

Friday Times

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Local

Card safety



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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There have been complaints in Kuwait and many other countries about the hacking and theft of personal banking information of individuals, whether via SMS or email, or due to scanning credit cards in shops. The usual claim is that this procedure is for marketing purposes only, but it seems that hackers can access people's details through the scanned card's information.

Many of us have received links via email from unidentified individuals asking for money or offering business partnership or friendship, so people must be warned about the risk of responding to such contacts. You may have experienced that after shopping and paying by credit card and receiving your receipt, the cashier scans the card in a device in front of him. Most probably, you don't object or think too much, believing the procedure may be part of the sale process. In fact, this action is incorrect and dangerous.

The Central Bank of Kuwait recently instructed local banks to take the necessary precautions to protect customer information against the risk of card scanning on the automated systems of shops, as this procedure poses a high risk to cardholders in the event of theft and hacking of the automated systems. The Central Bank requested the banks to take the necessary measures in this regard by Aug 16 of this year. It explained that regulatory authorities in many countries have effectively blocked such an act.

As per this decision, all shops are required to stop scanning customers' cards at checkouts by the end of this year, and it will take all necessary measures against merchants' failure to comply with the procedures. Another key point here is informing customers of their right not to allow merchants to scan their bank cards on their automated systems after finalizing a purchase.

It is known that there are operations of hacking and thefts targeting bank accounts continuously in all countries of the world, and these precautionary actions are important in the context of protection and the closure of any gaps or leaks that may help or allow such errors. I believe we should not be lenient in dealing with this matter because customers' personal information must be safe and all measures by the banks have to be in line with international standards of information security for payment by cards, which the banks are committed to. The client puts his money in the bank which he trusts, and any leakage of personal banking information can and will cause damage to the relationship between the two and affect confidence.

If I now go to a store and find the cashier scanning the bankcard after the completion of the sale - I wonder to whom I should turn to complain? Should I call the Central Bank, the commerce ministry, the consumer protection department, the police or the bank? Awareness of the subject is not enough - it is necessary to educate people how to deal with the situation if they find a shop is still insisting on scanning the bankcard after the sale, and who is responsible for following up the subject and taking legal action against those who ignore and violate the law.

I believe local banks must work hard to educate the people about the issue and how to deal with it, whether through the media, the press or social media.

PHOTO OF THE DAY



A silhouette of Kuwait City seen at sunset. — Photo by Hatem Alsheikh / KUNA

Free time and summer vacations

Scribber's Notebook

By Jamie Etheridge

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Every summer the countdown begins. Students begin marking off the days until summer holidays. Teachers are definitely keeping a tally and parents know it's just a matter of time. The focus on a countdown seems in marked contrast to what could arguably be the absolute best thing about summer - the lack of a schedule. Whether you are traveling abroad for the three months of school break or working your way through the heat of the summer here in Kuwait, there's no denying the relief that comes when that last school bell rings.

Summer provides all of us a chance to recharge. Even if we work during the summer, we can still enjoy the slight reduction in traffic on the roads and the overall slowed down pace of life. If we're lucky enough to be able to travel, then the greatest gift comes in the form of 'free time'. Time that doesn't require an alarm clock or a To Do list or a schedule of pickups, drop offs and punch ins.

Free time is one of the most precious and treasured parts of childhood. For many modern societies, it has been lost among the push to 'succeed' and the ever growing pressure on parents to involve their children from an early age in extracurricular activities.

Extracurricular activities are good and in fact have been proven in some cases to prevent children from engaging in dangerous or self-destructive behavior, especially once they reach high school. Summer camps are also a fabulous opportunity for kids to spend time with peers, enjoy a range of activities including sports and games that they typically wouldn't do during the school year.

But these should not be the sole focus of summer.

Both adults and children need 'free time'. Even NASA

includes free time and playtime in the schedule for its astronauts who live on the International Space Station, explaining that free time and fun are essential ingredients for quality of life.

For most of us, and especially those with kids, our greatest periods of free time happen when we are children and again during the summer when our kids are school age. The three months or so of summer create a window for creativity, an opportunity for relaxed play, for exploration and for fun.

For kids, summer represents freedom from the demands of the school year. It may mean less interaction with peers of the same age group in a classroom setting and more engagement with children of all different ages. Summer free time also allows children the opportunity to be bored and thus to learn to entertain themselves, to stoke their own creativity. Summer free time allows them the chance to choose the books they want to read, the games they want to play and the activities they want to engage in. In short, it's a chance for them to develop independence.

Most of us remember our summer holidays from childhood as the best time of our lives. We remember the trips we took and the games we played and even those slow, lazy summer afternoons when we didn't do much more than read a book or play.

The heat of Kuwait can be incredibly oppressive and those of us who stay here in the summer often feel that our kids are trapped indoors and unable to enjoy the full summer. But trust me, the kids only care that they are 'free' and as long as we respect that freedom to just be, even an indoor summer can be wonderful.

FREE

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Local



More *pedestrian bridges* for safer walking in Kuwait

By Ben Garcia

Kuwait is witnessing a surge in the construction of pedestrian bridges, a welcome respite for residents of high foot traffic areas like Salmiya, Hawally, Farwaniya and Khaitan. Many of these new footbridges are operational, while some are still under construction. The few past years have seen an uptick in the number of reported cases of deaths and fatal accidents due to jaywalkers crossing busy highways and roadways. Some people in Kuwait have tagged the Fourth Ring Road and Airport Road as the most

dangerous roads for motorists and pedestrians.

Assistant Undersecretary for the Road Engineering Sector at the Ministry of Public Works Ahmed Al-Hussan announced in mid-2017 that 19 footbridges will open throughout Kuwait. The delivery will be done gradually according to the progress in construction. The footbridges are being constructed to achieve public safety, eliminate traffic accidents and provide alternative roads for pedestrians and road users in various areas.

"We are grateful for these bridges. Although some footbridges are still under construction, just seeing them is quite a relief. I've witnessed several pedestrian accidents and deaths from the 1990s until now," said Bong, a Filipino expat working at the information ministry. "I've been in Kuwait for 20 long years and it makes me feel very sad whenever I learn about yet another hit-and-run victim. At least before I go home for good to Manila, some of my countrymen living in Maidan Hawally will be safer," he added.



Local



The stretch of Airport Road off Farwaniya and the stretch of area in Salmiya along the Fourth Ring Road near the fire station are identified as accident-prone by many. The construction of footbridges was coordinated with the General Department of Traffic to pinpoint such areas and places. The new footbridges include five in Khaitan, two in Seaside Shaab, two footbridges in Bayan, two in Ardiya, one in Salmiya (on the Fourth Ring Road), one footbridge in Ishbiliya near Al Nasr Sporting Club, one in Waha in Jahra and one in Salwa near Anjafa beach, in addition to a footbridge in front of Farwaniya Hospital on road 602 in Andalus.

Already build pedestrian crossovers can be found around Kuwait near Alshaheed park, in Mishref, Adaililya, Salmiya, Jabriya and other areas. Improving pedestrian pathways and crossovers also encourage more pedestrian traffic, further reducing both traffic accidents and the numbers of cars and buses on the roads of Kuwait. Building enclosed or covered footbridges also encourage their use, reducing the numbers of jaywalkers crossing main thoroughfares, especially during the hot summer months.

Kuwait has developed a plan to further increase the number of pedestrian bridges, anticipating five to be constructed in 2019 at a total cost of KD 7.25 million, in line with international safety and security regulations. According to statistics, nearly all traffic accidents and violations recorded in the first half of 2017 were related to running red lights, excessive speeding, use of mobile phones and reckless driving.



KUWAIT: Kuwait has begun a process of encouraging pedestrian traffic by adding several footbridges including covered or enclosed ones across main highways around Kuwait.

— Photos by Ben Garcia, Yasser Al-Zayyat and Joseph Shagra



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Local

Kuwait plans to establish shelter for male workers

Females' shelter to be relocated to bigger, safer place: Minister



KUWAIT: Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh (center right), Ethiopian Ambassador to Kuwait Abdulaziz Adam (center left) and other officials cut the cake during a ceremony held to celebrate Ethiopia's national day. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



Diplomats and other dignitaries attend the event.

KUWAIT: Kuwait is working on establishing a shelter for male workers similar to a building already set up to house abused female domestic helpers, a government official said. In the meantime, there are plans in place to relocate the women's shelter to a bigger and safer location, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh added.

The minister made her statements to reporters during a reception organized by the Ethiopian embassy Wednesday night to celebrate Ethiopia's national day. Sabeeh was asked about a labor agreement between Kuwait and Ethiopia, to which she explained that the ministry is waiting for the Foreign Ministry to finalize said agreement and the legal procedures related to it before it is referred to the Cabinet for approval.

In April, the Interior Ministry had announced lifting a ban on hiring Ethiopian domestic workers after a series of meetings with representatives from the Ethiopian government. However, Ethiopia said that it would not lift a ban on allowing its citizens to work in Kuwait unless Kuwait's Foreign Ministry responds to a letter it had sent with regards to this matter, according to statements Ethiopian Ambassador to Kuwait Abdulaziz Adam made to the press at the time.

The letter included a draft of the new agreement on the return of Ethiopian workers to Kuwait, the ambassador said. The new deal stipulates granting Ethiopian workers a paid annual holiday, specifying clear working hours, allowing workers to keep their passports with their possession, and giving them salaries equal to those received by helpers from other countries.

Minister Sabeeh reiterated on Wednesday that after the transition of the Domestic Help Department from the interior



Ethiopian Ambassador to Kuwait Abdulaziz Adam delivers a speech.

to the social affairs ministries is completed, meetings will be held with the Ethiopian ambassador to make arrangements "that serve the interests of employees and employers alike."

Meanwhile, Ambassador Adam expressed appreciation to Kuwait's support for Ethiopian projects, which exceeded \$150 million in financial aid through the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development. The envoy applauded the 'historical relations' between the two countries which date back to 1967, hoping for further enhancement of relations for the best interests of the two countries.



Local

Foreign Ministry urges diplomats to rapidly seek e-passports

Citizens holding valid, old passports can return home: MoI

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry yesterday urged holders of diplomatic passports to hurry and obtain e-passports to avoid travel difficulties after the Interior Ministry announced old ones would be invalid as of July 1. The ministry noted in a statement that holders of valid diplomatic and special passports will be allowed to enter Kuwait, as a direct destination. Kuwaitis holding regular invalid passports will have to seek help at the country's embassies to have travel documents to return home.

Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocols Ambassador Dhari Al-Ajran said the foreign ministry notified the concerned world authorities, through the Kuwaiti diplomatic missions abroad, that the old Kuwaiti passports would be rendered invalid as of July 1.

The Ministry of Interior (MoI) said meanwhile that citizens holding old version and valid passports could come back to the homeland. There is a ministerial decision to stop using the old passports as of July 1, the Ministry's Public Relations and Security

Media Department added in a press statement. Based upon Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah's decision suspending the old passports as of first of July, in collaboration with the Foreign Ministry, those who hold invalid and old travel documents have to head to the Kuwaiti Embassies abroad to issue documents so as to return home, the statement noted. The move shows the ministry's keenness on offering facilitations to the Kuwaiti nationals living abroad, it pointed out. However pointing out that no one can travel using the old passport as of the above-mentioned date of July 1, the statement added.

In the meantime, the Interior Ministry announced yesterday that citizenship and e-passport issuance centers at Shamiya, West Mishref, Saad Al-Abdullah, Fahad Al-Ahmad, Adan and Ashbeliah will open during evenings from 8:00 pm to 11:00 pm starting from June 24. The aim of this measure is help citizens obtain their new passports easily and more swiftly, the ministry explained in a statement.



Hot, dusty weather during weekend

KUWAIT: Kuwait's weather forecast over the weekend will be hot with dust prevailing, said an official from Kuwait Meteorological Center yesterday. Today evening's weather is expected to be warm with the expected temperature between 30 and 33 degrees Celsius and winds at

speeds of 15 to 42 km/h. Sea state between 3 and 6 feet, official at the center Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi said. As for tomorrow, Qarawi said it would be hot with the highest temperature between 42 and 44 degrees Celsius.

Winds at speeds will be at 15 to 38 km/h. Sea status will witness waves between 2 and 6 feet. Expected temperature tomorrow night is between 29 and 32 degrees Celsius with winds at speeds of 15 to 35 km/h. Sea state between 2 and 5 feet. — KUNA

'Back to the slammer', the history of prisons in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Ending up in prison is probably one of the worst things that could ever happen to any human being, but in our modern times, such correctional facilities are necessary to amend the behaviors of mis-

guided individuals and also are important to hold up those considered as menace to society. Prior to the early 1950s, Kuwait had no prisons in the modern sense of the term to house criminals and felons; however, according to the book 'From here began Kuwait' by author Abdullah Al-Hatem, a large shop, owned by Abdulaziz Al-Qabandi in one of the old markets of Kuwait, was used as a proto-prison. As signs of overall development began to creep in the era of Amir Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah forward, original methods of detention were becoming obsolete, requiring the establishment of a modern prison system.

In October 2, 1954, then Deputy Police Chief, future Crown Prince and Father Amir, Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah sent a

letter to the concerned authorities, which called for the overhaul of the outdated prison system and replacing it with a more effective and modern one.

The policy to develop new prisons and correction facilities was set in motion and Kuwaiti authorities sought assistance from Egypt on this matter. By October 29, 1954, Egyptian experts recommended that a prison - consisting of several buildings housing male, female, and juvenile offenders separately - would be constructed far away from known residential areas. The process of construction began in the 1955, which ultimately led to the establishment of modern detention facilities in Kuwait. — KUNA

EP reiterates support to Kuwait efforts to resolve Gulf crisis

BRUSSELS: The European Parliament (EP) yesterday reaffirmed their support to the efforts by His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to find a resolution to the Gulf crisis. This position was expressed during a meeting of visiting Qatari Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani with the EP Foreign Affairs Committee in Brussels.

"The European Union has good relations with all countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) including Qatar," Chair of the EP's Foreign Affairs Committee David McAllister said in his remarks. He noted that both the EU and the EP have adopted a neutral position on the ongoing crisis in the Gulf.

"We support Kuwaiti mediation efforts in the Gulf crisis as GCC cohesion is critical to fostering cooperation and stability," he said. "We believe de-escalation is vital for regional stability. The crisis should be an opportunity for the GCC to emerge stronger," he stressed. Meanwhile, the Qatari foreign minister said: "Kuwait is the main mediator and leading these efforts and all our international partners are supporting the mission of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait."

"Qatar has engaged very positively with His Highness the Amir of Kuwait," he said and noted the recent letter by His Highness the Amir of Kuwait inviting the GCC leaders to come and discuss all these developments. "We see that the

resolution will come through a positive dialogue," he said. Thani in his intervention spoke about the economic, political and social developments in his country and also referred to regional issues and the fight against terrorism. He called on the EU to support a regional security dialogue. — KUNA



BRUSSELS: Qatari FM Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani speaks at the European Parliament. — KUNA

Local

Ministry pushes tender to build second phase of new airport

Teachers to be hired from Egypt, Jordan, Palestine and Tunisia

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Public Works (MPW) recently contacted the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) requesting permission to announce offering a tender to build the second phase of the new airport project. The tender includes facility buildings, construction of the road leading to the new terminal and creating parking spaces.

Bidders have 60 days starting from the date in which the tender's announcement is published in the national gazette 'Kuwait Al-Youm' to study the tender, the sources said, adding that a preliminary meeting would be held 21 days after publication. The sources added that 8.4 percent of the new airport project had been completed so far.

In other news, auditory bodies postponed awarding a tender offered by the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) to register and vaccinate animals in Kuwait to one of the applying companies, well-informed sources said. CAPT decided to postpone its final decision until complaints made by two of the applying bidders were studied and investigated, the sources added. The project aims at vaccinating animals and protecting them against contagious diseases, namely those that



Animals vaccination tender postponed

can infect humans, the sources explained.

'Bachelors' residence

Ahmadi municipality's engineering follow up department announced disconnecting electric current in 112 houses inhabited by 'bachelors' in private residential areas in the governorate. This step was made as part of efforts to address violations in residential areas where owners of government homes rent rooms in their houses to single expatriate men in violation of the law.

Hiring teachers

The Ministry of Education (MOE) contacted the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to receive permission to dispatch committees to interview and hire teachers from Egypt, Jordan, Palestine and Tunisia by the end of the month, assistant undersecretary for public education Fatima Al-Kandary announced. Meanwhile, Kandary added that the supplemental exams were going according to schedule according to the same procedures followed during the finals' exams. She added that fewer students were sitting for the exams, making them more comfortable. Further, Kandary said that considerable numbers of evening students did not show up to the exams, adding that those would be considered doublers.



KUWAIT: An artist's rendition for the new terminal of Kuwait International Airport. (Source: Directorate General of Civil Aviation)

She also said that some students were caught cheating red-handed.

Voluntary teams

Following the end of a grace period given by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor's (MSAL) community development department to all voluntary teams taking part in the 'Bader' project to update their information, MSAL is

currently preparing lists of the teams that failed to do so to be submitted to Minister Hind Al-Sabeeh for consultancy. "They will most likely be written off," informed sources expected. The sources explained that the total number of registered voluntary teams was 182, while only 78 of them were active and effective, which means that 104 of them had been graced a fortnight to rectify their status.

Bahraini PM asserts on solid relations with Kuwait

MANAMA: Bahrain Prime Minister Prince Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa affirmed Wednesday on the solid relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the State of Kuwait and its development at all levels. In his meeting with Sheikh Fahad Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Prince Khalifa praised developments in Kuwait and the role played by Kuwait in the Gulf and Arab region under the leadership of His Highness Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Bahrain news agency BNA said in a statement. The Prime Minister also expressed pride in the advanced level of the Bahraini-Kuwaiti cooperation, which, he said, reflects on the deeply rooted relations between them, the statement added.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Fahad expressed his country's admiration to Bahraini Prime Minister's keenness and interests in strengthening relations between Bahrain and Kuwait and developing prospects



MANAMA: Bahrain Prime Minister Prince Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa meets with Sheikh Fahad Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Bahrain and Dean of Diplomatic Corps Shaikh Azzam Mubarak Al-Sabah. — KUNA

for cooperation and coordination between the two countries in different fields. The talks were attended by Kuwaiti Ambassador to Bahrain and Dean of Diplomatic Corps, Shaikh Azzam Mubarak Al-Sabah. — KUNA

22 co-ops committed violations in Ramadan

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Twenty six co-op societies were inspected during the holy month of Ramadan to make sure they fully respected Min-

istry of Social Affairs and Labor (MSAL) regulations and laws, assistant undersecretary for cooperation affairs, Abdul Aziz Shuaib said. The inspection tours resulted in filing 22 citations, Shuaib said, adding that violators would be referred to investigations to help protect shareholders' funds. Furthermore, he explained that four of the citations were issued for failure to link co-op systems with MSAL systems, while others were issued for submitting unsigned contracts to the ministry, failure to follow standard procedure on offering branches for investment, and misuse of social activity funds.

OFID's ministerial conference kicks off in Vienna

VIENNA: Finance Ministers of the member states of the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID) started their 39th meeting in Vienna yesterday. Kuwait's Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf is taking part in the major event. As the meeting kicked off, OFID offered its annual award, worth \$100,000, to a charity society from Bangladesh looking after Rohingya Muslims who fled aggression and violations in Myanmar. The OFID ministers are expected to review a host of issues, mainly the fund's general policy, and 2018 activities, in addition to electing a new director general to succeed outgoing Suleiman Al-Herbish.

Herbish will apprise the ministerial meeting of OFID's resources and ability to continue providing aid to developing countries. The ministers will also discuss means likely to help increase the fund's resources. Ecuador is the president of the Ministerial Council current session which comprises finance ministers of the fund's member states. OFID is the development finance institution established by the OPEC member states in 1976 as a channel of aid to the developing countries. It works in cooperation with partners and international donor community to stimulate economic growth and alleviate poverty in all disadvantaged regions of the world. The fund provides financing to build essential infrastructure, strengthen social services delivery and promote productivity, competitiveness and trade. OFID's work is people-centered, focusing on projects that meet basic needs - such as food, energy, clean water and sanitation, healthcare and education - with the aim of encouraging self-reliance and inspiring hope for the future. — KUNA

International

FRIDAY, JUNE 22, 2018



Killing dogs for meat is illegal, court rules

'End of driving ban' to boost Saudi women economic role

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BILAD AL-QADEEM: A Bahraini protester carrying a placard showing Sheikh Ali Salman, head of the Shiite opposition movement Al-Wefaq, takes cover from tear gas during clashes with police following a demonstration on the outskirts of the capital Manama. A court yesterday acquitted Sheikh Ali Salman of all charges in his trial for alleged spying for regional rival Qatar. — AFP

Bahrain opposition head acquitted in spy case

Head of Shiite opposition accused of spying for Qatar

DUBAI: A Bahraini court acquitted the jailed head of the Shiite opposition of all charges yesterday in his trial for alleged spying for regional rival Qatar, prompting the kingdom's attorney general to announce he would appeal. Sheikh Ali Salman, head of Bahrain's largest—and now banned—Shiite opposition group Al-Wefaq was found not guilty along with two of his aides, who were tried in absentia, a judicial source said on condition of anonymity.

Groups including the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy, and the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, confirmed his acquittal. "Sheikh Ali Salman was found innocent," Sheikh Maytham Al-Salman of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights said. "We hope this ruling opens the way for dialogue and reconciliation." Bahraini attorney general Ousama Al-Awfi said he would appeal the verdict in a statement released by the public prosecutor's office.

Sheikh Ali Salman has been behind bars since 2014 serving a four-year jail sentence on charges of inciting hatred. He is now expected to be released on December 28, according to Amnesty International. In November, Sheikh Ali pleaded not guilty to charges of communicating with a foreign state to commit acts hostile to the state of Bahrain—specifically Qatar. The charges came after Bahrain and its Gulf allies cut ties with Qatar last June over allegations the emirate supported Islamist extremist groups and was too close to Iran. Qatar has denied the allegations.

Dissent crushed

Tiny but strategic Bahrain has a Shiite majority but is ruled by a Sunni royal family that dominates all top government posts. It has been gripped by civil unrest since 2011, when authorities bloodily crushed protests calling for a constitutional monarchy and an elected prime minister. Both religious and secular opposition groups have since been banned and dozens of high-profile clerics and activists thrown behind bars. Al-Wefaq was the largest bloc in parliament before the 2011 protests. When they were crushed, all its members resigned their seats. The group was dissolved by court order in 2016.

Bahrain's main secular opposition group, the National Democratic Action Society (Waad), has also been outlawed. Waad's leader Nabeel Rajab is currently serving jail time in two separate cases linked to criticism of Bahrain's three-year-old military intervention in Yemen alongside its Gulf allies and of its treatment of prisoners at home. Bahrain's courts have come under heavy criticism from human rights groups, including Amnesty and Human Rights Watch, for failing to meet the standards of fair trials.

The groups identify Salman and other dissidents as prisoners of conscience. King Hamad last year ratified a constitutional amendment that gives military courts the authority to try civilians charged with terrorism, a term that is loosely defined in the Bahraini penal code. Bahrain accuses Shiite-ruled Iran of fanning

the protests in a bid to overthrow the government. Iran says it is merely criticizing the repression of peaceful protests, as Bahrain's Western allies have also done. Bahrain is home to the US Fifth Fleet and also houses a British naval base that opened in April. — AFP



Az Zinj: In this file photo, Bahraini men hold placards bearing the portrait of Sheikh Ali Salman, head of the Shiite opposition movement Al-Wefaq, during a protest at Al wefaq headquarter building. —AFP

International

Immigration fears fuel crisis in Western politics

Western political rifts exacerbated by a raucous online debate

WASHINGTON: One issue now dominates political debate within the major Western democracies, and that one issue could now divide the West upon itself: migration. Donald Trump is trying to ride a tide of anti-immigration feeling to a victory for his Republican supporters in the US mid-term elections in November. Angela Merkel is hoping to rise above the waves with her shaky German coalition intact, without ceding too much ground to the hardline mood.

New coalition governments in Austria and Italy have brought hardline voices from the fringe of the migration debate into the halls of power. Australia is battling criticism of its policy of detaining asylum seekers who arrive by sea offshore in camps on Nauru and Papua New Guinea. Through it all, Western political rifts have been exacerbated by a raucous online debate allegedly amplified by covert Russian propaganda. Behind the electoral posturing and the weaponized disinformation, there are real trends with real human and real political consequences.

Migrant flows are still high by historical standards, and the UN estimates there are potentially 65 million refugees and migrants on the move around the world. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi has said the

problem calls for a comprehensive global solution-but the mood of the times is more nationalistic. As scholar Walter Russell Mead wrote in The Wall Street Journal, migration and not the euro is now the ground on which "the European establishment is more vulnerable." The German public remains broadly pro-European, but is still adapting to Merkel's attempt to absorb more than one million mainly Muslim asylum seekers in 2015.

Crime down, fear up

Despite Trump's repeated claims that those migrants are responsible for a crime wave, total crime figures are down in Germany. But a number of high-profile incidents involving newcomers, including mass sexual assaults, have inflamed public opinion. "Crime in Germany is up 10% plus (officials do not want to report these crimes) since migrants were accepted," Trump tweeted this week. Official German figures show crimes down five percent between 2016 and 2017, dropping to their lowest level in a quarter century. US ambassador Richard Grenell reportedly boasted he wants to "empower" the European right, as the anti-immigrant mood boosted Merkel's opponents. Now,



NEW YORK: Activists leave their shoes on the ground to represent refugees during a rally to support immigrants and to mark World Refugee Day in New York City. — AFP

her Christian Democrats' traditional center-right coalition partner, the Christian Social Union, has threatened to bring down her government unless she closes the border.

For his part, Trump is determined to halt immigration across the Mexican boundary while he builds the wall he repeatedly promised to chanting crowds of supporters. The issue unites his base at home and now serves him as he feuds

with Merkel and offers succor to his friends among Europe's nationalist right. Under the administration's "zero tolerance" policy, Trump's border agents began separating migrant children from their parents and detaining them in tent camps. The president's cheerleaders hailed this as a deterrent to illegal border crossing, until shock images and recordings of wailing infants softened the public mood. —AFP

Kuwait Times

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International

'End of driving ban' to boost Saudi women economic role

A huge step forward for businesswomen

DUBAI: The end of a decades-old female driving ban is expected to bring an economic windfall for millions of Saudi women, making it easier for them to work and do business. Taghreed Ghazala, who owns a chain of beauty salons, sees the move as a huge step forward for businesswomen like her in the ultra-conservative kingdom. "I have many drivers that I pay to transport my employees around," she told AFP ahead of the end of the ban on Sunday. "Now I don't need them anymore. My business will save money, effort and time and I can invest them to grow my business faster."

Saudi women are severely under-represented in the jobs market, with a staggering 31 percent unemployment rate among the female workforce. They make up just under 23 percent of the national workforce of six million, according to official figures—mainly because of their restricted mobility. A recent survey by the Chamber of Commerce of the Red Sea city of Jeddah showed that transportation was considered one of the top barriers holding Saudi women back from joining the labor market. Experts expect that the lifting of the driving ban will not only help raise female participation and employment rates but also create new jobs.

'More than just jobs'

"I believe the decision will do more than just provide more job opportunities for women," said Ihsan

Bu-Hulaiga, head of the Riyadh-based Joatha Business Development Consultants. "It will also boost the female economic participation rate and cut the overall national jobless rate because most of the unemployed are women and many of them are university graduates," Bu-Hulaiga said. Saudi Arabia's "Vision 2030" reform program, the brainchild of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman aimed at weaning the kingdom off its dependence on oil, seeks to boost women's representation in the Saudi workforce to 30 percent by 2030.

'Transformative'

Allowing women to drive is also expected to sharply boost both car and insurance sales but is likely to reduce the number of expatriates and increase traffic jams and demand for energy, analysts said. Dubai-based PWC Middle East Consultancy estimates

Staggering 31% unemployment rate among the female workforce



that by 2020, the number of Saudi female drivers will reach three million, in addition to Saudi Arabia's 9.5 million male drivers. The kingdom has a population of 32 million people, including 12 million expatriates, according to official figures. Car sales are expected to grow by nine percent annually until 2025 as more women get behind the wheel, compared to three percent annual growth in the past four years, PWC said.

The decision will also result in less spending on male drivers hired to chauffeur women—and

toral alliance with communists, as long-time political figures were pushed out by voters seeking change in a country mired in conflict and corruption. The result was contested—mainly by the political old guard—following allegations of fraud in the election, Iraq's first since the defeat of the Islamic State (IS) group. According to intelligence services, tests of electronic voting machines—used for the first time in Iraqi elections—produced varied results, appearing to give credence to the fraud claims.

The vote saw a record number of abstentions as Iraqis snubbed the corruption-tainted elite that has dominated the country since the US-led invasion of 2003 toppled Saddam Hussein. Many of Iraq's longtime political figures—seemingly irremovable since the dictator's fall—were pushed out of their seats by new faces. The supreme court, whose rulings are final, also ratified parliament's decision to dismiss Iraq's nine-member electoral commission and have them replaced by judges. The recount is unlikely to produce a major change in the number of seats won by rival lists, according to experts, but rather modify the rankings of candidates within the same lists. "The major blocs could win or lose three seats," said judicial expert Haidar al-Soufi. —AFP

Top Iraqi court orders manual election recount

BAGHDAD: Iraq's Supreme Court yesterday ordered a manual recount of May 12 legislative elections, a process expected to take weeks although parliament's mandate runs out at the end of this month. The recount due to suspicions of electoral fraud, however, would not significantly affect the overall outcome, according to experts on Iraqi politics.

The court ruled that parliament's decision on June 6 to order a manual recount in response to allegations of irregularities did not violate the constitution, its president Medhat al-Mahmud told a news conference. All of the roughly 11 million ballots, including those of voters living abroad, displaced persons and security forces, must be recounted, he said, referring to the three categories whose results MPs had decided to annul because they were allegedly the most suspect.

