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# Riyadh reassures it will not abandon Jerusalem, refugees

Freed Palestinian teen vows to continue resistance • Bibi defends Jewish nation law

**RIYADH/JERUSALEM:** Saudi Arabia has reassured Arab allies it will not endorse any Middle East peace plan that fails to address Jerusalem's status or refugees' right of return, easing their concerns that the kingdom might back a nascent US deal which aligns with Israel on key issues. King Salman's private guarantees to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and his public defense of long-standing Arab positions in recent months have helped reverse perceptions that Saudi Arabia's stance was changing, diplomats and analysts said.

This in turn has called into question whether Saudi Arabia, birthplace of Islam and site of its holiest shrines, can rally Arab support for a new push to end the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, with an eye to closing ranks against mutual enemy Iran. "In Saudi Arabia, the king is the one who decides on this issue," said a senior Arab diplomat in Riyadh. "The US mistake was they thought one country could pressure the rest to give in, but it's not about pressure. No Arab leader can concede on Jerusalem or Palestine."

Palestinian ambassador to Riyadh Basem Al-Agha told Reuters that King Salman had expressed support for Palestinians in a recent meeting with Abbas, saying: "We will not abandon you ... We accept what you accept and we reject what you reject." He said that King Salman naming the 2018 Arab League conference "The Jerusalem Summit" and announcing \$200 million in aid for Palestinians were messages that Jerusalem and refugees were back on the table. The Saudi author-

ities did not respond to a request for comment on the current status of diplomatic efforts.

Diplomats in the region say Washington's current thinking, conveyed during a tour last month by top White House officials, does not include Arab East Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian state, a right of return for refugees or a freeze of Israeli settlements in lands claimed by the Palestinians. Senior adviser Jared Kushner, President Donald Trump's son-in-law, has not provided concrete details of the US strategy more than 18 months after he was tasked with forging peace.

Kushner and fellow negotiator Jason Greenblatt have not presented a comprehensive proposal but rather disjointed elements, which one diplomat said "crossed too many red lines". Instead, they heavily focused on the idea of setting up an economic zone in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula with the adjacent Gaza Strip possibly coming under the control of Cairo, which Arab diplomats described as unacceptable.

In Qatar, Kushner asked Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani to pressure the Islamist group Hamas to cede control of Gaza in return for development aid, the diplomats said. "The problem is there is no cohesive plan presented to all countries," said the senior Arab diplomat in Riyadh. "Nobody sees what everyone else is being offered." Kushner, a 37-year-old real estate developer with little experience of international diplomacy or political negotiation, visited Jordan, Saudi

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RAMALLAH: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas receives freed Palestinian teenager Ahed Tamimi yesterday. — KUNA

## News in brief

### Venezuelan envoy dies

**KUWAIT:** HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable yesterday to Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro, extending his deepest sympathies to the Bolivarian Republic over the death of its ambassador to Kuwait Dr Hadel Jose Paolini. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar messages to Maduro. — KUNA

### KD 50m donated in Ramadan

**KUWAIT:** The ministry of social affairs and labor said yesterday KD 50.8 million (\$168.2 million) was donated during the holy month of Ramadan, an increase of 27 percent from last year. Assistant Undersecretary for Planning and Administrative Development Hassan Kadhem said in a statement 31 charitable authorities and societies took part in the Ramadan donation campaign. He said the ministry was monitoring the collection of donations and registered 14 fines during the campaign, which was held in mosques and shopping malls in all six governorates. — KUNA

### Egypt railway head sacked

**CAIRO:** The head of Egypt's railway authority has been removed from office following a series of train accidents, the transport ministry said yesterday. The statement announcing Sayed Salem's sacking came just hours after a train came off the rails on the Cairo-Aswan line, injuring a number of passengers and delaying trips. Transport Minister Hisham Arafat appointed Ashran Mohammed Raslan as the new head of Egypt's National Railway Authority, the ministry said in a statement posted on Facebook. Salem was appointed to the position shortly after an Aug 2017 deadly collision forced his predecessor to resign. — AFP

### Houthi missile sites destroyed

**RIYADH:** A military coalition led by Saudi Arabia said yesterday it had destroyed sites used by Houthi rebels in neighboring Yemen to launch missiles at the kingdom. The coalition announced in a statement the "destruction over the past 24 hours of ballistic missile (launch) sites run by the Houthi militias in Saada", a northern Yemeni province bordering Saudi Arabia and controlled by the Houthis. Saudi Arabia's government-run Al Ekhbariya TV aired a 49 second clip showing black and white aerial footage of what it said was a coalition strike on Saada. — AFP

## Filipino rebels hope for peace with new law

**SULTAN KUDARAT, Philippines:** Members of the Philippines' largest Muslim rebel group gathered in their tens of thousands yesterday to discuss a landmark law granting them autonomy, with one expressing hope it would make their "dream of peace" a reality. President Rodrigo Duterte last week signed the law, a key step to ending a Muslim rebellion in the south of the mainly Catholic Philippines that had claimed about 150,000 lives since the 1970s.

Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) members, supporters and local residents from various parts of the southern island of Mindanao, including women in headscarves and fighters carrying arms, trooped to the main MILF camp there for a consultation. Their leaders are seeking support for the law ahead of a referendum on the measure, which creates an expanded autonomous region and is aimed at ending one of Asia's longest and deadliest conflicts.

"Our real journey towards self-determination is just starting," Mohagher Iqbal, the rebel group's chief negotiator, told Reuters by telephone, saying there are still challenges ahead that could stop the implementation of the law. Speaking earlier to thousands of supporters, including women and children, he asked

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MAGUINDANAO, Philippines: Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) members secure Camp Darapanan in Sultan Kudarat on the southern island of Mindanao yesterday. — AFP

## Polar bear shot after mauling ship worker

**OSLO:** A polar bear was shot dead after attacking a German cruise ship worker on Norway's Svalbard archipelago in the Arctic Ocean, the authorities said yesterday. The unnamed man in his 40s suffered head injuries shortly after landing on Spitzbergen island. He was accompanying a tourist expedition from the MS Bremen of Hapag-Lloyd Cruises on Saturday. "The bear was killed by another employee on the boat," police commissioner Ole Jakob Malmo told AFP.

Hapag-Lloyd Cruises said it was "self-defense". "We greatly regret this incident," said company spokesman Moritz Krause.

The injured employee was flown by helicopter to the local capital Longyearbyen and then on to Tromso on the mainland in the evening, Malmo said. Tromso hospital told AFP the man's life was not in danger and he was in a stable condition. Hapag-Lloyd Cruises said it had permission from "local authorities" to dock. "Landings are only possible in a few places (in the archipelago)," said Krause, in remarks confirmed by Malmo. Usually "as soon as an animal approaches, the landing stops immediately," Krause added. The company said excursions of this nature required staff to

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SJUSJOEN, Norway: A dead polar bear is seen at a beach north of Spitzbergen yesterday. — AFP

## NYT publisher tells Trump anti-press attacks 'dangerous'

**WASHINGTON:** The publisher of the New York Times has warned Donald Trump in a White House meeting that the president's escalating attacks on the news media are "inflammatory" and "dangerous and harmful to our country". Trump's meeting with A G Sulzberger, who took the reins of the prestigious newspaper on Jan 1, took place July 20, following a request from the White House for what appeared to be a routine get-to-know-you session.

The session, which also included Times editorial page editor James Bennet, had remained secret under

mutual agreement until Trump tweeted about it early yesterday. "Had a very good and interesting meeting at the White House with A G Sulzberger, Publisher of the New York Times," Trump said on Twitter. "Spent much time talking about the vast amounts of Fake News being put out by the media & how that Fake News has morphed into phrase, 'Enemy of the People.' Sad!"

Sulzberger, in a statement released by the Times, said the president's tweet effectively "put the meeting on the record", and he described what appeared to be an unusually tough and blunt session with the president. "I told the president directly that I thought that his language was not just divisive but increasingly dangerous," Sulzberger said. "I told him that although the phrase 'fake news' is untrue and harmful, I am far more concerned about his labeling journalists 'the enemy of the people.' I warned that this inflammatory language is contributing to a rise in threats against journalists and will lead to violence."

With some foreign leaders using Trump's language "to justify sweeping crackdowns on journalists, I warned that it was putting lives at risk". Sulzberger concluded: "I implored him to reconsider his broader attacks on journalism, which I believe are dangerous and harmful to our country."

But the exchange comes at a time of high tension between Trump and the US news media, with Trump regularly denouncing critical news reports as "fake news". The 37-year-old Sulzberger is the latest in a long line of Sulzbergers to lead the Times. When he took over leadership of the "Gray Lady" after several years as a reporter or editor, Trump tweeted that the young man's rise gave the paper a "last chance" to prove itself impartial and to report the news "without fear or FAVOR". But since then, as the Times and other news sources have chronicled Trump's personal and political problems and logged his frequent

Continued on Page 24

# Amir receives local, foreign officials; sends condolences to Pakistan prez



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receiving Acting National Assembly Speaker Awdha Al-Ruwai. — KUNA photos



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receiving Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receiving Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Hamid Mohammad Al-Azmi.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday received at Seif Palace the Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. HH the Amir also received a Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Yemen Martin Griffiths and his accompanying delegation.

HH the Amir and Griffiths discussed the latest Yemeni crisis developments. HH Sheikh Sabah also received Acting National Assembly Speaker Awdha Al-Ruwai. HH the Amir also received Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Hamid Mohammad Al-Azmi. Al-Azmi represented to His Highness Sheikh Sabah, Director General of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training Dr Ali Fahad Al-Mudhaf, Director General of National Bureau for Academic Accreditation Education and Quality Assurance Dr Hamad Al-Adwani and Undersecretary of the Ministry of Higher Education Dr Sabih Al-Mukhaizeem on their new post.

Amiri Diwan Affairs Deputy Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and Deputy Foreign Minister Khalid Sulaiman Al-Jarallah attended the meetings. In other related Amiri Diwan news, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah left the country for a private vacation yesterday. He was seen off by senior sheikhs, Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and senior state officials.

**Pakistan condolences**  
HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to President of Pakistan Mamnoon Hussain yesterday, over the victims of the heavy rains that hit different areas of the country killing and injuring dozens. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to President Hussain.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receiving Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Yemen Martin Griffiths and his accompanying delegation.



KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives the United Nations Special Envoy to Yemen Martin Griffiths.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah stands with Dr Ali Fahad Al-Mudhaf, Dr Hamid Mohammad Al-Azmi, Dr Hamad Al-Adwani and Dr Sabih Al-Mukhaizeem.

## Kuwait waters home to many 'peaceful' sharks

KUWAIT: Kuwait's regional waters, mainly Kuwait Bay is one of the largest incubators in the world for many types of fish and marine life forms, and especially attracting different kinds of shark. One of the main types of sharks living in Kuwaiti waters is the Whale shark, which is considered to be one of the largest of its species.

The peaceful and friendly fish may appear near the shore in search of food and it is sought after by many divers to take photos. Speaking to KUNA yesterday, Kuwaiti shark expert Dr Dareen Al-Mijil said that there are about 32 monitored shark species in Kuwait. She added that there are another 17 species that were "heard and read about" and they play a major role in protecting the environment by feeding on weak and sick fish.

Al-Mijil noted that sharks are often shy and peaceful in nature and they live in quiet



Researcher at Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research Abdurrahman Youssif.



Kuwaiti shark expert Dr Dareen Al-Mijil

areas. They swim in groups and are rarely seen near beaches or people, she added. Boubyan Island is one of the best homes to large numbers of sharks, since rivers' waters flow into the area carrying nutrition sources for these creatures, she said.

The researcher noted that sharks grow between 50cm to 12m and they do not attack humans unless they feel threatened. She advised divers to respect these marine creatures' privacy and keep a safe distance to avoid confrontation. Al-Mijil also said that bubbles coming from oxygen tanks

used by divers would affect sharks' nervous system and provoke them to attack.

According to the expert, in case of a shark attack, it is advised to hit the fish on its gill, eyes or the front part of the face to drive it away and allow people to escape. On his part, researcher at Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research Abdurrahman Youssif said that the number of sharks is largely decreasing while some of its species are already extinct. He noted that these creatures are being widely and illegally fished out for their fins.



## Kuwait is central pivot for peace in Yemen: UN

KUWAIT: Kuwait is the central pivot for us and for peace in Yemen, said United Nations Special Envoy to Yemen Martin Griffiths yesterday. His remarks came after being received by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. "I have lived a long life and the inspiration that we have received just now from His Highness is a moment that I will never forget and in many parts of the world where conflict happens as it does in your region, to find a man who is so dedicated to peace and whose own experience has shown as he was telling us how reconciliation and peace can overcome enmity and difference, it's remarkable and absolutely extraordinary.

On His Highness the Amir, Griffiths

carried on saying "I'm so honored and privileged the United Nations, an enterprise he has also served and supported so well has the privilege of his help and assistance." "I don't think we will succeed in Yemen in stopping this war and bringing political resolution to it without the help and experience of Kuwait. The fact is that two years ago, His Highness and his government hosted 100 days of talks on Yemen and those talks, while they didn't produce peace then, are the defining narrative for the peace that we hope to bring to Yemen in the course of the next month."

Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah had also received Martin Griffiths to discuss with him the recent developments in the Yemeni territories. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled affirmed to Griffiths, Kuwait's unwavering stance towards the Yemeni people and their rights to live in peace and security. He also stressed that Kuwait will continue its efforts to provide humanitarian aid to brethren in Yemen. Senior Kuwaiti diplomats, including Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Khaled Al-Jarallah and others, attended the meeting. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives United Nations Special Envoy to Yemen Martin Griffiths. — KUNA

## Sea navigation resumes as weather improves

KUWAIT: Maritime traffic at Kuwait's main seaports of Shuwaikh, Doha and Shuaiba is completely back to normal, as

weather conditions have improved nationwide, Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA) said. "The sea navigation movement at the three harbors have resumed following field notifications from sea operation chiefs that weather and horizontal visibility are now better," the KPA said in a statement to KUNA on Saturday. Kuwait has been hit by bad weather conditions triggered off by dusty storms and strong winds since Thursday, prompting concerned authorities to suspend sea navigation in the country.

Local

# US envoy visits shelter for housemaids as part of 'World Day Against Trafficking in Persons'



KUWAIT: US Ambassador Lawrence Silverman and Abdullah Al-Mutawa, Deputy Director at the Public Authority for Manpower touring facilities. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



By Ben Garcia

**KUWAIT:** The US envoy visited a shelter for abused and runaway housemaids in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh yesterday to highlight their plight. The United States Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence R Silverman met with Abdullah Mutawa, Deputy Director of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) and Jaber Ali Al-Ali, PAM Director-International Relations at the PAM-run shelter to mark World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, which is on July 30.

"There are around 20 million victims of human trafficking. Countries from around the world are trying to stop the trafficking and it is our duty to do so as we all have capabilities both in the US and in Kuwait or other countries to do the maximum effort to stop trafficking," Silverman said.

"It means prosecuting individuals or suspects, who are involved in trafficking and providing services to people who are trafficked and to send them back to their respective countries and families so that justice will be served," he added. "Anyone who is employed even as a domestic helper has rights. They should follow the law and if there are people violating the laws they must be prosecuted. This will not only help correct the problem but will also send a broader

message that Kuwait has laws and they should be respected. That also goes to employers keeping their worker's passport, following hours of labor and proper treatment of workers, it must be followed. We are seeing progress in the treatment of workers and even in the victims of trafficking, they are being helped and assisted by Kuwaiti authorities, but more needs to be done, not just in Kuwait but also in other countries," Silverman concluded.

The shelter serves as a temporary home for hundreds of trafficked workers including domestic helpers and others who have been brought to Kuwait illegally or suffered mistreatment and abuse by their employers. Currently there are 166 women staying at the shelter, awaiting clearance of their paperwork and cases in order to turn to their home countries. Inmates of the shelter as of June 2018 include women from the following countries: Sri Lanka-20, Nepal-39, India-8, Ghana-4, Sierra Leone-3, Cameroon-3, Nigerian-1, Philippines-16, Madagascar-12, Gambia-2, Ivory Coast-37, Mali-1, Benin-8, Burundi-3, Guyana-8 and Burkina Faso-1.

Embassies of the labor exporting countries coordinate with PAM to process all the transfers of abused women while their cases are filed and being heard by authorities here.

**Passports and a weekly day off?**

When asked by the Kuwait Times on the recent comments by a social media personality regarding the treatment of domestic helpers, the US ambassador said "I do not comment on personalities, but it was good that the issue was publicized so that people will understand."

Sondos Al-Qattan, a popular Kuwaiti makeup artists and Instagrammer with more than 2.3 million followers triggered an uproar when she made comments arguing against domestic helpers retaining their own passports or having a weekly day off - both rights that are protected by Kuwait's domestic labor law.

There are an estimated 620,000 domestic workers in Kuwait, the vast majority of whom are women living in the homes of their sponsors. Many of these often face a range of abuses and mistreatment including no weekly off, delayed salaries, verbal and physical abuse and worse.

In January, the Philippines stopped sending workers to the Gulf state after the discovery of a domestic worker's body in a freezer in Hawally. Her employers - both Arab expats - had fled the country but the news triggered a crisis in Kuwait-Manila. Later, the two countries agreed to end the tension by formally signing a memorandum of agreement.



The ambassador of Nicaragua Mohamed Lashtar hosted a reception on the occasion of the 39th anniversary of the Peoples Victory Day Revolution at the embassy of Nicaragua. Community, local businesses and media persons attended the event. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

## Advanced Trauma Life Support program graduates first batch

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Trauma and severe injuries specialist at the Amiri Hospital Dr Raed Sayyed Hashim said the Amiri Training Center has successfully graduated their first batch of students from the Advanced Trauma Life Support program. The program is accredited by the American College of Surgeons, and organized by the Life Science Academy. Fourteen participants from public hospitals including eight doctors from Amiri attended the ceremony.

Hashim said the programs aim at reducing the death rate resulting from accidents through the application of actual practices of heart resuscitation. It also covers topics on how to deal with life threatening critical injuries, until the case reaches specialized centers. He said the program strengthens and instills principles of

evaluating the injured and set the administrative practices of the shock as well as skills necessary to deal with victims of accidents, by specialists in this field such as emergency doctors, health care providers, surgeons and anesthetics. He said such programs are important in the majority of Gulf countries. It is headed by Saudi Arabia which approved it in 1991.

He said doctors go for these courses out of their humanitarian and professional conviction to enhance their skills in order to rescue the injured and increase their success rate of survival. Hashim lauded the role of the life science academy and its continued efforts to improve performance and enhance the quality of medical services through accredited training programs that meet local requirements.

Meanwhile, Director of Training at the LSA Mohammad Al-Khlaifi said the academy is keen on providing the most recent training programs and workshops that make a quality move in the medical field through cooperation with specialized international centers. He said the Academy held 15 "ATLS" programs, and graduated 200 doctors during the past four years. The training plan is on the Academy official site, and activities of it can be followed through social media.

It is worth mentioning that the LSA trained more than 4,000 doctors, nurses and allied teams at the government and private hospitals.



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## Local

## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Kuwait City silhouette during a golden sunset. — KUNA

# Gulf Bank concludes its sponsorship of 30th memorial journey for pearl diving

The successful journey was completed with a special 'Al-Quffal' ceremony



**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank has successfully concluded its platinum sponsorship of the 30th Memorial Journey for Pearl Diving, for the 9th consecutive year. The Journey, which ran from the 19 till the 26 of July 2018 was organized by the Committee of Marine Heritage of the Kuwait Sea Sport Club, under the Patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

With a special 'Al-Quffal' ceremony, a traditional Kuwaiti term used to welcome home sailors from long voyages - was held on Thursday, 26 July, which was attended by His Excellency the Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, Adel Al-Kharafi, representing His Highness the Amir, US Ambassador to Kuwait, Lawrence R. Silverman, along with local dignitaries, ministry representatives, Gulf Bank senior management representatives and friends, families and relatives of the young sailors.

Commenting on the conclusion of the journey, Mr Ahmed Al Ameer, Assistant General Manager for External Communications at Gulf Bank said: "On behalf of the Bank I would like to welcome the young Kuwaiti divers and the dhow captains back, those who are keen on upholding Kuwaiti tradition by helping to perpetuate the memory of the long and dangerous journeys Kuwait sailors took to find pearls each year"

"As a Bank, we continue to support this great initiative

and back any other activities that raise awareness of our rich history" added Al Ameer. The Pearl Diving Memorial Journey is one of the initiatives that Gulf Bank sponsors on an annual basis and forms a key part of its long-term commitment to preserving the heritage and continuing the traditions of Kuwait's unique past. The Journey aims to remind young Kuwaiti generations of the difficulties and challenges faced by their forefathers in earning a living, along with a message urging this generation to uphold the traditions and values their ancestors developed during that time.

Gulf Bank continues to maintain and strengthen its position as an integral part of the Kuwaiti society. The Bank supports and emphasizes the true Kuwaiti identity and the importance of the Kuwaiti traditions and customs, through sponsoring different social activities and events. For more details about Gulf Bank initiatives, please visit the bank's website.



Local

# Last concrete block installed in Subbiya spur of the Jaber Causeway project

Bridge will link the center of Kuwait with the north on the instructions of the Amir

**KUWAIT:** Commerce and Industry Minister, acting Public Works Minister and State Minister for Municipal Affairs Khalid Al-Roudhan said he was pleased to see the last concrete block installed in the Subbiya Spur of the Jaber Causeway project, the fourth longest sea bridge in the world. He said completing the bridge according to schedule is considered a major achievement, as the bridge will link the center of Kuwait with the north on the instructions of HH the Amir, which aims at transforming Kuwait into a financial and commercial center.



Roudhan appreciated the efforts of all ministers concerned with the project including the public works minister, Director of the Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport Ahmad Al-Husan and engineers who are working on the project, which runs 36 km above water. Husan said the last piece of the upper body of the bridge was installed. He thanked HH the Amir for his instructions and care of development projects in Kuwait, and hoped the project will be completed by the end of the year. He said the authority has an integrated plan for improving infrastructure of roads and bridges that includes 90 projects until the end of 2025 with an estimated value of KD 8 billion, adding that 16 projects have been completed in various areas at a cost of KD 300 million.

Meanwhile, Director of Jaber Causeway Mai Al-Musad said the last precast concrete piece was installed, and with it Kuwait City is linked with Subbiya, and the travel distance has been reduced from 104 km to only 36 km. She said work has been ongoing since 2015 to produce the blocks and store them in the prefabrication yard, then install them during the scheduled period. She added the project is expected to be completed by the end of the year.



In my view

## Dos and dos

By Talal Al-Ghannam



Good morning dear brothers and sisters, and I wish you all a happy vacation. In this article, I would like to highlight things that are not supposed to happen here in Kuwait but still happen due to a lack of respect, selfishness, boredom, ego and numerous irresponsible behaviors. The title of today's article seems a little weird - it should read "Dos and don'ts" instead but because many people here do it according to the dos in places and in situations that require the don'ts. I will give a few examples to make the picture a little bit clear for my honorable readers.

You go to see the doctor and the door of the doc says: Please do not knock on the door, but many do.

You go to see the doctor and the door sign also says do not enter when a patient is inside, but they still go in without permission.

You go out to the nearby grocery store and find a few irresponsible people parking in the handicapped zone even with the sign clearly saying: Park in my space and take my disability - but they still do.

You drive along the highway abiding by the law and the traffic regulations and here comes a maniac tailgating you, wanting you to fly and let him pass as if he or she has got a real emergency case, and a few meters away he stops for the red signal and smokes his electronic cigarette, not caring for the chaos he had just made.

The housemaid here is to help and care for them, yet many delay their salaries, put more burdens on them and deprive them of their necessities such as rest period, mobile and a weekly day off.

Littering the streets while the helpless cleaning boy is watching is an irresponsible behavior and falls within the framework of the don'ts, but many still do, adding to his misery in this scorching heat.

You go to the mall and park legally and there comes a fellow or a lady and without prior notice he or she blocks your car and leaves to eat with the family, making you wait a few hours before he or she shows up with a big smile saying "sorry".

You drive at night and there comes an erratic person flashing his or her high beam lights, causing an unwanted accident.

A new song comes out and hundreds of people try to challenge that song through manic activities, where they leave the car running and come out of it and try to challenge that lady. I bet that if the singer of that song knew that our people would engage in such irresponsible behaviors, he would not have sung it.

Finally, I wish to see the dos and don'ts fit in their appropriate categories and not end up as dos as always.

Till the next article insha Allah

## Attempt to smuggle in 6,488 bottles of liquor

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Shuwaikh customs officers foiled an attempt to smuggle into Kuwait 6,488 bottles of liquor in a container of wood and marble. The shipment arrived from an Asian country. Elsewhere, Nuwaiseeb police caught a man trying to smuggle 25 cartons of cigarettes hidden in his car out of the country.

### Brothers fight turns violent

A citizen was sent to the public prosecution and charged with attempted murder and possession of an unlicensed firearm and ammunition. The suspect, who is currently unemployed, allegedly tried to kill his brother with an AK-47. Police received a call about a house being attacked, the call was made by the house owner claiming that he was afraid of being killed by his brother, who left the firearm behind and escaped. Later while detectives were at the house, they were surprised by the suspect returning, so he was placed under arrest and charged accordingly.

### Babies fall, one dies

Ahmadi prosecutors investigated a case of two



infants falling, the falls resulting in the death of one of the infants. The case is being investigated as a suspected felony. The infants' uncle rushed them to Adan hospital, as one died while the other was admitted to the ICU in a critical condition. The whereabouts of the parent were not immediately known. If no criminal act was proven, the parents may still face a charge of negligence in caring for minors.

### Woman kidnapped in Waha

A security source said a call was received after midnight about the kidnapping of a woman in Waha area. Police found a Kuwaiti woman who told police that her nephews stormed her house and kidnapped her sister (their mother), while their father was waiting in his car and they all drove off. A kidnapping case was filed at Waha police station as a felony, and the culprits are to



be arrested on sight.

### Farm ransacked

A citizen who works for the Ministry Of Public Works told police that eight people stormed his farm in Kabd, ransacked it and damaged a vehicle. He said three of his friends who were at the farm were severely beaten. The case has been sent to the prosecution.

### Long-time swindler arrested

Sentences implementation detectives arrested a citizen who was wanted to serve an eight year jail sentence for committing several swindling cases, as she has been fugitive for several years. She was sent to concerned authorities.

—Translated by Kuwait Times from Alanbaa

## Stricter penalties for govt officials involved in violations

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Chairman of the parliamentary budgets and final statement committee Adnan Abdulsamad demanded stricter penalties for government officials involved in violations. "The current CSC disciplinary measures are not enough, though they sometimes go as far as dismissal from office," he underlined, noting that some officials avoid disciplinary measures because relevant government bodies should have investigated them prior to resorting to the Audit Bureau's disciplinary measures which are already halted because of lack of government bodies' investigations.

### Accredited universities

Responding to the issue of fake degrees, the National Apparatus for Academic Accreditation and

Ensuring Quality Education (NAAAEQE) is working on a list of accredited universities, said informed sources, noting that the study will include the names of accredited universities and the number students studying in them, namely those in Egypt, Jordan and some Arab countries. The sources added that NAAAEQE demanded periodically reevaluating these universities in terms of the academic programs taught and whether they are accredited.

### Inquiry about fires

Deputy PM and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh said that the total number of fires over the past three years was 14,567 and that the highest number was recorded in 2015. Responding to a parliamentary inquiry about fires, Saleh said the highest number of fires was recorded in Farwaniya with 3,688, followed by Ahmadi and Jahra.

### CMA report

Well-informed auditory sources said the CMA referred a lengthy report filed against a listed company to the finance ministry's money laundering investigations unit. The sources added that the report made against the company and a number of officials was backed up by double-checked documents.

### Special land plots

Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammed Al-Jabri said the government plans to allocate special land plots in each governorate to build clubs for people with special needs.

### Travel rush

Deputy director of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation for aviation safety affairs Emad Al-Jelawi said a special plan had been set under the supervision of Chairman Sheikh Salman Al-Hmoud Al-Sabah to deal with the rush during travel seasons. Jelawi added that Kuwait airport's annual capacity is 6 million passengers and that youth volunteers are currently deployed to help serve passengers. Jelawi added that Terminal 4 will open on August 8 and would be a substantial shift in developing Kuwait airport to match international standards.

### Kuwait Airways delay

Responding to a question about delaying a Kuwait Airways flight's departure from Dubai airport for over four hours, KAC President Yousif Al-Jassim apologized to the passengers and stressed that he ordered investigating the matter and hold whoever is responsible accountable.

## Kuwait's desert environment is rich with creatures



Spiny-tailed lizard



The deathstalker

**KUWAIT:** Many different kinds of creatures are living in Kuwait's desert environment, including the most famous reptile of them all: the Spiny-tailed lizard. Many different mammals dwell into the desert like Fennec fox and Red fox. Furthermore, various kinds of birds thrive such as the Houbara, Bustard and the Brown-necked raven. There are also the Arabian horned viper, spiders, hedgehogs and beetles. —KUNA

## KES concerned about Sabah Al-Ahmad City

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Engineering Society appealed to concerned authorities to hasten in implementing environmental plans and programs to stop the suffering of residents of Sabah Al-Ahmad City and its surrounding areas, adding that solutions by concerned authorities at the EPA, Ahmadi governorate and volunteer initiatives are all possible and should be implemented.

