

Friday Times

ISSUE NO: 17541

RAMADAN 9, 1439 AH | FRIDAY, MAY 25, 2018

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10 Trump cancels summit with North Korea scheduled for next month



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Amir: Enforce law without tolerance or laxity

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Local

Animal welfare



Local Spotlight
By Muna Al-Fuzai

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The conditions in which livestock are shipped to the Middle East sparked a debate in the Australian parliament after an expose by Australian current affairs program '60 Minutes'. Images of sheep suffering from heat stress and dying of heat stroke caused great distress, and a month after this program was aired, it provoked many animal welfare activists and organizations to call for a ban on livestock exports in summer.

Some Australian legislators also demanded an official ban on exporting sheep to the Middle East. Parliamentarian Susan Lee introduced a legislation titled "Long-term sheep export ban for 2018", and asked for a suspension of export of live sheep over the three months of summer - from July to September. I think the bill will not pass easily because this issue is about those who have been relying on this trade and making profits for many decades. But I guess reconsideration of export conditions will satisfy all parties and preserve the reputation of importing and exporting countries.

It is known that meat is a staple food on the Arab dining table in the Middle East in general, whether in Kuwait

“ Long-term sheep export ban for 2018 ”

or any Arab country. While we enjoy a heavy meal of meat, we often do not think much about which country the meat was imported from or the conditions of the cattle during their transfer, whether humane or not. Animal welfare activists have raised a concern on the conditions of the livestock, as it forms a real wealth of Australia as a major exporter.

I believe that meeting health conditions during the shipping of cattle is the duty of exporting companies. We import sheep and therefore have to impose strict measures to ensure the healthy transfer of these animals and that they are free of defects and in good health until their arrival in the country of import. There has to be mutual understanding and agreement over this.

Kuwait Times published a report that Al-Mawashi company in Kuwait, which is the largest importer of live Australian sheep, is looking to find other sources of livestock as a result of Australia's talk of banning the trade. If so, I think it's the right decision, because focusing on food security is far more important than maximizing profits at the expense of animal welfare.

It is best to wait until the discussions are over and a final decision is made, especially bearing in mind that the trust of local consumers is something I don't think anyone wants to jeopardize. Taking immediate actions to ensure animal welfare is maintained is essential.

PHOTO OF THE DAY



Muslims traditionally break their fast with dates and a few sips of water. One of the most nutritious and popular fruits, dates grow wild throughout the Arabian Peninsula and are also cultivated in large date palm farms as well as by individuals. — Photo by Joseph Shagra

Can we 'meat' in the middle?



IN MY VIEW
By Nejud Al-Yagout

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The other day I read an interesting online article about veganism. The author was a vegan for several years and renounced the lifestyle to go back to eating meat. The comments section was inundated with tirades from readers condemning her for her lack of compassion, though she made it clear that she was never a vegan for ethical reasons. This, in turn, sparked a debate between vegans who give up meat because they do not support the mistreatment of animals and those who are vegan because it is trendy or healthy, with the former accusing the latter of shallowness (and the latter accusing the former of moral policing).

The same judgment is present when omnivores belittle vegans or vegetarians and find ways to convince them that giving up meat is unhealthy for human beings. One of the lines commonly used is: You don't know what you are missing! This is untrue. Many vegans and vegetarians do know what they are missing since not all were vegan or vegetarian from birth. They know it is a sacrifice but are still willing to listen to their conscience rather than give in to the demands of their taste buds.

The question is: when did we turn our eating habits into an ideology with its own set of preachers, converts and clergy members? When did it become the norm for us to scorn or sneer at one another for what we eat or do not eat, for that matter? And when did it become commonplace to ridicule those who oscillate from one way of eating to another, struggling to find a balance? It never ceases to amaze me how human beings continue to find ways to polarize one another. It would be comical if it were not so tragic.

In a conversation with Abdul-Aziz Al-Ashban, a young writer, the issue was summed up pretty neatly when he stated that he could no longer keep up with all the ways

people describe themselves in terms of their eating habits: pescetarian, vegan, ovo-lacto vegetarian, flexitarian, omnivore and so on and so forth. And, wisely, he also added that after speaking to a vegan, he understood why it was necessary to define oneself in a restaurant, but why everywhere else? Al-Ashban's points are universal, but as a writer and thinker, he has a way of bringing to surface ideas we keep in our subconscious, trapped in the webs of our psyche.