Last month's ballot was won by cleric populist Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr's elec-



RIYADH: In this file photo, a Saudi woman practices reversing a car in Riyadh ahead of the lifting of a ban on women driving in Saudi Arabia in the summer. Saudi Arabia, the only country that does not allow women to drive, is set to lift its ban on female motorists on June 24. —AFP

potentially leave foreigners employed in those positions without work. "The decision will reduce the number of expatriate private (family) drivers which will positively impact the Saudi family budgets regarding drivers wages, housing and health insurance," Fadh al-Buainain, a Saudi financial and banking consultant, told AFP. The move will also have an immediate impact on the daily lives of Saudi Arabia's working women.

For more than 15 years, Raghda Bakhorji used to wait every morning for a driver to pick her up,

and take her to the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture in Dharan, where she works as a coordinator for an outreach program. "Being able to drive will be a transformative experience to my routine and lifestyle in general," says the young career woman. "In my case, driving will also probably let me save around 3,000 riyals (\$800), on a monthly basis", she said. Buainain, the consultant, said transportation costs consumed almost a quarter of employed women's earnings. —AFP

In Saudi Arabia, men still drive gender policy

DUBAI: The public relations blitz that has seen Saudi Arabia garner headlines this year culminates Sunday, when women take the wheel for the first time. But a draconian guardianship system remains. The notorious system that places the legal and personal affairs of women in the hands of the men in their lives—the only people qualified to make decisions on their behalf—continues to thrive in a kingdom carefully crafting a new image. One year ago this month, Prince Mohammed bin Salman was appointed heir to the most powerful throne in the Middle East, setting in motion a record number of policy changes in a very, very short time. But the reforms only chip at the surface of a system, and society, that many say has far to go.

'Hypocrisy'

Saudi Arabia's guardianship system, in place for decades, stipulates that women need the permission of their closest male relative—father, husband, brother, son—to enroll in classes, renew their passports and leave either the country or jail. Women may also be asked to provide the approval of their guardians to access healthcare. Since the appointment of Prince Mohammed as

crown prince last year, his father King Salman has signed off on decrees allowing women to watch sports live in stadiums, join the police force, apply online for their own business licenses and, of course, drive.

For many Saudi women, the right to drive a car with comprehensive insurance for those who can afford it—is a dangerous distraction. "How can you call this empowerment? This is hypocrisy. I can drive in my own country, but I cannot leave my own country unless my own son permits it?" one Saudi Arabian woman told AFP by phone on condition of anonymity. "We are rich. We are educated. And yet we are not citizens under the same law. We are at the mercy of the father we are born to or the husband we are married off to."

Rights groups say the recent decrees are at best partial. At worst, they nullify but some of the larger issues still hanging. "Allowing women to drive is a welcome step and it is a step towards freedom of movement for women," said Samah Hadid, Amnesty International's director of Middle East campaigns. "But it doesn't go far enough," Hadid told AFP. "If Saudi Arabia is serious about women's rights, they need to immediately abolish the guardianship system". Another Saudi Arabian woman, who also requested she not be identified, says she is stuck in an unhappy marriage—a marriage she described as emotionally abusive. She says she cannot divorce. Her husband has her passport, and her parents live abroad. "He says it every day: 'With one call, you'll never be able to leave Saudi Arabia and see your parents'." —AFP

International

Libya strongman's forces recapture 2 key oil ports

Violence causes 'catastrophic damage'

BENHAZI: A force led by Libyan military strongman Khalifa Haftar said yesterday it had recaptured two key oil ports, a week after they were seized by a rival militia in a blow to crucial exports. Armed groups led by militia leader Ibrahim Jadhran on June 14 attacked two eastern oil ports controlled by Haftar's self-styled Libyan National Army. Haftar yesterday announced an offensive to recapture the terminals after a week of clashes that had damaged vital infrastructure and slashed crude output, the lifeblood of Libya's economy. "Our armed forces have full control of the Ras Lanuf region," LNA spokesman Ahmed Al-Mesmari said later, adding they had also retaken the Al-Sidra terminal.

The violence in coastal Libya's oil crescent, some 650 kilometers east of Tripoli, has caused "catastrophic damage", according to the National Oil Company. Coming just weeks after rival Libyan leaders met in Paris and agreed to hold nationwide elections in December, the clashes have underscored how little the political push has affected the situation on the ground. Libya has been wracked by conflict since the 2011 ouster and killing of longtime dictator Muammar Gaddafi in a NATO-backed uprising, with rival governments and militias competing for authority

and control of key infrastructure, particularly oil facilities.

Damage to infrastructure

Haftar, addressing his forces in an audio message yesterday, said that "zero hour has passed" to "crush the enemy". Haftar accused Jadhran of "allying with the devil" and called yesterday's operation a "sacred invasion to cleanse the land and restore justice". Jadhran's Petroleum Facilities Guard had for years controlled the terminals and blocked exports, but was forced out by the LNA in 2016. Last week, Jadhran, whose Al-Magharba

tribe hails from the region, said in a video that he had formed an alliance to retake the terminals.

The LNA, which is opposed to an internationally recognized government based in Tripoli, responded with "a major offensive" by ground and air forces to oust "the militias of Jadhran and his allies". Sources close to the LNA have reported that Jadhran joined forces with the Benghazi Defense Brigades, made up of Islamist fighters ousted from the main eastern city by the LNA. The US State Department on Wednesday condemned the assault by Jadhran's forces and the "ongoing violence that has damaged Libya's vital



Libya wracked by conflict since the killing of Gaddafi



ZAWIYAH: File photo shows a general view of the Zawiyah oil installation in Zawiyah. Clashes between rival groups in Libya's key oil export ports have caused output to drop by nearly half, the head of the National Oil Company said. — AFP

oil infrastructure and disrupted oil exports".

Libya's economy relies heavily on oil, with production at 1.6 million barrels per day under Gaddafi. His ouster saw production fall to about 20 percent of that level, before recovering to more than one million bpd by the end of 2017. The head of the National Oil Company told AFP on Wednesday that the violence had also hit natural

gas output and had slashed oil production by nearly half. Mustafa Sanalla said the clashes "will ultimately result in the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars in construction costs, and billions in lost sales opportunities". On Monday, the NOC said fires caused by the clashes had destroyed two crude tanks—reducing storage capacity at the Ras Lanuf terminal by 400,000 barrels.—AFP

Erdogan: Turkey's pugnacious 'chief' with eye on history

ISTANBUL: After 15 years in power that have already seen Turkey transformed, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan wants by winning a new mandate to rank as the key figure of his country's modern history alongside its founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Erdogan, 64, has in his political career overcome a stint in prison, mass protests and even a bloody coup attempt to emerge as Turkey's uncontested leader first as premier and then president from 2014.

He has freed up constraints on religion in the officially secular but overwhelmingly Muslim state, overseen a vast programme of infrastructure building he calls his "crazy projects" and implemented a more assertive foreign policy. For supporters, Erdogan gives a voice to Turkey's conservative Muslim majority, has brought new levels of economic prosperity and commands respect on the international stage.

But detractors argue Erdogan is taking Turkey on a dangerous path to authoritarianism reminiscent of the Ottoman Sultans, coupled with reckless handling of the economy and an imperial foreign policy. "Erdogan has never been more powerful," said Kemal Kirisci of the Brookings Institution. "(But) there are growing signs that the political dexterity that has long allowed Erdogan to determine the course of Turkish politics could be waning." One thing is certain—Erdogan in elections on Sunday faces his biggest ballot challenge against a resurgent opposition and a rival, Muharrem

Ince, who can match the president's charisma.

'The heavyweight campaigner'

If there was a global contest for winning elections, Erdogan would see himself as the undisputed—and undefeated—heavyweight champion of the world. In one and a half decades since his ruling party came to power, Erdogan has taken part in 12 elections—five legislative polls, three referenda, three local elections and a presidential vote—and won them all. Known to his inner circle as "beye-fendi" (sir) and to admirers as "reis" (the chief), Erdogan prides himself on being able to woo doubters with his indefatigable campaigning, often visiting three or four towns in the space of a day.

His only setback—so far—came in June 2015 elections when the AKP won the most votes but lost its overall majority for the first time. But Erdogan then swatted away the prospect of a coalition, saying such governments belonged to the days of "old Turkey". He called new elections in November 2015 where the majority was restored. Erdogan pressed on with an April 2017 referendum on a new constitution that abolishes the office of prime minister and that critics said resembled an autocracy, winning relatively narrowly with 51.41 percent.

From Kasimpasa to presidency

Born in the working-class Istanbul harbor district of Kasimpasa but brought up by the Black Sea, Erdogan gained prominence in the nascent Islamic political movements that were challenging secular domination, becoming a popular mayor of Istanbul in 1994. His term was cut short when he was convicted and then jailed for four months for inciting religious hatred when he recited an Islamist poem. But this only magnified his profile. Founding the AKP after the previous Islamic party led by his mentor Necmettin Erbakan was banned, Erdogan spearheaded its 2002 landslide election victory and became premier less than six months later. Erdogan's signature early achievements included a series of reforms like abolishing the death penalty that gladdened the EU and beginning

Fiery Turkish MP Ince seeks to end Erdogan era

ISTANBUL: Muharrem Ince has in the space of weeks risen from being a fiery parliamentarian to a presidential candidate who has energized the Turkish opposition and poses a serious challenge to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Ince, a former physics teacher who has served as MP for 16 years, was in early May chosen as candidate for the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) to stand in Sunday's presidential elections.

With impassioned campaign speeches across the country and a commanding presence on stage, Ince has emerged as the leading standard bearer of the opposition and a potential threat to Erdogan's dominance. While Erdogan is almost certain to win the most votes of the six presidential candidates on Sunday, Ince could give the Turkish strongman a run for his money if the ballot goes to a second round on July 8.

Ince, 54, twice challenged CHP chief Kemal Kilicdaroglu for the party leadership. He was unsuccessful on both occasions, despite roof-shaking speeches, but Kilicdaroglu has blessed his presidential candidacy. Serving as MP for the northwestern province of Yalova, Ince often delivered loud reprimands in parliament and wrote a book entitled "Buyurun Muharrem Ince" ("Go ahead, Muharrem Ince"), a reference to the parliament speaker calling on Ince to speak.

In a colorful election campaign peppered with humor, Ince has ridden bikes, driven tractors, danced with his fellow citizens and even brought nappies on stage during one rally to rail against VAT on such products. —AFP

International

New Zealand's Prime Minister Ardern gives birth to baby girl

Deputy Winston Peters now acting prime minister

WELLINGTON: New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern gave birth to her first child, a girl yesterday, Ardern said in a posting on Instagram. Ardern, 37, became New Zealand's youngest prime minister when she took office through a coalition deal last year after an inconclusive election, and now becomes the first woman in the country's history to give birth while in office. "Welcome to our village wee one," Ardern wrote on Instagram.

"Feeling very lucky to have a healthy baby girl that arrived at 4.45 pm weighing 3.31 kg (7.3 lb) ... We're all doing really well thanks to the wonderful team at Auckland City Hospital." She posted a picture of herself, smiling and holding the baby in a woollen blanket, with her partner, television presenter Clarke Gayford. Deputy Prime Minister Winston Peters has stepped in as acting prime minister and will run the country for the next six weeks while Ardern takes maternity leave, according to an agreement they published earlier.

Ardern is one of the few elected leaders to hold office while pregnant. Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto gave birth

while she was prime minister in 1990. The public has generally been supportive of the popular Ardern. New Zealand has long had a progressive reputation and was the first country to give women the right to vote in 1893 and Ardern is the country's third female prime minister. Congratulations quickly flooded in from around the world and across the political spectrum.

'Proud day'

New Zealand's first women prime minister, Helen Clark, wrote on Twitter: "What a proud day ... gender quality in action. This is 21st Century NZ." Ardern found out she was pregnant on Oct. 13, just six days before she was propelled into the job when Peters, the leader of the New Zealand First Party, announced he was siding with her Labor Party in post-election negotiations.

Peters is a colorful political veteran who first entered Parliament in 1978 and has held senior positions in both centre-left Labor and centre-right National governments. Ardern had played down the chances of any disruption

arising from her absence, saying she and Peters would be in regular contact. "There actually hasn't really been a need to put down a plan ... We already talk about significant issues, that will just continue, we'll just be in different roles," she said in an interview with Fairfax media just before going on maternity leave.

Ardern has said she plans to return to work at the beginning of August. Then, Gayford will take care of the baby and will travel with Ardern between their Auckland home and the capital, Wellington, as well on international engagements.

Ardern worked until late into her pregnancy, regularly encountering members of the public who touched her stomach and passed on gifts such as 'onesies' and miniature rain boots, known as "gumboots". "It's been great," she told reporters at her last major public event before giving birth. "New Zealanders are incredibly generous people and have been generous in their support of me regardless of the politics just as another human being going into a new stage of life." — Reuters



AUCKLAND: This handout photo taken from the Instagram account of New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern (left) shows Ardern with her partner Clarke Gayford posing with their newborn baby girl. — AFP

Ardern, Bhutto: Two leaders and two very different pregnancies

AUCKLAND: Instagram posts, national excitement and well-wishing from political rivals: Jacinda Ardern's journey to motherhood was very different to that made three decades earlier by Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, the only other world leader to have given birth while in office. Ardern's daughter came into the world yesterday, 28 years after the late Bhutto's daughter Bakhtawar was born.

New Zealand's youngest-ever prime minister announced her pregnancy in January, posting a symbolic photo on social media and sparking warm words from across the political spectrum. "I'll be prime minister and a mum," she said on Facebook, adding that her partner Clarke Gayford, who hosts a television fishing show, would be a "stay-at-home dad". "I think it's fair to say that this will be a wee one that a village will raise, but we couldn't be more excited," she added. The intervening months have seen a frenzy of excitement from New Zealanders, many of whom took to the web yesterday to express their happiness.

Twitter user @zaichishka, who describes herself as a Welsh-Kiwi, wrote: "4.693 million New Zealanders (give or take) just became aunts and uncles." It was all a far cry from 1990, when Bhutto, the first woman to head a democratic government in a Muslim-majority nation, told almost no-one she was pregnant until Bakhtawar was born on January 25. "None of us in the cabinet virtually knew that this prime minister was about to deliver a baby," Javed Jabbar, a member of her cabinet, told the BBC recently. "And then lo-and-behold suddenly we learn that she has not only gone and delivered democracy she's also delivered a baby." —AFP

Political milestones for women as NZ PM gives birth

AUCKLAND: New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has become only the second leader to give birth while in office, in another milestone for women in politics. The 37-year-old took to Instagram to reveal the birth of her daughter Thursday, but has downplayed the significance of her pregnancy. "Plenty of women have multitasked before me, and I want to acknowledge that," she said in January. Here are some of the other historic moments for women in government.

Women get the vote

New Zealand has a track record of being progressive on women's issues—in 1893 it became the first country to give women the right to vote. Australia extended the franchise in 1902. Major powers of the era followed later, with the United States granting women the vote nationally in 1920. Women in Britain had to wait until 1928. Women in Saudi Arabia voted for the first time in 2015 at municipal elections.

Elected to parliament

Jeannette Rankin, a Republican from Montana and leading activist, was the first woman to be elected to the US Congress, in 1916. Despite being ahead of the curve with universal suffrage, New Zealand didn't get its first female MP until 1933, while Australia elected two women lawmakers to its national parliament in 1943. The first woman elected to Britain's House of Commons was Constance Markievicz in 1918, although as a member of the Irish republican party Sinn Fein, she did not take her seat.

First female PM

The first female prime minister was Sirima Bandaranaike, who was elected to lead Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) in 1960. She only came into politics after the assassination of her husband, then-premier Solomon Bandaranaike, but became a dominant figure, serving three terms as

head of government. Since then, several women have occupied the biggest job in their respective countries, including Margaret Thatcher of Britain, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, India's Indira Gandhi, Brazil's Dilma Rousseff and Thailand's Yingluck Shinawatra. But yet again, New Zealand is a trailblazer in this respect—Ardern is the third woman to be the country's prime minister, following in the footsteps of Helen Clark and Jenny Shipley.

Babies in office

Ardern is not the first female head of government to give birth in office that record was claimed by late Pakistani prime minister Benazir Bhutto when she had a baby girl in 1990. On the campaign trail, Ardern, 37, had pushed back against questions about whether she intended to start a family, saying pregnancy should not affect a woman's career opportunities.

Women in the majority

The number of women lawmakers has increased in recent years and currently stands at 23 percent of all MPs worldwide—but female MPs make up over half of elected representatives in the lower houses of just two countries. In Rwanda, 61 percent of MPs are women, while in Bolivia the figure is 53 percent, according to Swiss-based Inter-Parliamentary Union, an organization that collects data from legislatures worldwide.

Children in parliament

Italy's Licia Ronziulli was snapped with her six-week old child in the European parliament in 2010, and has regularly been accompanied by her little person since then—to the joy of photographers. Spanish MP Carolina Bescansa breastfed in her national legislature in early 2016, while the issue of juggling children and a political career hit the headlines in Australia last year when senator Larissa Waters became the first woman in the country's history to breastfeed in the chamber. That followed new rules introduced in 2016 to create a more "family friendly" parliament in the wake of what was described as a "baby boom" among politicians. Under previous rules, children were technically banned. However, in more socially conservative Japan, a female politician was ejected from her chamber in November after bringing her baby into a meeting, sparking heated debate. —AFP

International

Killing dogs for meat 'illegal', a court in South Korea rules

Animal rights activists hail landmark decision

SEOUL: A South Korean court has ruled the killing of dogs for meat is illegal, in a landmark decision that animal rights activists said yesterday could pave the way to outlawing eating canines. The meat has long been a part of South Korean cuisine, with about one million dogs believed to be eaten annually. But consumption has declined as South Koreans increasingly embrace the idea of dogs as man's best friend rather than livestock, with the practice now something of a taboo among younger generations and pressure from activists mounting.

Even so it remains a legal grey area. Despite no specific ban, authorities have invoked hygiene regulations or animal protection laws that ban cruel slaughter methods to crack down on dog farms and restaurants ahead of international events such as the Pyeongchang Olympics. Animal rights group Care last year filed complaints against a dog farm operator in Bucheon, accusing him of "killing animals without proper reasons" and violating building and hygiene regulations, and prosecutors later charged him. He was convicted by the Bucheon City court, which ruled that meat consumption was not a legal reason to kill dogs, and fined three million won (\$2,700). He waived his right to appeal.

Care lawyer Kim Kyung-eun welcomed the ruling-made in April but with details only released this week-telling AFP: "It is very significant in that it is the

first court decision that killing dogs for dog meat is illegal itself." The precedent "paved the way for outlawing dog meat consumption entirely", she added. Care leader Park So-youn said her group was tracking down dog farms and slaughter houses across the country with a view to filing similar complaints against them to judicial authorities. "Over the past decades, public discourse over dog meat consumption has shifted towards banning it," she said. "The dog meat industry will take greater heat because of the court ruling."

Barking mad

A lawmaker from the ruling Democratic Party introduced a bill in parliament this week that would effectively ban killing dogs for meat. The measure would limit the slaughter of animals for food to species classed as livestock, which does not include canines.

About one million dogs believed to be eaten annually



Some 30 activists rallied outside the National Assembly yesterday, urging it to pass the measure. But some South Koreans object to what they describe as cultural double standards. Dog is usually eaten in the country as a summertime delicacy, with the greasy red meat - invariably boiled for tenderness-believed to increase energy.

A survey last year found that 70 percent of South Koreans do not eat dogs, but only about 40 percent believe the practice should be banned. Similar de-

Mescladis in his 30s after leaving consultancy and said he chose a restaurant because food unites people. "Working in a restaurant is all about action, not words, and so it's easy to bring people together," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "Also, everybody loves food." Each year, about 80 students join the culinary course - known as "Cooking Opportunities" - during which time they intern in the restaurant and at other eateries in the Catalan capital.

Not welcome

More than 1.8 million migrants have entered Europe since 2014. Greece and Italy receive the most asylum claims, with Spain only receiving a small share of all claims. However there is public support in Spain for admitting more migrants, especially in the wealthy region of Catalonia. Just this month, the Spanish government agreed to take in hundreds of refugees and migrants aboard the Aquarius rescue ship, which had been rejected by Italy and Malta.

Barcelona's City Council said this week that the Catalan capital would accept 100 of the 629 people on board. For incomers who seek asylum in Spain, applications can drag on for seven years, during which many resort to casual labor or illegal activities like street selling to make ends meet. It is challenging for newcomers to fend for themselves without any work, Habiague said. "I was shocked at the treatment of migrants in Europe when I first arrived here." —Reuters

A Barcelona restaurant that tells refugee tales

BARCELONA: Tucked away in a mediaeval Spanish square, an unconventional restaurant is training refugees and telling their stories, hoping to change the lives of migrants and how people see them. Espai Mescladis is both a restaurant and culinary school - and part publishing house. It trains migrants from as far afield as Venezuela, Senegal and Pakistan to cook and cater so they have a better shot at finding jobs and integrating in Catalan life.

The interns also get help with asylum paperwork, and customers get insight into what it is to be new, penniless and scared in a strange land. The social enterprise was founded in 2005 by Argentine entrepreneur Martin Habiague, whose interest was sparked by volunteering with a humanitarian organization in Belgium. "Immigration has always interested me. I'm a migrant here and my family were immigrants to Argentina from Europe, going back generations," he said in an interview.

With mistrust of migrants on the rise in many Western societies, Habiague said it was important to stress the positives of incomers who "bring richness to a culture". He founded



SEOUL: South Korean animal rights activists wear dog-shaped masks outside a court in Seoul as they rally in support of a court decision declaring killing dogs for meat is illegal. —AFP

bates have emerged in other Asian nations where dogs are eaten. China's most notorious dog meat festival in the southwestern town of Yulin has continued to draw crowds despite international outrage. The Bucheon court decision sparked angry protests from dog farmers, whose premises usually double as slaughter houses as the government does not license abattoirs to kill dogs.

"This is outrageous. We can't accept the ruling that killing of dogs for dog meat consumption amounts to killing animals on a whim," Cho Hwan-

ro, a representative from an association of dog farms, said on YTN television. There are some 17,000 dog farms across the country, Cho said, calling for the government to explicitly legalize dog meat consumption and license dog slaughter houses. "Otherwise, we'll fight to the end," he added. "Dogs for eating and dogs as pets must be separated," he said, adding they were different breeds, fed differently and raised for different purposes. "Cows, pigs, chickens and ducks are all raised to be consumed and why not dogs?" he said. —AFP

Japan halts missile attack drills after Trump-Kim summit

TOKYO: Japan has decided to halt evacuation drills to prepare for a potential North Korean missile attack as tensions had eased following a historic summit between the leaders of the United States and North Korea, Kyodo news agency reported yesterday. US President Donald Trump met North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Singapore last week and Kim committed to "work toward complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula", while Trump said he would end what he called "provocative" US-South Korean military exercises.

Japan welcomed the summit as a first step towards the denuclearization of North Korea, but also said the US-South Korean exercises were a vital deterrent to North Korean threats. North Korea last year launched two missiles that flew over Japan. It also conducted its sixth nuclear test. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga repeated that it was vital for North Korea to take concrete steps toward complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of all its weapons of mass destruction and missiles.

Suga noted, however, that North Korea has said it would not conduct tests and Kim had promised complete denuclearization. "The situation is different from last year when missile launches were frequent and it is not a situation where missiles will soon come flying," he told a news conference, adding that the matter of the drills was under consideration. Japan is eyeing a meeting between Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, government sources said a week ago, and Japanese media have reported that one possibility was for Abe to visit Pyongyang, perhaps as early as August.

Promoted to commander of the US Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) last month, Admiral Philip Davidson gave an assurance that the United States was committed its alliance with Japan and to securing North Korea's denuclearization during his first official visit to Japan for two days of talks with Defence Minister Itsunori Onodera. Japan, which hosts some 50,000 US military personnel, including the biggest overseas concentration of US Marines and a US Navy carrier strike group, relies on the Washington for its defense and operates closely with its military.

Japan's capital of Tokyo held its first evacuation drill in January and smaller Japanese towns and villages have conducted similar exercises as North Korea pushed ahead with its missile and nuclear weapons programs. —Reuters

International

Syria President Assad gets food lifeline from Crimea

Syria and Crimea under Western sanctions

News in brief

Rats break into ATM

NEW DELHI: Indian police yesterday said rats nibbled through more than a million rupees of banknotes after busting into a cash machine in the country's northeast. The rodent heist in Assam state was only detected by bank officials after locals complained that the ATM was faulty and had stopped dispensing cash, police in Tinkusia district said. "The bank officials came to check the ATM machine last week and found a dead rat and shredded banknotes when it was opened," said district police superintendent Mugdhajyoti Dev Mahanta. "We've checked and there is no other criminal or conspiracy to angle to the incident. It looks like the rats entered the machine through a small opening for some wires," he said. The rats munched through an estimated 1.2 million rupees (\$18,000) worth of hard currency, local media reported. —AFP

Bouteflika eyes fifth term

ALGIERS: The main ally of Algeria's ruling party will back 81-year-old President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's bid next year for a fifth term in office, its head said yesterday. Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia of the Rally for National Democracy (RND) said his party would support Bouteflika in a presidential poll in 2019. Bouteflika, head of the ruling National Liberation Front (FLN), has led Algeria since 1999 and won a fourth term in 2014 despite suffering a stroke the previous year. In a speech to the RND's ruling body, Ouyahia said the party would support Bouteflika "continuing his mission and his sacrifice in the service of Algeria". Ouyahia, 65, is himself serving a fourth term as prime minister and is seen as a key Bouteflika ally. The president made two rare public appearances in a wheelchair in April and May, at the inauguration of a mosque and for the extension of the Algiers metro. —AFP

South Sudan peace push

ADDIS ABABA: East African leaders gathered in Ethiopia yesterday hoping to revive stalled South Sudan peace talks, following a long-awaited face-to-face meeting between the two warring leaders. President Salva Kiir and his former deputy turned rebel leader Riek Machar held face-to-face talks on Wednesday, brokered by Ethiopian prime minister Abiy Ahmed, in their first meeting in nearly two years. What was discussed has been kept under wraps, but video footage of their initial meeting shows Abiy sandwiched between the two towering South Sudanese after cajoling them into an awkward group hug. The last time Kiir and Machar met was at the outbreak of deadly fighting in the South Sudanese capital Juba in July 2016. Machar, defeated, then fled to neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo and then into exile in South Africa where he was placed under de-facto house arrest. —AFP

'Sex-for-marks' don

LAGOS: A lecturer has been dismissed from his post at one of Nigeria's leading universities for promising a female student higher marks in exchange for sex. Obafemi Awolowo University said its governing body had decided Richard Akindele "should be dismissed from the services of the university for gross misconduct". His dismissal came after the student in question released a secret recording online in April of a conversation in which the lecturer offered to improve her grade if she slept with him. —AFP

LONDON: Crimea has stepped up grain exports to Syria over the past year in an arrangement that gives the Black Sea peninsula an outlet for its surplus crops and ensures President Bashar Al-Assad has a reliable source of wheat. Shipments started picking up in the middle of last year and at least 10 ships took a minimum of 170,000 tons of grain to Syria between July 2017 and May 2018, according to port and ship tracking data seen by Reuters and confirmed by shipping sources.

The recent rise in grain shipments from Crimea is helping to support Assad's government, as a steady supply of wheat is critical to providing the heavily subsidized bread that many Syrians depend on. Syria's domestic wheat production has been hit by fighting in its main grain-producing regions, forcing Assad's cash-strapped government to rely on imports. While food is not restricted by Western sanctions on Syria, banking sanctions and asset freezes have made it difficult for some grain trading houses to do business with Assad's government and it has failed to fill a number of large wheat tenders.

Crimea has also been under Western sanctions since it was annexed from Ukraine by Russia in 2014 and has been frozen out of many export markets, making Syria an ideal trading partner - especially as it is open to receiving goods from Syria such as olive oil in exchange for wheat. "We do not have any problems with a number of countries, including Syria," Crimea's Deputy Prime Minister Georgy Muradov told Reuters. "Our countries do not apply sanctions against each other, so of course they are free to work."

Russia, the world's second biggest wheat exporter, intervened militarily in the Syrian conflict in 2015 to help turn the tide in favor of Assad and it has also been supplying grain to the government as part of its humanitarian aid. Syria also said in September it had struck a deal to buy 3 million tonnes of wheat from Russia over three years and was seeking credit finance from Moscow, but no Russian wheat has yet been exported, according to Russian customs data. This may be because Russia wants to avoid putting its own grain trading at risk by dealing with Syria, while major aid supplies could put strains on its budget and reduce wheat export revenue, Russian grain industry sources said.

Driven away by conflict, thousands of Ethiopians stranded without a home

BAHIR DAR: Early one morning, Aschal Zegeye and her young family heard a knock at the door. Her husband answered it. Shortly after he was dead. "They took him outside and slaughtered him," the 25 year-old mother of two said in a church shelter in the city of Bahir Dar. With her one year-old baby son on her back, she spoke of the day last October when her husband was murdered by a mob and she and her children were chased from their home. "They burnt our farm. A group of men beat me with sticks. I ran away into the woods to hide for three days. Then I begged on the streets to get back here."

Aschal is one of around a million Ethiopians driven from their homes by a land and ethnicity-fuelled crisis that has gripped the Horn of Africa nation for years and escalated in recent months. Most dramatically, tensions between ethnic Somali and Oromo ethnic groups and conflict along the border separating the two regions led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands last year, most of whom have still not returned home.

Old tensions

The crisis sprawls across Ethiopia, a country of 100 million people hit by anti-government protests that began in 2015 over land rights before broadening into demonstrations against authoritarian rule. It threatens the country's fragile system of "ethnic federalism", a constitutional model which offers a degree of self-determination to Ethiopia's diverse communities but which critics say encourages competition along ethnic lines.



