against the administration to demand separated families be brought back together. A month ago, Sabraw ordered the government to return children under

the age of five to their parents by July 10 and those between five and 17 by Thursday.

The government missed the first deadline. It deemed 45 children ineligible for return because their parents were not fit or able to take them. As of Tuesday, the Department of Health and Human Services had in its custody, in shelters around the country, 11,500 children classified as Unaccompanied Alien Children, or UACs. That figure includes kids and adolescents who traveled to the United States without an adult. —AFP

Judge lets anti-corruption case against Trump move forward

WASHINGTON: A lawsuit that accuses President Donald Trump of violating the constitution by maintaining his interest in a hotel that does business with foreign governments has been allowed to proceed by a US judge. It marked the first time a judge has interpreted anti-corruption clauses in the constitution known as emoluments clauses and applied them to a sitting president, news reports said. US District Judge Robert Messitte in Maryland ruled Wednesday that the case—which centers on money Trump makes from the Trump International Hotel in Washington—can now move to the evidence-gathering stage. If the ruling stands—the Justice Department can appeal—it would mean the plaintiffs will seek to examine Trump business records. Trump has refused to disclose such information and in particular his income tax returns, in a break with the practice of previous presidents.

The clauses at stake bar a president from receiving financial benefits from foreign or domestic governments. The plaintiffs in the

case are the state of Maryland and the District of Columbia, as Washington is known. They say Trump violates the clauses by profiting from the hotel, which is just down the street from the White House and popular with foreign and US state government delegations.

"Sole or substantial ownership of a business that receives hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars a year in revenue from one of its hotel properties where foreign and domestic governments are known to stay (often with the express purpose of cultivating the president's good graces) most definitely raises the potential for undue influence, and would be well within the contemplation of the clauses," Judge Messitte wrote.

The Justice Department had sought to have the case thrown out on grounds the clauses did not apply to the hotel. It argued that the clauses were designed to prevent a president from taking bribes, not from engaging in business. But the judge ruled that this was too narrow an interpretation of what an emolument is. —AFP

International

Floods from Laos dam collapse force evacuations in Cambodia

27 dead, 131 still missing as rescuers battle rains

ATTAPEU, Laos: The torrent of water unleashed in a deadly Laos dam collapse has drained into Cambodia, forcing thousands to evacuate, as rescuers yesterday battled monsoon rains to find scores of Laotians still missing after entire villages were washed away. Twenty-seven people have been confirmed dead, with 131 still missing, after the Xe-Namnoy dam collapsed on Monday in a remote southern corner of Laos, leaving villagers with little time to escape.

It is an unprecedented accident to strike the hydropower industry in Laos, where the Communist government has dammed large sections of its myriad waterways to generate electricity that is mostly sold to its neighbors. The search and rescue effort entered a third day yesterday, with China, Vietnam and Thailand sending in specialists, while villagers picked through their wrecked, mud-caked homes for possessions as the flood waters receded.

Carcasses of livestock floated in the knee-deep waters in a devastated village visited by AFP, as heavy rain pounded the area. Thousands of villagers downstream in Cambodia have also been forced to flee as the water once held back by the dam flowed south. "Water is still rising, so more people will be evacuated," Men Kong, a government spokesman in

Cambodia's Stung Treng province, told AFP.

Cambodian soldiers ferried villagers and motorbikes from flooded zones on wooden boats, while supplies were handed out to some who found refuge on dry land. In Laos, Chinese rescuers in life jackets and helmets joined local soldiers searching for the missing yesterday, according to an AFP reporter at the scene, while community volunteers pitched in with private boats to return to villages still submerged. Residents recalled their terror as water rushed through their homes.

Tran Van Bien, 47, from Ban Mai village close to the ruined dam said he was told to evacuate just two hours before the dam burst on Monday evening, running to a neighbour's house with his family as his home quickly filled with water. "We were on the roof of that house the whole night, cold and scared. At 4:00

am a wooden boat passed and we decided to send my wife and my kid out," he told AFP from a nearby town where he eventually found dry land. "My wife tied our child to her body, saying if they died, they would die together rather than being alone."

Insufficient warning

The \$1.2 billion Xe-Namnoy dam, a joint venture between Laos, Thai and Korean companies, was still under construction in southern Attapeu province

“Water is still rising”



ATTAPEU, Laos: People use a makeshift ferry to cross the swollen Xe Khong river due to flash flooding in Sanamxai, Attapeu province. —AFP

when it collapsed after heavy rains pounded the area earlier this week. Two South Korean companies involved in the project's construction and operation said damage was reported a day before the auxiliary "Saddle D" dam collapsed.

However a timeline from operator Korea Western Power Co. obtained by AFP said 11 centimetres (four inches) of subsidence was spotted at the dam's centre as early as Friday. The company told AFP it could not yet determine the cause of the collapse. "It is too early to define whether it was a natural

disaster or a manmade disaster," a spokesman said yesterday.

Thailand issued new regulations for its hydro plant operators in Laos this week, ordering companies to report on dam conditions every week and communicate closely with residents. "If a dam plans to release water they must coordinate with local officials to warn people and to prevent people from panic at least seven days (in advance)," Thailand's Energy and Mining Minister Khammany Inthirath announced Wednesday. —AFP

Fujimori, loved, hated by fellow Peruvians, is quietly turning 80

LIMA: Peruvian ex-president Alberto Fujimori turns 80 on Saturday—his first birthday in 12 years out of prison—with his children, and the nation, sharply divided over his political legacy. "Let history judge my successes and my errors," Fujimori wrote in a message sent to AFP ahead of his birthday. He said he was comforted by the conviction that he had laid a solid foundation for a country that would "finally reach its destiny, which is to be a leader in Latin America."

His birthday, which he said would be austere celebrated, will find him living alone in a rented house in Lima. He has been working on a memoir about his decade in power (1990-2000), a period marked by corruption but also by a fight against guerrillas and terrorism. "I have reached 80 bearing the marks of the years, with all the shocks of political life, the enormous satisfactions and the profound regrets," he wrote.

Since gaining his freedom seven months ago after a pardon by then-president Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, Fujimori, an engineer and mathe-



LIMA: In this file picture Peruvian (then) President Alberto Fujimori waves during his inauguration for a third term, in Lima. —AFP

matician by training, has retired to write, to tend to his garden—a special passion—and to spend time with his four children and two granddaughters. "In the few years I have left," Fujimori explained in his handwritten text, "I will dedicate myself to three objectives: bringing my family together, improving my health to the extent possible, and striking a serene and balanced equilibrium in my life."

The few photos he or his family have posted on social networks show a tired and fragile-looking Fujimori, possibly depressed—far from the image of the powerful autocrat he projected while ruling Peru with an iron hand. —AFP

Thousands told to flee 'out of control' California wildfire

LOS ANGELES: An "out of control" California wildfire prompted officials yesterday to order thousands of residents to flee their homes as firefighters struggled to contain the blaze in a mountainous area near the city of Redding. The Carr Fire, about 150 miles north of Sacramento, had blackened about 20,000 acres yesterday, three times its last-reported size a day ago. Crews contained just 10 percent of it, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection said.

The conflagration is one of about 75 major wildfires burning in the United States in an unusually active fire season that has already scorched about 3.98 million acres, mostly in western states. That is above the 10-year average for the same period of 3.54 million acres, according to the National Interagency Fire Center. The Carr Fire is currently in a sparsely inhabited area, but Cal Fire spokesman Scott McLean warned in a phone interview that it was heading toward Redding,

a city of about 90,000 people. "If you live in West Redding start packing and be prepared!" the California Highway Patrol said on Twitter. "This fire is out of control!" The western fires were being supercharged by extreme temperatures above 100 degrees Fahrenheit, erratic winds and low humidity, factors that were expected to remain yesterday. Further south, the Cranston Fire, believed to have been started by arson, had charred 4,700 acres around 90 miles east of Los Angeles in the San Jacinto Mountains. It was just 5 percent contained, Cal Fire officials said.

That blaze had forced 3,200 people to evacuate in resort communities including Idyllwild, Mountain Center and Lake Hemet as it destroyed five structures and threatened 2,100 homes, the agency said. A suspect was arrested on Wednesday and accused of starting multiple fires including the Cranston Fire, fire officials said in a statement. A third major blaze, the almost two-week-old, 43,300-acre Ferguson Fire, forced much of Yosemite National Park to close on Wednesday, as it poured thick smoke into the valley in the Sierra Nevada Mountains some 170 miles east of San Francisco. A firefighter died and seven others have been hurt combating the blaze, which was 27 percent contained as of yesterday morning. —Reuters

International

Indian courts speed up justice for human trafficking survivors

Fighting trafficking cases in court remains challenging

CHENNAI: A series of speedy legal orders in human trafficking cases in India has raised hopes for thousands survivors facing drawn-out court battles, but experts warn that justice remains elusive for most victims. Over the past few months, courts have handed rare life sentences to traffickers, denied bail to another person facing charges, and ordered compensation to be paid to a victim even though her trial was still ongoing.

In a country where trafficking cases are often stalled - if they make it to court at all - some see those legal decisions as signs that judges are pushing for reform. "The judiciary is paving the way for a better shot at justice for survivors," said Saji Philip of the anti-trafficking charity International Justice Mission. "Recent judgments have set precedents, emphasizing the need to strengthen investigation, denying traffickers easy bail and awarding compensation to survivors," he said.

Investigations, prosecutions and convictions for human trafficking are low in India. Less than half of the more than 8,000 human trafficking cases reported in 2016 were filed in court by the police, and the conviction rate in those that did go to trial was 28 percent, according to government data. Campaigners said the reported cases represent only a small fraction of incidents of

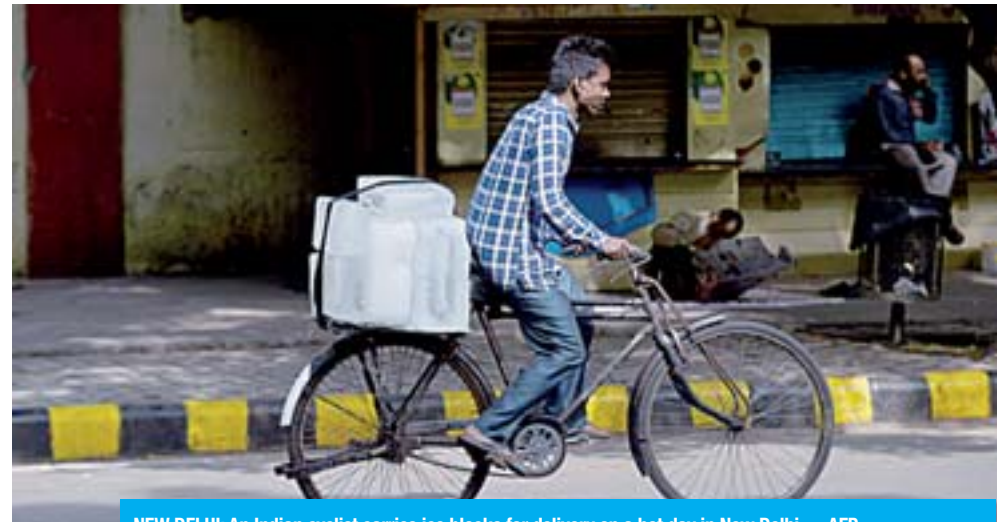
trafficking throughout the country. Likewise, the recent court judgments should be kept in perspective, said Sarfaraz Ahmed Khan, author of *Sex Trafficking and the Law*. "These verdicts give us confidence but they are 0.1 percent of the total cases," he said.

Rule of law

This month, judges Ravi Krishan Kapur and Joymalya Bagchi of the Calcutta High Court, in West Bengal state, cancelled the bail of a hotel owner who said she was unaware of trafficked girls and women being sexually exploited on the premises. In their order, the judges acknowledged that the "menace of trafficking of women and minors had assumed alarming proportions," and excoriated police for

failing to take action. "We note with grave concern the lackadaisical manner in which offences involving commercial sexual exploitation of women and children like the present one are investigated (and) prosecuted," Kapur and Bagchi wrote. They added that police must alert anti-trafficking units within 24 hours of cases being reported. In March, two brothel owners were jailed for life for the trafficking, rape and sexual abuse of children in Gaya in the eastern state of Bihar - a rare sentence in

“ A better shot at justice for survivors ”



NEW DELHI: An Indian cyclist carries ice blocks for delivery on a hot day in New Delhi. —AFP

such cases. In another case this month, the Calcutta High Court said it would be "gross inhumanity" to delay compensation for a trafficking survivor, and ordered state authorities to pay up within 10 days even though her trial was not over. The court's motto now is that this "illegal business should be stopped", said Prodipto Ganguly, a public prosecutor in West Bengal, which record the most cases of human trafficking of any Indian state, according to government data.

He applauded recent "landmark" judgments,

but warned that fighting trafficking cases in court remains challenging. "The accused often get bail easily, victims are threatened and forced to change their testimonies and this makes getting a conviction difficult," Ganguly said by phone. Khan, the author of *Sex Trafficking and the Law*, noted that victims who recently received justice were backed by advocacy groups. "In all other cases, the victim is an outsider in the judicial process, unaware and often re-victimized, he said.—Reuters

Suicide attack on Afghan intelligence convoy kills five

KABUL: A suicide bomber blew himself up near an Afghan intelligence convoy yesterday, killing at least five people and wounding six, police said, in the latest deadly attack in the city. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack on the National Directorate of Security (NDS), which police spokesman Hashmat Stanikzai said happened at 5:00 am. Most of the victims were NDS officers, Stanikzai said.

Four members of the NDS and a civilian were killed, while five NDS personnel and a civilian were wounded. The attacker was "most likely" driving a vehicle carrying explosives, Stanikzai added. The assault comes two days after five rockets were fired on a residential area of Kabul, wounding at least three people. There was no claim of responsibility.

And on Sunday, a suicide bomber blew himself up near Kabul international airport, killing at least 23 people, including AFP driver Mohammad Akhtar. A further 107 people were wounded. That attack was claimed by the Islamic State group (IS), which said it had targeted Afghan Vice President Abdul Rashid Dostum, who returned to Kabul after more than a year in exile. Taliban and IS militants have repeatedly carried out deadly attacks in the Afghan capital, turning it into one of the most dangerous places in the country.—AFP

Indian police detain 450 after violent minority protests

MUMBAI: Almost 450 people were in custody in the Indian state of Maharashtra yesterday after clashes between thousands of protesters from the Maratha minority and police charging with batons and firing tear gas, officials said. Like other communities in India the Marathas, who make up around 30 percent of the western state's 110 million people, want quotas or "reservations" to ensure they get jobs in the government and education.

"We have detained 447 people for their involvement in arson and stone-pelting and action will be taken against them," Deepak Deoraj, a spokesperson for Mumbai police, said a day after the clashes on Wednesday. The protests, which began on Monday in the city of Thane and spread across the state, saw demonstrators set cars and buses on fire, throw stones at trains and block railways and two major roads.

More than 30,000 police were deployed, in places using tear gas and baton charges to disperse the crowds. Three officers were injured, police said, as well as an unknown number of demonstrators. The protests were sparked when a Maratha community activist jumped to his death from a bridge. Another activist killed himself with poison on Wednesday, while a police officer died in clashes on Tuesday.

However more demonstrations were called off by Maratha groups late on Wednesday after state chief minister Devendra Fadnavis called for talks with the community. "We are monitoring the situation to prevent further violent incidents and have detained 20



MUMBAI: Indian members of the Maratha community in the state of Maharashtra ride on their bikes during a protest in Mumbai. —AFP

people in the Thane region," Sukhada Narkar, a spokesperson for Thane police, said. The Marathas have for years been pressing for more state jobs. A rally by hundreds of thousands paralyzed Mumbai last year. One bid to give them more jobs was cancelled by an Indian court in 2014.

Maharashtra is an important agricultural state but in recent years poor rains have led to crop failures. Many Marathas were among more than 2,500 farmers who committed suicide in the state in 2017, according to official figures. Jobs campaigns by groups like the Marathas and the Patidars in Gujarat state have claimed many lives in recent years. On Wednesday a court in Gujarat sentenced a firebrand Patidar leader, Hardik Patel, to two years in prison for rioting and arson during 2015 jobs protests that left 10 dead.—AFP

International

Lone suspect in blast near US embassy in Beijing caught

Woman attempted self-immolation near embassy earlier

BEIJING: A bomb exploded outside the US embassy in Beijing yesterday, wounding the lone assailant, the embassy said in a statement, although police described the weapon merely as a “firework device”. The explosion happened on the street outside southeast corner of the embassy compound. Beijing police said the suspect, a 26-year-old man from China’s Inner Mongolia region whom they identified only by the surname Jiang, had injured his hand and had been taken to hospital.

Police did not provide a motive but said in a statement via their official account on the Chinese social networking service Weibo that the suspect had a history of mental illness and was once hospitalized for treatment. The suspect was hearing voices, the statement said. China and the United States have been involved in a trade dispute initiated by Washington, with the two sides imposing tariffs on \$34 billion worth of each other’s goods. US President Donald Trump has threatened ultimately to impose punitive tariffs on all Chinese imports.

While Chinese officials and state media have been outspoken in their criticism of Washington’s trade moves, there has not been a groundswell of outrage on China’s heavily censored social media,

Eight bodies recovered after landslide at Myanmar jade mine

YANGON: Authorities in northern Myanmar recovered eight bodies yesterday after a landslide that engulfed 27 small-scale miners, an official said, the latest disaster to hit a centre of the Southeast Asian nation’s lucrative jade trade. A search was continuing for others trapped or washed

India detains mother over dead baby in plane toilet

NEW DELHI: A 19-year-old woman was detained after a dead newborn baby was found in the toilet of an Indian passenger plane, police said yesterday. Cabin crew on the domestic AirAsia flight on Wednesday found the dead foetus minutes before the plane landed in New Delhi. “A doctor from the medical team at Delhi

and no reported boycotts of US goods. Witnesses told Reuters that they heard an explosion near the embassy and felt tremors. “I’d just arrived and started to queue and then heard a loud explosion about 100 meters away,” a 19-year-old high school student who gave his name as Li told reporters. Li said the blast happened shortly after 1 pm as he queued to apply for a US visa to take an exam in Los Angeles.

A police SUV appeared to have been damaged, with its back windshield missing, and was cordoned off by police before being removed, a Reuters witness said. The embassy resumed normal operations at about 1.45 pm, it said. Crowds were still queuing outside the embassy after the explosion, and traffic was moving as normal in an area of northeastern Beijing that is home to numerous embassies including those of France, India and Israel.

Postings on social media showed pictures of smoke close to where people line up outside the compound for visa appointments. Some video clips and images were later removed. Li Shaohui, a 58-year-old sanitation worker, said he felt the ground shake and that some people screamed. “I thought first there was a big car crash,” Li told Reuters, adding

away when muddy earth slid from a cliff on Monday, but authorities were not expecting to find any of the miners alive, said fire brigade official Aye Thein, who was leading the search in the jade mining region of Hpakant in Kachin state.

Aye Thein said the bodies of eight people had been recovered from water near the site of Monday’s landslide, while others would need to be dug out of the rubble with excavators brought to the site on Tuesday. The recovered bodies are “badly deformed. They are already rotten,” he said. “Others are still buried under the soil.” Kyaw Swar Aung, administrator of Hpakant, said six of the bodies had already been collected by family members. —Reuters

International Airport confirmed that the baby had been delivered on board,” an airline statement said.

AirAsia said that all female passengers were questioned before the suspect was identified and detained. “A 19-year-old acknowledged that she had delivered the baby and was taken to the hospital for medical attention and examination,” police official Sanjay Bhatia said. “She has only told us that she is a sportsperson but refused medical examination or (to give) any more details about the incident,” he added. Investigators are now trying to contact the teenager’s family to get more details. The mother faces a fine and up to two years in jail. —AFP



BEIJING: Security officials work at the scene of a blast outside the US embassy in Beijing following a blast near the embassy premises.—AFP

that the smoke had cleared quickly.

There was no damage to US embassy property, the embassy said. Staff members at the Indian and South Korean embassies said they were unaware of any unusual incident and were working as normal. The state-run Global Times reported separately, citing witnesses, that police took away a woman who sprayed herself with gasoline in a suspected self-immolation attempt outside the embassy at around 11 am. It was not clear whether this woman’s actions were related

to the later explosion, the paper said.

A witness who did not want to be identified told Reuters that he saw a middle-aged woman with two buckets of gasoline. On her back were the Chinese characters for “sue them”. Beijing police and the US embassy did not immediately reply to a request for comment on the woman. Security in the Chinese capital is tight and protests are often quickly disbanded. Violent crime rates are low in China, according to official statistics.—Reuters

Japan hopes basic toilet can save lives

TOKYO: Japan may be famous for high-tech toilets, but one local firm is hoping a much more basic model can help solve deadly sanitation problems in developing countries. More than two billion people around the world do not have access to basic sanitation facilities, and children are especially susceptible to diseases that can spread without hygienic toilets. Household products firm Lixil has developed a latrine that sells for just a few dollars and features a self-sealing trapdoor to keep out disease-spreading insects and seal in unpleasant odors.

Now it is forming an unusual partnership with the UN’s children’s agency UNICEF, which will help promote the company’s SATO toilet in the hope of saving lives in developing countries. Andres Franco, UNICEF’s deputy director for private sector engagement, said Thursday the

partnership would capitalize on Lixil’s “business, their technology, their knowledge, their innovation.” Under the partnership, UNICEF will promote the SATO toilets in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania, Lixil president Kinya Seto said, with the aim of helping 250 million people gain access to an adequate toilet by 2021.

About 2.3 billion people worldwide do not have access to basic sanitation facilities, including 892 million people who have no choice but to defecate in the open, according to UNICEF. “This takes away people’s dignity, it renders them vulnerable to life-threatening diseases,” UNICEF deputy executive director Shanelle Hall said Thursday at a joint press conference with Lixil. “In fact, each and every day, dirty water, poor sanitation and poor hygiene results in the death of around 800 children under the age of five.

Lixil has already sold around 1.8 million SATO toilets in 15 countries since releasing the product in 2013. But Seto said it hoped to expand further and capitalise on UNICEF, “which has credibility and a network around the globe that we don’t have,... to give children access to toilets.”—AFP

International

Japan executes sarin attack cult members on death row

Kamikawa says inappropriate to abolish death penalty

TOKYO: Japan yesterday executed the last members of the cult sentenced to death for their role in the fatal 1995 sarin attack on the Tokyo subway, weeks after the group's leader was hanged. The execution of the six Aum Shinrikyo members, years after they were put on death row, draws a line under the horrific attack which shocked the world and prompted national soul-searching over the group and its crimes.