Nobody who is aware of the cruelty of the food industry can ever view eating animals in the same manner - which is why many people across the globe are embracing veganism. With an awakening on our planet, it will become more mainstream to see people adopt plant-based diets. Even those who adhere to scripture that permits the ingestion of meat know that what we eat today is far from being halal or kosher. In fact, there are online vegan Muslims who remind us that no animal should be slaughtered in front of another one, and these days animals are injected with hormones and antibiotics, and it is hardly spiritual to pollute our bodies. And, interestingly enough, seventy rabbis across the globe have invited Jews to adopt a vegan diet (The Jewish Chronicle, Simon Rocker, September 27, 2017). So just because something is permissible does not mean it is obliged, and we have to use our own discernment, especially since as Bob Dylan would say: The Times They Are A-Changing. For those who are not concerned with the plight of animals, there is also talk of the environmental aspect of consuming animals. But that's a whole other topic.

Ascension has its own pace and can never be induced by fear or guilt (or as in many cases, vanity or selfishness). The time will come when we can no longer bear the exploitation of animals. The time will come when we admit that we can survive as herbivores. The time will surely come when we eat compassionately. And the time will come when we see fellow sentient beings as brothers and sisters in this journey of consciousness. But until then, let's tune into Voltaire and "cultivate our own gardens." There is nothing more difficult to digest (literally) than someone judging us for eating or not eating meat at the dinner table. Can we 'meat' in the middle?

Kuwait  Times

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Local

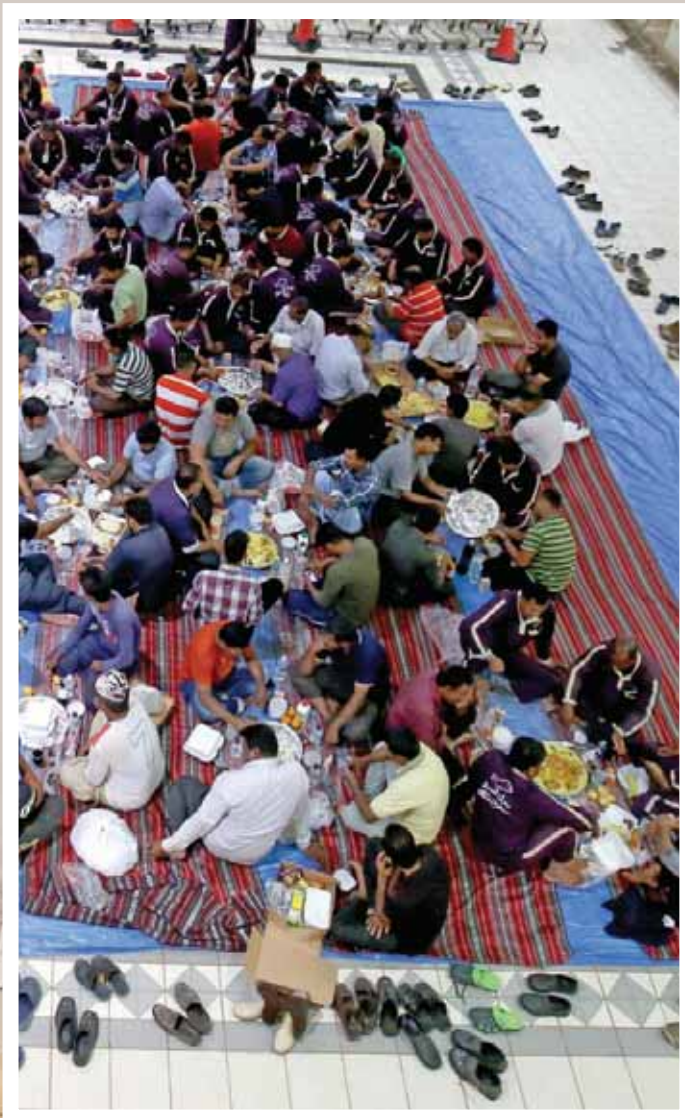


PHOTO ESSAY

FUTOOR AT KUWAIT'S FISH MARKET



Local



Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Hundreds of workers at the main fish market in Sharq enjoy iftar meals donated by the Kuwait Food Bank, local banks, charities and other organizations. The workers are mostly vendors at the market, porters or fish mongers who

stay open through the day and through fu-toor in order to be available for customers wanting fish. One of the oldest traditional fish markets in Kuwait, the Sharq fish market offers daily catches and fish and shrimp auctions throughout the year and is an important part of the local fishing industry.



The challenge of 30-day challenges

There are challenges for pretty much every aspect of life. Drawing and photography challenges. Work out and cooking challenges. Decluttering and mindfulness challenges. Gratitude and prayer challenges. Even Lego game play challenges.

By Jamie Etheridge

During Ramadan, the greatest 30-day challenge is that of fasting and prayer. For fasters, this month is both rewarding and difficult as they must still carry on with their daily lives, work and responsibilities.

Aside from the spiritual, Ramadan also gives people an opportunity to chisel away at bad lifestyle habits and inculcate new, healthy ones. I planned to use the shortened work hours during Ramadan and the overall slowed down pace of life to learn a new skill and complete a 30-day challenge for self-improvement.