AL-QADI, Syria: A Syrian child from the northern city of Manbij, displaced by fighting between the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and Islamic State (IS) group fighters, sits outside mud-brick dwellings at Al-Qadi camp for the displaced. —AFP

Rising exports

Crimea's agriculture sector has received about 2.4 billion roubles (\$38 million) of Russian state support over the last three years, and this has led to wider usage of modern technology and higher yields, Russia's Agriculture Ministry told Reuters when asked to comment on rising Crimean grain exports. "Due to the significant growth of the crop, Crimea was able to cover both the domestic needs of the republic's citizens and to export the excess of wheat," the Russian ministry said. For Crimea, which is controlled by Russia, trading with Syria using blacklisted Syrian ships and other vessels means it can offload grain it cannot export elsewhere due to Western sanctions while giving Assad another supply line. Crimea produces some 1.4 million tons of grain a year, leaving about 1 million for export, although dry weather may reduce this year's crop. Russia, which gives Crimea some financial support, is also keen for the peninsula to organize its own business to lessen the burden on its finances, the Russian industry sources said. —Reuters

As part of an effort to stabilize the country the ruling Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) in April appointed Abiy Ahmed, a 42 year-old from the Oromo wing of the ethnically-based coalition as prime minister. Though the move brought stability to most parts of the country the problem of ethnically-motivated evictions and displacement remains unresolved. Since taking office Abiy has visited most regions of Ethiopia and has repeatedly called for "unity" between its ethnic groups. "This has been a tragedy that should never have taken place," he said of the conflict between Oromia and Somali region during an April visit to Jigjiga, capital of the Somali state. But critics argue the government has not done enough to prevent the displacement of ethnic groups in Oromia and other parts of the country since April.

Violence persists

Human rights group Amnesty International said earlier this month thousands of displaced Amharas had arrived in Bahir Dar, the capital of Amhara region, from Oromia since October. Thousands more are on the verge of displacement due to violent attacks on their homes by ethnically-motivated young men, Amnesty said. Each day brings new arrivals, according to Father Abraham, a priest and representative of Amharas displaced from Oromia.

Meanwhile, hundreds of ethnic Amharas have arrived after violent clashes in the neighboring region of Benishangul-Gumuz where they had lived for many years. "We have been displaced three times now," said Minale Ayalew, a 45 year-old priest and father of six who fled from Benishangul-Gumuz. "We came back here each time, asked the regional government for help, and the government said it wouldn't happen again. But it does happen again." At least 400,000 mostly ethnic Gedeos were displaced from southern Oromia following violence in mid-April, the National Disaster Risk Management Commission said this week. —Reuters

International

Police detain captain and two crew in deadly ferry disaster

193 people including children still missing

SIMALUNGUN: The captain and two crew of an overloaded Indonesian ferry that sank into the depths of a volcanic lake have been detained for questioning over the deadly disaster, police said yesterday. The trio were among just 18 people rescued after the vessel capsized and sank Monday at Lake Toba, a picturesque tourist destination in Sumatra. Three passengers have been confirmed dead, but official estimates listed 193 others—including children—as missing.

That has raised fears the sinking could be one of Indonesia's deadliest maritime disasters. The traditional wooden boat could have been carrying five times the number of passengers it was built to hold, along with dozens of motorcycles, officials have said. Captain Tua Sagala and two of his crew would be questioned, said local police chief Marudut Liberty Pandjaitan. Sagala is also the boat's owner, he said, adding that a fourth crew member who survived the accident had since fled the area. "(He) is still at large," Pandjaitan told reporters. Earlier yesterday, national police spokesman Yusri Yunus said the captain had not yet been questioned because he was "still traumatized".



Three passengers confirmed dead

news about missing loved ones. Indonesia is a Muslim-majority country but the area has a large Christian population. Some mourners expressed anger at the pace of the search effort. Jadiano Nainggolan, 40, said a dozen relatives were on the boat including his three-year-old nephew. He showed a picture of the group to AFP that he said was taken shortly before they got on the ferry, which has not yet been located. "We're hoping that our relatives will be found—we're counting on the search and rescue agency," he said.

"But I don't think they're doing enough—there seem to be more teams at the harbor than on the lake. "There must be a lot of people trapped in the boat." The vessel is believed to have been operating illegally with no manifest or passenger tickets so officials have struggled to pinpoint the exact number onboard when it went down in bad weather. They have relied on reports from survivors and the families of missing relatives who may have been on the doomed vessel. The search-and-rescue operation is focused on recovering bodies—including those that may still be inside the sunken vessel.

It was not clear if any foreigners were on board. Divers and underwater vehicles, along with about 400 personnel, are being deployed to search the enormous body of water. Toba is one of the world's

trovye (Centrals) gang. They were killed in a tit-for-tat street war that erupted in the 1990s between the Tsentrovye and Uralmash gang, named after a huge Soviet-era plant that sustained the city. With the Russian economy imploding, the gangs battled over everything from casinos and heavy industry to "protection"—in reality extortion—of small businesses. It is a dark period in Russia's early post-Soviet history that the people of Yekaterinburg would rather forget—if only the gravestones would let them.

"It is a notorious part of our history that we couldn't make that transition period (to capitalism) in a peaceful and a beautiful way," said Maria Tretyak, a Yekaterinburg native and expert in the city's history. "But at that time it seems that there was no other way to make money and so many young people would really want to be members of these gangs." Organized crime was endemic in Russian cities of all shapes and sizes, with the gangs of Yekaterinburg and surrounding Urals towns based mostly around local manufacturing plants.

Dying young

In the northern neighborhood of Uralmash lies another cemetery where the gang's slain bosses—the criminal elite—take pride of place in the best lots and boast the most expensive tombstones, costing upwards of 2.5 million rubles (\$40,000). Like their Central rivals immortalized across town, almost all were killed in the 1990s before reaching middle age. —AFP



SIMALUNGUN, Indonesia: Women mourn for their missing family members who were passengers of a ferry that capsized on June 18, at a hospital morgue in Simalungun, in the province of North Sumatra. —AFP

deepest lakes, plunging some 500 meters in parts, and it covers an area of about 1,145 square kilometers. Survivors have said the boat began shaking as it struggled to navigate strong winds and high waves about halfway into the 40-minute trip from an island in the middle of the lake to shore. Lake Toba fills the crater of a supervolcano that exploded in a massive eruption tens of thousands of years ago.

Millions were travelling around Indonesia to celebrate the end of the holy month of Ramadan when the accident happened. It came days after

more than a dozen people were killed in another ferry accident in the Southeast Asian archipelago nation, where many people depend on boats despite the industry's woeful safety record. Traditional vessels—like the one in the Lake Toba disaster—are often packed beyond capacity and lacking safety equipment. Nearly 80 people died in a ferry accident on Lake Toba in 1997. More than 300 people are estimated to have drowned in 2009 when a ferry sank between Sulawesi and Borneo. —AFP

Yekaterinburg: World Cup host city where gangs once ruled

YEKATERINBURG: Yekaterinburg has escaped its dark past of contract killings and organized crime to become a World Cup host city with a more hopeful future. The industrial city of 1.5 million people is the most eastern of all the 11 involved in the tournament, staging four group games including France v Peru.

A stroll among the graves of cemeteries reveals how far Yekaterinburg has come in the past 20 years to stage the biggest sports event on the planet. Prominent among the fading tombstones of Soviet apparatchiks, professors and Red Army heroes is the well-maintained grave of Mikhail Kuchin. His life-size and intricately engraved tombstone shows him in a suit, the keys for a Mercedes dangling ostentatiously in his left hand. It is a nod to the criminally financed and lavish lifestyle this member of the so-called "Russian mafia" led in the turbulent aftermath of the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991. He was assassinated in 1994, aged 34.

Violence erupts

A few steps farther down in the Shirokorechenskoye cemetery, close to the city centre, are buried other leading members of the Tsen-

Migrants use World Cup Fan IDs to try to enter EU

SAINT PETERSBURG: A small number of migrants have used Russia's World Cup ticketing system that allows visa-free travel for foreign fans to try to enter the European Union illegally, with neighboring Belarus and Finland reporting cases. Moscow has implemented a Fan ID system that exempts visiting fans from Russia's strict visa system and allows them to move freely between host cities for the tournament between June 15 and July 15.

Belarus, which signed an agreement with Russia allowing Fan ID holders to transit the country without a visa, said it had stopped four Moroccans and an unspecified number of Pakistanis as they tried to enter the European Union illegally across borders with Lithuania and Poland. "More 'illegals' have entered Belarus under the guise of football fans," Andrey Sytenkov, an investigator with Belarus's State Border Committee, said at a press conference in Minsk on Wednesday.

The Moroccans are currently in tempo-

rary detention centers and face fines, deportation and a five-year ban on entering Belarus, he added. There was no word on the whereabouts of the Pakistani nationals. Sytenkov said the Belarusian border guard service "has information on groups of pseudo-fans" on the country's Western borders. "We are ready for the fact that Europe will not accept them and will be sending them back," he said. Similar cases have also been reported in Finland, an EU member that also shares a border with Russia.

Finnish Border Guard official Marko Saareks told AFP there have been three cases of people crossing the Russian-Finnish border and applying for asylum in Finland after arriving in Russia with Fan IDs. "There is a threat of this kind of phenomenon," he said, adding "these kinds of illegal crossings may go on until the end" of the World Cup. "They will not be deported to Russia immediately" since they asked for asylum in Finland, he added. Last Friday, a Chinese citizen flew to Helsinki from Russia and applied for asylum after arriving in Russia with a World Cup Fan ID. In another case on the same day, a Nigerian with a fake Brazilian passport tried to cross the Finnish border. He had earlier arrived in Russia with a Nigerian passport and a Fan ID. —AFP

International

Pope Francis seeks unity between Catholics, other Christian faiths

China and Vatican trying to end dispute over bishops

GENEVA: Pope Francis yesterday called for deeper unity between the Catholic Church and other Christian faiths as he visited Geneva, a centre of Protestantism, amid Christianity's waning influence in Europe. "I have desired to come here, a pilgrim in quest of unity and peace," Francis told a prayer gathering at Geneva's Ecumenical Centre, shortly after arriving in the City of Calvin.

The pontiff, who was met by Swiss President Alain Berset at Geneva airport, said Christians were called to follow a path with "a clear aim, that of unity." He came at the invitation of the World Council of Churches (WCC), which



Pope sees 3 paths to reconciliation with China

was created in 1948 and groups 350 Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican churches from more than 100 countries around the world, with around half a billion believers among them. At the start of his one-day visit, he took part in an "ecumenical prayer" for the organization's 70th anniversary, highlighting his commitment to unity between various Christian denominations.

'Unbridled consumerism'

"In the course of history, divisions between

Christians have often arisen because at their root, in the life of communities, a worldly mindset has seeped in," he told the 230 Christians of various denominations gathered before him. The pope warned that "indifference prevails in the streets of today's world. Driven by our instincts, we become slaves to unbridled consumerism, and God's voice is gradually silenced." "How hard it is to leave behind centuries-old disagreements and mutual recriminations," he acknowledged, but insisted that "our differences must not be excuses... We can pray, evangelize and serve together." "Our world, torn by all too many divisions that affect the most vulnerable, begs for unity," he said.

Historically, divisions between the Catholic Church and the Protestant confessions have run deep. The dissenting movement launched by Martin Luther more than 500 years ago and its strict interpretation engrained in Geneva by John Calvin in the mid-16th century launched centuries of often bloody divisions in Europe. WCC chief Olav Fykse Tveit, a Norwegian Lutheran pastor, told AFP prior to the pope's visit that "it is not difficult to find issues



GENEVA: Pope Francis greets the audience during his one-day visit at the invitation of the World Council of Churches (WCC) yesterday in Geneva. — AFP

that are still dividing Christians," pointing to attitudes towards "human sexuality and family life". But he said there was movement towards Christians across denominations becoming "more united, and the pope's visit is a sign of that."

'Speaks for all Christians'

"I think that many Christians, whether they are Catholics or not, see him as a strong voice

for what we want to say as Christians today," he said pointing to the pope's message of love and inclusiveness. "In that sense, he speaks for all Christians," he said. The Catholic Church is not part of the WCC but Francis is keen to close the gap between its 1.3 billion-strong faithful and the Churches under the WCC umbrella, in particular given the regularity of deadly attacks on Christians. —Agencies

Malaysia to reopen probe into Mongolia model's death

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia will reopen an investigation into the murder of a Mongolian model in 2006, media reported yesterday quoting the country's police chief, in a case that could spell more trouble for former premier Najib Razak. Two former police officers, who were serving as members of Najib's personal security detail at the time of the murder, were sentenced to death for the crime.

Najib, who was defeated in an election last month after nearly a decade in power, has denied knowing the woman, but the question of who ordered the killing has never been answered. "I can confirm we are reopening investigations," Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Mohamad Fuzi Harun said, adding that a new police report submitted by the model's father on Wednesday was one reason for the fresh probe into the murder case.

Altantuya Shaariibu, 28, was killed and blown up with military grade explosives in a forest near Kuala Lumpur. Her father Setev Shaariibu on Wednesday met with Malaysia's new attorney-general Tommy Thomas and Prime

Minister Mahathir Mohamad, who defeated the scandal-tainted Najib in a stunning election upset last month. Civil society groups have alleged Altantuya's murder was linked to her role as an interpreter for Abdul Razak Baginda, a former associate of Najib, in Malaysia's purchase of two Scorpene-class submarines from French shipbuilding giant DCNS in 2002.

Abdul Razak, who said he had had an affair with Altantuya, was charged with abetment in her murder. He was acquitted in 2008. One of the officers found guilty of her murder, Sirul Azhar Uma, fled to Australia shortly before his sentence was handed down. Sirul said last month he would cooperate with any new investigation into the murder if he was given a full pardon. Malaysia is considering revoking his death sentence to facilitate his extradition. Asked for comment on the new developments yesterday, a spokesman for Australia's Attorney-General said it does not comment on extradition requests. Asked about the Altantuya case in an interview with Reuters this week, Najib said: "I'm on record to have sworn in a mosque in the name of Allah that I had nothing to do with the case."

"I still maintain that I only knew she died 4-5 days after the death...that was the first time I heard about her. There is no evidence to show I ever knew her." Mahathir is seeking to lay multiple charges against Najib for his alleged role in looting billions from state-run fund 1MDB and blames him for widespread corruption in the previous government. —Reuters

Poverty-stricken Albania new migrant gateway into the EU

TIRANA: Until recently, few refugees chose poverty-stricken Albania as a pit stop on their perilous trek towards wealthy EU countries. But with the so-called western Balkan migrant trail now shut, the number of Syrians arriving in Albania is on the rise. Migrants are "trying to find new paths to get to European Union countries" after nations along the route up from Turkey and Greece significantly increased their border security, interior ministry spokesman Ardi Bide said.

Instead of going through Macedonia and Serbia, people attempt to reach the EU via some of the poorest member states including Bulgaria and Albania. Although authorities have not released official data on asylum requests, police said they have blocked 2,300 people at the Albanian border since the start of the year.

For many, "Albania is now the only solution for refugees to move on," said Syrian Guwan Belei. The 28-year-old arrived in mid-June in Albania's only migrant reception centre, located in the capital Tirana. Some 200 migrants currently stay at the 180-bed facility. Belei has applied for asylum here but does not hide that for him "like for others, Albania is now a gateway in contrast to Serbia and Macedonia, which have closed their borders".

"Many prefer to seek political asylum in Albania because during the proceedings it leaves them time to find solutions to move to Montenegro and Bosnia, and from there get to Germany, Denmark

or another country," the 28-year-old told AFP. Germany has become one of asylum-seekers' favored destinations since Chancellor Angela Merkel threw open the border in 2015 in the face of the continent's worst migration crisis since World War II. However, the decision to allow in more than a million migrants has cost Merkel politically and put her current coalition under threat.

'Nobody wants to stay'

Migrants, meanwhile, are largely oblivious to the political storm their arrival is causing in the EU. At Tirana's camp, newly-arrived migrants wait in front of the small brick building while others are stepping out with backpacks, possibly hoping to try to cross the border into Montenegro, 100 kilometers further north. The route through Turkey, Greece, Albania, Montenegro and Bosnia before reaching EU member Croatia is rather treacherous, steep and mountainous. But that is not enough to deter 26-year-old Berivan Alus and her husband Asmar from trying to reach western Europe.

The couple from Afrin, in northwestern Syria, said they were forced to leave behind their three-year-old twin girls with the grandparents because the journey was too dangerous. Showing photos of their children, the couple told AFP they had already crossed "fields, mountains and rivers" on foot or in small boats, "in the mud and in the rain". —AFP

Lifestyle

Friday Times

FRIDAY, JUNE 22, 2018

www.kuwaittimes.net



A Nepali yoga practitioner takes part in a yoga session class on the International Yoga Day in Kathmandu yesterday. Yoga, which means union in Sanskrit, is a family of ancient spiritual practices and also a school of spiritual thought from South Asia, where it remains a vibrant living tradition and is seen as a means of enlightenment. — AFP

**The world yoga capital, with
a little help from its friends**

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Suspect arrested in Florida shooting death of rapper XXXTentacion

A man has been arrested and charged with murder in connection with the death of up-and-coming U.S. rapper XXXTentacion, who was gunned down in Florida on Monday, police said yesterday. Dedrick Williams, 22, was taken into custody on Wednesday evening, two days after XXXTentacion, whose real name was Jahseh Dwayne Onfroy, was shot while leaving a motor sports dealership in Deerfield Beach, about 40 miles (64 km) north of Miami. The death of the 20-year-old rapper stunned the hip hop community and sparked tributes online.

Two men fled the scene in a dark SUV after one of them opened fire during a possible robbery attempt, investigators had said. It was not immediately clear if police were looking for a second suspect. XXXTentacion, who was born and raised in Plantation, Florida, released his debut album in August 2017. His second album “?” debuted at No.1 on the Billboard 200 album chart when it was released in March.

According to local media reports, he had spent time in jail and was awaiting trial on allegations of domestic violence against his pregnant girlfriend. Police said Williams was also charged with probation violation for theft of a motor vehicle and driving without a valid license. He was awaiting trial yesterday. — Reuters

PETE DAVIDSON CONFIRMS ENGAGEMENT TO ARIANA GRANDE



“Saturday Night Live” cast member Pete Davidson on Wednesday confirmed reports that he and American pop star Ariana Grande are engaged after dating for less than two months. Davidson, 24, told talk show host Jimmy Fallon in an appearance on “The Tonight Show” that the rumors of the past week were correct. “I did,” Davidson said, when asked by Fallon whether he had got engaged. “I feel like I’ve won a contest,” he added about his romance with Grande. Grande, 24, and Davidson went public about dating in late May through their social media accounts a few weeks after ending their previous relationships. Celebrity media reported last week that they were engaged.

The “Dangerous Woman” singer was spotted wearing a diamond ring on her engagement finger earlier this week and celebrity media reported on Wednesday that the couple had moved into a Manhattan apartment together. Grande launched her career on the Nickelodeon TV show “Victorious” in 2009 and released her first studio album in 2013. She has gone on to become one of the most popular young artists in the United States, winning three American Music Awards.

In June 2017, she won plaudits for returning to the English city of Manchester for a benefit concert for the victims of an Islamic State suicide bombing that killed 22 people moments after Grande had finished a concert. Davidson started his career as a stand-up comedian and joined popular satirical sketch show “Saturday Night Live” in 2014. — Reuters

Q&A: SAM SMITH ON TOURING, THERAPY, SMOKING AND LIP SYNCING



In this file photo, Sam Smith performs at the Brit Awards 2018 in London. —AP

Sam Smith knows his music is melancholy and emotional, but he’s hoping his live shows will be uplifting and feel “like a fistful of love,” as he put it. The singer, known for down-tempo hits like “Stay With Me” and “Too Good at Goodbyes,” is launching “The Thrill of It All Tour” in the United States today in Detroit. Smith will perform at some of the arenas he played three years ago when his 2014 debut album, “In the Lonely Hour,” dominated the charts. But he said now he’s able to do more when it comes to the show - from the lighting to the set list. “We didn’t really know what to do actually because everything became very big before we actually had the money to actually afford to put on anything that was a spectacle,” he said of his 2015 tour. “With this tour, I got to choose songs. I got to really decide what type of show and tour this is,” said Smith, who released this sophomore album, “The Thrill of It All,” last November. “I really think you can see, within the show, (the) growth of me as an artist, I hope.” Smith talked to The Associated Press about the tour, cutting out alcohol and smoking, and going to therapy for the first time.

AP: How have you been prepping to get ready for this tour?

Smith: It’s very, very tough. I’m trying to really discover other joys in life instead of going out drinking and going clubbing. I’ve completely stopped drinking. I’m working out. I have my trainer on the road with me, which is amazing. I work out every day. I’ve just had four weeks off so I’ve been eating a lot of really bad food, so I’m trying to work that off before I get to New York. I’m just being super, super, super healthy. Making sure I go to bed after the shows and rest my voice. It’s really looking after myself as much as I can. The time that I’m onstage is my time to have fun and that’s my time to express and let go.

AP: Have you cut out smoking?

Smith: Yes. The last year or so, I’m embarrassed to say that I did - I fell into the pit of smoking cigarettes. I’m battling it. I’m not smoking at all at the moment. When I have my time off in between shows I find it really difficult. But I’m pretty certain and sure that I’ve kicked it now. I have to. It’s so bad for you. It’s just affecting my voice. It affects my mood as well, smoking. I feel like I’m hurting myself in a way when I do it. So, I’ve stopped that.

AP: You sing live every night. How does it feel when you see others lip sync?

Smith: In general, I find it sad. It’s different with the different artists, I feel. ...I don’t know for certain, but I’m pretty sure some people sing a bit here and there and mime a bit during the show because they’re dancing so hard. Then I understand that because I’m not a dancer and I don’t know how it feels. If you’re singing for a bit of it live, then I get it. I’ve got to admit, it’s something that I find annoying, especially within pop music, because I’m someone who has never mimed. I’ve never ever mimed my entire life. Whenever people around you are miming, you’re kind of expected to do the same amount of work and promo and stuff as all the other artists. But, it’s hard. I can’t do as much promo. I can’t sing flat out every day, all day because my songs are very,

high and demanding for me as a male singer. I sing in a place in my voice, even when I’m singing high, I’m belting. It’s quite exhausting for my vocal chords. It’s just a strain because sometimes I feel like I can’t work as hard as everyone else because I’m not miming. Other than that, what other people do isn’t my business. If they can sleep at night and they mime, then that’s fine. It works for them, it doesn’t work for me.

AP: Do you get to go to concerts? If so, who have you seen recently?

Smith: Yeah, I go to shows quite a lot. I try to see all the big pop shows. I saw Beyoncé’s “Lemonade” stadium tour. I’m watching all of her “On the Run Tour” stuff online. I’m just obsessed. It’s just incredible to watch. My dream person to see that I haven’t seen is Robyn. I just really want to see her live. I think I’d just cry the whole time.

AP: How’s it been performing songs from your latest album now that it’s been out several months?

Smith: I look back at this album and sometimes, when I’m singing these songs, I worry because I know they are very dark. If you listen to the album it’s got quite a dark tone to it.

“In the Lonely Hour” - I felt that it was melancholy but there was hopefulness to the songs, because I was hoping the man I loved loved me back. And I think during the period of “The Thrill of It All,” I really was a bit stuck and I was in a place where I just felt very confused about fame and felt that love was nowhere to be seen. I look back on that time and sometimes I’m almost upset with how dark it was and wish I could have written a happier record. But it was honest and it was me.

I’ve already started writing quite a lot for my third record. Just wrote something today, actually, in the dressing room. It’s just feeling a little more up. Never too happy. But I’m feeling a lot more confident as a songwriter, which is really, really nice.

AP: Is what you’re writing now a reflection of how you feel now? Because it seems like you’re happier.

Smith: Oh, yeah, completely. I’m a lot happier now than I was. I still have my down days. After releasing the record, I got into a really happy place and it was great, and then had a massive low a few months afterward. I started therapy recently and I’m starting to truly understand that you can’t be happy all the time. And life is like a sea, isn’t it? Sometimes it’s calm and then sometimes it’s crazy and stormy. And you’ve just got to ride it, I guess. I still find parts of my life really, really challenging and difficult and I get very, very sad sometimes, but I have the tools now. And I’m trying to work out the tools, how to stay happy, which is good. The not drinking thing is a big thing for me. Not smoking. Yeah, just seeking help around me. And remembering that I’m good by myself as well. I think alone time is really important.

AP: Was this the first time you tried therapy?

Smith: Yeah, yeah, first time ever in my life recently. It’s only been recently, but it’s been great. — AP

Dance company reinvents Mexico's 'folk ballet'

With a twirl of his skirt, Jacob Soto taps his strappy high-heels in time to the music, the very image of his all-gay dance company's bold reinvention of Mexico's traditional folk dances. Soto first discovered the dance company, "Mexico in Color," when he went to one of their shows. The 28-year-old psychologist says it was love at first sight. "I said, 'Wow! I want to be up there. I don't know how I'm going to do it, but I want to be up there. I don't know how to put on make-up, I don't know how to dance in heels, but I want to be up there with them,'" he says, his eyes painted in an elaborate feline look topped by enormous fake eyelashes.

Mexico in Color takes "ballet folklórico," Mexico's beloved traditional folk dance, and mashes it with the flamboyant transgression of drag. Instead of virile men in sombreros twirling dainty women in flowing skirts around the floor, some 20 gay men play both roles, mixing the highly technical traditional steps with modern dance. The hardest part, they say, is learning the delicate sensuality of the traditional female steps: twirling a skirt just so, floating around the floor in heels, dancing with legs together rather than apart—it all takes many hours of practice.

"The form and style of movement of a woman is very difficult for us, because nature gave us a different anatomy," says David Reyes, 27, one of the dancers who founded the company seven years ago. "We have to sweat like truckers to look like princesses," says Carlos Antunez, 57, the company's director.

Something old, something new

It is a daring project in a country where folk dance is revered and



Jorge Estrada of the "Mexico de Colores" dance troupe, poses for a photograph.



A group of dancers of the dance company "Mexico de Colores" perform at the Teatro de la Ciudad.

machismo and homophobia loom large. Antunez is also the artistic coordinator of the Ballet Folklórico de Mexico de Amalia Hernandez, the premier institution of Mexican folk dance—a renowned company founded in 1952 that has toured the world and still performs every week in the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City. Although Mexico in Color is inspired by the same traditions, it is completely different, says Antunez. "The steps dancers learn in a traditional folk school are very well written, very academic. I don't use them. I take them and I transform them," he says. "This isn't folk dance."



Sergio Najera of the "Mexico de Colores" dance troupe, poses for a photograph.

'Ours too'

Antunez, who has also been a choreographer for some of Mexico's most famous pop stars, says he wanted to stake his own claim to the folk dancing tradition. "In folk dancing, (homosexuality) is always hidden. It's as if gay people didn't exist," he says. "But Mexican music is



Israel Fermin Romero of the "Mexico de Colores" dance troupe, poses for a photograph.

ours too, we're part of Mexico and we can dance to it too." Mexico can be a hostile place for the LGBTI community. At least 381 people who identified as such were murdered in Mexico from 2013 to 2017, "presumably because of their sexual orientation, identity or gender expression," according to the rights group Letra Ese.

Except for Mexico City, a gay-friendly capital with equal marriage rights, there is "ever growing intolerance" toward the community, creating a



This combination of pictures shows (from left) Marco Antonio Portillo, Jacob Rafael Soto, Luis Angel Lucio, Ivan Sol, Julio Cesar Fuentes, Ruben Gomez, Jorge Estrada, Kevin Alducin and Jesus Martin Galvan of the "Mexico de Colores" dance troupe, posing for a photograph during a rehearsal in Mexico City. The dance company, which has 20 members and its performances mix traditional Mexican folk with modern dance in a 'drag-queen' tone and aesthetic, marks its seventh anniversary. — AFP photos

risk of hate crimes, according to the National Human Rights Commission. Antunez says he prepares his dancers for the possibility they will be booed or heckled at performances. But he considers it a bright point that in seven years they have never been physically attacked. "I think people applaud our bravery," he says. "You are basically telling people: there are men out there who kiss each other and are happy. This is how we are. And people simply stand and applaud." — AFP



(From left) Mauricio Galvan, Marco Antonio Portillo, Jesus Martin Galvan and Alberto Espinosa of the "Mexico de Colores" dance troupe, pose for a photograph.

THE WORLD YOGA CAPITAL, WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM ITS FRIENDS



Indian Armed Forces personnel take part in a yoga session to mark International Yoga Day on the Indian Navy aircraft carrier INS Viraat anchored at the Mumbai harbor yesterday. — AFP photos



Yoga enthusiasts perform yoga to mark International Yoga Day at the Sri Kanteerava Stadium in Bangalore.

Sitting humbly on the floor in his orange robes, the spiritual head of the biggest ashram in Rishikesh rejoices at how yoga has spread across the globe in the 50 years since The Beatles first visited the holy city. “Yoga is amazing!” enthused the long-haired, bushy-bearded Swami Chidanand Saraswati in a tranquil inner courtyard in the world yoga capital, assistants having prostrated themselves at his feet. “As the Sun is for all, the Moon is for all, rivers are for all, in the same way yoga is for all.” International Yoga Day, being celebrated on Thursday, was proposed by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2014 to the UN General Assembly and adopted unanimously. This year tens of thousands will take part worldwide. “Imagine that! The prime minister went to the United Nations and talked about the benefits of yoga... Today yoga is everywhere,” Saraswati told AFP at his Parmarth Niketan Ashram, a stone’s throw from the holy Ganges river.

And the town of Rishikesh, in the foothills of the Himalayas 250 kilometers (160 miles) north of Delhi, is the world center of yoga, drawing tens of thousands of foreign tourists every year to its dozens of ashram retreats and yoga schools. And this is thanks in no small part to the Fab Four, who came to Rishikesh looking for refuge from Beatlemania, for spiritual enlightenment and to immerse themselves in Indian culture. Staying in an ashram hosted by the magnetic Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, it was a watershed time for the world’s most famous band—although drummer Ringo Starr, troubled by the food, went home after just 10 days.

“They wrote 48 songs here. Many of them appeared on the ‘White Album’, one of their most successful records,” said Raju Gusain, 47, a local journalist and a leading authority on the trip. “The visit completely transformed the Beatles.”

All things must pass

The last of the band left after eight weeks. The site is now derelict and atmospheric, having been abandoned in 2001, although efforts are under way to spruce it up including fences to keep out tigers from the neighboring reserve. But the group’s 1968 stay

helped to put the town—a center for yoga for centuries already and long a gateway to other sacred sites—on the map for Westerners and Indians alike, while also popularizing yoga and meditation. Atta Kurzmann, 68, an American visiting Rishikesh who was a “great Beatles fan”—attending their famous Shea Stadium concert in New York in 1965 — and now a yoga teacher, was one of those inspired back then.