### Labor attaches

President of Kuwait Trade Union Salem Al-Ajmi welcomed the proposal of the foreign affairs committee with regards to having labor attaches in countries that export labor, such as the Philippines and India. He said this

remains one of the interests of the Kuwait Trade Union, and was proposed in 2008.

### Remembering the martyrs

The manager of memorization office at the martyrs bureau, Salah Al-Ouqan said that Kuwait would always remember the martyrs who willingly sacrificed their lives to protect Kuwait. Speaking on the occasion of commemoration of the 28th Iraqi invasion anniversary, Al-Ouqan said that this year's 'Martyrs Day' would be held at the AVENUES under the title of 'Sacrifice & Redemption' where photos of the 1255 invasion martyrs and 877 photos of civilian and military martyrs belonging to 16 other nationalities would be displayed in addition to a kids art gallery with their drawings and impressions about the invasion and patriotism.

### Wife killer

The criminal court handed an Egyptian the death sentence for killing his Lebanese wife in Hawally. The suspect had a video clip that showed how he gave himself up to police, but the court did not accept his defense.



Mali votes in key election for violence-hit Sahel

## Iraq PM sacks electricity minister after weeks of protest

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OMBOK, Indonesia: An Indonesian man examines the remains of houses, after a 6.4 magnitude earthquake struck, in Lombok. — AFP

# Strong Indonesia quake kills 14

## Local officials declare three-day state of emergency

**LOMBOK, Indonesia:** A powerful earthquake which struck the Indonesian tourist island of Lombok yesterday killed at least 14 people, injured scores and damaged thousands of homes, officials said. Five children were among those killed by the shallow 6.4-magnitude early-morning quake, which sent people running outside in panic and triggered landslides on popular mountain hiking routes. Scores of aftershocks sparked fear among survivors. More than 120 were recorded, the biggest with a magnitude of 5.7, Indonesia's meteorology agency said.

Local officials have declared a three-day state of emergency. President Joko Widodo is due to visit the island today morning, his spokesman said. "Based on reports, 14 people died, 162 were injured and thousands of homes were damaged," Indonesian disaster mitigation agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho said in a statement, adding that five of the dead were children. One Malaysian was killed and six injured, the Malaysian foreign ministry said.

"All of them were at the foot of Mount Rinjani when the incident happened," it said, referencing the spectacular volcano that dominates the island. The 30-year-old victim was inside a restroom when the entire building collapsed and crushed her, the New Straits Times quoted another Malaysian climber, Khairul Azim, as saying. Khairul said his own group was unable to leave the Sembalun area because many roads including the main

one had been damaged. The constant aftershocks sparked terrified shouts among scores of people made homeless in the eastern village of Sembalun in the district of the same name, an AFP reporter said. Some 200 people from 35 families whose house were damaged or destroyed had pitched tents there. The roof of a health clinic had collapsed and its walls had cracked. "People are traumatized and too scared to return home for fear the aftershocks could destroy their homes completely," the reporter said.

"Everytime there is an aftershock they cry out in fear and tremors can still be felt constantly." Evacuees said they badly needed blankets and instant food because there was no time to bring anything when they fled their homes. Popular trekking trails on Mount Rinjani were closed because of landslides, according to the disaster agency. One local trek organizer described how rocks rained down on two Spanish hikers and their guide as they were caught on a mountain trail.

"My trekking guide who was accompanying two

tourists from Spain suffered from minor injuries during the jolt. They were hiking from Segara Anak Lake to Plawangan and rocks were falling on them during the quake," said Karyadi, the owner of a guesthouse where the pair was staying. The two Spaniards were also slightly hurt. "Our guests were in shock because of the incident," said Karyadi, who like many Indonesians goes by one name. The epicenter of the earthquake struck 50 km (30 miles) northeast of Lombok's main city Mataram, the United States Geological Survey said, far from the main tourist spots on the south and west of the island. USGS said two of the aftershocks measured more than 5-magnitude. The jolt was felt some 100 km (60 miles) away in the bustling holiday

island of Bali, although there were no immediate reports of damage there.

**"We ran outside"**

"The earthquake was very strong... and everybody in my house panicked, we all ran outside," said Zulkifli, a resident of North Lombok near the epicenter. "All my

neighbors also ran outside and the electricity was suddenly cut off," Zulkifli told AFP. No tsunami alert was issued. "People in East Lombok and Mataram felt the strong quake for 10 seconds, residents were panicking and running outside of their homes," Nugroho said earlier, adding people had run for open spaces such as football fields.

At the holiday island's hotels, tourists raced outside as the quake struck. At the Katamaran Hotel and Resort in Senggigi beach, some 30 guests gathered in the lobby for around half an hour before venturing back to their rooms. "They calmed down and returned to their rooms once we explained the earthquake did not trigger a tsunami. Everything is back to normal now," receptionist Ni Nyoman Suwarningsih said.

The quake also rocked the tiny Gili islands off northeast Lombok, which are popular with honeymooners, divers and partygoers. "Fortunately there was no panic during the earthquake even though it was quite strong," said Lilis Letisha, receptionist at the Ombak Paradise Hotel on Gili Air island. Indonesia, an archipelago of thousands of islands, sits on the so-called Pacific Ring of Fire, a seismic activity hotspot. In 2004 a tsunami triggered by a magnitude 9.3 undersea earthquake off the coast of Sumatra in western Indonesia killed 220,000 people in countries around the Indian Ocean, including 168,000 in Indonesia. — AFP

“No tsunami alert was issued”



## Myanmar floods kill at least five, 54,000 displaced

**BAGO, Myanmar:** Rising floodwaters have killed at least five people and forced tens of thousands from their homes across swathes of Myanmar, a government official said yesterday, as heavy monsoon rains continue to batter the Mekong region. Dramatic images showed vast areas of farmland completely submerged in muddy waters stretching to the horizon, with only the rooftops of some houses visible.

Some stranded people were plucked from the churning inundations by rescuers in boats, while others waded through waist-deep water to escape, carrying children on their shoulders while trying to keep precious belongings out of the water. "There are more than 54,000 displaced people affected by the flooding around the country," a Ministry of Social Welfare official said. The official confirmed that five people had been killed but said this figure was expected to rise.

Evacuation orders had been issued in several areas, while some 163 camps have been set up for displaced people in southern, eastern and central parts country. The floods in Myanmar come as a particularly heavy monsoon continues to pummel the region, bringing downpours that contributed to the collapse of a dam last week in Laos, which left scores dead or missing.

Myanmar is hit by severe flooding every year and climate scientists in 2015 ranked it top of a global list of nations hardest hit by extreme weather. That year more than 100 people died in floods that also displaced hundreds of thousands across the country. Myanmar's worst natural disaster of recent times was Cyclone Nargis, which lashed huge stretches of the country's coast, leaving at least 138,000 dead or missing in May 2008.—AFP

## Powerful storm hits disaster-ravaged Japan

**TOKYO:** A powerful storm slammed into Japan yesterday, churning across western areas already hard hit by floods and landslides earlier this month and injuring some 20 people. Typhoon Jongdari, with winds of up to 180 kilometers an hour, made landfall at Ise in Mie prefecture at around 1 am, according to the meteorological agency. More than 170 domestic flights were cancelled yesterday and train services disrupted.

A total of 21 people have been injured in the past days as the storm brought violent winds and torrential rains, the government said. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe warned that the storm could continue to bring heavy rain even after the epicenter had passed by. "Get hold of information on damage, cooperate closely with municipal offices and make utmost efforts to help evacuate local residents," he central government officials yesterday.

The typhoon weakened after making landfall and was downgraded to a tropical storm but many provinces stayed on alert. "We have been on emergency alert the whole time since the rain disaster" in early July, said Koji Kunitomi, a crisis management official in the western prefecture of Okayama.

"Fortunately, so far, we haven't seen new flooding," he said. The storm, after unleashing torrential rain over eastern and Japan, moved west and then south yesterday. TV footage showed high waves smashing onto rocks and seawalls southwest of



TOKYO: In this photo people protect themselves with umbrellas as heavy rains caused by Typhoon Jongdari fall in Tokyo. — AFP

Tokyo and trees buffeted by strong winds and heavy rain. Waves shattered the window of an ocean-view restaurant at a hotel in the resort town of Atami southwest of Tokyo late Saturday.

"We didn't expect this could happen... Waves gushed into the restaurant as the window broke but we are grateful that customers followed evacuation instructions," an official at the hotel told AFP. "Fortunately no one was seriously hurt," she said, adding five people suffered cuts from broken glass as they fled. The storm moved across the western

region of Chugoku, where record rainfall early this month unleashed flooding and landslides which killed around 220 people.

It was Japan's worst weather-related disaster in decades, and thousands of those affected are still in temporary shelters or damaged homes. The storm was hitting the nation's southern land mass of Kyushu late yesterday. The authorities in Kyushu urged residents to evacuate before rain intensifies. The weather agency warned of heavy rain, landslides, strong winds and high waves. — AFP

International

# Iraq PM Abadi sacks electricity minister after weeks of protest

## Power shortage forces Iraqis to buy electricity from private entrepreneurs

**BAGHDAD:** Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi yesterday sacked his minister of electricity after three weeks of protests against corruption and chronic power cuts in the energy-rich country where successive conflicts have devastated infrastructure. A statement from Abadi's office said the premier sacked Qassem al-Fahdawi whose departure was demanded by protesters "because of the deterioration in the electricity sector".

Iraq has been gripped by three weeks of protests over power outages, unemployment, state mismanagement and a lack of clean water. The demonstrations during which 14 people were killed first erupted in the oil-rich but neglected southern province of Basra, home to Iraq's only sea port, before spreading north including to Baghdad.

Power shortages are chronic in Iraq, a country devastated by conflicts including the war against the Islamic State group who held a third of the country before Abadi declared victory over them in December. Chronic, hours-long electricity cuts are a source of deep discontent among Iraqis, especially during the scorching summer months when demand for air-conditioning surges as temperatures soar past 50 degrees Celsius.

Since the ouster of dictator Saddam Hussein in 2003, Iraq has allocated some \$40 billion in state funds to rebuild its power network and meet the needs of a 38-million-strong population, official figures show. But much of that has been siphoned off by politicians and

businessmen in a country listed by Transparency International as the world's 12th-most corrupt.

### Fake contracts

A government official said yesterday that Abadi had also ordered investigations launched into fake contracts. Since 2003, more than 5,000 so-called "phantom contracts" have been signed in the public sector, according to Iraq's parliament. During the same period, \$228 billion dollars have gone up in smoke due to shell companies. A lawyer, Tareq al-Maamuri, recently lodged a complaint against Fahdawi and his ministry for failing to provide electricity.

He also demanded prosecutions over alleged "embezzlement of public funds". Since Saddam's toppling in 2003, successive electricity ministers have been sacked over corruption or forced to quit in the face of angry protests. One of them fled abroad after he was accused of embezzling \$500 million. In 2010, one of Fahdawi's predecessors, Karim Wahid, resigned after a wave of protests across central and southern Iraq against draconian power rationing.

Power shortages have forced Iraqis to buy electricity from private entrepreneurs who run generators visible on street corners across the country. Despite the shortages, electricity consumption has risen since the 2003 US-led invasion as Iraqis make more use of household electronic equipment including computers and mobile phones. Iraq-the second-largest oil producer within the

“Deterioration in electricity sector”



**BAGHDAD:** A man checks the wiring on electric cables reaching out to homes in Saadoun Street in the Iraqi capital Baghdad. —AFP

OPEC cartel-sits on some of the world's largest crude reserves, with the oil sector accounting for 89 percent of the state budget.

Officials say the expensive war against IS and a slump in world crude prices, slashing revenues, have emptied state coffers of the funds desperately needed

to rebuild the infrastructure. They also blame Iraqis who they say are not paying their utility bills. Fahdawi's sacking comes amid political tensions as Iraq awaits the results of a partial recount of May 12 elections, while political factions jostle to cobble together a coalition.—AFP

## Israel intercepts boat trying to break Gaza blockade

**JERUSALEM:** Israel's navy yesterday intercepted a Norwegian-flagged activist boat trying to break its more than decade-long blockade of the Gaza Strip, the military and activists said. "The activity ended without exceptional events," a military statement said. "At this time the ship is being transferred to the port of Ashdod" along the coast of central Israel.

An activist group affiliated with the boat, the Al-Awda (The Return), said 22 people and a cargo of medical supplies were onboard. A second boat that is part of the same group, the Swedish-flagged Freedom, is expected to arrive in the same area in the next couple days, according to the Freedom Flotilla Coalition.

Four boats left from Scandinavia in mid-May and stopped in some 28 ports along the way, the coalition said. Two boats remained behind after a recent stop in Palermo. Shortly before the Al-Awda, a fishing boat, was intercepted, the coalition released a statement saying the Israeli navy was issuing warnings to it.

"The Israeli navy claims our ship is breaking international law and threatens that they will use 'any measures necessary' to stop us," it said. "In fact, the only 'necessary measures' would be to end the blockade of Gaza and restore freedom of movement for all Palestinians." It said afterwards on Twitter that the boat had been "hijacked by Israeli forces".

Israel has fought three wars with Palestinian militants in Gaza since 2008 and says the blockade is necessary to keep them from obtaining weapons or materials that could be used for military purposes. UN officials and rights activists have called for the blockade to



**ISRAEL:** Israeli navy ships maneuver at the military port of Ashdod, southern Israel. —AFP

be lifted, citing deteriorating humanitarian conditions in the Palestinian enclave of two million people run by Islamist movement Hamas.

### Deadly 2010 incident

A 2010 attempt to breach the blockade ended in disaster. In that incident, Israeli commandos killed nine Turkish

activists when they raided a six-ship flotilla trying to reach the Gaza Strip in defiance of the blockade. Another activist died years later. The botched raid angered Turkey and saw it cut off ties with Israel until 2016. Other attempts to run the Israeli blockade included a 2016 women's boat with 13 passengers, including Nobel Peace Prize winner Mairead Maguire of Northern Ireland.—AFP

## Turkey's Erdogan warns US over sanctions threat

**ANKARA:** President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned the US in comments published yesterday that sanctions would not force Ankara to "step back" after Donald Trump threatened to punish Turkey if a US pastor was not freed. "You cannot make Turkey take a step back with sanctions," Erdogan said in his first comments since relations soured after Trump threatened the measures on Thursday if Pastor Andrew Brunson was not released.

"The US should not forget that it could lose a strong and sincere partner like Turkey if it does not change its attitude," he was quoted as saying by Hurriyet daily. "The change of attitude is Trump's problem, not mine," he told journalists during a visit to South Africa, calling the US threats "psychological warfare". Relations between the NATO allies have worsened over the jailing of Brunson, who ran a Protestant church in the Aegean city of Izmir.

He was held in a Turkish jail for almost two years on terror charges but was placed under house arrest on Wednesday. Trump on Thursday hit back at the move, calling for his immediate release and warning that the US would impose "large sanctions on Turkey for their long time detainment" of Brunson.

Ties had already been strained over multiple issues including Washington's support of a Syrian Kurdish militia which Turkey views as a terrorist group and the failure to extradite the Pennsylvania-based Muslim preacher Fethullah Gulen. Erdogan in September suggested Turkey could free Brunson if the US handed over Gulen—an offer brushed off by Washington.

### No bargaining chip

Ankara accuses Gulen of ordering the 2016 failed overthrow of Erdogan, a claim he strongly denies. The

Washington Post on Friday reported a deal between Ankara and Washington was made to secure the release of a Turkish woman imprisoned in Israel in exchange for the freedom of Brunson. Ebru Ozkan, 27, had been held for over a month by Israel on charges of passing hundreds of dollars to a "terrorist" group, but she returned to Turkey on July 16.

The newspaper said the agreement was "personally sealed" by Trump but fell apart when Brunson was transferred to house arrest. Erdogan addressed the claims, stressing that Turkey had "never made Pastor Brunson a bargaining chip." However, he said Ankara had asked for Washington's help in securing Ozkan's return home. "But we didn't say: 'In return for this, we will give you Brunson'. Nothing like this was discussed," Erdogan insisted.

Brunson risks up to 35 years in jail if found guilty of charges of carrying out activities on behalf of two groups deemed by Turkey to be terror organizations—the Gulen movement and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Brunson rejects the accusations while US officials have repeatedly insisted the pastor is innocent.

### International arbitration

Temperatures were further raised when the US threatened in June to block the delivery of F-35 stealth jets to Turkey if Ankara buys Russia's S-400 air defense system. But Erdogan suggested Turkey would not sit idly by if this happened. "We told (the US): 'If you don't give them, there is something called international arbitration. We will seek international arbitration,'" he said. Another source of tension is the prison sentence of 32 months for deputy director general of Turkish lender Halkbank Mehmet Hakan Atilla convicted of plotting to help Iran evade US sanctions on billions of dollars of Iranian oil proceeds. Turkish officials insist Atilla is innocent but Halkbank still faces a penalty from the US Treasury.

### Summit

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Turkey is seeking to hold a summit in Istanbul with France, Germany and Russia on September 7 to discuss regional issues including the Syrian conflict, in comments published yesterday. "We



**JOHANNESBURG:** Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan arrives to attend a session meeting during the 10th BRICS summit in Johannesburg. —AFP

will discuss what we can do in the region together," Erdogan said, quoted by Hurriyet daily. He gave no further details on the issues on the agenda but said Turkey would continue dialogue with Russia, "outside of this foursome", in the remarks made to Turkish journalists during his South Africa visit on July 25-27.

Erdogan met with Russian President Vladimir Putin during the visit on the sidelines of the Brazil, China, India, Russia and South Africa summit of leading emerging economies in Johannesburg. "We will separately have a summit in Istanbul on September 7 with Russia, Germany, France and Turkey", Erdogan was quoted as saying. There was no immediate confirmation from Moscow, Paris or Berlin. The seven-year conflict in Syria is likely to be high on the four countries' agenda as Russia, Iran and Turkey continue their efforts to end the war under the Astana peace process launched last year despite being on opposing sides.—AFP

### News in brief

#### Six dead as boat capsizes

**ISTANBUL:** Six people including three babies died yesterday when an inflatable boat carrying 16 people capsized off the coast of western Turkey, state-run Anadolu news agency reported. Nine people were rescued by the coast guard overnight, it said, adding that search and rescue efforts were continuing for one missing person after the incident off the coastal province of Ayvalik. The boat was believed to be en route to Greece's Lesbos island which is around 20 km away from the Turkish coast, it said.—Reuters

#### Tunisia takes in 40 migrants

**TUNIS:** Tunisia on Saturday said it would take in 40 migrants, including two pregnant women, rescued by a commercial vessel. The ship, the "Sarost 5" a Tunisian flagged supply boat, has been blocked for two weeks from docking off Zarzis in southern Tunisia. "For humanitarian reasons, we will accept the 40 migrants," Prime Minister Youssef Chahed said in parliament. The African migrants, five of whom are women, set off from Libya and were lost at sea for five days before being spotted. "Despite this delay in making this decision we are happy and relieved," the captain of the Sarost 5, Ali Hajji, said.—AFP

#### Serbian lawyer shot dead

**BELGRADE:** A leading lawyer who defended former Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic on charges of war crimes has been shot dead in Belgrade, police said yesterday. Dragoslav Ognjanovic, who was gunned down Saturday night outside the apartment block where he lived, also represented a senior underworld figure, Serbian media reported. "The police are searching for the person who killed... lawyer Dragoslav Ognjanovic and wounded his 26-year-old son in the arm," said Serbian police official Dejan Kovacevic. The authorities did not link the murder of the 56-year-old to his work for Milosevic or Luka Bojovic, who is reportedly serving 18 years in a Spanish prison for possessing weapons.—AFP

#### Palestinian militants killed in Gaza

**GAZA CITY:** Two Palestinian militants were killed in the eastern Gaza Strip early yesterday, their movement said, in an explosion during what residents said were preparations to launch a projectile at Israel. The left-wing Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) named the two members of its armed wing as Ayman al-Najjar, 26, and Muhannad Hamuda, 24, both from Jabalia in northern Gaza. The explosion happened east of Jabalia, with the PFLP saying the two were killed in the line of duty. Palestinian medical sources had reported that they died as a result of an Israeli strike, but the Israeli army denied the claim.—AFP

#### Thousands back Nicaragua bishops

**MANAGUA:** Thousands of Nicaraguans marched through their capital on Saturday in a show of support for the country's bishops whom President Daniel Ortega has accused of aiding an attempted "coup" against him. The rally brought together Catholics, evangelicals and non-Christians under images of the Virgin Mary and Nicaraguan flags, and cries of "freedom" and "Bishop, buddy, the people are with you." —AFP

## International

# Lawmakers protest US deal allowing free plans for 3D guns

## DD website invites to download program to make ghost guns

WASHINGTON: Dozens of US legislators are demanding that the Trump administration explain a recent agreement to allow the free distribution of plans for using 3D printers to make plastic handguns that will be easy to hide and almost impossible to control. After a lengthy legal battle, the government reached agreement last month with Cody Wilson, a militant gun rights advocate from Texas. He successfully argued that the US Constitution's Second Amendment, which guarantees the right to private gun ownership, should extend to a person's right to make guns at home-uncontrolled by authorities, since they will bear no serial number.

Dozens of Democrats in both the US House of Representatives and the Senate have decried the settlement and are demanding an explanation from the President Donald Trump's administration, which has been extremely supportive of gun-owners' rights. The agreement between the State Department, which controls the exportation of American arms, and Wilson's Defense Distributed (DD) group was reached on June 29. But it remained secret until last week, after groups advocating for stronger gun controls demanded its publication.

The consent agreement "permits any United States person, to include DD's customers and SAF's members, to access, discuss, reproduce or otherwise benefit from the technical data that is the subject of the action." The SAF is the Second Amendment Foundation, which supported Wilson's suit and has called the settlement a

"devastating blow to the gun prohibition lobby." Wilson is due to receive \$40,000 in damages and interest. The DD website invites anyone interested to download the program to make so-called "ghost guns" starting August 1, when "the age of the downloadable gun formally begins."

That means anyone with a 3D printer—which costs around \$2,000 and can be programmed to build objects of almost any shape—will be able starting next week to make plastic-bodied guns at home for just a few hundred dollars each. Security experts fear that the guns may be able to evade detection by the metal detectors used in many public buildings and airports. But gun enthusiasts say that without some metal parts, the guns will be unreliable—and might even explode in a user's face.

### Felons and terrorists

The settlement offers no justification for the decision in Wilson's favor. Similar software programs have become available in other countries, notably Britain, China and Japan. But five US senators, all Democrats, have denounced the agreement as "stunning" and "puzzling," and have demanded, in an open letter, that the government provide a written explanation of its thinking. "The settlement will allow these tutorials to be posted online for unlimited distribution to anyone—including felons and terrorists—both here in the United States and abroad," the senators wrote.

Forty-two Democratic members of the House of



NEW JERSEY: US President Donald Trump, right, and First Lady Melania Trump, left, walk off Air Force One at Morristown Municipal Airport in Morristown, NJ. —AFP

Representatives shared their own concerns, writing that the administration's decision would only worsen the "epidemic of armed violence" in the US. "So-called 'ghost guns' do not bear a manufacturer's serial number and may be constructed using plastic materials that are

impossible to screen at security checkpoints using metal detectors," they wrote. "We shouldn't have to wait for someone to kill someone in a House office building after sneaking past security with a plastic 3D printed gun to do something to stop this." —AFP

“Devastating blow to gun prohibition lobby”

”

## Polls close in 'sham' Cambodia vote

PHNOM PENH: Polls closed in Cambodia's election yesterday as the ruling party predicted a landslide victory for veteran strongman Prime Minister Hun Sen after the main opposition party was dissolved. Hun Sen, who came to power in 1985 in a country still plagued by civil war, has cracked down on dissent in the run-up to the poll, pressuring civil society, independent media and his political opponents.

The 65-year-old, a one-time defector from the brutal Khmer Rouge regime, has pointed to stability and growth as the fruits of his rule—a message that resonates with his base. "Prime Minister Hun Sen is the savior of the country," said voter Sim Chantha. "I voted for him and the Cambodian People's Party (CPP)." Ruling party spokesperson Sok Eysan forecast a huge victory and said people "flocked to vote". A bell was struck at one polling station in Phnom Penh to signal the end of balloting.

But there was also despondency and indifference to the predictable poll, with many closely watching the turnout for signs of a snub to the premier. "I did not go to vote. I slept at home," said Khem Chan Vannak, a former commune chief elected with the now-banned opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP). "A lot of my friends did not go to vote." Western governments have withdrawn their assistance from the election, citing its lack of credibility, with rights groups and the opposition describing it as a knockout blow to the democratic process.

Nineteen small-or hitherto unknown-parties are competing against Hun Sen's ruling CPP in the absence of the CNRP. A National Election Commission spokesperson said two hours before polls closed that turnout was more than 70 percent, just surpassing the final figure in 2013 of roughly 69 percent. The opposition, whose leaders are in jail, underground or in self-exile, urged a "clean-finger" boycott of the vote as the only safe form of protest.

There were numerous pictures of spoilt ballots on social media on Sunday. An opposition member told AFP they were sent by supporters but they could not be independently verified. Lines, some with saffron-clad monks, were seen at polling stations early Sunday as voters showed up at schools and pagodas to cast ballots. But they began to thin out by midday. Hun Sen smiled as he and his wife Bun Rany arrived early to vote just outside the capital, holding up an ink-stained finger for photographers. The CPP has won every election since 1998.

### Fist of a dictator

More than eight million voters are registered for the sixth general election since polls organized by the United Nations in 1993. At the time the country was slowly emerging from decades of war, including the Khmer Rouge years from 1975-79 which killed a quarter of the population. Hun Sen was installed aged just 32 as national leader during the Vietnamese occupation of 1979-89. But a youthful population angered by corruption and with little memory of the Khmer Rouge era put the ruling party's longevity in doubt.

His votes helped the CNRP to secure more than 44 percent of the vote in 2013 and a similar share in local elections last year. "The CNRP offered a promise of responsive and non-corrupt governance, and people wanted to give them a chance," said Phil Robertson, deputy director of the Asia division of Human Rights Watch. But Hun Sen snuffed out the looming electoral threat, accusing the rescue party of being involved in a plot to topple the government and arresting leader Kem Sokha.

"This is a story of how democratic dreams die under the fist of a dictator," Robertson added. The Supreme Court dissolved the party in November 2017, clearing the way for a CPP whitewash yesterday. A climate of fear driven by local-level ruling party members has made many reluctant openly to criticize the vote. —AFP

## Russian navy to deploy 26 new ships this year

SAINT PETERSBURG: Russia's navy will deploy a total of 26 new ships this year including four carrying Kalibr cruise missiles. President Vladimir Putin said yesterday as the country celebrated Navy Day with a show of strength. "In total in 2018 the navy should get 26 new warships, motor boats and vessels including four warships with Kalibr cruise missiles," Putin said in the north-western city of Saint Petersburg, Interfax news agency reported.

Kalibr missiles fired from Russian ships in the Mediterranean and the Caspian have been used as part of Moscow's military intervention in the conflict in Syria in

support of President Bashar al-Assad. The navy has already this year taken in eight new ships, Putin added. The commander of the Black Sea fleet, which is based in Crimea's port of Sevastopol, Vice-Admiral Alexander Moiseyev said six new vessels including missile ships would be inducted by the end of the year, Interfax added.

Putin reviewed a spectacular annual naval display on the Neva River in Saint Petersburg with 39 warships carrying out maneuvers. He told the 4,000 servicemen taking part that the navy "is making a weighty contribution to the fight with international terrorism." "Of course we will continue measures aimed at strengthening and developing the navy, boosting equipment," Putin said. The Navy Day celebrations also included a parade in Russia's Syrian base of Tartus in the Mediterranean for the second time, involving five ships and the Kolpino diesel submarine, the defense ministry said on Facebook. —AFP



SAINT PETERSBURG: Russian sailors take part in the Navy Day parade in Saint Petersburg. —AFP

## EU trying to 'swindle' UK in Brexit talks

LONDON: Italy's far right deputy prime minister Matteo Salvini has accused the European Union of attempting to "swindle" the United Kingdom out of the Brexit people voted for in the landmark 2016 referendum. The Sunday Times reported. "My experience in the European parliament tells me you either impose yourself or they swindle you", Salvini told the weekly as he urged prime minister Theresa

May to take a harder stance in negotiations to sever ties with the trading bloc.

May and her ministers are scrambling to forge agreements with each of the EU's 27 member states after a week which saw her already fragile "Chequers plan" for Brexit knocked back by Brussels chief negotiator Michel Barnier. On Thursday Barnier rejected May's plan to keep the border between EU member Ireland and the UK province of Northern Ireland open, with a dual system of taxes levied by each side for the benefit of the other.

But League party leader Salvini has urged May to consider taking a hard line, potentially leaving the EU without securing a deal. "Because on some principles there is no need to be flexible and you should

not go backwards," he told The Times. The paper said he also implied the EU is attempting to punish Britain for seeking to leave, claiming: "There is no objectivity or good faith from the European side."