Sadly, my plans did not work out. This first week I have started and stopped three separate 30-day challenges.

First up, a friend gifted me a book - Learn to sketch in 30 days - and I thought this would be perfect for Ramadan. I set out wholeheartedly, sketching for four days every evening after iftar. But on the fifth day we went out and I totally forgot to sketch.

Scratch challenge #1.

For the second challenge, I decided to do 30 days of running. I suffered a hip injury last summer and have spent the better part of a year recovering. But feeling fine, I decided to jump back into it. Day one and I totally bailed. I never even made it to the gym. The first day of fasting turned out to be so stressful that I ended up sick in bed for the whole weekend. I did work in a few runs and swims in the week but sadly did not meet the goals of the challenge.

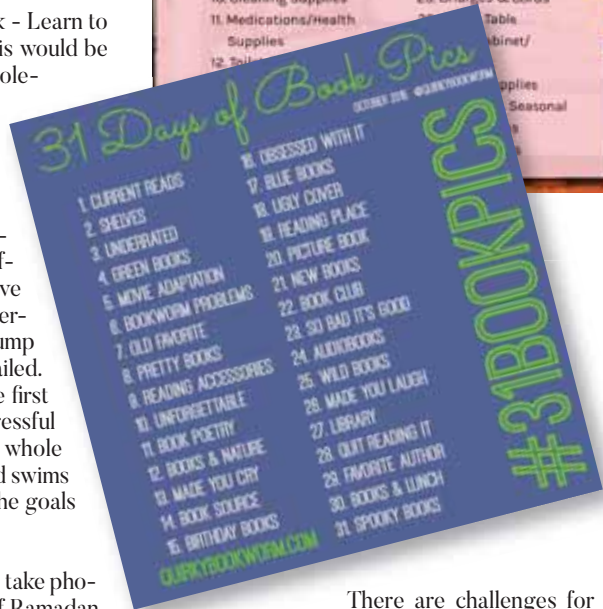
Challenge #2 = fail!

My third 30-day challenge was to take photos every day for the entire month of Ramadan. A friend sent me an article about the benefits of 30 day photo challenges, how they improve your mood and are good for mindfulness and reducing stress. I thought, 'Great!' and immediately agreed to do it. But the first day of Ramadan didn't turn out like I expected and I completely forgot about the idea.

Challenge #3 - fail.

So far in my challenge category, I'm 0/3. Not really a promising start for what are often pitched as the most popular and positive way to build new, healthy habits.

Thirty day challenges are the Internet Age's answer to the perpetual problem of self-improvement. Since the first Jane Fonda workout video or the publication of Dale Carnegie's How to Win Friends and Influence People, we have turned to self-improvement as a legitimate, reasonable way to change our lives and lifestyles. The adage 'you are what you do every day' is especially powerful when it comes to building habits of mind and activity.



There are challenges for pretty much every aspect of life. Drawing and photography challenges. Work out and cooking challenges. Decluttering and mindfulness challenges. Gratitude and prayer challenges. Even Lego game play challenges.

The 30-day challenges have the added benefit of being particularly Instagrammable. We can easily combine 30 days of photos to create a 1 minute video and show our progress, not to mention that the 30-day challenge's daily challenge itself provides excellent photo opportunities.

But the reality is that 30-day challenges come with their own unique set of 'challenges'. Firstly, most adults work full time and often have to squeeze in their 'challenge' in the limited free time they enjoy on nights and weekends.

Second, if you are a parent, forget about having any free time on nights and weekends. My nights and weekends are booked solid taking my children to tuitions or playdates, running errands, cooking and shopping or simply spending quality time with the family.



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Third, the entire point of the 30-day challenge is to help you overcome a bad habit by replacing it with a good one. Switching sitting on the couch for running, for example. Or drawing every day rather than binge-watching Netflix.

But our bad habits exist for a reason. I personally am no fan of TV and do not like to waste time watching it or letting my kids watch it. But sometimes my brain is so exhausted from a long and stressful week. The only thing I have the energy left to do is plop down on the sofa, perhaps pick up a bit of knitting and veg out to old episodes of Friends.

This is not me at my ideal self.

But on a Thursday night after a busy week, sick kids, deadlines and dealing with Kuwait traffic is anyone at their ideal self?

Fourth, bad habits are linked in a concatenated chain of behaviors. Changing one habit is difficult, if not impossible, without changing all those connected to it. For example, someone wants to start running daily. To do that, they need to book a time to run. Let's say the morning. But in the morning breakfast must be made and the kids got ready for school and if the person gets up an hour earlier - let's say 4:30am rather than 5:30am - then they will have to also go to bed earlier to compensate, which means less time to do other things in the evenings like spend quality time with a spouse or work a second, part time job or bake cookies for the kids to take to class the next day.