"Today the state executed six people," Justice Minister Yoko Kamikawa said at a press conference. "I ordered the executions after extremely careful consideration." In all, 13 Aum members, including the cult's near-blind leader Shoko Asahara, were on death row for crimes including the 1995 sarin attack on Tokyo's subway. Local media said authorities wanted the death sentences against the Aum members to be carried out before Japan's emperor abdicates next year, when a new imperial era will begin.

Since the Aum's crimes were committed during the Heisei era of the current emperor, authorities wanted the executions complete before the new era begins, local media reported. Some of the Aum's victims said it would be hard to simply move on. "With the 13 members executed, perhaps the case is closed from the point of view of criminal justice," Shizue Takahashi, whose husband was killed in the subway attack, told reporters. "(But) the damage done to the victims

continues even after the executions. I find it very hard." The Aum gained international infamy with the 1995 sarin attack on the Tokyo subway during rush hour, which killed 13 people and injured thousands more. Members of the group released the chemical in liquid form at five points throughout the subway network, and soon commuters began struggling to breathe, staggering from trains with their eyes watering. Others keeled over, foaming at the mouth, with blood streaming from their noses.

The attack plunged the capital into chaos, and prompted a crackdown on the cult's headquarters in the foothills of Mount Fuji, where authorities discovered a plant capable of producing enough sarin to kill millions. Aum members, including those executed this month, were also convicted of crimes including an additional sarin attack in the town of Matsumoto the year before the Tokyo attack, and the murder of an anti-cult lawyer and his family. Many of the group's members remain in prison.

Heinous crimes

The 13 cult members spent years on death row as prosecutors investigated their crimes, and some activists opposed the executions, fearing the members would be elevated to the status of martyrs. But victims of the group's attacks welcomed the execution of Asahara and six

other Aum members earlier this month. One man who was injured in the subway sarin attack told AFP he felt "the world had become slightly brighter".

Japan is one of the few developed nations to retain the death penalty, and public support for it remains high despite international criticism, including from rights group Amnesty International. "The taking of a life in retribution is never the answer," the group's East Asia researcher Hiroka Shoji said in a statement yesterday.

But Kamikawa said it was "not appropriate under the current circumstances to abolish the death penalty." "I think we can't avoid capital punishment for those who have committed extremely heinous crimes," she said. Asahara developed his cult in the 1980s, and at one point the wild-haired "guru" had at least 10,000 followers, including the doctors and engineers who produced the group's chemical agents. Despite the crackdown on the Aum, it was never formally banned.

It officially disowned Asahara in 2000 and renamed itself Aleph, but experts say the former guru retained a strong influence before his execution. Asahara's execution set off a battle among his surviving family members for his remains, with his wife and several children who are in successor cults to the Aum seeking to obtain them. —AFP



TOKYO: Japanese Justice Minister Yoko Kamikawa speaks about execution of six members of the Aum Supreme Truth doomsday cult, at the justice ministry in Tokyo.—AFP

Investigator of Cambodian genocide wins Asia's Nobel

MANILA: A Cambodian who has devoted his life to documenting the killing of almost two million of his countrymen in the 1970s was named yesterday among the winners of this year's Magsaysay Awards, widely regarded as Asia's version of the Nobel prize. Youk Chhang, 57, was given the award for his role as head for more than two decades of the Documentation Center of Cambodia, an institute that investigates atrocities committed under the Khmer Rouge.

The Khmer Rouge was a murderous, ultra-Maoist organization that killed one quarter of Cambodia's population from 1975 to 1979. Youk's organization aims to help victims of the brutal regime come to terms with their ordeal while ensuring that future generations do not forget the events. Youk, who experienced torture and saw the death of

many family members at the hands of the Khmer Rouge, said he undertook the work for his mother, who also suffered extensively during the genocide.

"I want her to be a free woman, not to carry all the tragedy in her heart and in her life," he was quoted as saying. The Manila-based Ramon Magsaysay Award, named after a Filipino president killed in a plane crash, was established in 1957 to honor people and groups tackling development problems. Two Indian nationals were separately honored this year: Sonam Wangchuk, 51, who promotes alternative education systems in his home Himalayan region Ladakh; and Bharat Watwani, 60, a psychiatrist who started a foundation to rescue people living on the streets with mental health problems.

Polio victim Vo Thi Hoang Yen, 52, was awarded for her work in assisting the disabled in Vietnam, while 56-year-old Maria De Lourdes Martins Cruz received an award for founding an institute to help the poor in her native East Timor, the organizers said. Another awardee, Howard Dee, 87, was once head of a major Philippine drug company but gave up his career to help the poor including through peace efforts with local communist guerrillas and Muslim separatists.—AFP

Philippine anti-graft chief and Duterte critic retires

MANILA: The Philippines' top anti-corruption prosecutor, one of the few remaining critics of President Rodrigo Duterte in government, retired yesterday, replaced by a loyalist of the leader. Ombudsman Conchita Carpio-Morales, 77, finished a seven-year term during which she earned Duterte's ire for criticizing his brutal drug war and for her office's investigation into his alleged secret bank accounts. She was replaced by Supreme Court justice Samuel Martires, Duterte announced yesterday, describing the new ombudsman as a "bright and... fair man".

Martires was appointed to the Supreme Court by Duterte last year and has previously voted in support of the president's controversial policies. Duterte, who accused Morales of "selective justice" and conspiring with opposition figures to oust him, last year threatened to have the retired Supreme Court justice impeached while launching tirades against her. But a defiant Morales dismissed Duterte's allegations as "fake news", saying that his threats never intimidated her from doing her job.

"I know I am right in my own work so why should I be scared," Morales told AFP days before her retirement. "As long as we have strong institutions, we don't need strong people to run the government", she added, emphasizing the importance of independent bodies like her office. Duterte, 73, has launched an unprecedented crackdown on drugs that has left thousands



Conchita Carpio-Morales

Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno who was ousted in May. Opposition leaders have said these moves against these figures—along with attempts to discredit the country's main rights agency—are part of Duterte's scorched-earth tactics to silence critics and weaken democratic institutions.

Morales, who was appointed by Duterte's predecessor, Benigno Aquino, in 2011 to head the anti-graft watchdog, angered the president when she criticized his pronouncements on killings last year. Their spat intensified last January when Morales defied Duterte's order to suspend her deputy for allegedly leaking his bank records, saying the president's directive violated the constitution. Her agency was then investigating allegations that Duterte failed to disclose 211 million pesos in secret bank accounts when he was a presidential candidate.

The ombudsman said in February it had terminated the probe after the central bank's Anti-Money Laundering Council refused to cooperate. "Ombudsman Morales is a significant voice, a strong woman and a person with integrity," Gladstone Cuarteros, assistant professor of political science at the De La Salle University in Manila, said. "With her retirement, another critical voice is softened but not silenced." —AFP

dead, sparking criticism from rights groups who say he may be orchestrating a crime against humanity. The Filipino leader has lashed out at critics, including Senator Leila de Lima-jailed over drug charges she says were fabricated—and former Supreme Court Chief

Lifestyle

Friday Times

FRIDAY, JULY 27, 2018

www.kuwaittimes.net



Spanish artists From the band 'El Embruio de Marbella' perform a Spanish flamenco dance at the national stage in Baghdad. — AFP

Final 'Game of Thrones' season to air in first half of 2019

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Thousands cheer swimming ponies in Chincoteague, Virginia



Ponies arrive on shore during the annual Pony Swim in Chincoteague. — AP photos



Spectators watch as ponies graze after swimming across the Assateague Channel in Chincoteague.

Thousands of people cheered on dozens of ponies during the annual Chincoteague Pony Swim on Virginia's Eastern Shore. News outlets report that the ponies swam Wednesday morning across the Assateague Channel. Crowds of people greeted them from the other side of a fence on the shore. Others watched from kayaks and boats.

The ponies traveled from Assateague Island to Chincoteague Island during "slack tide," when there's little current. Every year, the first foal to come ashore is named King or Queen Neptune. Some of the ponies will be auctioned off. Others will head back into the wild. The Pony Swim is in its 93rd year. — AP



Saltwater Cowboys corral the herd of ponies toward the parade route after the Pony Swim in Chincoteague.

US marshals task force arrests suspect in rapper's slaying

The third of four suspects in the shooting death of an emerging South Florida rap star XXXTentacion has been arrested in rural Georgia. The US Marshals Southeast Regional Fugitive Task Force arrested Robert Allen, 22, of Fort Lauderdale on Wednesday. He was booked into jail in Dodge County, Georgia, and is being held on a warrant from Broward County, Florida.

Allen and three other men are accused of killing XXXTenta-

cion (ex-ex-ex-ten-ta-see-YAWN) in June. The 20-year-old rap star, whose real name was Jahseh Onfroy, was fatally shot as he left a motorcycle dealership. Officials said a struggle ensued when two masked gunmen approached the rapper's sports car and XXXTentacion was shot multiple times. The gunmen fled with a Louis Vitton bag containing \$50,000.

Last week, a grand jury indicted Allen along with three others - Dedrick Williams, 22; Michael Boatwright, 22 and Trayvon

Newsome, 20 - with first-degree murder and armed robbery charges. Williams and Boatwright are in custody while Newsome remains at large. Deputy US Marshal John Edgar tells the Miami Herald they received information that Allen was possibly staying with his sister in Eastman, Georgia. Officers did surveillance on the sister's house and she was cooperative when the officers came looking for Allen, Edgar told the Herald. An attorney for Allen isn't listed on jail records. — AP

Final 'Game of Thrones' season to air in first half of 2019



HB.O will debut the final season of its international hit "Game of Thrones" in the first half of next year and it aims to start production on a prequel in 2019, a network executive said on Wednesday. Casey Bloys, HBO's president of programming, speaking at a Television Critics Association event, declined to provide details on the eighth and final "Game of Thrones" season or to provide a more specific premiere date.

The Emmy-winning medieval fantasy series is HBO's biggest hit ever with some 30 million viewers in the United States and an army of devoted fans worldwide. HBO, a unit of AT&T Inc, also is in the process of searching for a director and cast for a "Game of Thrones" prequel, Bloys said in response to questions. He said he hopes the prequel pilot will begin filming next year. The network announced in June that it had ordered the pilot and would proceed with a full series if the pilot goes well.

The as yet untitled prequel will take place thousands of years before the events of "Game of Thrones." It was created by British screenwriter Jane Goldman with author George R.R. Martin, whose novel series "A Song of Ice and Fire" is the basis for the "Game of Thrones" television series. It will chronicle "the world's descent from the golden Age of Heroes into its darkest hour," and look at the secrets of the history of the warring families in the fictional kingdom of Westeros, the network has said. HBO considered five different scripts before settling on the approach for the prequel. "The reason we did multiple scripts is out of five, we'd be lucky to get one we are very excited about," Bloys said. — Reuters

Beverly Knight to sing with the New Power Generation

Beverly Knight is to join the New Power Generation for the band's London show. The R&B star has been announced as the special guest for the group's concert at the Indigo at The O2 on August 2, which will see them play a set of Prince's music in honor of the late pop legend. It was 11 years ago when Beverly joined Prince on stage when he played an after-show gig at the venue following one of his concerts at



The O2 as part of his '21 Nights in London' residency, and NPG leader Morris Hayes can't wait to be reunited with the 'Shoulda Woulda Coulda' hitmaker. And Morris has teased that Beverly will not be the only special guest on the night.

He exclusively told BANG Showbiz: "Beverly Knight was a longtime friend of Prince, so it's going to be awesome to play with her. She's such a wonderful singer. "We hope to definitely get a few more names down to

the show too, we're just waiting to hear on people's schedules. We'll definitely be inviting a few friends down to the concert who we hope to get on stage." Morris played with Prince during that acclaimed residency and at the after-show concerts and, for him, the night when Amy Winehouse duetted with the 'Purple Rain' singer was one of the greatest moments he's ever experienced on stage. — Bang Showbiz

Arctic Monkeys lead nominations for Mercury Prize

Arctic Monkeys became the joint second most-nominated act in the Mercury Prize's history as the prestigious British album award announced its 2018 shortlist. The band, nominated for its sixth record "Tranquility Base Hotel and Casino", are joined by Florence and The Machine and Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds in the lineup of 12 shortlisted albums. Indie rockers Everything Everything and London ensemble Wolf Alice were both shortlisted for the second time, while first-time nominees included singers Lily Allen and King Krule.

A pair of debut albums also featured: "Novelist Guy" by grime act Novelist and "Lost and Found" by R and B artist Jorja Smith. "This year... celebrates albums by musicians at all stages of their careers, but with a shared belief in the importance of music for navigating life's challenges—whether personal or political, falling in or out of love, growing up or looking back, angry or ecstatic," the jury said. "The music here is funny and inspiring, smart and moving," it added, in a statement unveiling the finalists.

Arctic Monkeys received their fourth-ever nomination for the prize after the Sheffield band's latest album became its sixth consecutive British number one record in May. It was the fastest selling vinyl record of the last 25 years. The group won the award in 2006 with their ac-



claimed debut "Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not". Only Radiohead have received more career nominations with five. P. J. Harvey, the only artist ever to have won the award twice, also has four career nominations.

Gallagher shortlisted

Florence and The Machine scored their third Mercury shortlisting with "High as Hope", while former Oasis guitarist Gallagher's High Flying Birds project was nominated for "Who Built the Moon?" Lily Allen greeted her nomination for "No Shame" by writing on Twitter she was "so happy" and "on cloud nine". First-timer Smith also took to the social media plat-

form to celebrate her inclusion. "Wow! Honored to be short listed for this year's Mercury Prize. Thank you to everyone who has supported me on this journey!" she wrote.

Sons of Kemet bagged the shortlist's usual spot for a jazz act, while compilation album "Everything Is Recorded", put together by producer Richard Russell, was also nominated. Featured artists on the record include London singer Sampha, who won last year's Mercury Prize. English singer-songwriter Nadine Shah also landed on the shortlist for the first time for "Holiday Destination". The prize will be awarded on September 20 at the Hammer-smith Apollo theatre in London.—AFP

Lily Allen wants more 'support' from record label

Lily Allen is hoping her record label will give her more "support" after being shortlisted for the 2018 Hyundai Mercury Prize. The 'Trigger Bang' hitmaker's fourth studio LP 'No Shame' is one of 12 records released in the past year to be selected for the prestigious accolade, and Lily hopes the nod will give her more credibility and creative freedom. Speaking on the red carpet at the shortlist reveal at London's Langham Hotel yesterday she said: "I wish I had more support from the record label, bigger video budgets."

The 33-year-old singer was finding it hard to hold back the tears as she admitted she was "overwhelmed" that her most personal record made the list. The 'Smile' hitmaker says adding a Mercury Prize to her three Ivor Novello Awards - Including Songwriter of the Year from 2010 - would be a "big" deal. She said: "I'm not sad, I'm happy. "This award for me and the Ivor Novello Awards are the big ones for me." Lily's comments about her record label com after the 'Hard Out Here' hitmaker said she doesn't make a lot of money from her career.

Speaking last month, she said: "It's really hard to make money out of music these days, people don't buy albums and I don't make any money from streaming, because of my contract, which I signed in 2005." And Lily feels her outspoken views have prevented her from being regarded as a "bankable brand" by music executives.

She said: "With all the negative attention I get from things beyond my control, I ask myself quite often, 'What am I doing this for?' "I'm past becoming a bankable brand as I'm not safe, so this is what I do and if I'm not going to make millions of pounds out of it then I might as well be doing it for the right reasons." Lily goes up against the likes of Noel Gallagher's solo LP



'Who Built The Moon?', Arctic Monkeys' sixth album 'Tranquility Base Hotel and Casino' and Florence + the Machine's 'High as Hope' for the prestigious accolade. The winner will be announced at the ceremony at London's Eventim Apollo, Hammer-smith, on September 20. —BangShowbiz

TRUMP'S HOLLYWOOD WALK OF FAME STAR VANDALIZED



File photo shows Donald Trump's star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame that was vandalized Wednesday in Los Angeles. — AP photos

President Donald Trump's star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame was destroyed before dawn Wednesday, and a man was later arrested. Austin Clay, 24, was held for investigation of felony vandalism, the Los Angeles Police Department said. The vandalism was reported around 3:30 a.m. A pickaxe was found at the scene on Hollywood Boulevard.

"When people are unhappy with one of our honorees, we would hope that they would project their anger in more positive ways than to vandalize a California State landmark," Leron Gubler, president of the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, said in a statement. The star, which recognizes Trump for his work on the reality show "The Apprentice," will be covered for several days as the Hollywood Historic Trust repairs it.

The star was previously vandalized by James Otis with a sledgehammer and pickaxe days before the November 2016 election. Otis, who pleaded no contest to the felony, was sentenced to three years of probation for vandalism and was ordered to pay \$4,400 for the damage and attorney's fees and perform 20 days of community labor in 2017. — AP



Gregg Donovan stands near the vandalized star of Donald Trump on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Japan's declutter queen Marie Kondo expands her empire

People often ask Japanese tidying queen Marie Kondo what containers they need to achieve her brand of organizational success. They expect her to "reveal some hitherto secret storage weapon," she explains in her popular book. Instead, she advised when "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up" was first published in Japanese in 2011. "You can solve your storage problems with things you already have in the house." But Kondo's thinking has evolved as she's leveraged her massive, global fan base to expand her empire. She's now got an upcoming Netflix show, a fledgling corps of consultants working around the world to help her fans declutter their homes, and, on Tuesday, she's launched her first product line: six-piece sets of beautiful, sturdy paper boxes for \$89 a pop.

In a recent appearance in Manhattan to announce the show and merchandise line, Kondo said she thinks lovely storage options will spark the life-changing joy she wrote about in her book, which has sold more than 10 million copies in 40-plus countries. She also hopes the boxes will motivate more people to actually complete all the steps in her laborious KonMari Method of sorting, tossing and putting things away in their right and righteous locations. The new storage sets are the shape and size of shoe boxes. (Her book had recommended using real shoe boxes for organizing.) Smaller boxes in the set are akin to iPhone boxes (another reuse hack she recommends). All are intended to be of service on shelves or in drawers (the sets are called Hikidashi, which means "drawer" in Japanese) to hold such things as sunglasses, handbags, papers, socks, undergarments and T-shirts, the latter three lovingly folded in the flat, KonMari-sanctioned way so they stand upright.

Influential people

"I'm probably the only person in the world who makes such an official occasion to introduce empty boxes," the soft-spoken mother of two recently told a small gathering of journalists through a translator as she unveiled the containers. "These are meant to enhance your experience of the KonMari Method." The boxes will also enhance her bottom line. Since Kondo unleashed the best-selling "Life-Changing Magic," including an English translation in 2014, she's published three other books, earned a spot on Time magazine's 2015 list of 100 most influential people and given birth to two girls, now 3 and nearly 2. She has given

birth to a new business as well: consultants certified by her and sent forth into homes in 23 countries, from Europe and the Americas to Australia and the Middle East.

As for her new show, Netflix ordered an initial eight episodes of her series of home consultations but will say little else on the record. For now, it's all about the boxes, in pale pink, soft gray, taupe and purple watercolor designs. The sets are dubbed Wonder, Harmony, Clarity and Balance. Customers ordering the containers, for delivery in mid-September from her website, konmari.com, will receive a series of emails and other help online



Japanese organizational expert Marie Kondo introduces her new line of storage boxes during a media event in New York.

to guide them through the tidying process. Perhaps more importantly, she hopes to connect devotees to one another online via her take on social networking. "I often hear that it is very difficult to sustain your motivation to tidy when you're doing it all by yourself, so I very much feel that having this community is very important," Kondo said.

She has adorned just the interiors of the boxes. One set has a purple tree branch with white buds inside. Others are done in abstract swirls. The idea, Kondo said, is to "make the things that you store inside happy," rather than merely hide belongings away.



Japanese organizational expert Marie Kondo folds an item of clothing as she introduces her new line of storage boxes during a media event in New York.

Their plain exterior design also makes the boxes easier to blend with just about any decor. Two additional sets of boxes in smaller sizes and different color schemes are planned for the holiday season later this year.

Kondo, who is based in Tokyo, told The Associated Press in an interview after the crowd cleared out that she's not done writing books quite yet. Her next one will focus on workplace organizing. She is traveling less now and no longer does regular home consultations, a business she began building as a 19-year-old college student studying sociology. Working one-on-one again in homes for Netflix was a highlight of Kondo's year. "It was a very exciting, very enjoyable experience for me," she said. "I've been engaged so much in giving lectures, doing media appearances and so on."

She has also been engaged in motherhood, not a small thing when your passion since age 5 has been tidying. The unflappable Kondo still lives a tidy life, of course, but young kids have been a challenge. "I try to teach them how to fold clothes. Children are very close observers so I try to make it so they can watch me folding clothes," Kondo said. "From time to time I do feel anxious. It's not 100 percent. It's not perfect." — AP



The undated photo provided by Semihandmade shows a kitchen designed by Samantha Gluck. — AP photos



The undated photo provided by IKEA shows an IKEA designed kitchen.

So you want a new kitchen? Tips for starting the process

So you want a new kitchen? Whether you're considering designing a kitchen using your own architect, a kitchen planner hired through a store like IKEA or Home Depot, or an online planning service, professionals suggest keeping a few things in mind.

Plan ahead, plan way ahead

"Many people start planning their kitchen a year ahead of time, and that's about right," says John Allen, a services planner at IKEA in the United States. "The more you've worked out what you want ahead of time, the more smoothly things will go once you start working with a kitchen planner." Be as specific as you can about what you like and how much you can spend.

"If you already know exactly which appliances you want, and what kind of sink, that helps a lot," Allen says. Changing a fridge or range halfway through the planning can throw everything off, since even an inch or two difference in appliance dimensions could mean rethinking all the cabinets.



The undated photo provided by IKEA shows IKEA cabinets being assembled.

Make your kitchen work for you

Do you have kids? Are you right-handed or left-handed? Will more than one person be cooking at the same time? The answers to questions like these affect the placement of microwave, dishwasher, sink, cabinet, kitchen island and more. "If you're 5 feet tall, 40-inch cabinets may not be ideal for you," Allen says. And just because you're going with one company for kitchen planning and cabinet boxes doesn't mean you can't use another for cabinet and drawer fronts, decorative drawer pulls and more.