"I hope the negotiations end well for the UK to serve as an example of the people coming out on top of the EU," he added. "I remember the referendum stage as an example of participation and freedom; I hope it can be an opportunity for the British." Barnier has attempted to scupper May's plan to circumvent Brussels in striking a deal with the member states, insisting that there is not a "sliver of difference" between him and the 27 nation leaders. But according to The Times Salvini has said he would welcome one-on-one talks with May, undermining Barnier's authority as the head of talks. —AFP

## US govt approves aid as California battles wildfires

REDDING: The US federal government approved aid Saturday for California as thousands of firefighters battled to contain a series of deadly raging wildfires that have killed six people, including two young children and their great grandmother, and destroyed hundreds of buildings. The largest of the fires menacing the state has nearly doubled in size, while another pushed thousands of people to flee and a third forced the partial closure of the popular Yosemite National Park.

A huge column of smoke rotated rapidly above the massive Carr Fire with such strength it looked like a tornado in a fire whirl sometimes dubbed a "firenado." Melody Bledsoe, 70, and her two great-grandchildren James and Emily Roberts—aged just five and four respectively—died as the fire consumed their rural trailer home. The blaze also killed two fire workers, Cal Fire said. Another firefighter died in the Ferguson Fire.

In declaring an emergency in California, President Donald Trump "ordered federal assistance to supplement state, tribal and local response efforts due to the emergency condi-

tions resulting from a wildfire beginning on July 23," the White House said. The Federal Emergency Management Agency "is authorized to identify, mobilize and provide at its discretion, equipment and resources necessary to alleviate the impacts of the emergency," it said.

The Carr Fire in northern California—which began on July 23 — has consumed 80,906 acres (32,749 hectares), up from 48,312 on Friday, according to Cal Fire, the state's Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. "Winds, high temperatures and dry vegetation still have the potential to fuel fire growth. Fire spread has been active in all directions and has made significant runs," Cal Fire said. Governor Jerry Brown on Friday asked for federal assistance "to save lives and to protect property," his office said in a statement.

### Thousands evacuated

He asked for help, including military aircraft, shelter supplies and water for 30,000 evacuated residents in Shasta County, in north-central California, where the Carr Fire has grown "uncontrollably," the statement said. Brown declared a state of emergency in Shasta and ordered National Guard forces to assist the 3,400 fire personnel already trying to contain the Carr Fire, which has destroyed 500 structures. More than 1,300 firefighters are battling the fast-moving Cranston Fire, which began on Wednesday and forced



CALIFORNIA: Redding firefighters look on as the Carr Fire moves through the area in Redding, California. —AFP

the evacuation of about 7,000 people, the US Forest Service said.

It added that the hazards caused by Cranston and another fire have caused the temporary closure of all US Forest Service lands within the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument. A 32-year-old man has been arrested and charged with 15 arson counts, including for the Cranston Fire. The Ferguson Fire has encroached upon the Yosemite National Park in central California, forcing the partial closure of the popu-

lar attraction.

"Firefighters worked through the night extending and strengthening containment lines, while also monitoring a small fire that jumped a line Friday afternoon," according to InciWeb, the Forestry Service's incident information website. Last year was the worst on record for wildfire devastation in California, with more than 40 deaths and around 9,000 structures destroyed, following fires that ravaged the Napa and Sonoma wine regions. —AFP



## International

# Mali votes in key election as violence flares up in Sahel

## President Keita seeks second 5-year term

**BAMAKO:** Mali went to the polls yesterday, with President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita seeking a second 5-year term in the fragile Sahel state beset by deadly ethnic and jihadist violence. After a campaign marred by violent incidents, 23,000 polling stations opened at 0800 GMT and are scheduled to close at 1800 GMT. "I have my voting card, I am going to vote for my country and for my favorite president," said Moriba Camara, a 35-year-old teacher, in the Sebenicoro district of the capital Bamako.

"I know there is going to be no cheating. I trust the authorities," he added, as a few voters started queuing around him. President Keita, 73, leads a crowded field of 24 candidates—just one of them a woman—bidding for the presidency which he has held since 2013. He voted in Sebenicoro, in the capital, surrounded by journalists and supporters. His record on security has been a dominant theme, with opponents, including several former ministers, accusing him of incompetence.

On the campaign trail, Keita—commonly known by his initials IBK—highlighted the achievements of a 2015 peace agreement between the government, government-allied groups and former Tuareg rebels to fight jihadi fighters in the country's north. But the main Al-Qaeda-linked jihadist alliance made its presence felt on the final day of campaigning Friday, dubbing the election a "mirage" that would do nothing for the Malian people.

"These elections are nothing other than the pursuit of a mirage and our peoples will reap nothing but illusions, as they are used to doing," said alliance leader Iyad Ag Ghaly. Ag Ghaly, the key figure in the jihadists' operation to take control of much of the north of the country in 2012, leads the Group to Support Islam and Muslims (GSIM), formed from a merger of several militant groups.

## Muslim survivors of massacre shaken by citizenship test

**NELLIE, India:** Thirty-six years after losing his parents, sister and a four-year-old daughter in one of India's worst sectarian massacres, Abdul Suban says he is still trying to prove he's a citizen of the Hindu-majority nation. Suban is one of hundreds of thousands of Bengali-speaking Muslims categorised as "doubtful voters", who will not find their names in a National Register of Citizens (NRC) the northeastern border state of Assam will release today.

"If the government has decided to brand us foreigners what can we do?" said the 60-year-old. "NRC is trying to finish us off. Our people have died here, but we will not leave this place." Suban was seated with his wife at their house a few hundred metres from a vast paddy field where, in 1983, scores of people were chased down and killed by machete-armed mobs intent on hounding out Muslim immigrants. He survived by running as hard as he could and hiding behind a bush for days.

Work on the citizens' register has accelerated under the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). With an eye on the 2019 national election, the BJP's Hindu-first campaign has become more strident, critics say, playing to its core base with divisive programs such as the citizenship test in Assam, already a tinderbox of ethnic and religious tensions.

Elsewhere in the country's northern heartland, lynchings of Muslim cattle traders have risen under Modi in the country where many

## Bangladesh photographer sacked over viral kiss photo

**DHAKA:** A renowned Bangladesh photographer said yesterday he has been the victim of "unwanted cruelty" after being sacked over an image of a couple kissing that raised a social media storm in the conservative Muslim-majority country. The Purboposhchimbd news portal said Jibon Ahmed was "not fit" to work for the company because of doubts about whether the kiss image was staged. Ahmed protested his innocence, insisted he has proof the image was spontaneous and said he has been roughed up by other photographers because of the image.

### IBK unbreakable bond

One supporter attending IBK's final rally, Cheickna Traore, a young entrepreneur, insisted there was an "unbreakable bond" between with the incumbent president and that there was no real alternative. "Nobody can sort Mali out in five years. Nobody. If IBK goes then the next president will have to start again from square one. We don't want that, we want continuity." Violence continues to flare, even with the presence of 15,000 UN peacekeepers and 4,500 French troops and a heralded five-nation anti-terror force, the G5 Sahel. A state of emergency enters its fourth year in November.

More than 300 civilians have died in ethnic clashes this year, according to UN figures and an AFP toll. Many deaths have occurred in the central region of Mopti, involving the Fulani nomadic herder community and Bambara and Dogon farmers. Four days before polling day, armed men—described as Dogon hunters—killed 17 Fulani civilians in the village of Somena, Fulani representatives said Friday.

Jihadist violence, meanwhile, has spread from northern Mali to the centre and south and spilled over into neighboring Burkina Faso and Niger, often inflaming communal conflicts.

### Security and observers

Amid concerns that the vote could not be held in some restive areas, more than 30,000 personnel have been drafted to ensure security. The European Union, the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF) are fielding election observers. Keita's challengers are headed by Soumaila Cisse, 68, a former finance and economy



BAMAKO: A man casts his ballot at the polling station in Bamako during Malian presidential election. — AFP

minister, who lost by a large margin in the second round of the 2013 election.

His team have warned of possible fraud, claiming that there are two electoral lists and hundreds of fake polling stations. For Cisse, Mali "is dying". In the centre of the country, "there is no administration, more than 500 schools have closed, no more health centers, investment in water", he told AFP in an interview Friday. Cisse blamed recent bouts of inter-communal violence on "poverty, first of all, which has risen these past few years. That creates tension, difficulties, competition for resources".

He also slammed "a real lack of state authority", meaning "some citizens end up meting out their own justice and that is very dangerous". He termed the continuing problem of jihadist violence as a global, rather than African problem and urged the next government to apply the 2015 peace accord. The first poll results are expected within 48 hours, with official results following on Friday at the latest. First round turnout is typically below 50 percent in Mali which has some eight million voters. If no candidate gains more than 50 percent of the vote in Sunday's first round, a second round will take place on August 12. —AFP



ASSAM: Villagers wait outside the National Register of Citizens (NRC) centre to get their documents verified by government officials, at Mayong Village in Morigaon district, in the northeastern state of Assam, India. —Reuters

Hindus consider cows sacred, further deepening social divides. The BJP has denied the lynchings have any connection with it being in power. Modi has at least twice publicly spoken out against cow vigilantes.

### Mass grave

Several other survivors of the "Nellie Massacre", which killed around 2,000 people from more than a dozen villages, gave accounts of burying bodies in a mass grave now partly under water. They said they hoped the release of the NCR list on Monday would not spark further violence. Security has been tightened across Assam. The citizenship test is the culmination of years of often violent agitations by Assamese demanding the removal of outsiders they accuse of taking jobs and cornering resources in the state of 33 million, known for its tea estates and oil fields.

"The NRC is extremely important to make the Assamese people feel protected,"

said Santanu Bharali, the legal adviser to the BJP chief minister of Assam. "It's a moral victory. The ethnic Assamese always maintained the presence of foreigners and this will prove that." But the opposition Congress party and rights activists say the government is misusing the register to target even legal Indian Muslim citizens who have traditionally voted for non-BJP parties. The BJP and NRC authorities have repeatedly denied the allegations.

To be recognized as Indian citizens, all residents of Assam had to produce documents proving that they or their families lived in the country before March 24, 1971. Suban said both he and his father were born in Assam, and showed Reuters a soiled yellow document that showed his father's name in the list of voters in Assam for 1965, before the cut-off date. The local border police declined to discuss individual cases, but said not all documents furnished by suspected illegal immigrants were valid. —Reuters

"They asked me why did I shoot the photo. One of them slapped me during the quarrel," he said. "I said it was a symbol of pure love." After publishing the photo, Purboposhchimbd later wrote an article saying it believed the photo was "preplanned" and the photographer had "apologized". The editor, Khujista Nur-e-Naharin, said the company asked Ahmed to take legal action against the photographers who allegedly beat him but he did not turn up for a meeting to discuss the issue.

She also said there were suspicions the photo was staged with "models" and that Ahmed was not "fit" to work for the news portal. "We have asked him many times to come and explain why he was roughed up and why he had said sorry to the photographers and whether models were used for the photo. He did not communicate with me. He denied our honor," she said. Ahmed, who said he was sacked, rejected the employer's criticism, and insisted he has proof that that the image was "natural". He said his conscience would not let him sue his fellow journalists. The couple in the photo have not made any public comment. —AFP

## Pakistan's Sharif falls sick in jail, moving to hospital

**ISLAMABAD:** Former Pakistani premier Nawaz Sharif, jailed earlier this month over graft charges, has fallen sick inside prison and is being moved to hospital, a minister said yesterday. Sharif and his daughter were jailed on July 13 after a graft court sentenced them to 10 and seven years respectively over properties in Britain which emerged in the wake of Panama Papers revelations. Caretaker home minister for Punjab province Shaukat Javed said on state-run Pakistan Television that doctors had advised his transfer to hospital after an electrocardiogram had shown "variations".

"How many days he stays in hospital depends on doctors," Javed said, adding that the former PM was being transferred to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences in Islamabad. Sharif, who claims he is being targeted by the country's powerful security establishment, is fighting for his political life after his Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party lost an election on Wednesday to rival

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf led by former cricket hero Imran Khan.

His brother Shabbaz, who heads the party now, has rejected election results along with other parties who have demanded fresh elections and announced they would protest against alleged election rigging. The protests announcement late Friday came as the United States, the European Union and other observers aired reservations over widespread claims that the powerful military had tried to fix the playing field in Khan's favor.

Khan's victory represents an end to decades of rotating leadership between the PML-N and the Bhutto dynasty's Pakistan Peoples Party that was punctuated by periods of military rule. The vote was meant to be a rare democratic transition in the Muslim country, which has been ruled by the powerful army for roughly half its history. But it was marred by violence and allegations of military interference in the months leading up to the vote, with Khan seen as the beneficiary. —AFP

## Fresh headache for embattled Australia PM after poll loss

**SYDNEY:** Embattled Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's grip on power ahead of upcoming national polls was under renewed scrutiny yesterday after disappointing by-election results. Five seats were up for grabs after four opposition politicians and one from a minor party fell foul of a constitutional rule barring dual citizens from serving in parliament.

Saturday's by-elections were billed as a key test for Turnbull and Labor opposition leader Bill Shorten, with the governing Liberal-National coalition hoping to win a seat to double its wafer-thin parliamentary majority of one. With Labor tipped to retain all four of its seats, including two that had been seen as too close to call—Longman in Queensland state and Braddon in Tasmania state—Shorten emerged as the clear winner.

"These by-elections were a very simple question—did people want more of

the same or did they want better from their government," Shorten told reporters in Queensland yesterday. "I think, in large numbers, they said we want better from the government... We had the better candidates (and) the better policies." Turnbull spent yesterday downplaying suggestions the results, particularly in Longman where there was a 10 percent swing against the coalition's candidate, placed his leadership in peril ahead of national polls.

Turnbull, a moderate Liberal, has battled disquiet from right-wingers in the coalition after he ousted former PM Tony Abbott in a party-room vote in September 2015. "This was a conventional swing in one electorate," Turnbull told reporters in Sydney. "I assure you, when we come to the federal campaign, Australians will see there is a very clear choice then... We will look very seriously and thoughtfully and humbly at the way in which the voters have responded."

National upper-house elections have to be called by mid-May and lower-house polls by early November next year, though they are usually held on the same day. Turnbull has said he would call an election in the first half of 2019. Following the by-elections, analysts said the government could lose power and its hold on marginal seats in the critical state of Queensland at the next national election. —AFP

## Analysis

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## Nazis, racists, bigots: Extremism on US ballot in 2018 polls

Arthur Jones is an avowed Nazi. John Fitzgerald says the Holocaust is a myth. Rick Tyler wants to "make America white again." Their fringe ideas are reminiscent of another age, but the unapologetic men who espouse them are all on US election ballots in 2018. Extremism and bigotry, even outright white supremacy and anti-Semitism, have found new lives in 21st century US politics and the era of President Donald Trump, beyond just the toxic rhetoric of a few little-known cranks.

They have received more exposure this year on the national stage than at any time in recent memory. And the mainly conservative proponents of hate running for office are proving to be a major embarrassment for the Republican Party. In Illinois, Jones, who called the Holocaust "the biggest, blackest lie in history" and once ran a newspaper ad with a large swastika in the middle, is the Republican candidate for Congress, after he won the party primary by running unopposed in a largely Democratic district. Russel Walker, running for a seat in North Carolina's state house, proclaims "there is nothing wrong with being a racist" and that Jews are "descendants of Satan".

In Wisconsin, Paul Nehlen, the leading Republican running to fill the seat in Congress currently held by retiring Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, has emerged as a leader of the alt-right movement, someone who critics warn wants to provide white nationalists and anti-Semites a stronger foothold in US culture and politics. And the campaign website for Tyler, a Trump supporter running for Congress in Tennessee, depicts the Confederate flag flying atop the White House. One of his campaign billboards read: "Make America White Again."

Experts say there is an unprecedented number of openly bigoted candidates this year, and that their chief enabler may well be the president of the United States himself. "Trump's unorthodox use of racism-related and anti-Muslim stuff - all of that bigoted language - has opened a door in politics that wasn't there before," Heidi Beirich, who as an expert at the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) has been tracking hate groups since 1999, told AFP. "We've always had a smattering of neo-Nazis... but this is ratcheting the situation up much higher than it was before."

### No more 'taboos'?

Overt bigotry by a candidate would spell his or her "death knell" up until recently, Beirich said. But in today's hyper partisan political environment, such rhetoric may no longer be a deal breaker. "By blowing through those taboos, and winning the presidency, Trump has shown a path to electoral success that people assumed wouldn't work," she said. This bigotry has spread into public life. Several incidents caught on video showing white people calling the police on African-Americans going about their business have gone viral.

One, which showed two young men dragged out of a Starbucks coffee shop in handcuffs, helped spark a national dialogue about race. The racial and ethnic divides are on clear political display in places like Virginia, where the Republican Senate nominee, the anti-immigration county supervisor Corey Stewart, is under fire for his provocative associations. Stewart has praised Nehlen as "one of my personal heroes," and has appeared with Jason Kessler, the man who organized a deadly white supremacist rally in Charlottesville last August.

However Stewart has since disavowed both men, and the move may have swayed some voters. On June 20 he won the Republican Senate primary. Last week he found himself on the debate stage with Democratic Senator Tim Kaine - Hillary Clinton's 2016 vice presidential nominee - where Stewart insisted "there's not a racist bone in my body." But he maintained he is a vigorous defender of Virginia "heritage," and strongly opposes the removal of any Confederate monuments.

Extremist candidates tend to flourish when they and their supporters feel unrepresented and ignored by the mainstream US parties, either the GOP or Democrats. In 2016 Trump appealed to millions of such blue collar voters, unemployed coal miners or factory workers or farmers whom Trump labeled the "forgotten man". They felt betrayed by globalization and US trade agreements, worried about illegal immigration, and mindful that their communities were changing.

Stewart says Democrats had the chance to reach those voters. But their failure to do so helped contribute to a scenario where far-right candidates can thrive. Democrats "abandoned the working guy," Stewart told CNN. "They slammed the door in their face, and now it's president Trump and the new Republican Party that is supporting working Americans."

The GOP has disavowed several extremist candidates, including Jones and Nehlen. But the SPLC's Beirich says Trump's embrace of controversial Republicans like former Arizona sheriff Joe Arpaio, who ran concentration camp-like jails for undocumented immigrants and is now running for Senate after being pardoned by Trump, is dog-whistle messaging to his party's fringe elements that there is space for them in political discourse. — AFP



## How a drive in rural India ended in lynching

In the tiny hamlet of Murki in the hinterlands of south India, Inspector V B Yadwad surveyed a pile of bricks and stones in a ditch where he and other police officers had been attacked earlier this month while trying to save a group of five men on a road trip from a violent mob. "We tried hard to stop them," said Yadwad, pointing to injuries on his back. "They wouldn't listen to anyone." Yadwad was one of eight policemen who rushed to the village on July 13 to try to control a mob of more than 200 that attacked the five friends, wrongly assuming they were child kidnappers.

The vicious assault left one of the five men, Mohammed Azam, a UK-educated IT worker from India's tech hub in Hyderabad, dead, and at least two of the others badly beaten. All eight officers were injured, two seriously. Azam, who was 32 and worked for global consulting services firm Accenture, is one of the latest victims of a wave of lynchings in India, as ill-equipped and outnumbered police struggle to contain mob violence triggered by false messages about child kidnappings spread via platforms like Facebook's WhatsApp messaging service, which is very popular in India.

The Indian government says it is not tracking data for lynchings, but data portal IndiaSpend has tallied more than 30 deaths from nearly 70 such incidents since January 2017. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration, which has been facing criticism from opposition parties and the public for failing to do enough to stop the lynchings, has blamed WhatsApp, warning the messaging service of legal action if it did not curb the spread of fake news. On July 20, WhatsApp said it was limiting the number of people someone can forward messages to simultaneously, and said it was considering more changes to curb the spread of fake messages in its largest market. But it is unclear how much this will restrain mob violence. Police probing the lynchings of Azam and others say they are often triggered by deep-rooted prejudices against minorities in India. Azam's own job at Accenture, according to his younger brother Akram, included reviewing the propriety of video content before it was uploaded to Alphabet Inc's YouTube.

"India is already vulnerable due to religious and caste fault lines," said Rema Rajeshwari, a superintendent of police in the southern Telangana state, where some recent lynchings took place. "When you add WhatsApp to the mix, things can easily spiral out of control."

## On a train home, Zimbabweans wonder if election could surprise

On the slow overnight train from Johannesburg to the Zimbabwe border, the talk is all about whether the country's election today could spring a surprise and topple the ZANU-PF government. Regular travellers carrying maize, blankets and washing powder sat beside voters heading home for Zimbabwe's first election since autocratic long-time leader Robert Mugabe was ousted eight months ago. The six-carriage train drew out of Johannesburg's central Park station in the early evening on Friday for a 15-hour, 600-km journey through a cold winter night.

"The people of Zimbabwe need a new life so they can forget about the hard times we had under that old man Mugabe," said passenger Emile Manyikunike, 36, wearing a black leather jacket and green Bob Marley t-shirt. "People were being beaten up by police for disagreeing with the government, and we could not even trust our neighbors because every other person was a spy for ZANU-PF," he told AFP. Manyikunike said he supports Nelson Chamisa, the young leader of the opposi-

tion MDC party who hopes to defeat Mugabe's former ally and successor, Emmerson Mnangagwa of the ZANU-PF party. Under Mugabe, Zimbabwe's economy collapsed and millions fled abroad - often to neighboring South Africa - to seek work and escape the repressive regime. "Chamisa needs to ensure that all Zimbabweans have jobs so that even the ones that escaped can come back and we can rebuild the country," Manyikunike told AFP. "This train is taking me home so that I can vote and bring change."

### 'We want a new country'

Fellow passenger Gertrude Tshabalala, 58, a domestic worker in South Africa, was heading back to visit her four grandchildren, carrying cooking pots, canned food and meat to supplement scarce supplies in Zimbabwe. She doubted whether Mnangagwa and ZANU-PF, which has ruled since independence from Britain in 1980, could be beaten in a country with a history of fraud-riddled elections. "ZANU-PF always wins - no matter what," she said. "But my two grandkids are old enough to vote this year and I just hope their votes count unlike ours in the past."

For one mother-of-two on board, who declined to give her name, the election is a chance to register her anger at the Mugabe years and try to throw out his ZANU-PF party. "We are going back home because we want a new country. It was 37 years with that old man ruling - he was greedy and wanted everything for himself," said the nurse, who has worked in Johannesburg for six years. "I am going to vote for the young Chamisa. The old guys



A kid sleeps in the economy class of the Shosholoz Meyl train on July 27, 2018 connecting Johannesburg to Musina. — AFP

want the old days. Their brains are old too, they can't think straight." The recently-refurbished train, which came back into service in February after being shut for three years, only had about 100 passengers and was hit by regular power cuts inside the carriages.

### Pap and a beer

A small dining car sold pap - maize porridge - steak and chicken, along with beer and cider to passengers who paid 190 rand (\$14) for a seat or 310 rand for a bed in a cabin, plus 60 rand for a pillow, sheets and thin blanket. Some women sitting on the

floor sang hymns before lying down to sleep in the dark after guards had checked their tickets. The train terminates at Musina, about 10 km short of the border, with travellers heading into Zimbabwe taking mini-bus taxis to the crossing point into Beitbridge.

On the South African side of the border, Zimbabwean truck driver Andrew Kumalo, 45, disagreed with most voters on the train. "The country needs experience not an experiment," he said. "A new broom sweeps better, but an old blanket comforts better. We must keep our revolutionary party." — AFP

While police say there were no child kidnappings recorded in or around Murki, child trafficking is a problem in India, and many children are sold into slavery, especially forced labor. About 250,000 children were registered as missing on the government's Track Child portal between Jan 2012 and March 2017. Villagers in Murki said they had been hearing about child kidnapping gangs for months. Photos and videos of the bodies of children being mutilated by alleged child abductors have been circulating via WhatsApp in many parts of India. Police showed Reuters some of the material they have gathered.

One video purports to show the bloodied body of a boy with his mouth gagged, as a man leans in and repeatedly stabs his heart. The messages exhort viewers to share them. "High Alert. Please Share As Much as Possible," one said. In all the areas where the recent lynching cases occurred, there were no such gangs, and the messages and reports were all false, police said. The problem is that people "may not be able to read or write, but everyone understands photos and videos," said Telangana Superintendent Rajeshwari.

### 'People made a mistake'

In many recent lynchings, police say minority groups such as those from lower castes, have been targets. Hindu vigilantes have also killed over two dozen Muslim people for transporting cows in the past year, accusing them of slaughtering the animals considered sacred in Hinduism. India's home ministry issued a notice to police nationwide on July 4, calling lynchings over child kidnapping rumours "a serious concern," according to a copy reviewed by Reuters. The government also issued a statement on Wednesday urging action against "cow vigilantes". Azam's killing has sent a chill through Murki, where many fear discussing the attack following the arrest of more than 30 men and women from the area in the police investigation. No one has yet been charged. When asked why villagers attacked the men, Vijay Biradar, a village elder, said "people made a mistake." "Did you see the Qatari's face? His big beard?" he said. "He looked like a terrorist." — Reuters

### 'High alert, please share'

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One video purports to show the bloodied body of a boy with his mouth gagged, as a man leans in and repeatedly stabs his heart. The messages exhort viewers to share them. "High Alert. Please Share As Much as Possible," one said. In all the areas where the recent lynching cases occurred, there were no such gangs, and the messages and reports were all false, police said. The problem is that people "may not be able to read or write, but everyone understands photos and videos," said Telangana Superintendent Rajeshwari.

### 'People made a mistake'

In many recent lynchings, police say minority groups such as those from lower castes, have been targets. Hindu vigilantes have also killed over two dozen Muslim people for transporting cows in the past year, accusing them of slaughtering the animals considered sacred in Hinduism. India's home ministry issued a notice to police nationwide on July 4, calling lynchings over child kidnapping rumours "a serious concern," according to a copy reviewed by Reuters. The government also issued a statement on Wednesday urging action against "cow vigilantes". Azam's killing has sent a chill through Murki, where many fear discussing the attack following the arrest of more than 30 men and women from the area in the police investigation. No one has yet been charged. When asked why villagers attacked the men, Vijay Biradar, a village elder, said "people made a mistake." "Did you see the Qatari's face? His big beard?" he said. "He looked like a terrorist." — Reuters

## Business

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# Iran currency sinks as US sanctions loom

## Tehran woos local investors with price and tax incentives



TEHRAN: Iranian women shop at Tehran's ancient Grand Bazaar on Saturday. — AFP

**DUBAI:** Iran's currency plunged to another record low yesterday, dropping past 100,000 rials to the US dollar as Iranians brace for Aug 7 when the United States is due to re-impose a first lot of sanctions on their economy.

In May the United States pulled out of a 2015 deal between world powers and Tehran under which international sanctions on Iran were lifted in return for curbs on its nuclear program. Washington decided to re-impose sanctions on Iran upon its withdrawal, accusing it of posing a security threat, and has told countries they must halt all imports of Iranian oil from Nov 4 or face US financial measures.

Yesterday, the Iranian rial plunged to 111,500 against one US dollar on the unofficial market, down from about 97,500 rials on Saturday, according to foreign exchange website Bonbast.com. Other websites said the dollar was exchanged between 108,500 and 116,000 rials.

The rial has lost about half of its value since April because of a weak economy, financial difficulties at local banks and heavy demand for dollars among Iranians who fear the effects of sanctions.

US President Donald Trump has called the agreement one of the worst deals ever negotiated but in a bid to salvage the accord, Iran's European partners in the

nuclear deal are preparing a package of economic measures to offset the US pullout.

However, France said earlier this month that it was unlikely European powers would be able to put together an economic package for Iran that would salvage its nuclear deal before November.

On Aug 7, the United States will re-impose sanctions on the purchase or acquisition of US dollars by the Iranian government, Iran's trade in gold and precious metals, and on the direct and indirect sale, supply and transfer to or from Iran of graphite, raw or semi-finished metals, coal and industrial-related software. Sanctions also will be reapplied to the importation into the United States of carpets and foodstuffs made in Iran, and on certain related financial transactions.

Iran's oil exports could fall by as much as two-thirds by the end of the year because of the new US sanctions, putting oil markets under huge strain amid supply outages elsewhere in the world.

minum that raised costs of cans and some production processes.

Coca-Cola chief executive James Quincey acknowledged that retailers were not thrilled with the development. "Clearly these conversations are difficult, I think it's working its way through," he told analysts this week. "Ultimately the beverage industry is not the only industry that is facing pressure from changing imports and the need to take pricing," he said. "That's just partly the general environment."

At paint company Sherwin-Williams, executives hinted at price hikes due to inflation in petroleum-linked commodities. "Our historic practice has always been to talk with our customers first and then the investment community," chief executive John Morikis told Wall Street analysts. "We are going to protect our margins and we're going to talk to consumers first. And you can connect the dots from there."

### Prices already elevated

Analysts see a number of factors behind higher commodity prices, with US tariffs on steel and aluminum imports a frequently-cited catalyst. But while trade actions by US President Donald Trump have gotten much of the attention, analysts note that prices of many goods-including steel and oil-were already elevated before the trade war took center stage.

Higher inflation also typically accompanies

### Strategy

Meanwhile, Iran plans to offer price and tax incentives to private investors to take over idle state projects and help boost the economy, state media reported on Saturday, as the country faces likely US sanctions and the exit of many foreign companies.