Each change requires adjustments all along the chain of activities and that is not always taken into account when adopting a new habit or taking on a 30-day challenge.



So the result is failure.

Repeated and disheartening failure. Not the result most of us who take on 30-day challenges were hoping for. And the failure hurts. It can be embarrassing if we've foolishly followed all the internet advice that says 'inform all your friends of your goals to help you stick with them'.

Failure also undermines confidence and the belief that we can take up new habits and change our lives for the better.

True failure is a part of trying and sometimes the process itself can be rewarding. I failed at all three of my planned 30-day challenges this month. But I learned some really valuable lessons including how to understand and manage my time more realistically, how to set SMARTer, more realistic goals (working out daily is impossible, for example but I can likely manage three times a week).

Now the challenge is to figure out how to design a 30-day challenge tailored for my lifestyle and current time constraints. Maybe we need an Every-Other-Day-Challenge or perhaps an Only-On-The-Weekends-Challenge. Or even better, how about a I'm-Great-The-Way-I-Am-Challenge, that one sounds easy but trust me, it's the hardest one of all.

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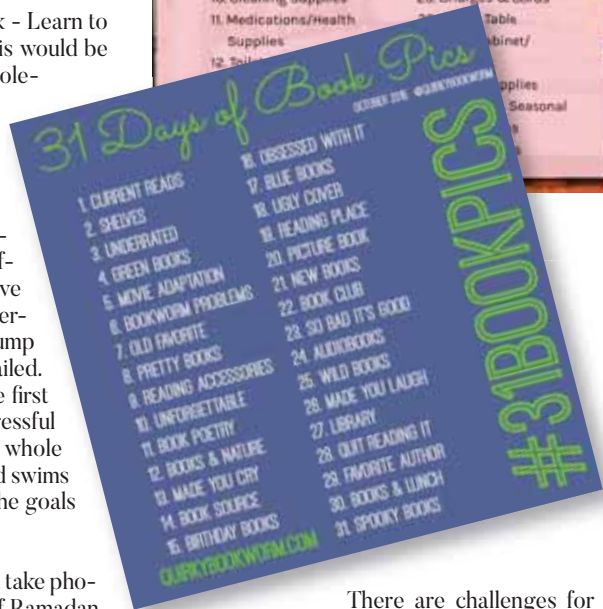
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First Deputy Premier chairs govt follow up committee's meeting

Sheikh Nasser stresses keenness on cementing bonds with Iraq



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs the meeting of the ministerial committee of preparing and following up the government's programs yesterday. — KUNA



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with Sayyid Ammar Al-Hakim, Leader of National Wisdom Movement of Iraq.

KUWAIT: The ministerial committee of preparing and following up the government's programs met yesterday under the chairmanship of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, said the defense ministry's moral guidance and public relations department. A number of ministers and top concerned officials attended the meeting, including Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State

for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh, Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Hamed Al-Azmi, and Finance Minister Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf.

In other news, Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad received at his bureau at Seif Palace on Wednesday Sayyid Ammar Al-Hakim, Leader of National Wisdom Movement of Iraq, and the

accompanying delegation. the Ministry of Defense, in a statement, quoted Sheikh Nasser as praising during the meeting bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries, affirming keenness on bolstering these ties further. The two sides discussed issues of common interest during the meeting, attended by the Amiri Diwan Advisor, Mohammad Abulhassan.

Separately, Kuwait's National Security Bureau Chief Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali Al-Sabah

and US envoy for the global coalition against the so-called Islamic State (IS) Brett McGurk discussed topics of common concern at a meeting on Wednesday. During the meeting, the two officials reviewed cooperation and bilateral relations as well as means of developing and promoting them, the apparatus said in a press statement. They also focused on key issues on regional and international levels that concern the two countries, it added. — KUNA

MPs demand probe into cabinet finances

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The controversy over MP Ahmad Al-Fadhli's statement that the government will pay lawmakers before the summer got a new turn yesterday after seven lawmakers demanded a probe into the cabinet finances while Fadhli himself asked the Anti-Corruption Authority to investigate his sources of finance.

A video posted on the social media a few days ago showed Fadhli clearly saying that the government was going to pay lawmakers before summer. Fadhli later explained that his statement was old and that concerned payments made to needy Kuwaiti citizens with the help of lawmakers and insisted that the lawmakers never received the cash which is paid directly to the needy citizens. But the issue received great attention from other lawmakers who alleged that the government uses such payments to influence lawmakers and boost

its control over the national assembly.