For example, Semihandmade, a Los Angeles company, makes cabinets, drawer fronts and accessories specifically made to fit IKEA cabinet boxes. Company founder John McDonald says he can offer more upscale veneers "and can manage a lot of customization work that Ikea can't do, like special door sizes, doors for appliance fronts, and custom bookcases to match cabinetry."

Consider resale value, especially with floors and countertops

Even if going with a laminate countertop seems tempting and more affordable in the short term, consider the impact your choices will make on the eventual resale value of your home. "People move a lot these days, and countertops and flooring always come up in home ads," Allen says.

Measure, and measure again

"There's a saying that goes 'measure twice, cut once.' Well for kitchens, I'd say measure three times," Allen warns. "No matter how new or old your house is, chances are things aren't quite even. And you'll need to measure outlets and vents and window frames as well." There's more involved than meets the eye, and it often pays to hire a professional to measure the room.

"The foundation of everything you do is getting accurate and comprehensive measurements up front," says Rachel Getz, associate merchant in countertops at Home Depot. For between \$99 and \$129, Home Depot will send a service provider to measure the kitchen and design the project. IKEA will have your site professionally measured and designed for a refundable \$199. "No matter who's doing your kitchen, it's worth it to invest a few hundred dollars up front to get things properly measured," says McDonald.

Know when to cut corners and when to leave it to the pros. "When clients propose installing their own kitchen, I like to ask them if they installed their own water heater or did their own roofing," says Allen. "If the answer is yes, they can probably manage it. If not, they may want to reconsider." To save money, he suggests, homeowners might do the disassembly and painting themselves, leaving the installation to the pros.

Be realistic about time frame

Dismantling and preparing the kitchen and flooring ahead of installation will take time. Contractors often take longer than expected, and plumbers and electricians aren't always available on the day you'll need them. And even with perfect turnaround time, custom countertops will take at least two weeks, the experts say, and can't be templated until the cabinets have been installed.

Have an alternative space set up with a microwave, tabletop and small fridge; you'll need a place to prepare food while your dream kitchen is in the works. "It's important to remember that you're likely to encounter roadblocks that may extend the timeline," says Stephanie Sisco, home editor at Real Simple magazine. "Whether it's a surprise that's uncovered when a wall is opened up or a change is made to the design plan, it can delay your renovation's progress. So give yourself some wiggle room and don't plan a party for the day you think it's going to be completed." — AP

11-year-old girl catches piranha relative in Oklahoma lake

An 11-year-old girl has quite the fish tale: A rare pacu with human-like teeth chomped down on the worm at the end of her line while she was fishing with her grandparents and brother in an Oklahoma lake. But Kennedy Smith isn't exaggerating when she describes her catch. Caddo County Game Warden Tyler Howser confirms that the fish was a pacu, a relative of the piranha that is native to South America and can grow up to 50 pounds (22 kilograms).

Kennedy's fish weighed about 1 pound (half a kilogram), according to Howser and Kennedy's grandmother Sandra Whaley. Kennedy says she initially was "really excited" to have caught a fish Sunday in Fort Cobb Lake, about 55 miles (89 kilometers) southwest of Oklahoma City. She was shocked when the fish bit her grandmother, as Whaley removed the hook from its mouth.

"I was confused because I knew that fish with teeth are not normal. It was weird. They were human-like and that made it even weirder," Kennedy told The Associated Press yesterday. Whaley said she suffered no ill-effects from the bite. Howser said the fish was likely purchased as a pet and was released into the lake when it grew too large for the aquarium of the family that owned it. Pacu are considered an invasive species that can destroy the native Oklahoma fish ecosystem and habitat, so the fish Kennedy caught was taken by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and destroyed. Howser said he recognized the species immediately. "I've actually caught one myself," Howser said. "As soon as I saw (it) I said 'I know what that is.'"—AP



Photo shows the teeth of a native South American fish known as a pacu. — AP photos



Photo provided by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Services, Kennedy Smith, of Lindsay, Okla., holds a pacu, a native South American fish she caught in a southwestern Oklahoma lake in Caddo County, Okla.

Lifestyle | Feature



A former member of Barrio 18 gang, crochets a hat during a workshop at the prison of San Francisco Gotera, 161 km east of San Salvador. — AFP photos



Former gang members attend a crafts and modeling class.



Former gang members attend a paper crafts workshop.



Former gang members weave a hammock.



Former gang members attend a crochet weaving workshop.

Knitting and painting

for El Salvador's imprisoned ex-gang members

The hands knitting so deftly are covered in tattoos, and nearby another man delicately puts the final touches to a painting of Elsa, the character from Disney's animation "Frozen." That's the scene in a prison in El Salvador where former members of the country's ultra-violent gangs are being kept after renouncing their previous life and readying to re-enter society. It's a path to rehabilitation for people US President Donald Trump has called "animals" as he has sought to conflate the gangs in Central America with broader immigration from the region.

El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala are some of the most dangerous countries in the world, and are collectively known as Central America's "Northern Triangle." Together, they form the biggest zone for undocumented migration to the United States as citizens flee insecurity, corruption and poverty. The two main gangs in the Northern Triangle are MS-13 and Barrio 18, criminal outfits started on the streets of Los Angeles, California in the 1980s and brought back to the Northern Triangle as Central Americans were deported back to their homelands. In El Salvador, these gangs—locally called "maras"—drive a national homicide rate



A former gang member holds a Bible at the prison of San Francisco Gotera.



Former gang members weave a hammock at the prison of San Francisco Gotera.

Lifestyle | Feature



A former gang member crochets during a workshop.



Former gang members weave a hammock.



Former gang members attend a paper crafts workshop.



A former gang member crochets during a workshop.



Former gang members gather to share a moment of reflection after participating in different sport activities.

that is the highest in the world outside of a war zone. There are an estimated 70,000 gang members in the country.

Leaving the gangs is dangerous. But those sitting in the San Francisco Gotera penitentiary east of the capital San Salvador are willing to take the risk. The program they are in is run by an evangelical church. "We regret so much belonging to the gang and spending all that time stacking up so many problems," one of the convicts, Moises Linares, 30, told AFP. He has a big "18" tattooed onto his forehead, signaling his past fealty. He has already served 12 years behind bars for extortion.

'We regret so much belonging to the gang and spending all that time stacking up so many problems'

Over capacity

A couple of years ago, Linares was counted among the most violent prisoners being held. Now, he is training others in bread-making skills he learned from his grandmother when he was 13. The prison they are in holds 1,585 inmates, nearly five times the capacity it was designed for. Most are there for serious crimes such as murder, extortion and belonging to criminal organizations. In August 2016, the authorities running the penitentiary began sifting out inmates who wanted to leave their gang and take part in the "I Change" rehabilitation program, explained El Salvador's prison services director, Marco Tulio Lima.

The rules of the program are tough, for those locked away for years: no free time, no visits, and no alcohol. "There is a change of behavior that boosts their rehabilitation," he said. "There is a

desire to completely leave behind their gang, even to the point they ask to have their tattoos removed."

The tattoos, often covering the whole body, are an obvious sign of gang membership, and a barrier to finding jobs or otherwise fitting into society after release. Getting rid of them is almost literally like shedding the skin of their previous life. "We would love to get rid of the tattoos. We don't want to have to hide them anymore," said Marvin Palacios, a 31-year-old former MS-13 member taking part in sketching and painting workshops.

He has already served 13 years for murder, and hopes to be released from prison in August. But he's worried. The "M" and "S" inked on each arm could be his death warrant once he's outside. The rival gangs don't hesitate to kill their enemy when they come across them.

Father and son, ex-foes

Inside the prison of San Francisco Gotera, though, some of that rivalry has been buried. One ex-member of MS-13, Marlon Steward Padilla, 40, who has spent 16 years locked away, found himself sharing the prison with his 24-year-old son Alexander, a Barrio-18 member convicted for murder. "I was happy. I hugged him and kissed him and told him that the time I wasn't able to give him on the streets, I'll give him here," said Marlon, who now shares his cell with his son. According to prison authorities, of the 80 inmates who have already been released after going through the rehabilitation program, only one returned to committing crime. — AFP



A former gang member sits next to the prison library.



A former gang member crochets during a workshop.

8 MOVIE CLASSICS THE OSCARS IGNORED



The Big Lebowski (1998)



Breathless (1961)

Let's take an appreciative look back at some of the greatest films in Hollywood history that didn't receive a single Oscar nomination - a list that, as you'll see, includes more than a few timeless classics.

1) The Big Lebowski (1998)

In a filmography studded with cult classics, the Coen brothers' *The Big Lebowski* might be the cultiest - which is to say that when it arrived in theaters, it landed with nowhere near the impact you might suspect today. In spite of a top-notch cast that included Jeff Bridges, John Goodman, Julianne Moore, and Philip Seymour Hoffman, as well as an eminently quotable screenplay whose storyline amiably loped between (often equally surreal) moments of comedy and drama, *Lebowski* eked out less than \$20 million during its theatrical run, and although critics were generally kind, they weren't exactly falling all over themselves to proclaim its everlasting virtues. The Coens had the last laugh in the long run, however - Oscars are nice, but how many movies have inspired their own religion?

2) Breathless (1961)

When Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless* arrived in 1960, there was no way for critics to

know they were witnessing one of the most influential works in all of cinema - as well as the arrival of one of the medium's greatest auteurs. But everyone who saw it - including more than two million French filmgoers - knew they were watching something bold and new, and among cineastes, it was recognized as part of the emerging French New Wave. How it came up empty with the Academy is up for debate, but there's no arguing its lasting impact; among directors as well as critics, *Breathless* is regularly cited on lists of the all-time greatest films.

3) Heat (1995)

One of a handful of thrillers to make such stylishly effective use of its Los Angeles locations that the city is virtually a character unto itself, Michael Mann's *Heat* might be hands down the sleekest cops-and-robbers suspense flick of the '90s - which is really saying something, considering Mann had to weave a tangled web of plotlines involving a crowded, marquee-topping ensemble that included Robert De Niro and Al Pacino. Alas, not even the combined might of two of Hollywood's greatest thespians could earn this classic heist picture any attention from the Academy. Mann's next release, 1999's *The*



Heat (1995)

Insider, made up for lost opportunities with an impressive seven nominations - none of which, sadly, it won.

4) M (1931)

The way we talk about director Fritz Lang

today, you'd think he was swimming in awards during his lifetime, but in reality, he racked up an astonishing zero Oscar nominations - and that includes shameful goose eggs for his twin towers of cinematic achievement, *Metropolis* and *M*. The latter, Lang's first talkie,



M (1931)



Mean Streets (1973)



Once Upon a Time in the West (1968)

uses sound in a number of inventive ways, including his enormously influential decision to make Grieg's "In the Hall of the Mountain King" the recurring theme music for Peter Lorre's villainous Hans Beckert. It's gone on to be reissued numerous times, continuing all the while to enjoy near-universal critical acclaim; in fact, it's one of a small handful of classic films to boast a 100 percent Tomatometer rating. An unfortunate oversight on the Academy's part, but given that Lang's name has become synonymous with groundbreaking genius among cinema buffs, it's safe to say all's well that ends well.

5) Mean Streets (1973)

Martin Scorsese's long streak of Oscar futility really got going with 1973's *Mean Streets*, which found the young director determined to make a personal film after the frustration of working for hire on Roger Corman's *Boxcar Bertha*. Emboldened by disappointment and professional desperation, Scorsese drew on his roots in New York City's Little Italy neighborhood to tell the story of an ambitious but conflicted young gangster (Harvey Keitel) and his fraught relationships with a young woman (Amy Robinson) and her brother (Robert De Niro), a small-time gambler with a volatile streak. Although *Mean Streets* whiffed at the Academy Awards, it started Scorsese on his way to elite filmmaker status - even if he did end up having to wait until 2007, and through five nominations, to win his first Best Director Oscar.

6) Once Upon a Time in the West (1968)

A mammoth revisionist Western before revisionist Westerns were cool, Sergio Leone's *Once Upon a Time in the West* synthesized tropes from the already well-trod genre and fired them back at an audience not yet accustomed to seeing its frontier mythology deconstructed - and represented an artistic leap forward for Leone, who used a much slower pace and more realistic tone to tell the tale of

an unsavory hired gun (Henry Fonda) whose campaign of terror against a railroad town is complicated by a lone vigilante (Charles Bronson) with a mysterious vendetta. Better late than never, *West* has steadily built a devoted following since its release, and influenced generations of America's most popular filmmakers.

7) The Shining (1980)

Like comedy, horror hasn't always found the warmest reception at the Academy, and a horror movie adapted from a bestseller by Stephen King - who hasn't always been a critics' darling himself - probably never stood a prayer of receiving Oscars recognition. On the other hand, the big-screen version of King's *The Shining* boasted a stellar pedigree, both onscreen and behind the cameras; with Jack Nicholson starring opposite Shelley Duvall and Stanley Kubrick directing, this terrifying descent into snowbound madness could easily have earned a nomination or three. Alas, it came up empty, forever depriving Nicholson the opportunity to stroll up to the podium and shout, "Heeeeeeeeeeeere's Oscar!"

8) Three Kings (1999)

David O. Russell's movies have piled up a number of Oscar nominations and wins over the years, and it'd be hard to argue he's been unfairly ignored by the Academy. Still, looking back, it's a little surprising to note that Russell's *Three Kings* didn't pick up a single nomination. A critical and commercial hit, this pitch-black satire of modern warfare and global American politics is the rare message movie that works as pure entertainment - and it found Russell employing a few nifty visual tricks, too. Any or all of the above might have been good for awards consideration; alas, Russell would have to content himself with the awards-season attention he'd generate in later years with movies like *The Fighter*, *Silver Linings Playbook*, and *American Hustle*. (www.rottentomatoes.com)



The Shining (1980)



Three Kings (1999)



THIS CORN SPOONBREAD HAS A DELICIOUS PUDDING-LIKE RICHNESS

By Sara Moulton

The Southern staple known as spoonbread - a particular specialty of Kentucky and Virginia - is a Native American dish adopted early on by America's earliest European settlers. George Washington happened to be a big fan and often served it up at Mount Vernon, Virginia. I love it because of its pudding-like richness, a creamy, airy cross between cornbread and a soufflé. Creating that airiness is a matter of separating the eggs and beating the whites, then folding them into the batter.

The recipe's key ingredient is corn, and since this is the height of the fresh corn season, I decided to amp up the traditional recipe with corn kernels. Half of them are pureed - adding to the bread's creaminess - while the remainder is folded in for crunch.

What should you look for when buying fresh corn? Start by confirming that each ear is full and thick, with kernels growing all the way to the tip. The easiest way to do so would be to strip away the husk and take a squint at the tip, but that maneuver makes the ear unsellable. Instead, use your fingers to feel if the ear is full at the top by pressing the tip through the husk. And if you discover a tiny bug on the ear after shucking it at home, just wash it away, secure in the knowledge that no pesticides were used in the corn's cultivation.

Some varieties of corn sold at the market will stay sweet for four or five days. I prefer regular corn because it tastes more like corn to me, but its sugar starts to turn to starch as soon as it's picked, which means it's best to cook the corn as soon as you

can (keep it chilled until you do).

I call for fine cornmeal in this recipe for Fresh Corn Spoonbread with Sharp Cheddar and Chiles, but you're welcome to use the medium-ground variety if you want a bit of gritty crunch. The buttermilk provides some tangy contrast to the corn's sweetness, but if you're no fan of tang (or don't want to buy buttermilk), substitute regular whole milk.

FRESH CORN SPOONBREAD WITH SHARP CHEDDAR AND CHILES

Ingredients

Servings: 6
 Start to finish: 1 hour, 10 minutes (45 active)
 2 cups fresh corn kernels
 2 cups buttermilk
 2/3 cup fine yellow cornmeal
 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
 1 teaspoon kosher salt
 1/4 teaspoon cayenne, optional
 4 ounces extra-sharp cheddar cheese, coarsely grated
 One 4.5 ounce can chopped green chilies, drained
 4 large eggs, separated, at room temperature
 1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar

Preparation

In a blender, puree 1 cup of the corn with 1 cup of the buttermilk until smooth. Preheat oven to 425 F. In a medium saucepan stir together the pureed corn with the remaining buttermilk, cornmeal, butter, salt and cayenne, if using, and bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring frequently. Reduce the heat and simmer, whisking constantly, 3 minutes. Remove from the heat, stir in the cheese, chilies and the remaining 1 cup corn kernels; let cool while you beat the egg whites.

In a bowl with electric beaters beat the whites with a pinch of salt until they are frothy, add the cream of tartar and beat until they form soft peaks. Add the yolks to the cornmeal mixture, whisking constantly. Stir one-fourth of the whites into the cornmeal mixture and then fold in the remaining whites gently until they are just incorporated. Spread the mixture evenly in a buttered shallow 8-inch square baking dish and bake on a rack in the lower third of the oven until set, 20 to 25 minutes. Serve immediately.

Nutrition information per serving:

288 calories; 130 calories from fat; 14 g fat (8 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 175 mg cholesterol; 709 mg sodium; 26 g carbohydrates; 2 g fiber; 8 g sugar; 14 g protein.

A STREAMLINED WAY FOR MAKING A COLORFUL VEGETABLE CASSEROLE

By America's Test Kitchen

This colorful vegetable casserole has a striking look but a simple approach. A tian is an assortment of roasted vegetables cooking in a shallow dish, sometimes with cheese or au gratin. Arranging slices of moisture-rich zucchini, summer squash, and tomatoes over the uncooked orzo and baking the dish all together lets us skip precooking the pasta and streamlines the recipe.

Garlic, shallots, oregano, and pepper flakes add punch to the fresh vegetables, while a topping of broiled Parmesan adds just the right finishing note. Crisp garlic toasts are a perfect accompaniment to the creamy orzo. Look for squash, zucchini and tomatoes with similar-size circumferences so that they are easy to shingle into the dish.



VEGETABLE AND ORZO TIAN WITH GARLIC TOASTS

Ingredients

Servings: 4
 Start to finish: 1 hour
 3 ounces Parmesan cheese
 2 shallots
 4 garlic cloves
 1 cup orzo
 1 teaspoon dried oregano
 1/8 teaspoon red pepper flakes
 Salt and pepper
 1 zucchini
 1 yellow summer squash
 12 ounces plum tomatoes
 1 3/4 cups vegetable broth
 1 loaf rustic bread
 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
 Fresh basil

Preparation

Adjust one oven rack to middle position and a second rack 6 inches from broiler element and heat oven to 425 F. Grate Parmesan (1 1/2 cups). Mince shallots. Mince 3 garlic cloves. Combine orzo, oregano, pepper flakes, 1/2 cup grated Parmesan, shallots, minced garlic, and 1/4 teaspoon salt in bowl. Spread mixture evenly into broiler-safe 13-by-9-inch baking dish.

Slice zucchini and squash 1/4 inch thick. Core tomatoes and slice 1/4 inch thick. Alternately shingle zucchini, squash, and tomatoes in tidy rows on top of orzo. Carefully pour broth over top of vegetables. Bake on lower rack until orzo is just tender and most of broth is absorbed, about 20 minutes. Meanwhile, slice four 3/4-inch-thick slices of bread and spread out evenly over rimmed baking sheet; set aside.

Remove dish from oven and heat broiler. Drizzle vegetables with 1 tablespoon oil, and sprinkle with remaining 1 cup Parmesan. Broil on lower rack until nicely browned and bubbling

around edges, about 5 minutes. Remove dish from oven and let rest for 10 minutes. While tian rests, broil bread on upper rack, flipping as needed, until well toasted on both sides, about 4 minutes. Peel remaining 1 garlic clove and rub one side of each toast with garlic, then drizzle toasts with remaining 1 tablespoon oil and season with salt and pepper to taste. Chop 2 tablespoons basil and sprinkle over tian. Serve with toasts.

Nutrition information per serving

506 calories; 134 calories from fat; 15 g fat (5 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 20 mg cholesterol; 875 mg sodium; 75 g carbohydrate; 7 g fiber; 11 g sugar; 19 g protein.

MARINATE YOUR TUNA AHEAD TO ENSURE MOIST GRILLED FISH

By America's Test Kitchen

Tuna steaks are a treat, and the intense heat of the grill is perfect for getting a good sear on the outside while keeping the inside tender, moist, and pleasantly pink. We wanted a foolproof method for grilling tuna to perfection, and we decided to make vinaigrette that would complement the fish but not overshadow it.

We found that marinating the fish before grilling worked to season it throughout and ensure remarkably moist grilled fish; a bit of ginger and five-spice powder proved a simple way to boost the flavor of our oil-based mari-

nade. We found we could let the steaks marinate for up to 24 hours, making our recipe more flexible.

As for the grilling method, we built a hot, concentrated fire by pouring the coals over only half the grill, which encouraged the exteriors of the steaks to cook quickly before the interiors could overcook. To accompany the steaks, we made a lime-ginger vinaigrette and gave it more aromatic depth with coriander seeds, fresh cilantro, and fresh basil. A bit of fish sauce offered some umami notes.

GRILLED TUNA STEAKS WITH LIME-GINGER VINAIGRETTE

Ingredients

Servings: 4
Start to finish: 1 hour 25 minutes (25 minutes active)

Vinaigrette:

2 tablespoons lime juice
1 1/2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
1 teaspoon coriander seeds, crushed
1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
1 tablespoon fish sauce
1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil
1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro leaves
1/3 cup canola oil
Salt and pepper

Fish:

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 teaspoon grated fresh ginger
1/2 teaspoon five-spice powder
Salt and pepper
4 (6- to 8-ounce) tuna steaks

Preparation

Whisk lime juice, ginger, coriander, pepper flakes, fish sauce, basil and cilantro in bowl until well combined. Whisking constantly, drizzle in oil. Season with salt and pepper to taste and set aside. Combine oil, ginger, five spice, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper in 1-gallon zipper-lock plastic bag; add tuna, seal bag, toss to coat, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

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

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

Clean cooking grate, then repeatedly brush grate with well-oiled paper towels until grate is black and glossy, 5 to 10 times. Remove tuna from oil, place on grill (on hotter side if using charcoal), and cook (covered if using gas) until grill marks form and bottom surface is opaque, 1 to 3 minutes. Flip tuna and cook until opaque at perimeter and translucent red at center when checked with tip of paring knife and registers 110 F (for rare), about 1 1/2 minutes, or until opaque at perimeter and reddish pink at center when checked with tip of paring knife and registers 125 F (for medium-rare), about 3 minutes. Serve with vinaigrette.