The new Iranian plan, along with action against alleged financial crime, appears to be aimed at easing concern over the US decision.

The probable return of sanctions has triggered a rapid fall of Iran's currency, protests by bazaar traders usually loyal to the Islamist rulers, and a public outcry over alleged profiteering.

The plan will offer attractive prices and flexible terms as well as tax holidays for investors who agree to take over some of the 76,000 government projects which are unfinished or idle, Vice-President Eshaq Jahangiri said on state television. "Over the past few months, the country's liquidity has gone into housing, foreign exchange and gold coins, raising prices and provoking public concerns,"

Jahangiri was quoted as saying by the website of the state broadcaster.

"A main issue in the meeting ... was to find solutions to push liquidity towards employment and activating manufacturing," Jahangiri added after the meeting attended by President Hassan Rouhani, and the heads of parliament and the judiciary.

### Pulling out

The sanctions start to come into effect in August but some European companies investing in Iran and with big US operations have already announced they will pull out of business deals with Tehran. Judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei said on Saturday that 18 people had been arrested over alleged profiteering from foreign exchange dealings and the illegal importing of luxury cars, state television reported.

In late December, demonstrations which began over economic hardship spread to more than 80 Iranian cities and towns. At least 25 people died in the unrest, the biggest expression of public discontent in almost a decade. Demonstrators initially vented their anger over high prices and alleged corruption, but the protests took on a rare political dimension, with a growing number of people calling on Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to step down. — Reuters

## Protests mount against regime amid price spiral



## Trade war casualty in US: Cheap prices for everyday goods

**NEW YORK:** The US economy may be roaring ahead, but American consumers face the prospect of paying more for everyday goods, due in part to trade tariffs.

Big companies reporting earnings over the last week or so described price hikes on everything from soda to airplane tickets to household paint and tools. Some of the price hikes are still in the planning stages and not all companies are sure they will be able to make higher prices stick due to competitive pressures.

"We have implemented price increases for these implemented tariffs," said Donald Allan, chief financial officer at Stanley Black & Decker, whose products include hammers, saws and power tools.

The 175-year old Stanley expects to generate \$190 million more in revenues in 2018 from price hikes, Allan said at a conference call this month. Soda giant Coca-Cola also recently enacted price hikes in North America, in part because of tariffs on steel and alu-



NEW YORK: Soda giant Coca-Cola also recently enacted price hikes in North America, in part because of tariffs on steel and aluminum that raised costs of cans and some production processes. — AFP

increased macroeconomic growth, which was estimated on Friday at 4.1 percent in the second quarter by the US government, the fastest level in six years.

Inflation also surfaced as a concern in the first-quarter earnings season, but more companies are now discussing price hikes and some companies said the problem has worsened as Trump has expanded the attack to more countries and regions and as the steel

and aluminum tariffs moved from threat to reality. JJ Kinahan, chief market strategist at TD Ameritrade, said it was still premature to view inflation as a major worry. "What makes me hesitant on inflation is not how it starts but that it can rise really quickly," he said.

Economists fear that a sudden surge in prices could spark more aggressive interest rate hikes from the Federal Reserve, which could itself derail growth.

### Companies face dilemma

For companies, the issue of how to respond to elevated commodity prices has compelled difficult choices between accepting lower profits, cutting other spending and lifting retail prices. General Motors suggested this week that it expects to eat at least some of the hit from \$2 billion in higher costs due to metals tariffs and the strong dollar. GM trimmed its 2018 profit forecast, a move that sent shares diving.

GM has managed to offset about half the \$2 billion through negotiations with suppliers and hopes consumers will shoulder at least some of the rest, said chief financial officer Chuck Stevens.

"To the extent we can, we're recovering that through pricing," Stevens said. "Obviously the market in the United States is challenging." American Airlines responded to \$2 billion in additional fuel costs this year by cutting some planned additional capacity and defer deliveries of new planes. — AFP

## Business

## NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

# Dollar rallies on easing tensions and softer trade war rhetoric

**KUWAIT:** US President Donald Trump declared "a new phase" of trade relations after reaching an agreement with European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, easing tensions following Trump's threat to impose tariffs on car imports. Trump had warned last week that he would move forward with 25 percent tariffs if the meeting did not go well. The two sides agreed to expand European imports of US liquefied natural gas and soybeans, and lower industrial tariffs on both sides, leaving automakers aside as they continue to endure losses. Investor concern eased while US equities rose as 10-year treasury yield rose to reach 2 month high of 2.976 percent.

The Trump administration announced last Tuesday that it will implement a relief package program to pay up to \$12 billion in order help US farmers handle the growing trade war with China, the European Union, and others.

The move signals clear intent that President Trump is determined to stick to his tariff plan, yet the plan was met by criticism by many farmers, lawmakers, and republicans. On a different note, Trump tweeted that the US will impose large sanctions on Turkey for the detainment of Pastor Andrew Brunson. The tweet depreciated the Turkish Lira by 1.76 percent against the dollar within minutes.

Oil markets have witnessed plenty of volatility during the past week. The US continued to trade threats with Iran. Additionally, US crude oil inventories dropped to their lowest level since 2015. According to the Energy Information Administration, inventories fell 6.1 million barrels during the week, leaving a total of 404.9 million barrels left (not including the American emergency petroleum reserve). Adding fuel to fire, Saudi Arabia announced it was "temporarily halting" all oil shipments through a strategic Red Sea shipping lane immediately, after an earlier attack on two crude vessels by the Iranian Houthis movement. Brent Crude futures set-

led at \$74.29 towards the end of the week. On the FX front, the US dollar had a volatile week reacting to sudden changes in the trade-war rhetoric with Europe especially. During the past week, the green back gained as much as 0.378 percent. The currency closed the week at 94.683.

## Existing home sales drops

US sales of existing homes fell in June as Americans in search of homes confront prices that are rising nearly double the pace of wage growth. The National Association of Realtors announced total existing-home sales fell 2.2 percent from a year ago in June, largely due to a shortage of homes and rising building materials costs. NAR's chief economist said that "there continues to be a mismatch between the growing levels of home buyer demand in most of the country in relation to the actual pace of home sales, which are declining." Though the number of homes for sale rose for the first time since 2015, median sales price increased 5.2 percent annually in June.

## ECB maintains the status quo

As widely expected by the market, the ECB kept policy and guidance unchanged. The statement by ECB President Mario Draghi was not changed since the latest meeting. Fixed income investors looking for more detail on reinvestment policy have been disappointed as Draghi didn't answer any questions on the topic saying simply that "it wasn't discussed". During his statement Draghi noted the positive acceleration in wage growth in the region. Additionally, the ECB views growth to remain "broadly balanced" as per their assessment. The governing council remains confident that inflation is converging to target in a sustainable manner, but weak underlying inflation means "ample" stimulus is still required; prudence, patience and persistence is still needed when setting policy.

On the FX side, the euro started the week at

## Rates - 29 July, 2018

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	High	Low	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.1732	1.1743	1.1619	1.1657	1.1475	1.1875	1.1740
GBP	1.3138	1.3213	1.3069	1.3109	1.2910	1.3315	1.3166
JPY	111.32	111.54	110.58	111.03	109.15	111.95	110.37
CHF	0.9918	0.9978	0.9898	0.9943	0.9745	1.0135	0.9870

1.1727 and lost ground to the dollar to reach 1.1622 on Friday. The single currency was supported at the 1.17 levels, yet after the ECB statement the Q&A session weighed in heavily on the currency as reinvestment strategy was not discussed and expectations for an interest rate hike may occur by the end of summer 2019.

## May to take control of EU talks

Theresa May has taken back control of crucial negotiations with Brussels from her new Brexit secretary just hours after the government published its white paper on withdrawing from the European Union. May announced she would lead the talks with the EU while the recently appointed Dominic Raab would be in charge of domestic preparations.

In light of the earlier mentioned news the sterling gained on the Euro, yet the overall uncertainty on the Brexit negotiations outcome remains an anchor for both currencies. The pound had a third straight week of decline after the EU's chief negotiator Michel Barnier rejected a key part of the UK Government's Brexit proposal. The sterling levels are justifiably subdued below the 1.31 levels.

## Japanese manufacturing

The Japanese manufacturing sector recorded its slowest growth in 20 months this July. The Nikkei Japan manufacturing PMI showed a preliminary reading of 51.6, down from 53.0 in June. Growth in output, employment, inventories and purchase quantities all slowed, with a decline in order backlogs. This hints that the slowdown in July may extend in the months ahead, with new export orders continuing to decline and domestic orders remaining unchanged.

Tokyo's core inflation increased by 0.8 percent in July from a year earlier, accelerating for a second straight month but offering little comfort to the Bank of Japan as it struggles to reach its elusive 2 percent inflation target. The central bank will meet next week and perhaps the current inflation level won't warrant a change in the framework of their monetary policy stance.

## Kuwait Kuwaiti dinar at 0.30265

The USDKWD opened at 0.30265 yesterday morning.

## Swatch quits annual Baselworld trade fair

**GENEVA:** Swiss watchmaker Swatch Group is quitting the annual Baselworld watch and jewellery trade fair, the NZZ am Sonntag newspaper reported yesterday, calling time on an event that has been a fixture of the luxury industry calendar for a century. Omega maker Swatch is the most important exhibitor at Baselworld, which traces its history back to 1917, but more and more brands are deserting the fair held every March, blaming high costs and insufficient returns.

"The Swatch Group has decided not to be present at Baselworld from 2019," the newspaper quoted Swatch chief executive Nick Hayek as saying. Swatch Group confirmed the decision in a statement.

The portfolio of Swatch, based in Biel in western Switzerland, spans the expensive Breguet, more affordable Longines and plastic Swatch timepieces.

Some of Swatch's high-end competitors have left Basel for a rival fair in Geneva, but Hayek said traditional annual watch fairs were no longer useful in a more transparent and fast-paced world.

Major exhibitors such as Swatch budget about 50 million francs (\$50.3 million) for each Baselworld, to cover travel and hotel expenses for staff and guests, the paper said.

"Annual watch fairs, as they exist today, no longer make much sense," Swatch Group said in its statement. "This does not mean that they should disappear. But it is necessary that they reinvent themselves, responding appropriately to the current situation and demonstrating more dynamism and creativity. At the moment, the trade fairs are failing to do so."

Hayek, a famously outspoken and flamboyant character in a staid and conservative industry, cited the cost of the fair's 430 million franc exhibition building as a reason for the decision to withdraw. "We are not there to amortize an expensive hall designed by (Swiss architects) Herzog & de Meuron," Hayek told the paper. Swatch Group said the funding of the new building was largely financed by the watch industry during the fairs, and Baselworld's organizers were more concerned with that than "having the courage to make real progress and to bring about true and profound changes."

Nobody at Baselworld could be reached for comment yesterday. Michel Loris-Melikoff, who took over as managing director of Baselworld at the beginning of this month, said Baselworld intended to remain the number one event for the watch industry. "It would be a great disappointment if the Swatch Group were to leave Baselworld," he told the paper. "We are doing everything we can to keep them in Basel." — Reuters

## Record drought grips Germany's breadbasket

**NIEDERNDODELEBEN, Germany:** Withered sunflowers, scorched wheat fields, stunted cornstalks—the farmlands of northern Germany have borne the brunt of this year's extreme heat and record-low rainfall, triggering an epochal drought.

As the blazing sun beats down, combine harvesters working the normally fertile breadbasket of Saxony-Anhalt in former communist East Germany kick up giant clouds of dust as they roll over the cracked earth.

"It hasn't really rained since April and that's the main growth period for our grains and the other crops—we've never seen anything like it," said Juliane Stein of Agro Boerdegruen, a farming conglomerate formed after German reunification in 1990.

"We've reached the point here in Germany where we're talking about a natural disaster that's a threat to our livelihood." A natural disaster is declared by German authorities during a drought when at least 30 percent of the average annual harvest is destroyed.

Given the massive losses feared by the sector this year, the German Farmers' Association (DBV) has called crisis talks tomorrow to discuss urgent state aid.

While southern Germany has seen largely normal rainfall this year, the north has been in the grip of an unrelenting high-pressure system creating weather conditions more familiar in southern France or Italy. "We expect billions in losses," DBV president Joachim Rukwied told German media last week.

## 'As flammable as straw'

The grain crop alone has shrunk by up to eight million tons or around 18 percent this year, stripping 1.4 billion euros (\$1.6 billion) from revenues so far. "The government needs to declare a state of emergency so that farmers in areas hit hardest by the drought can be helped directly with cash aid," Rukwied said.

While the sunshine has fostered larger and sweeter fruit than usual, sugar beets, rapeseed, potato and corn crops have been decimated in the drought, prompting farmers to cut their losses and harvest two to three weeks earlier than usual.

"The cornstalks are knee-high" and are sprouting smaller cobs or none at all, said Stein of Agro Boerdegruen, located about 150 kilometers (90 miles) west of Berlin. "Normally they should be over two meters by now." Stein said that to grow crops like potatoes—a staple of the German diet—her farms have long relied on watering systems because the region, in



Withered sunflowers, scorched wheat fields, stunted cornstalks — the farmlands of northern Germany have borne the brunt of this year's extreme heat and record-low rainfall, triggering an epochal drought.

the rain shadow of the Harz Mountains, is generally too dry. However it is too late to expand such systems to other fields this year, and in the long run would be too expensive to justify with other crops. Meanwhile the knock-on effects of the grain shortage have already been dramatic, depriving farmers of animal feed and sending prices soaring.

Many dairy farmers have responded by selling their livestock. The number of slaughtered cows and heifers surged 10 percent in the first two weeks of July, according to figures from the Federal Agriculture and Nutrition Agency. While Sweden and Greece have been ravaged by devastating forest fires, Germany has been less afflicted due to its less vulnerable types of vegetation and higher concentration of fire brigades.

However grain fields mark an exception and Saxony-Anhalt has seen wide swathes of farmland go up in flames. "Wheat when it's dry is as flammable as straw," Stein said. A drive through the farmland east of the River Elbe shows crops covered with the black soot of recent fires, with 70 hectares (170 acres) near the village of Barleben bearing the apocalyptic remains of a spark that raged across the parched field this month.

## 'Nothing you can do'

So will northern Germany become a region of olives,

wine and citrus fruits? Stein said farmers here will likely find other ways to adapt. No-till farming, which allows seeds to be sown without disturbing the soil, and the use of mulch to improve germination rates are two techniques already in practice.

Meanwhile seed breeding is developing crops that are more resistant to heat and dryness. However the process can take a decade or more and the European Court of Justice ruled last week it should be considered genetic manipulation and thus subject to stricter scrutiny by regulators.

Thomas Endrulat of the German Weather Service said it had been at least 15 years since the country had experienced a similarly hot, dry summer.

Such extremes matched forecasts seen in climate change models for Europe but he warned against drawing catastrophic conclusions from an "exceptional" year.

"You are seeing a rising number of heatwaves, just like you have had winters or heavy rainfall and floods," Endrulat said. "That bandwidth is part of our weather in central Europe."

But for farmers in the grip of this year's drought, that is cold comfort. "You plant the grain in the autumn, it germinates and then it needs water in the spring to grow," Stein said. "If that doesn't happen, there's nothing you can do." — AFP

## Turkish firm wants to refinance Zambia Eurobond

**LUSAKA:** A Turkish company has expressed interest in refinancing Zambia's \$750 million Eurobond falling due in 2022, Zambia President Edgar Lungu said on Saturday during talks with Turkey's President Tayyip Erdogan. Zambia, whose credit rating was downgraded by Moody's on Friday, said in December last year that it would begin refinancing Eurobonds worth a total \$3 billion in 2019 to reduce the cost of debt servicing for Africa's No.2 copper producer.

During talks in Lusaka with the visiting Turkish president, broadcast on state ZNBC TV, Lungu said that the firm would send representatives to Zambia in September to discuss details of refinancing.

"We urge you to take keen interest in

this matter and encourage the company to pursue this deal without hesitation," Lungu told Erdogan during the meeting held at State House, but gave no details about the company he mentioned.

As well as the \$750 million Eurobond, Zambia has a \$1 billion Eurobond due in 2024 and another \$1.25 billion Eurobond which will be due for repayment in 2027. Ratings agency Moody's on Friday downgraded Zambia's long-term issuer ratings to Caal from B3 and maintained a stable outlook, reflecting ongoing fiscal consolidation challenges.

The International Monetary Fund in February rejected Zambia's borrowing plans, saying they risked making it harder for the southern African country to sustain its debt load. — Reuters

## EXCHANGE RATES

### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL	America	Thai Baht
British Pound	0.391682	0.405582	0.227476	0.008775
Czech Korune	0.005797	0.015097	0.299400	0.009325
Danish Krone	0.043424	0.048424	0.304700	Arab
Euro	0.346973	0.360673	0.299900	0.000884
Georgian Lari	0.137636	0.137638	0.003057	0.789938
Hungarian	0.001144	0.001334	0.043293	0.014329
Norwegian Krone	0.033091	0.038291	0.036920	0.000197
Romanian Leu	0.064988	0.081838	0.003867	0.423765
Russian ruble	0.004853	0.004853	0.004639	0.000156
Slovakia	0.009058	0.019058	0.000017	0.000259
Swedish Krona	0.030433	0.035433	0.002833	0.044559
Swiss Franc	0.299242	0.310242	0.000262	0.781994
			0.071605	0.079074
			0.002624	0.079847
			0.002543	0.001286
			0.005952	0.001506
			0.227663	0.116883
			0.001588	0.057283
			0.010144	0.082907
				0.000986
				0.001066

Business

# Despite Trump rebuke, Fed to continue steady course

## Central bank kicks off 2-day policy meeting tomorrow

WASHINGTON: Despite booming second quarter growth in the US economy, the Federal Reserve will hold its fire and leave lending rates untouched this week as it awaits more signs of inflation.

But the central bank, which kicks off its two-day policy meeting tomorrow, is still widely expected to hike interest rates twice more this year, as inflation mounts, the jobless rate falls and the economy continues to soar. This plan of action has not gone over well at the White House, however. President Donald Trump earlier this month publicly chastised the Fed for raising interest rates he says counteracts the economic benefits of tax cuts.

That political interference is casting a shadow over the meeting.

After boosting the benchmark lending rate in March and June, the US economy has continued humming, with inflation at last hitting the Fed's two percent target rate.

Most economists say the central bank has every reason to stick to its current course of gradual increases, which has seen the federal funds rate rise seven times since December 2015.

Futures markets overwhelmingly expect rate hikes in September and December, with the probability only

increasing after Friday's blockbuster report that GDP grew 4.1 percent in the second quarter, the fastest pace in four years. "At least right now, the economy still looks pretty strong, more than strong enough to keep the unemployment rate coming down," Jim O'Sullivan of High Frequency Economics told AFP.

While most economists expect growth to slow in the rest of the year, O'Sullivan said "Momentum looks up and chances are momentum will only continue to look up if the unemployment rate continues to fall."

Still, Trump told CNBC he was "not thrilled" about the Fed's plans to continue tightening and took to Twitter to say America should be allowed to recoup the losses before rates rise again.

"Every time you go up, they want to raise rates again," he told the network. "I am not happy about it. But at the same time, I'm letting them do what they feel is best."

Cue the sound of breaking glass, with some observers accusing the president of brazenly trespassing on the Fed's independence. Economists solemnly warn that politicizing monetary policy invariably leads to misfortune. And the Federal Reserve is legally and fiscally separate from the federal government.

But Sarah Binder, a Brookings Institution expert on

the politics of the Federal Reserve, said despite its legal status, the Fed sat at the center of the political system.

### But is it a norm?

"Although we call it a norm, this expectation that the president is going to refrain and restrain himself from commenting on the Fed's policies, it's really just a short-lived practice," she told AFP. "In that sense, Trump is just joining the political fray."

President Lyndon Johnson summoned Fed Chairman William McChesney Martin to his ranch after the Fed boosted rates in 1965. Nixon bullied Martin's successor, Arthur Burns, into holding rates low in the 1970s, ushering in the decade's disastrous inflation.

More than 20 years later, President George HW Bush publicly called on Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan to cut interest rates—and later blamed Greenspan for his defeat in the 1992 elections.

It was only under President Bill Clinton that the Fed's deliberations took on an air of inviolability.

"I don't think we know enough historically about what difference presidential jaw-boning has done," Binder said. The Fed has not reacted to Trump's comments, pointing reporters instead to earlier remarks by current Chairman Jerome Powell, who

said central bankers kept political independence "deep in our DNA."

And analysts warned that openly challenging the Fed's independence could backfire.

Former Fed vice chair Alan Blinder told AFP he would have defied such interference. "My attitude would have been, and I believe the attitude of most members of the Federal Open Market Committee would have been, to stiffen our backs and show that we're not taking instructions from the White House." And Blinder said Trump's interference could create static in the Fed's efforts to signal its intentions to markets—which prevents undue turmoil when a new move is announced.

If the Fed is seen as yielding to Trump's pressure or overreacting by tightening policy more, markets could begin to second-guess their motives.

"We don't want either," Blinder said. "It is foolish for the president of the United States to make their job harder." Evolving economic circumstances could prove especially challenging for the Fed with trade disputes creating uncertainty and raising prices, the housing market weakening, and consumer confidence cooling.

Add to this rising oil prices and sluggish wage growth, and central bankers could be left with hard choices. —AFP

## Zimbabwe: Impoverished after Mugabe's long rule

HARARE: Zimbabwe was ruled by Robert Mugabe from independence from Britain in 1980 until he was ousted last year, leaving behind a country in economic ruin. Here is some background about the southern African nation as it goes to the polls to elect Mugabe's successor.

### Born after war

British settlers moved up into the region from South Africa in the late 19th century, attracted by its mineral wealth and farming land. Among them was mining magnate Cecil Rhodes who gave his name to what became in 1923 the British colony of Southern Rhodesia.

In 1965, the colony's rulers declared unilateral independence from Britain, forming a white-minority regime similar to that in apartheid South Africa.

Black nationalists launched a war for liberation in 1972, which claimed at least 27,000 lives. Negotiations under British auspices led to a ceasefire and elections in 1980 that culminated in independence, the country renamed Zimbabwe.

### 37 years in power

Mugabe took the reins of power as the prime minister in 1980, becoming president in 1987 after a change to the constitution. He was ousted in 2017, then one of the longest-running leaders in Africa and, at 93, the oldest head of state in the world.

His much-criticized stint in power saw repression of the opposition, economic mismanagement and allegations of corruption. Mugabe initially reached out to the white minority but in 2000 encouraged squatters and so-called veterans from the independence war to expropriate farms from the white minority, who fled in their thousands.

A 2002 election that gave him another term was marred by violence and denounced as irregular by international observers. He won controversial elections in



HARARE: Former Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe addresses the media yesterday during a surprise press conference at his residence "Blue Roof" in Harare, on the eve of the country's first election since he was ousted from office last year. —AFP

2008, in which his rival quit citing severe intimidation, and again in 2013. Mugabe was pushed out last November after a military takeover in response to his efforts to position his wife Grace as his successor. Emmerson Mnangagwa completed the presidential term and is favorite to win Monday's election.

### Economic disaster

Southern Africa's former bread basket, Zimbabwe's agricultural production plummeted after the land seizures, which saw once-productive farms fall into ruin. It triggered hyperinflation and GDP nearly halved between 2000 and 2008. The Zimbabwean dollar collapsed and in 2009 was abandoned for the US dollar and the South African rand, with a little-trusted token currency known as "bond notes" introduced two years ago.

The crisis led to mass unemployment with nearly nine out of 10 of the active population out of work, the collapse of many public services and the scarcity of cash. Nearly three-quarters of Zimbabwe's 16.15 million peo-

ple (2016) live in poverty, according to the World Bank. Economic growth improved from 0.7 percent in 2016 to 3.4 percent in 2017 but is advancing more slowly than population growth and worsening poverty, it says. The country is however rich in minerals, such as platinum, gold, diamonds and nickel, which may attract investors.

### Wild attractions

Zimbabwe's wildlife is a draw for tourists as well as trophy hunters from the United States, Europe and South Africa. Perhaps the best-known game park is Hwange, on the border with Botswana, where the killing with a bow and arrow by an American hunter in 2015 of a much-loved lion called Cecil caused worldwide outrage.

Another tourist draw is the Victoria Falls on the Zambezi River, on the border with Zambia. The country is also recognized for its sporting talent, including in cricket and swimming, with Zimbabwean Kirsty Coventry a double Olympic and multiple world champion. —AFP

## Global auto powers plotting response to Trump auto tariff threats

MEXICO CITY/OTTAWA: Canada, the European Union, Japan, Mexico and South Korea will meet in Geneva next week to discuss how to respond to threats by US President Donald Trump to impose tariffs on US imports of autos and car parts, officials familiar with the talks said.

The Trump administration has come under heavy criticism from automakers, foreign governments and others as it considers tariffs of up to 25 percent, a levy critics warn will hike vehicle costs, hurting auto sales and global industry jobs.

Several auto manufacturing powers have been talking to each other in recent days about their fears and a possible coordinated response to Trump's "Section 232" investigation, which he ordered on May 23, into whether auto imports are a threat to US security, sources say.

The probe could be completed within weeks, although similar ones ordered last year that led to tariffs of 25 percent on steel and 10 percent on aluminum took about 10 months. The Commerce Department has 270 days to offer recommendations to the president after such a probe starts. He then has 90 days to act upon them.

It was not immediately clear what kind of response the countries could be looking at, although Canada, the EU and Mexico retaliated with their own tariffs after Trump imposed levies on steel and aluminum imports in March. Another option is to fight the United States at the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Deputy ministers will gather in Geneva on July 31 to hear each other's views, a Canadian official and a Mexican official told Reuters, asking to not be named because they were not authorized to talk to the media. "The meeting is meant to bring together major auto producing nations so we can discuss our concerns over the US Department of Commerce's Section 232 investigation of automobiles and parts," said the Canadian government official. —Reuters

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## Business

# Global economy likely to continue rewarding stock-tilted portfolios

## Barclays announces findings of its Q3 2018 Compass Report

**KUWAIT:** Barclays announced yesterday the findings of its Q3 2018 Compass Report, which outlines the Private Bank's tactical recommendations on portfolio asset allocations for investors around the world.

The report's key takeaways note that the global economy is likely to continue to reward investment portfolios tilted toward stocks. Barclays' investment experts see stocks more likely to outperform the bond market, which is expected to face both greater inflation as well as increasingly resolute central bankers.

Commenting on the Q3 tactical investment recommendations, Bjorn Holderbeke, Head of Investment Advisory, Middle East and North

Africa, said: "Our team of experts believe that the acceleration phase of global economic expansion seems to be passing, according to the latest cyclical indicators, which reflect future changes in economic activity. However, those same indicators tell us that growth remains on a solid footing. We believe that the world economy will continue to grow, and still see the cycle end as a relatively distant prospect."

He added: "With a healthy global economy allowing for strong profit growth across a range of sectors, and inflationary forces remaining contained, our experts believe that the fundamental backdrop for stocks remains attractive." The Q3 2018 Compass report kept a tactical

overweight position in Developed Markets Equities, with the preferred developed region to invest in being Continental Europe, and with some exposure to Japan to enhance diversification. In terms of sectors, Barclays is currently leaning towards industrials, technology, and financial stocks. Emerging Markets Equities are also outlined as a tactical overweight within a moderate risk portfolio. The outlook for companies within emerging markets remains strong, as business confidence surveys and trade data confirms: despite the key macro risk emerging from trade protectionism. Barclays' experts believe that the risks of a global trade war are not yet high enough to justify reducing exposure to the emerging market region.

Asia remains the preferred region in the asset class, with Korea, Taiwan, China (offshore) and India being the favored bets on a long term basis.

High Yield & Emerging Markets Bonds have been kept at a tactical overweight, favoring Global High Yield over Emerging Markets Debt, with the former offering a higher yield and lower duration risk. Allocations to Developed Government and Investment Grade Bonds, Cash and Short-Maturity Bonds, and Alternative Trading Strategies remained tactically underweight in the latest Compass report. The report also kept a neutral view towards Commodities and Real Estate, which retains pro-cyclical characteristics.



Bjorn Holderbeke

## VIVA summer draw offers free Oasis Miles to 100 winners on Kuwait Airways



**KUWAIT:** VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, launched a Summer Draw Campaign for postpaid, prepaid and internet customers to enjoy their summer vacations even 'more' by being one of 100 winners of free Oasis Miles to travel to their favorite destinations in Europe, Middle East and GCC with Kuwait Airways.

This exciting offer from VIVA allows customers to enter two rounds of draws which will be held on 25 August and 25 September 2018. Customers can increase their chances to win Oasis miles and redeem them towards flight tickets to various touristic destinations. They can subscribe by sending "M" to 510, and for every KD 1 consumed, they earn one chance to win.

On this occasion, Abdulrazzaq Bader Al-Essa, Corporate Communications Director, commented: "This strategic partnership with Kuwait Airways, one of the leading organizations in Kuwait and the region, is part of our promises to our customers to give them 'more' privilege and enrich their experience with VIVA."

VIVA is the fastest-growing telecom operator in Kuwait. Launched in December 2008, VIVA makes things 'More' for its customers by transforming communication, information and entertainment experiences. The company has rapidly established a pioneer position in the market through its customer centric approach. VIVA's quest is to be the mobile brand of choice in Kuwait by being transparent, engaging, energetic and fulfilling. VIVA continues to take a considerable share of the market by offering an innovative range of best value products, services and content propositions; a state of the art, nationwide network and world-class service.