MP Riyadh Al-Adasani threatened to grill the prime minister if the government did not issue a statement clarifying its position regarding the alleged payments. The government obliged and issued an explanation following its weekly meeting on Monday and explained that assistance from government bodies to citizens is done through well-known regulations and without any goals.

But the seven MPs in a request filed yesterday demanded that the Audit Bureau should be assigned to investigate the finances of the council of ministers between the start of 2016 and end of May this year. The request signed by MPs Adasani, Yousef Al-Fadhlah, Abdulwahab Al-Babtain, Ali Al-Deqbasi, Abdullah Al-Roumi, Abdulkarim Al-Kundari and Rakan Al-Nasef, wants the Audit Bureau to submit its findings to the assembly by the start of October this year.

The lawmakers want the Audit Bureau to specifically review the council of minister's spending on social benefits, other expenditures and transfers, rewards for non-staff and other activities. The request calls on the Audit Bureau to ensure that spending is done in accordance with the rules and regulations and to highlight any violations.

Amir congratulates new Municipal Council chief

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday sent a cable of congratulation to the newly elected Kuwaiti Municipal Council's Chairman Osama Humoud Al-Otaibi. In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished Otaibi the best of luck in serving the dear nation.

His Highness the Amir sent another cable to the council's newly elected deputy chairman Abdullah Abdulaziz Al-Muharri. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent them similar cables.

Otaibi was elected chairman after winning 12 votes to four votes for member Hamdi Al-Azmi. Muharri was elected deputy chairman with 13 votes to three votes for his rival Dr Hassan Kamal. The opening session of the council was also followed by the election of members of the main committees. The Technical Committee consisted of Maha Al-Baghli, Abdul Aziz Al-Mujal, Abdullah Al-Roumi, Fahid Al-Muizri, Mohammed Al-Mutairi, Hamoud Al-Anzi and Hamad Al-Madalj. Other committees followed suit.

Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Hussam Al-Roumi said that Kuwait's Municipal Council represents the cradle and legacy of democracy in the country. In a speech during the opening session of the 12th term, Roumi congratulated the members of the new council and thanked the members of the former municipal council for their achievements. He called for continuing municipal achievements and putting the public interest above all other considerations.

The council, which inaugurates its work today in the holy month of Ramadan, includes young and experienced professionals, "which makes us optimistic about the excellent performance through the cooperation between the members and the executive body of the municipality," he added.

He said that His Highness the Amir praised the performance of Kuwait Municipality in the recent period, considering that "a great asset must be maintained and strengthened, within the framework of cooperation between the members and executive body," he confirmed. — KUNA

Local

Amir urges police to firmly

Sheikh Sabah praises firefighters' dedication and selfless devotion



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and top state officials pose for a group photo with Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) officers during His Highness's visit to the KFSD Headquarters. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah urged on Wednesday the interior ministry to double efforts to curb crimes and negative phenomena in the society. "Our society, like other societies, is witnessing some negative phenomena that are increasing as a result of the expansion of population and the populated area," His Highness the Amir stated at his speech during a visit to the Interior Ministry to congratulate them on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan. His Highness the Amir was accompanied during the visit by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Deputy Commander of the National Guard Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir was also received at the venue by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah and his two advisors Retired General Fahad Al-Fahad and Retired Lieutenant General Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Khalifa Al-Sabah; the Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lieutenant General Mahmoud Al-Dosari and the Interior Ministry assistant undersecretaries.

Spread of crimes

His Highness the Amir identified the spread of drugs-related crimes, murders and thefts as the gravest of these phenomena. He argued that eliminating such phenomena required relentless efforts and cooperation with other concerned bodies. "Moreover, there is a need to strictly enforce law without tolerance or laxity," His Highness the Amir asserted.

His Highness the Amir also touched upon the problem of traffic congestion and asked the interior ministry to intensify efforts and collaboration with the relevant bodies to find suitable solutions to that problem.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah delivers a speech during his visit to the Interior Ministry.

"We hope that the completion of the under-construction network of roads and bridges will contribute to overcoming this problem and end people's suffering," he said. He regretted the high rates of road accidents which left a large number of people dead, wounded or disabled every year.

His Highness the Amir also called for firm application of traffic laws and regulations as well as taking all other necessary measures to reduce the number of roads accidents. He hailed the Ministry of the Interior's efforts to raise security awareness to educate people about the seriousness of these



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives a memento during his visit to the KFSD Headquarters.

negative phenomena. He also acclaimed notable development at the different security sectors, particularly expanding the use of the latest equipment and technology to confront crimes as well as raising the efficiency of personnel through specialized training courses. His Highness the Amir commended the achievements of the Ministry of the Interior and its pre-emptive operations which helped reduce crimes in the recent period as indicated by the published statistics.