“The reason I got into Indian spirituality was because of George Harrison and knowing that they came to Rishikesh... and were interested in higher forms of consciousness that didn’t have to do with drugs was

very appealing,” she told AFP. “That’s what got me to India originally when I was in my 20s,” she said. Today Rishikesh attracts around 70-80,000 foreign visitors every year, as well as a great many more Indians wanting to bathe and go white-water rafting in the river, to attend festivals, or visit the sites and escape Delhi’s pollution.

‘I was depressed’

Away from the crowds at the Anand Prakash Yoga Ashram and Retreat Centre, the mostly foreign and overwhelmingly young guests pay 1,050 rupees (\$15.40) per night for a shared room, vegetarian meals included. One of them, Mexican Pablo Rueda, 42, decided to come for a week after losing his job as an aerospace engineer in Canada. “I was depressed and wondering what to do with my life,” he told AFP, fresh from a communal breakfast where guests sit on the floor and eat in silence from individual small tables. “I wanted to practice yoga, which I love, and meditate.”

It’s a tough routine though, with the wake-up bell ringing at 5 am. Guests then do half an hour of meditation, 90 minutes of yoga on the roof—as the sun rises—and then half an hour chanting mantras around a fire before breakfast. The rest of the day is free for meditation, reading, chatting and local trips before more yoga at 6 pm, supper and early bed. The facility is not completely cut off from the modern world however, offering Wi-Fi. “I still look at Facebook as I like to share pictures from my trip,” Rueda said. — AFP



Indian school students take part in a yoga session to mark International Yoga Day at the Sun Temple in Modhera.



Practitioners take part in a mass yoga session on International Yoga Day at Rajpath in New Delhi.



Indian yoga practitioners take part in a yoga session on International Yoga Day in Amritsar.



Practitioners take part in a mass yoga session on International Yoga Day at Rajpath in New Delhi.

Luxury sneakers: High style and a booming market



Buyer/reseller Matt Troisi holds an Air Jordan 11 Jeter sneaker at Stadium Goods in New York, the sneakers were priced at USD 50,000 at the time the photo was taken. —AFP photos



A Craig Sager Air Jordan 1 Sager Vision shoe is displayed at Stadium Goods.



An Air Jordan 11 Jeter shoe (center) is displayed at Stadium Goods.



A worker handles some of the hundreds of pairs of sneakers stocked at Stadium Goods.



Sneakers are displayed at Stadium Goods.

Christian, aged 10, has 20 pairs of high-end sneakers in his closet at his home in the suburbs of New York. Maxance, who just turned 14, asked his parents for an \$800 pair of Adidas shoes for his birthday. He did not get them. “We live in a world where sneakers are basically works of art,” the teenager said. The world is also one in which luxury sneakers—often limited-edition collaborations between the big names in sportswear and fashion labels, rappers or famous athletes—have become coveted accessories for everyone from tween boys to middle-aged men.

Some pairs fetch tens of thousands of dollars—the super-rare Derek Jeter Air Jordan 11, named for the New York Yankees superstar, were going for about \$50,000 in recent weeks. Only five pairs were released. Such shoes are bought second- or third-hand, mainly on the internet but also in chic boutiques or pop-up stores, packaged in plastic wrap to protect them. New York is one of the capitals of this flourishing high-end sneaker culture, though the trade in trainers is hardly new. It began in the 1990s—when Nike made it big with the first Air Jordans, made for the legendary basketball star Michael Jordan, those shoes quickly became must-have collector’s items. Then in the 2000s, the market grew as the internet boomed, especially on auction sites like eBay.

Just part of the market?

Today, boosted by celebrities, social media influencers and the mainstream influence of rap culture, the sneaker biz has gone global. It’s particularly big in the United States, Europe and Asia. Since 2016, it even has its own “stock exchange”—the StockX website. Matt Powell, a sports industry analyst for the NPD Group, says the actual size of the luxury sneaker market is hard to estimate, but one thing is clear “that market has had nice growth.” Even if it’s centered on a few key industry players, the market is fed by a mass of small-time vendors—many of them sneaker addicts themselves looking for a quick way to make extra cash.

“Estimates of the resale market is that it’s at one billion dollars,” Powell says, explaining that it’s still a “pretty small sliver” of the overall athletic shoe market, which hit \$38 billion in the United States in 2017, and \$100 billion worldwide. But for John McPheters, the president and co-founder of Stadium Goods—mainly a web business, but which opened what has become one of New York’s most

popular sneaker stores in Soho in late 2015—these estimates are way too low. Stadium Goods sold more than \$100 million in shoes last year, McPheters says. And sales have at least doubled this year, in what he says is a healthier market now that certificates of authenticity have become the norm. “What we are doing today is really just scratching the surface of what is going to be an even bigger business in the years to come,” the 38-year-old says.

What about women?

The future plans of McPheters and Stadium Goods are a good indication of the luxury sneaker market’s potential and worldwide appeal. While internet sales account for 90 percent of the firm’s total for now, they plan to open several more actual stores in the US and abroad. China is its largest market outside the US, followed by Britain and Canada, McPheters explains. Thanks to a partnership with Britain-based online fashion platform FarFetch, Stadium Goods is hoping to soon break into the Russian market. Matt Troisi, 29, is a regular customer at Stadium Goods—he owns about 300 pairs of sneakers—and an experienced buyer and seller online. He is convinced the market is huge and about to explode.

Troisi says he earns \$25,000–\$35,000 a year in the sneaker trade—about half of what he makes as a manager for the Tao restaurant group, where he rubs shoulders with celebrities who help him get access to limited-edition treasures. “Men—sometimes we don’t have the best fashion. We don’t really know what the cool stuff is,” Troisi says. “We can wear all black and have no style whatsoever in clothing and just throw on a cool pair of sneakers and that’s your outfit!” he adds with a laugh. On his feet? A pair of Nikes marking the 1969 Moon landing that are worth about \$1,000.

McPheters says one key to the future growth of the luxury kicks business will be to attract more women. “That’s one of the problems in the industry, one of the areas brands need to focus on,” he says. “For a long time, brands have tried to entice female sneakerheads with pink laces, and ‘feminine’ colors while in reality, women want the exact same products as men do,” he adds. “Over the next few months, we’re working on some innovative ways to better present our products with women in mind.” —AFP



A Michael J Fox “Back to the Future” self-lacing sneaker is displayed at Stadium Goods.



The Trophy Case displays sneakers and trophies at Stadium Goods.

Lifestyle | Fashion



FASHION'S NEW BLACK PRINCE REIGNS OVER PARIS SHOWS

Models present creations by US designer Virgil Abloh from OFF-WHITE fashion house during the men's spring/summer 2019 collection fashion show in Paris. — AFP photos



Fashion's designer of the moment Virgil Abloh channeled James Dean and the graffiti legend Dondi White at his Off-White Paris show Wednesday. The American creator's hype machine has pretty much hijacked the first three days of Paris men's fashion week, with Kanye West's former sidekick and muse about to make his debut at the helm of Louis Vuitton yesterday. But first Abloh rolled out his own Off-White label's spring summer collection, which he said was inspired by "those crazy summer New York City nights when it's just as sticky hot at midnight as it was at noon".

With temperatures in Paris every bit as high, Abloh sent out a run of almost nostalgic youth culture looks, with references to the classic film "Rebel Without a Cause" and white T-shirts with tags in homage to the late New York artist White. True to his streetwear roots, his tees were long and baggy and often cut to the elbow and beyond. His love of branding even extended to the shoelaces, which had "shoelaces" written on them just in case their might be a doubt. Several models sported neck and trouser chains made from climbing hooks, with recut and embroidered jeans apeing a DIY teenage bedroom vibe, which included leaving the security tags on shoes.

Doubters

While Abloh is drooled over by young fans who flock to his shows, some in the front rows whisper that the new darling of the French luxury conglomerate LVMH—which owns Vuitton—is "not a real designer" because he didn't go to fashion school. Instead the creator—who trained as an engineer and architect-cut his teeth with his famous friend West designing outfits on Photoshop. He has also accumulated an enviable address book of celebrity friends and 2.3 million Instagram followers. He did, however, learn a thing or two about the trade from his mother, an immigrant seamstress from Ghana who made a new life in Illinois.

And Abloh loves to add the odd couture touch, this time with a pair of jeans with a kind of floral toile de Jouy pattern that would not be out of place on the wall of a French chateau. In fact, the sometime DJ has a finger in many pies, with an art show running in London alongside the Japanese pop art legend Takashi Murakami. And before his Off-White show he told the French daily Le Figaro that he had much to bring to Vuitton, the world's biggest luxury brand.

"I simply think that Louis Vuitton is missing the products that me and my generation want to buy," he said. Abloh, 38, is only the second black man to rise to the top of a big Paris fashion house, with French designer Olivier Rousteing responsible for both Balmain's men and women's lines.





Models present creations for Raf Simons during the men's spring/summer 2019 collection fashion show.

Simons' return

Raf Simons, the former Dior designer now at Calvin Klein, is the latest to be tempted by the exodus from New York. He had not presented his own label in the French capital for three seasons and he showed Paris what it had been missing in a masterly late night show in a suburban warehouse where he reimagined New Wave and New Romantic London of the early 1980s. "It feels good" to be back, he told reporters, adding that his collection was "DIY meets the opposite" with a post-punk aesthetic transported to the luxury heaven of couture.

He began with vivid oversized silk overcoats with studded backs—"why should we only have studs in leather?" he quipped—with some of his models wearing leather mail shirts underneath, inspired by both the plastic rings of "six- and eight- packs of beer and by Paco Rabanne", Simons said. The theme continued with earrings made to look like drink can pull tops and sleeveless punky T-shirts adorned with iron rings and diamante details.

Simons followed that by a run of outsized glittering polo necks, with a couple of shrunken woollen jumpers for contrast, as well as silky neck scarves which Duran Duran would have killed for in their pomp. He described the show as a series of flashbacks where he "gave everything a very simple twist". The designer recreated a nightclub with "naughty" mirrored dummies hanging from the ceiling or staring into mirrors to evoke our modern "social media Narcissus", he said.

With supermodel Naomi Campbell backstage to congratulate him, Simons said fashion "needs a new outline, something needs to shift". Another talented Belgian, Glenn Martens of Y/Project, played with classical silhouettes by stretching a second skin of nylon over his jackets with ingenious effect. The long pleats he stitched into his trousers so they flapped like cowboy chaps were equally neat. — AFP



The Arugam effect: Taking it easy on Sri Lanka's east coast

Riding a barrel at Main Point in Arugam Bay



The morning sun warms the back of my neck as I float on a foam-topped surfboard in the cerulean shallows of Sri Lanka's Arugam Bay. My instructor, whose swim attire includes a baseball cap and a pair of thick sunglasses, drifts on his own board nearby, dispensing advice on how I should go about catching the next wave. As an oncoming swell starts to break, frothing like the jaws of a rabid dog, I begin frantically paddling towards shore. For one glorious moment the wave carries me along, until the nose of my longboard plunges beneath the water and I'm sent somersaulting head-first through the surf. When I resurface, frustrated and embarrassed, I find my instructor drifting idly by my side. 'No problem,' he says, lowering his giant dark glasses onto his nose, 'Just relax, machan' - the Sinhalese term for 'dude'.

Discovering Arugam

Despite Sri Lanka's meteoric rise to become one of Asia's hottest tourist destinations, blissful Arugam Bay, on the country's east coast, has effortlessly retained its cool. While crowds of tourists sweat to snap the perfect shot of the country's ancient temples, at Arugam barefooted boarders laze in the sun sipping strawless organic smoothies. A successful visit to Arugam means embracing this beach town's mellow mantra - something that can take a little training for the uninitiated. To set you on the right track, here's our comprehensive guide to chilling out in Arugam Bay.

Everybody's gone surfin'

Thanks to the bay's compelling and consistent breaks, surfing has been integral to the shaping of Arugam's identity, with the sport spurring the town's development from tiny fishing village to fully fledged tourist destination.

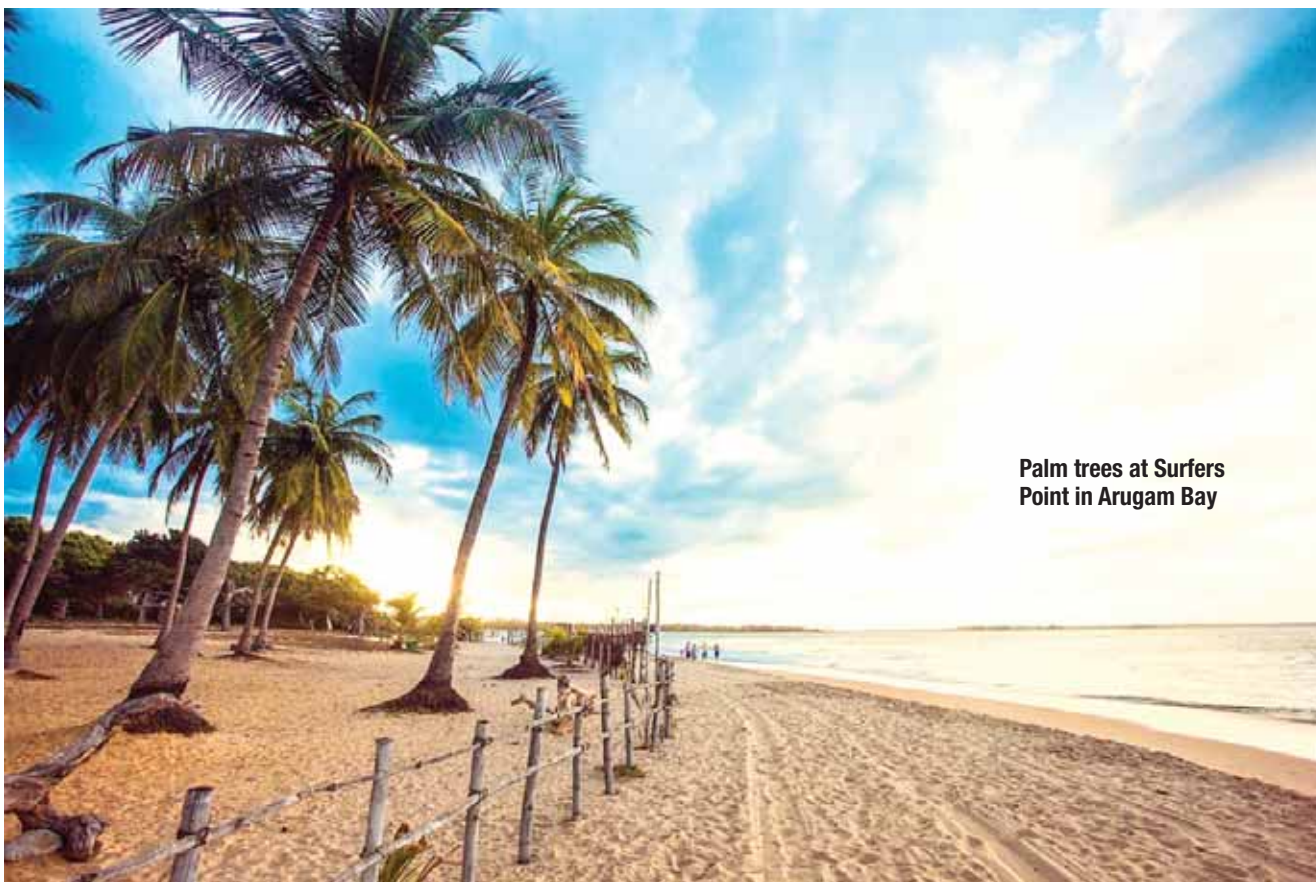
As far back as the 60s, intrepid boarders were venturing to these sleepy shores to surf fabled right-hand rollers and gnarly reef breaks, staying with local families or simply stretching out overnight on the warm sands. As word spread, the town's popularity grew, and today Arugam's turquoise waters host international surf competitions and are flecked with local and foreign boarders during the April-October high season.

Amateurs wishing to join the crowds should make use of one of the town's beachside surf schools. Safa Surf School, run by local surfer Fawas Lafeer, offers first-rate lessons from - remarkably patient - Sri Lankan instructors, while Dylan's Surf Company draws plaudits for its high-quality rental kit.

Parked surfboards in Arugam Bay



Lifestyle | Travel



Palm trees at Surfers Point in Arugam Bay

tuvil, a small town sprinkled with weathered mosques, churches and Buddhist temples.

The star attraction, however, is the Magul Maha Vihara, a 5th-century ruin wrapped in a tangle of forest. The atmospheric site is believed to have been a royal compound built by King Dhatusena (459-477AD), and despite its grand age is still home to a miraculously well-preserved moonstone encrusted with a ring of intricately-detailed elephants.

A walk on the wild side

Aside from the waves and insouciant aura, Arugam's other main draw is its proximity to areas of outstanding natural beauty, rich in wildlife. Arugam is flanked to the north and south by two large lagoons, where local fishermen row visitors between mangrove thickets in search of crocodiles, monitor lizards and a wealth of birdlife, ranging from peacocks to pelicans.

For the most magical encounters, book a visit in the morning or early evening, when temperatures are cool and the light paints the lake's still waters with a pleasant orange glow. Mangrove Eco-tours runs trips on the Pottuvil lagoon, while Panama Lagoon Eco Safaris operates on the Panama lagoon.

The real showstopper, however, is Kumana National Park, 11/2 hours from Arugam by road. Formerly known as Yala East, this 357-sq-km wildlife reserve is far less crowded than the nearby, more famous Yala National Park, but still boasts a stunning array of wildlife. The opportunity for up-close glimpses of the iconic Sri Lankan elephant is the park's central drawcard, but on a good day experienced eyes can spot leopards, white cobras and potentially one of the park's elusive bears.

When the wildlife spotting is done, rather than face the bumpy drive back to Arugam many visitors choose to overnight on the coast nearby, a blissful experience where tents are erected on empty stretches of sand and fresh fish are grilled on wood fires. There's really nothing else to do but grab a plate, listen to the surf roll in and, in the words of one sunglasses-sporting surf instructor, just relax, machan.—www.lonlyplanet.com

Seasoned surfers, meanwhile, can flag down a rickshaw and travel - with board strapped precariously to the roof - to less crowded beaches along this stretch of coast. A short rattle south of Arugam, Peanut Farm benefits from two rewarding breaks (one of which is reserved for experts), while Okanda, further south again, offers a legendary right-handed point break that rarely gets busy. To the north, Pottuvil Point offers a good alternative for newbies looking to branch out from the main bay.

Beauty and the beach

Back on dry land, Arugam's modest township appears almost as an embodiment of its surfer community's collective psyche: a scattering of relaxed homestays and eco-tinged eateries splaying from a single beachside road.

To sample the town's distinct flavor, travelers should head to Hideaway, serving fresh juices in a walled garden where swings dangle from shady trees and cane loungers are scattered around the coffee tables. Alternatively, the surf-obsessed owners of Happy Panda can whip you up a healthy, fruit-heavy breakfast with local curd each morning, and also provide three basic guestrooms set around a hammock-strewn courtyard.

That's not to say Arugam is only for the health conscious. Cosy Meena plates up sizable plates of Sri Lankan specialties, including giant portions of kotthu (rotti chopped up and mixed with veggies). Globe-trotting Breakpoint, on the main road through Arugam, serves tasty renditions of Israeli staples shakshuka and falafel, along with what's claimed to be Sri Lanka's largest schnitzel sandwich.

As the sun sets, wooden tables and chairs are dragged out onto the white sands. Charcoal BBQs are lit and a selection of fresh seafood is spread across countertops like scaley sirens, tempting hungry passers-by. Haggling over price after settling on your desired fillet is normal, but, in typical Arugam-style, is done with a smile and minimal zeal. Those not feeling sufficiently placated post-dinner should head to one of the town's bustling bars, where makeshift beach parties offer escapism of both the audible and liquid variety late into the evening.

A harmonious heritage

Given the growing number of expats and establishments catering to western tastes, first-time visitors to Arugam could be forgiven for thinking that the town's easygoing ethos has

been engineered as a result of foreign influence. But Arugam's penchant for a peaceful life predates the arrival of even the earliest wave riders. Geographically the town straddles the rough divide between Sri Lanka's Sinhalese-dominated south and the Tamil and Muslim-majority north, resulting in a cultural mixture of residents, who, despite the country's civil issues, have long cohabited in harmony. To get a sense of the region's rich history, spend a lazy afternoon strolling the streets of neighboring Pot-



Wild elephants roam the jungles and marshes of Kumana National Park

MAKE DELICIOUS DEVEILED EGGS WITHOUT THE STRAIN OR TORMENT

By America's Test Kitchen

The best deviled eggs start with the best hard-cooked eggs. Conventional wisdom insists that older eggs peel more easily than fresh eggs but we wanted to be able to start with eggs of any age and still end up with flawlessly smooth peeled results.

Instead of a cold-water start, we used our recipe for Easy-Peel Hard-Cooked Eggs, which calls for placing cold eggs directly into hot steam. This denatures

the outermost egg white proteins, causing them to shrink away from the shell membrane and making it easy to slip off the eggshells after cooking.

Fresh herbs, cider vinegar, Dijon, Worcestershire sauce, and cayenne elevated the flavor of the filling, and we also created two variations: one with aromatic curry powder and another with meat and fresh chives. This recipe can be doubled. If you prefer, use a pastry bag fitted with a large plain or star tip to fill the egg halves.

CLASSIC DEVEILED EGGS

Ingredients

Makes 12 egg halves
Start to finish: 35 minutes
6 large eggs
3 tablespoons mayonnaise
1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley, plus 12 small whole parsley leaves for garnishing
1 teaspoon cider vinegar
1 teaspoon mustard
1/4 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
Pinch cayenne pepper

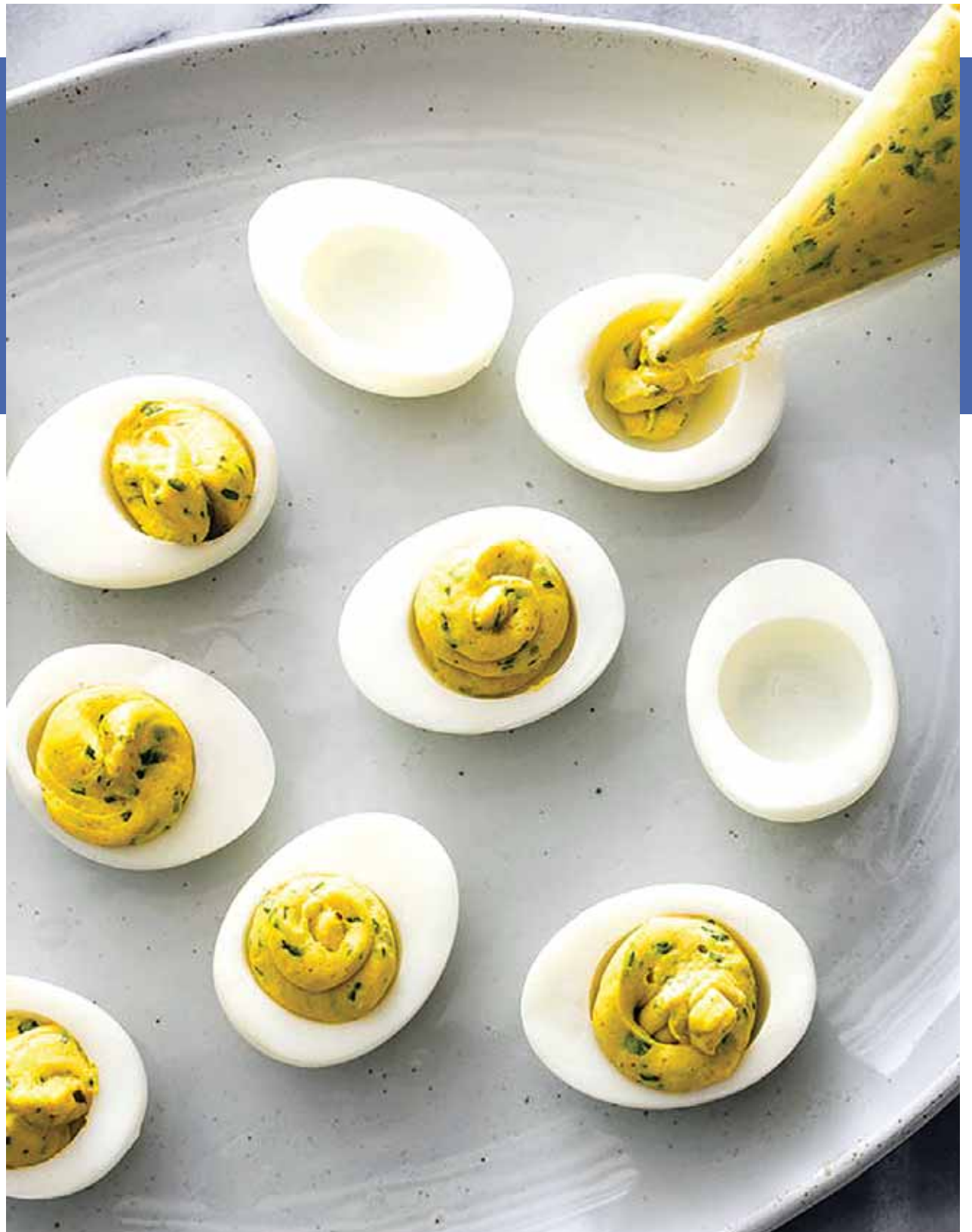
Preparation

Bring 1 inch water to rolling boil in medium saucepan over high heat. Place eggs in steamer basket. Transfer basket to saucepan. Cover, reduce heat to medium-low, and cook eggs for 13 minutes. When eggs are almost finished cooking, combine 2 cups ice cubes and 2 cups cold water in medium bowl. Using tongs or spoon, transfer eggs to ice bath; let sit for 15 minutes. Peel before using.

Halve eggs lengthwise with paring knife. Transfer yolks to bowl; arrange whites on serving platter. Mash yolks with fork until no large lumps remain. Add mayonnaise and use rubber spatula to smear mixture against side of bowl until thick, smooth paste forms, 1 to 2 minutes. Add minced parsley, vinegar, mustard, Worcestershire, and cayenne and mix until fully incorporated. Transfer yolk mixture to small heavy-duty plastic bag. Press mixture into 1 corner and twist top of bag. Using scissors, snip 1/2 inch off filled corner. Squeezing bag, pipe yolk mixture into egg white halves. Garnish with parsley leaves before serving.

Nutrition information per serving:

126 calories; 94 calories from fat; 10 g fat (2 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 189 mg cholesterol; 129 mg sodium; 1 g carbohydrate; 0 g fiber; 1 g sugar; 6 g protein.



COOKING ON DEADLINE: CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER ICE CREAM PIE

By Katie Workman

If you want to end a summer celebration or gathering with a big old bang, you would be hard pressed to pick a better dessert than an ice cream pie. Somehow, ice cream stuffed into a pie crust just seems so much more festive and decadent and sultry than bowls of ice cream. And it's one of the easiest-to-make treats on the planet. Especially this version, with the classic chocolate, vanilla and peanut butter cup thing happening. Not to mention the whipped cream.

Often, ice cream pies have cookie crusts of some sort, but I had a refrigerated pie crust hanging around and decided to blind bake the crust and use that as the base for this pie. Blind baking means baking a pie crust on its own, so that it can be fully cooked and wonderfully flaky before you start piling in a filling that doesn't need to be cooked, like a chocolate mousse or all kinds of icebox pies.

For this recipe, fit the pie dough (homemade or from a package) into the pan, line the dough with parchment paper, cover it with weights of some sort (like

dried rice or beans) so the dough stays in place without shrinking or bubbling, and bake it. There are also pie weights available for the dedicated baker.

A few other tips: Leaving the crust in the freezer for an hour or so before putting it in the oven helps it keep its shape while baking. Also, save the rice or beans you used to weigh down the crust for another time. Place them in a jar and label them "baking beans" or "baking rice," and they won't go to waste (you can't cook them once they've been in the oven).

For the cleanest, smoothest layers, pop the pie back into the freezer for a bit after you add each layer of ice cream. If you have thought ahead enough to spread the pie-building process over a full day or two, this is very doable. But if a magazine-quality cross-section isn't your deepest wish, then skip that step and just spread the ice cream layers carefully, so they remain discrete from one another. The pie will keep for five days in the freezer. Make the whipped cream just before serving. You can also slice the pie without with the whipped cream, and serve individual slices with whipped cream added to each piece if you prefer.

CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER CUP ICE CREAM PIE

Ingredients

Serves 8-10
Start to finish: 5 hours (more if you are spreading out the steps)
1 refrigerated pie crust
1 pint vanilla ice cream
1 pint chocolate ice cream
25 miniature peanut butter cups, chilled and coarsely chopped, divided
3/4 cup cold heavy cream
3 tablespoons confectioner's sugar
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Preparation

Let the pie crust sit at room temperature for 15 to 20 minutes before starting. To blind bake the crust, transfer it to a 9-inch pie pan. Gently press it into the pan, into the corners and up the sides.

Fold the edges underneath themselves to form a thick rim that hangs just over the edge of the pie pan. Crimp the edges attractively. Place the crust in the freezer and chill for 30 minutes to one hour (you can also leave it overnight if you want to get this step done ahead of time).

Before you take the pie out, preheat the oven to 375 F. Prick the crust in several places with a fork. Line the inside of the crust with parchment paper, then fill it with dry rice or dried beans. Bake the crust for 20 minutes, and then carefully remove the parchment paper with the grains or beans inside. Return the crust to the oven and bake for another 18 to 20 minutes, until the crust is golden. Remove and let cool completely on a wire rack.

Take both ice creams out of the freezer and let soften slightly. In a medium-size bowl, combine the vanilla ice cream with 3/4 of the peanut butter cups, blending until they are well combined.

Scoop half of the chocolate ice cream into the cooled crust, spread it evenly, and smooth the top with an offset spatula or the

back of a spoon. (See Cooking Tip at bottom). Turn the vanilla ice cream with the peanut butter cups on top of the chocolate ice cream and spread that out evenly, trying not to disrupt the bottom chocolate ice cream layer. Scoop the remaining chocolate ice cream on top, and smooth out that layer. Return the pie to the freezer to firm up completely, at least 3 hours and up to 5 days. If you are storing the pie for more than a few hours, cover the top tightly with plastic wrap.