## KFH-Group re-launches KFH Bahrain website

**KUWAIT:** Group Chief Strategy Officer- Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Eng Fahad Khaled Al-Mukhaizeem said that "KFH-Group" has launched "KFH-Bahrain" new website www.kfh.bh after making significant updates, changes and inclusion of the highest standard specifications of global websites in form and content.

He expressed KFH's leading role as a global Islamic Bank providing services to customers and achieving harmony with the spirit of change and development which makes the website navigation an interesting opportunity to achieve comprehensive and integrated view of KFH group. KFH is linked through this website with other subsidiary banks. The website provides new modern electronic services and advantages.

Al-Mukhaizeem added in a press release: "The website provides highly significant information to customers as it focuses on the advantages of services and products provided to customers' e.g. Murabaha, Ijara, Istisnaa, Tawarruq, foreign exchange, agency investment deposits, corporate call accounts and banking cards for various tiers of customers.

He indicated that the website provides also several distinguished services including the possibility to compare the advantages of banking cards and choose appropriate cards in addition to Zakat calculation method, trade finance calculation method and the XE Currency Converter.

He emphasized that in implementation of the transparency policy adopted by KFH the website shows all commissions and wages collected against the services provided to customers in an easy manner such as Libshara account, unrestricted investment Mudharaba account, Murabaha investment account, and Visa Signature credit card.

### Supporting role

He reiterated that these services confirm the role which KFH plays in supporting various tiers of customers. Furthermore, blind people are able through this website to navigate the website with the assistance of their companions through voice reader facility "Text to Speech".

Al-Mukhaizeem added that KFH has ensured that the website reflects a unique and distinguished content in a very attractive and elegant format. The website shows through several windows the bank's progress, growth, activities, services, products and social role. It exhibits all banking products and services and forms a marketing tool. It is easy to access retail and corporate finance services, payment of cards and billing services for the account, vehicle purchase financing program and some excellent banking services such as EFTS for

that customer can enjoy.

Now CBK existing customers can open Al-Najma Account through Al-Tijari Online and enter all draws without visiting the Bank's branch. However, CBK non-customers can submit an account opening application via the Bank's website where the Bank's Sales Unit will call them to arrange a visit to the customers to complete the account opening formalities.



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money transfer. This aims primarily to develop financial trading systems in the Kingdom of Bahrain while reducing the time of transferring money.

He added that the new website comprises three main sections including retail banking services, private banking services and corporate banking services in addition to other fixed sections i.e. daily news, media messages, latest offers and locations of branches and ATM machines in both Arabic and English.

He indicated that one of the most important features of KFH's website is the fact that there is an element of "augmented reality". The browser can take advantage of the guiding features "How can we assist you today?" which allows users to choose the bank cards that suit their lifestyle, choose from all available bank accounts and deposits, while exploring the latest offers and innovative solutions with rewarding investment opportunities.

Al-Mukhaizeem indicated that the users and navigators of are able to make comparisons among various KFH products e.g. credit cards and prepaid cards to identify the features and advantages of each card. The website has the facility to enable navigators and users to view the webpage contents through their mobiles iPads in addition to the huge amount of information for shareholders relations including financial performance indicators, ratings, global awards collected by KFH, annual and sustainability reports and brief summary on subsidiaries and affiliates.



Eng. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem

## Al-Tijari announces winner of Al-Najma new prize program

**KUWAIT:** Commercial Bank of Kuwait announced the winner of the weekly draw as follows:- Weekly draw prize KD 5,000 - Rais Shaikh Haji Mohammed Shaikh.

The draw was conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Latifa Al-Jeean.

The bank stated that the account prizes this year is featured by the highest cash prize and diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that Al-Najma Account will offer weekly prize of KD 5,000 and monthly prize of KD 20,000 and a semi-annual prize of KD 500,000 in addition to the grand prize (the biggest prize in the world) of KD 1,500,000 for which the draw will be held in January 2019. Al-Najma Account can be opened by depositing KD 100, and customer should maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 to be eligible to enter all draws on Al-Najma Account prizes. As for the chances of winning, the more balance a customer maintains in Al-Najma Account, the more chances the account holder will get to win, where each KD 25 will give the customer one chance to win, the account also offers additional benefits like the ATM card, a credit card against customer's account and all CBK banking services

## Stripping zeros not the answer to save Venezuelan economy: Analysts

**CARACAS:** Zapping five zeros off Venezuela's almost worthless currency is nothing but a half-hearted measure and won't solve the country's chronic hyperinflation, analysts have told AFP.

President Nicolas Maduro initially announced in March that he would strike three zeros off the bolivar bank notes, before upping that to five. Having predicted earlier this year that Venezuela's inflation would hit 14,000 percent in 2018, the International Monetary Fund adjusted that projection earlier this week to a mind-boggling one million percent.

As the country grapples with a financial and humanitarian crisis, shortages of food and medicines, and failing public services such as water, electricity and transport, the question is how will this drastic move help drag Venezuela into recovery? Prices and inflation are rising so fast that the highest denomination bank notes emitted in 2016 are already practically worthless. The biggest of those, 100,000 bolivars, would have bought five kilograms (11 pounds) of rice in 2017, now it's barely enough for a single cigarette.

### 'Obsolete by December'

"If inflation continues at 100 percent a month," the new 500 bolivar note, which will be the largest following the currency redenomination on August 20, "will be obsolete by December," said economist Leonardo Vera. Currently, a pair of reading glasses can cost one billion bolivars (about \$300 on the black

market). It would require 10,000 of the country's largest bank note to pay for those in cash.

Some shops had resorted to weighing bank notes to determine their value rather than arduously counting them out.

Unsurprisingly, cash has practically vanished and electronic transfers reign. But few people could afford to buy those glasses anyway given they cost 200 times the minimum wage of five million bolivars a month.

The government's move to rub out some zeros is merely a "partial acknowledgement" of the hyperinflation crisis but "needs to be accompanied by economic reform in order to stop it," said Henkel Garcia of economics consultancy Econometrica. Venezuela has already been down this road, 10 years ago when Maduro's predecessor Hugo Chavez tried the same trick by deleting three zeros.

"The redenomination in 2008 was a failure because we still ended up with hyperinflation," said Asdrubal Oliveros, an economist with Ecoanalitica, another economics consultancy.

"The redenomination was made without accompanying policies to combat inflation so it didn't tackle the causes." In the short term the move was a "transactional success," said Garcia, but by "not containing inflation, that was completely lost."

The government blames inflation on the opposition and the United States but, in reality, financing of the fiscal hole caused the monetary base to increase 250 fold in two years.

For industry and production minister Tarek El Aissami said the redenomination aims to "improve the spending power of the working classes."

One tangible advantage, though, will be to ease the pressure on technology systems that are at breaking point due to transactions that run into billions of bolivars. Many supermarkets, for example, have to divide sales into more than one transaction as their systems are limited to figures of 20 million. —AFP

## Technology

# Al Shaya & Al Sagar offers first hand viewing of Mazda CX9-R

## Three-day event at the Avenues for clients



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Automotive Imports Co, Al Shaya and Al Sagar, the authorized distributor for Mazda vehicles in Kuwait held an event at the Avenues mall to offer a closer look of its 2018 CX9-R model.

During the event which lasted for three days, clients got the firsthand view of the vehicle and detailed explanation of its features from the Mazda expert at the event.

The Mazda CX9-R comes with a 4 cylinders 2.5 turbo SKYACTIV-G TECHNOLOGY engine that provides 231hp, a 6 speed sport mode automatic transmission and 20-inch wheels.

Initial comments expressed admiration of the breathtaking design, sleek cabin & LED headlights & taillights that give a chic premium look. During the event, viewers had the chance of booking a test drive accompanied by the Mazda expert. "The way for you to be convinced of any car and to make sure it suits best your daily needs is to take it for a spin," said Nader Salmeh, Senior divisional manager of Kuwait Automobile Import Company. He added "Kaico organizes such events to raise awareness among the society on how to choose the right car for themselves & their families." In support, Kaico offers the highest trade-in value on top of cars as well as free 3rd party insurance and free traffic registration.

The CX9 keeps you in touch with MZD CONNECT system that gives you versatile internet connection while on the road. The communication system can read SMS messages aloud with 12 BOSE speakers as well as other internet social network services.



## Apple and Amazon lead the pack to \$1 trillion market value

**NEW YORK:** For a long time, Apple appeared to be flying solo to a \$1 trillion market value, but Amazon is right at its heels-and experts have no fears of a tech bubble. Apple, at \$939 billion, remains the highest-valued private company on the global markets-and could well cross the \$1 trillion finish line after it releases its quarterly results tomorrow.

But Amazon is right behind: on Friday, its market cap reached \$917 billion, before finishing at \$882 billion, thanks to quarterly figures well received by investors. Google's parent company Alphabet (\$886 billion) and Microsoft (\$827 billion) are also on track, while Facebook (\$505 billion) is out of the race, having shed \$119 billion in value after results released Thursday.

The biggest traditional economic players-billionaire Warren Buffet's holding company Berkshire-Hathaway (\$492 billion) and bank JPMorgan Chase (\$395 billion) — have been relegated to mere spectators. State oil company PetroChina briefly broke the \$1 trillion barrier in 2007 during its initial public offering, but has since dropped back down.

### Safe haven

According to TD Ameritrade's mid-year review, online commerce giant Amazon's stock was the most popular buy in the first half of 2018, with



This combination of file pictures created yesterday shows the Apple logo (top) in Paris and the Amazon logo in New York. — AFP

Apple the second most popular sell.

"The retail trader who is buying that stock is also the same person who is probably an Amazon client," said JJ Kinahan, a chief market strategist for TD Ameritrade. "They see a stock that has plenty of upside and benefitting from the money people have to spend with the economy and the job market improving," he added.

But Apple, which unveils record high after record high when it comes to quarterly results, holds its lead. Ken Berman, Gorilla Trades strategist, is convinced that Apple will reach the \$1 trillion mark after its Tuesday results, thanks to its range of iPhones, growing interest in the iPad and strength in its services.

"I don't think Apple stock is that expensive," said Nate Thooff of Manulife Asset Management.

"The tech sector is the safe haven of the equity market right now." Analysts insist the situation is a

their professional success, working very long hours", he said. For now, that potential has yet to blossom, with Silicon Valley's residents still mostly seen in jeans, T-shirts and trainers.

### 'Disastrous dress sense'

"If you really think about it, Steve Jobs had a disastrous dress sense," Paris School of Luxury co-founder Eric Briones told AFP. "And even if it's starting to get a little better now, it's still very simplistic. But that doesn't stop (people) from earning billions!" he added.

Startup business leaders have had such a huge cultural impact that firms around the world have become more casual about clothing, Briones said. "Nowadays, startup bosses are seen as the epitome of success. For them, clothing is utilitarian, functional and secondary," he added.

"And if they wear a suit, they must be wrinkle-free, because they don't have the time to preen themselves. They live in the moment, zipping from one plane to the next," said Briones.

Until recently, few luxury houses had thought to venture out to Palo Alto. Today, three French giants-Hermes as well as Louis Vuitton and Cartier-have set up shop there.

In neighboring Santa Clara, high-end fashion addicts can find Christian Dior, Balenciaga and Yves Saint Laurent boutiques, all huddled together in a glitzy Californian shopping mall. But just because they don't necessarily wear designer clothing, the children of the digital revolution aren't by any means new to luxury.

"This particular population segment... has already adopted luxurious lifestyle habits," said

far cry from that in the late 1990s, when several start-ups exploded on Wall Street-only for the "dot.com" bubble to burst.

### New business model

"The big problem with the internet bubble was that the majority of businesses did not have revenues, did not have profits, many just responded to a fashion phenomenon," said Gregori Volokhine of Meeschaert Financial Services.

"That's not the case with all these companies that today have an essential place in people's lives," Volokhine said. "Most of the leading tech companies in the late 1990s were trading at 100 times earnings," added Edward Jones investment strategist Kate Warne. "Very different than today."

Apple's price/earnings ratio stands at 18.62, underperforming the S&P 500 (20.86), the index representing the 500 biggest businesses on Wall Street. But even in case of economic crisis, the technology sector is in a good place, according to Maris Ogg, founding principal of Tower Bridge Advisors.

"If you start to see the economy slowing, if companies have to cut cost, to fire people, they will invest in technologies towards more automation," she said. For Nicholas Colas of DataTrek Research, it is also hard for investors to evaluate the business strategies with a fairly new business model. "Equity valuations for FANG (Facebook, Amazon, Netflix and Google) stocks and other internet-enabled business models is a fundamentally new challenge for investors," he said. "At their core, they are ideas created by a handful of people, developed/maintained by perhaps 10,000 coders (and sometimes much less), but then used by billions around the world. This is a new phenomenon, and we suspect equity markets do not yet understand what 'correct/normalized' valuations should be." — AFP

Elisabeth Ponsolle des Portes of the Comite Colbert, which groups together 82 French luxury houses specializing in fashion, gastronomy, hotels and culture. "They invest a lot in real estate, contemporary art, cars and charity. They also know a lot about wine and gastronomy," she added.

### 'Planting a seed'

Comite Colbert has entered into a partnership with the prestigious Stanford University, located in Silicon Valley. From September, artisans will teach students the coveted techniques honed over centuries by French goldsmiths. In December, the group plans to welcome some 70 Californian industrialists and investors in Paris, where they will visit tailoring workshops and dine in Versailles—"unique experiences that money can't buy", Ponsolle des Portes said.

"We are planting a seed," she said, adding that it wasn't financial return that the firms were after.

Rather, her group wants to "to help (Silicon Valley residents) understand the difference between marketing-based luxury and the real thing". Beyond the beauty of the scarves and elegance of the bags and shoes, French luxury houses may also have another lesson in store for Silicon Valley giants.

According to Ponsolle des Portes, tech companies are intrigued by "the longevity of our enterprises". Hermes was founded in Paris in 1837, Cartier in 1947, and Dior in 1946.

Google was born in 1998, and Facebook in 2004. "In the Silicon Valley business model, companies are 'uberised' within five years," Ponsolle des Portes said. — AFP

## Cisco and Google Cloud embark on a journey to streamline work for 150M+ people

**DUBAI:** Life just got a whole lot easier for the millions of people who use the industry - leading apps and services delivered by Cisco Collaboration and Google Cloud.

As part of our deepening alliance, Cisco is announcing its first wave of collaboration integrations with Google products. This goes far beyond merely making sure our calling, email, document collaboration, and customer service products work together. The goal is to help people be much more efficient so they can do their jobs better. At Cisco, we believe artificial intelligence and machine learning will dramatically change the way we work. As we create that new future, we are exploring how AI services from Google Cloud Platform can help us expand collaboration capabilities.

We are making the announcement at Google Cloud Next in these key areas:

- Give your contact center agents an AI-enhanced assist so they can answer questions quicker and better. More than three million customer service agents globally use Cisco contact center software. We want to make their interactions the best they can possibly be. So we are adding Google Artificial Intelligence (AI) to our Cisco Customer Journey Solutions via Google Cloud's new Contact Center AI solution. Contact Center AI is a simple, secure, and flexible solution that allows enterprises with limited machine learning expertise to deploy AI in their contact centers. The AI automatically provides agents with relevant documents to help guide conversations and continuously learns in order to deliver increasingly more relevant information over time. This combination of Google's powerful AI capabilities with Cisco's large global reach can dramatically enhance the way companies interact with their customers.
- Schedule a Webex meeting within your Google Calendar with one click.

With an add-on from G Suite in the coming months, you'll see the Webex Meetings icon every time you schedule a meeting in Google Calendar. Click it to set up your video-first Webex meeting for the people and rooms you need, and let the technology do the rest. People join from a Cisco video device by simply pushing the big green "Join" button. Or from a Chrome browser with just one click- no downloads or guest accounts required. While different companies created the tools, it will now feel like they were built to work together.

Making meetings easier to schedule and join is only part of the problem we're solving. We will jointly explore using Google AI for capabilities such as transcription, translation, meeting summaries and task management to ensure what's discussed becomes more actionable for everyone whether they were there or not.

- Add Cisco calling and meetings into your Android app. Thanks to the Webex Teams Android SDK, developers can easily add Cisco collaboration capabilities into their Android apps. For example, you could add Cisco video meetings into smart glasses for a "see what I see" experience between, say, an expert on land and an engineer on a ship in the middle of the ocean.
- Use Google Docs, Sheets, Slides and Forms in your Webex Teams Spaces. As people collaborate on content more and more, Cisco and Google are exploring ways to make the job easier. No more endless reposting of documents as people layer on new rounds of edits. Post it once, edit it as many times as you need, or co-collaborate on content to get things done even faster. Everyone always has the latest and greatest version. "Together, Cisco and Google Cloud can drive significant value for our customers," said Amy Chang, SVP, Cisco Collaboration. "We're excited about these initial integrations and what's to come as we work together to improve the future of work. This is just the beginning."



Amy Chang, SVP, Cisco Collaboration

## French luxury giants dive into Silicon Valley

**PARIS:** Steve Jobs may have been a tech genius, but he clearly didn't care much for fashion.

Facebook boss Mark Zuckerberg has followed in his footsteps, sporting a plain grey T-shirt every day for years-only to swap it for a simple black suit to testify before Congress and the European Parliament. But Silicon Valley, whose billionaires have long stuck to basic, functional apparel, may finally be starting to get a taste for something more extravagant.

Sensing an opportunity, French luxury titan Hermes has launched its 34th US store in Palo Alto, the ultra-rich beating heart of the world's technological behemoths. "We opened this new store after our San Francisco store reaped very strong results," Hermes CEO Axel Dumas told shareholders in June.

"It's also a bet on the future. Right now, you can see how residents often invest more in their cars than in their clothes. We hope to be able to change that a little," Dumas added.

Guillaume de Seynes, a top executive at Hermes, sees great potential in Silicon Valley. Palo Alto "isn't very far away from San Francisco, where luxury is everywhere. However, the environment is very different. People are very focused on

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- ◆ American Board of Colo - Rectal Surgery
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**DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED**  
Consultant of General Surgery  
Laposcopic and Bariatric Surgery

**Academic Certificates - Training**

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

**Scope of clinical Practice.**

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

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What's On

# Ooredoo Volunteer Program concludes with awards ceremony for participants



Ooredoo concluded its training program for the participants of its official Ooredoo Volunteer Program in its fourth consecutive year, in an awarding ceremony that took place last week at its head office. The awarding ceremony was attended by representatives of Ooredoo's Corporate Communications department in addition to the participating volunteer groups and non-government entities which included Agrivage and ReFood.

In its fourth year, Ooredoo's volunteer program succeeded in attracting hundreds of participants who spearheaded a number of charitable initiatives, especially during the holy month of Ramadan. Volunteers managed the distribution of iftar meals via Ooredoo's iftar tent, in addition to the charity truck that delivered iftar to different locations across Kuwait close to the residence of workers. The volunteer program participants have also organized a number of iftar banquets to share with government officials who work during the iftar shift as well as visits to the elderly care center.

The volunteers also visited children's hospital wards in association with the Kuwait Association for Care of Children in Hospitals to celebrate the gerga'an with toys, spreading joy among the children.

In a statement to the press, Ooredoo Kuwait's Corporate Social Responsibility and Sponsorship and Social Media Senior Manager Yousef Al-Shallal expressed his pride in all participants in the volunteer program, which underscore the company's leading position in the field of volunteerism. He noted that the program embodies Ooredoo's values of caring, connecting, and challenging, and come in tandem with the company's corporate social responsibility policy which gives great importance to youth. Ooredoo's award-winning volunteer program was launched in 2015 in collaboration with 'Spread the Passion' non-profit organization, with the aim of giving youth the necessary training before matching them with volunteering opportunities in Kuwait.



## Dr Suad Al-Sabah publishes 'History of Kuwait Radio'

In commemoration of the anniversary of the invasion of Kuwait, Dr Suad Al-Sabah recently published a book on the 'History of Kuwait Radio', which is the most integral encyclopedia ever written about Kuwait radio history since its inception in the early 1950s. The book also reviews how Kuwait radio acted as a fortress for patriotism and freedom fighting during Kuwait's invasion. The book was prepared by researchers, Somaiya Meqbel and Omar Khalaf under the supervision of and with a preface written by Dr Suad Al-Sabah. It also includes a testimony by the information ministry's assistant undersecretary for media services affairs, Yousif Mustafa.

In the preface, Al-Sabah pointed that her publication house had launched competitions inviting Arab creative youth figures over the past 25 years. "Nowadays, in view of media openness and e-publications, we are in even a greater need to sort art publications and refine them before they reach readers", she underlined.

Notably, Kuwait Radio was established by Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah in 1951 when its first transmission was, then, broadcast from the police headquarters. In this regard, Al-Sabah said that Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak was destined to be among decision makers during those decisive years in the history of Kuwait and he



took the responsibility for establishing Kuwait Radio to make its first broadcast on May 12, 1951 and preside it in the period of 1951-1960.

On his part, assistant undersecretary, Yousif Mustafa stressed that "This is Kuwait" had always been an admired slogan for Kuwait Radio adding that, through his work in the radio, he became acquainted with unique figures from whom he learned a lot. "Kuwait Radio taught us to be courageous and that is why we were not terrified by the Iraqi aggression fighter planes nor their bul-



lets and explosions", he underlined. Notably, the book includes 600 pages of fancy paper and an inspiring cover. It also includes two parts written by the first and second winners in the 'Kuwait Radio History' competition launched by Dar Suad Al-Sabah.



Chairman of Kuwait's Supreme Judicial Council and the Cassation Court, and President of the Constitutional Court, Justice Yousef Jassem Al-Mutawaa received Indian Ambassador K Jeeva Sagar in his office yesterday.



# Lifestyle

MONDAY, JULY 30, 2018



In this photo an Afghan kite vendor cuts tissues as he makes kites in a shop in Shor Bazaar in Kabul. After selling hundreds of thousands of kites during the cooler months, particularly in spring when flying conditions are ideal, kite makers spend the rest of the year replenishing their stocks. — AFP

## Behold the Amazonian eco-warrior drag queen



Artist and activist Emerson Munduruku is pictured as he teaches environmental conservation to children through his drag queen alter ego Uyra Sodoma.



Artist and activist Emerson Munduruku is pictured.



A child in costume attends a class by artist and activist Emerson Munduruku, who teaches environmental conservation.

Bare chested, wearing an ankle-length dress, painted yellow, green and red, with flowers or leaves in his hair, it takes Brazil's Emerson Munduruku two hours to transform into Uyra Sodoma, his drag queen alter ego. Whether carrying seeds, branches and other natural materials, Munduruku's creation Uyra, often submerged up to the waist in water, is a colorful extension of the earth and nature. His mission: to travel around Amazon villages, teaching conservation through performance art. Of indigenous descent, biologist Munduruku was born in the Amazon region and the environment is a subject about which he feels passionate.

"In a time of change, I had wanted to work in environmental protection," the 27-year-old told AFP. "I was doing it from a scientific perspective but I realized it was also important from a social perspective. Until then, Uyra had no face or name." Munduruku, or rather Uyra, takes part in educational projects, teaching children about Amazon communities and how to both connect with and protect nature. After suffering a homophobic assault in the Amazonian state capital Manaus in 2015, Munduruku decided to give a new meaning to his life, and Uyra was born. "I'd spent six years of my life studying frogs and lizards... and one day I was hit coming out of a bar because I was wearing lipstick and eyeliner," he said. "That violence rocked me to my core... I started to get closer to women, transvestites, and understand more about racism and homophobia. I became closer to the city and the people."

### Brazilian crisis

Munduruku's personal metamorphosis happened at a time of political turmoil in Brazil, as a corruption scandal involving scores of high

profile politicians and major enterprises exploded, eventually leading to the impeachment of then president Dilma Rousseff in 2016. "Brazil was going through a crisis, artistic expressions of protest were springing up all over Manaus and I asked myself how I could bring new perspectives to my work," he said.

"That was what brought Uyra into the world."

But there was more than an assault behind Munduruku's journey from amphibian and reptile studies to eco-warrior drag queen. "Our stories can be told through the prism of pain and an immediate metamorphosis. But our stories are much more complex than that," he said.

"Uyra has given me a new lease on life. She makes me happy. She makes me more comfortable in my skin and with other people, as well as with my desires and concerns," Munduruku says he doesn't believe in different genders: "They're the same, female, male. All I need is that people treat me with respect."

Born in a tiny community of less than 40,000 people in the north of Brazil, he moved to Manaus with his parents and older sister when he was six. Since then they've lived in the suburbs, surrounded by tributaries to the Rio Negro. The son of a salesman and a maid, Munduruku wanted to study literature at university, but a teacher convinced him to pursue biology studies instead.

### 'Enchantment or fear'

Now he spends his time travelling around small riverside villages to teach about environmental conservation through art. It's through this that Uyra emerges in her full splendor and glory. "Fundamental to the project is using the jungle as both an inspiration and a tool. This helps to connect people to the forest," he said. "Uyra is always met with either enchantment or fear... in cities, those who are enchanted approach to speak. But in the villages even those who are afraid approach. There's no distance, it's more spontaneous. It's the same with children, they're curious so they approach."

But while Munduruku tries to pass on to the next generation a sensibility towards the importance of protecting the planet, he sees little to feel positive about when it comes to those who hold the fate of the environment in their hands. With presidential elections due in October, Munduruku sees little political will to tackle the country's growing problems. "Thousands of people are looking for desperate, immediate solutions or magic to solve systemic problems," he said. "We live in an age of serious violence in which indigenous lands and environmental reserves are threatened by the invasion of business agreements. But Munduruku remains upbeat. "Even though chaos in Brazil seems only to be increasing, I see a lot of green and hope." — AFP



Artist and activist Emerson Munduruku (left) poses with children to whom he teaches environmental conservation through his drag queen alter ego Uyra Sodoma, at the Sustainable Reserve of Anavilhanas in the state of Amazonas in northern Brazil. — AFP photos

# Soaring production: Kabul kite makers prepare for the flying season



Afghan boys prepare to fly kites during a kite battle on a hillside in Kabul. — AFP photos

Surrounded by bright-coloured tissue paper and bamboo sticks, Afghan kite maker Halim Mohammadi and his children sit in their modest living room in Kabul assembling kites in preparation for the city's flying season. After selling hundreds of thousands of kites during the cooler months, particularly in spring when flying conditions are ideal, kite makers spend the rest of the year replenishing their stocks. A single kite takes only minutes to make. Mohammadi, 50, expertly cuts a piece of

delicate tissue paper into a diamond shape and glues it to a thin bamboo frame—skills he has honed since he was a child.

He then passes the fragile object to his children—daughters Madina, 18, and Nigina, 15, and his 14-year-old son Shohaib—who adorn it with simple decorations and leave it to dry in their home. While the main kite flying season starts in the winter and finishes at the end of spring, a breeze at any time of the year is enough to draw people of all ages to rooftops, dusty hills

or cemeteries to enjoy one of the country's traditional leisure activities. Retailing for as little as a few cents each, kites are a cheap past-time in the impoverished country.

Banned during the Taliban's repressive 1996-2001 regime, kite flying soared in popularity after the US-led invasion, which enabled kite makers, such as Mohammadi, to reopen their businesses. Afghanistan's kite-flying culture was made famous by best-selling Afghan author Khaled Hosseini, whose 2003 novel "The

Kite Runner" became a runaway global best-seller and turned into a film.

Fierce battles waged by kite flyers, who use string coated with crushed glass to cut down other kites, ensures many repeat sales for kite retailers. "My entire family, including my sons, daughters and wife, make kites (at home)," Masood, 40, a second generation kite seller, told AFP recently at his shop in the bustling Shor Bazaar in an old neighborhood of Kabul. "During the winter we sell between 100,000 and

300,000 kites. I make about 300,000 Afghans (about \$4,200) in three months," he added.

Inside the cramped kite stores in Shor Bazaar, huge piles of kites are testament to Afghans' love of the sport. "People are crazy about kite flying here," said Pahlwan Karim, 65, whose family has been making kites for nearly a century. His kites are branded with a picture of a scorpion—after his kite-making brother's nickname. "This market sells hundreds of thousands of kites every day in winter," he added. — AFP



A young Afghan kite vendor (right) sells plastic kites to children during a kite battle on a hillside in Kabul.



An Afghan kite shop in Shor Bazaar in Kabul.