"Security and compliance with the law are the cornerstone of the stability and development of societies. You have been honored to be the

main front in enforcing law and protecting the state security and your success is linked to the extent of your cooperation and interaction with citizens and residents in the homeland," His Highness the Amir concluded.

Unlimited support

Meanwhile, the Interior Ministry's Undersecretary Lieutenant General Mahmoud Al-Dosari welcomed His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince and all guests and congratulated them on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan. Lt Gen Dosari noted that the directives

Local

enforce law, confront violators



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah visits the Interior Ministry.



KFSD Director General Lt Gen Khaled Rakan Al-Mekrad presents a gift to His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

and unlimited support of His Highness the Amir to the security agencies helped them made great achievements in the past period.

The Ministry of Interior had won the “out-standing achievement for the best electronic passport for 2018” prize of the High Security Printing Europe, Middle East and Africa Conference, held in Poland last February, he said.

He noted that the Interior Ministry had also increased its air fleet to comprise eight aircraft and expanded the use of planes in different security operations. The Ministry was also waging a ferocious war on drug dealers and employing the latest security methods, technology, and equipment to conduct pre-emptive operations to track and dismantle drug gangs, he said.

Upon directives from the Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah, a national campaign was launched in collaboration with all state bodies to educate the society about the dangers of drug addiction, he pointed out. Lt Gen Dosari unveiled that the ministry had also installed 100 cutting-edge traffic cameras across the nation to follow up traffic, spot violators and feed the ministry with live updates about the situation on roads. He also disclosed that the ministry had supplied 700 patrol vehicles with smart cameras to document their work and the incidents they report. He added that the ministry planned to provide all patrol units with these kind of advanced cameras. Dosari also shed lights on the efforts of the environment police to protect land marine environment. He stated that the ministry had upgraded its website and improved online services to keep abreast with the latest in this domain.

Later, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received memorial gifts and signed at the senior guests record. His Highness the Amir was also accompanied during the visit by First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah; Minister of Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah and senior state officials.

Selfless devotion

Separately, His Highness the Amir, accompa-



The Interior Ministry's Undersecretary Lieutenant General Mahmoud Al-Dosari delivers his speech.

nied by His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Mashaal Al-Ahmad and His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, visited the Headquarters of Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) on Wednesday evening. They were welcomed by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh and KFSD Director General Lt Gen Khaled Rakan Al-Mekrad as well as a number of other senior officials.

Addressing a function at the Directorate on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan, His Highness the Amir said: “It is a pleasure for me and my brothers His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Vice President of the National Guard Sheikh Mashaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to meet you on this annual tradition to exchange the greetings of the holy month of Ramadan.

“Your dedication and selfless devotion to your job which is fraught with dangers as well as the self-sacrificing you show while protecting the safety of life and property are held in high-esteem by everybody. You always prove that you are capable of shouldering your responsibilities and live up to the trust placed in you. The development of the various sectors of the Directorate testify to the keenness of its leaders on keeping abreast with the latest developments in the field of fire fighting in terms of provision of modern equipment and building the capacity of its personnel through regular training programs. We highly appreciate the efforts of the Directorate to promptly respond to fire accidents and promote awareness about basic safety rules through mass media, and direct and indirect contact with the society. We pray for Allah Almighty to grant you success, preserve the safety of the homeland and lodge

the martyrs in paradise. Thank you. Peace be upon you.”

Lt Gen Mekrad said meanwhile, “It is a great honor for the Directorate to be visited by His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince, His Highness the Vice President of the National Guard and His Highness the Prime Minister.”

He reaffirmed the commitment of the leaders and personnel of the Directorate to continuing the modernization of its operating system under the vision of the government for new Kuwait. KFSD will further enhance the quality of its services through introducing the ISO standards in collaboration with other state boding notably Kuwait Municipality, Lt Gen Mekrad added. He reviewed the achievements made by the Directorate in issuing licenses for new building in a record time and fines for irregularities that pose threats life and property. — KUNA



KFSD Director General Lt Gen Khaled Rakan Al-Mekrad delivers a speech.



Russian unit identified in downing of flight MH17

Pakistani mob destroys 100-year-old minority Ahmadi mosque

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This combination of pictures shows US President Donald Trump (left) and an undated picture of North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un. —AFP

US cancels summit with North Korea

North Korea blows up nuclear test tunnels

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump yesterday called off a planned historic summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, even after North Korea followed through on a pledge to blow up tunnels at its nuclear test site. Referring to a scheduled June 12 meeting with Kim in Singapore, Trump said in a letter to the North Korean leader: "Sadly, based on the tremendous anger and open hostility displayed in your most recent statement, I feel it would be inappropriate, at this time, to have this long-planned meeting."