Just before you are ready to serve the pie, place the cream, confectioners' sugar and vanilla in a mixing bowl. Use an electric mixer to blend the cream until firm peaks just form. Scoop the whipped cream attractively over the top of the pie. Let it sit for 10 minutes to soften just slightly before cutting. Use a sharp knife that has been dipped into a cup of hot water and then wiped dry to cut slices of the pie. Do this dip and wipe between each slice.

Make asparagus sing with mustard, soy sauce and honey

By Melissa D'arabian

Asparagus is truly jam-packed with vitamins and minerals, with a cup of asparagus providing more than 10 percent of your daily requirement of at least 10 vitamins and minerals. The same cup has 3 grams each of protein and fiber, so it's filling, and is under 30 calories. So it's a worthy investment to get your family on board. You can serve asparagus in hundreds of ways, cooked or raw, or even in between - cooking the outside for sweetness and keeping the inside cool, fresh with and with some snap.

Chop raw asparagus and serve it as a salad, dressed simply in lemon juice, olive oil, maybe a little garlic, black pepper and a sprinkle of parmesan cheese. Or steam it quickly - 3-4 minutes is usually enough - and then toss in a little olive

oil and nutritional yeast, or the tiniest pat of butter. Cut the stalks into bite-sized pieces to bulk up a stir fry - the Asian flavor profile highlights the sweet asparagus flavor. Or our Tuesday night go-to: toss in a little olive oil and salt, and roast at 400 F for 7-8 minutes.

Today's recipe is a simple but flavorful saute. I use soy sauce instead of salt, which adds umami. A tiny bit of Dijon mustard and a touch of honey create a luscious glaze that makes the asparagus sing. Whatever you decide to do with the asparagus, you can turn leftovers into a soup simply by whirring up with a little broth and lemon juice in a blender until smooth. Unless, you are like our family, where asparagus leftovers are merely a hypothetical scenario.

SAUTEED ASPARAGUS IN SOY SAUCE GLAZE

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 pounds of fresh asparagus, tough ends trimmed
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- pinch red pepper flakes (optional)
- 2 teaspoons soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard

Preparation

Rinse trimmed asparagus stalks, and shake dry, leaving them damp. Heat the olive oil in a large saute pan over medium high heat. Add the sliced garlic and red pepper flakes (if using) and stir with a wooden spoon until fragrant and starting to turn golden brown, about 1-2 minutes. Add the asparagus and cook for two minutes, stirring with the wooden spoon. In a small bowl, mix together the soy sauce and lemon juice. Carefully pour over the asparagus, and stir once to disperse the sauce. Cover with a lid (or a baking sheet if pan is too large for a lid), and let steam for 2 minutes.

Meanwhile, mix honey and mustard in the small bowl. Uncover the asparagus and stir. Drizzle or spoon the honey mustard mixture over the asparagus and cook until a glaze just starts to form (it will thicken as it cools), about two more minutes, stirring frequently. Transfer to a platter and serve.

Nutrition information per serving

- 46 calories
- 13 calories from fat
- 2 g fat (0 g saturated; 0 g trans fats)
- 0 mg cholesterol
- 138 mg sodium
- 7 g carbohydrate
- 2 g fiber
- 3 g sugar
- 3 g protein



Comic

WORD SEARCH

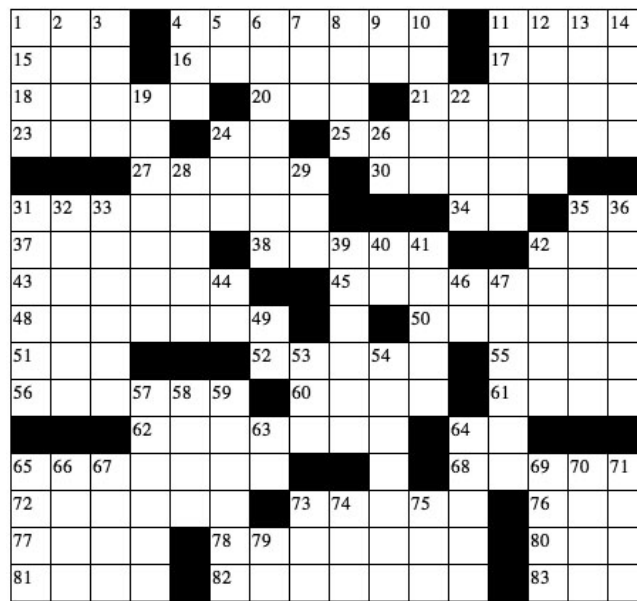
Refrigerator

Find and circle all of the refrigerator items that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional item found in many refrigerators.

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

- | | | | |
|----------|-----------|-------------|--------------|
| APPLES | DRAWERS | LETTUCE | ORANGES |
| BACON | DRINKS | LIGHTBULB | PEAS |
| BANANAS | EGGS | MAGNETS | POULTRY |
| BREAD | GRAPES | MAPLE SYRUP | PRODUCE |
| BROCCOLI | ICE CUBES | MAYONNAISE | SHELVES |
| BUTTER | JAM | MEAT | SPINACH |
| CAKE | JUICES | MILK | STRAWBERRIES |
| CARROTS | KETCHUP | MUSTARD | WATER |
| CHEESE | LEFTOVERS | OLIVES | YOGURT |
| COLD | LEMONS | | |

CROSSWORD 1940



ACROSS

- Syndrome resulting from a serious acute (sometimes fatal) infection associated with the presence of staphylococcus.
- Sweet liqueur made from wine and brandy flavored with plum or peach or apricot kernels and bitter almonds.
- Ditch dug as a fortification and usually filled with water.
- South American wood sorrel cultivated for its edible tubers.
- A soft gray ductile metallic element used in alloys.
- Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
- A port in western Israel on the Mediterranean.
- Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
- (Norse mythology) God of light and peace and noted for his beauty and sweet nature.
- Chocolate cookie with white cream filling.
- The state capital of South Australia.
- (folklore) A corpse that rises at night to drink the blood of the living.
- A condensed but memorable saying embodying some important fact of experience that is taken as true by many people.
- Decorated with designs of sprigs.
- An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
- Of or relating to or involving an area.
- A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
- A tenant in someone's house.
- Medium tall celery pine of New Zealand.
- Pertaining to or characteristic of an ascetic.
- Relating to or characteristic of the Celts.
- Extinct flightless bird of New Zealand.
- A port city of south central Ukraine on an arm of the Black Sea.
- A medicine or therapy that cures disease or relieve pain.
- The striking of one body against another.
- Type genus of the Anatidae.
- (of persons) Highest in rank or authority or office.
- English writer (born in France) of novels and short stories (1874-1965).
- Any of the radiating leaflike spore-producing structures on the underside of the cap of a mushroom or similar fungus.
- A Bantu language spoken by the Kamba people in Kenya.
- A member of the people inhabiting an area of northern Mongolia and eastern Siberia.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- Bound or secured closely.
- A tricycle (usually propelled by pedaling).
- A reptile genus of Iguanidae.
- The probability of a specified outcome.
- A state in the southeastern United States on the Gulf of Mexico.
- Workplace for the conduct of scientific research.

DOWN

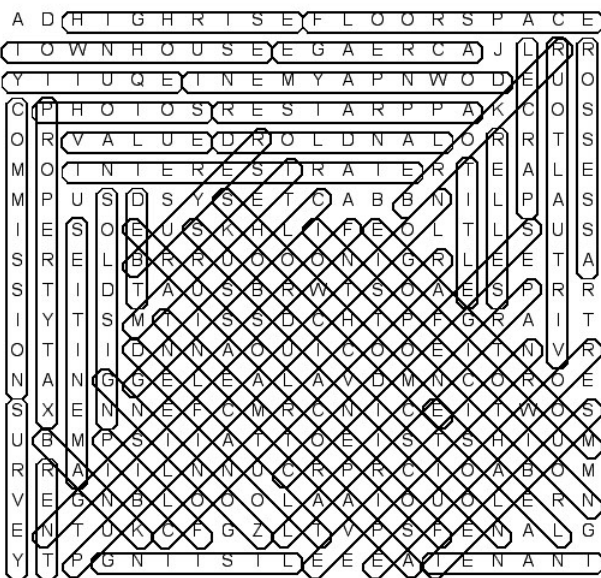
- Japanese army officer who initiated the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and who assumed dictatorial control of

- Japan during World War II.
- A mark left by the healing of injured tissue.
- Free from risk or danger.
- A nucleic acid that transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm.
- The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
- 1 species.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- A tax on employees and employers that is used to fund the Social Security system.
- A bivalent and trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
- To fix or set securely or deeply.
- A port city and resort in Andalusia in southern Spain on the Mediterranean.
- A song that was formerly popular.
- Advanced in years.
- Any of several weedy vetches grown for forage.
- The main organ of photosynthesis and transpiration in higher plants.
- (botany) Of or relating to the axil.
- A graphical record of electric currents associated with muscle contractions.
- An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
- Metal or plastic sheath over the end of a shoelace or ribbon.
- A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
- A frequently prescribed sleeping pill (trade name ProSom).
- (British) A member of the military police.
- Canna grown especially for its edible rootstock from which arrowroot starch is obtained.
- Positioned so as to be ready for confrontation or danger.

- (Greek mythology) Goddess of wisdom and useful arts and prudent warfare.
- A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
- A Chadic language spoken in northern Nigeria and closely related to Hausa.
- A numerical quantity measured or assigned or computed.
- A state in New England.
- (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- A member of a South American Indian people in Peru who were formerly the ruling class of the Inca empire.
- A heavy odorless colorless gas formed during respiration and by the decomposition of organic substances.
- The longer of the two telegraphic signals used in Morse code.
- An Italian liqueur made with elderberries and flavored with licorice.
- A sum of money paid in compensation for loss or injury.
- A metal cleat on the bottom front of a horseshoe to prevent slipping.
- Eurasian perennial bulbous herbs.
- A rare silvery (usually trivalent) metallic element.
- Jordan's port.
- (often followed by 'for') Ardently or excessively desirous.
- (archaic) A fitting reward.
- A heavy long-handled hammer used to drive stakes or wedges.
- A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
- An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
- Horny projecting mouth of a bird.
- A rapid escape (as by criminals).
- Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).

Yesterday's Solution

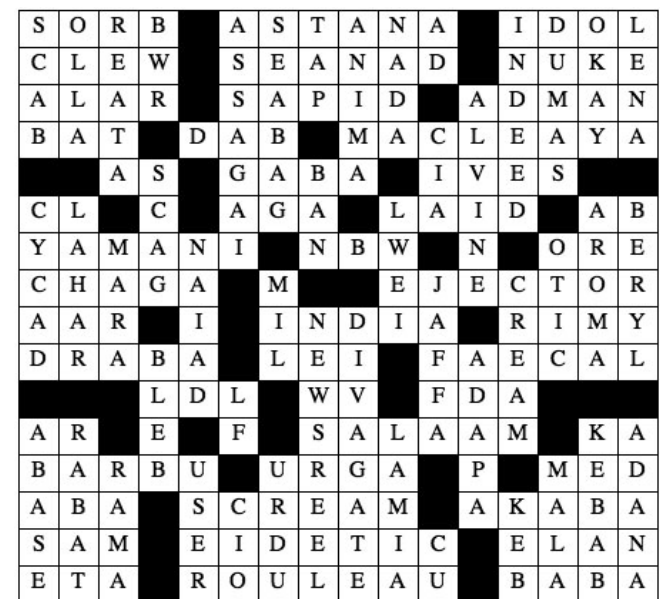
Real Estate 2



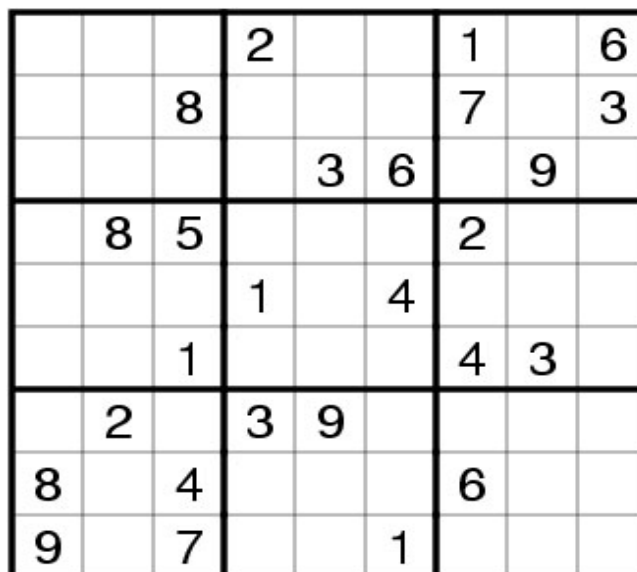
- | | | | |
|------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| ACREAGE | DEBT | LANDLORD | SELLER |
| AMENITIES | DEFAULT | LEASE | SHOW HOME |
| APARTMENT | DOWN PAYMENT | LISTING | SOLD SIGN |
| APPRAISER | EQUITY | MARKET | SUBDIVISION |
| ASSESSOR | EVICTON | MORTGAGE | SUBLET |
| BANK | FLIP | PARCEL | SURVEY |
| BROKER | FLOOR SPACE | PHOTOS | TENANT |
| BUYER | FOR SALE SIGN | PRINCIPAL | TITLE |
| CLOSING | FORECLOSURE | PROPERTY TAX | TOWNHOUSE |
| COMMISSION | HIGH RISE | PUBLIC AUCTION | VALUE |
| CONDO FEES | INSPECTION | RENT | VIRTUAL TOUR |
| CONTRACTOR | INTEREST RATE | ROW HOUSE | ZONING |

The hidden message is: ADJUSTABLE-RATE MORTGAGE

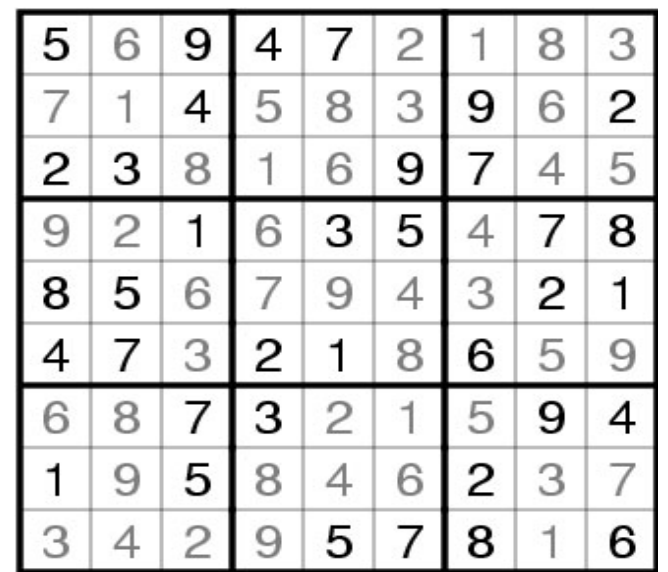
Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



TV Listings

AM MOVIES
ACTION

01:20 American Ninja II: The Confrontation
02:55 Point Break
04:55 Time Trap
06:30 American Ninja II: The Confrontation
08:10 911 Nightmare
09:45 Point Break
11:45 Resident Evil: Vendetta
13:30 Allegiant
15:40 Kung Fu Yoga
17:35 Standoff
19:05 Rampage: President Down
20:50 Transporter 2
22:20 The Assignment



00:45 Mekong: Soul Of A River
01:40 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
02:35 Escape To Chimp Eden
03:00 Escape To Chimp Eden
03:25 Lone Star Law
04:15 North Woods Law
05:02 Wildest Arctic
05:49 Untamed & Uncut
06:36 Meet The Penguins
07:00 Orangutan Island
07:25 Escape To Chimp Eden
07:50 Escape To Chimp Eden
08:15 Mekong: Soul Of A River
09:10 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
10:05 Wildest Arctic
11:00 Escape To Chimp Eden
11:28 Escape To Chimp Eden
11:55 Lone Star Law
12:50 North Woods Law
13:45 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
14:40 Wildest Arctic
15:35 Untamed & Uncut
16:30 Mekong: Soul Of A River
17:25 Missouri Mountain Family
18:20 Life At Vet University
19:15 Cats 101
20:10 Escape To Chimp Eden
20:38 Escape To Chimp Eden
21:05 Missouri Mountain Family
22:00 Dodo Heroes
22:55 Wildest Islands
23:50 Untamed & Uncut



00:25 Friday Night Dinner
00:50 New Tricks
01:45 Holby City
02:40 Dickensian
04:15 Friday Night Dinner
04:40 The Detectives
05:10 Agatha Raisin
06:00 EastEnders
06:35 EastEnders
07:05 Holby City
08:00 Doctors
09:00 EastEnders
09:30 Hold The Sunset
10:00 Carters Get Rich
10:25 New Tricks
11:20 Casualty
12:15 Holby City
13:10 Doctors
13:40 EastEnders
14:10 Casualty
15:05 Hold The Sunset
15:35 Carters Get Rich
16:00 Doctors
18:00 EastEnders
18:30 Hold The Sunset
19:00 New Tricks
20:00 Trauma
20:50 Shakespeare And Hathaway: Private Investigators
21:40 Poldark
22:45 I Want My Wife Back
23:45 Father Brown



00:00 Homicide Hunter
01:00 Homicide Hunter
01:55 Evil Up Close

02:50 Evil Up Close
03:45 Homicide Hunter
04:30 Homicide Hunter
05:15 The First 48
06:00 Homicide Hunter
07:00 It Takes A Killer
07:20 The First 48
08:05 Homicide Hunter
08:50 Cold Case Files
09:35 Crimes That Shook Australia
10:30 Crimes That Shook Britain
11:25 Crimes That Shook Britain
12:20 Crimes That Shook Britain
13:15 Evil Up Close
14:10 Homicide Hunter
15:05 It Takes A Killer
15:35 It Takes A Killer
16:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
17:00 The First 48
18:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
19:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
20:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
21:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
22:00 Monster In My Family
23:00 The First 48



00:05 South Park
00:30 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
00:55 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
01:20 Nightcap
01:45 Tosh.0
02:10 South Park
02:35 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
03:25 Nightcap
03:50 Nightcap
04:15 I Used To Be Fat
05:05 I Used To Be Fat
05:55 Disaster Date
06:20 Disaster Date
06:50 Disaster Date
07:15 Disaster Date
07:40 The Jim Gaffigan Show
08:05 The Jim Gaffigan Show
08:30 Bondi Ink.
09:20 Bondi Ink.
10:10 Hillbillies For Hire
10:35 Hillbillies For Hire
11:00 Friendszone
11:25 Friendszone
11:50 Friendszone
12:15 Disaster Date
12:40 Disaster Date
13:05 Ridiculousness
13:30 Ridiculousness
13:55 The It Crowd
14:20 The It Crowd
14:45 The It Crowd
15:10 The It Crowd
16:00 House Of Food
16:55 Impractical Jokers
17:20 Impractical Jokers
17:45 Friends
18:10 Friends
18:35 Friends
19:00 Friends
19:25 Friends
19:50 Takeshis Castle Thailand
20:12 Takeshis Castle Thailand
20:35 Graves
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 Chris Ramsey Stand Up Central
22:00 Amy Schumer-Mark Normand: Don't Be Yourself
22:50 Inside Amy Schumer
23:15 Chris Ramsey Stand Up Central
23:40 Russell Simmons Presents: The Ruckus



00:30 Kids Do The Craziest Things
00:55 Kids Do The Craziest Things
01:20 How It's Made
01:45 How It's Made
02:10 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
03:00 Tanked
03:50 Ultimate Survival
04:40 How The Universe Works
05:30 Weather Top Tens
06:20 How It's Made
06:40 How It's Made
07:00 Kids Do The Craziest Things
07:25 Kids Do The Craziest Things

07:50 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
08:40 How It's Made
09:05 How It's Made
09:30 Tanked
10:20 Ultimate Survival
11:10 Kids Do The Craziest Things
11:35 Kids Do The Craziest Things
12:00 How It's Made
12:25 How It's Made
12:50 Don't Blink
13:15 Don't Blink
13:40 The Carbonaro Effect
14:05 The Carbonaro Effect
14:30 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
15:20 How It's Made
15:45 How It's Made
16:10 Ultimate Survival
17:00 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
17:50 Tanked
18:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things
19:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things
19:30 Don't Blink
19:55 Don't Blink
20:20 The Carbonaro Effect
20:45 The Carbonaro Effect
21:10 How It's Made
21:35 How It's Made
22:00 Ultimate Survival
22:50 Don't Blink
23:15 Don't Blink
23:40 The Carbonaro Effect



00:45 Betrayed
01:40 Blood Relatives
02:35 Murder Calls
03:30 The Detectives Club: New Orleans
04:25 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
05:20 I Almost Got Away With It
06:10 Murder By Numbers
07:00 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
07:25 Murder Calls
08:15 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
09:10 The Perfect Murder
10:05 Chandra Levy: A Mistress Murdered
11:00 Disappeared
11:55 Murder Calls
12:50 I Almost Got Away With It
13:45 Murder By Numbers
14:40 Chandra Levy: A Mistress Murdered
15:35 The Detectives Club: New Orleans
16:30 Murder Calls
17:25 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
18:20 I Almost Got Away With It
19:15 Murder By Numbers
20:10 Chandra Levy: A Mistress Murdered
21:05 Bride Killa
22:00 Murder Calls
22:55 Murder Calls
23:50 James Patterson's Murder Is Forever



00:00 Hank Zipzer
00:25 Alex & Co.
00:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
00:50 Evermoor Chronicles
01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:05 Binny And The Ghost
02:30 Binny And The Ghost
02:55 Hank Zipzer
03:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
03:20 Hank Zipzer
03:45 Alex & Co.
04:10 Alex & Co.
04:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
05:00 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
05:25 Binny And The Ghost
05:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
05:50 Rolling With The Ronks
06:00 Raven's Home
06:25 Tangled
06:55 Hotel Transylvania

07:20 Stuck In The Middle
07:45 K.C. Undercover
08:10 Bunk'd
08:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
09:25 Tangled
09:50 Tangled
10:15 Bizaardvark
10:40 Bizaardvark
11:05 Liv And Maddie
11:55 K.C. Undercover
12:20 K.C. Undercover
12:45 Hotel Transylvania
13:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
13:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
14:00 Hotel Transylvania
14:15 Bunk'd
14:40 K.C. Undercover
15:10 Kitty Is Not A Cat
15:35 Elena Of Avalor
16:00 Tangled
16:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
16:50 Raven's Home
17:15 Stuck In The Middle
17:40 Hotel Transylvania
18:05 Hotel Transylvania
18:30 Hotel Transylvania
19:00 Hotel Transylvania
19:25 Liv And Maddie
19:50 K.C. Undercover
20:20 Tangled
20:45 Bizaardvark
21:35 Stuck In The Middle
22:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
22:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
22:50 Lolirock
23:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
23:35 Binny And The Ghost



00:00 Trulli Tales
00:30 PJ Masks
00:55 Trulli Tales
01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
01:35 Calimero
01:50 Henry Hugglemonster
02:05 Art Attack
02:30 The Hive
02:40 Loopdidoo
02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
03:10 Art Attack
03:35 Loopdidoo
03:50 Calimero
04:05 Art Attack
04:30 Henry Hugglemonster
04:45 Henry Hugglemonster
05:00 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
05:45 Loopdidoo
06:00 Henry Hugglemonster
06:15 Calimero
06:30 PJ Masks
07:00 Trulli Tales
07:25 PJ Masks
07:30 Puppy Dog Pals
07:45 Doc McStuffins
08:00 Jake And The Neverland Pirates
08:15 PJ Masks
08:30 Vampirina
09:00 Doc McStuffins Toy Hospital
09:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
09:55 Unbungalievable
10:00 Puppy Dog Pals
10:30 Puppy Dog Pals
11:00 Puppy Dog Pals
11:30 Puppy Dog Pals
12:00 Puppy Dog Pals
12:30 Puppy Dog Pals
13:00 Puppy Dog Pals
13:30 Vampirina
14:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
16:00 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
16:30 Trulli Tales
17:00 Vampirina
17:30 PJ Masks
18:00 The Lion Guard
18:30 First Responders To The Rescue
19:30 Sofia The First
20:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
20:30 Vampirina

21:00 Trulli Tales
21:30 Sofia The First
22:00 First Responders To The Rescue
22:55 Minnie's Bow-Toons
23:00 Mission Force One
23:30 PJ Masks



00:15 Deadliest Catch
01:05 Darkness
01:50 Dark Woods Justice
02:35 Strip The City
03:20 Street Outlaws
04:05 Alaska: The Last Frontier
04:50 Kindig Customs
05:35 Storage Hunters UK
06:00 Backroad Bounty
06:45 Storage Hunters UK
07:10 How Do They Do It?
07:35 Alaska: The Last Frontier
08:20 Backroad Bounty
09:10 Kindig Customs
09:55 Alaska: The Last Frontier
10:45 Kindig Customs
11:30 Deadliest Catch
12:20 Backroad Bounty
13:05 Storage Hunters UK
13:30 How Do They Do It?
13:55 Kindig Customs
14:40 Deadliest Catch
15:30 Darkness
16:15 Dark Woods Justice
17:05 Strip The City
17:50 Bushcraft Build-Off
18:40 The Wheel
19:25 Deadliest Catch
20:15 Street Outlaws
21:00 Sticker Shock
21:50 American Chopper
22:40 Twin Turbos
23:30 Jungle Gold



06:00 Marvel's Spider-Man
06:25 Lab Rats
06:50 Phineas And Ferb
07:05 DuckTales
07:32 Big City Greens
07:45 Furiki Wheels
08:00 Phineas And Ferb
08:25 Phineas And Ferb
08:50 Lab Rats
09:15 Lab Rats
09:40 Milo Murphy's Law
10:30 Gravity Falls
11:20 Lab Rats
11:45 Lab Rats
12:10 Phineas And Ferb
13:00 Lab Rats: Crush, Chop & Burn
13:50 Lab Rats
15:05 Supa Strikas
15:32 Lab Rats
16:00 DuckTales
16:25 Disney Mickey Mouse
16:32 Big Hero 6 The Series
16:55 Big Hero 6 The Series: Shorts
17:00 Big City Greens
17:10 Big City Greens
17:25 DuckTales
17:32 Furiki Wheels
18:00 Lab Rats
18:25 Lab Rats
18:50 Phineas And Ferb
19:00 Disney II
19:30 Walk The Prank
19:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
20:00 DuckTales
20:25 Two More Eggs
20:32 Big Hero 6 The Series
21:00 Marvel's Spider-Man
21:25 Star Wars Rebels
21:50 Phineas And Ferb
22:05 Furiki Wheels
22:20 Big City Greens
22:35 Phineas And Ferb
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am
KSA



00:05 WAGs LA
00:55 WAGs LA
01:50 E! News
02:50 Botched

03:40 Botched
04:35 Botched
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 Second Wives Club
06:55 E! News Middle East
07:10 Botched
08:10 E! News: Daily Pop
09:10 Botched
12:00 E! News Middle East
12:15 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
13:10 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
14:05 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
15:00 E! News Middle East
15:15 E! News: Daily Pop
16:15 Botched
17:10 Botched
19:00 E! News
20:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
23:00 E! News Middle East
23:15 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian



00:10 Couples Come Dine With Me
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:30 The Chase
03:25 What Would Your Kid Do?
04:20 One Night With My Ex
05:15 Couples Come Dine With Me
06:15 Cash Trapped
07:10 The Chase
08:05 What Would Your Kid Do?
09:00 One Night With My Ex
09:55 Couples Come Dine With Me
11:00 Cash Trapped
11:50 The Chase
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Emmerdale
13:45 Coronation Street
14:15 Cash Trapped
15:10 The Chase
16:00 One Night With My Ex
16:55 Autopsy: The Last Hours Of...
17:50 Couples Come Dine With Me
18:50 Emmerdale
19:15 Emmerdale
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 The Chase
21:00 One Night With My Ex
21:55 Autopsy: The Last Hours Of...
22:50 Emmerdale
23:40 Coronation Street



00:00 Cities Of The Underworld
01:00 Modern Marvels
02:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
02:50 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
03:40 Search For The Lost Giants
04:30 Clash Of Warriors
05:20 Million Dollar Genius
06:10 Million Dollar Genius
07:00 Cities Of The Underworld
08:00 Modern Marvels
09:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
10:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
11:00 Search For The Lost Giants
12:00 Clash Of Warriors
13:00 Cities Of The Underworld
14:00 Modern Marvels
15:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
16:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
17:00 Search For The Lost Giants
18:00 Cities Of The Underworld
19:00 Modern Marvels
20:00 In Search Of Aliens
21:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
22:00 Missing In Alaska
23:00 Clash Of Warriors



00:20 Ax Men
01:10 Mountain Men
02:00 Swamp People
02:50 American Ripper In London
03:40 Hunting Hitler

TV Listings

04:30 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
 05:15 Ax Men
 06:00 Ax Men
 06:50 Ax Men
 07:40 Ax Men
 08:30 Ax Men
 09:20 Ax Men
 10:10 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
 11:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
 14:20 Hunting Hitler
 15:10 Hunting Hitler
 16:00 Hunting Hitler
 16:50 Hunting Hitler
 17:40 Hunting Hitler
 18:30 102 Minutes That Changed America: 15th Anniversary
 20:10 Detroit Steel
 21:00 Road Hawks
 21:50 Ax Men
 22:40 Ax Men
 23:30 Ax Men



00:15 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
 00:45 Testing The Menu With Nic Watt
 01:10 Angelo's Outdoor Kitchen
 01:40 Dog Whisperer
 02:35 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
 03:00 A Is For Apple
 03:30 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Med
 04:25 Places We Go
 04:50 Fish Of The Day
 05:20 Fish Tank Kings
 06:15 Fearless Chef
 07:10 Dog Whisperer
 08:05 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
 08:30 A Is For Apple
 09:00 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Med
 09:55 Places We Go
 10:20 Fish Of The Day
 10:50 Fish Tank Kings
 11:45 Fearless Chef
 12:40 Dog Whisperer
 13:35 Dog Whisperer
 14:30 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Med
 15:25 Places We Go
 15:50 Fish Tank Kings
 16:45 Fish Of The Day
 17:15 Fearless Chef
 18:10 Raw Travel
 18:35 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
 19:05 Dog Whisperer
 20:00 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Med
 21:00 Places We Go
 21:30 Fish Of The Day
 22:00 Fish Tank Kings
 22:55 Fearless Chef
 23:50 Raw Travel