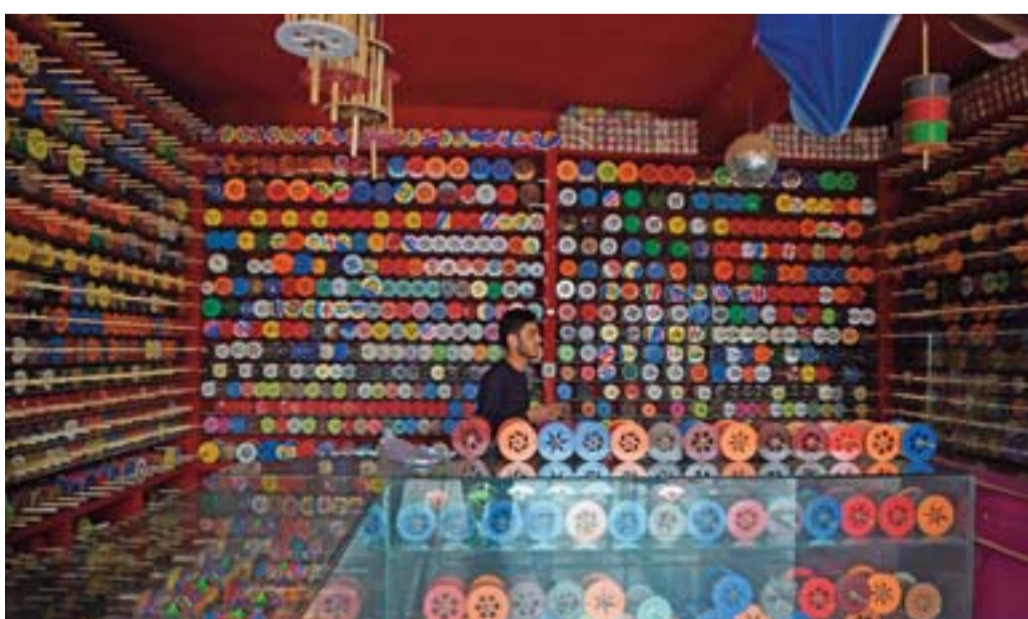
Afghan kite vendor Halim Mohammadi cuts tissue papers as he makes kites with his daughter Nigina in their home in Kabul.



Afghan youths hold bamboo sticks to catch a loose kite after it had its strings cut during a kite battle on a hillside in Kabul.



Afghan youths attempt to catch a loose kite after it had its strings cut during a kite battle on a hillside in Kabul.



An Afghan string vendor waits for customers in a shop in Shor Bazaar in Kabul.



An Afghan youth makes spools for string as he works in a shop in Shor Bazaar in Kabul.

Lifestyle | Features



A pictures shows a tunnel part of a network of subterranean caves and tunnels known as "Master Levon's divine underground" in the village of Arinj outside the capital Yerevan. — AFP photos



A pictures shows tourists lit candles at an altar.

# 'Heaven-guided' underground maze proves Armenian tourist draw



A pictures shows a tunnel part of a network of subterranean caves and tunnels known as 'Master Levon's divine underground'.

When Tosya Gharibyan asked her husband to dig a basement under their house to store potatoes, she had little idea the underground labyrinth he would eventually produce would prove to be one of Armenia's major tourist draws. Their one-storey house in the village of Arinj outside the capital Yerevan may not look like much but today it brings in visitors from all over the globe after a 23-year labor of love by Tosya's late husband, Levon Arakelyan.

They come to see a twisting network of subterranean caves and tunnels known as "Levon's divine underground." In the cold and quiet, Tosya leads tourists through corridors that connect seven chambers adorned with Romanesque columns and ornaments like those on the facades of mediaeval Armenian churches. "Once he started digging, it was impossible to stop him," she said of the project that began in 1995. "I wrangled with him a lot, but he became

obsessed with his plan." A builder by training, Levon would toil for 18 hours a day—only pausing to take a quick nap and then rush back to the cave, confident that he was being guided "by heaven". "He never drew up plans and used to tell us that he sees in his dreams what to do next," his widow told AFP.

Over more than two decades he hammered out the 280-square-metre (3,000 square-foot) space, 21 meters deep into strata of volcanic rocks—only using hand tools. "My primary childhood recollection is the loud knock of my father's hammer heard at night from the cave," said his 44-year-old daughter Araksya. At the start he had to break through a surface layer of black basalt, but at the depth of a few meters Levon reached much softer tufa stone and the work progressed. He pulled out 600 truckloads of rocks and earth, using only hand-held buckets. Levon died in 2008 at the age of 67 from a heart attack after destroying the last wall that separated two tunnels.



A pictures shows a tourist lit candles at an altar.



Picture shows a tunnel part of a network of subterranean caves and tunnels.



A pictures shows a tourist walking through part of a network of subterranean caves and tunnels.

'Amazing place'

A decade on from the project's completion, Tosya also runs a small museum commemorating her husband's work in the village of some 6,000 people. The underground complex has several analogues in the world. An eccentric man named William Henry "Burro" Schmidt spent more than three decades digging a half-a-mile tunnel to transport gold through a granite mountain in California, beginning his work in the early 1900s during the state's gold rush. In Ethiopia a man named Aba Defar began carving churches on a mountainside after claiming divine inspiration from years of dreams.

Today the Armenian cave features prominently in travel brochures, regularly drawing busloads of visitors. Milad, a 29-year-old Iranian tourist, called the maze an "amazing place". He said it made him realize just "how boundless the spiritual and physical capabilities of a person can be". — AFP

# Hundreds of Macau greyhounds await their forever homes



This picture shows greyhounds inside kennels at the shutdown Canidrome Club in Macau, which was Asia's only legal dog-racing track. — AFP photos

On a sweltering afternoon in Macau, panting greyhounds lie in tiny concrete kennels at the gambling enclave's notorious dog-racing track, as a new plan to save them emerged following the venue's closure. The dogs are currently walked each day by an army of dedicated volunteers from all over Macau, who have been helping out at the deserted Canidrome Club since it shut down on July 21. Some 533 greyhounds still live at the shabby venue, which was Asia's only legal dog-racing track. Many of those remaining have patches of fur missing, a result of sleeping on wet concrete according to activists, who say injured dogs went untreated when the Canidrome was still operating.

They believe up to 300 greyhounds were killed each year as they reached their racing shelf-life. First opened in 1931, the track's closure was a victory for those who had spent years criticizing its treatment of the animals. But the firm which operated the track, Yat Yuen, failed to rehome the animals ahead of the shutdown, despite being given two years' notice by authorities. Macau's angry government stepped in to guarantee the dogs' safety, slamming Yat Yuen as irresponsible and threatening heavy fines for

abandoning the greyhounds.

It was a direct challenge to Angela Leong, fourth wife of Macau casino pioneer Stanley Ho and a legislator in the city, who runs the company. Yat Yuen finally seemed to cave to public and political pressure Friday, announcing a joint proposal with Macau animal protection NGO Anima which would see the dogs looked after at the Canidrome for another two months at the firm's expense then moved to a newly renovated shelter, where any who are not adopted would be cared for until the end of their lives.

Anima would run the shelter in the Taipa area of Macau, to be called the International Centre for the Rehoming of Greyhounds, and would also be in charge of the adoption process. Leong would make a "financial commitment" to running the center, the statement said, without giving a figure. The plan has been submitted to the Macau government. "We hope we can assist in rehoming all the greyhounds—we hope they will have a safe family forever," Anima board member Zoe Tang told AFP ahead of the announcement. The adoption process for the dogs could still take as long as a year, Tang said, given the medical treatments and paperwork required.

Yat Yuen organized adoption days in the

weeks before the closure. But Tang says eight of the more than 100 dogs found homes through the firm's adoption drive are already back in Anima's care. One dog adopted out has died, she

said, adding that adoption procedures must be properly supervised in future. But some of the greyhounds at least have started a happier chapter. Macau pet shop owner Fei Chan, one of the

volunteers at the Canidrome, adopted two of the dogs in the last few weeks.

When she took in female greyhounds BoBo, 9, and Choi Choi, 8, they had skin conditions and some of their teeth had to be removed because they were rotten, she says. They are now recovering and roam gently around her store. "I thought: 'Why not let them live in our pet shop, and educate our customers about the good things we discovered in our greyhounds?'" Chan told AFP. "In the end, I see no difference between greyhounds and other dogs. The ferocity of greyhounds only came from the training humans gave them. Why can't we teach them the other way around and tame them?"

Another Canidrome volunteer, Georgina Lao, who is considering adopting a greyhound, dropped into the shop to spend time with the pair of dogs. She is still undecided on whether to take in a greyhound of her own because she is looking after a baby at home. But Lao says her volunteer work has opened her eyes to a gentler side of the dogs. "I found them very polite-like well-trained soldiers," Lao told AFP. "Even when they want to dash out, as soon as you tell them to they will follow you back. They are very affectionate and very kind." — AFP



This picture shows pet shop owner Fei Chan posing with her adopted female greyhounds Bobo (right), 9, and Choi Choi (left), 8, taken in after the closure of the Canidrome Club in Macau, which was Asia's only legal dog-racing track.



A volunteer walking with greyhounds at the shutdown Canidrome Club in Macau, which was Asia's only legal dog-racing track.



A general view of the shutdown Canidrome Club in Macau, which was Asia's only legal dog-racing track.

# 'Nico, 1988': Movie for muse who couldn't shake her fame

After her 1960s peak, the German vocalist Nico was "Lou Reed's femme fatale," a glamorous superstar whose name was plastered across one of the most influential records of all time. But her days mixing with Andy Warhol and alternative US rockers The Velvet Underground are far behind the drug-addled forty-something we meet in Susanna Nicchiarelli's upcoming feature "Nico, 1988." The singer, embodied in a pitch-perfect performance by the Danish actress and one-time Eurovision contestant Trine Dyrholm, is addicted to heroin and washed up, yet stubbornly content that she has remained true to herself.

It is a movie not so much about Nico's fleeting brush with global celebrity as it is about the panache with which she dealt with the frustration at not being able to leave it behind. "The Velvet Underground and Nico," the 1967 collaboration on which she sung lead on just three songs, has ranked as high as 13 on Rolling Stone's list of the 500 Greatest Albums of All Time.

It was seen as the progenitor of much of the alternative rock that followed in the 1970s-and

the album and associated tours were pretty much the only thing that interested the music press about Nico. Nicchiarelli, a fan of Nico's lesser-known later music, became intrigued by the singer after listening to her dry, laconic interview answers about her supposed heyday. "She did much more interesting things afterwards, as a solo artist, and I found it very funny the way she treated journalists and the way she took out all the myths from the 60s," Nicchiarelli told AFP.

## Struggling with demons

"My favorite answer, which I put in the first interview in the movie, is when they say, 'That must've been the best period of your life.' And she says, 'Well, we took a lot of LSD.' That fascinated me and made me like her a lot." "Nico, 1988" is a poignant and at times hilarious chronicle of the performer's last tour of Europe before her death from a heart attack on the Mediterranean island of Ibiza in the summer of that year. Leading a solitary existence in Manchester, northern England, her career and personal life are on the ropes, and a new man-

ager (John Gordon Sinclair) convinces her to hit the road again. Approaching 50 and struggling with her demons, she is distracted by the never-ending quest to score another hit and yearns to rebuild a relationship with the son of whom she lost custody (Sandor Funtek).

Her voice meanders out of tune as she shambles on stage, her behavior erratic and tone unguarded, while her legs are covered in puncture marks from needles and unsightly bruises. Nico-Christa Paffgen to her few friends-suffered poverty and hunger growing up in West Berlin and shared in the national sense of shame that accompanied defeat in World War II, even though she was just seven when it ended. Her father had been a German soldier, but whenever she met Jewish people as an adult she would pretend that he had been a brave resistance fighter.

## Past glories

"That wasn't true and I find that very touching, the way she made up that story. What I think is interesting is that she died a year before the end of the Cold War," Nicchiarelli said. "So



In this file photo Danish actress Trine Dyrholm poses upon arrival to attend the awards ceremony of the 66th Berlinale, Europe's first major film festival of the year, in Berlin. — AFP

she didn't even have time to see the end of it. She didn't see her country reunited at the end of the Cold War. And I liked the idea of telling that part of her life, the final part of her life, because I think it was the best part of her life." Nicchiarelli's thesis is that, even to this day, the

singer is regularly done the injustice of being mentioned mostly in association with the "famous men she slept with."

Warhol, a leading figure in the pop art movement, once said that Nico "became a fat junkie and disappeared," and Nicchiarelli's third feature is nothing if not a 93-minute refutation of this notion.

Although Nico's commercial successes were well behind her in her final years, the filmmaker sees her as almost the polar opposite of the faded star reveling in past glories, lamenting vanished beauty. "The whole thing gave me the possibility to turn around the clichés about Nico-her life in the final part and then the relationship with her son and her relationship with history, her European identity, her German identity," Nicchiarelli told AFP.

"All these elements were much more interesting for me than the things they usually care about in a biopic-being famous or not famous, successful or not successful-which somehow didn't seem to be the major interest in Nico's life." "Nico, 1988" is being rolled out in select US theaters during August. — AFP

# 'The Meg' is here and she's pleased to eat you

In the 43 years since "Jaws" scared a generation of cinemagoers out of the water and took a \$470 million bite out of the box office, few shark movies have made much of a splash. The increasingly poor sequels to Steven Spielberg's 1975 masterpiece launched their own era of corny aquatic monster movies, from The Asylum's "Sharknado" series to more sober but uninspiring releases like "Deep Blue Sea" and "The Shallows." "The Meg" lunges out of the deep in US and Chinese theaters on August 10 with the aim of giving the genre back its teeth with a two-million-year-old megalodon five times the size of a great white.

"When you're a kid, you think there's a monster under your bed or in your closet, and monsters haunt us. They're there in our darkest dreams," one of the movie's stars, American actor Rainn Wilson, told AFP. "They are in the Jungian shadow part of ourselves. Humanity's in some dark times right now and I think the monster movies and post-apocalyptic monsters reflect that." Based on the best-selling novel "MEG" by Steve Alten, Jon Turteltaub's movie stars Jason Statham ("The Fate of the Furious," "The Expendables") and Chinese actress Li Bingbing ("Transformers: Age of Extinction").

A deep-sea submersible-part of an international undersea observation program-has been attacked by a massive creature and lies disabled at the bottom of the deepest part of the Pacific Ocean with its crew trapped inside. Former deep-sea rescue diver Jonas Taylor (Statham) is drawn out of self-imposed exile by a visionary Chinese oceanographer, Dr. Zhang (Winston Chao), against the wishes of his daughter, Suyin (Li), who thinks she can rescue the crew on her own.

## 'Indelible impression'

But it will take their combined efforts to save the crew, and the ocean itself, from this seemingly unstoppable threat-a prehistoric 75-foot (23-meter) shark known as the megalodon. Wilson-best known as creepy salesman Dwight in NBC's "The Office"-remembers being around 12 years old when he first saw "Jaws." "I had never seen a movie like that before. I

remember it really made an indelible impression-it did on a lot of people," he said during a press preview for the movie in Los Angeles on Saturday. "The filmmaking was just so beautiful and visceral and it was absolutely terrifying."

For Masi Oka, who plays one of the crew members stranded in the sub, a good monster movie is enjoyable precisely because the audience feels safe as the carnage unfolds



In this file photo actor Rainn Wilson arrives at the premiere of "Middle Of Nowhere," at the Los Angeles Film Festival in downtown Los Angeles, California. — AFP photos

onscreen. "I think if you were watching this while you were out on the sea, it would be a very different story, it would feel more real," said the former star of CBS cop show "Hawaii Five-O." "Jaws" is famous for the problems Spielberg had getting his shark model Bruce named for his accountant-to work in the salty water. The Meg and all of the other aquatic life seen in the film were brought to life via state-of-the-art CGI, starting with extensive research on the beast's appearance.

## Terrifying but... graceful

The idea was to create something that looked massive and terrifying but, at the same time, very graceful in the water. Oka, a former visual effects artist who worked on the "Star Wars" prequels as well as "Mission to Mars,"



In this file photo Masi Oka attends the premiere of Peter Rabbit, in Los Angeles, California.

"Terminator 3" and many other huge blockbusters, said the technology has improved beyond recognition. "Filmmakers are no longer limited by what you can do, it's what you can think of," he said. As with many recent blockbusters-including "The Great Wall," "Transformers: Age of Extinction," "Furious 7," "Skyscraper" and "Pacific Rim 2" — "The Meg" has significant Chinese funding, and much of the movie takes place in the Middle Kingdom.

The Hauraki Gulf in northern New Zealand doubled as China's Pacific coast and much of the shoot took place in huge tanks at the Kumeu Film Studios in Auckland. But the production moved to China's Hainan Island for extensive sections of the movie and the beachside city of Sanya provided the setting for a climactic attack involving thousands of extras. "China is an amazing place-vibrant, colorful and bright. The script called for a densely populated beach, and that's Sanya Bay," Turteltaub said. "It's not lacking for people, which was heaven for a giant shark movie." — AFP

# Kendrick Lamar is 'fearless' in tackling Power guest role

It was Kendrick Lamar's friendship with 50 Cent that helped him get a guest role on Starz's "Power," but Lamar came ready to work. "He was so chill, like very cool, very humble," said series creator and producer Courtney Kemp. "He's very kind of quiet and thorough and methodical. He had prepared so



File photo shows Kendrick Lamar arrives at the MTV Video Music Awards at the Forum in Inglewood, Calif. — AP

much. He was ready." Kemp didn't give much away about the character Lamar plays in Sunday's episode airing at 8 pm EDT, but she said he indicated he was interested in playing a drug addict.

"He's really gifted, tremendously gifted. I mean it's a total transformation. It is not a version of Kendrick Lamar that

you've ever seen before. So it's very exciting," Kemp told The Associated Press. Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson, a producer for "Power" who also appears in Sunday's show, got the ball rolling for his buddy Lamar, Kemp said Saturday. "That is absolutely 50 Cent," she said. "He is just a dynamo when it comes to bringing these things together, and he and Kendrick ... were hanging out and Kendrick said, 'I'd really like to be on the show,' and you know it goes from there."

Kemp, who took part in a panel discussion on the series Saturday, said the Grammy- and Pulitzer-winning Lamar was "fearless" in approaching what Starz called his first role on a scripted TV series. "Power" cast member Larenz Tate, a self-described "huge" Lamar admirer, said he deliberately avoided going on set when the music star was working. "I felt like I didn't want to disturb him because I knew this was a big moment for him," Tate said. "I didn't want to throw that off because I would've been more into the Kendrick dynamic then what he's doing on the show at that moment. I didn't want to fan out, is my point."

Whether Lamar will be back on the show, which is in its fifth season and stars Omari Hardwick as a drug kingpin and nightclub owner, is something Kemp wouldn't reveal before Lamar's episode airs. "Anyone can die in 'Power' at any time! So I can't say," Kemp said. — AP

# Smith, Dunst add new YouTube Originals fare

Will Smith, Jordan Peele, Kirsten Dunst and Robert Downey Jr. are part of YouTube Original's new series line-up. YouTube said Friday that in "Will Smith: The Jump," the star will bungee jump from a helicopter over the Grand Canyon. The live broadcast will take place on Sept. 25, Smith's 50th birthday. Smith's bravado is in response to a challenge from the Yes Theory channel on YouTube. "Get Out" filmmaker Peele is the co-creator (with "Key & Peele" writer Charlie Sanders) of "Weird City," described by YouTube as a comedic sci-fi anthology series with six episodes.

Guest stars will include Rosario Dawson, Michael Cera and LaVerne Cox. Dunst stars in "On Becoming a God in Central Florida," a dark comedy about a minimum-wage worker who schemes her way into a company that ruined her family. The 10-episode series, produced by Dunst, is set in the early 1990s. Downey will host and narrate a series that explores the world of artificial intelligence through the perspectives of researchers and experts. The still-untitled series will look at the impact of A.I. and how it's changing people's lives and the change yet to come. The 2019 debut dates for it and the other new series were not provided. This fall, YouTube Originals will debut "Origin," a sci-fi thriller about people struggling for survival on an abandoned spacecraft. The cast includes Natalia Tena ("Game of Thrones"), Tom Felton (of the "Harry Potter" film franchise) and Sen Mitsuji. — AP



Clients of the VR attraction, The Void, put on their 3D headset in Anaheim, California. — AFP photos

# INTO THE VOID: HYPER-REAL 'STAR WARS' VR MAKES YOU THE HERO

Imagine putting on a helmet, lowering the visor and being transported immediately from your humdrum day-to-day existence into your own "Star Wars" adventure. Well, holster that blaster because the kind of fantasy that could once only be woven into the dreams of the young is coming to a theme park or shopping mall near you-perhaps sooner than you think. The Void is the latest in a flood of businesses offering whole-body, fully immersive virtual reality experiences for about double the price of a movie ticket.



John Kirkpatrick, Chief marketing officer at The Void, a VR attraction poses for a photo in Anaheim, California.

The company's "Star Wars: Secrets of the Empire" scenario instructs players that their mission is to recover Imperial intelligence critical to the survival of the Rebellion-yes, that Rebellion, of Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia. In reality, the players are in a room full of cameras, movement sensors and other gadgetry in the shadow of Disneyland in southern California. As far as they are concerned, they are rebels disguised as Imperial stormtroopers on the molten planet of Mustafar, battling giant lava monsters and generally taking care of business.

Wearing vests weighed down by high-tech hardware, the players can reach out and touch what they are seeing in their visors, feel the breeze on their faces and hear creatures scuttling around them. Designed in partnership with Disney-owned Lucasfilm, which makes the "Star Wars" movies, the experience involves all the senses, says marketing director John Kirkpatrick. "I really felt like I was in the movie," says player Sean Oshima, 29, a technology consultant. "I was really amazed by this technology. You can really feel the agents shooting you."

## Cusp of a boom

The experience-typically enjoyed in

groups-costs about \$30-35 for 10 minutes, and gets about 500 visitors a day in Anaheim. There are locations in North America, the Middle East and Europe and the company is still growing, with other scenarios including a narrative tour around the movie "Ghostbusters," and a haunted house experience. Without the bells and whistles, the interior is much as you might expect-a room measuring about 10 square meters (110 square feet), partitioned here and there to guide players through the attraction. The cutting-edge tech works in tandem with run-of-the-mill radiators and fans varying the atmospherics, while foam mats double as magma and scent diffusers provide the "smell-o-vision."

Jeremy Bailenson, founding director of Stanford University's Virtual Human Interaction Lab and author of the best-selling "Experience on Demand," told AFP the sector was on the cusp of a boom. In California, VR attractions under development or already out there include the free-roaming group experience "Alien: Descent" in Orange County and an ImaxVR center in Los Angeles. An attraction based on CIA analyst "Jack Ryan," the hero of the Tom Clancy novels and an upcoming Amazon TV series, was among numerous VR experiences showcased at the recent San Diego Comic-Con fan event.

## VR Oscar

Video games are criticized for isolating players, but proponents of virtual reality say it can be an inherently social experience, as it promotes teamwork through problem-solving. The technology is developing rapidly and has already moved beyond pure entertainment into education and science. Acclaimed filmmaker Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu got a special Oscar last year for a virtual reality installation focusing on the plight of migrants, which was shown in several cities including Los Angeles. The six-minute "Carne y Arena" ("Virtually Present, Physically Invisible") takes viewers on the harrowing trek many migrants undertake through the Sonoran desert in the southwestern US. As sirens wail, each participant-barefoot on the sandy ground and wearing VR goggles-experiences the journey alone, joined only by a small band of virtual people hoping to reach America. Border guards armed to the teeth separate the men from the women and the children. Their abandoned shoes litter the ground, as one person screams out in pain and a tragedy looms. From the art world, a successful exhibition on David Bowie is to be adapted into a VR experience by Sony, while architects, teachers and many others in the public and private sectors are increasingly using the technology to illustrate projects and ideas. "Picture if an educator or a student goes into a world, and instead of just learning about it through a textbook, you can actually interact (with) that locale," said Kirkpatrick. "Or even see what those worlds might have looked like in the times that you're studying." — AFP

# Classifieds

Monday, July 30, 2018

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## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY NIGHT:** Relatively hot and Dust will subside gradually with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 45 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

**BY DAY:** Hot with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 45 km/h with a chance for rising dust.

STATION	MAX. REC.	MIN. EXP.
KUWAIT CITY	43 °C	34 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	45 °C	33 °C
ABDALY	45 °C	33 °C
BUBYAN	** °C	** °C
JAHRA	45 °C	33 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	43 °C	33 °C
SALMIYAH	41 °C	34 °C
AHMADI	44 °C	35 °C
NUWAISSIB	47 °C	34 °C
WAFRA	44 °C	33 °C
SALMY	41 °C	29 °C

**SFC. CHART 28/07/2018 1200 UTC**

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Sunday	07/29	Hot with a chance for rising dust	46 °C	33 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h
Monday	07/30	Very hot with a chance for rising dust	47 °C	34 °C	NW	20 - 45 km/h
Tuesday	07/31	Very hot and Dusty	48 °C	36 °C	NW	20 - 65 km/h
Wednesday	08/01	Very hot and Dusty	47 °C	35 °C	NW	20 - 60 km/h

TOMORROW PRAYER TIMES		RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
Fajr	03:36	MAX. Temp.	46 °C
Sunrise	05:06	MIN. Temp.	36 °C
Zuhr	11:54	MAX. RH	23 %
Air	15:30	MIN. RH	67 %
Sunset	18:42	MAX. Wind	N 71 km/h
Isha	20:09	TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

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### BEFORE THE HON'BLE ADDITIONAL FAMILY COURT JUDGE AT MYSURU M.C.No. 105/2018

Petitioner: Anitha Sadananda  
 W/o. Pradeep Kumar,  
 D/o. K.S. Sadananda,  
 Aged about 47 years,  
 R/ at # 402, Windsor Apartments,  
 Kalidasa Road, V.V. Mohalla,  
 Mysuru - 570 002.

Respondent: Pradeep Kumar,  
 S/o late. P.N. Balakrishna,  
 Aged about 55 years,  
 P.B. No. 2118, Safat,  
 Kuwait.

-V/s-

### NOTICE THROUGH PAPER PUBLICATION

Whereas the above mentioned Petitioner had filed the above petition against you the Respondent seeking the relief Decree of divorce in M.C. No. 105/2018 on the file of Addl. Family Court at Mysuru.

Hence the Respondent is hereby called upon to appear before the Hon'ble Court on 14-08-2018 at 11:00 a.m., in person or through your advocate and file your objections if any. Otherwise the above matter will be heard and disposed off ex parte.

Given under my hand and seal of the court, this 4 day of July 2018.

Place: Mysuru  
 Date: 28-06-2018

By Order of Court  
 Additional Family Court

## Vacancy for Accountant

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### DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Monday 30/7/2018				Departure Flights on Monday 30/7/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
FEQ	441	Asyut	00:05	THY	772	Istanbul	00:05
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15	MSR	611	Cairo	00:25
THY	1516	TZX	00:40	UAE	872	Dubai	00:30
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	RJA	645	Amman	00:30
KAC	504	Beirut	00:50	FEQ	342	Sohag	00:30
KAC	102	London	00:50	IAW	158A	Al Najaf	01:00
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00	KNE	382	Bahrain	01:05
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	GFA	222	Dubai	01:05
RJA	642	Amman	01:35	KAC	673	Dubai	01:30
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	FDB	060	Doha	01:40
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	QTR	1079	Bahrain	01:45
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00	JZR	124	Bahrain	01:50
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	SVA	501	Riyadh	01:50
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	KAC	775	Jeddah	01:50
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	KNE	530	Jeddah	01:55
THY	768	Istanbul	02:40	KAC	785	Jeddah	02:15
THY	1404	AYT	02:45	JZR	606	Kochi	02:15
JZR	607	Kochi	02:55	KAC	743	Dammam	02:45
JZR	651	Lahore	02:55	KAC	563	Amman	02:50
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	ABY	128	Sharjah	03:05
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KAC	619	Doha	03:30
KAC	418	Manila	03:05	OMA	646	Muscat	03:35
MSC	415	Sohag	03:10	ETD	304	AGP	03:45
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10	KAC	121	Bahrain	04:05
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC	191	Alexandria	04:05
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:25	KAC	547	Dubai	04:10
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	SAW	706	Damascus	04:15
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	FDB	052	Dubai	04:15
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	QTR	1073	Doha	04:25
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30	KAC	361	Colombo	04:40
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	UAE	858	Dubai	04:40
JZR	1541	Cairo	04:35	KAC	381	Delhi	05:15
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	NIA	362	Alexandria	05:35
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	KAC	331	Trivandrum	06:00
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15	KAC	283	Dhaka	06:00
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:20	SVA	511	Riyadh	06:30
JZR	603	Mumbai	05:25	GFA	216	Bahrain	06:50
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	JZR	184	Dubai	07:00
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	JZR	608	Hyderabad	07:15
JZR	561	Sohag	05:55	JZR	240	Amman	07:20
BAW	157	London	06:10	JZR	538	Cairo	07:25
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:25	WAN	135	Doha	07:30
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:25	THY	1283	TZX	07:35
KAC	204	Lahore	06:30	JZR	266	Beirut	07:40
KAC	678	Dubai	06:45	QTR	1081	Doha	08:00
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	08:00
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	KAC	151	Istanbul	08:00
JZR	143	Doha	07:20	MSR	621	Bahrain	08:20
JZR	529	Asyut	07:30	GFA	218	Bahrain	08:35
JZR	503	Luxor	07:50	FDB	064	Dubai	09:00
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	RJA	641	Amman	09:05
KAC	358	Delhi	08:05	ABY	124	Sharjah	09:05
KAC	384	Kochi	08:05	JZR	552D	Alexandria	09:05
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KAC	357	Kochi	09:15
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	JZR	602	Mumbai	09:40
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	FDB	058	Dubai	09:40
WAN	312	Asyut	09:05	UAE	876	Delhi	09:45
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:15	JAI	215	Doha	09:45
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	DLH	624	Dammam	09:50
SAW	703	Damascus	09:30	KNE	232	Riyadh	09:55
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	OMA	648	Muscat	10:00
IAW	157	Al Najaf	10:00	MEA	403	Beirut	10:00
MSC	405	Sohag	10:15	KAC	301	Mumbai	10:00
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20	QTR	1089	Doha	10:10
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	DHX	171	Bahrain	10:15
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	203	Lahore	10:15
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	10:25
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KLM	445	Bahrain	10:30
JZR	1539	Cairo	11:05	KAC	1543	Cairo	10:40
WAN	134	Doha	11:10	ALK	230	Colombo	10:40
JZR	165	Dubai	11:45	THY	1413	TZX	11:00
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:30	KAC	383	Delhi	11:15
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	UAE	860	Dubai	11:20
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	JZR	604	Ahmedabad	11:20
THY	766	Istanbul	12:45	KAC	783	Jeddah	11:35
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	GFA	220	Bahrain	11:55
JZR	239	Amman	13:00	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	12:00
RJA	644	Amman	13:20	QTR	1083	Doha	12:05
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:30	SVA	515	Riyadh	12:10
JZR	779	Jeddah	13:45	WAN	337	Alexandria	13:10
FEQ	341	Sohag	13:50	JZR	560	Sohag	13:10
IAW	157A	Al Najaf	13:55	SVA	503	Jeddah	13:30
KAC	672	Dubai	13:55				



A Palestinian woman walks past a mural painted on Israel's controversial separation barrier in the West Bank city of Bethlehem yesterday, drawn by Italian artist Jorit Agoch, depicting Palestinian teenager Ahed Tamimi, next to another graffiti showing Palestinian paramedic Razan Al-Najjar who was shot dead by Israeli soldiers in Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip. — AFP

## 'Very positive signals' after US, Taliban talks

**PESHAWAR/KABUL:** A meeting between a senior US diplomat and Taliban representatives in Doha last week to discuss a possible ceasefire ended with "very positive signals" and a decision to hold more meetings, people with knowledge of the talks said yesterday. The meeting between a delegation led by Alice Wells, deputy assistant secretary in the State Department's Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, and Taliban representatives was first reported in *The Wall Street Journal* but has not been officially confirmed.