Trump called it "a missed opportunity" and said he still hoped to meet Kim someday. The North Korean mission to the United Nations did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Trump's cancellation of the summit. US stocks dropped sharply on the news, with the benchmark S&P 500 Index falling more than half a percent in about 10 minutes. Investors turned to US Treasury debt as a safe alternative, driving the yield on the 10-year note, which moves inversely to its price, down to a 10-day low and back below the psychologically important 3 percent level.

The US dollar also weakened broadly, particularly against the Japanese yen, which climbed to a two-week high against the greenback. "Please let this letter serve to represent that the Singapore summit, for the good of both parties, but to the detriment of the world, will not take place," Trump wrote. "You talk about your nuclear capabilities, but ours are so massive and powerful that I pray to God that they will never have to be used," he said. Earlier yesterday, North Korea repeated a threat to pull out of the summit with Trump next month and warned it was prepared for a nuclear showdown with Washington if necessary.

Faded hope

North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons has been a source of tension on the Korean peninsula

for decades, as well as antagonism with Washington. The rhetoric reached new heights under Trump as he mocked Kim as "little rocket man" and in address at the United Nations threatened to "totally destroy" North Korea if necessary. Kim had called Trump mentally deranged and threatened to "tame" him with fire. Kim rarely leaves North Korea and his willingness to meet and Trump's acceptance sparked hope but it had faded in recent days.

In a statement released by North Korean media, Vice Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui had called US Vice President Mike Pence a "political dummy" for comparing North Korea - a "nuclear weapons state" - to Libya, where Muammar Gaddafi gave up his unfinished nuclear development program, only to be later killed by NATO-backed fighters.

"Whether the US will meet us at a meeting

room or encounter us at nuclear-to-nuclear showdown is entirely dependent upon the decision and behavior of the United States," Choe said. A small group of international media selected by North Korea witnessed the demolition of tunnels at the Punggye-ri site yesterday, which Pyongyang says is proof of its commitment to end nuclear testing. The apparent destruction of what North Korea says is its only nuclear test site has been widely welcomed as a positive, if largely symbolic, step toward resolving tension over its weapons.

North Korean leader Kim has declared his nuclear force complete, amid speculation the site was obsolete anyway. Cancellation of what would have been the first ever summit between a serving US president and a North Korean leader denies Trump what supporters hoped could have been the biggest diplomatic achievement of his presidency, and one worthy of a Nobel Prize. "I felt a wonderful dialogue was building between you and me, and ultimately it is only that dialogue that matters," Trump said in his letter to Kim. "Some day, I look very much forward to meeting you." — Reuters



North Korean vice minister calls Pence a 'political dummy'

International

The nuke site N Korea decided to destroy

SEOUL: Huge explosions reportedly shook North Korea's only known nuclear test site yesterday, in a ceremony that Pyongyang said had "completely" destroyed the facility near the Chinese border. The Punggye-ri test site, located beneath a mountain in the far northeast, hosted all six nuclear tests Pyongyang has conducted—most recently last September. Earlier this month the North announced it would blow up the site's access tunnels in front of invited foreign media. The announcement came as the diplomatic push for Pyongyang to give up its nuclear weapons gathered pace with an unprecedented summit between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and US President Donald Trump slated for June 12 in Singapore. Here's some of what we know about the secretive place:

Ideal environment

The site is located deep inside mountains in North Hamgyong province, which borders China. Surrounded by high, craggy peaks and carved deep into a granite mountain more than 2,000 meters (6,500 feet) high, the test site is said to be an ideal venue to withstand the huge forces unleashed by nuclear blasts. The site's location only became known in 2006 when the North conducted its first nuclear test under Kim's late father Kim Jong Il. Activities have been closely watched through satellite imagery

since then. Tunnels can be seen entering the site from different directions. The first test was staged in the eastern tunnel, the second and third in the western tunnel and the remainder in the northern tunnel, according to intelligence authorities. Yonhap reported three blasts in the tunnels yesterday followed by explosions that destroyed a barracks and other structures on the mountainside.

Powerful blast

Tests staged at the site have demonstrated the country's rapid progress in its nuclear program—especially since Kim took power in 2011 and oversaw four atomic tests in only six years. The country's first test was largely seen as a failure and produced an estimated yield of only about one kiloton, compared to as much as 250 kilotons in the sixth—an explosion 16 times more powerful than the US atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945. But Punggye-ri's proximity to China has become a source of concern for Beijing, as the tremor from the sixth test was felt across the border and prompted many residents to flee their homes in panic.

Collapse claims

The growing impact of the blasts raised safety concerns, with some Chinese scientists warning that the site could pose a major ra-

dioactive threat to the wider region. A recent study by seismologists at the University of Science and Technology of China suggested rock had collapsed under the Mantap peak, making it unusable. Kim himself has disputed those claims in conversations with his South Korean counterpart Moon Jae-In. "If they come and see, they will understand that there are two bigger tunnels than the existing test facilities and that they are in a very good condition," Kim said, according to comments released by the South. A statement by North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Institute yesterday said prior to the blasts, reporters confirmed "two tunnels at the nuclear test ground were ready for use for carrying out very powerful underground nuclear tests at any time".