Nutrition information per serving

442 calories; 254 calories from fat; 28 g fat (4 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 70 mg cholesterol; 628 mg sodium; 1 g carbohydrate; 0 g fiber; 0 g sugar; 43 g protein.



Comic

WORD SEARCH

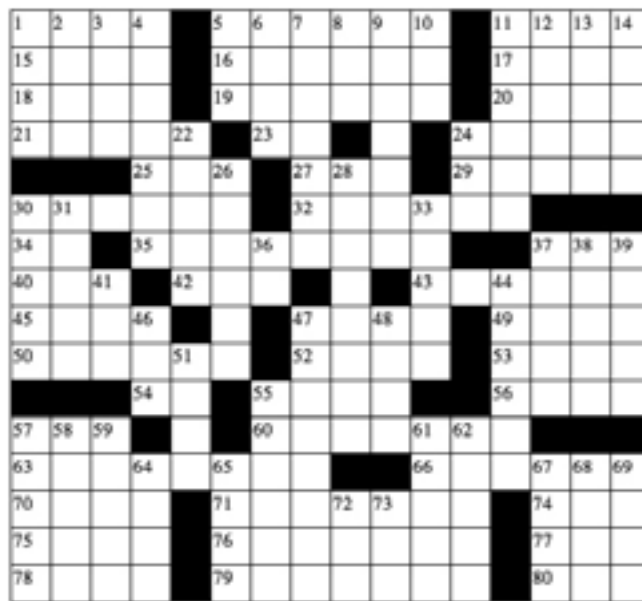
USA Presidents Word Search

Find and circle all of the United States Presidents that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an Abraham Lincoln quotation.

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| MADISON | BUCHANAN | TAFT | FORD |
| MONROE | LINCOLN | WILSON | CARTER |
| J Q ADAMS | A JOHNSON | HARDING | REAGAN |
| JACKSON | GRANT | COOLIDGE | G H W BUSH |
| VAN BUREN | HAYES | HOOVER | CLINTON |
| W HARRISON | GARFIELD | F D ROOSEVELT | G W BUSH |
| TYLER | ARTHUR | TRUMAN | OBAMA |
| POLK | CLEVELAND | EISENHOWER | |

CROSSWORD 1970



ACROSS

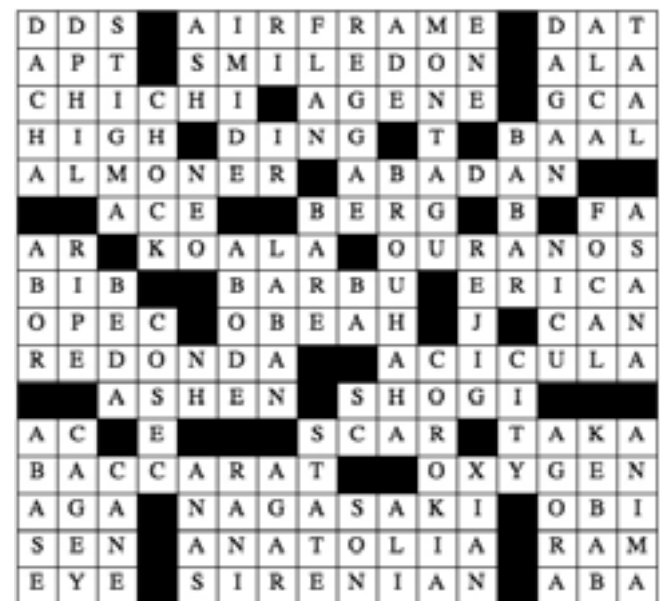
- Not moving quickly.
- A cephalosporin that can be given parenterally (trade name Zinacef) or orally by tablets (trade name Cefitin).
- Providing sophisticated amusement by virtue of having artificially (and vulgarly) mannered or banal or sentimental qualities.
- Small short-eared burrowing mammal of rocky uplands of Asia and western North America.
- Having an oblique or slanted direction.
- Any of the forms of Chinese spoken in Fukien province.
- A British peer ranking below a Marquess and above a Viscount.
- Befitting or characteristic of a young boy.
- Relating to or characteristic of or occurring on land.
- Infestation of the pubic hair by crab lice.
- Being ten more than thirty.
- Not in good physical or mental health.
- Apparent power to perceive things that are not present to the senses.
- East Indian tart yellow berrylike fruit.
- A Chadic language spoken in Chad.
- Pertaining to one of the small sacs (as in a compound gland).
- After noon.
- The Palestinian uprising (beginning in 1987) against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
- An associate degree in applied science.
- Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by

- A detailed description of design criteria for a piece of work.
- A person who has lied or who lies repeatedly.
- Long green edible beaked pods of the okra plant.
- A language of Australian aborigines.
- A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
- Type and only genus of the family Esocidae.
- A blank leaf in the front or back of a book.
- Of or relating to or characteristic of Thailand of its people.
- Lacking taste or flavor or tang.
- Last or greatest in an indefinitely large series.
- A high-crowned black cap (usually made of felt or sheepskin) worn by men in Turkey and Iran and the Caucasus.
- At full speed.
- A singular metaphysical entity from which material properties are said to derive.
- A major victory by the Romans over the Macedonians in 168 BC.
- Informal language consisting of words and expressions that are not considered appropriate for formal occasions.
- American prizefighter who won the world heavyweight championship three times (born in 1942).
- Chinese tree cultivated especially in Philippines and India for its edible fruit.
- White Southerner supporting Reconstruction policies after the Civil War usually for self-interest.
- A member of the Siouan people formerly living in the Missouri river valley in NE Nebraska.
- Given or having a specified name.
- A state in midwestern United States.
- (Old Testament) The second patriarch.
- (law) A defense by an accused person purporting to show that he or she could not have committed the crime in question.
- Having help.
- A colloid that has a continuous liquid phase in which a solid is suspended in a liquid.
- Preserve a dead body.
- A light touch or stroke.
- A state in west central United States in the Rocky Mountains.
- (prefix) Half or partial.
- A city in east central Texas.
- Having an oblique or slanted direction.
- English monk and scholar (672-735).
- The capital and largest city of Jordan.
- A unit of weight for precious stones = 200 mg.
- Jordan's port.
- English monk and scholar (672-735).
- The head of a branch of an organized crime syndicate.
- The female reproductive cell.
- A Tibetan or Mongolian priest of Lamaism.
- The biblical name for ancient Syria.
- A silvery malleable metallic element that resists corrosion.
- Fiddler crabs.

DOWN

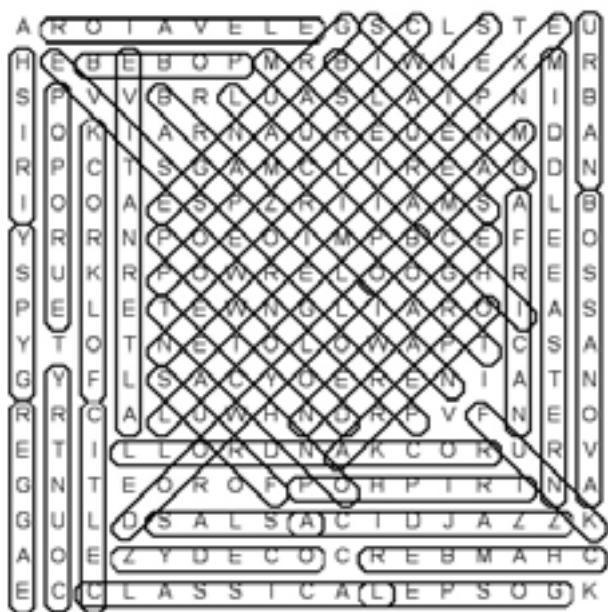
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Yesterday's Solution



Yesterday's Solution

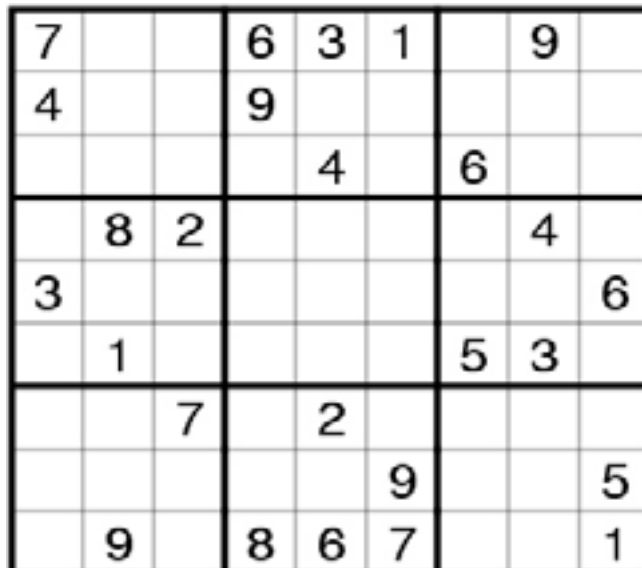
Types of Music 2



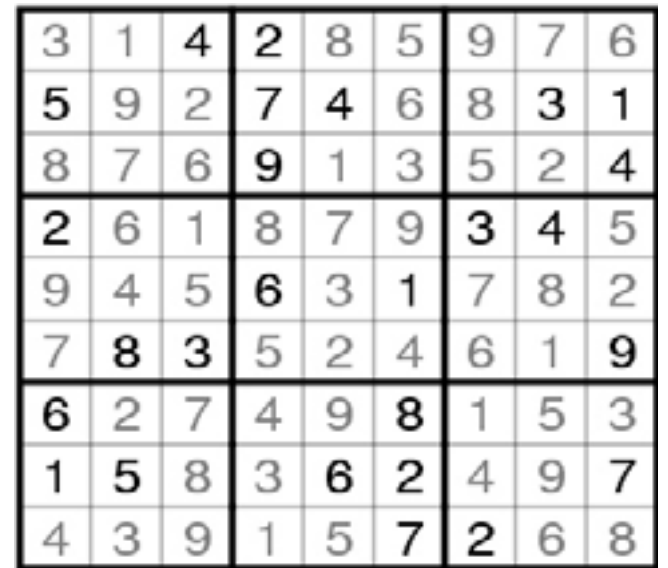
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|-------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|
| ACID JAZZ | CLASSICAL | GYPSY | REGGAE |
| AFRICAN | COUNTRY | IRISH | ROCK AND ROLL |
| ALTERNATIVE | DOO WOP | MAMBO | SALSA |
| BEBOP | ELEVATOR | MARIACHI | SURF |
| BLUES | EUROPOP | MIDDLE EASTERN | SWING |
| BOLLYWOOD | EXPERIMENTAL | NEW AGE | TECHNO |
| BOSSA NOVA | FOLK ROCK | NEW ORLEANS | TRIP HOP |
| BRAZILIAN | FUNK | OPERA | TROPICAL |
| CELTIC | GOSPEL | POP MUSIC | URBAN |
| CHAMBER | GRUNGE | PROGRESSIVE | ZYDECO |

The hidden message is: ALTERNATIVE ROCK

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



TV Listings



01:45 Nerve
03:45 Boering II
05:40 Falsely Accused
07:10 Nerve
09:00 Boering II
10:50 In The Line Of Fire
13:05 Now You See Me 2
15:20 The Northlander
17:00 Suicide Squad
19:05 Live Free Or Die Hard
21:15 Ben-Hur
23:25 Sniper: Ultimate Kill



00:45 North Woods Law
01:40 I'm Alive
02:35 Crocodile Hunter
03:25 Lone Star Law
04:15 North Woods Law
05:02 Wildest Indochina
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 Indochina
11:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees
12:50 Crocodile Hunter
13:45 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
14:40 North Woods Law
15:35 I'm Alive
16:30 Rugged Justice
17:25 Untamed & Uncut
18:20 Crocodile Hunter
19:15 The Bronx Zoo
20:10 China's Last Elephants
21:05 Wildest Indochina
22:00 I'm Alive
22:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees
23:50 The Bronx Zoo



00:00 Homicide Hunter
01:00 Homicide Hunter
01:55 Crimes That Shook Britain
02:50 Crimes That Shook Australia
03:45 Crimes That Shook Australia
04:30 Homicide: Hours To Kill
05:15 Cold Case Files
06:00 The First 48
07:00 It Takes A Killer
07:20 The First 48
08:05 Homicide Hunter
08:50 Crimes That Shook Britain
09:35 Crimes That Shook Britain
10:30 Crimes That Shook Australia
11:25 Crimes That Shook Australia
12:20 Homicide: Hours To Kill
13:15 Cold Case Files
14:10 Homicide Hunter
15:05 It Takes A Killer
15:35 It Takes A Killer
16:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
17:00 The First 48
18:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
19:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
20:00 Evil Up Close
21:00 Diabolical Women
22:00 The Eleven
23:00 The First 48



00:30 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
00:55 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
01:20 South Park
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
03:50 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
04:15 The Dude Perfect Show
04:40 The Dude Perfect Show
05:05 I Used To Be Fat

05:55 Disaster Date
07:15 Punk'd (Bet)
07:40 Punk'd (Bet)
08:05 I Used To Be Fat
08:55 Bondi Ink.
09:45 House Of Food
10:35 Hillbillies For Hire
11:00 Hillbillies For Hire
11:25 Disaster Date
12:40 Impractical Jokers
13:55 Idiotsitter
15:10 The It Crowd
17:20 Takeshis Castle Thailand
17:45 Takeshis Castle Thailand
18:10 Friends
20:07 Martha And Snoop Potluck Dinner Party
20:30 Graves
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 Comedy Central Roast: Justin Bieber
22:55 Detroiters
23:18 Chappelle's Show
23:40 Comedy Central Roast: Justin Bieber



00:30 Destroyed In Seconds
00:55 Destroyed In Seconds
01:20 How It's Made
01:45 How It's Made
02:10 My Cat From Hell
03:00 Tanked
03:50 Ultimate Survival
04:40 Weather Gone Viral
05:30 Secret Space Escapes
06:20 How It's Made
06:40 How It's Made
07:00 Destroyed In Seconds
07:25 Destroyed In Seconds
07:50 My Cat From Hell
08:40 How It's Made
09:05 How It's Made
09:30 Tanked
10:20 Ultimate Survival
11:10 Destroyed In Seconds
11:35 Destroyed In Seconds
12:00 How It's Made
12:25 How It's Made
12:50 Don't Blink
13:15 Don't Blink
13:40 The Carbonaro Effect
14:05 The Carbonaro Effect
14:30 How It's Made
14:55 How It's Made
15:20 My Cat From Hell
16:10 Ultimate Survival
17:00 My Cat From Hell
17:50 Tanked
18:40 Destroyed In Seconds
19:05 Destroyed In Seconds
19:30 Don't Blink
19:55 Don't Blink
20:20 The Carbonaro Effect
20:45 The Carbonaro Effect
21:10 How It's Made
21:35 How It's Made
22:00 Ultimate Survival
22:50 Don't Blink
23:15 Don't Blink
23:40 The Carbonaro Effect

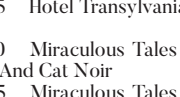


00:45 Diabolical: Deadly Love
01:40 Behind Closed Doors: Shocking Secrets
02:35 Forbidden: Dying For Love
03:30 Evil Talks: Chilling Confessions
04:25 Swamp Murders
05:20 I Almost Got Away With It
06:10 The Perfect Murder
07:00 California Investigator
07:25 Obsession: Dark Desires
08:15 Swamp Murders
09:10 The Perfect Murder
10:05 Murder In The Heartland
11:00 Disappeared
11:55 Obsession: Dark Desires
12:50 I Almost Got Away With It
13:45 The Perfect Murder
14:40 Murder In The Heartland
15:35 Evil Talks: Chilling Confessions
16:30 Obsession: Dark Desires
17:25 Swamp Murders
18:20 I Almost Got Away With It
19:15 The Perfect Murder

20:10 Murder In The Heartland
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
02:55 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 And Cat Noir
09:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
09:25 Tangled: The Series
09:50 Tangled: The Series
10:15 Bizaardvark
10:40 Bizaardvark
11:05 Liv And Maddie
11:55 K.C. Undercover
12:45 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
13:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
13:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
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 And Cat Noir
16:50 Raven's Home
17:15 Stuck In The Middle
17:40 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
18:55 Descendants Wicked World
19:00 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
19:25 Liv And Maddie
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23:35 Binny And The Ghost

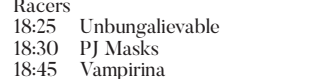


06:00 Marvel's Spider-Man
06:32 Lab Rats
07:00 DuckTales
07:32 Big City Greens
07:45 Furiki Wheels
08:00 Phineas And Ferb
08:25 Phineas And Ferb
08:50 Disney Mickey Mouse
08:55 Milo Murphy's Law
09:20 Milo Murphy's Law
09:45 Phineas And Ferb
10:00 Gravity Falls
10:25 Gravity Falls
10:50 Disney Mickey 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 Lab Rats Elite Force
14:00 Lab Rats Elite Force
14:32 Lab Rats Elite Force
15:00 Big City Greens
15:32 Big City Greens
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



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
06:15 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
13:10 Vampirina
13:35 PJ Masks
14:00 PJ Masks Shorts
14:05 The Lion Guard: Return Of The Roar
14:50 PJ Masks Shorts
15:00 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



00:15 The Middle
00:40 The Middle
01:05 The Drew Carey Show
01:30 The Drew Carey Show
01:55 The Mick
02:20 Ghosted
02:45 The Michael J. Fox Show
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 The Michael J. Fox Show
06:30 Grown-Ish
06:55 Great News
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 The Michael J. Fox Show
11:30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
12:20 Grown-Ish
12:45 Great News
13:10 The Middle
13:35 The Middle
14:00 The Drew Carey Show
14:25 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 Great News
18:00 The Middle
18:30 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 One Mississippi
22:30 Family Guy
23:00 Hit The Road
23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers



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
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22:15 Big City Greens
22:30 Phineas And Ferb
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am



00:05 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
00:55 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian

01:50 E! News
02:50 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
03:40 WAGs
04:35 WAGs
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 Rob & Chyna
06:55 E! News Middle East
07:10 Rob & Chyna
08:10 E! News: Daily Pop
09:10 Botched
10:10 Botched
11:05 Botched
12:00 E! News Middle East
12:15 WAGs LA
13:10 WAGs LA
14:05 WAGs LA
15:00 E! News Middle East
15:15 E! News: Daily Pop
16:15 Botched
17:10 Botched
18:05 Botched
19:00 E! News
20:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
21:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
22:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
23:00 E! News Middle East
23:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry



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00:40 The Middle
01:05 The Drew Carey Show
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12:45 Great News
13:10 The Middle
13:35 The Middle
14:00 The Drew Carey Show
14:25 The Drew Carey Show
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15:15 Modern Family
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17:00 Grown-Ish
17:30 Great News
18:00 The Middle
18:30 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 One Mississippi
22:30 Family Guy
23:00 Hit The Road
23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers



00:10 Natural Born Killers
02:10 A Few Good Men
04:25 Life Or Something Like It
06:10 Newsies: The Broadway Musical
08:30 Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them
10:55 Alvin And The Chipmunks: Chipwrecked
12:30 Nine Lives
14:15 Dragonheart
16:15 Daddy's Home
18:10 Babylon A.D
20:00 In Time
22:00 Once Upon A Time In America



01:15 The Pacifier
03:15 Toy Story
05:00 Pirates Of The Caribbean: On Stranger Tides
07:30 The Pacifier
09:30 Tangled
11:30 The Game Plan
13:30 Toy Story 2
15:15 Planes
17:15 The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement
19:15 George Of The Jungle
21:15 Toy Story 2
23:00 Planes



01:45 Without A Paddle
03:30 Down To Earth
05:15 Angus Thongs And Perfect Snogging
07:00 Mr. Wrong
08:45 Down To Earth
10:30 Angus Thongs And Perfect Snogging
12:30 Mr. Wrong
14:30 Little Loopers
16:30 Ghost Town
18:30 Planes, Trains And Automobiles
20:15 Without A Paddle: Nature's Calling
22:00 Puerto Ricans In Paris
23:30 Deuce Bigalow: European Gigolo



00:20 Help And Freedom
01:55 Bunny Tales
03:15 Hocus Pocus Alfie Atkins
04:40 Azur & Asmar: The Prince's Quest
06:15 Phantom Boy
07:50 A Doggone Hollywood
09:25 Operation Arctic
11:05 Teo: The Intergalactic Hunter
12:30 Hocus Pocus Alfie Atkins
13:55 Azur & Asmar: The Prince's Quest
15:30 The Adventures Of Scooter The Penguin
17:00 Operation Arctic
18:40 Elias And The Royal Yacht
20:05 The Snow Queen 3
21:40 The Adventures Of Scooter The Penguin
23:10 A Doggone Hollywood



00:10 Natural Born Killers
02:10 A Few Good Men
04:25 Life Or Something Like It
06:10 Newsies: The Broadway Musical
08:30 Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them
10:55 Alvin And The Chipmunks: Chipwrecked
12:30 Nine Lives
14:15 Dragonheart
16:15 Daddy's Home
18:10 Babylon A.D
20:00 In Time
22:00 Once Upon A Time In America



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?