According to one Taliban official, who said he was part of a four-member delegation, there were "very positive signals" from the meeting, which he said was conducted in a "friendly atmosphere" in a Doha hotel.

"You can't call it peace talks," he said. "These are a series of meetings for initiating formal and purposeful talks. We agreed to meet again soon and resolve the Afghan conflict through dialogue." He said the talks had been held without the presence of Afghan government officials at the insistence of the Taliban.

The move comes as the Afghan government and the United States have stepped up efforts to end the 17 year-war in Afghanistan following the unprecedented three-day truce during last month's Eid al-Fitr holiday. The truce, which saw unarmed Taliban fighters mingling with soldiers on the streets of Kabul and other cities, offered the first concrete vision of a peace settlement since an earlier attempt at peace talks broke down in 2015.

Although the Taliban refused an offer by President Ashraf Ghani to extend the Eid ceasefire, behind-the-scenes contacts have continued and the government has said it is considering another ceasefire during next month's Eid-al Qurban holiday. As hopes of possible formal negotiations have risen, the United States has agreed to participate directly in the talks, although it

insists the process will remain under Afghan leadership.

The Taliban official said the talks took place with the approval of the leadership council. The two sides had discussed proposals to allow the Taliban free movement in two provinces where they would not be attacked, an idea that President Ashraf Ghani has already rejected. They also discussed Taliban participation in the Afghan government. "The only demand they made was to allow their military bases in Afghanistan," said the Taliban official.

The meeting in Doha, where the Taliban maintains a political office, followed two earlier meetings between US officials and Taliban representatives in recent months, the sources said. "We have held three meetings with the US and we reached a conclusion to continue talks for meaningful negotiations," said a second Taliban official. He said they would first exchange prisoners and then discuss other issues that could restore peace to Afghanistan. "However, our delegation made it clear to them that peace can only be restored to Afghanistan when all foreign forces are withdrawn," he said.

Another person with knowledge of the talks said the

United States had pressed the Taliban side to accept the ceasefire offer for Eid-ul Adha, often known in Afghanistan as Eid-al Qurban, which this year starts on Aug 22. "So a long-term ceasefire is expected on Eid-ul Adha," the person said. "Both sides agreed upon the continuation of the meetings and talks and another meeting is expected before Eid, but the exact time and place is not clear yet."

The State Department confirmed that Wells had visited Doha but has said only that she met United Arab Emirates government officials, including the deputy prime minister, to talk about their contributions to the situation in Afghanistan. Asked about talks with the Taliban, a State Department spokesman referred to a July 9 comment from Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, that the United States would "support, facilitate, and participate in these peace discussions, but peace must be decided by the Afghans and settled among them." Ghani's main spokesman Haroon Chakansuri said last week that peace talks would be Afghan-led and would build on international consensus in support of peace. — Reuters

## Riyadh reassures it will not abandon...

Continued from Page 1

Arabia, Qatar, Egypt and Israel in June. He did not meet Abbas, who has refused to see Trump's team after the US embassy was moved to Jerusalem.

In an interview at the end of his trip, Kushner said Washington would announce its Middle East peace plan soon, and press on with or without Abbas. Yet there has been little to suggest any significant progress towards ending the decades-old conflict, which Trump has said would be "the ultimate deal". "There is no new push. Nothing Kushner presented is acceptable to any of the Arab countries," the Arab diplomat said. "He thinks he is 'I Dream of Genie' with a magic wand to make a new solution to the problem."

### Palestinian teen freed

Meanwhile, Palestinian teenager Ahed Tamimi left prison yesterday and was greeted by crowds of supporters after serving eight months for slapping Israeli soldiers, an episode that made her a symbol of resistance for Palestinians. Tamimi, 17, and her mother Nariman, who was also jailed over the incident, arrived in their village of Nabi Saleh in the occupied West Bank, where they were mobbed by journalists. Easily recognizable by her shock of reddish hair, Tamimi wore a Palestinian-style keffiyeh around her neck, at times appearing relaxed but at other moments overwhelmed as television cameras followed her.

"The resistance continues until the fall of the occupation, and of course the (female) prisoners in jail are all strong," Ahed Tamimi said, her voice barely audible above the crowd. "I thank everyone who supported me in this sentence and supports all the prisoners." Her father Bassem put his arms around Ahed and her mother as they walked together along a road, while a crowd of around 100 chanted "we want to live in freedom".

At a press conference later at a square in the village, Tamimi sat at a table behind a forest of microphones, a translator providing an English version of her remarks. She declined to take questions from journalists from the Israeli media because of what she said was unfair coverage of her and her family's cause. She said she planned to study law to hold Israel's occupation accountable. "Of course I am very happy that I came back to my family, but that happiness is partial because of the prisoners who are still in prison," she said.

Tamimi also visited the tomb of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in Ramallah and laid flowers there, before meeting Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas. Abbas described Tamimi as "a model of peaceful civil resist-

ance ..., proving to the world that our Palestinian people will stand firm and constant on their land, no matter what the sacrifice".

Israeli authorities appeared keen to avoid media coverage of the release as much as possible, and conflicting information had meant supporters and journalists scrambled to arrive on time at the correct location. Tamimi and her mother had been driven early yesterday from Israel's Sharon prison into the West Bank, authorities said. But the location of the checkpoint where they were to cross into the territory was changed three times before it was finally announced they were being taken to a crossing at Rantis, about an hour's drive from the initial location.

In a sign of the sensitivity of the case, Israeli authorities on Saturday arrested two Italians and a Palestinian for painting Tamimi's image on the Israeli separation wall cutting off the West Bank. Both Tamimi and her mother were sentenced to eight months by an Israeli military court following a plea deal over the December incident, which the family said took place in their garden in Nabi Saleh. They were released some three weeks early, a common practice by Israeli authorities due to overcrowded prisons, Tamimi's lawyer Gaby Lasky said.

### Netanyahu backs law

Separately, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday defended a new law declaring Israel the Jewish people's nation state, saying it did not harm minority rights despite it lacking references to equality and democracy. The new legislation speaks of Israel as the historic homeland of the Jews and says they have a "unique" right to self-determination there. Netanyahu said other laws are already in the books guaranteeing equality for non-Jews and defining Israel as democratic.

"However, we have never determined the national rights of the Jewish people in its land in a basic law - until now, when we passed the nation state law," Netanyahu said at a weekly cabinet meeting. The law was passed in the middle of the night on July 19 and is part of Israel's so-called basic laws, a de facto constitution. It has been subject to harsh criticism in parliament and elsewhere. Arab lawmaker Zouheir Bahloul of the opposition Zionist Union party resigned on Saturday over it.

Hundreds of Israeli writers and artists have signed a petition calling on Netanyahu to "stop your government and coalition members from scouring minorities" and repeal the law. Arab citizens make up some 17.5 percent of Israel's more than eight million population. Members of Israel's 130,000-strong Druze community - who serve in the police and military - have also been among those strongly denouncing the legislation. "There is nothing in this law that infringes on your rights as equal citizens of the state of Israel, and there is nothing in it that harms the special status of the Druze community in Israel," Netanyahu said yesterday. — Agencies

## NYT publisher tells Trump anti-press...

Continued from Page 1

misstatements, the president has repeatedly lashed back. He has tweeted scores of times that the Times is "very dishonest," "failing and corrupt", and that it uses "phony and nonexistent sources". The Times has defended its reporters' work and pointed out that, far from "failing," it has enjoyed healthy growth. Last year's revenue hit \$1.7 billion, 8 percent above the previous year.

Observers say the president has a love/hate relationship with what was his hometown newspaper as he

grew up in New York and became one of the city's best-known figures, craving space in its columns but furious when it appeared critical of him. Whether the Trump-Sulzberger meeting will lead to any easing of White House tensions with the press remained unclear, though Trump's tweet did not seem to suggest so. As one former Times editor said yesterday on social media about the chances of any reconciliation, "Don't hold your breath."

If anything, Trump's relations with the press seem recently to have hit a new low. The White House on Wednesday barred CNN reporter Kaitlan Collins from a press event after her persistent questioning at an earlier event was deemed "inappropriate". Olivier Knox, president of the White House Correspondents Association, deplored the action as a "wrong-headed and weak" response to a reporter who, he said, was simply doing her job. —AFP

## Polar bear shot after mauling...

Continued from Page 1

check areas before landing and to protect those onboard against polar bear attacks. Polar bears have

been protected in Norway since 1973 and nearly 1,000 were counted on Svalbard during a 2015 census. The archipelago, roughly twice the size of Belgium, lies about 1,000 km from the North Pole. Five fatal polar bear attacks have been recorded on Svalbard in the last 40 years. The most recent was in 2011 when a bear attacked a group of 14 people on a trip organized by a British schools association. A 17-year-old Briton died and four other members of the expedition were hurt before the bear was killed. — AFP

## Filipino rebels hope for peace...

Continued from Page 1

them to vote for the approval of the law, although he warned of some potential obstacles. "We still don't know if there are groups or individuals who will question the new autonomy law before the Supreme Court," he told a cheering crowd in a speech livestreamed on social media. Supporters chanted "Allahu Akbar" and "Yes to BOL" in the rebel camp in the middle of coconut and banana groves.

"This is our dream. If we end this (fighting), hopefully we can live in peace," Nasser Samama, a 61-year-old veteran rebel fighter, told AFP inside MILF headquarters at Camp Darapanan. "Most people want peace and so do we in the MILF forces. What the MILF has achieved is not just for our group but for the whole of Mindanao."

Muslim rebels have long been battling for independence or autonomy in Mindanao, which they regard as their

ancestral homeland. The law aims to enforce a historic but fragile 2014 peace deal under which the MILF vowed to give up its quest for independence and lay down the weapons of its 30,000 fighters in return for self-rule. Under the law, a new political entity known as the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region would replace the current autonomous region created following a 1996 deal with another rebel group, the Moro National Liberation Front.

The Bangsamoro is set to have more powers and cover a bigger area. MILF leaders approve of the measure but say its communities would need to back the law for it to pass a plebiscite. Yesterday, many of the group's members, who have endured decades of conflict, said they supported the law. "This is the beginning of peace in Mindanao. This is the start of unity between Muslims and Christians," housewife Babaidi Budain told AFP. Some expressed fear the law would not bring development to the resource-rich but poverty-stricken south. "Everyone in Mindanao should avail themselves of the opportunity the region offers. If not, it would be the same, the Bangsamoro would not prosper," said community worker Nasser Sulaiman. — Agencies



## Sports

# Angels' Arcia reaches 10 RBIs in the second game

## Arenado, Valaika power Rockies past A's, 4-1

**CALIFORNIA:** Francisco Arcia doubled twice, homered and drove in six runs to lead the Los Angeles Angels to an 11-5 win over the Seattle Mariners on Saturday night in Anaheim, Calif. It was just Arcia's second major league game after spending the past 11 years in the minor leagues. In his major league debut on Thursday, the 28-year-old catcher went 2-for-4 with a home run and four RBIs, but he topped that performance on Saturday. Arcia set a major league record with 10 RBIs in his first two major league games. The Angels had plenty of offense to go around, totaling 13 hits, including Mike Trout's 29th home run of the season off Felix Hernandez in the first inning.

### Royals 10, Yankees 5 (Game 1)

Lucas Duda hit a towering two-run homer off Luis Severino as Kansas City cruised past New York in the opener of a day-night doubleheader at Yankee Stadium. Duda ended Severino's fourth straight rough outing by hitting a high fly ball that carried 345 feet over the right field fence to give the Royals a 6-0 lead in the fifth inning. Severino (14-4) continued his recent struggles and was unable to get his 15th win on his third attempt. In a season-low 4 1/3 innings, he allowed six runs on eight hits.

### Yankees 5, Royals 4 (Game 2)

Aaron Hicks lofted the tiebreaking sacrifice fly to cap an eighth-inning comeback for New York, which salvaged a split of the doubleheader with visiting Kansas City. The Royals put themselves in position to earn a sweep by scoring single runs in the fifth, sixth and seventh innings to take a 4-3 lead. But Greg Bird tied the game with a lead-off homer in the bottom of the eighth against Brian Flynn (2-2), who then gave up a double to Neil Walker. Glenn Sparkman entered and allowed a bunt single to Austin Romine before walking pinch hitter Gleyber Torres to load the bases. Walker then scored easily on Hicks' fly ball to left field.

### Red Sox 10, Twins 4

JD Martinez hit his major-league-leading 32nd home run of the season and Eduardo Nunez tripled, doubled and drove in two runs to lead a 14-hit attack as host Boston crushed Minnesota. Jackie Bradley Jr. had a two-run triple, and five batters each had two hits for Boston, which improved to 12-2 in its last 14 games at Fenway Park and 36-14 at home overall this season. Rick Porcello (13-4) picked up the victory despite giving up four runs on five hits in just 5 2/3 innings. Rafael Devers left the game in the eighth inning with a hamstring injury and is expected to be placed on the disabled list by the Red Sox for the second time this month.

### Cardinals 6, Cubs 2

Miles Mikolas pitched six strong innings and Marcell Ozuna hit a grand slam as St. Louis defeated visiting Chicago. Ozuna homered in a six-run first inning for the Cardinals, who have won the first two games of the series and improved to 9-6 this season against the National League Central leaders. Javier Baez homered for the second consecutive day for the Cubs, who will attempt to avoid a three-game sweep Sunday night.

## No 1 Johnson gets another shot at Canadian Open

**OAKVILLE:** A hard-charging Dustin Johnson fired a seven-under 65 to seize a share of the third round lead at the Canadian Open on Saturday, setting the world number one up for another shot at a title that has slipped his grasp. Twice a runner-up in Canada, Johnson used a scorching start that included five birdies over his first six holes and a birdie-birdie-eagle rampage on the back nine to get to 17-under.

He was in a four-way tie at the top of the leaderboard with South Koreans Kim Whee (67), An Byeong-hun (66) and American compatriot Kevin Tway (68), whose father Bob Tway hoisted the Canadian crown in 2003. With 18 PGA Tour wins, including two this season, Johnson will head into Sunday's final round as the heavy favorite since the three other men sharing the lead are all chasing maiden PGA Tour titles.

American Hudson Swafford and South African Rory Sabbatini sit four off the pace on 13-under. "I want to win just because I like to win but this is the last one here so it would mean a lot to get it done here tomorrow as I have finished second here twice," said Johnson. "I like the golf course, my game is in really good form, I have a lot of confidence in it but I'm going to have to go out and play really well

tomorrow. "There are some really low numbers out there. Somebody is going to shoot low and I just hope it's me." After missing his first cut of the year last week at the British Open, Johnson has been almost flawless at Glen Abbey.

Having wrapped up a bogey free 66 with a birdie on Friday, Johnson picked up where he left off by carding three consecutive birdies on Saturday. The 34-year-old American, who started the day three off the pace, took a breather with a par at the fourth but was quickly back in top gear as he hit birdies in the fifth and sixth holes en route to an error free start. The back nine, however, did not begin as brightly. Johnson collected his first bogey since Thursday's opening round and quickly followed that up with his second at the par-five 13th. But Johnson was able get back on track with birdies at the 14th and 15th before rolling in a 23-foot putt at the 16th for an eagle. Kim had a more adventurous day grabbing and surrendering the outright lead with an eagle, bogey, par closing stretch. Overnight leader Tway could not match the early birdie binge and was slowly pushed down the leaderboard before responding with three birdies over his final four holes to join the party. — Reuters

### Tigers 2, Indians 1

JaCoby Jones hit a two-run home run, and four Detroit pitchers held visiting Cleveland to a combined five singles in a tight win. Jones, the No. 9 hitter, ripped his eighth homer of the season in the third inning to make a winner of starter Blaine Hardy (4-3). Jones left the game after six innings with lower back tightness. The Tigers defeated the Indians for just the fourth time in 15 meetings this season. Michael Brantley (2-for-4) was the only Cleveland player to get more than one hit.

### Reds 6, Phillies 2

Joey Votto drove in two runs with a pair of late singles, and the Cincinnati bullpen pitched four shutout innings to help defeat visiting Philadelphia. Votto's sixth-inning RBI single broke a 2-2 tie and gave the Reds the lead for good en route to their second straight win over the Phillies after a 9-4 drubbing in the series opener on Thursday. The loss spoiled the Phillies debut of Asdrubal Cabrera, acquired Friday in a rare trade with the New York Mets. Cabrera started at shortstop and went 0-for-4 with a strikeout.

### Pirates 5, Mets 0

Trevor Williams combined with three relievers on a six-hit shutout, and Pittsburgh downed visiting New York for the second straight night. Colin Moran drove in two runs, and David Freese, Adam Frazier and Francisco Cervelli each added an RBI for the Pirates, who have won 15 of their past 18 games. Mets starter Jacob deGrom (5-6) gave up a season-high eight hits and allowed three runs in seven innings, with five strikeouts and no walks. DeGrom, who leads the majors with a 1.82 ERA, has held opponents to three runs or fewer in 18 straight starts but has not notched a win since June 18.

### Orioles 11, Rays 2

Joey Rickard homered and drove in five runs and Trey Mancini also hit a homer as host Baltimore routed Tampa Bay. Mancini and Rickard hit back-to-back homers on consecutive pitches in a three-run second inning. Rickard added a three-run bloop double to right in the fourth and an RBI double in the sixth. Mancini, Rickard and Caleb Joseph—the Nos. 7-9 batters—drove in nine of the Orioles' runs.

### Dodgers 5, Braves 1

Alex Wood earned his sixth straight win and Yasiel Puig returned from the disabled list to hit a homer and drive in three, helping Los Angeles claim victory at Atlanta. Wood (7-5) pitched 5 2/3 scoreless innings and gave up only one hit, walked four and struck out five. He has not suffered a loss since June 9. Puig, out since July 9 with a right oblique strain, went 1-for-2 with a walk and scored two runs. He plated the first run for the Dodgers with a sacrifice fly in the second inning, then ripped a two-run homer to left in the sixth inning.

### Rangers 7, Astros 3

Rougned Odor recorded his ninth career multi-homer game as visiting Texas thumped scuffling Houston. Odor (5-for-5) put Texas ahead to stay with an inside-the-park home run off Astros starter Justin Verlander (10-6) in the fifth inning. Odor led



**CALIFORNIA:** Mike Zunino #3 of the Seattle Mariners watches a home run ball hit by Francisco Arcia #37 of the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim in the third inning at Angel Stadium on July 28, 2018 in Anaheim. — AFP

off the seventh inning with a conventional dinger, blasting his ninth of the season to right off debuting Astros right-hander Ryan Pressly for a 3-1 lead. After the game, Astros manager A.J. Hinch told reporters star second baseman Jose Altuve had been placed on the 10-day disabled list for the first time in his eight-year career with right knee soreness.

### White Sox 9, Blue Jays 5

Pinch hitter Daniel Palka hit a two-run, go-ahead single in a six-run bottom of the eighth, and Chicago came back to defeat visiting Toronto. Leury Garcia had four RBIs—including a three-run triple in the eighth—and Yolmer Sanchez and Nicky Delmonico hit solo home runs for the White Sox, as the teams have split the first two games of a three-game series. Toronto's Lourdes Gurriel Jr was 2-for-5 with two RBIs to give him a club-record 10th straight multi-hit game.

### Marlins 2, Nationals 1 (10 innings)

JT Realmuto hit a walk-off single down the right field line in the 10th inning as host Miami edged Washington. The Marlins started the winning rally against reliever Kelvin Herrera (2-2) with a perfect bunt hit by Magueuris Sierra, who dragged the ball down the first base side. Miguel Rojas reached on catcher interference against Spencer Kieboom. After a bloop hit by Brian Anderson loaded the bases with no outs, Washington put right fielder Bryce Harper at first base, employing a five-man infield. Realmuto foiled the strategy with his hit.

### Rockies 4, Athletics 1

Nolan Arenado homered for the second straight game, Pat Valaika also went deep and Colorado beat Oakland in Denver. Carlos Gonzalez had three hits, and Wade Davis pitched the ninth for his 29th save

for Colorado. The Rockies have won 10 of their last 12 and improved to 15-5 in July. Nick Martini had two hits and scored once, and Matt Chapman and Josh Phegley also had two hits for Oakland, which lost for the second straight night after a six-game winning streak.

### Diamondbacks 9, Padres 4

Jon Jay pulled a tiebreaking, two-run double into right field in the eighth inning to lead Arizona to victory at San Diego. The win was Arizona's second straight over the Padres, who have lost four straight and 11 of their last 13, and kept the Diamondbacks 1 1/2 games behind the leading Los Angeles Dodgers in the National League West. Daniel Descalso opened the eighth with a single and move to second on a sacrifice bunt. After pinch hitter Chris Owings drew a walk, Padres reliever Phil Maton (0-1) was replaced by Kirby Yates, who immediately gave up the double to Jay. Paul Goldschmidt then singled home Jay.

### Brewers 7, Giants 1

Jhoulys Chacin continued his brilliant month of July with seven innings of three-hit pitching, leading Milwaukee to a third straight win at San Francisco. Eric Thames singled, doubled and scored three times, and Lorenzo Cain collected four of Milwaukee's 14 hits. Christian Yelich homered and drove in three runs, and Mike Moustakas went 1-for-5 with a strikeout in his Brewers debut. Chacin (10-3) no-hit the Giants for five innings before allowing a leadoff homer to Nick Hundley in the sixth, though the Brewers had already built a 6-0 lead by then. The right-hander allowed three or fewer hits for the fourth time in five starts in July, improving to 4-0 in the month. — Reuters

## Garcia overpowers Robert Easter in a 12-round battle

**LOS ANGELES:** American boxer Mikey Garcia unified the WBC and IBF lightweight titles late Saturday by overpowering Robert Easter in a 12-round battle of undefeated champions. The 30-year-old Garcia retained his WBC title and grabbed Easter's IBF belt with a unanimous decision victory at Staples Center arena in downtown Los Angeles.

"It is a great accomplishment. Now we are back," said Garcia. "I prepared for the best. He gave a great fight but I was in control most of the fight and did what I had to do to win." Garcia seized control of the fight early, flooring American Easter in the third round with a left hook to the chin. It was just the second time in his career that Easter was knocked down. "We wanted to land that right hand. It was a perfect punch around the chin," he said.

Easter recovered from the knockdown but failed to mount a sustained attack outside of using his jab, and was almost knocked down again in the ninth round. Garcia is now 5-0 with two knockouts since returning from a 30-month exile from the sport due a battle with promoter Top Rank. The three judges scored it 118-109, 117-110 and 116-111 as Garcia improved to 39-0 overall after this fight, which marks a return to the lightweight division. He won a junior welterweight belt in February but had to vacate it to face Easter.

Garcia immediately threw down the gauntlet to Errol Spence saying in the ring that for his next fight he wants to move up to the wel-



**LOS ANGELES:** Mikey Garcia punches Robert Easter Jr during their WBC & IBF World Lightweight Title fight at Staples Center on July 28, 2018. — AFP

terweight division to fight for Spence's IBF belt. "He is the most feared man and I want to challenge him," said Garcia. The 27-year-old Easter suffered the first loss of his career to drop to 21-1, with 14 KOs. He was making his

fourth title defense of the vacant belt he won in 2016. The lanky Easter, who had a 20 centimeter (eight inch) reach advantage, stuck to his game plan and hung in there to the final bell. — AFP

## Sports

# Rabada and Shamsi set up South Africa's big win in one-day clash

## Some consolation as South Africa hammer Sri Lanka

### SCOREBOARD

**DAMBULLA, Sri Lanka:** Final scoreboard of the first one-day international between Sri Lanka and South Africa in Dambulla yesterday:

Sri Lanka	
N. Dickwella c Shamsi b Rabada	2
U. Tharanga run out (Duminy)	10
K. Mendis c de Kock b Rabada	3
K. Perera c Miller b Shamsi	81
A. Mathews c Amla b Ngidi	5
S. Jayasuriya c de Kock b Rabada	0
T. Perera c de Kock b Shamsi	49
A. Dananjaya b Shamsi	11
S. Lakmal c de Kock b Rabada	5
L. Sandakan not out	5
L. Kumara st de Kock b Shamsi	3
Extras (lb4, nb2, w13)	19
Total (all out, 34.3 overs)	193
Fall of wickets: 1-2 (Dickwella), 2-11 (Mendis), 3-22 (Tharanga), 4-35 (Mathews), 5-36 (Jayasuriya), 6-128 (T. Perera), 7-166 (Dananjaya), 8-179 (K. Perera), 9-189 (Lakmal), 10-193 (Kumara)	
Bowling: Rabada 8-0-41-4 (w7), Ngidi 8-1-29-1 (w4), Mulder 3-0-34-0 (nb2, w1), Phehlukwayo 3-0-30-0 (w1), Shamsi 8.3-0-33-4, JP Duminy 4-0-22-0.	
South Africa (target 194)	
H. Amla b Dananjaya	19
Q. de Kock c Lakmal b Dananjaya	47
A. Markram lbw b Dananjaya	0
E. du Plessis c Mathews b Sandakan	47
JP Duminy not out	53
D. Miller lbw b Lakmal	10
W. Mulder not out	14
Extras (lb1, w5)	6
Total (5 wickets, 31 overs)	196
Did not bat: A. Phehlukwayo, K. Rabada, T. Shamsi, L. Ngidi	
Fall of wickets: 1-31 (Amla), 2-31 (Markram), 3-117 (de Kock), 4-129 (du Plessis), 5-172 (Miller)	
Bowling: Dananjaya 10-0-50-3, Lakmal 6-0-37-1 (w2), Jayasuriya 4-0-23-0 (w1), Kumara 3-0-11-0 (w1), Sandakan 8-0-74-1 (w1).	
Result: South Africa beat Sri Lanka by five wickets	
Series: South Africa lead the five-match series 1-0	

**DAMBULLA:** Bowlers Kagiso Rabada and Tabraiz Shamsi starred yesterday in South Africa's five-wicket hammering of Sri Lanka in the first one-day international, some consolation for a disappointing tour. They claimed four wickets each to help bowl out Sri Lanka for 193, a total the visitors passed in just 31 overs to take a 1-0 lead in the five-match series. South Africa's chase depended on an 86-run third-wicket stand between Quinton de Kock and skipper Faf du Plessis, who both hit 47. Off spinner Akila Dananjaya struck at crucial moments to get three wickets but Jean-Paul Duminy ensured a swift chase with his 32-ball unbeaten 53.

But it was a superb opening pace spell from Rabada and Shamsi's career-best figures of 4-33 with his left-arm wrist spin that led South Africa to their first victory of the tour after being swept aside in a two-Test series. "Feels much better to be chatting as a winning captain," du Plessis said afterwards. "In the Test series we didn't play well. There is a new group of players for the ODIs. I also thought we've learnt lessons, had good discussions and put pressure on their spinners by taking a few risks." After the recent defeats, du Plessis said South Africa were now looking forward to the rest of the tour. Sri Lanka's innings lasted just 34.3 overs but batsman Kusal Perera hit a gritty 81 to lift the hosts from a precarious 36-5 following their decision to bat first. Kusal, whose 72-ball stay included 11 fours and a six, put on a crucial 92 for the sixth wicket stand with Thisara Perera, who made 49 to give the total a modicum of respect. Kusal and Thisara counter-attacked to hit the South African bowlers to all parts of the ground as Sri Lanka reached 100 in the 16th over. The left-handed batting duo cashed in on the inexperience of rookie pacemen Willem Mulder and Andile Phehlukwayo as they plundered runs.