00:10 WW2 Hell Under The Sea
 01:00 Nazi Underworld
 02:00 Airport Security: Peru
 03:00 Mega Factories: Vestel
 04:00 WW2 Hell Under The Sea
 05:00 Street Genius
 05:30 Street Genius
 06:00 Strippers: Cars For Cash
 07:00 Breakthrough
 08:00 The Great Human Race
 09:00 Street Genius
 09:30 Street Genius
 10:00 Inside North Korea
 11:00 Airport Security: Peru
 12:00 Marco Polo: The China Mystery Revealed
 12:30 Marco Polo: The China Mystery Revealed
 13:00 Strippers: Cars For Cash
 14:00 The Great Human Race
 15:00 On Thin Ice: Jade's Polar Dream
 16:00 Inside
 17:00 Airport Security: Peru
 18:00 WW2 Hell Under The Sea
 19:00 Nazi Underworld

20:00 Inside
 20:50 Airport Security: Peru
 21:40 WW2 Hell Under The Sea
 22:30 Nazi Underworld
 23:20 World's Toughest Fixes



00:20 Battle Of The Swamp Dragons
 01:10 Ultimate Animal Countdown
 02:00 Ultimate Predator
 02:50 Wild 24
 03:45 Natural Born Monsters
 04:40 Wild Russia
 05:35 Ultimate Predator
 06:30 Wild 24
 07:25 Natural Born Monsters
 08:20 Wild Russia (2018)
 09:15 Snakes In The City
 10:10 Wild Congo
 11:05 1000 Days For The Planet
 12:00 When Sharks Attack
 12:55 Brutal Killers
 13:50 Wild 24
 14:45 When Crocs Ate Dinosaurs
 15:40 Wild Russia
 16:35 Snakes In The City
 17:30 Russia's Wild Sea
 18:25 Mission Critical
 19:20 When Crocs Ate Dinosaurs
 20:10 Wild Russia
 21:00 Snakes In The City
 21:50 Russia's Wild Sea
 22:40 Mission Critical
 23:30 When Sharks Attack



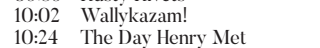
00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
 00:36 Rabbids Invasion
 01:24 Sanjay And Craig
 02:12 Winx Club
 03:00 Harvey Beaks
 03:48 Rabbids Invasion
 04:36 Breadwinners
 05:00 Breadwinners
 05:24 The Loud House
 05:48 Harvey Beaks
 06:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
 06:36 SpongeBob SquarePants
 07:00 Breadwinners
 07:24 Welcome To The Wayne
 07:48 Sanjay And Craig
 08:12 Rabbids Invasion
 08:36 The Loud House
 09:00 Regal Academy
 09:24 Winx Club
 09:48 Game Shakers
 10:12 School Of Rock
 10:36 Henry Danger
 11:00 The Thundermans
 13:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
 13:48 Knight Squad
 15:48 The Adventures Of Kid Danger
 17:48 Hunter Street
 18:12 Henry Danger
 18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky And Dawn
 19:00 School Of Rock
 19:24 Game Shakers
 19:48 The Thundermans
 20:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
 20:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
 21:00 Harvey Beaks
 21:24 Breadwinners
 21:48 Bunsen Is A Beast
 22:12 Sanjay And Craig
 22:36 Rabbids Invasion
 23:00 The Loud House
 23:24 Regal Academy
 23:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles



00:08 Max & Ruby
 00:30 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
 00:41 Kiva Can Do!
 00:52 The Day Henry Met
 00:58 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 01:20 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 01:42 Paw Patrol

01:54 Kid-E-Cats
 01:58 Kid-E-Cats
 02:03 Shimmer And Shine
 02:26 Nella The Princess Knight
 02:38 Paw Patrol
 03:01 Max & Ruby
 03:24 Dora The Explorer
 03:47 Sunny Day
 04:09 Nella The Princess Knight
 04:31 Shimmer And Shine
 04:54 Wallykazam!
 05:17 Zack & Quack
 05:28 The Day Henry Met
 05:33 The Day Henry Met
 05:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 06:00 Rusty Rivets
 06:13 Paw Patrol
 06:37 Dora The Explorer
 07:00 Nella The Princess Knight
 07:21 Kiva Can Do!
 09:15 Kiva Can Do!
 07:43 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 08:05 Paw Patrol
 08:29 Shimmer And Shine
 08:52 Nella The Princess Knight
 09:15 Paw Patrol
 09:39 Rusty Rivets
 10:02 Wallykazam!
 10:24 The Day Henry Met
 10:30 Bubble Guppies
 10:54 Team Umizoomi
 11:16 Kid-E-Cats
 11:22 Shimmer And Shine
 11:45 Sunny Day
 12:07 Max & Ruby
 12:29 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
 12:40 Kiva Can Do!
 12:51 The Day Henry Met
 12:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
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 13:53 Kid-E-Cats
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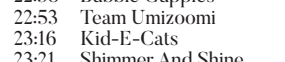
09:50 The Goldbergs
 10:15 The Goldbergs
 10:40 Community
 11:05 People Of Earth
 11:30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
 12:20 Alone Together
 12:45 Life In Pieces
 13:10 How I Met Your Mother
 13:35 How I Met Your Mother
 14:00 Suburgatory
 14:25 Suburgatory
 14:50 Community
 15:15 The Goldbergs
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 18:00 How I Met Your Mother
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 19:00 Suburgatory
 19:30 Suburgatory
 20:00 The Good Place
 21:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
 22:00 Will And Grace 2017
 22:30 Better Things
 23:00 LA To Vegas
 23:25 Late Night With Seth Meyers



00:30 Pirates Of The Caribbean: On Stranger Tides
 03:00 The Little Mermaid: Ariel's Beginning
 04:30 Herbie Fully Loaded
 06:30 Pirates Of The Caribbean: On Stranger Tides
 09:00 Moana
 11:00 Herbie Fully Loaded
 13:00 Pocahontas
 14:45 The Country Bears
 16:45 College Road Trip
 18:45 Oz The Great And Powerful
 21:00 Pocahontas
 22:45 The Country Bears



00:00 This Is Us
 01:00 Outlander
 02:00 The Flash
 02:50 Quantico
 03:40 9-1-1
 04:30 This Is Us
 05:20 Supergirl
 06:10 Once Upon A Time
 07:00 Good Morning America
 09:00 The View
 10:00 9-1-1
 11:00 The Flash
 12:00 Once Upon A Time
 13:00 Station 19
 14:00 Quantico
 15:00 The View
 16:00 Good Morning America
 18:00 Once Upon A Time
 19:00 The Flash
 20:00 Station 19
 21:00 The Amazing Race
 22:00 Survivor: Ghost Island
 23:00 WWE Experience



00:15 High Heels And Low Lifes
 02:00 The Time Of Their Lives
 04:00 Hearts Of Spring
 05:45 The Discoverers
 07:45 Meet Dave
 09:30 Hearts Of Spring
 11:15 The Discoverers
 13:15 Meet Dave
 15:00 Dad's Army
 16:45 There's Always Woodstock
 18:30 The Tiger Hunter
 20:15 The Hot Chick
 22:00 Boomerang



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 18:30 The Tiger Hunter
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12:30 Dare To Be Wild
 14:15 Buena Vista Social Club:
 Adios
 16:10 Wuthering Heights
 18:00 The Remains Of The Day
 20:15 James White
 22:00 Babel



01:15 The Happy Cricket
 02:45 Dinofroz - An Island In The Sky
 04:05 Legend Of The Sea
 05:30 Zodiac: The Race Begins
 07:05 Moomin And Midsummer Madness
 08:30 Ivan The Incredible
 10:05 Funny Little Cars
 11:15 The Happy Cricket
 12:45 Dinofroz - An Island In The Sky
 14:05 Emilie Jolie
 15:25 Ivan The Incredible
 17:00 Help And Freedom
 18:35 Freddy Frogface
 20:05 Emilie Jolie
 21:25 Moomin And Midsummer Madness
 22:50 Help And Freedom



01:35 Pele: Birth Of A Legend
 03:30 Nine Lives
 05:05 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part II
 07:25 Daddy's Home
 09:10 The Magnificent Seven
 11:25 A Thousand Words
 13:05 Groundhog Day
 14:50 Nim's Island
 16:35 The Cable Guy
 18:20 Terminator Genisys
 20:30 Dude, Where's My Car?
 22:00 Desperado
 23:50 American Pie



00:05 Food Factory
 00:30 Mythbusters: The Search
 01:20 Extreme Engineering
 02:10 Scanning The Skies: The Discovery Channel...
 03:00 Strangest Weather On Earth
 03:48 Nextworld
 04:36 Mythbusters: The Search
 05:24 How Do They Do It?
 05:48 Food Factory
 06:12 Extreme Engineering
 07:00 How Do They Do It?
 07:26 Strangest Weather On Earth
 08:14 Mythbusters: The Search
 09:02 Scanning The Skies: The Discovery Channel...
 09:50 How Do They Do It?
 10:14 Food Factory
 10:38 Strangest Weather On Earth
 11:26 Nextworld
 12:14 Mythbusters: The Search
 13:02 Extreme Engineering
 13:50 Scanning The Skies: The Discovery Channel...
 14:38 How Do They Do It?
 15:02 Food Factory
 15:26 Strangest Weather On Earth
 16:24 Nextworld
 17:02 Scanning The Skies: The Discovery Channel...
 17:50 Extreme Engineering
 18:40 How Do They Do It?
 19:05 Food Factory
 19:30 How The Universe Works
 20:20 Mythbusters: The Search
 21:10 Cosmic Collisions
 22:00 How The Universe Works
 22:50 Nextworld
 23:40 How Do They Do It?



01:10 Prem Ratan Dhan Payo
 03:00 Prem Ratan Dhan Payo
 04:05 Koffee With Karan
 05:00 Gali Gali Chor Hai

07:05 Rockstar
 10:10 Tezz
 12:25 Hero
 14:45 Garam Masala
 17:25 Son Of Sarदार
 20:00 Bullett Raja
 22:50 Mantra



01:15 When Love Came To Town
 03:00 Now Is Good
 04:45 Sparkle
 06:45 Tomorrowland
 09:00 Night Train To Lisbon
 10:45 The Wedding Planner
 12:25 Dirty Dancing : Havana Nights
 13:50 Bounce
 15:35 When Love Came To Town
 17:10 Fifteen And Pregnant
 18:40 Monkey Kingdom
 20:00 Million Dollar Baby
 22:15 Swimming Upstream



00:00 Black Box
 01:00 Black Box
 02:00 Devious Maids
 03:00 Married At First Sight The First Year
 04:00 Project Runway
 05:00 Mistresses
 06:00 Black Box
 07:00 Black Box
 08:00 Devious Maids
 09:00 Married At First Sight The First Year
 10:00 Project Runway
 11:00 Mistresses
 12:00 Black Box
 13:00 Black Box
 14:00 Devious Maids
 15:00 Married At First Sight The First Year
 16:00 Project Runway
 17:00 Devious Maids
 18:00 The Wedding Band
 20:00 Project Runway All Stars
 21:00 Victoria's Secret Fashion Show 2017
 22:00 House Of DVF
 23:00 Devious Maids



00:20 Say Yes To The Dress UK
 00:42 Say Yes To The Dress UK
 01:05 90 Days To Wed
 01:50 Say Yes: Wedding SOS
 02:35 90 Day Fianc?: Happily Ever After?
 03:20 Outdaughters: Busby Quints
 04:05 Toddlers & Tiaras
 04:50 Say Yes To The Dress UK
 05:12 Say Yes To The Dress UK
 05:35 Say Yes To The Dress
 06:00 Outdaughters: Busby Quints
 08:15 Say Yes To The Dress UK
 08:37 Say Yes To The Dress UK
 09:00 Cake Boss
 09:25 Little People, Big World
 09:47 Little People, Big World
 10:10 Little People, Big World
 10:32 Little People, Big World
 10:55 Cake Boss
 11:17 Cake Boss
 11:40 Cake Boss
 12:02 Cake Boss
 12:25 Cake Boss
 12:47 Cake Boss
 13:10 Meet The Putmans
 13:55 Say Yes To The Dress UK
 14:20 Say Yes To The Dress UK
 14:45 Cake Boss
 17:15 Little People, Big World
 18:05 Sister Wives Special
 18:55 Sister Wives
 19:45 Cake Boss
 20:10 Say Yes To The Dress
 20:35 Say Yes To The Dress
 21:00 Sister Wives
 21:50 Little People, Big World
 22:40 My Extreme Excess Skin

Stars

**Aries (March 21-April 19)**

Place much focus on solidifying your foundation today. From your love of your own life to your love of family the roots are the key to success. You may find yourself in a very nurturing mood today. Plant the seeds today and prepare for great rewards from your work in the future. Now is a great time to start that diet you have been considering and to start to take care of yourself. You could find you may feel as if you are spinning your wheels, but rome was not built in a day and you will soon start to truly see results from your actions.

**Taurus (April 20-May 20)**

Family seems to be where your focus is. You desire a strong foundation and have been working hard to establish this in your world. You may find someone younger seeking advice and looking to you for assistance. You will be able to guide them with ease. Helping others brings great satisfaction to you and in a way will fulfill the need to be needed you have been desiring. It is a great time to sit and have a meaningful conversation with a loved one. Taurus, you will be able to relate your ideas with ease and grace and this conversation will be very beneficial to your relationship. Others will be attracted and drawn to you today. You are very focused on those closest to you. These personal relationships are your driving force and you are in a very content and peaceful state.

**Gemini (May 21-June 20)**

This seems to be a great time to consider making a move. Whether it is a new place or new career path, you should put great thought and consideration into change. You have a deep desire to turn your dreams into reality today and a secure a future for your loved ones. You seem highly focused on your family and making decisions and changes to ensure a stable and prosperous future. You have a strong desire to care for everyone close to you. You may find great satisfaction from not only caring for others but the respect and admiration you gain from doing so. Your ability to communicate is on point today and you will be able to clearly translate your plans to those close to you.

**Cancer (June 21-July 22)**

You are feeling a deep desire for control. You want to be the decision maker, the leader. You are working to make your dreams and desires become reality. You may feel the root of all you are begins with who you have chosen as your support system. You feel led to feed and care for these people in your life. You want to establish a strong, unbreakable foundation and pouring much of your time and attention into others. You are only as strong as your weakest link. Stability is where it is at for you and not only are you feeding the emotional needs of others you may also be very interested in investments at this time. You may be drawn to investing in real estate or some other financial area to ensure your emotional and financial future are sound and stable.

**Leo (July 23-August 22)**

You may be called upon by a friend in need. Your friends tend to look to you for advice and have much respect for you. Friendships are very important to you and your friends tend to lean on you often. This could be a very profitable time for you. You are in a good place in life and have learned to love and appreciate what you have earned in this world and place great value on your relationships. Now is a good time to spend time with a special someone. You may find the lines of communication are wide open and this will lead to a wonderful time and a special bond being developed.

**Virgo (August 23-September 22)**

Follow your heart and continue to work to make your dreams become a reality. Today may find you focused on your feelings and dreams. You are passionate about your goals and find yourself more devoted than ever to make them happen. Perhaps, you have found yourself more focused on family and loved ones than you have been in the past. Appreciation for those who unconditionally support you. You find yourself wanting to give back and feel a desire to protect those closest to you. You are planning for the future and making sure your loved ones are well provided for. This may be a good time for you to look into real estate you have been considering.

**Libra (September 23-October 22)**

Today may find you with a desire to climb out of the rut you feel as if you have been in. Something new is on the menu for the day. You are ready to spread your wings and live a little. You are ready for new experiences and to see what all this world has to offer. This new desire and thought pattern may bring great reward in the workplace as a new insight on an old problem may bring an instant and brilliant solution. With a new outlook and new desires, comes a new appreciation for your life. A deeper love and appreciation for everything around you. You desire to connect with those closest to you. You are especially drawn toward spending time with someone younger today. You may be drawn to their high energy and find you share their zest for life.

**Scorpio (October 23-November 21)**

You may be feeling a need to put a much greater focus on family life. Know that the seeds you plant today have great impact on your future. You may be feeling very nurturing when it comes to your love ones. Today is a great day to set the groundwork for tomorrow. You are looking for and desiring stability in the future. Your actions of today are leading you straight towards your goals. Scorpio, stability, structure, and growth are very important to you and to your future.

**Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)**

Today may find you focused on your future. You know to secure a stable and happy future you must first be standing on firm ground. You will find that by feeding your personal relationships this can develop. Your focus on family and those you love and making sure they are happy and well cared for will pay off in the long run for you as they will be your support in days to come. You seem to be very in touch with your feelings. You know what you desire and are making plans to ensure this happens. You may find an opportunity arise concerning a piece of property or some other real estate you have been considering. All of this is part of a greater plan, Sagittarius, and things are falling into place.

**Capricorn (December 22-January 19)**

You may find that you are putting much more focus on family at this time rather than other areas of your life. Keep it there! The seeds you sow today will last a lifetime. It is all about love and support from your love one's for you. You may be feeling a strong need to be needed and appreciated. This need will be satisfied by keeping your focus on your home life and love ones. You have a strong desire for stability in your home life and as long as you continue to feed it, it will grow.

**Aquarius (January 20- February 18)**

This is a good time to plant the seeds to set the groundwork for that project or property purchase you have been dreaming of. Today is a great day to set things in motion to make your dreams become your reality. Take these steps to secure your future. Take someone in need under your wing. This could bring you great satisfaction. You may also find you have needs that are fulfilled by using your time to help others. Sensing the needs of others comes naturally to you.

**Pisces (February 19-March 20)**

You have become a more emotional person. Being more in touch with your emotions has led you to nurture and care for those surrounding you. You may find yourself especially drawn to those younger and children. This is mostly driven by an "if I knew then, what I know now" type of attitude. You feel as if you could help so many others and wish someone would have been around to mentor and guide you. You may find yourself signing up to volunteer to work with children or find some other role to step in where your knowledge may be beneficial to others. You will benefit in many ways from helping those close to you.

COUNTRY CODES

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

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Kuwait Times

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Information

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 METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

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

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 45 km/h

WEATHER WARNING			Strong Wind	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 21/06/2018 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	45 °C	32 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	44 °C	33 °C		
ABDALY	47 °C	30 °C		
BUBYAN	00 °C	00 °C		
JAHRA	46 °C	32 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	43 °C	28 °C		
SALMIYAH	40 °C	32 °C		
AHMADI	43 °C	35 °C		
NUWAISIB	46 °C	31 °C		
WAFRA	45 °C	31 °C		
SALMY	43 °C	29 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	06/22	Hot causing rising dust	43 °C	33 °C	NW	25 - 60 km/h
Saturday	06/23	Hot causing rising dust	43 °C	32 °C	NW	20 - 45 km/h
Sunday	06/24	Hot	45 °C	32 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h
Monday	06/25	Hot	46 °C	33 °C	NW	15 - 38 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:13
Sunrise	04:48
Zuhr	11:50
Asr	15:23
Sunset	18:50
Isha	20:23

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	46 °C
MIN. Temp.	34 °C
MAX. RH	28 %
MIN. RH	09 %
MAX. Wind	N 68 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

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Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

Business

FRIDAY, JUNE 22, 2018

39 With billion users, Instagram takes on YouTube in video**40** Ross: US must create 'more painful' trade environment**41** Easy as A, B, Xi: China gives economic lessons to N Korea

THESSALONIKI, Greece: A man walks past closed shops in the center of this city yesterday. — AFP

Greece nears end to bailout odyssey

Germany pockets €2.9bn from Greek crisis

LUXEMBOURG: Eurozone ministers yesterday neared an agreement to set the terms of Greece's departure from eight years of bailout programs, despite splits over the degree of debt relief needed by cash-strapped Athens. Greece is slated to exit its latest rescue on August 20 and finance ministers from the 19 countries that use the single currency are looking to send off Athens with a sustainable debt level and enough cash to reassure financial markets.

If successful the talks will mark an important milestone for Europe nearly a decade after Greece stunned the world with out-of-control debts and set the scene for three bailouts and a near collapse of the euro single currency. "We will deliver today, I'm optimistic we will find a debt relief package that will promote sustainability in Greek debt for the future," said Portuguese Finance Minister Mario Centeno, who heads the Eurogroup. Greece's €86-billion program was agreed in

2015 after six contentious months of negotiation and is set to end this summer, bringing the level of assistance received by Athens to €273 billion since 2010.

"Greece has really done the job and has delivered its commitments," said French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire as he arrived for the talks. As ever in the Greek debt crisis, Germany and northern eurozone states are the most resistant to debt relief and have demanded that Athens be closely tracked on reform implementation after the program ends this summer. Under German demands, Greece's debt relief in the short-term will be conditional on the continued implementation of reforms, which if successful could inject about one billion euros to the government's underfunded budget every year. "We will ensure that the pressure to implement further reforms remains strong... in the medium and long term," said Austrian Finance Minister Hartwig Loger.

Meanwhile, a government report seen by AFP showed yesterday Germany has earned some €2.9 billion (\$3.5 billion) since 2010 on Greek debt bought to help the struggling country. "Contrary to all the rightwing myths, Germany profited massively from the crisis in Greece," said Sven-Christian Kindler, a Greens party MP whose question to the finance ministry uncovered the figure. "It cannot be the case that the federal government is cleaning up the German budget with billions of interest earnings from Greece," he added.

The finance ministry document shows the Bundesbank (German central bank) had by the end of last year earned €3.4 billion of interest on Greek bonds it bought in 2010-11. Officials at the Frankfurt institution bought Greek debt under a scheme known as the Securities Markets Programme, created by the European Central Bank (ECB) to calm financial markets in troubled eurozone economies. At a Feb 2012

Eurogroup meeting, eurozone finance ministers agreed that interest on those bonds should be paid back to Athens via the single currency area's crisis firefighter, the European Stability Mechanism (ESM). The Bundesbank duly sent €527 million to Greece in 2013.

But a 2014 tranche of €387 million was held by the ESM, part of a €1.8 billion total earmarked to cover some Greek debt payments in exchange for the government pressing ahead with reforms demanded by its creditors. That reciprocal arrangement ended in June 2015, when the Eurogroup suspended the transfers during a standoff with Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras.

Taking all the twists and turns into account, Germany's federal government has raked in €2.5 billion of profit on Greek debt, while public investment bank KfW has notched up €400 million of interest payments on a loan to Athens - a total of €2.9 billion. —AFP

Business

OPEC edges closer to raising output, Iran agreement is key

Saudi energy minister: Market needs 1m bpd extra oil

VIENNA: OPEC edged closer yesterday towards raising oil output, with Iran softening its opposition to an increase and Saudi Arabia warning of supply shortages and price rallies if production remained stable. A production rise of about 1 million barrels per day (bpd) or around 1 percent of global supply was emerging as a consensus for the group and its allies, OPEC sources told Reuters, adding that Iran could agree under certain conditions.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries meets today to decide output policy amid calls from top consumers such as the United States, China and India to cool down oil prices and support the world economy by producing more crude. Russia, which is not in OPEC, has proposed producers raise output by 1.5 million bpd. Saudi Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih said on Thursday the world needed at least an extra 1 million bpd to avoid a shortage in the second half of 2018.

OPEC and its allies have since last year been participating in a deal to cut output by 1.8 million bpd. The measure has helped rebalance the market in the past 18 months and lifted oil to around

\$73 per barrel from as low as \$27 in 2016. But unexpected outages in Venezuela, Libya and Angola have effectively brought supply cuts to around 2.8 million bpd in recent months. Iran's output is also likely to fall in the second half of this year due to new U.S. sanctions.

Iran, OPEC's third-largest producer, has so far been the main barrier to a new deal as it said on Tuesday OPEC was unlikely to reach an agreement and should reject pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump to pump more oil. But on Wednesday, Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh said OPEC members that had over-delivered on cuts in recent months should comply with agreed quotas. That would effectively mean a boost from producers such as Saudi Arabia that have voluntarily cut more deeply than planned.

"An increase is acceptable if justified from the demand side and if it is agreed by all OPEC mem-

bers. An increase because of external pressure on OPEC is not acceptable," said a source familiar with Iranian thinking. Ecuador said OPEC and its allies could agree to a compromise increase in output of around 0.5-0.6 million bpd.



Trump called on OPEC to help lower oil prices

the squeeze that we saw in 2007-2008," Falih said, referring to a time when oil rallied close to \$150 per barrel. He said the exact mechanics of any increase would be decided among all OPEC members today. Three OPEC sources said ministers would debate yesterday whether to raise supplies by 1 million bpd as the main proposal for the meetings of OPEC and its allies on Friday and Saturday. If the proposal were approved, all

'Market squeeze'

Falih said the world could face a supply deficit of up to 1.8 million bpd in the second half of 2018 and that OPEC's responsibility was to address consumers' worries. "We want to prevent the shortage and

OPEC members and their non-OPEC allies could raise supplies pro-rata, with Saudi Arabia adding about 0.25-0.3 million bpd.

Iran had yet to agree to the proposal, the sources said. Iraq and Venezuela have also opposed a relaxation of production cuts, fearing a slump in prices. Yesterday, however, Iraqi Oil Minister Jabar Al-Luaibi said: "We are in comprehensive talks with all ministers, especially Saudi Arabia and Iran, and we are trying to narrow that gap between the two and we hope that this afternoon we will reach some sort of good compromise".

Zanganeh told CNN on Wednesday that if OPEC returned to regular compliance, the real supply increase from the group would constitute around 460,000 bpd. OPEC sources said the final compromise also depended on whether OPEC agreed to mention US sanctions in the group's communique, an important point for Iran, which has blamed US measures against Tehran for the recent rise in oil prices. The United States, which rivals Russia and Saudi Arabia for the position of world No.1 oil producer, is not participating in the current supply pact. — Reuters

IMF green-lights three-year \$50bn Argentina aid

WASHINGTON: The International Monetary Fund on Wednesday formally approved a \$50 billion aid package intended to help Argentina confront inflation, budget deficits and a weakening currency. The fund's executive board approved the agreement that Argentina struck with IMF staff earlier this month. Argentina plans to draw on the first \$15 billion tranche of the aid program, of which half will be used for budget support, while treating the remaining \$35 billion as "precautionary," according to the IMF.

Christine Lagarde, the IMF's managing director, has heaped praise on Argentina's plans for economic reform but insisted the decisions were made in Buenos Aires and not handed down from the Washington-based fund. "The approval today is clear evidence of the international community's trust in Argentina's reform drive and support for the government economic plan backed by the fund," she told reporters on Wednesday. "This is a plan which was designed and which is owned by Argentine authorities. It takes into account their domestic situation. It is geared towards strengthening the economy for the benefit of all Argentines."

Vocal street protests and threatened labor strikes have greeted Argentine President Mauricio Macri's decision to seek IMF financing. The country has a bitter his-



Christine Lagarde

tory with the global crisis lender, which many Argentines view as having imposed tough conditions that worsened economic pain 17 years ago. Lagarde said Wednesday the fund approached the arrangement with Buenos Aires with "great humility and great attention to the domestic situation of all the people of Argentina."

The fund said Wednesday that the so-called stand-by arrangement would back efforts by Buenos Aires to put public debts on a sustainable path, reduce the need for financing and tackle inflation while strengthening the central bank's independence. "Importantly, the plan includes steps to protect society's most vulnerable by maintaining social spending and, if social conditions were to deteriorate, by providing room for greater spending on Argentina's social safety net," the statement said. Notably, Argentina will rejoin a widely watched "emerging markets" index by MSCI, a New York-based provider of financial information for institutional investors to build their equity portfolio. — AFP

Asylum seekers boosting Europe economies: Study

NEW YORK: Asylum seekers moving to Europe have raised their adopted nations' economic output, lowered unemployment and not placed a burden on public finances, scientists said on Wednesday. An analysis of economic and migration data for the last three decades found asylum seekers added to gross domestic products and boosted net tax revenues by as much as 1 percent, said a study published in Science Advances by French economists.

The findings come amid a rise of anti-immigrant

sentiment across Europe, where immigration peaked in 2015 with the arrival of more than a million refugees and migrants from the Middle East and Africa. An annual report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees released on Tuesday showed the global number of refugees grew by a record 2.9 million in 2017 to 25.4 million. The research from 1985 to 2015 looked at asylum seekers - migrants who demonstrate a fear of persecution in their homeland in order to be resettled in a new country. "The cliché that international migration is associated with economic 'burden' can be dispelled," wrote the scientists from the French National Center for Scientific Research, the University of Clermont-Auvergne and Paris-Nanterre University.

The research analyzed data from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. — Reuters

Italian bonds, stocks, euro hit as govt appoints eurosceptics

LONDON: Italy's bond yields rose, its stocks fell and the euro weakened yesterday after the Italian government appointed two eurosceptics to head key finance committees. Claudio Borghi and Alberto Bagnai, both from the far-right League, were picked to head, respectively, the Budget Committee in the lower house of parliament and the Finance Committee in the upper house Senate. The appointments renewed market jit-

ters about the new coalition government's commitment to the single-currency bloc, after economy minister Giovanni Tria reassured investors a few days ago by saying Italy had no intention of leaving the euro.

"If Tria's interview reassured markets, it would make sense that now (this news) could create worries," said JCI Capital portfolio manager Alessandro Balsotti. He added that following the recent strong rebound in Italian government bonds it was worth taking out some profit. Italy's 10-year government bond yield rose 14 basis points to a one-week high of 2.72 percent, while two-year borrowing costs rose 25 bps to 0.84 percent.