Stars



Aries (March 21-April 19)

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



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You seem to be able to get your point across with ease. You find yourself to not only be understood by others but to be very understanding of them as well. What a great time for communicating with those around you! You feel a strong desire to care for those around you. You want to make sure all is well with the world. You may find your needs are best satisfied by taking care of those around you. You tend to give freely, Virgo. It is nice when you find someone that makes you feel as if your needs are just as important to them. You may find this to be a very magical time in your life as it seems everything is just going your way.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may find yourself over confident today. You could easily find yourself taking on more than you can handle. You may experience what is best defined as an inner peace today. You find your clear mind and level of peace make it very easy to solve problems in the workplace and make very clear decisions. You are focused and determined and may find others seeking your advice. Today is a very good one. You will be able to find a sense of clarity in the big scheme of things. You will really be able to discover what drives you. This may be the beginning of much progress for you as you have a deeper understanding of what you truly desire.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may be feeling a desire to surround yourself with all things beautiful. You have a new appreciation for the finer things in life. Perhaps, a shopping trip is in order. You may find that females in your life seem more appreciative of your talents today. You may find you have an opportunity to financially benefit from using your creative talent. Expect others to take notice of you. This is one occasion where a change of scenery may be just what you need in life. This could lead to new inspiration in many areas of your world.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Sit tight. Now is not the time to make any changes concerning your living situation. It is a time to let things remain the same and change shouldn't be an option right now. You may feel alone and disconnected from your friends and crave some time out and about. This is a time you should resist temptation and just keep to yourself to avoid conflict and hard times. Time is best spent at home with your lover, close family, or children right now. Surround yourself with those closest to you who truly understand you best. You may find that the admiration and appreciation you receive from them is just what you need.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

A simple hooray may be in order. It seems as if nothing, but wonderful news keeps coming your way. One thing after another seems to turn out in your favor. You may feel as if life cannot get any better. You seem to be thinking outside of the box and taking a new approach on life and the problems that arise. Others may not be used to this and you may face opposition as this is not the you they know. They may seem not as supportive as usual and this new you and your new way of doing things may be something they really have to adjust to.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Leave the major decisions for later. It may seem as if there is a road block at every turn today. These obstacles may cause frustration and you may not feel support from your peers or family. This challenge should be temporary so stay positive and keep pushing forward. Keep your cool and avoid confrontation at all cost. You could easily find yourself in bosnia conflict or arguments today. You have a strong desire to be in control of everyone and everything around you. You may want a take a step back as this may be the cause of the conflict are experiencing.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may find yourself ready to get out and about and hit the town. You are ready to add a bit of spice to your life and the social scene is what you have your mind set on. Take into careful consideration the company you chose to keep today. You may find there is a fine line between friend and foe. Choose your company wisely as to not encounter conflict. You may find yourself extremely disciplined today when it comes to a task set before you. You have a goal and you become dedicated and devoted to accomplishing this. You seem to be very productive and find things working in your favor today. You may find an extra bit of support from one of your closest friends. This gives you a boost and a sense of reassurance you have been looking for.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

A nurturing relationship is what you are craving. As strong as the urge is to care for others, you also desire to have someone care for you the same way. You are able to easily sense the needs of those around you. Walls you have built around your heart may be working against you and preventing you from getting the nurturing and love you desire. This is a time for compromise in your life. To have your needs fulfilled you have to be willing to drop your guard and let someone in. This is a great time to do a bit of soul-searching. Remember, Sagittarius, sometimes the reward is much greater than the risk. Open your heart.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Today may find you with a desire for power and control. You may not only feel as if you want to control every aspect of your life but today could find you wanting to take control of others around you. The behavior you are exhibiting in the workplace seems to be noticed by your superiors. You may be offered a management or leadership role. Your ability to develop strong bonds with others may be very beneficial to you today. You are just the person to lead the team and get the job done. This could lead to new opportunities and offers in some type of management role in the workplace for you.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You should be feeling very happy and in harmony with others. The lines of communication are open. The support you need is available. Someone that trusts your judgment could be asking you for help in resolving some very personal and emotional issues. You will have no problem in understanding and you will be able to offer assistance in handling any difficulties. You are dedicated and devoted to your work and to accomplishing your goals. You have a talent for cutting through the red tape and getting beneath and behind problems that allows you to be insightful and helpful.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Buckle up! You are about to take the ride of your life. This is a time of radical change in your world. This will be a very unusual period in your life. It seems the eccentric and unusual things that never interested you in the past will become your new focus. Perhaps a new you is being born or you are just coming out of your shell. You may find yourself desiring a physical change as well, a piercing, a new hair color, or a new style of wardrobe may be on the horizon. Don't be surprised if those close to you think you have lost your mind. You may not find much support of the new you but you will definitely find yourself the center of attention to many.

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

Health

I said 'no' to drugs, they didn't listen: Dealing with addiction

AMSTERDAM: At the International AIDS Conference in Amsterdam, a doctor is on duty to prescribe methadone, a legal heroin substitute, to delegates who might be struggling with withdrawal. Nelda de Grave, an addiction specialist, was not sure she would have any takers, but considers it her duty to ensure any addicts among the conference goers are "not sick, not in withdrawal", and "well enough to follow" the proceedings. Three came for prescriptions on Tuesday alone. One floor down, in a large advocacy space at the conference venue, counselors staff a "harm reduction" booth stacked with boxes upon boxes of sterile needles for intravenous drug users who may need them.

No questions asked.

Such pragmatism about narcotics use and addiction may be par for the course in the Netherlands, a country known for its open-minded approach to drugs, which remain illegal. But for many delegates it may seem too good to be true. "We were asked (by conference organizers) to be ready especially for people from eastern Europe and (central) Asia," de Grave told AFP. This is a region where experts say oppressive drug laws are fuelling an HIV surge through the sharing of tainted

needles. Infections with the immune system-wrecking virus that causes AIDS rose 30 percent in the region since 2010, according to a UNAIDS report. "To be on methadone... obviously is not common in these countries, so only to attend the conference well you have to have some medication," said de Grave. "That is why we are here."

Reducing harm

For epidemiologist and public health expert Chris Beyrer, "progressive drug policy can really be a critical part of controlling the HIV epidemic." "Part of that is making sure that people who are using, are doing so in ways that are safer and are not associated with disease transmission," he said on a visit to a nearby addiction center in Amsterdam. The center not only offers counseling, but also offers to test drugs, including heroin, for purity and safety. Walk-in customers pay 2.50 euros (about three dollars) for a test.

In the Netherlands, experts say, HIV transmission through intravenous drug use is extremely rare. The country has several needle exchange facilities and safe consumption venues. Ingrid Bakker, one of the "harm reduction" advisers stationed at the conference, said about 20 people had made

use of the service in the first three days. "We have a lot of stuff," she told AFP, gesturing around the tiny booth. "Most of it is for injecting." There are needles and syringes, and sterile cups for dissolving heroin. "You can also do it in a spoon, of course that's what most people do, but this is sterile," she said. There are filters for removing impurities from the liquid heroin mix, sterilizing wipes, pads to apply pressure to the prick point, and portable, yellow, plastic bins for discarding used needles. "This is tinfoil for... if you want smoke heroin," said Bakker, pointing out another product.

'Support. Don't punish'

"In the Netherlands we have very good quality heroin so there's a lot of people who don't inject heroin but they smoke it from foil, 'chasing the dragon.'" This is a form of harm reduction, she explains, as it presents an alternative to injecting. There are booklets of sniffing papers too, with tips handily printed on them. "Crush and chop the powder as finely as possible," the sheets advise. "Be kind to your nasal passage and go for small lines." The papers help stop the spread of Hepatitis C, which can cause liver disease, said Bakker.

"People use straws, for instance,



KIEV: (FILES) In this file photograph a social worker collects a box of used syringes at an needle exchange spot at an HIV/AIDS clinic in Kiev. —AFP

which are quite sharp. If you share them and if you have ... just a tiny, tiny, tiny bit of blood... it (the virus) could be transferred." According to Ann Fordham, who leads the International Drug Policy Consortium, an advocacy network, there was a 30-percent increase in HIV among people who inject drugs worldwide between 2011 and 2015. Less than one percent of people who inject drugs live in countries where needle exchange is available, she said.

Activists at the AIDS conference launched a campaign entitled "Just say no to the war on drugs"—a direct chal-

lenge to the Ronald Reagan-era slogan "Just say no" at the height of America's "war on drugs". "I said no to drugs but they didn't listen," reads one slogan of the alternative campaign. "Support. Don't punish," states another. A report this month by Harm Reduction International said funding for such services in low- and middle-income countries—mainly donor money — had flat-lined in the past decade. In 2016, \$188 million (161 million euros) was allocated—the same as in 2007, it said. "Simply put, the lives of people who use drugs are being neglected," charges the report. —AFP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

248 33 199

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

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



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Kuwait Times
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Head & Neck Surgery and Facial Plastics.
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A rare Subspecialty in Microscopic Ear Surgery, Cochlear implant & Ear diseases

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- ◆ Canadian Board of General Surgery
- ◆ Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada
- ◆ American Board of Colo - Rectal Surgery
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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Very hot with light to moderate freshening gradually north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 50 km/h causing rising dust.

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot and Dusty with moderate to fresh north westerly wind, with speed of 25 - 60 km/h .

WEATHER WATCH			Fresh wind + dust	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 26/07/2018 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	47 °C	35 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	47 °C	33 °C		
ABDALY	47 °C	33 °C		
BUBYAN	-- °C	-- °C		
JAHRA	47 °C	35 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	46 °C	32 °C		
SALMIYAH	45 °C	36 °C		
AHMADI	41 °C	36 °C		
NUWAISIB	45 °C	33 °C		
WAFRA	46 °C	34 °C		
SALMY	44 °C	31 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	07/27	Very hot and Dusty	47 °C	35 °C	NW	30 - 70 km/h
Saturday	07/28	Hot with a chance for rising dust	46 °C	34 °C	NW	25 - 65 km/h
Sunday	07/29	Hot with a chance for rising dust over open areas	46 °C	32 °C	NW	20 - 45 km/h
Monday	07/30	Very hot with a chance for rising dust over open areas	47 °C	33 °C	NW	15 - 42 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:34
Sunrise	05:04
Zuhr	11:54
Asr	15:30
Sunset	18:44
Isha	20:12

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	46 °C
MIN. Temp.	31 °C
MAX. RH	27 %
MIN. RH	08 %
MAX. Wind	NW 46 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

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Hospitals

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

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

Business

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39 Bond investors shun India, citing lack of reassurance from RBI



40 Ethiopia set on economic reforms, but won't be rushed



41 What bubble? China's record-breaking venture capitalists charge ahead



JOHANNESBURG: (Left to right) India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, China's President Xi Jinping, South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa, Russia's President Vladimir Putin and Brazil's President Michel Temer pose for a group picture during the 10th BRICS summit at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg, South Africa. —AFP

BRICS vows unity against US threat

US, EU to resolve dispute over US tariffs

JOHANNESBURG: Five of the biggest emerging economies yesterday stood by the multilateral system and vowed to strengthen economic cooperation in the face of US tariff threats and unilateralism. The heads of the so-called BRICS—Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa—met for an annual summit dominated by the risk of a global US-led trade war, although leaders did not publicly mention President Donald Trump by name.

"We should stay committed to multilateralism," China's President Xi Jinping said on the second day of the Johannesburg talks. "The escalation of protectionism and unilateralism are directly affecting... emerging markets," he said in a statement in the day's opening session. "Closer economic cooperation for shared prosperity is the original pur-

pose and priority of BRICS." Russian President Vladimir Putin, who held a controversial meeting with Trump last week, echoed the calls for closer ties among BRICS members and for stronger trade within group. "BRICS has a unique place in the global economy—this is the largest market in the world, the joint GDP is 42 percent of the global GDP and it keeps growing," Putin said. "In 2017, the trade with our BRICS countries has grown 30 percent, and we are aiming at further developing this kind of partnership."

US targets China's trade surplus

Trump has said he is ready to impose tariffs on all \$500 billion of Chinese imports, complaining that China's trade surplus with the US is due to unfair currency manipula-

tion. Trump has already slapped levies on goods from China worth tens of billions of dollars, as well as tariffs on steel and aluminum from the EU, Canada and Mexico. "We are concerned by the rise in unilateral measures that are incompatible with World Trade Organization rules, and we are worried about the impact," South African President Cyril Ramaphosa told the summit's opening session on Wednesday. The BRICS group, comprising more than 40 percent of the global population, represents some of the biggest emerging economies, but it has struggled to find a unified voice.

Analysts say US trade policy could give the group renewed purpose. In Washington, Trump and European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker announced an apparent

truce in their trade war after White House talks on Wednesday. The US and the EU will "immediately resolve" their dispute over US steel and aluminum tariffs and subsequent EU counter-measures, US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin confirmed yesterday.

The punishing US metals tariffs had angered Washington's major trading partners including the EU and sparked retaliation against important American exports, spooking global stock markets. Xi arrived in South Africa after visiting Senegal and Rwanda as part of a whistle stop tour to cement relations with African allies. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will also attend the BRICS event as the current chair of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and will meet Putin on the summit's sidelines. —AFP

Business

World shares at four-month high on EU-US trade breakthrough hopes

US agrees to refrain from car tariffs on EU for now

LONDON: European equities powered higher yesterday, pushing world stocks to new four-month highs after the European Union and the United States agreed to negotiate on trade, easing fears of a transatlantic trade war. However, concerns over the slowing pace of world economic growth, the prospect of escalation in the Sino-US trade spat and some lackluster company earnings reports prevented markets from rallying further, and Wall Street looked set for a weaker session.

In what the EU chief called a “major concession,” US President Donald Trump agreed on Wednesday to refrain from imposing car tariffs while the two sides launch negotiations to cut other trade barriers. European gains were led by the continent’s auto sector, which was up more than two percent, with Germany’s export-reliant and auto-heavy index up 1.5 percent. Auto shares, highly vulnerable to tariff wars, have performed poorly this year, with earnings forecasts downgraded in recent months.

Gains elsewhere were more subdued and a pan-European stock index rose 0.5 percent while the MSCI world equity index, which tracks shares in 47 countries, was up a quarter percent to the highest since March 16. “The lifting of the threat of tariffs on the auto sector in particular is a major development. We’ve not seen a lot of actual measures implemented but it should lift the confidence of manufacturers,” said RBC European economist Cathal Kennedy.

“The feed through should come through in the manufacturing sector and confidence indicators in the coming months.” The equity gains pushed up government bond yields in the US and Europe, with

Germany’s 10-year yield, the benchmark for the euro zone, coming close to a one-month high at 0.42 percent. Foreign exchange markets were more cautious about seeing the EU-US announcement as a substantial breakthrough, with the euro down against the dollar and other currencies such as the Japanese yen and the Swiss franc.

The euro, having initially strengthened on the news, fell back 0.2 percent to \$1.1707 as traders turn their attention to the European Central Bank monetary policy meeting later yesterday. The dollar was flat against a basket of currencies. US equities were set to open weaker, with Nasdaq futures down the most by 0.8 percent. That follows a 21 percent after-hours slump in tech giant Facebook after its quarterly report. Facebook losses could weigh on the entire tech sector, where Amazon and Intel will post second-quarter results later in the day.

Turning to china

Asian markets were also more circumspect, on fears that US trade policy would now squarely be concentrated on China. China’s Shanghai Composite index fell 0.7 percent and blue-chip shares lost 1.1 percent. This kept MSCI’s Asian shares outside Japan flat. While the transatlantic mood was improving, “this deal, along with the breakdown of a large M&A deal, leave investors fearing that the trade war has just turned even more so on China,” Citi analysts told clients.

They were referring to Qualcomm’s decision to drop its \$44 billion bid for NXP Semiconductors after a deadline for securing Chinese regulatory approval passed. Economic growth worries are also mounting—economists polled by Reuters said



TOKYO: A man walks past a stock indicator showing share prices on the Tokyo Stock Exchange in Tokyo. — AFP

global activity had peaked, with trade protectionism seen having a significant downward impact. Data out of South Korea yesterday showed slowing growth and exports reinforced that picture. Another poll indicated US second quarter growth with data due today—also would mark the peak. Trade and growth worries have already taken their toll on some companies’ bottom lines.

US automakers General Motors, Ford Motor and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles have cut profit forecasts,

while Germany’s Daimler blamed US-China tariffs for a 30 percent drop in second-quarter profit. With US-EU trade fears pushed into the background for now, the focus will return to central bank policy—the softer US-EU tone should help the ECB stick with its plan to gradually withdraw stimulus. Brent crude touched a 10-day high of \$74.68 per barrel, extending gains into a third day after Saudi Arabia suspended crude shipments through a strategic Red Sea shipping lane. — Reuters

Concerns linger in Europe after US-EU trade truce

BRUSSELS: European capitals yesterday welcomed the trade truce announced by the EU and US but doubts lingered over its feasibility and the changing moods of President Donald Trump. Trump and European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker on Wednesday announced a plan to defuse a lingering trade row, that in effect saw Washington back off a threat of auto tariffs against Europe, at least for now. Germany unsurprisingly hailed the decision, given their world dominating auto industry was the first in line to be punished by Trump’s protectionist offensive.

But France quickly spoke out in anger, with Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire demanding “clarifications” over the agreed measures. Critics of the agreement were especially miffed that existing steel and aluminum tariffs will remain in place despite the White House meeting. “A good business discussion can only be conducted on a clear basis and cannot be conducted under pressure,” said Le Maire. These comments contrasted greatly with comments out of Berlin, where the spokesman for Chancellor Angela Merkel welcomed the “constructive” meeting. Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte also welcomed the “positive outcome of the conversation.” — AFP

In LA, fresh produce bound for trash helps feed the poor

LOS ANGELES: Delighted to take home food that others would discard, Herlinda Mendoza looks excitedly over the bounty of fresh produce spread out before her. “I like all of it, all of it. The grapes, the onions,” Mendoza says in a soft grandmotherly voice as she and her daughter Laura man shopping carts, waiting to fill them up. “You have to be grateful for everything you are given.” The women are in a warehouse in a poor neighborhood of Los Angeles, one of many venues where a non-governmental organization called Food Forward is working to salvage some of the mountains of food that Americans throw away every year and give it to the needy.

On this particular day, the NGO and a community center distributed 15,000 pounds of fruit and vegetables that wholesalers would otherwise have thrown out. There was nothing wrong with all that food. It was doomed only because more fresh deliveries were on the way and room had to be made, or because the produce had some slight bruise or other minor defect. Every week, Food Forward collects some 353,000 pounds of surplus produce from people’s

fruit trees, farmers’ markets and LA’s Wholesale Produce Market.

It then donates the food to hundreds of organizations that help the needy throughout southern California. “With a program like this, where people can actually understand the two-sided connection of food waste and hunger, you start to see some change,” said Rick Nahmias, the NGO’s founder.

No restrictions

This particular twice-monthly handout is held in a warehouse in Watts, one of the poorest and roughest neighborhoods of Los Angeles, where most residents are black or Latino. “They can have two or more bags, and they fill up, and there is no restrictions,” said Sheila Thomas, who works for the community center allied with Food Forward at this warehouse. The center also helps people find work, and offers assistance to young people applying to college. It even help them with paying their tuition.

As they all wait in line, Herlinda and Laura chat and joke around with other Latinos. All told, some 500 people are expected to come by on this particular day and take

home some fresh produce. The spread at the center looks like any other market, with everything neatly organized. When it comes time for the customers to choose, their neediness becomes more apparent. They nervously use both hands as they try to stuff as much as they can in bags, as if they were participating in a TV game show race against the clock.

“This is really good for the heart,” Herlinda says, with a cucumber in her hand. Later, she holds an ear of corn. “Do you know what I make with this? Atol,” she says, referring to a hot beverage made from corn flour. “This food is so good. I don’t understand why they were going to throw it away,” said 61-year-old Salvadoran woman Paula Ramirez. She saves a lot of money thanks to this charity, and she needs to: her husband uses a wheelchair and they get by on a small pension. “He doesn’t work and neither do I,” she said.

A study by the National Resources Defense Council has estimated that each American chucks out an average of more than 400 pounds of food per year. Multiply that by America’s population of 327 million. It is an astronomical amount of waste. An orange tree in somebody’s backyard might yield 200-300 pounds of fruit per year, according to Nahmias, who adds that he has heard of grapefruit trees yielding as many as 1,400 pounds in a year. — AFP

Business

Bond investors shun India, citing lack of reassurance from RBI

India sees heaviest foreign debt investment outflow in region

MUMBAI: Amid all the noise about an increasingly hawkish US Federal Reserve, a trade war and higher oil prices, the Reserve Bank of India's silence is deafening, say investors piling out of the country's bonds. India has seen the largest bond outflows in Asia this year, and investors say the RBI's laconic communication has added uncertainty in an already challenging environment for emerging markets, especially those countries running current account deficits. The Indian rupee hit a record low of \$69.13 on Friday and has fallen 7 percent so far in 2018, the most in Asia.

Bond outflows totaled around \$6 billion this year, the heaviest in the region, although foreign investment in the debt market is capped at 5.5 percent of India's roughly \$760 billion of issued debt in the fiscal year ending March 2019. During emerging market weakness in the last three months, RBI Governor Urjit Patel made only one passing reference to the rupee. Prompted by a question in a 15-minute news conference following the bank's decision to raise rates in June, he said the bank was watching the currency's impact on inflation.

By contrast, many central banks in Asia, from China to the Philippines, have publicly reassured investors that foreign exchange stability was an important policy objective. The Reserve Bank of India did not respond to a request for comment. But Subhash Chandra Garg, chief economic affairs secretary of the government, praised the RBI's efforts to control foreign exchange volatility in comments last month. "The central bank has

enough firepower in the form of forex reserves to deal with the rupee volatility," Garg said. "The role of RBI is to ensure that there was no disorder." Investors say a central bank's signals give them a sense of how uncomfortable they are with market pressure and offer valuable context about policy-makers' thinking and decisions. When there are few explanations and guidance is scarce, investors price in an uncertainty premium, investors said. "If you have confusing communication, that only results in increased volatility," said Rohit Garg, an emerging markets fixed-income and foreign exchange strategist at Bank of America Merrill Lynch in Singapore. "It could result in the currency underperforming and weakening much more than expected."

More than a half-dozen Indian investors, who asked not to be named due to the sensitivity of the issue, said a tight-lipped RBI was a key reason for ditching bonds in recent months. Total returns on Indian bonds this year are negative 4 percent, one of the worst in Asia after outperforming last year. "We have sold off most Indian assets and will prefer not to enter into India in the short term until the macro-picture on pressure on the rupee, fiscal slippage and current account deficit becomes clear," said Johnny Chen, a portfolio manager at NN Investment Partners in Singapore, who said he preferred Indonesia to India because of a stable rupiah. Chen, however, said he did not take issue with the Indian central bank's communication strategy, noting that its primary focus was the inflation target. —Reuters



MUMBAI: A stock trader watches share prices on his screen at a brokerage house in Mumbai. —AFP

ECB to hold firm through trade tensions

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: European Central Bank governors meet yesterday in the shadow of global trade tensions, which may shade the institution's outlook but are unlikely to discourage it from ending massive stimulus for the eurozone come December. The gathering comes a day after European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker met US President Donald Trump in Washington after a tit-for-tat round of tariffs from Washington and Brussels.