#### Spin trouble

But the introduction of spin in the 18th over put Sri Lanka in trouble again. Shamsi broke the dangerous partnership by getting Thisara caught behind. Kusal kept up the good work to reach his fourth ODI fifty and got support from Dananjaya in a 38-run partnership. He



**DAMBULLA:** South Africa's Kagiso Rabada (2nd right) celebrates with his teammates after he dismissed Sri Lankan cricketer Shehan Jayasuriya during the first One Day International (ODI) cricket match between Sri Lanka and South Africa yesterday. — AFP

finally fell to Shamsi, who won the man of the match award, after being caught at point while attempting a reverse sweep. The innings folded soon afterwards.

South Africa suffered a wobbly start to their chase after opener Hashim Amla and Aiden Markram fell to the guile of Dananjaya, who opened the attack for the hosts. The left-right batting combination of de Kock and du Plessis blunted Sri Lanka's spin threat with their measured approach. However de Kock and du Plessis were denied their fifties after Dananjaya and left-arm spinner Lakshan Sandakan got the batsmen out respectively.

Duminy, who hit six fours and two sixes, kept calm to complete his 26th ODI half-century and the veteran left-hand batsman hit the winning runs. "It wasn't the best day but we have four more games to bounce back," said Sri Lanka skipper Angelo Mathews. "Getting bowled inside 34 overs was pretty disappointing. We will take the positives and move forward," said Mathews, who returned as one-day captain in January. The second international, a day-night game, is on Wednesday, also in Dambulla. The two sides will also play a one-off Twenty20 international on August 14.—AFP

## World junior champ Zohri becomes face of Indonesia Games

**JAKARTA:** Just over a year ago, Indonesian sprinter Lalu Muhammad Zohri could barely afford running shoes and was pretty much unknown outside his small village on the eastern island of Lombok. That all changed in 10.18 seconds earlier this month when the 18-year-old orphan produced a blistering finish to beat the cream of the planet's junior sprinting talent in the 100 meters final at the under-20 world championships in Finland.

Indonesia had never previously had a finalist at the championships, let alone a world junior champion, and Zohri has quickly become burdened with the hopes of a nation ahead of their hosting of the Asian Games. Zohri's sudden rise to the status of household name in the southeast Asian nation of some 260 million people is clearly still something of a shock to the quietly spoken teenager. "It was beyond my imagination to be invited to meet the government, the ministers and the President," he told Reuters during a break in his training at Jakarta's Gelora Bung Karno Stadium. "I feel very proud and thankful."

Indonesia's President Joko Widodo has praised Zohri as a "collective inspiration to the nation's athletes to achieve gold" at the Asian Games and has ordered ministers to renovate his humble woven bamboo home. The teenager, though, is not confident about his chances of winning another gold at the Asian Games, which will take place in Jakarta and Palembang from August 18 to September 2. "I think (the Asian Games) will be tough because the competition is tight and I'm going against seniors who are more experienced and can finish the run under 10 seconds," said Zohri, adding that his focus would be on preparing for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Zohri lowered his personal best from 10.25 seconds in winning his world title in Tampere, leaving him only one hundredth of a second off Suryo Agung Wibowo's Indonesia mark of 10.17. To win gold in the 100 meters on the Gelora Bung Karno Stadium track next month, however, he is likely to have to beat Nigerian-born Qatari Femi Ogunade and Chinese sprinters Su Bingtian and Xie Zhenye, all of whom have run under 10 seconds. "Lalu is a tough competitor. Given how fast he is running at 18, with training he has the capacities to break the 10-second barrier," said US coach Harry Harra, who trained decathlon world record holder Ashton Eaton and is advising the Indonesia Athletics team.

Indonesia Athletics Association chairman Bob Hasan agrees, but is not sure the Asian Games is the right stage for such a fledgling talent. "We are still deciding with Lalu's coaches whether it might be better to have him run in the junior Asian Games," Hasan said. "He is still very young. We nearly didn't get the visa for him to go to Finland. We had to provide him with a guarantee because his parents are no more." Hasan said Zohri, who lost his parents when he was a child, had struggled with the food in Finland, leading to the Indonesian Ambassador driving two hours a day to bring over rice and home cooked meals for him.—Reuters

## Berrettini stuns Bautista Agut for career-first title

**ROME:** Italy's Matteo Berrettini overcame second seed Roberto Bautista Agut 7-6(9) 6-4 to win his first title at the Swiss Open in Gstaad yesterday. World number 17 Bautista Agut, who was playing in his first event since he suffered a hip injury in Halle, gave everything to stay in contention after fending off five break points but failed to match his opponent's powerful groundstrokes. The 22-year-old Berrettini snatched the opening set tiebreak 11-9, before converting a break point in the 10th game of the second to wrap up the victory.

"From the beginning until the end it was really tough to break him," Berrettini said. "I served really good most of the days and it was an unbelievable tiebreak. "If I lost the tiebreak, I think the match would have been really tough. I was lucky I did a really good job." Playing in his first tour level final, Berrettini produced a fearless display, firing 17 aces and losing 12 points on serve in total. He finished the tournament without dropping a set, ousting 2016 champion Feliciano Lopez and fourth seed Andrey Rublev on his way to lifting the title. —Reuters



**GSTAAD:** Italy's Matteo Berrettini holds the trophy as he celebrates his victory at the end of the Swiss Open ATP 250 tennis tournament final match against Spain's Roberto Bautista-Agut yesterday. —AFP

## Toyota's Tanak back in world title hunt after Finland win

**JYVASKYLA:** Estonia's Ott Tanak steered his Toyota to an impressive victory on the dirt-track forest roads at the Rally of Finland yesterday, clinching his second win of the season after leading all weekend. Norway's Mads Ostberg in a Citroen and home hope Jari-Matti Latvala of Toyota were second and third in this eighth of 13 dates on the WRC calendar. The race was all but secured on Saturday with Tanak taking five of the eight specials. Tanak won a similar style of rally in Argentina in April and climbs to third in the world rankings albeit 46 points adrift of Belgian Thierry Neuville, who slumped to a ninth-place finish here.

"We tried what we could," said Hyundai's Neuville. "But we knew coming here it would be rough." The winner, who celebrated wildly on the roof of his Toyota, had held a comfortable lead overnight of 39 and 44sec over his two closest rivals with yesterday's racing including just four specials raced over a total of 45.72km. Taking his foot off the gas after watching Esapekka Lappi roll his Toyota yesterday morning, Tanak eventually won by 32.7sec. "It was a perfect weekend for us, first day was tough but after that we just increased our gap," said Tanak, who thanked his Toyota team for their performance.

"There is full support behind us, I think that's how it needs to be done - when we all work together," he said. "In terms of the championship let's see where we end up." Tanak's next chance will come at the Rally of Germany in three weeks time. Five-time world champion Sebastien Ogier ended the rally fifth at 2min 15sec but felt the performance was a step towards the world title as he currently sits second in the standings. "The whole weekend I gave everything. The most important is that we at least step in the right direction in the championship," said the Frenchman.—AFP

## Baker dazzles in 100m backstroke

**IRVINE:** Kathleen Baker sliced more than half a second off her personal best to win the women's 100m backstroke at the US swimming championships in a world record of 58.00sec on Saturday. Baker had been gunning for the Kylie Masse's world record of 58.10 ever since she finished runner-up to the Canadian at the World Championships in Budapest last year.

That was another silver medal performance for Rio Olympics runner-up Baker, and just more motivation for a swimmer who now has her sights set on breaking through the 58-second barrier. "I put a goal on my phone so it reminds me every day and right now it's a 58.10," Baker said. "I just broke that, so now I'm going to put 57.99 down." Baker, who shared 200m backstroke gold with 16-year-old Regan Smith this week, led a podium that featured three women under 59 seconds with 50m back winner Olivia Smoliga second in 58.75 and Smith third in 58.83. Hers was the first world record of the five-day championships, which serve as a qualifier for both the Pan Pacific Championships next month in Tokyo and the World Championships in South Korea next year. Baker said she fed off the energy of Katie Ledecky — who stirred up the crowd as she briefly pushed world record pace on the way to a 400m freestyle victory in 3:59.09. But it took her a moment to realize what she'd accomplished. "I was looking to see if I won first, and then I realized I went 58.0 and I was shocked," she said. "I was like 'Oh my gosh I just broke a world record!'"

While there was no world record for Ledecky, her distance dominance was on full display as she shredded 400m field. On pace to break her own world record of 3:56.46 through the first 250 meters, Ledecky professed herself satisfied with a time under four minutes, with expectations she'll improve at the Pan Pacs coming up in less than two weeks. "It's always good to go under four (minutes)," said Ledecky, who touched 3.12sec ahead of runner-up Leah Smith. Haley Anderson was third, 8.12sec behind.—AFP



**JYVASKYLA:** Estonian driver Ott Tanak and co-driver Martin Jarveoja get airborne with their Toyota Yaris WRC car during the Ruuhimäki 1 Special Stage of the WRC Rally Finland yesterday. — AFP

## Sports

# Rooney scores; DC wins on a late own goal 2-1

## Second-half outburst lifts Toronto past Chicago

WASHINGTON: DC United took advantage of an own goal in the 90th minute to earn a 2-1 victory over the visiting Colorado Rapids at Audi Field on a night when Wayne Rooney scored his first MLS goal. United midfielder Ulises Segura was attempting a cross in front of the Colorado goal when his pass deflected off the foot of Rapids forward Niki Jackson and past goalkeeper Tim Howard for the late score. Midfielder Kellyn Acosta, acquired by the Rapids in a trade with FC Dallas on Monday, scored his first goal for Colorado in the 82nd minute to tie the match 1-1. Rooney, making just his second start and fourth appearance for DC United, opened the scoring with a goal between the legs of former English Premier League teammate and foe Howard in the 33rd minute.

Rooney took a pass from Luciano Acosta inside the box on the right side of goal and scored with his right foot. It was Rooney's fourth goal all-time on Howard, scoring three times when he played for Manchester

United and Howard was in goal for Everton. Acosta scored the equalizer when he placed a delicate chip shot off the arm of DC United goalkeeper David Ousted and into the goal. Forward Jack McBean sent a long cross into the box and Acosta chased it down to deliver his second MLS goal this season.

Acosta had a chance to score in the 26th minute but his penalty kick rebounded off the right post. Edgar Castillo earned the shot when he was fouled by DC United's Junior Moreno just inside the penalty area. Rooney had two chances to score in the second half, but his shot in the 56th minute was deflected by Howard off the left post. Howard then smothered a Rooney shot in the 58th minute. DC United (4-9-5, 17 points) is now 2-1-0 in its new stadium, defeating Vancouver 3-1 on July 14 before losing to the New York Red Bulls 1-0 on Wednesday. The Rapids fell to 4-12-5 (17 points) and have not won since July 1 at Vancouver, going 0-3-2 since then.

### Second-half outburst

In another development, Toronto FC picked up its second win over the Chicago Fire in as many weeks, this time collecting a 3-0 result on Saturday at BMO Field in Toronto. After a first half that was lacking in action, Toronto forward Jozy Altidore broke things open with a goal in the 52nd minute. Altidore made the definitive touch after a scramble in front of the Fire's net to score his third goal in five league games this season. Toronto (6-11-4, 22 points) struck again in the 72nd minute, with Sebastian Giovinco sliding to collect a long cross from Justin Morrow, then making a sliding one-footed touch from just outside the goalkeeper's box to an open Jonathan Osorio on the other side of the net.

Giovinco collected a goal of his own in the 89th minute, finally hitting the scoresheet after putting shots off the goalpost and crossbar earlier in the game. The three-goal outburst was a good sign for a

Toronto FC team that is fighting to stay in the playoff race and is finally recovering after an injury-riddled first four months of the season. Saturday's game marked the first time since its opening match on March 3 that top playmakers Altidore, Giovinco, Michael Bradley, and Victor Vazquez were all in the starting lineup for a league game.

Chicago (6-12-5, 23 points) played a defensively-focused first half, but couldn't muster an offensive response after Toronto's attack took over later in the game. The Fire have now lost five consecutive games, and have just one win in their last eight MLS matches. The two clubs also played last Saturday in Chicago, with Toronto FC collecting a 2-1 victory. Toronto FC has now won consecutive league games for the first time this season. The rivalry between the two Eastern Conference rivals has been one-sided in recent years, as Toronto is now 8-0-1 in its last nine games against the Fire. — Agencies

## Say I'm your No 1: Goalkeeper Buffon faces fight at PSG

SINGAPORE: Italy legend Gianluigi Buffon has a fight on his hands for the Paris Saint-Germain goalkeeper's shirt as coach Thomas Tuchel revealed he had not yet decided who was his number one. Buffon has made his first move abroad at the age of 40 but faces stiff competition at the French club, which shares his ambition of a first Champions League title. Tuchel has an embarrassment of goalkeeping riches including Alphonse Areola, a member of France's World Cup-winning squad, German international Kevin Trapp, Sebastien Cibois and Remy Descamps.

"He's (Buffon) not afraid to fight for his place, Kevin and Alphonse are not afraid to fight for their place," Tuchel said in Singapore, ahead of today's friendly with Atletico Madrid. "This is the kind of competition that I would love to have in every other position." The German added: "This is a situation we need to handle relaxed but clearly. When everybody is there and everybody has shown up and everybody is healthy at the top level, then it's time to decide."

Buffon has not had the easiest of starts with PSG, shipping four goals in his first two friendly appearances against Bayern Munich and Arsenal. Buffon, who clocked up 656 appearances in 17 years at Juventus, insisted he never expected simply to be handed a starting spot. "In 24 years of my career, nobody has ever told me that I had the number one shirt by right. It's come through hard training and being selected based



SINGAPORE: Paris Saint-Germain's Gianluigi Buffon (2nd right) and fellow goalkeepers warm up during an official training session for the International Champions Cup in Singapore. — AFP

on merit," he said. "So I'll continue to do that and also work towards developing the other goalkeepers in the squad." The 2006 World Cup-winner also denied that the chance of winning an elusive Champions League title was the main motivation behind his move to PSG on a one-year deal. "This decision was made so I could

continue... to play at the top level," he said. "I've always been excited by the thought of a challenge abroad, a challenge as ambitious and important as this one at Paris. "I think after 40 years in Italy, a change will be good for me from a personal point of view as well as a professional one." — AFP

## Sub Silva scores twice; Man City beat Bayern 3-2

MIAMI: Pepe Guardiola finished Manchester City's US tour with a deserved 3-2 victory over former club Bayern Munich, but his evening was soured with an injury to new signing Riyad Mahrez. Two goals from substitute Bernardo Silva helped Manchester City come from 2-0 down to end a run of two defeats in this International Champions Cup campaign with youngster Lukas Nmecha scoring in between. Mahrez, however, went down twice with what looked like an ankle problem. He was eventually forced off after just 27 minutes and looked in discomfort. With the traditional English season opener - the Community Shield - taking place next Sunday at Wembley against Chelsea, coach Guardiola will assess the Algerian's fitness as the start of the Premier League campaign looms into view.

Meanwhile Guardiola's squad flew back to Manchester at the end of the Saturday match. City's opening games against Borussia Dortmund and Liverpool had both ended in narrow defeats, but with Guardiola opting for familiarity — eight players in the starting lineup here had begun all three games of this US tour — it was another young side full of running. "We analyzed our mistakes in the previous

games and did it better against Bayern Munich," said Guardiola. "We were able to play good and overcome the situation when we were 2-0 down."

Bayern's main men Arjen Robben and Franck Ribery looked dangerous on the ball, yet with Mahrez afforded plenty of space in midfield the English champions dominated the early stages and really should have opened the scoring. Mahrez, who had already spent a few minutes getting treatment after being challenged, sent German-born City striker Nmecha through only for his shot to be saved by Sven Ulreich. It wasn't long before Nmecha had the opportunity to make amends as another classy through ball from Mahrez set him free, but this time he was denied by the post. That was to prove a costly couple of misses because on 14 minutes, Bayern were ahead.

The lively Rafinha found space on the right and his cross was headed in by Meritan Shabani. It was a good team goal and on 23 minutes, Ribery and Robben combined for number two. The French midfielder's lofted through ball found the Dutchman in the area and his two touches - one to control and one to expertly lift the ball past Claudio Bravo - were top class. And all of a sudden, a difficult evening for Guardiola darkened on 27 minutes when Mahrez was forced to leave the field with an injured ankle. "We will see, maybe it is not a problem," said Guardiola. The Algerian limped off to be replaced by Portuguese midfielder Silva, who scored the goal his team's display had deserved on the stroke of half-time. The former Monaco star ran unchallenged 25 yards out and produced an excellent low, curling finish leaving Ulreich with no chance. — AFP



MIAMI: Benjamin Garre #73 of Manchester City battles for a header against the Bayern Munich in the second half during the International Champions Cup on July 28, 2018 in Miami. — AFP

## Injuries hit Crusaders

CHRISTCHURCH: The Canterbury Crusaders will be without bruising flanker Jordan Taufua for next weekend's Super rugby final against the Golden Lions after he suffered a broken arm against the Wellington Hurricanes. Coach Scott Robertson also faced a question mark over backline leader Ryan Crotty and was grappling with a dwindling stock of hookers as he began Sunday to prepare for the showdown in Christchurch. Injuries aside, Robertson viewed Saturday's semi-final victory over the Hurricanes as a sign his defending champions were tracking well to claim a ninth title, with discipline, defence and the skills of fly-half Richie Mo'unga working as planned.

"We wanted to be really clean and I think we gave four penalties away for the whole game and that's way below average," he said. "We defended amazingly and its given us a

chance of one more week, and Richie's controlling everything. He's got time, he's brave and made some big tackles." After the Crusaders cruised to a 30-12 semi-final victory, Hurricanes coach Chris Boyd pointed to the strength of their powerful forward pack. "They just keep putting that pressure on the supply of ball and we had trouble at times at the scrum, we had trouble at times at the lineout, we had trouble at times in the breakdown," he said.

"We couldn't get any go forward to get ourselves rolling." Even with the loss of Taufua, Robertson has Wallaby international Pete Samu to call on for the starting pack to join seven All Blacks. Taufua is an All Black in name only. After being selected to play France in the June Tests, he was sidelined by a calf injury in training.

Crotty left the field after a blow to the head and will be monitored in the coming days, while replacement hooker Seb Siataga suffered a broken arm to become the third Crusaders rake to be sidelined by injury this year.

Apart from the venue, next Saturday's final will be a repeat of last year's show-

down when the Crusaders beat the Lions 25-17 in Johannesburg to claim their eighth Super crown. The South Africans, who downed the NSW Waratahs 44-26 in their semi-final, go into their third consecutive final without having won the southern hemisphere championship.

Their forwards looked impressive against the Australians with two tries to hooker Malcolm Marx from driving mauls, and when they played wide, wing Aphiwe Dyantyi produced a long-range touchdown.

"Their strengths are the reason they have got to the final," Robertson noted. "Their ability to maul, and they have got incredible guys who can turn a ball over in Kwagga (Smith) and Malcolm Marx. They are just an abrasive, big pack. "They have been hurt a couple of times in finals," Robertson added. "We know what happened last year with the red card, the controversy and we held on in the end there." In last year's final, the Crusaders led 25-3 at half-time only for the Lions to come back with 14 unanswered points in the second half despite being a man down, with Smith red carded just before the break. — AFP



CHRISTCHURCH: Crusaders' Jack Goodhue (center) is tackled by Hurricanes' Ricky Riccitelli (2nd right) and Toby Smith (left) during the Super Rugby semi-final match between New Zealand's Canterbury Crusaders and Wellington Hurricanes at the AMI Stadium on July 28, 2018. — AFP

## Preseason tours; worth the effort?

By Ahmad Al Othman

As the new footballing season beckons, clubs from all over the world have scattered around the globe in preparation for what's ahead. Most notably, 18 of Europe's giants have participated in this year's International Champions Cup, which is held every summer in the United States and Asia. It includes the world's finest such as Real Madrid and Barcelona from Spain, Manchester United, Liverpool and Chelsea from England, Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund from Germany, Juventus, Inter and AC Milan from Italy.

Others such as Arsenal, Paris Saint-Germain and Atletico Madrid have gone to South Asia to Singapore, where fans are having a glimpse of their favorite athletes. Managers try to make the most of the preseason matches by rotating their squad and involving youngsters from the academy to make up the numbers. It's down to them to grasp their chance and flourish and show their faithful fans what's in the bag. It can also give the coaching staff an indication of what is about to come in the upcoming season and what to expect from the current members.

Managers tend to try out different match formations and various approaches, as trying such experiments could be costly throughout the season. Furthermore, some managers use preseason matches to identify the main areas for improvement, and whether to pursue the targets they had in mind. Such managers may have second thoughts when approaching a transfer target should a current player excel, as this may potentially save tens of millions and it would be better off spending the money elsewhere.

Commercially, it certainly makes sense and probably plays a major reason to take on such tiring summer tours. Liverpool's thrashing of Manchester United was witnessed by more than 100,000 spectators, a clear evidence of the appeal and crowd turnout. It does increase the global fanbase and boost shirt sales due to the high demand worldwide. No wonder clubs love a preseason tour, not to mention the warm temperatures these destinations have. You can clearly tell how elated players get when they spend weeks together, which in return can enhance the training atmosphere and boost team morale.

With clubs traveling across continents, the hectic schedule can have its effect on the players and the injury toll sometimes can sting badly if a star player is caught with a long term one. Such major downside has already affected Manchester United and Manchester City as Antontio Valencia and Riyad Mahrez have been stretched off and ruled out of the opening Barclays Premier League matches with calf and ankle problems respectively.

**25** Garcia overpowers Easter to unify lightweight titles

**26** Rabada, Shamsi set up South Africa's big win

**27** Sub Silva scores twice as City beat Bayern 3-2



## Barca topple Tottenham on penalties

The Catalans triumph 5-3 on penalties



CALIFORNIA: Tottenham Hotspur's Georges-Kevin N'Koudou scores a second half equalizer during the International Champions Cup football match between Barcelona and Tottenham Hotspur on July 28, 2018. —AFP

**PASADENA:** Ernesto Valverde expects a bright future for summer signing Artur after the Brazilian midfielder netted a stunning goal on his Barcelona debut. The La Liga champions have lost the services of experienced midfielder duo Andres Iniesta and Paulinho since the end of last season, but splashed out 40 million euros to bring in Artur from Brazilian outfit Gremio. The 21-year-old made an instant impression in Barcelona's opening encounter in the International Champions Cup pre-season tournament on Saturday after firing home in a 2-2 draw against Tottenham Hotspur, before the Catalans triumphed 5-3 on penalties.

Barcelona boss Valverde has confirmed that he still wants to add to his options in the middle of the park, but was encouraged by the early signs from Artur during an impressive first half display in Pasadena, California. Valverde said: "He is a player that can give us a lot. He can give us possession, goals and he was really motivated

today. He had a great game during the minutes that he played." Like Valverde, Tottenham boss Mauricio Pochettino is eager for a transfer breakthrough, particularly as the Premier League outfit are yet to make a signing since last season's third placed finish.

Spurs are already without their nine World Cup semi-final representatives for their trip to America and Pochettino's options have been further depleted after injuries to Victor Wanyama, Erik Lamela and Moussa Sissoko. Wanyama's knee problem is potentially serious after he has flown back to London to see a specialist. But regardless of the casualties, Pochettino says it is crucial that Spurs add to their squad before the August 9 Premier League transfer deadline. "We are going to see what happens in the next few days," said Pochettino. "But with or without injuries, I think that's our target [to strengthen the team] to bring in some players and add some with quality

who can help us to achieve our goals."

### Point-blank range

Both sides were without many of their big names, with the likes of Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez, Harry Kane and Hugo Lloris all still recovering from their exertions at the World Cup. But Barcelona's weakened team dominated the opening half and went ahead through a devastatingly simple 15th minute opener. Andre Gomes delivered an inswinging cross from the left, Rafinha escaped at the far post and headed the ball back into the six-yard box, where Munir cushioned it into the net from point-blank range.

A second arrived courtesy of Arthur. Rafinha laid the ball back to the midfielder on the edge of the area and he effortlessly swept it into the far top corner beyond the helpless Gazzaniga. Another new Brazilian signing, Malcom, was introduced by Valverde at half-time and he came close

to marking his Barcelona debut with a goal after taking on right-back Serge Aurier and firing a low shot towards the near post which was smartly diverted behind by goalkeeper Michel Vorm. But after Valverde introduced a raft of teenagers into the fray, Spurs began to pull themselves back into the game and pulled level with two goals in as many minutes. First, the Barcelona defense failed to deal with Ben Davies' left wing cross and after Christian Eriksen saw his shot blocked, Son Heung-min latched onto the rebound to divert a shot into the unguarded net. The lever then arrived when Barcelona struggled with another low cross, this time from the right. Eriksen's shot was cleared off the line, but academy product Georges-Kevin N'koudou pounced with a volley from inside the six-yard box. In the penalty shoot-out that followed, Anthony Georgios missed for Spurs, with Barcelona converting all five of their spot-kicks. —AFP

## Mourinho frustrated with under-strength United's squad

**LOS ANGELES:** Jose Mourinho has hit out at Manchester United's transfer window inactivity after watching his under-strength squad crash to a 4-1 defeat against Liverpool in the latest stop of their pre-season US tour. Mourinho said he expected to bring in only one new player before the new Premier League season kicks off despite submitting a list of five transfer targets to club bosses earlier this year.

United's failure to bolster their resources and the absence of several key first team players following the World Cup has forced Mourinho to field several untested youngsters during the US tour. On Saturday, United were torn apart by Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool at Ann Arbor, Michigan, in the Red Devils' penultimate game before facing Real Madrid in Miami on Tuesday. They face a further friendly against Bayern Munich in Munich on August 5.

Mourinho, who has become increasingly downbeat during the tour, cut a frustrated figure as he spoke about the club's relative inactivity in the transfer market. "I would like to have two more players," Mourinho said. "I think I am not going to have two. I think it's possible I'm going to have one. I gave a list to my club of five names a few months ago and I wait to see if it's possible to have one of these players. If it's pos-



MICHIGAN: Liverpool FC Sheridan Shaqiri (right) shoots and scores during the second half of the 2018 International Champions Cup football match against Manchester United at Michigan Stadium on July 28, 2018. Liverpool FC beat Manchester United 4-1 in their friendly. —AFP

sible, it's possible. "If it's not possible, it's not possible. If it's possible, it's good. If not then we keep fighting and working and believing in the players that we have."

Responding to a question about Chilean international Alexis Sanchez's performance against Liverpool, Mourinho suggested the pre-season tour had been of little value, adding that the team were just trying to "survive". "You want him to be very happy with the players he has around him?" Mourinho said of Sanchez. "We are not playing here to improve the team or improve our dynamic. We are playing here just to survive and to have some not very happy results. "Alexis is the only attacking player we

have. We don't have wingers, we don't have strikers, he is the only who is here. "And the poor man is there trying his best with the frustration of someone who wants more."

Mourinho meanwhile praised the contribution of senior players such as Sanchez, Juan Mata, Ander Herrera and Eric Bailly. Bailly volunteered to face Liverpool after Chris Smalling was injured during the warm up. "Today, we have four or five players who are dead because they care with the club and try to give everything, even risking themselves, because they don't want to let all the kids play by themselves against Milan, against Liverpool," Mourinho said. —AFP

## Qatar World Cup bid 'used a secret black operations'

**LONDON:** Qatar's successful, controversy-plagued bid to host the 2022 World Cup has been hit by further allegations that they used a secret "black operations" propaganda campaign to undermine rival bids in violation of FIFA rules, according to The Sunday Times. The newspaper — which also made allegations in 2014 about Qatar buying the vote but of which they were subsequently cleared after a two-year long FIFA investigation led by American lawyer Michael Garcia — says emails leaked to them by a whistleblower from the bid team show they paid a US-based office of a public relations firm as well as former CIA agents to disseminate "fake propaganda" concerning main rivals Australia and the United States during their campaign to host the 2022 competition.

Qatar, to general surprise, beat the Australian and US bids as well as South Korea and Japan to the right to host the quadrennial football showpiece. Russia

were awarded the 2018 edition at the same time, seeing off, amongst others, England.

The gas-rich Gulf state's strategy was to recruit influential individuals in order to attack bids in their respective countries, creating the impression there was "zero support" to host the World Cup among the population, the paper said. One of the core criteria considered by FIFA is said to be that the bids should have a strong backing from domestic populations. Bidders are also prohibited from making "any written or oral statement of any kind, whether adverse or otherwise, about the bids or candidatures of any other member association" under FIFA guidelines.

### 'Rejects allegation'

But one of the leaked emails the Times claims to have obtained was sent to Qatar's deputy bid leader Ali al-Thawadi, and allegedly shows the state was aware of plots to spread "poison" against other bidders in the running before Qatar won the right to host the World Cup in December 2010. Such actions went as far as planning a resolution for US congress on the "harmful" effects of the American World Cup proposition during the week of the vote, as well as approaching and paying a US professor \$9,000 (7,723 euros, £6,865) to compose a report on the economic burden the competition would present. —AFP