The closely-watched gap between 10-year bond yields in Italy and benchmark euro zone issuer Germany was its widest in a week at around 236 bps. Italy's FTSE MIB extended losses to slide 1.4 percent, on track for its biggest fall in two weeks. — Reuters

Business

With billion users, Instagram takes on YouTube in video

IGTV built to be used on a smartphone

SAN FRANCISCO: Instagram said Wednesday it now has more than one billion active users, as it unveiled a new long-form video feature in a bid to attract “creators” like those on YouTube. It becomes the fourth Facebook platform to hit the billion-user mark, including the namesake social network with more than two billion users, and the messaging applications WhatsApp and Messenger. Instagram, which had some 800 million users as of September, has been outpacing rival social networks such as Twitter and Snapchat and has been gaining younger users even as Facebook itself has seen declines in the youth segment.

Instagram chief executive Kevin Systrom announced the milestone as he unveiled the new video application known as IGTV. “We have now a community of one billion users,” Systrom told the event in San Francisco. “Since our launch in 2010, we’ve watched with amazement as the community has flourished and grown.” As Facebook itself has moved deeper into video, Instagram will become a direct competitor to YouTube with IGTV.

IGTV will enable any user to upload long-form videos and will also include “channels” from video “creators,” similar to a format employed by Google-owned YouTube which has given

rise to a number of YouTube “stars”. “Anyone can be a creator - you can upload your own IGTV videos in the app or on the web to start your own channel,” Systrom said.

Built for smartphones

Systrom said IGTV is built to be used on a smartphone, and boosts the time for videos from the previous limit of one minute. “The way we are watching video is changing,” Systrom told the event. He added that IGTV is “built for how you actually use your phone, so videos are full screen and vertical”. The launch comes amid a shift in video viewing habits away from traditional television to online platforms including Netflix and Hulu, and with more people watching both professional and user content on services like YouTube.

According to the research firm eMarketer, 181.7 million Americans will watch video content on their smartphones at least once a month this year, up 6.1 percent from a year ago. Product manager Ashley Yuki told the event that IGTV “is an open platform from day one, so everyone can become a creator.” Rolling out for the iOS and Android apps, IGTV will allow any user to upload videos up to 10 minutes long, with the limit for larger ac-

Platform now has more than 1bn active users



counts at one hour. Systrom described the new app as “a separate space, a dedicated space to enjoy video without being distracted”.

Facebook acquired Instagram in April 2012 for a combination of cash and stock worth some \$1 billion at the time. Since then it has become a strong engine of growth for Facebook in terms of users and ad revenues. While Facebook offers no detailed revenue breakdown, eMarketer estimates Instagram will generate \$5.48 billion in net US ad revenue this year, up 70.4 percent from last year and accounting for more than one-fourth of Facebook’s net mobile ad revenue. Facebook itself is also ramping up its video offerings with original shows and this week announced new formats including interactive game shows, quizzes and polls. — AFP

Xiaomi lowers target as it kicks off IPO

HONG KONG: Chinese smartphone maker Xiaomi kicked off its initial public offering yesterday but the firm is likely to pull in about \$6.1 billion, far less than originally expected, with investors having mixed views about its main business. Xiaomi had hoped to raise \$10 billion with the Hong Kong IPO, making it the biggest since Alibaba’s \$25 billion New York debut in 2014 and valuing the company at about \$100 billion. However, the firm is offering 2.18 billion shares at HK\$17-HK\$22 apiece, according to

Bloomberg News, which values it at about \$53.9-\$69.8 billion.

Xiaomi had hoped to be the first company to list shares in Hong Kong at the same time as launching new Chinese Depository Receipts (CDRs) in Shanghai under new rules announced in April by mainland authorities to open up markets in the world’s number two economy. But on Tuesday it put off its decision on listing the CDRs until it completes its IPO in Hong Kong. The China Securities Regulatory Commission said it has cancelled a listing review originally scheduled for June 19.

This delay, as well as differing market views about Xiaomi’s business model, were also among reasons for the lower valuation. CEO Lei Jun claimed it was an Internet services company making money via online games and advertisements despite 70 percent of its revenues coming from selling hardware, particularly smartphones. The firm, which mainly sells cheap but high-quality smartphones in China, is looking to push into Europe - recently opening its first flagship store in Paris - as the home market reaches saturation point.

China Mobile Ltd and US wireless-chip giant Qualcomm are among the cornerstone investors and it is expected to list on July 9. Chinese authorities devised the CDR program, under which homegrown companies listed abroad can simultaneously list at home, after watching technology heavyweights Alibaba and Baidu list on Wall Street. The objectives of the plan include helping to develop China’s still relatively immature and volatile share markets while allowing domestic investors to invest in the country’s big tech champions.—AFP

Electric scooters launch in Paris, to spread in Europe

PARIS: The boulevards of Paris, already bustling with a dizzying range of transport devices, are set to feature a new shared electric scooter system that has swept the US and is now heading for Europe. California-based Lime launched a pilot scheme for the two-wheeled powered scooters on Thursday in several districts of the French capital and will roll them out across the city. “Very quickly our fleet will grow to respond to demand,” Lime’s director for France, Arthur-Louis Jacquier, told AFP.

The US start-up, which already operates bike-sharing schemes in Berlin and Frankfurt, has big ambitions in Europe as it competes with other fast-expanding American rivals such as Bird. The new e-scooters arrive as Paris faces problems with two of its flagship transport innovations over the last decade which forged the city’s reputation as a pioneer for new forms of commuting. The city’s bike-sharing scheme Velib’, launched in 2007 and since copied around the world, is in disarray after a change of contractor led to major problems and a shortage of bikes. An electric car-sharing system known as Autolib, launched in 2011, could be at the end of the road after it ran up major losses that neither

local authorities, nor private operator Bollere are prepared to absorb.

Car service sputters

The public body that oversees the car system was set to meet yesterday and could vote to cancel the contract with Bollere, which would leave its 150,000 users in the lurch. Paris city authorities estimate the loss incurred from cancelling the deal at “several tens of millions of euros” while Bollere, owned by French magnate Vincent Bollere, expects it to be up to 300 million. Autolib was never adopted by Parisians in the way they took to the shared bikes, meaning that the number of subscribers was lower than expected while new taxi apps such as Uber undercut it on cost.

Lime and other private operators of new transport-sharing solutions are looking to capitalise on the problems with Velib’ and Autolib’, which are both backed by public money. Chinese bike-sharing groups such as GoBee and Ofo as well as Singapore’s Obike have piled into the French market, adding to the ever-expanding range of options available to commuters and travellers. They have also added to congestion on pavements and led to criticism from pedestrians who must often weave around bikes that have been badly parked or scattered on streets.

As well as pedal-bikes, electric bikes, electric mopeds, motorbikes and cars and buses, Paris’ streets are also awash with skateboards, scooters and increasing numbers of battery-operated unicycles.—AFP



BEIJING: This file picture taken on May 3, 2018 shows a customer looking at a Xiaomi smartphone in a shop. — AFP

Business

China: Washington's 'capricious' trade actions will hurt US workers

Accusations of forced tech transfer severe distortion of reality

BEIJING: China's commerce ministry yesterday accused the United States of being "capricious" over bilateral trade issues, and warned that the interests of US workers and farmers ultimately will be hurt by Washington's penchant for brandishing "big sticks". Previous trade negotiations with the United States were constructive, but Beijing has had to respond in a strong manner due to the US tariff threats, commerce ministry spokesman Gao Feng said.

President Donald Trump threatened on Monday to hit \$200 billion of Chinese imports with 10 percent tariffs if Beijing retaliates against his previous announcement to target \$50 billion in imports. The United States has accused China of stealing US intellectual property, a charge Beijing denies. Washington's accusations of forced tech transfers are a distortion of reality, and China is fully prepared to respond with "quantitative" and "qualitative" tools if the US releases a new list of tariffs, Gao told a regular briefing in Beijing.

China could hit back at US firms listed on the Dow Jones Industrial Average if Trump keeps heightening tension with Beijing over trade, state-controlled Chinese tabloid the Global

Times said yesterday. The 30-stock Dow, which counts Boeing Co, Apple Inc and Nike Inc among its constituents, fell 0.17 percent on Wednesday and has declined 0.25 percent this year. By contrast, China's benchmark Shanghai Composite Index has slumped 13.1 percent year-to-date. "It is deeply regrettable that the US has been capricious, escalated the tensions, and provoked a trade war," Gao said. "The US is accustomed to holding 'big sticks' for negotiations, but this approach does not apply to China."

White House trade adviser Peter Navarro, who views China as a hostile economic and military power, said on Tuesday Trump's actions were a necessary defense of the "crown jewels" in the US economy. None of the US administration's efforts to negotiate with Beijing had yielded progress on changing China's "predatory" trade practices, Navarro said. Fending off criticism from some Western countries, China has said it is willing to boost imports and widen market access.

In April, President Xi Jinping told a high-profile Chinese forum that import tariffs would be cut on goods such as cars, among other promises. In May, Beijing said it would lower import tariffs on 1,449

consumer goods, starting from July 1. "I've been honoring my words with actions," Xi told a group of foreign chief executives in Beijing on Thursday.

Open trade conflict

Xi said countries should not fight among themselves, but instead cooperate and meet challenges together, adding that the last global financial crisis happened not too long ago. "We still have vivid memories of what happened during the financial crisis and we are not yet fully recovered," he said. "We must also stay vigilant because, as economic growth still lacks momentum, we have seen a surge of trade protectionism, isolationism and populism."

Global financial markets have shuddered this week amid worries about open trade conflict between the world's two biggest economies. Three rounds of high-level talks since early May failed to reach a compromise on US complaints over Chinese practices and its record deficit with China. Last year, the deficit was about \$375 billion, as China imported \$129.89 billion of US goods, while the United States purchased \$505.47 billion of Chinese products, according to US data.

A Sino-US trade war could disrupt global supply

chains for the tech and auto industries, sectors heavily reliant on outsourced components, and derail world growth. "US unilateral protection measures will ultimately harm the interests of US companies, workers and farmers," Gao told reporters. British forecaster Oxford Economics, in a recent note, said it "will not be easy for the US to identify \$200 billion worth of Chinese imports that it can levy tariffs on without hurting US companies and/or consumers, given the strong involvement of US companies in a large share of China's exports to the US"

Gao said China and the US were due to negotiate on issues around the manufacturing and service industries in the near future. Chinese shares fell yesterday on investor worries about the trade dispute, with the Shanghai index languishing at a two-year low and stocks of about 100 firms down by the daily limit of 10 percent. "I suspect that the US indices will start to sniff out the specific losers from this trade war, and individual stocks will get hurt much more than the broad index as investors understand this isn't going to kill global growth," Andrew Polk, co-founder of research firm Trivium China, told the Reuters Global Markets Forum. "But it will impact some companies disproportionately." —Reuters

Ross says US must create 'more painful' trade environment

WASHINGTON: Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said yesterday the United States needs to make it harder for its trading partners to have high trade barriers in order to achieve President Donald Trump's ultimate goal of lower barriers and a level playing field. "What we have to do is create an environment where it's more painful for these parties that have these huge trade barriers, both tariff and non-tariff, got to make it more painful for them to keep those barriers than to get rid of them," he told CNBC. "In the particular case of China, it's compounded by their disrespect of intellectual property, the forced technology transfers, the cybersecurity breaches."

Trump this week expanded the amount of Chinese imports possibly facing new duties. He threatened on Monday to hit \$200 billion of Chinese imports with 10 percent tariffs if Beijing retaliated against his previous target of \$50 billion in imports, aimed at pressuring China to stop stealing U.S. intellectual property. The growing trade conflict hit financial markets hard, with Beijing accusing the United States of "extreme pressure and blackmailing" and vowing to retaliate. With both sides upping the ante, the risks of a dam-



Wilbur Ross

aging trade war grew dramatically.

In the CNBC interview, Ross downplayed the impact of tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from Canada, Mexico and the European Union that Washington imposed last month, saying they would not have a huge impact on product prices and the overall economy. Those tariffs, Ross said, had induced other countries to take similar action against dumping.

"After we put those in, suddenly Europe started a whole bunch of safeguard actions to protect their own borders against dumping of steel and aluminum," Ross said. "Before we put our tariffs, they hadn't done that. Similarly Japan. It may sound strange but the fact that we put tariffs on the goods coming out of them has modified their behavior and has induced a pretty high degree of international cooperation against dumping," he said. —Reuters

Baccarat joins collection of Chinese magnate

PARIS: A Chinese businesswoman who is an avid buyer of Baccarat glassware added the famed French crystal maker to her collection of business assets yesterday in a €164-million (\$189 million) deal. Coco Chu - founder of the Hong Kong-based Fortune Fountain Capital - has completed the acquisition of Baccarat, whose hand-crafted sculptures and champagne flutes have been made since the reign of Louis XV. Baccarat announced that Fortune will buy an 89 percent stake held by the US investment firms Starwood Capital and L Catterton, which have struggled to revive the 250-year-old brand.

Baccarat's luster has faded as it failed to benefit from the explosive growth in demand for luxury items in emerging markets, particularly in Asia. It began falling into the red when the global financial crisis struck in 2008, only once posting a small annual profit until regaining its footing in 2016. During those years investments in new designs and marketing were scaled back as losses accumulated.

"This isn't the kind of growth seen in a luxury company," said Eric Rogue, a union delegate at the company's glassworks in the eastern town of Baccarat, which eventually gave its name to the glassworks founded by royal decree in 1764. "We're a luxury brand that could be developing much faster than we are now," he told AFP last month, pointing to annual revenues that have stagnated at around 150 million euros over the past five years.



NANCY, France: In this file photo taken on Oct 16, 2012 an employee prepares a box to be sent to the crystalworks of French crystal glass maker Baccarat. —AFP

'Sleeping beauty'

Baccarat's designs are found in temples of taste around the world, its sculptures gracing the storied Crillon Hotel in Paris, its glittering chandeliers hanging in palaces and museums. Prices for a pair of champagne flutes - a stalwart on wealthy wedding registries - start at 300 euros, while a best-selling coffret of six colored tumblers lists for €1,030. This month it unveiled a collection of 100 sculptures of Zinedine Zidane's foot costing €40,000 each, with proceeds going to the European Leukodystrophy Association, of which the soccer great is the patron.

But Didier Guyot, an accountant hired by union representatives, said Baccarat had failed to build out its e-commerce operations, while recent designs and product renewals have lacked flair. Starwood took control of the company in 2005, later joined by L Catterton, a partner of French luxury conglomerate LVMH. The company appears to have put the years of losses behind it, booking earnings last year of €3.4 million on sales of €146 million. —AFP

Business

Easy as A, B, Xi: China gives economic lessons to N Korea

Kim tours agro-tech park and rail traffic control center

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping has coached his North Korean counterpart Kim Jong Un on high-stakes diplomacy. Now he seems poised to give the young autocrat another lesson: How to reform a state-controlled economy while keeping an iron grip on power. Beijing has long pushed for Pyongyang to adopt similar measures to those that fuelled China's dizzying ascent from a communist backwater to one of the world's largest trading powers.

But while the highly secretive, nuclear-armed North has been quietly carrying out economic reforms for some time, officially it still promotes the merits of its system and denounces the evils of capitalism. In recent months, as relations between China and North Korea have experienced a renaissance, Kim has transformed from a recalcitrant and standoffish troublemaker to Xi's eager pupil. The shift followed a decision by Beijing to back UN sanctions banning imports of coal, iron ore and seafood from its unruly neighbor, after years of hushed diplomacy failed to convince the North to stop its nuclear and missile tests.

It didn't take long for Kim to change his tune: He made his first visit as leader to his country's sole major ally in March, quickly followed by two more trips, during which he toured Chinese tech and science hubs. Kim, who is in his mid-30s, seemed eager to learn: Chinese state media has been filled with images of the attentive leader taking copious notes during his meetings with Xi. "We are happy to see that the DPRK (North Korea) made a major decision to shift

the focus to economic construction," Xi told Kim in their most recent meeting Tuesday, according to state news agency Xinhua. "China is ready to share its experience" with Pyongyang, Xi said the next day.

China as a model

China's "reform and opening" under Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s started an economic boom that has made it the world's second-largest economy and a crucial driver of global growth. Despite pressure from Beijing to follow its example, in public Kim had appeared resistant, in 2016 decrying "the filthy wind of bourgeois liberty and 'reform' and 'openness' blowing in our neighborhood".

But in practice he has brought in limited changes, from allowing private traders to operate in informal markets to giving state-owned enterprises some freedoms to operate, and turning a blind eye to private company operations. Having completed the development of his atomic arsenal, Kim announced in April that his priority was now "socialist economic construction". A delegation from his ruling Workers' Party of Korea visited Beijing in May to learn about economic reforms.

At a historic summit with US President Donald Trump in Singapore last week, Kim expressed his commitment to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula - and Washington is offering him sanctions relief if he gives up his weapons. The summit also saw Kim take the opportunity to explore the affluent city-state, with images of his visit to an



BEIJING: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and his wife Ri Sol Ju inspect the State Agricultural Sci-tech Innovation Institute under the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences on Wednesday. —AFP

expensive hotel, casino and other tourist sites widely distributed by North Korean media.

The visit bore "a certain historic resemblance" to a 1979 trip by China's then-leader Deng to the United States as the country stood on the verge of economic reform, said Zhao Tong, North Korea specialist at the Carnegie-Tsinghua Center in Beijing. Deng was able "to see for himself the successful development of Western countries", said Zhao, who predicts that North Korea has now reached its own major turning point.

Afraid of collapse

Before leaving Beijing on his latest visit this week, Kim toured an agricultural technology park and a rail traffic control center. "It looks like this trip is aimed at studying China as a model for economic development post-denuclearization," said Koh Yu-hwan, professor of North Korean Studies at Dongguk University, pointing to the attendance of Pyongyang's chief economic officer Premier Pak Pong Ju.—AFP

Brazil consumers lend farmers a hand to go organic

PLANALTINA, Brazil: Every week, farmer Thiago Kaiser fills his truck with dozens of boxes of organic food to be delivered directly to those who will eat it in Brasilia, Brazil's capital city. Kaiser is one of a growing number of Brazilian farmers paid by customers to grow organic fruit and vegetables through a shared-production system. His farm does not sell any of its produce on the open market, including restaurants and supermarkets.

"We have our co-farmers, who are the people who finance our planting. It is a relationship of trust," Kaiser told the Thomson Reuters Foundation beside a vegetable garden on his family farm in Planaltina, some 55 km from Brasilia. "When you go to the supermarket, you choose what you are going to eat ... Our co-farmers don't know what we'll deliver to them," he added.

Organic agriculture has grown in popularity around the world in recent years, amid rising health and environmental concerns over industrial farming, and pressure for more sustainable use of soil, water and other natural resources, according to a 2017 report published by Codeplan, a state-run company that carries out development work in Brazil's Federal District.

Growing demand for food low in fat and sugar makes fruit and vegetables key weapons in the battle against obesity and malnutrition, giving an extra boost to the organic market.

The model adopted by Kaiser, known as "Community Supported Agriculture" (CSA), is a system in which local residents finance and participate in food production. The farmer calculates the cost of producing food for a group of people, who pay a monthly fee. They agree to buy seasonal vegetables and fruits, and to split the costs of crop failure. "If we can produce a good harvest of lettuce, they will receive two, three or four lettuces - but if I have a problem with rain and cannot produce lettuce, they will also understand," Kaiser said.

Organic fruit and vegetables are delivered to collection points on a weekly basis, but customers can also visit the farm, take part in decisions about what to plant, suggest new crops and help with the harvest themselves. "For people with children, we say it's priceless," said agronomist Abilio Vinicius Barbosa Pereira. "Children grow up knowing the name of the food and placing value on food, on land and on the environment in practice."

Pereira joined a CSA group in his Brasilia neighborhood in November, and pays about \$80 per month. Since then, his children are eating far more fruit and vegetables. "We visit farms, and my children recognize the name of the plants, and are encouraged to eat vegetables children usually don't want to eat," Pereira said.—Reuters

Australia \$106bn income tax cuts seen boosting PM

CANBERRA: Australia passed a A\$144 billion (\$106 billion) package of income tax cuts yesterday after rightwing leader Pauline Hanson backed the legislation, potentially boosting the re-election prospects of the center-right government. Taking a page from a tax overhaul in the United States, Australia's seven-year plan to cut personal income taxes is aimed at boosting the economy and delivering a political victory for Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull.

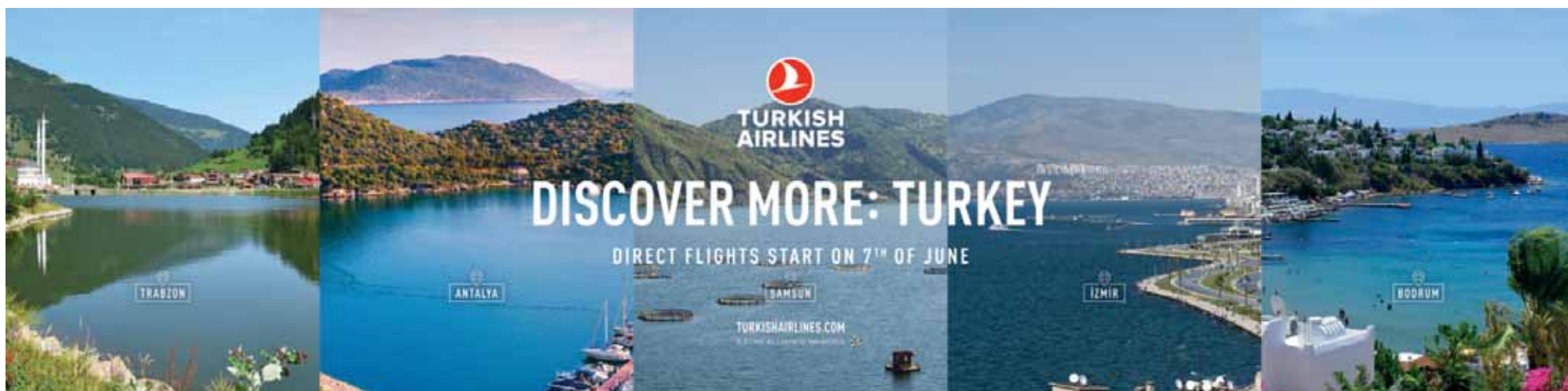
The bill had been stalled in the finely balanced parliament before Hanson, leader of the nationalist One Nation party, broke the impasse. "I've actually now decided to support the government in the tax cuts which the Australian people need," Hanson told reporters in the capital, Canberra. "It was the only fair thing to do," she added. The passage of the bill was good news for Turnbull's coalition, which trails the opposition Labor Party in opinion polls ahead of a likely general election early next year.

The government has struggled to implement its tax policy, including corporate tax cuts which remain on hold. "It is the most significant victory in Turnbull's tenure and will give him a real boost as we approach an election," said Haydon Manning, a political science professor at Flinders University. Hanson, who was re-elected in 2016 largely with support from low-income earners, had previously said the government could not afford the tax package. Opposition parties had sought to break Turnbull's tax policy into three components, in order to pass income tax cuts for low and middle-income earners, while rejecting benefits that would flow to higher earners.

Markets subdued

There was little reaction from Australian financial markets as the package will require seven years to implement and it was uncertain if future governments would rescind parts of the bill. Analysts said the package would have little immediate impact. "Because the macroeconomic aspect of the tax measures is negligible in the near term and it doesn't have any implications for interest rate settings domestically, I doubt it would have an impact in the Australian dollar either," said Matthew Hassan, senior economist at Westpac Banking Corp.—Reuters

Sports



Neymar fit for Brazil after World Cup injury fears

Neymar criticised for being self-indulgent

SAINT PETERSBURG: Neymar will play in Brazil's vital World Cup match against Costa Rica today despite injury fears, coach Tite has confirmed. The world's most expensive player was given a rough ride by the Swiss in a 1-1 draw on Sunday, suffering 10 fouls during the match, the most for any player in a single World Cup game for 20 years.

Neymar then set alarm bells ringing when he hobbled out of training on Tuesday. But he returned to training on Wednesday and Tite insisted he is not running a risk by throwing Neymar straight back into the action.

"It's the same team that is going to start that stated against Switzerland," said Tite. "We want to win, it's a World Cup, but the coach is not going to play with the players' health. It's too big a risk." Even before his latest injury scare, there were doubts over Neymar's match fitness after a broken bone in his foot ended his club season with Paris Saint-Germain in February. Neymar returned and scored in World Cup warm-up friendly wins against Croatia and Austria, but Tite admitted it could take up to five games for his star forward to be back to his best. "He had a knock, but I think it was the first time in three and a half months he played 90 minutes," said Tite.

"We are calm. Five matches is the minimum you need to be fully fit and he has already sped up the process." In their desperation for a breakthrough in the final stages

against the Swiss, Brazil consistently looked to Neymar to provide the final finish or pass without success.

Neymar was criticised for being self-indulgent, often taking too many touches to try and beat Swiss right-back Stephan Lichtsteiner instead of moving the ball on quickly to teammates. But Tite strongly refuted reports he has asked Neymar to play more in the team's best interests. "Absolutely not. The information you got is not true," Tite responded to a Brazilian journalist. "All of the players have this responsibility of playing for the collective (good) and being individuals."

"I'm not going to take away from him his genius in the last third of the pitch. That applies to (Philippe) Coutinho, (Gabriel) Jesus, Willian and (Roberto) Firmino too. "You have to strengthen the team but I'm not going to take away the main characteristics of the players."

Thiago Silva will captain Brazil as Tite continues to rotate who wears the armband among a group of senior players. The Paris Saint-Germain defender admitted Brazil's failure to carry their excellent form in two years under Tite into their opening fixture in Russia has piled on the pressure but is confident they will bounce back in Saint Petersburg.

"Given the first result, this puts a greater pressure in theory, but we are fully aware of the responsibility and we are ready to perform tomorrow," he said. —AFP



SAINT PETERSBURG: Brazil's forward Neymar (R) shares a laugh with (from L) Brazil's midfielder Paulinho, Brazil's forward Taison and Brazil's defender Marcelo during a training session at the Saint Petersburg Stadium in Saint Petersburg yesterday on the eve of the Russia 2018 World Cup Group E football match between Brazil and Costa Rica. —AFP

Gudmundsson set to miss Iceland's Nigeria clash

VOLGOGRAD: Iceland midfielder Johann Berg Gudmundsson has not recovered from the calf injury he picked up against Argentina and is set to miss today's crucial Group D clash with Nigeria. Iceland's coach said yesterday that the injury means he will make changes to his line-up but boldly predicted his side, who held Argentina to a 1-1 draw, would beat the Super Eagles in Volgograd.

"We expect to win," coach Heimir Hallgrímsson told reporters at the Volgograd Arena after a brief training session. "It is very unlikely that Joey will play. But he's getting better every day, and is in good hands," Hallgrímsson said, adding that the Burnley player would be replaced by Olafur Skúlason if he doesn't make it. Gudmundsson was forced off after an hour against Argentina but there was better news on Swansea City's Gylfi Sigurdsson who had faced a race against time to be fit for the tournament.

He played the full 90 minutes against Argentina and has recovered completely. "He's 100 percent fit. Match fit and ready to play," said Hallgrímsson. "We have been rotating the team in preparation so we are ready to switch it around and it doesn't change our plans how we will approach this game." Iceland are buoyant after their shock result against Argentina where Lionel Messi saw a potentially match-winning penalty saved by Hannes Halldórsson. And captain Aron Gunnarsson said it was the team's togetherness and spirit that enabled them to keep punching above their weight on the world stage, having famously knocked England out of Euro 2016. "I've always said that when everyone is rowing in the same direction then anything is possible in football," said Gunnarsson. Nigeria lost their opening match 2-0 to Croatia and Hallgrímsson said he expected the Africans to come out firing.

"This is a must-win game for Nigeria, and that makes it a little bit psychologically different, they have to win," he said. "This group is going to be decided in the last minutes, in the last game. "It's going to be down to some margins, a set piece, a goal in injury time. This is how this group is going to be played." —AFP



VOLGOGRAD: Iceland's players take part in a training session at Volgograd Arena in Volgograd yesterday, on the eve of their Russia 2018 World Cup Group D football match against Nigeria. —AFP

Sports

Cleveland Indians rolled past visiting Chicago White Sox 12-0

San Francisco outlast Miami to win tense three-game series

CLEVELAND: Corey Kluber allowed just one hit in seven innings to become the major leagues' first 11-game winner this season as the Cleveland Indians rolled past the visiting Chicago White Sox 12-0 on Wednesday at Progressive Field. The victory gave the Indians the three-game series sweep and pushed their winning streak to four. The loss was the White Sox's seventh in a row. Jose Ramirez's three-run home run in the first inning was plenty for Kluber (11-3). He bounced back from his worst outing of the season in his prior appearance (four runs in five innings in a 6-3 loss to Minnesota) by dominating the White Sox. Omar Narvaez's two-out single in the second inning was the only hit off Kluber, who struck out seven, walked just one and did not allow a Chicago runner to reach second base. He retired the final 14 batters he faced after walking Charlie Tilson in the third inning. George Kontos and Josh Tomlin completed the Indians' two-hitter.

CUBS 4, DODGERS 0

Jon Lester went seven scoreless innings and Kyle Schwarber hit a home run for the second consecutive game as Chicago closed out a National League Championship Series rematch with a shutout of visiting Los Angeles. The Cubs took two of three against the defending NL champions, with a four-game rematch set to start Monday at Los Angeles. Dodgers starter Ross Stripling (6-2) saw his six-start win streak come to an end after giving up three runs on eight hits over six innings. Meanwhile, Lester (9-2) has won five consecutive starts and seven of his last eight. He threw a season-high 119 pitches while holding the Dodgers to five hits with three walks and a strikeout.

PHILLIES 4, CARDINALS 3

Odubel Herrera's one-out solo homer in the seventh inning lifted host Philadelphia over St. Louis. Homering in his fourth straight game, Herrera tagged reliever Sam Tuivailala (1-3) with the loss on a difficult day for St. Louis. The Cardinals lost starting pitcher Michael Wacha to an oblique injury in the bottom of the fourth, one batter after he served up a two-run homer to Cesar Hernandez that gave the Phillies a 3-1 edge. Reliever Edubray Ramos (2-0) worked 1 2/3 scoreless innings to earn the win. Adam Morgan got the last two outs to garner his first big league save, retiring Tommy Pham on a grounder to short with the tying run at second to end the game.