Following their talks, the pair announced a series of joint steps to defuse the escalating row between the two trading blocs. Declaring a "new phase" in relations, Trump said the US and EU agreed to "work together toward zero tariffs" on non-auto industrial goods, while the EU would import more American natural gas and soybeans. Both men also said they would hold off on any new tariffs while negotiations continued. But while the agreement was welcomed by the eurozone's largest economy Germany, France had reservations.

ECB President Mario Draghi has repeatedly warned that "downside risks to the (economic)



Mario Draghi

outlook mainly relate to the threat of increased protectionism". That means the Juncker-Trump deal is "good news as far as the ECB is concerned," analyst Jennifer McKeown of Capital Economics said. Nevertheless, Draghi will likely "continue to strike a relatively cautious stance, we don't really know what the outcome of these talks is going to be," she predicted.

The ECB chief may also address Trump's Twitter allegation last week that "China, the European Union and others have been manipulating their currencies and interest rates lower... taking away our big competitive edge". "Draghi will likely have pointed responses, since we know he's sensitive about questions relating to central bank independence and G20 commitments, especially on avoiding manipulation of currencies," one ECB watcher at a major European bank told AFP. —AFP

26 new winners have been included to the winners list in Al Hassad Islamic account this week

Ahli United Bank recently conducted its Al Hassad Islamic account weekly draw, Kuwait's leading Shari'ah compliant rewards program that offers a broad range of prizes to the largest number of winners, on the 25th of July 2018. The account provides 26 weekly prizes that are comprised of KD 25,000 as a grand prize and 25 other prizes valued at KD 1,000 each. AUB also offers four quarterly prizes that are valued at KD 250,000 to each winner allowing them to achieve their dreams of travelling, studying abroad, or owning their dream home or car.

On this occasion Ahli United Bank announced, "With this draw, we are adding 26 new winners and prizes to the Al Hassad Islamic account whereby, the total number of winners annually will include more than 1300.

The weekly grand prize winner of KD 25,000 Zelfi Zaid Al Zaid.

25 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and are as follows: Fajer Othman Al Saeed, Hanaa Hussain Kakouli, Hussain Mohammad Al Shammari, Sheikha Khalaf Al Shammari, Rawan Bader Al Hussainan, Abdullah A Al Ghanam, Mansour Eissa Al Hadad, Fuad Ali Sultan, Zainab Quli Hussain, Jamal Ali Mubarak, Amal Abdulraheem



Bahbahane, Mohammad Humoud Al Enezi, Motlaq Fajri Al Qeryafi, Aliah Fadous Al Rajhi, Mubark M Al Ajmi, Bahja Sayed Esmail A/Nabi Mustafawi, Esmail Ahmad Abdullah Al Qabandi, Najiya Salman Al Najjar, Mohammed Hasan Al Yahya, Tariq Mohd Almahmood, Kawthar Yaqoob Saeed, Mohammed Jassim Abdulhasan, Salma Abdulsamee Salamah, Majed Isa Majed And Mirna Micheletto.

Al Hassad Islamic account's customers in Kuwait and Bahrain are eligible to participate in the draw in line with the program's terms and conditions

Ahli United Bank added, "There are increased opportunities that await our current customers and those who are interested in opening an Al Hassad Islamic account to benefit from the wide range of prizes and opportunities offered this year."

Individual customers can open their accounts with a minimum deposit of KD 100, qualifying them to enter the draw.

Business

Ethiopia set on economic reforms, but won't be rushed

New PM wants to open up economy of 100m people

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopia has embarked on a root-and-branch overhaul of its economy, though its currency will not be devalued any time soon and liberalizing the state-dominated banking sector will take years, the recently appointed head of its central bank said. Yinager Dessie took the helm last month as one of the main players in a far-reaching program of political and economic reforms that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is pushing through.

In a candid interview at odds with the secretive traditions of the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE), the 47-year-old Yinager said the country was making a clean break with the state-driven economic model phased in following the end of military rule in 1991. "We cannot move the way we were moving the past 15-16 years," he told Reuters on Wednesday, referring to a period of rapid growth driven by huge state investments in infrastructure. "We should look into new ways of managing the economy."

Massive change has swept through the country of 100 million people since Abiy took office in April and set about dismantling the status quo. The 41-year-old has made peace with neighbor Eritrea - a move that could bring substantial economic benefits to landlocked Ethiopia - ended a state of emergency, freed political prisoners and put a complacent civil service on notice.

The government has also said it wants sell stakes in state-owned firms in the hope the private sector will boost already pacy growth and create jobs for the hundreds of thousands of young Ethiopians entering the market each year. "If we maintain and sustain this environment politically, it will create tremendous opportunity for this country," Yinager said. In an attempt to boost exports, the bank devalued the birr currency by 15 percent in October for the first time in seven years. While acknowledging a chronic shortage of dollars that is stifling growth, Yinager ruled out any further devaluation in this financial year, which runs until next July.

“**New ways of managing the economy**”

Opening up

Yinager's predecessor held the position for two decades, during which time he granted only a handful of interviews to state media. Ethiopian journalists joked that he was as shadowy as the head of the intelligence services. By contrast Yinager, a former National Planning Commission head who holds a PhD in environmental science from a university in Vienna, was happy to acknowledge the problems facing the economy and admit the government was seeking help to solve them. "We have established a working group which deals with reforms in the finance sector... that will be supported by experts from the World Bank and IMF," he said.



ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed addresses the members of parliament inside the House of Peoples' Representatives in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. —Reuters

When and how to liberalise the antiquated banking sector, currently off-limits to foreign investors, is a sensitive issue for the government, however. Yinager said establishing mobile banking was a priority, but authorities would tread carefully for fear that local lenders, locked in a 20th century banking time-warp, would be crushed by an influx of international banks. "It requires some sort of preparation to liberalise our banking system, so we are working on that," he said, adding this process would take "some years".

The currency crunch that Ethiopia has been bat-

ling has eased slightly over the last two months with a sharp narrowing of the gap between the official and black-market birr rates. But businesses that need hard currency to import raw materials say the unpredictability of the central bank's foreign currency allocation system has forced some to lay off staff or shut down completely. "This is one area where we are going to make some reform," Yinager said, acknowledging that one of the main reasons for the overhaul was the need for the economy to generate more dollars. —Reuters

Trade spat with Mexico speeds US decline as global wheat supplier

CHICAGO: Mexican bread, pasta and flour-tortilla makers are seeking alternative suppliers of wheat to reduce their dependence on the United States as trade relations between the two neighbors deteriorate. Mexico, the top importer of US wheat, is increasingly turning to cheaper supplies from Russia, which surpassed the United States as the top global wheat supplier in 2016.

Now the US market share decline is accelerating as Mexico casts about for more alternative suppliers in Latin America and elsewhere to hedge against the risk that US grains will get more expensive if the Mexican government imposes tariffs, according to interviews with three large Mexican millers, international grains traders, the top Mexican government agricultural trade official and government and industry data analyzed by Reuters. "It's important to send signals to Mr. Trump," said Jose Luis Fuente, head of Canimolt, a Mexican trade group which represents 80 percent of Mexican millers.

Mexico will keep buying American wheat because of its proximity, he said, but "we can't continue to have this absolute dependence." The shifting supply deals are alarming for the US industry,

which has supplied the vast majority of Mexico's wheat since the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) took effect. US wheat exports to Mexico dropped 38 percent in value, to \$285 million, in the first five months of 2018. US wheat exports to all countries, valued at \$2.2 billion, dropped 21 percent.

"The Mexico market ought to be just an extension of our domestic market," said Justin Gilpin, CEO of the Wheat Commission in Kansas, the nation's biggest wheat-producing state. Instead, Mexican buyers plan to import as much as 100,000 tons from Argentina - worth about \$20 million based on current prices - when it harvests wheat later this year, Fuente told Reuters. Mexico imported a test cargo of 33,000 tons in late 2017 after the its government financed a trade mission of grain buyers to find alternatives to US wheat in Latin America.

That same mission also resulted in Mexico raising its corn imports from Brazil, at the expense of sales from the United States. Mexico imported 10 times more corn from Brazil in 2017 than the previous year, and is on course to buy more this year. Shortly after that trip, Mexico finalized pest-and-pathogen import clearances to allow shipments of wheat from Argentina, which until then had been forbidden.

The White House and the US Department of Agriculture did not respond to repeated requests for comment on how the nation's trade policy might be accelerating the decline of its wheat industry. The Office of the US Trade Representative declined to comment. The administration of US President Donald Trump signaled its long-term commitment to tariffs this week when it announced that it would tap a Great Depression-era program for up to \$12 billion in aid to help US farmers hurt by the trade war that Trump started.

Paying a premium

Global grain merchant Bunge, which runs one of the largest milling operations in Mexico, booked the Argentine wheat purchase together with seven other buyers - even though it cost \$1 or \$2 more per tonne than US wheat, Fuente said. Bunge declined to comment. The buyers included Grupo Trimex, Harinas Elizondo, Molino Harinero San Blas, Harinera Anahuac, Harinera Los Pirineos, Harinera El Paraiso and Harinera Tlalnepantla.

They all wanted to test the quality of the imports, Fuente said. Grupo Trimex, Harinera Anahuac, Harinera Los Pirineos and Harinera El Paraiso did not respond to requests for comment. Molino Harinero San Blas and Harinera Tlalnepantla declined to comment. Manuel Iriso, CEO of Harinas Elizondo, which operates three flour mills in central Mexico, said the company was seeking the best quality wheat at the lowest cost, a goal it could achieve with a more diverse list of suppliers. "We want the biggest number of options," Iriso told Reuters.

More trade missions

Senior Mexican government officials are planning a trade mission to Argentina this week, timed to coincide with the G20 Agriculture Ministerial Meeting, a source familiar with the planning told Reuters. It will mark the third such grains-focused visit in about a year. Argentina's effort to take a piece of the Mexico wheat market remains tentative and faces challenges in competing on price, said David Hughes, president of Argentine wheat industry chamber Argentigo. But with the country's wheat now approved for import and the next crop nearly planted, "We are all set to sell to Mexico," he said. —Reuters

Business

What bubble? China's record-breaking venture capitalists charge ahead

Startups in China more expensive than their US counterparts

HONG KONG: China's venture capital scene has been on fire this year and a record-breaking run to unicorn status by a Chinese coffee startup suggests it is not cooling yet. Luckin Coffee took just six months to reach a \$1 billion "unicorn" valuation, a performance that is helping boost investor appetite for Chinese startups, even as they estimate that valuations are far outstripping US ones.

This month at Hong Kong's RISE technology conference, a key stop on the Asian venture capital circuit, investors said that startups in China were 30 to 40 percent more expensive than their US counterparts and in some cases, were even valued at twice the price.

"If I put my US lenses on, this is insane," said Edith Yeung, partner at 500 Startups, a California-based venture capital firm. But, she said, the calculus for investors was the sheer size of the Chinese market, noting that the WeChat social media platform had three times more daily users than the population of the United States. "Everything is sort of relative," Yeung said.

Brewing coffee, not bubbles

Luckin Coffee typifies the optimism evident in China's start-up scene. The Beijing-based coffee delivery firm only began operating in January and has plans to expand its 660-strong network to

challenge Starbucks, with 3,400 stores. Detractors point out that Luckin's fast growth has relied heavily on cut-price promotions and warn it also faces heavy competition from other chains such as Canada's Tim Horton's. Its backers still see value however.

"Luckin's valuation is not cheap or lofty - it's reasonable," said David Li, head of Centurium Capital. The former head of Warburg Pincus Asia Pacific led Luckin's recent \$200 million financing round and maintains it is not a conventional start-up, pointing to a management of experienced, serial entrepreneurs. At the other end of the scale from Luckin sits Ant Financial, the Chinese payments giant that became the world's largest unicorn in June when it secured \$14 billion in fresh funds that valued the firm at \$150 billion.

In search of the next Ant, Sequoia Capital China, the local arm of the Silicon Valley-based venture capital giant, is close to raising 15 billion yuan in its fifth yuan-denominated China-focused fund, the largest of its kind. "Lots of China's rising sizable tech companies are promising and still fast-growing, and rely on fundraising for further growth. We are increasing our fund size to capture those opportunities," said Zhou Kui, a partner at Sequoia China.

The firm's recent investments include Bitmain

weekly press briefing yesterday. He declined further comment, referring to China's market regulator for additional details. The State Administration for Market Regulation did not immediately respond to faxed questions nor provide any updates on its website.

Qualcomm had extended the deadline several times for the tie-up, which would have given the dominant smartphone chipmaker firm a broader array of products including sensors and microprocessors for connected "internet of things" devices. It also raised its bid from \$110 to \$127 a share in February, to the irritation of fellow chipmaker Broadcom, which itself recently had a hostile bid for Qualcomm blocked by the White House.

Washington said the acquisition of Qualcomm by Broadcom - now Singapore-based - would help Chinese competitors such as Huawei, particularly in the emerging 5G blazingly fast wireless internet, where a stronger China could present a national security issue. According to Qualcomm, the acquisition of NXP had received antitrust clearance from eight of the nine required government regulatory bodies around the world, with the matter still pending in China - suggesting the takeover may be a collateral victim of US-China trade tensions. "We intend to terminate our purchase agreement to acquire NXP when the agreement expires at the end of the day today, pending any new material developments," Mollenkopf said in a statement Wednesday with the company's quarterly earnings. —AFP



BEIJING: Men check their mobile phones outside a Luckin Coffee store in Beijing, China. — Reuters

Technologies, a Chinese bitcoin mining equipment maker, Pinduoduo Inc, a fast-growing e-commerce firm, and the self-driving start-up Pony.ai. On average, a startup in China reaches unicorn status about 18 months quicker than its US equivalent, according to Pitchbook, an industry data provider. "There is a lot of aggression and hunger," said Jixun Foo, managing partner at GGV Capital. "It's important to recognize the amount of talent and capital that's pouring into this market. That's capitalizing on a lot of change."

No rush for the exits - yet

Beijing's deleveraging campaign, which has driven up borrowing costs, slowed the economy and aggravated already tight market liquidity, could potentially affect fundraising for funds and companies, some investors warned. For now, however, venture capitalists are confident they can exit via either an IPO or a sale. Hong Kong is readying for a series of blockbuster tech deals, led by smartphone maker Xiaomi's \$5.4 billion float in July, the world's biggest tech IPO in four years. — Reuters

Qualcomm drops \$43bn bid for Dutch chip rival NXP

WASHINGTON: US computer chip giant Qualcomm dropped a \$43 billion bid to acquire Dutch rival NXP yesterday after failing to win approval from antitrust authorities in China. "Qualcomm River Holdings has terminated its previously announced cash tender offer to acquire all of the outstanding shares of NXP," the company said in a statement, referring to a wholly owned subsidiary of Qualcomm.

Qualcomm said it would pay NXP a \$2 billion dollar break-up fee. Its board has also authorized a \$30 billion stock repurchase plan. The California firm ended its effort when the bid expired at 11:59 pm Eastern time. The move came amid increasing trade tensions between the United States and China. But in Beijing the commerce ministry denied those tensions affected the proposed merger and sidestepped questions about its fate.

"The issue with the case is related to anti-monopoly law enforcement and has nothing to do with China-US trade frictions," commerce ministry spokesman Gao Feng told reporters at a

India's HPCL cancels Iran oil shipment

NEW DELHI: India's Hindustan Petroleum Corp (HPCL) cancelled the purchase of an Iranian oil cargo earlier this month after its insurance company refused to provide coverage for the crude because of US sanctions, three sources with knowledge of the matter said. HPCL, India's third-biggest state-owned refiner, renewed its installation insurance, which protects against any accidents at its refinery or storage sites, in early July. However, the new policy would not protect against any incidents involving Iranian oil processed or stored at its refineries, the sources said.

The refiner had planned to load 1 million barrels of Iranian crude onto the Suezmax tanker Ankaleshwar in early July but cancelled the purchase after it was unable to sell it on to another buyer, said the sources

who declined to be identified because of the sensitivity of the matter. India is the second-biggest buyer of Iranian crude after China and without insurance coverage to protect their plants, the country's refineries may have to cut off their imports earlier than anticipated.

The United States said in May it plans to re-impose some sanctions against Iran starting in August, with full sanctions in place by November, after withdrawing from a 2015 accord with Iran limiting its nuclear program. "HPCL faced problems in lifting cargo from Iran because its annual insurance policy was renewed in July after the US pulled out of the nuclear deal in May," said one of the sources, adding the company will not be able to lift any Iranian oil.

HPCL's Iranian imports account for only 20,000 barrels per day (bpd) of its full demand of 316,000 bpd but other Indian refiners that take larger volumes are likely to face the same problem if their annual policy is up for renewal before November. HPCL did not respond to requests from Reuters for a comment. Companies have until Nov 4 to fully wind down activities with Iran or risk exclusion from the US financial system. — Reuters

Sports

Pirates' 11-game winning streak ends

CLEVELAND: Trevor Bauer pitched seven-plus shutout innings, Edwin Encarnacion hit a two-out, two-run single, and Yonder Alonso hit a two-out, two-run homer Wednesday for the host Cleveland Indians, who ended the Pittsburgh Pirates' 11-game winning streak, 4-0. Bauer (9-6) allowed two hits, struck out 10 and walked two as the Indians avoided being swept in the three-game series. It was the 12th straight start in which Bauer has struck out at least seven.

Pittsburgh was trying to win 12 straight for the first time since May 21-June 1, 1965. The Pirates also had an eight-game winning streak in inter-league games and a five-game road winning streak halted. They had scored six runs or more in each of their previous seven games. Pirates center fielder Starling Marte, the second batter of the game, was hit on the back of the left hand with a pitch. He remained in the game long enough to get thrown out trying to steal second, then left.

Athletics 6, Rangers 5

Khris Davis blasted a two-out, two-strike, two-run home run in the ninth inning, rallying scorching Oakland to another improbable victory in Arlington, Texas. One night after the A's rallied from a 10-2 deficit to beat the Rangers 13-10 in 10 innings, Oakland found itself behind 5-1 after six innings this time before storming back behind two Davis homers, including a three-run, deficit-closing shot in the seventh. With the A's down 5-4 in the ninth, Nick Martini drew a one-out walk from Rangers right-hander Jose Leclerc (2-3), who was seeking his first save of the season. After Jed Lowrie struck out, Leclerc got two strikes on Davis before delivering a pitch that the slugger belted for his 27th homer of the season.

Angels 11, White Sox 3

Mike Trout homered twice, drove in four runs and reached base four times, leading Los Angeles to a rout of visiting Chicago. The Angels' Albert Pujols broke a tie with Hall of Famer Ken Griffey Jr. for sixth place on the all-time home run list by hitting the 631st of his career. He went deep on the first pitch of the second inning off James Shields. Trout hit a solo homer in the first inning against Shields (4-12) and belted a three-run homer in the sixth off Chris Volstad. Trout also doubled and was hit by a pitch.

Rockies 3, Astros 2

Charlie Blackmon clubbed a walk-off home run with one out in the ninth inning, and Colorado earned a split of a two-game interleague series with a victory over visiting Houston. Three Colorado pitchers combined on a one-hitter. Jon Gray

threw seven innings of one-hit ball. Adam Ottavino pitched the eighth inning, and closer Wade Davis (1-3) earned the win with a scoreless ninth after being tagged for five runs on Tuesday. Jose Altuve, who recorded the lone hit for the Astros, departed in the fifth inning due to right knee discomfort.

Rays 3, Yankees 2

Sergio Romo struck out rookie Gleyber Torres for the final out of the eighth inning and escaped trouble in the ninth as Tampa Bay held off New York in St. Petersburg, Fla. After Romo allowed a Giancarlo Stanton sacrifice fly to cut the Rays' lead to 3-2, the right-hander won an eight-pitch encounter with Torres, who was activated from the disabled list before the game following a three-week absence caused by a hip injury. The Rays employed six pitchers after originally scheduled starter Nathan Eovaldi was traded to the Boston Red Sox for minor league lefty Jalen Beeks about 80 minutes before first pitch.

Nationals 7, Brewers 3

Bryce Harper and Juan Soto each homered, and Tanner Roark threw eight shutout innings as Washington won at Milwaukee. Roark (4-12) allowed just three hits and struck out 11 with only one walk. The right-hander had lost six decisions in a row, not winning since June 6. Harper, held out of Tuesday's game — except to pinch-hit — due to a stomach bug, belted his three-run shot in the fifth inning.

Cubs 2, Diamondbacks 1

Pitcher Tyler Chatwood scored the winning run as an eighth-inning pinch runner, helping Chicago edge visiting Arizona. The Cubs were playing with a short bench due to an injury to third baseman Kris Bryant (left shoulder). That left only backup catcher Victor Caratini, second baseman Javier Baez and outfielder Jason Heyward. Baez, who has a sore left knee, hit a pinch-hit single in the eighth and advanced to second on a throwing error by Diamondbacks reliever T.J. McFarland (2-2). Baez was immediately removed from the game in favor of Chatwood, who scored when shortstop Nick Ahmed threw over the head of first baseman Paul Goldschmidt while trying to turn a double play.

Phillies 7, Dodgers 3

Carlos Santana hit a three-run triple and Jake Arrieta earned his eighth win as host Philadelphia defeated Los Angeles. Santana's triple was part of the Phillies' tiebreaking, five-run fifth inning. The first baseman battled back from an 0-2 count against southpaw Scott Alexander by hitting an opposite-field line drive on a pitch off the outside

training camp in Oxnard, California, Jones said the team had a policy to stand during renditions of "The Star-Spangled Banner." "Obviously I wouldn't dare speak for any of the other owners, but as far as the Dallas Cowboys are concerned, you know where I stand and our team knows where I stand on the issue," Jones told reporters. "Our policy is that you stand for the anthem, toe on the line."

The National Football League and the NFL Players Association last week said they had reached a "standstill agreement" on the anthem issue, declaring that no new rules would be put in place while confidential talks were ongoing. Protests in which players knelt during the anthem — first launched by San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick in 2016 to highlight racial and social injustices — put America's



CLEVELAND: Jason Kipnis #22 of the Cleveland Indians slides safely into third base with a triple as Colin Moran #19 of the Pittsburgh Pirates tries to tag him during the fourth inning at Progressive Field. — AFP

corner. Arrieta (8-6) allowed five hits, two walks and three runs (two earned) in six innings.

Reds 7, Cardinals 3

Phillip Ervin busted open a close game with a two-run double in the eighth inning, helping Cincinnati hold off visiting St. Louis. Eugenio Suarez, Adam Duvall and Tucker Barnhart homered for the Reds, who won a second straight series from the Cardinals after beginning the season 0-9 against St. Louis. Yadier Molina belted his 14th home run of the season, a solo shot, in the seventh inning to get the Cardinals within 5-3. St. Louis threatened at least to get even in the eighth when it loaded the bases with two outs, but Molina, who already had three hits in the game, flied out to right field, ending the rally.

Mariners 3, Giants 2

Jean Segura's run-scoring single snapped an eighth-inning tie as Seattle defeated visiting San Francisco. Edwin Diaz struck out the side in the ninth for his major-league-leading 38th save of the season, giving Alex Colome (3-5) the victory. Guillermo Heredia led off the bottom of the eighth by drawing a walk off left-hander Tony Watson (3-4). Dee Gordon's sacrifice bunt advanced Heredia to second. Right-hander Sam Dyson came on to face Segura, who chopped the first pitch into center field.

Twins 12, Blue Jays 6 (11 innings)

Mitch Garver went 4-for-6 with five RBIs, including a two-run double in a six-run 11th inning, as Minnesota completed a three-game sweep at

Toronto. Joe Mauer added three hits and three RBIs for the Twins, who took the lead in the 11th when Max Kepler was hit by a pitch from Jake Petricka (1-1) with two outs and the bases loaded. Ervin Santana, making his first start of the season for the Twins after finger surgery in February, allowed three runs, seven hits and one walk while striking out five in five innings.

Tigers 8, Royals 4

Jose Iglesias hit a three-run homer, Matthew Boyd won for the first time in eight starts, and visiting Detroit thumped Kansas City. Victor Martinez supplied three hits and two RBIs. John Hicks had two hits and scored two runs, and Jeimer Candelario added two hits and an RBI for Detroit. Royals starter Danny Duffy (6-9) surrendered seven runs on nine hits in 5 2/3 innings. He had allowed just one run combined in his previous three starts.

Mets 6, Padres 4

Jose Bautista hit a long two-run homer in the sixth inning, and New York halted a dubious streak with a victory over visiting San Diego. The Mets won a series for the first time since sweeping the Arizona Diamondbacks May 18-20. They were 0-11-6 in their previous 17 series before Bautista contributed offensively and defensively and helped the Mets avoid matching the 1982 team record. Before homering, Bautista ended Padres starter Clayton Richard's perfect-game bid by opening a four-run fifth with a walk. He also made a running catch and crashed into the right field wall to rob Freddy Galvis of a run-scoring extra-base hit for the final out of the fourth. — Reuters

Cowboys owner: Players will stand for US anthem

DALLAS: Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones said Wednesday his players would be expected to stand for the US national anthem this season but described President Donald Trump's frequent interventions on the subject as "problematic." Speaking as the Cowboys opened their

most popular sport at the center of a political firestorm last year.

This came after Trump described players who took part as "sons of bitches" who were insulting the flag, the US military and the nation. The remarks prompted a wave of kneeling protests across the league last September, angering some fans and placing several conservative, Trump-supporting team owners in an awkward position as NFL television ratings dropped.

In an attempt to defuse the issue ahead of the 2018 season, the NFL in May announced a new policy which required players on the field to stand for the anthem. However players had the option of remaining in the locker room. The NFL backed away from that position last week however following a challenge from the players union. Some team owners had already said they

would not punish players who protested. That in turn prompted Trump to return to the subject on Twitter, calling for players who did not stand for the anthem to be suspended without pay. "The NFL National Anthem Debate is alive and well again - can't believe it!" Trump tweeted last Friday. "Isn't it in contract that players must stand at attention, hand on heart? The \$40,000,000 Commissioner must now make a stand. First time kneeling, out for game. Second time kneeling, out for season/no pay!" he wrote. Jones said Trump's involvement in the issue had given the league a headache. "Yes, his interest in what we're doing is problematic," Jones said. "Unprecedented if you really think about it. Like the very game itself, that's the way it is and we'll deal with it. Everybody would like for it to go away." — AFP

Sports

'Half-time' champions Mercedes face struggle in Hungarian heat

'[We] will keep pushing to improve our performance'

BUDAPEST: Mercedes team chief Toto Wolff has admitted that his "half-time" champions are struggling for supremacy and expects this weekend's Hungarian Grand Prix to deliver another closely-fought three-way fight for glory. Just days after seeing Lewis Hamilton claim one of the greatest wins of his career with an epic rain-soaked triumph in Germany, Wolff conceded that "in the cold light of day, we know and recognize that we didn't bring the quickest car to Hockenheim."

And, as a result, he said: "We all know that no prizes are given out for half-time champions, so we will keep pushing to improve our performance." After 11 of this year's 21 races, Hamilton and Mercedes sit atop the drivers and constructors championships, but only by a narrow margin, and Wolff knows that it will require another special effort in the expected sweltering heat of the Hungaroring for his team to head off for their European summer holidays as leaders. "Hungary will be another tough fight with both Ferrari and Red Bull," he said. "It's a high down-force track and on paper they should both be very fast. However, if there's one thing the German Grand Prix taught us, it's that predictions don't determine results."

Serious threat

After struggling for power at recent circuits,

the Hungaroring's layout and characteristics make Red Bull strong contenders for success because their car has the chassis handling that will enable them to compete at the front. Daniel Ricciardo won the Monaco Grand Prix this year and has shown on the tight and technical circuits that he has the ability to deliver results, albeit with his team-mate Max Verstappen also representing a serious threat. He won in Hungary in 2014.

The Australian is expected to have his future with Red Bull resolved this weekend and another win, his third of the season, would be a timely confirmation of his and the team's potential. It would also not be an entirely unwelcome result for Hamilton or Mercedes if it deprives rivals Sebastian Vettel and Ferrari of points in the 'fight for five' titles that has dominated the season to date. For Ferrari, the race will be overshadowed by the death of former chairman Sergio Marchionne this week as they attempt to bounce back from Vettel's crashing, and point-less, exit in the rain last weekend.

Vettel's misfortune allowed Hamilton to turn an eight-point deficit into a 17-point lead with his epic win from 14th on the grid. But, he knows too, that despite having won a record five times in Hungary, this weekend's contest will not be straightforward. "It's not usually our strongest track, but it's not a power circuit so hopefully



HOCKENHEIM, Germany: Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton steers his car during the German Formula One Grand Prix at the Hockenheim racing circuit. — AFP

this extra chunk of power that Ferrari have doesn't serve them as well there and maybe we can have a decent fight. "They have always been really good on tyres it's a hot track so, undoubtedly, they'll continue to be fast, but I've still got

high hopes." Ricciardo will go into the weekend well prepared, after taking engine penalties at Hockenheim for strategic reasons, but concerned about the power failure that forced him to retire. — AFP

Why the Olympics are held in July despite heat

TOKYO: A heat wave scorching Japan is raising questions about timing the Tokyo 2020 Olympics during July and August, typically the annual peak for temperatures and humidity, and the health risks that might pose for athletes and spectators. When Tokyo first hosted the Summer Olympics in 1964, they were held during the cooler, drier month of October. The 1968 Mexico City games were also held in October.

But most Summer Olympics for the past three decades have been held in July or August, recognized as an ideal time window for TV networks to cover the event. They pay billions of dollars for broadcasting rights during these months when the global sports calendar is otherwise light, increasing the chances of capturing a bigger audience.

Neal Pilson, the former president of CBS Sports, which broadcast the 1992, 1994 and 1998 Winter Olympics in the United States, said "the IOC is well aware of American network preferences for the timing of the Summer and Winter games," referring to the International Olympic Committee (IOC). "The Summer Olympics are simply of less value if held in October because of pre-existing programme commitments for sports," he told Reuters.

The IOC stipulated that bidders for the 2020 Olympics should hold the event between July 15 and Aug 31. Tokyo chose July 24 to Aug 9. To set the dates, the IOC gets input from international sporting federations so as not to interrupt their schedules.

Prime time

But the dates are also chosen because of the lull in the sports calendar, public Olympic records show and TV sports marketing experts say. In September or October, the Olympics would have to compete for viewers' attention against other events, such as the start of the NFL American football season, Major League Baseball playoffs in the United States and the early months of the soccer season in Europe.

"It's designed to fit in this window, a lull in the sports schedule where not much is going on," said Victor Matheson, a professor of economics at College of the Holy Cross in Massachusetts. Candidate cities can propose alternative dates, although they are not always granted. When Doha in Qatar proposed hosting the 2020 games in October because it was too hot in July and August, the Olympic Broadcasting Services, which provides TV coverage for many events, and International Television and Marketing Services were critical of the idea in feedback published in an April 2012 Olympic working group report.

"Olympic Games held in the IOC's preferred period of July/August provide broadcasters with a 'guarantee' that they will be prime-time market leaders," the feedback read. "In October, broadcasters would face lower viewership/ratings levels." NBC, which in 2014 agreed to pay the IOC \$7.65 billion for exclusive broadcasting rights in the United States through 2032, declined to comment.

Discovery Communications, which acquired Eurosport in 2015 and spent 1.3 billion euros to buy pan-European rights to four Olympics through the Paris 2024 games, also declined to comment. IOC spokesman Michael Noyelle said in an email that broadcasters provide their input during the development of the competition schedule after the Olympics dates have been set. — Reuters

Ledecky eases into US championships with 800m free win

IRVINE: World record-holder Katie Ledecky cruised to victory in the 800m freestyle at the US swimming championships on Wednesday to lock down a berth for the Pan Pacific Championships next month. Ledecky, owner of the top 10 times ever posted in the event, was under world record pace through 350 meters, but settled for a comfortable victory in 8min 11.98 sec — well outside the world record of 4:08.79 she set at the Rio Olympics in 2016.

"Usually it takes me a few races to get into these meets, so (I) knew that was going to be the case probably," said Ledecky, whose four victories in Rio took her tally of Olympic gold medals to five. The 21-year-old American was confident she would find more speed before the Pan Pacs in Tokyo August 9-14. "I felt pretty smooth throughout," she said. "I never really was able to change gears. I'll get back to work and find ways to be better in a couple of weeks."

While Ledecky was easing into the meet — a qualifier not only for Pan Pacs but also for next year's world championships in South Korea — Hali

Flickinger capped a career day with a victory in the 200m butterfly. Flickinger, 24, sliced almost a full second of her lifetime best in the heats with a time of 2:05.87. She broke the US Open record of 2:05.96 set by Mary T. Meagher in 1981 in becoming the third-fastest US woman ever. She couldn't quite reproduce that in the final, but she held on to win in 2:06.14, with Katie Drabot second in 2:07.18 and Regan Smith third in 2:07.42.

"I definitely think it is a step in the right direction," Flickinger said. "I definitely know there's more in the tank. That just showed me that it's going to come." Blake Pieroni, 22, stormed home to beat 2012 Olympic champion Nathan Adrian in the 100m freestyle in 48.08sec. Adrian, who also owns four Olympic relay golds, was philosophical. "In a race like that you're just racing for places," said Adrian, who was second in 48.25sec and like Ledecky thought he'd find more speed heading into Tokyo. "Usually I do get a little faster with that extra two weeks of rest," he said. — AFP

Sports

Hetmyer hundred helps Windies level series against Bangladesh

Bangladesh failed to score eight runs off their final over

PROVIDENCE: Shimron Hetmyer scored a superb century as Bangladesh stumbled in the final over to hand the West Indies a series-levelling victory in their one-day game here Wednesday. The hosts made it 1-1 in the best-of-three series after Bangladesh failed to score eight runs off their final over for what would have been a series win.

Shimron Hetmyer blazed 125 off 93 balls to pace the home side to a competitive 271 all out batting first. Bangladesh were left stranded on 268 for six after their 50 overs as West Indies held on for a three-run win. West Indies captain Jason Holder, who started the innings by conceding 20 runs and whose final analysis of one for 66 was the most expensive ever by a Caribbean bowler in an ODI against Bangladesh, bowled the 50th over to give the hosts the victory.

Holder's first delivery accounted for topscorer Mushfiqur Rahim for 68 via a catch on the mid-wicket boundary and he conceded just four runs off the remaining five deliveries to celebrate a result with his teammates which leaves the series to be decided in the final match on Saturday in St Kitts. "We just had to hang in there and believe in ourselves," said the delighted captain after the match. "Bangladesh came at us hard and credit to them for the way they batted at the top. But we didn't give up and it really sets things up for the final match."

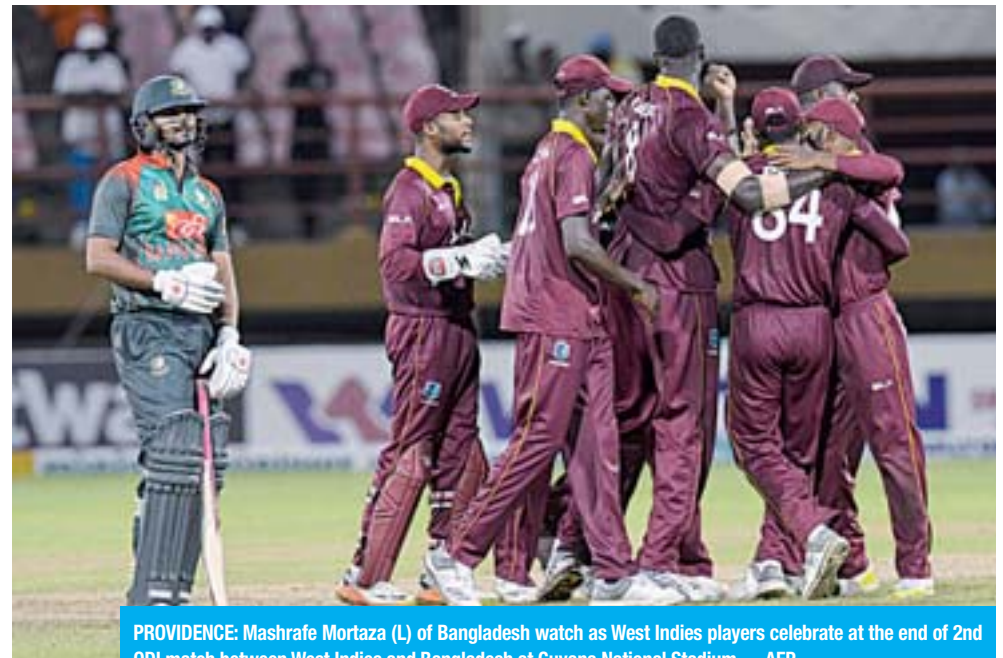
Final over drama

Yet it should never have come to the final over drama, especially after the flying start in which Bangladesh raced to their fastest-ever fifty in ODIs

- off 4.4 overs - and were 71 for one by the seventh over and apparently cruising. However both Tamim Iqbal (54) and Shakib al Hasan (56) fell to careless shots to spinners Devendra Bishoo and Ashley Nurse respectively to get the West Indies back into the fray.

Mushfiqur and Mahmudullah, who contributed 39, then featured in an 87-run fourth-wicket stand that looked to have tilted the balance decisively Bangladesh's way. There were more twists to come though as Mahmudullah was run out at the start of the 46th over at 232 for four, which opened the door to a West Indies team who appeared to have been closed out from the contest just minutes earlier. "It was a game we should have won but we made too many mistakes at the end," said Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Mortaza. "We weren't at our best in the field either but the series is still alive and we believe we have what it takes to win it."

Bangladesh announced Wednesday that the West Indies would arrive on November 15 for their first full tour to the country since 2012. "Apart from the West Indies, we've also confirmed the Zimbabwe series in October," said BCB chief executive officer Nizamuddin Chowdhury. "They (Zimbabwe) will play two Tests and three ODIs. It means we will now play back-to-back series this year." The West Indies series will include two Tests, three one-day internationals and three twenty20 internationals between November and December. The Zimbabwe tour dates have not yet been announced.



PROVIDENCE: Mashrafe Mortaza (L) of Bangladesh watch as West Indies players celebrate at the end of 2nd ODI match between West Indies and Bangladesh at Guyana National Stadium. —AFP

Fixtures for West Indies tour of Bangladesh:

Nov 15: West Indies arrive
Nov 18-19: Two-day match v TBA in Chittagong
Nov 22-26: First Test in Chittagong
Nov 30-December 4: Second Test in Dhaka
Dec 6: One-day match v TBA in Dhaka

Dec 9: First one-day international in Dhaka
Dec 11: Second ODI in Dhaka
Dec 14: Third ODI in Sylhet
Dec 17: First twenty20 international in Sylhet
Dec 20: Second T20 in Dhaka
Dec 22: Third T20 in Dhaka —AFP

CAS dismisses Russian trio's Olympic DQs

LAUSANNE: The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) yesterday dismissed appeals by Russian athletes Tatyana Lebedeva and Maria Abakumova and cyclist Ekaterina Gnidenko against their Olympic disqualifications for doping. The trio were banned by the disciplinary committee of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) after re-testing showed that "each athlete was found to have committed an anti-doping rule violation", notably testing positive for turinabol.

Abakumova and Lebedeva's tests dated from the 2008 Beijing Games while Gnidenko tested positive in London four years later. "CAS has dismissed the appeals and confirmed the IOC disciplinary committee decisions," CAS said in a statement. "Accordingly: the disqualification of Ekaterina Gnidenko (track cycling) from the 2012 London Olympic Games is confirmed; the disqualification of Maria Abakumova (silver medalist in javelin) from the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games is confirmed; the disqualification of Tatyana Lebedeva (silver medal-

ist in long jump and triple jump) from the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games is confirmed."

CAS found that the Russians "were unable to prove that the testing methods adopted by the laboratories, which led to the positive findings against each of them, were not scientifically valid in accordance with the standard required to be applied". Lebedeva, who retired in 2013, dominated long jump and triple jump for much of the previous decade. She won long jump gold in the 2004 Athens Olympics and triple jump silvers in Greece and Sydney four years previously. Her medal haul also includes three world golds and two silvers as well as three world indoor titles and one European gold medal.

Russia was banned in 2015 over a state-sponsored doping program was revealed. The Kremlin has however consistently denied a report by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) which accused Moscow of institutional doping between 2011 and 2015, including at the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics. Russia was banned from participating in the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics earlier this year, but tens of Russian track and field athletes have been cleared to compete under a neutral flag after proving an unblemished doping record. Additionally, WADA has maintained its suspension of the Russian Anti-Doping Agency (RUSADA) over its failure to follow a roadmap necessary to regain compliant status. —AFP

England recall Rashid for first Test against India

LONDON: England dramatically recalled Adil Rashid to their 13-man squad announced yesterday for next week's first Test against India even though the Yorkshire leg-spinner has opted out of playing first-class County Championship cricket this season. Rashid is now in line to play his first home Test, after all 10 of his previous appearances were made overseas.

His recall came alongside that of off-spinner Moeen Ali, who was preferred to Somerset's Dom Bess — a Test debutant in the drawn series against Pakistan earlier this season. Rashid's selection in a squad for what will be England's 1,000th Test when they face India in the first of a five-match series at Edgbaston, comes despite him deciding to opt out of all first-class cricket this year ahead of a home World Cup campaign in 2019.

It was a bold move by a panel headed up by new national selector Ed Smith, who recalled Jos Buttler against Pakistan on the strength of the batsman's form in the Indian Premier League. Rashid won the last of his 10 Test caps away to India in Chennai more than 18 months ago. He starred recently in England's one-day series wins over Australia and India, taking 20 wickets at an average of 23.95.

Rashid also produced a classic leg-break to bowl India captain and star batsman Virat Kohli as England clinched a 2-1 success at the bowler's Headingley home ground. Meanwhile left-armed Jack Leach, who like Rashid naturally turns the ball away from right-handed batsmen, suffered concussion on his return to county cricket with Somerset after breaking his thumb on the eve of the Pakistan series and so has yet to add to his debut cap against New Zealand in Christchurch.

An England statement stressed Rashid, 30, was committed to Test cricket. "Before the selection meeting, Adil had confirmed his availability to play Test cricket for England for whole of this summer and the upcoming winter tours to Sri Lanka and West Indies."

'One-off'

Former England batsman Smith added Rashid would also have to commit to playing red-ball cricket if he wanted a long-term Test future. "Following his earlier decision in February 2018, Adil has a white-ball only contract to play for Yorkshire this summer," he insisted. "That arrangement is unchanged by his selection for England. "However, Adil fully understands that if he wishes to be eligible for Test cricket in the 2019 season, he must have a county contract to play four-day cricket." Moving forward, England Test players must be committed to the county championship. "Clearly, the one-off circumstances around Adil's return to the Test squad are unusual. "However, the selection panel was unanimous in believing that Adil should be selected in England's squad." —AFP

Sports

Carry on coaching: Tite keeps Brazil job despite Russia flop

'It's a great challenge and we are happy to face it'

RIO DE JANEIRO: Tite was handed a new contract to remain as coach of the Brazil national team until 2022 on Wednesday despite their traumatic World Cup quarter-final exit in Russia, the Brazilian football federation (CBF) said. "The CBF has renewed the contract with coach Tite until the end of the 2022 World Cup in Qatar," wrote the CBF on its website.

Tite is the first coach of the Brazil national team to be re-appointed after a World Cup elimination since Claudio Coutinho in 1978. Brazil, with superstar Neymar in their ranks, were regarded as one of the favorites for the 2018 World Cup but they were knocked out in the last-eight, losing 2-1 to Belgium. "The federation has given us the conditions to build an environment of unity and professionalism, it's a great challenge and we are happy to face it, already focused on our next matches and competitions," Tite said in a statement.

Tite's first challenge will be to win the Copa America in 2019 when Brazil hosts the tournament. Brazil will begin their post-World Cup rehabilitation with a series of friendlies, the first of which is against the United States in New Jersey on September 7. "The CBF is investing in a long-term project to guarantee the staff six-and-a-half-years in charge of La Selecao, and we believe that this careful planning will bring to Brazilian

football the results we expect," said Rogerio Caboclo, the executive director of the CBF.

A daunting task

Adenor Leonardo Bacchi, who is universally known by his nickname Tite, took over the Brazil job in June 2016 and immediately faced a daunting task. The team under Dunga, who'd been fired, were an embarrassment. And Dunga himself had been hired in 2014 to resurrect a team reeling from the ultimate humiliation of that 7-1 loss to Germany in the semi-finals of the World Cup on Brazilian soil.