BLUE JAYS 5, BRAVES 4

J.A. Happ struck out eight in a season-best 8 1/3 innings, Kendrys Morales hit a two-run home run, and Toronto held on to defeat visiting Atlanta. Happ (9-3) held the Braves to four runs, six hits, including two solo homers, and no walks as the Blue Jays gained a split of the two-game interleague series. Happ was sent out for the ninth to try for his first complete game of the season but was replaced by Ryan Tepera after allowing one-out singles to Freddie Freeman and Nick Markakis. Tepera allowed an RBI single to Kurt Suzuki before striking out Charlie Culberson.

Ender Inciarte hit an RBI infield single before Johan Camargo flied out to center to give Tepera his fifth save of the season.

GIANTS 6, MARLINS 5

Hunter Pence drove in two runs in a rare start, and Gorkys Hernandez capped a five-run sixth inning with a two-run single, allowing host San Francisco to outlast Miami and win a tense three-game series. After the clubs split games Monday and Tuesday in which there were four hit batsmen and two ejections, both teams were on their best behavior in the series finale, the seventh time the clubs have met in the last 10 days. Derek Holland (5-7) got the win, allowing three runs and seven hits in six-plus innings. He walked two and struck out seven. Reyes Moronta came on with two aboard in the ninth and struck out J.B. Shuck for his first career save.

ATHLETICS 12, PADRES 4

Oakland hit back-to-back homers in back-to-back innings for the first time in 21 seasons to rout host San Diego and complete a two-game sweep. Franklin Barreto and Josh Phegley hit back-to-back homers—the first round-tripper of the season for each—in the second off Padres starter Joey Lucchesi (3-3) to give the A's a quick 4-0 lead. Mark Canha and Matt Olson went back-to-back in the third off Padres reliever Robbie Erlin. Jed Lowrie hit a two-run homer in the eighth off Phil Hughes, giving the A's five homers for the game totaling 2,018 feet.

REDS 5, TIGERS 3

Scooter Gennett and Eugenio Suarez hit back-to-back homers in the sixth inning, and Cincinnati held on to beat visiting Detroit. Gennett's two-run shot was his 13th this season, while Suarez has 15 homers. Adam Duvall added a solo blast—his 12th—and Scott Schebler contributed two hits and a run. Tucker Barnhart had two hits and an RBI as Cincinnati took both games of the series. Jeimer Candelario and Niko Goodrum homered for Detroit, and Jose Iglesias added three hits and an RBI. Tigers starter Michael Fulmer (3-6) allowed three runs on five hits in 5 2/3 innings and tied his season high with nine strikeouts.

YANKEES 7, MARINERS 5

Giancarlo Stanton hit the game-winning, two-run homer with two outs in the bottom of the ninth inning as New York staged a five-run comeback against Seattle at Yankee Stadium. In the eighth inning, Gary Sanchez blasted a 1-1 cutter from Alex Colome off an advertisement in the back of the Seattle bullpen in left-center field, a two-run home run that tied the score at 5-5. An inning later, the Yankees recorded their sixth walk-off win. Stanton hadn't ended a game with a homer since April 18, 2014, also against Seattle. The Mariners lost a third consecutive game for the second time this season and fell to the Yankees for the ninth time in the past 11 meetings.

ASTROS 5, RAYS 1

George Springer, Alex Bregman and Jose Al-



CLEVELAND: Adam Engel #15 of the Chicago White Sox makes a diving catch to get out Tyler Naquin #30 of the Cleveland Indians during the fifth inning at Progressive Field on Wednesday in Cleveland, Ohio. The Indians defeated the White Sox 12-0. —AFP

tive clubbed back-to-back-to-back home runs in the sixth inning, and Houston claimed its fourth consecutive series victory with a win over visiting Tampa Bay. The Astros used the power surge to become the first team in the majors to reach 50 wins. Springer snapped a 1-all tie with his leadoff homer against Rays right-hander Nathan Eovaldi (1-3), drilling an 0-2 fastball 437 feet to left field for his 15th home run on the season. Two pitches later, Bregman cranked his 11th homer, also to left. Altuve, who belted a homer off Eovaldi with one out in the fourth to pull the Astros even, followed with a titanic 443-foot shot, his seventh, that extended the lead to 4-1.

TWINS 4, RED SOX 1

Max Kepler and Robbie Grossman both homered off David Price to supplement five innings of one-run ball from Minnesota starter Lance Lynn in a victory over visiting Boston. Kepler's two-run blast in the fourth broke a 1-all tie after Grossman's solo shot led off the bottom of the first. Lynn (5-5) walked five batters but allowed only an unearned run on three hits with two strikeouts for the Twins, who have won four of five. Price (8-5) was on the hook despite his quality start, giving up three runs on seven hits and a walk while striking out three in six innings. The Boston southpaw had won four consecutive starts and six of his past seven coming in.

RANGERS 3, ROYALS 2

Rougned Odor homered and Austin Bibens-Dirkx picked up his first win of the season as visiting Texas completed a three-game sweep of Kansas City. It was the fifth consecutive victory for the Rangers, who have won 17 of their past 20 meetings with the Royals dating back to July 23, 2016. Kansas City dropped its ninth straight game, its longest losing streak of the season.

Bibens-Dirkx (1-1) allowed just five hits and a run over 6 2/3 innings. He also made history by combining with catcher Isiah Kiner-Falefa to form the first battery in major league history of players with hyphenated surnames. Kiner-Falefa, making his big league catching debut, threw out Hunter Dozier trying to steal second to end the game.

ROCKIES 10, METS 8

Nolan Arenado, Charlie Blackmon and Ryan McMahon homered, and Colorado survived a throwback game at Coors Field for a slugfest win over New York in Denver. Colorado trailed 8-6 heading into the bottom of the fifth but rallied to take the lead. Ian Desmond drew a two-out walk, Tom Murphy singled and McMahon smacked a pinch-hit home run off Robert Gsellman (5-2) to make it 9-8. The long ball was McMahon's second of the year. Dominic Smith had a single, a double and a triple, and Asdrubal Cabrera and Devin Mesoraco each had two hits and two RBIs for New York.

ORIOLES 3, NATIONALS 0

Baltimore scored early and added on later in defeating host Washington in a soggy game that included a rain delay of 2 hours, 43 minutes. Mark Trumbo launched a 427-foot home run in the second inning off loser Gio Gonzalez (6-4) to stake Orioles starter Andrew Cashner to a 2-0 lead. Danny Valencia added a sacrifice fly in the sixth, after the rain delay. The Orioles began the night having lost 10 of 11 games, including Tuesday night's defeat against the Nationals to open the series. Baltimore earned its first win in five games against Washington this season, with one more game remaining on Thursday. The Nationals lost for the eighth time in 11 games. —Reuters

Sports

Sky slam Tour de France legend Hinault's strike remarks over Froome

Team Sky hope for a quick resolution of the matter

LONDON: French five-time winner of the Tour de France Bernard Hinault's accusation that Chris Froome is a "cheat" and call for riders at this year's race to strike in protest at his presence are "uneducated" say Team Sky.

Froome was found to have twice the permissible amount of asthma drug Salbutamol in his system during September's Vuelta a Espana, which he won, before also winning May's Giro d'Italia, becoming the first man to hold all three Grand Tours at once since Hinault in 1983. The British four-time Tour de France champion insists he has not broken any rules, but Hinault says Froome is a cheat and as cycling authorities dither, rider power should be exerted. However, in a hard-hitting statement yesterday Team Sky accused 63-year-old Hinault of distorting the facts and not for the first time. "It is disappointing that Bernard Hinault has, once again, repeated factually incorrect comments about a case he clearly does not understand," the statement read.

"His comments are irresponsible and ill-informed. Chris has not had a positive test, rather an adverse analytical finding for a prescribed asthma medication. "As an ex-rider himself, Bernard will appreciate the need for fairness for each and every athlete. And at the current time, Chris is entitled to race." Team Sky said they hoped for a quick resolution of the matter but in the meantime they were getting on with their training for this year's Tour de France which gets underway on July 7.

"This process would normally be confidential to protect the athlete and establish the facts. Unfortunately, it was leaked. However, both Chris and the team are following the process that has been put in place by the UCI. "It is clearly a difficult situation which no one wants resolved more quickly than Chris and the team. "Chris and Team Sky are fully-focused on the upcoming Tour de France and won't let these uneducated comments affect our preparation for the greatest race in the world."

'IF HE'S ON IT, WE'RE NOT'

Hinault, known as "The Badger" in his riding pomp, did not mince words when he spoke to AFP on Wednesday. "If the international authorities don't sanction him it's up to the other cyclists to shoulder the responsibility," said Hinault. "If the racers accept a cheat on the race then that's their problem!" Hinault challenged

As records fall, cricket's balance tilts in favour of the bat

CHESTER-LE-STREET: International limited overs batting records have been tumbling amid a blizzard of boundaries in recent weeks. But while statisticians update their files an uncomfortable question remains: has the balance between bat and ball, on which all cricket depends, become worryingly lopsided in the one-day game?

Just over a week ago, New Zealand posted the highest ever total in a women's one-day international when they made 490 for four against Ireland in Dublin—an innings featuring Amelia Kerr's record 232 not out.

And the women's Twenty20 international record fell twice in a day on Wednesday as New Zealand and then England piled up scores of 216 for one and 250 for three against South Africa at Taunton. That came just 24 hours after England broke their own all-time men's ODI record when they made a mammoth 481 for six against Australia in Nottingham. Even though world champions Australia were without six first-choice players through injury or suspension, it was still a staggering feat.

Moreover, it meant England's previous men's ODI record total of 444 for three against Pakistan, also set at Trent Bridge, had lasted just two years. It's all a far cry from the opening match of



File photo shows (From L) Cyclists of Great Britain's SKY cycling team: Great Britain's Geraint Thomas, Great Britain's Christopher Froome and Poland's Michal Kwiatkowski ride during a track reconnaissance on the road towards the Alpe d'Huez's summit, on June 13, 2018, as part of their preparation for the 2018 Tour de France. — AFP

the peloton to strike on the opening day of the 2018 Tour, a ride from Noirmoutier to Fontenay-le-Comte along the Atlantic coast on July 7. "The peloton should just stop and strike, saying 'if he's on it, we're not'. "The peloton is being too nice. We condemned others, everyone agreed, but him, are you telling me it's because you call this an adverse finding (instead of a positive one) this is just not right," he said.

"Contador paid the price for the same thing, he was suspended, but him (Froome) nothing," said Hinault said in reference to Spaniard Alberto Contador, who was banned after testing positive

the inaugural men's World Cup in 1975 when England, in what was then a 60-over competition, made a then record 334 for four against India at Lord's. India's Sunil Gavaskar thought the target so out of reach, the opening great carried his bat for 36 as his side managed 132 for three at the end of their 60 overs. By contrast South Africa, when confronted with a then record score of 434 for four by Australia in 50 overs, the first time a team had passed 400 in an ODI, in Johannesburg in 2006, responded with 438 for nine.

'SCARING ME'

But it is the latest record-breaking feat at Trent Bridge, a year out from the World Cup in England, that has sent shock waves through the world of cricket, given a total of 500 — once thought to be utterly unobtainable in a 50-over game—now appears to be in sight. "To see almost 500 runs scored in 50 overs in England is scaring me...about the health of the game and where it's going," tweeted former India captain Sourav Ganguly. So how has it come to this? While limits on the number of overs a bowler can deliver in an innings and fielding restrictions have long been a part of the one-day game, the really rapid increase in run-scoring has taken place during the last few years — England's total at Trent Bridge was the eighth score of 400 or more since the start of 2015. Before that there had been just 11. The advent of Twenty20, a new format which puts an emphasis on attacking batting, better bats, shorter boundaries and a greater range of shots such as "the scoop" and "the ramp", have all played their part in the increasing number of run-fests.

Similarly, rigid restrictions on field placings, limiting fielders on the boundary and the legside, have also worked against bowlers. And one of the greatest changes has been the change to using

for clenbuterol and being stripped of the 2010 Tour de France title.

"Ventolin might not be much, and maybe its not what made him win the Vuelta, but the rules are the rules, and they should be applied to everyone." International Cycling Union (UCI) president David Lappartient told French regional newspaper Le Telegramme in January that Froome's team should withdraw him.

"Without wishing to comment on the rider's guilt, it would be easier for everyone" were Sky to suspend him, Lappartient said. "It's up to (Sky team manager Dave) Brailsford to take his responsibilities." — AFP

two white balls, one from each end, during an innings. With all ODIs now played in coloured clothing, white balls have become a standard part of the limited overs game.

But they tend to swing less than traditional red cricket balls, making it easier for top-class batsmen to hit through the line. It was thought having two white balls per innings would aid quicker bowlers as this would ensure bounce from both ends for longer in the innings. Instead the effect has been to reduce the wear and tear which makes balls conducive to reverse swing, which has proven to be some of the most difficult for bowling for batsmen to face.

'EMASCULATED' BOWLERS

James Anderson, England's all-time leading Test wicket-taker, who no longer plays limited overs cricket, said while commentating for BBC Radio on Tuesday: "I want to see a close game, a battle between bat and ball. "I love seeing batsmen in full flow, but I also like to see the off stump cartwheeling out of the ground. If the bowler bowled straight today he was going to get hit for six."

Meanwhile Michael Atherton, while admiring the "awesome combination of ease and brutality" displayed by England's batsmen in Nottingham, issued a plea on behalf of swing bowlers whom he felt had become "emasculated" in one-day cricket.

Writing in yesterday's edition of The Times, the former England captain and opening batsman insisted: "The game needs to find a suitable white ball that swings at the start and must abandon the use of two balls per innings, to allow for the return of reverse swing—two fundamental skills of the game that provide as much entertainment as any number of sixes belted into the Nottingham night sky." — AFP



Messi under pressure at World Cup as Ronaldo scores again

Beckham hints England to play Argentina in World Cup final

YEKATERINBURG: Lionel Messi is under pressure to deliver when Argentina face Croatia yesterday after his eternal rival Cristiano Ronaldo streaked clear at the top of the World Cup goalscoring charts.

The Barcelona forward had a first game to forget, failing to convert a penalty as the two-time world champions drew 1-1 with Iceland in their Group D opener. In stark contrast, Ronaldo, who last month won his fifth Champions League winner's medal, now has four goals in Russia and looks a shoo-in to win his sixth world player of the year award.

Elsewhere yesterday, 1998 champions France can virtually ensure progress from Group C with a win against Peru, while Australia need to bounce back against Denmark after losing to Les Bleus. Messi's teammates have rallied around their superstar captain after his disappointing performance against Iceland.

He is bearing the weight of expectations as Argentina seek a first World Cup trophy since 1986, desperate to crown his glittering career with a major

international tournament success.

A defeat against the Luka Modric-led Croatians in Nizhny Novgorod could see Argentina, unthinkably, flirting with a first exit at the group stage since 2002. "We are all with him, he knows that he can count on the support of all of us more than ever," said Argentina striker Paulo Dybala of Messi. "We are here to help him every moment, and of course we will be at his side."

Croatia secured three points in a 2-0 win against Nigeria in their opening game but enter the match under a cloud. AC Milan striker Nikola Kalinic was sent home from Russia for reportedly refusing to come on as a substitute, though coach Zlatko Dalic said the AC Milan man had a back injury.

France, who edged past Australia 2-1 courtesy of an Antoine Griezmann penalty and an own goal in their Group C opener, vowed to ramp up the intensity against Peru in Yekaterinburg. "We took stock of what was done well or not so well and all agree that we will have to increase our physical intensity and im-

prove our attitude in general," said vice-captain and central defender Raphael Varane. "Other teams (among the favourites) did not win or even lost. We won, but we know that there are things to improve on. We know what direction we need to go in."

The defeat to France means the Socceroos need a win against Christian Eriksen's Denmark in Samara. "We know (Eriksen) is a fantastic player and obviously he's got a huge role to play for them," said Australia captain Mile Jedinak. "But we're not trying to focus on that. We'll definitely focus on them as whole and as a collective."

RUSSIA CELEBRATE

Russia are celebrating after Wednesday's results confirmed they have qualified for the knockout round for the first time since the Soviet era along with Uruguay, condemning Mohamed Salah's Egypt and Saudi Arabia to an early exit. Morocco will also be leaving Russia after the first round following their defeat to European champions Portugal,



BRONNITSY: Argentina's forward Lionel Messi (L) vies for the ball with defender Nicolas Otamendi during a training session at the team's base camp in Bronnitsy, near Moscow, during the Russia 2018 World Cup football tournament. — AFP

who are level with Spain on four points at the top of Group B.

Former England captain David Beckham has tipped England to play Argentina in the World Cup final after a

positive start against Tunisia. "I think obviously my choice would be England to win the competition, but that's me being biased and passionate about my country," he said. —AFP

Tunisia set to test Belgium's cup-winning credentials

NIZHNY NOVGOROD: Belgium's credentials as a genuine outside bet for World Cup success face a tougher examination against Tunisia tomorrow after a relatively sedate opening against Panama.

Roberto Martinez's star-studded squad emerged as 3-0 winners in their opening Group G game in Sochi on Monday but will likely find Tunisia a far more robust and defensively astute opponent when they meet at the Spartak Stadium in Moscow.

It will mean the creative acumen of captain Eden Hazard and Kevin De Bruyne will be vital if Belgium are to move closer to the second round and effectively end Tunisia's tournament. Both Premier League standouts took a while to get going in Monday's match but their obvious ability eventually made the requisite impact.

"The first game at any tournament is always a little tough and the heat also tired us out but after rest we'll be ready to



Wahbi Khazri Eden Hazard

roll again," Chelsea playmaker Hazard said in the build-up to the weekend's clash. De Bruyne set up the second goal for Romelu Lukaku with a characteristically innovative pass and the Manchester City midfielder said on Wednesday he

saw that as his primary task at the tournament.

"I have to get the strikers into situations where they can score. If I do that, then I know I'm doing a good job," he told reporters as Belgium were given a surprise day off. Tunisia have a well-earned reputation in African football for their ability to close down matches through a combination of bloody-minded defence, time-wasting tactics and gamesmanship.

That approach almost paid off against England in Volgograd on Monday as they frustrated Gareth Southgate's men for most of the second half after they pulled level 10 minutes before the break from the penalty spot.

However, their well-organised rearguard eventually caved in when they conceded from a late set-piece to lose 2-1 and will need to employ more ambitious tactics against the Belgians to keep alive their World Cup hopes. —Reuters

Israelis cheering Iran, hope to rekindle ties with native land

JERUSALEM: Iran's national team received surprise support in their World Cup fixture against Spain: a group of Israelis of Iranian origin gathered to cheer on the team. About 20 supporters mainly comprising the Hasid family and some of their friends gathered on Wednesday in an upscale Jerusalem neighbourhood and cheered for a team that most Israelis consider a representative of their arch-enemy.

Israel has long been locked in a shadow war with Iran, which supports Islamist militants in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon and whose nuclear programme is widely believed to have been targeted by Israel's intelligence services.

But Tzion Hasid, 84, a prominent member of Israel's Iranian community and a Jerusalem building contractor, who came to Israel from Isfahan in 1966 with other family members, said that despite the political enmity between the two Middle Eastern powers, Israelis of Iranian origin felt great affection for their former compatriots.

"I came from Iran to the land of Israel, the land of our dreams, but not even for one moment in over 60 years have we forgotten our (old) country," Hasid said. "We still have feelings of respect for all Iranians ... We want peace with them and we hope that even next year, our (Israel's) leaders and theirs will meet and make peace for the benefit of both our people." —Reuters

Sports



Australia and Denmark draw 1-1 in World Cup Group C

Captain Jedinak equalises from penalty spot

SAMARA: Captain Mile Jedinak rode to Australia's World Cup rescue with a penalty to cancel out Christian Eriksen's superb opener for Denmark, securing a 1-1 draw yesterday that ensured Group C would go down to the wire.

Eriksen's seventh-minute opener was fully deserved by the fast-starting Danes and the quality of his half-volley finish was excellent in a tournament that has produced some wonderful goals.

Jedinak, however, got Australia back into the game with his second penalty in Russia, awarded following the intervention of the VAR, and the draw kept the Socceroos just about alive in the tournament. Denmark moved on to four points and need at least a draw against France in their final game to guarantee a last-16 spot. Australia's destiny, how-

ever, is no longer in their own hands.

With one point, they must win their last match against Peru to stand any chance of going through, but results could still conspire to send them home.

"For me it is important just that we have to beat Peru," Australia coach Bert van Marwijk told reporters. "I have no influence on the rest so I do not think about it. I will not sleep one second less."

After their opening defeat by France, Van Marwijk resisted the temptation to draft in attacking reinforcements, leaving veteran forward Tim Cahill on the bench for the second match in a row.

It looked a bad decision in the early stages as Australia laboured up front and the Danes tore into their opponents at a furious pace. Aaron Mooy's poor clearance was immediately returned into the

area. Nicolai Jorgensen controlled and cleverly flicked the ball inside to Eriksen, who ghosted into space and lashed a sweet half-volley on the rise which flew high into the net. It was Eriksen's 13th goal in his last 15 appearances for his country and underlined the pivotal importance of the Tottenham Hotspur playmaker to the otherwise workmanlike Danes.

HEADER WIDE



They should have doubled their advantage when Jorgensen flashed a header wide as Australia looked ragged at the back and toothless up front. Yet just as in their opening game, Australia were handed a route back into the match from the penalty spot, thanks to the intervention of the Video Assistant Referee. —Reuters




SAMARA: Denmark's forward Nicolai Jorgensen (L) jumps to bring under control a long ball into the box during the Russia 2018 World Cup Group C football match between Denmark and Australia at the Samara Arena in Samara yesterday. — AFP




Today's Matches (All local timings)

Brazil  15:00  Costa Rica

Nigeria  18:00  Iceland

Serbia  21:00  Switzerland

Tomorrow's Matches

Belgium  15:00  Tunisia

Korea Republic  18:00  Mexico

Germany  21:00  Sweden

Poland to make changes for Colombia

SOCHI: Poland will make changes for their match against Colombia and start "more aggressively" in what will be a key match against opponents who also lost their opening contest, striker Dawid Kownacki said yesterday.

Both sides were defeated 2-1 in their first Group H games—Poland at the hands of Senegal and Colombia to Japan—meaning another defeat is unthinkable for either of them. "We have to play more aggressively," Kownacki said. "In the Senegal match, we did not show the aggression, we did not attack the rival as we should have. We should have played sharper. This was a key mistake.

"This (aggression) will be important in the match with Colombia. We have to get close to them, they have great players, a lot of individuals who can do a lot when they have control of the

ball. "When we get possession we need to make faster decisions. We kept the ball too long with Senegal, we could not get into the rhythm." Assistant coach Hubert Malowiejski said some of those who disappointed against Senegal would be dropped but he did not name names.

"There will be certainly be changes, it is not very likely that we will play with Colombia with the same players," Malowiejski said. "How many changes, and which positions, this decision has not been made yet. We have training sessions ahead of us, especially today's training. The skeleton of the team will remain the same but there will be changes."

The results in Group H have been one of the most surprising in the World Cup with the underdogs winning both opening ties. That makes Sunday's game in Kazan a crunch match for both sides, especially as Senegal play Japan a few hours before.

Kownacki, however, sought to introduce a note of calm. "This tournament has just started and after the first match not all is lost," he said. —Reuters

Serbia take on Switzerland with Brazil looming

KALININGRAD: Serbia will attempt to wrap up qualification to the World Cup knockout rounds today as they take on a Switzerland team brimming with confidence after grabbing a draw with Brazil. The Serbs control their own destiny in Group E after an opening 1-0 win against Costa Rica on Sunday, which came courtesy of a stunning Aleksandar Kolarov free-kick.

Victory over Switzerland in Kaliningrad on Friday would guarantee Serbia a place in the last 16, regardless of whether they win or lose their final group game with Brazil next week. Roma star Kolarov acknowledged that Serbia are in a strong position to qualify for the knockout rounds for the first time since they competed alongside Montenegro in 1998.

However the 32-year-old cautioned that the Serbs would take nothing for granted against the Swiss. "It's very important that we have these three points in the bag, but it's not over, Switzerland will be the hardest match," he said. "I don't want to do the maths for now, if we draw it would not work, we want to win of course."

Serbia boast a host of current and former Premier League talent, including Manchester United Midfielder Nemanja Matic. But their rising star is Lazio's Sergej Milinkovic-Savic, a rangy attacking midfielder who has drawn comparisons to Serbian great Dejan Stankovic. —AFP

SNIPPETS



Mbappe sends France through as Peru knocked out of WCup

Teenager Mbappe becomes France's youngest World Cup goalscorer

YEKATERINBURG: Teenager Kylian Mbappe became France's youngest World Cup goalscorer as they beat Peru 1-0 yesterday to reach the last 16 and condemn the South Americans to an early exit. France, one of the pre-tournament favourites, join Uruguay and hosts Russia in the knockout rounds with one group game to go.

Paris Saint-Germain forward Mbappe-aged 19 years and 183 days-underlined his rich talent and claimed his place in the French record books when he poked home in the first half. Didier Deschamps' side face Denmark on Tuesday with top spot in Group C up for grabs but progression to the next stage assured. In contrast, Peru face Australia with their fate sealed and just pride to play for in front of their passionate and large following that has decamped to Russia. Some Peru fans were in tears even before kick-off—a generation of Peruvians have never known their country in the World Cup before.

The South Americans' last appearance was in 1982 and they made this like a home game, ensuring their red and white dominated the Yekaterinburg Arena. That included the two enormous temporary stands that stretch high above both ends, exposed to the elements, where Peru fans bobbed and bounced to keep warm.

Paul Pogba, the Manchester United midfielder who a few days ago called himself "the most criticised player in the world", flashed a drive wide and defender Raphael Varane did likewise from a header.

With 15 minutes gone, Pogba and France began to impose themselves. Antoine Griezmann drove straight at goalkeeper Pedro Gallese after Olivier Giroud-starting in place of Ousmane Dembele-set up the Atletico Madrid forward. Deschamps had clearly



EKATERINBURG: France's forward Kylian Mbappe (C) vies for the ball with Peru's midfielder Yoshimar Yotun (L) and Peru's defender Miguel Trauco (R) during the Russia 2018 World Cup Group C football match between France and Peru at the Ekaterinburg Arena in Ekaterinburg yesterday. — AFP

told his side, disappointing in beating Australia 2-1 in their opener, to go long and use Giroud's physicality. Peru's best outlet in the first half was rampaging full-back Luis Advincula, who had the beating of defender Lucas Hernandez down France's left flank.

Peru, unfortunate to lose 1-0 to Denmark in their first game, took until the half-hour to have their first serious chance, with recalled skipper Paolo Guerrero stinging the legs of Hugo Lloris. France captain Lloris, making his 100th appearance for his country, was a bystander for long periods. On 34 minutes France went in front. Pogba cleverly played in

Giroud, his shot took a deflection and looped over Gallese, allowing Mbappe to stab into an open net. New-found confidence ran through the French and Hernandez should have made it 2-0 just before the break.

As in the first half, Peru made the better start to the second and midfielder Pedro Aquino arrowed a long-distance rocket onto Lloris's upright. But for all their possession, Peru—in their distinctive white kit with red sash—caused the French defence few problems. Barcelona centre-back Samuel Umtiti was imperious alongside Real Madrid's Varane. — AFP

World Cup superstitions putting a spell on players

MOSCOW: Some players believe World Cup success is earned through exercise, diet and endless practice drills—others are convinced it's a matter of wearing lucky underwear. Players and coaches can be a superstitious bunch and often have a ritual or item of clothing they believe is a charm that has contributed to a winning run.

They range from former Colombian keeper Rene Higuita's insistence on wearing blue underpants to current German striker Mario Gomez's habit of only using the far-left urinal to relieve himself before a match.

Gomez's Germany teammate Julian Draxler gives himself a spritz of scent before a big match. "Sometimes my teammates ask me if I'm not right in the head," the Paris Saint-Germain midfielder said. "Every player has a ritual before a match and I usually hold my bag in my locker and I throw on two or three sprays of perfume. It gives me a feeling of happiness." Sports psychologist Dan Abrahams, author of the book "Soccer Tough", said so many match-day factors are beyond a player's control that adopting a ritual or lucky charm provides something to focus on and take charge of.

"Logically, these kinds of rituals aren't linked to performance," he told AFP. "However, if a player creates the perception that they are, then the action can become a hinge factor for how a player feels," said the specialist, who works with Premier League club Bournemouth. England's Dele Alli is using the same shin guards

he has worn since childhood when he plays in Russia, hoping they bring the good fortune that has long eluded the Three Lions at international tournaments. "I've had the same shinpads since I was 11. They are battered (but) I am very superstitious," the Tottenham midfielder told Fifa.com.

BEST FOOT FORWARD

Some players such as England's Phil Jones do not like stepping on white lines, while Brazil defender Marcelo always runs onto the pitch right foot first. The habit is so ingrained that during training in Rostov-on-Don he left the pitch and re-entered after realising he had accidentally led with his left foot.

"Everybody likes to enter with the right foot, right? I'm no different," he laughed when quizzed by reporters. Morocco coach Herve Renard has worn a white shirt on the sidelines since he took Zambia to a surprise victory at the Africa Cup of Nations in 2012.

He is doing so again in Russia, although it has not proved so lucky this time as Morocco will be heading home after the group stages. France are convinced superstition played a part in their 1998 World Cup win, when Fabien Barthez's teammates rubbed the goalkeeper's bald head for good luck.

Defender Laurent Blanc planted a big kiss on Barthez's pool-ball pate before every match, right up to the final against Brazil.

Perhaps the strangest example of the power of suggestion helping a team to World Cup glory is Argentina's triumph in 1978. In an era of short shorts and long hair, Argentina's star striker Mario Kempes was a dedicated follower of fashion, sporting a stylish horseshoe moustache and flowing locks. But Kempes failed to find the net in the group stages, prompting coach Cesar Luis Menotti to offer a suggestion to the forward nicknamed "El Matador". —AFP



EKATERINBURG: Peru's mid-fielder Pedro Aquino (L) heads the ball ahead of France's defender Samuel Umtiti during the Russia 2018 World Cup Group C football match between France and Peru at the Ekaterinburg Arena in Ekaterinburg yesterday. — AFP

Mbappe sends France through as Peru knocked out of WCup

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