By the time Tite took over, Brazil had already played a third of their qualifying games for the 2018 tournament and Tite wondered whether he'd have time to turn the slow-motion disaster around. Immediately after getting the job, "I said to myself... 'What if I don't manage to qualify?'" he told TV Globo recently. Tite, 57, says his wife Rose looked at him in concern. "I can't figure out what you're thinking," she said.

But the devout Catholic, who has a shrine to the Virgin Mary in his office, did more than just sort out his thoughts. In seven months he pulled the team from the brink and turned them into winners, comfortably topping the South American qualifying group. Tite's emotional and eloquent way of talking and his father-figure status



in the dressing room were key in healing the mental scars of talented, young players who'd known so many setbacks.

Tite didn't have to make wholesale changes to the squad—he only had to bring out the best in what he already had. A fan of typical Brazilian rice and beans, washed down with the potent cachaca-based cocktail caipirinha, Tite admitted

he cried for a week after the 2014 loss to Germany, when he waited in vain for a call from the Brazilian Football Confederation to take over. "When I wasn't chosen... I felt frustrated, angry and very sad," he said. "But right then I thought of my mother. She was a fighter. Whenever our family had problems, she'd start working even harder," he told *The Players' Tribune*. — AFP

Wounded Lions seeks Super redemption as semis loom

WELLINGTON: The Golden Lions head into this weekend's Super Rugby semi-final against NSW Waratahs desperate to erase painful memories of losing the 2016 and 2017 competition deciders. Hooker Malcolm Marx insists that rather than leaving the Lions mentally scarred, the back-to-back defeats made them tougher and more determined to go all the way this year. "I think we're a bit more experienced now that we've had two finals under our belt," he said ahead of the final four clash in Johannesburg on Saturday. "I definitely believe we're as strong as we were a year ago."

The other semi-final is an all-New Zealand affair pitting the defending champion Canterbury Crusaders against Wellington Hurricanes in Christchurch. The Lions start as favourites against the Waratahs, who have never won a finals match away from home and suffered a 29-0 loss to the South Africans in Sydney earlier this year. Former Lions coach Johan Ackerman predicted the Sydneysiders, who staged an epic comeback against Otago Highlanders to reach the semis, would struggle at altitude in Johannesburg.

"(The Lions) have shown they can go into an extra gear in the last 20 minutes, the Waratahs won't be able to keep up with the pace over the 80 minutes," he said. "They won't come back like they did against the Highlanders." The Waratahs have not won at Ellis Park since 2009 but halfback Nick Phipps said they would stick with their brand of "quick, unrelenting footy". "We're not going to come into a semi-final and change the way we play now," he said. "We're not going to die wondering. We're ready to play our game and play it to the best of our ability."

Discipline vital: McCaw

The Hurricanes will also be battling history when they face an in-form Crusaders outfit gunning for a record-extending ninth Super Rugby title. The Crusaders are on a 13-match winning run and have turned Christchurch into a finals fortress, never losing any of the 19 post-season matches hosted there. Additionally, the hosts have emerged victorious in all 11 semi-finals contested by two New Zealand teams, including three Crusaders' wins over the Hurricanes.

However, the Hurricanes can take comfort in the fact that they have won six of their last nine meetings against the Crusaders. The 2016 champions also have one of the most potent backlines in the competition, marshaled by two-time world player of the year Beauden Barrett. The Crusaders should have an edge up front with a pack that collectively boasts around 400 international caps.

But former captain Richie McCaw said there were lapses of discipline in the 40-10 quarter-final win over Coastal Sharks that the Hurricanes would punish. "It's the little mistakes and the back-to-back penalties that allow momentum to go against you," he told TVNZ. "It can be one or two things like that and you go from being on the front foot to all of a sudden, with the guys the Hurricanes have got, being under pressure."

The Crusaders beat the Lions to claim last year's title and the Hurricanes denied them in 2016, meaning the South Africans still face a daunting task if they down the Waratahs to reach a third straight final. But Marx said adversity had forged the Lions into a tight unit ready for any challenge. "I can only describe the environment here in one word — brotherhood," he said. "It's hard to actually explain unless you've experienced it yourself. "Everyone cares about each other, it's not about the individual, but rather how we can help each other to perform as well as possible as a group." — AFP

Olympic boss appointed as Japan football coach

TOKYO: The 49-year-old replaces Akira Nishino, who led the Blue Samurai to the last 16 of the World Cup in Russia in his two-month spell as caretaker coach. Former Germany coach Jürgen Klinsmann had been linked to the job, along with ex-Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger, but the Japan Football Association (JFA) went for a trusted insider.

Moriyasu, who will also maintain his current assignment as the coach for Japan's under-21 team for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, pledged to bring new blood to the top national side. "There will be generational changes. There will be integration of various generations of players," he told a press conference. Moriyasu was drafted in as an assistant to Nishino ahead of the World Cup after JFA chief Kozo Tashima abruptly fired Franco-Bosnian coach Vahid Halilhodzic in April following a poor run of form.

Japan went on to reach the World Cup knockout stage for the first time since 2010. Moriyasu, a former Japan international midfielder, steered Sanfrecce Hiroshima to three J-League titles between 2012 and 2015. Japan have had mixed results under foreign coaches since Dutchman Hans Ooft became the country's first non-Japanese boss in 1992.

Frenchman Philippe Troussier led Japan to the last 16 as co-hosts of the 2002 World Cup. But Brazilian legend Zico frittered away the talents of a so-called "golden generation" of players such as Hidetoshi Nakata and Shunsuke Nakamura in an anemic performance at the 2006 finals. His successors have fared little better and Japan appeared rudderless heading into this summer's World Cup until Tashima's controversial decision to axe Halilhodzic. — AFP

Sports

Salah and Mane score as Liverpool down City

Managers relieved at the lack of injuries on both sides

EAST RUTHERFORD: Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane made an instant impact as Liverpool came from behind to beat Premier League champions Manchester City 2-1 in their International Champions Cup friendly match on Wednesday. Mane stroked home Liverpool's winner from the penalty spot deep into stoppage time to give Jurgen Klopp's men a morale-boosting victory over an under-strength City team at the MetLife Stadium.

Klopp praised Mane's performance after coming on in the second half. "The second half pleased me, first half not so much," Klopp said. "You saw the difference when Sadio came on. He played balls in behind and made life difficult. "With this and all the other changes, it changed the game." Both Klopp and City boss Pep Guardiola were unimpressed with the makeshift playing surface in a venue used by the New York Giants and New York Jets NFL teams. "Better to throw the ball than pass it in this arena," Klopp said. Guardiola meanwhile said he was relieved no players were injured. "This happened in my first season with Barcelona and I was so angry, so upset," Guardiola said when asked about the pitch. "I grew up and am a more mature guy. I look to the other side. It is business. We pray before the game that there would be no injuries and that's what happened."

Disrupted prep

Both Liverpool and City's pre-season prepara-

tions in the United States have been disrupted by the absence of several key players who starred in the World Cup. Guardiola however sounded a positive note about the absentees. "I learned that when I was little boy in Barcelona in the Academy. Don't find excuses," he said. "We are happy as a club to have 16 players out and the most with their national teams, that's a good sign for the club." In the past it didn't happen, years ago, and that is good for our future. But we are going to adapt. It's as simple as that." Salah and Mane both reported for duty for Liverpool in time for Wednesday's game.

Nonetheless, it was City who took the lead just after half-time when German international Leroy Sane caught Liverpool's defense napping and burst clear to slot past Caoimhin Kelleher on 57 minutes. Egypt star Salah, however, was quick to make his mark after coming on for Curtis Jones in the 62nd minute, scoring a header with virtually his first touch of the game to level it at 1-1. The game appeared to be heading for a draw until Tosin Adarabioyo crashed into Dominic Solanke in the area for a certain penalty. Mane stepped up to send Joe Hart the wrong way and give Klopp's team the win.

Guardiola also said the club have still to see the best of Leroy Sane. A surprise omission from Germany's World Cup squad, Sane scored the opener in City's 2-1 defeat to Liverpool in the International Champions Cup but Guardiola said last season's PFA Young Player of the Year had room to improve.



EAST RUTHERFORD, NJ - JULY 25: Marko Grujic #16 of Liverpool fights for the ball with Tomiwa Dele-Bashiru #72 of Manchester City during their match at MetLife Stadium. — AFP

"It depends on him," Guardiola told reporters. "He needs more minutes and he needs to regain his principles in terms of playing without the ball. "He has the talent to do that and we are happy that he scored.

Still, he is far away from his best." Guardiola

also said his team's performance against Liverpool showed there was a bright future for a young City squad. "For 75 minutes, it was incredible what we did with the players we have ... Our personality was incredible. The average age of our players in the first half was very young." — Agencies

Poch relaxed about World Cup missing list

SAN DIEGO: Mauricio Pochettino insists he will "adapt" to the loss of Tottenham's World Cup absentees, despite the impact on the club's preparations for the new Premier League campaign. Spurs thrashed Roma 4-1 in their opening game in the International Champions Cup pre-season tournament on Wednesday after doubles from Fernando Llorente and Lucas Moura earned Pochettino's side a comfortable win in San Diego.

But while World Cup trio Christian Eriksen, Son Heung-Min and Davinson Sanchez all played a part, there were a host of big names missing from Spurs' ranks, including Harry Kane, Hugo Lloris and Dele Alli after they have been given extra time off for their exploits in Russia. Spurs had nine players represented among the four World Cup semi-finalists, but while that group may struggle to feature in their Premier League opener at Newcastle on August 11, boss Pochettino is focusing on those who are definitely available.

"It's different circumstances [this summer] because the [World Cup] players need to rest and a period to recover after more than 12 months of competition," said Pochettino. "I'm not complaining about that. I completely understand that they need 21 days away from football. "Of course, it's a massive disadvantage because to prepare the season in that way will be tough for them. But I need to adapt. "We cannot delete the start of the season. — AFP

Sanchez on target as United edge Milan

LOS ANGELES: Alexis Sanchez was on target as Manchester United defeated AC Milan on penalties in their International Champions Cup friendly here Wednesday. Chilean international Sanchez was United's best performer in a low-key game at Carson's StubHub Center which finished 1-1. Sanchez fired United into the lead with a well-taken goal on 12 minutes before Spanish midfielder Suso equalized for Milan three minutes later.

Although Sanchez produced a lively performance for United, the Premier League giants were unable to find a further goal, sending the game to penalties. A bizarre shoot-out was won 9-8 by United, with both teams having to recycle their penalty takers after a string of missed spot-kicks.

Ander Herrera fired United into the lead in sudden death with his second penalty before Ivorian youngster Franck Kessie chipped his spot-kick over the bar to give United the win.

United's Portuguese goalkeeper Joel



CARSON: Franck Kessie #79 of AC Milan battles for the ball with Luke Shaw #23 of Manchester United in the second half during the International Champions Cup 2018 at StubHub Center. — AFP

Pereira, deputizing for the absent David De Gea and Sergio Romero, said he hoped his performance in the shoot-out had helped his bid to win a place in manager Jose Mourinho's squad. "Obviously I have been the last 18 months here and the

manager shows good faith and trust in me, he wants me to play and he thinks it's the right thing for me," Pereira said. "I will find out next week where I play next season. "I want to prove the manager the faith he put in me is right." — AFP

Sports

Germany's FA boss rejects Ozil racism charge but admits mistake

Admits he should have done more to protect the midfielder

BERLIN: The chief of the German Football Association (DFB) yesterday rejected accusations of racism by Mesut Ozil, but admitted he should have done more to protect the midfielder against discriminatory abuse. In a four-page statement announcing his decision to quit playing football for Germany on Sunday, Ozil singled out football federation (DFB) boss Reinhard Grindel with harsh words.

"In the eyes of Grindel and his supporters, I am German when we win, but I am an immigrant when we lose," Ozil, who has Turkish roots, wrote Sunday in his lengthy farewell statement that unleashed a racism storm in Germany. But Grindel rejected the charge four days on and has not yielded to calls for him to quit. "I say this openly that the personal criticism has affected me," he said.

"I am even more sorry for my colleagues, the many people working on a voluntary basis and the employees in the DFB, to be branded in connection with racism. "For the federation as well as for me personally, I firmly reject this." But Grindel acknowledged that he should have stepped in firmly to end the abuse against Ozil over a controversial photograph with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, which led some to question the footballer's loyalty to Germany.

'Unbearable, unacceptable'

"On hindsight, I should have clearly said what is obvious to me personally and to all of us as a federation: any form of racist hostility is unbearable, un-

acceptable and cannot be tolerated." "That's valid in the case of Jerome Boateng, that's valid for Mesut Ozil, and also valid for all players who have a migration background," he said, adding that it was regrettable that the photo was "misused for racist slogans".

In 2016, far-right leader Alexander Gauland took aim at defender Boateng, who was born in Berlin to a German mother and a Ghanaian father. "People find him good as a footballer, but they don't want to have a Boateng as a neighbor," said Gauland. Words from Grindel's past have come back to haunt him. As a backbencher in 2004 in the Bundestag, the lower house of the German parliament, he said that "multi-culturalism is in truth a mess". In Ozil's scathing critique of Grindel, the Arsenal star said he tried to explain his "heritage, ancestry and the reasoning" behind the Erdogan photo to the DFB boss. But Grindel was "more interested in speaking about his own political views and belittling my opinion", said Ozil.

The playmaker has walked away from international football after a career that included a World Cup win in 92 appearances, 23 goals and 40 assists for Germany. Born in Gelsenkirchen, he is a third generation German who counts among more than three million people of Turkish origin in Germany. Since dropping the bombshell resignation, Ozil has been in Singapore with Arsenal on a pre-season tour, with the Gunners playing Atletico Madrid. But the midfielder was excluded from the matchday squad, Arsenal said on Twitter, explaining that he was among a trio



ZONGULDAK, Turkey: In this file photo people gather under a cardboard bearing a photo of German national team football player Mesut Ozil (L) and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (R) reading "Mesut Ozil street" on July 24, 2018 during a street name ceremony in Zonguldak's Devrek district. — AFP

who were "still in the early stages of their pre-season training".

Three-stage plan

Back in Germany, Grindel sought to move on from the Ozil saga to look at how the DFB can pick up the pieces after the World Cup debacle in which Germany crashed out during the group stages in Russia. He

noted that the debate on integration was an opportunity for the federation to bolster its work in the area, while adding that a "sound analysis" was needed of the "disappointing World Cup". "Thirdly, we all have the common goal of winning the bid for the hosting of the European Championship 2024," he said. "For all these projects, we must work together in the coming weeks and months with great commitment." — AFP

UEFA threaten Marseille with European ban

PARIS: French giants Marseille were warned Wednesday they could be kicked out of European competition if their fans continue to wreak havoc. After numerous incidents in last season's Europa League in games against RB Leipzig, Salzburg and even in the final with Atletico Madrid, governing body UEFA have put the club on a two-year probation period.

If similar incidents occur again, "Marseille (will be excluded) from participating in the next UEFA club competition for which it will otherwise qualify". Marseille were sanctioned for crowd disturbances, acts of damage, setting off of fireworks and throwing of objects in last season's European campaign, said UEFA in a statement. The club, who have also been fined 100,000 euros (\$116,925), will play in the Europa League in the forthcoming season.

However, one home game at their Stade Velodrome will be played behind closed doors while the subsequent home match will see northern and southern ends of the stadium closed. "It would be good if we are not excluded so we will have to be on our toes," said Marseille coach Rudi Garcia. "We know that UEFA are very severe, rightly. But we need our supporters, if we do not have them for the first match of the Europa League, that is already very negative. "Everyone will have to take responsibility so that we can play in a full Stade Velodrome." — AFP

Arsenal's Ramsey contract news in 'next few weeks'

SINGAPORE: Arsenal's Aaron Ramsey says he is excited about playing under new boss Unai Emery and expects movement on a fresh contract "in the next few weeks". Ramsey is considered key to Emery's rebuilding project at the London club after the 22-year Arsenal Wenger era but, with his contract expiring next year, the Wales international raised hopes he could agree a new deal.

Ramsey said he was encouraged by the ideas and philosophy of Emery, the former Paris Saint-Germain coach, as his agent pursues talks with the Arsenal hierarchy. "We've yet to come to an agreement. I still have a year left and I'm really happy playing here," the 27-year-old midfielder said during Arsenal's pre-season trip to Singapore. "There's a great opportunity this season under the new manager to go on and hopefully compete for things, so I'm looking forward to that and if something's to happen we'll see in the next few weeks or so."

Ramsey said his discussions with Emery had been "purely football" as Arsenal attempt to return to trophy-winning ways and Champions League football after finishing sixth in the Premier League last season. The 27-year-old said there was a buzz about the team as the players take on the Spanish coach's tactics, most notably a high-tempo, pressing game.

"I'm looking forward to playing the way that he wants to play. It's very exciting," Ramsey said. "I think all the players are really looking forward to this season and hopefully we can hit the ground running right from the off. "It's always difficult when a new manager comes in, for him to get his ideas across to the team and for it to just click straight away, but hopefully that will be the case. But yeah, I am encouraged by the way he wants to play and his ideas." — AFP

Newcastle sign Swiss WC defender Fabian Schaer

LONDON: Newcastle United announced yesterday the signing of Switzerland defender Fabian Schaer from Deportivo La Coruna. Schaer played in three of Switzerland's four games at the World Cup in Russia, helping the Swiss to progress from Group E - along with Brazil - before missing their last-16 defeat by Sweden through suspension.

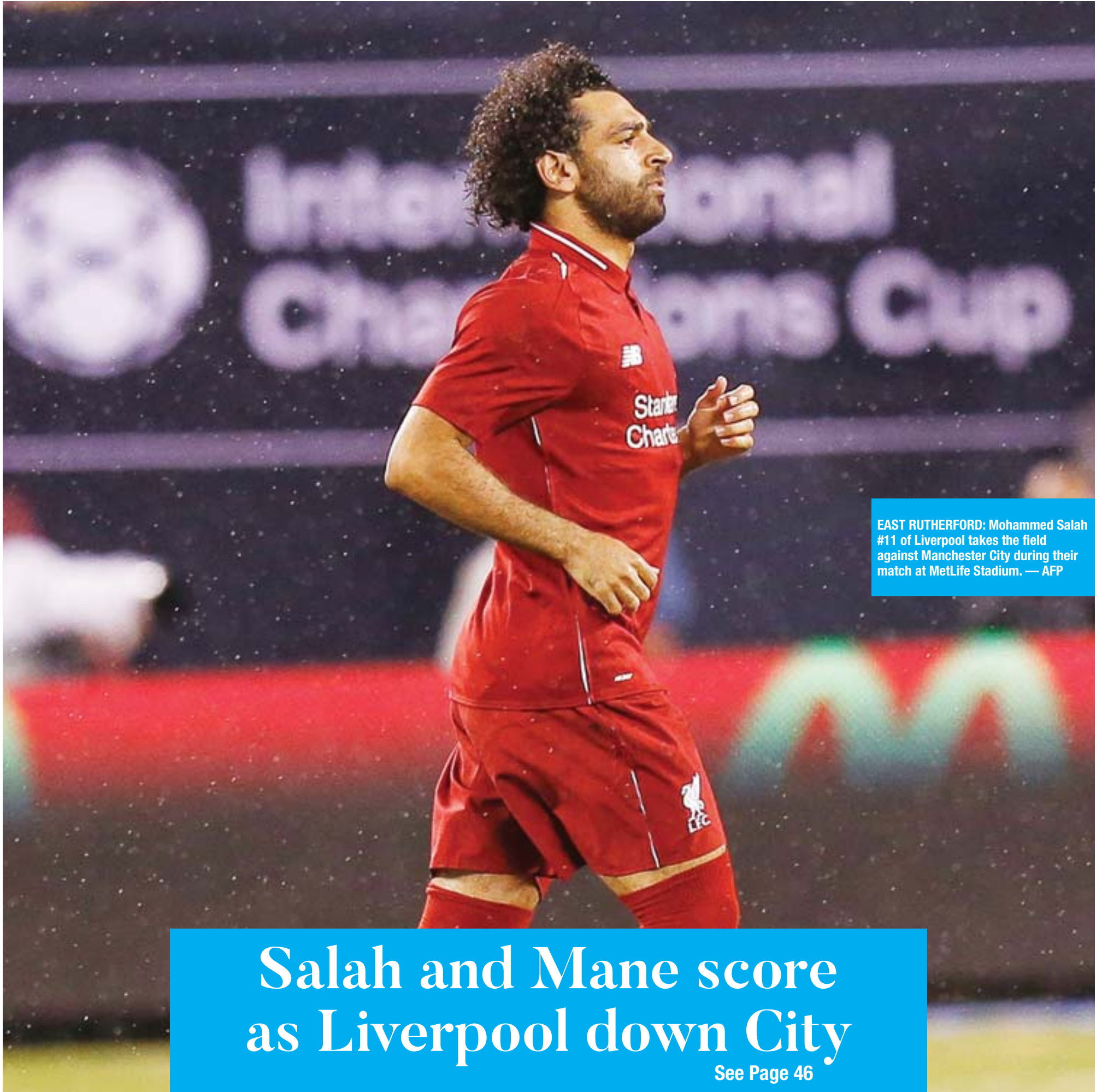
He made 25 appearances for Deportivo in La Liga last season, having moved to the Spanish outfit from 1899 Hoffenheim a year ago. The defender, 26, is the Magpies' fourth signing of the summer, following the arrivals of Slovakia's Martin Dubravka and South Korea's Ki Sung-yueng and the loan capture of Brazilian Kenedy. "I'm really happy to be here," said Schaer. "The club is a really big club for me. It has a big name and it is a brilliant chance for me. "I'm not like a typical defender. I, of course, defend but I'm quite good with the ball. "I like to play, I want to build up the game from behind and I think that is a strength of mine. I have also scored some headers. That could also be a strength and hopefully I can use it here."

Manager Rafa Benitez said: "I'm really pleased to welcome Fabian to Newcastle United. He is an international, did well in the World Cup and has great experience. He adds competition in this position and that is a positive for the team." — AFP

Sport Times

FRIDAY, JULY 27, 2018

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EAST RUTHERFORD: Mohammed Salah #11 of Liverpool takes the field against Manchester City during their match at MetLife Stadium. — AFP

Salah and Mane score as Liverpool down City

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