Empty gesture?

Sceptics have said the move to destroy the site is an empty concession by Kim as the site is already suffering from "tired mountain syndrome" and may be obsolete. Others say North Korea has learned all it needs from the nuclear tests conducted there. "They already collected the necessary data through six nuclear tests and unless they discard that data, there are suspicions over how significant the dismantling of a nuclear test site that has already run its course is," said Go Myong-Hyun, an analyst at the Asan

Institute of Policy Studies. But Jeffrey Lewis of the Middlebury Institute of Strategic Studies says there is "no basis" to conclude Punggye-ri is no longer usable and the closure is "not a case of passing off damaged goods".

Radiation fears

The North has long claimed that its nuclear tests posed no environmental threats, saying there was "no radioactive leak" after conducting tests. But some South Korean and Japanese media reported that workers at the site or residents from the area suffered from radioactive exposure and symptoms including cancer and the births of deformed babies, citing the North's defectors and researchers. Such concerns prompted Seoul's unification ministry to run medical checkups on 30 defectors who hailed from the region for potential radioactive exposure last year.

Four of them—from the county of Kilju that includes Punggye-ri—showed symptoms that could be attributed to radiation exposure, but researchers involved in the study said they could not conclude that the health problems had been caused by a nuclear test. After the destruction yesterday, North Korea said: "It has been confirmed that there were neither leakage of radioactive materials nor any adverse impact on the surrounding ecological environment."—AFP



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International

Lebanon's Hariri PM on track to become PM for third time

Hariri remains leading Sunni despite electoral losses

BEIRUT: Lebanon's Saad Al-Hariri is on track to become prime minister for a third time after winning the backing of a majority of MPs in official consultations yesterday, and is expected to launch negotiations on a coalition government. The post of prime minister is reserved for a Sunni Muslim in Lebanon's sectarian power sharing system, and the Western-backed Hariri was the clear frontrunner as the country's leading Sunni despite losing more than a third of his MPs in a May 6 election.

President Michel Aoun was holding the official consultations with MPs who were holding separate meetings with him yesterday. The meetings are due to continue into the afternoon. Aoun must designate the candidate with the greatest backing. The new coalition government is expected to reflect the enhanced political position of the Iran-backed Shiite group Hezbollah and allies that support its possession of arms, which together won at least 70 of parliament's 128 seats. While Hariri won wide backing, Hezbollah MPs named no-

body for the post. The group would cooperate "positively" with whoever was designated, Mohammed Raad, head of Hezbollah's parliamentary bloc, said after meeting Aoun.

All Lebanese leaders have called for the rapid formation of a new government that will aim to revitalize a stagnant economy situation and address unsustainable public debt levels. But like the outgoing cabinet, the new government will have to balance out the interests of all the main competing Lebanese parties and may take time. Hezbollah, which is designated a terrorist group by the United States, intends to secure three cabinet seats

in the next coalition government, an increase from the two portfolios it held in the outgoing cabinet of 30 ministers, a senior official familiar with the group's thinking told Reuters.

Hezbollah, which has to date held only marginal cabinet posts, is also seeking more significant service-providing ministries in the new cabinet, sources familiar with its thinking have said. Hezbollah also believes a cabinet post should be allocated to one of its Sunni

allies who wrested seats away from Hariri's Future Movement. The staunchly anti-Hezbollah Lebanese Forces party, which almost doubled its number of MPs to 15, is also seeking a bigger slice of cabinet portfolios. Parliament



Leaders have urged rapid government formation

Hezbollah targets bigger role in the next government

BEIRUT: The Iran-backed Hezbollah aims to move beyond its traditional backseat role by assuming more influence in Lebanon's next government to help it counter an escalating US campaign against Tehran and its regional ascendancy. A parliamentary majority for the Shiite Muslim Hezbollah and its allies is expected to be reflected in a new coalition government that Western-backed Saad Al-Hariri will now try to form, weakened by the loss of more than a third of his MPs.

The May 6 election underlined how Lebanon's political landscape has tilted in Hezbollah's favor in recent years, and is part of a bigger picture of expanding Iranian influence that Washington wants to counter. "Hezbollah will strengthen its presence more than at any previous time," a senior Lebanese official familiar with the group's thinking told Reuters. "Now it has two ministers. It will have three - and three party members, known leaders - as clear as the sun. Shiites," the senior official said.

The group, which has to date held only marginal cabinet posts, is also seeking more significant service-providing ministries in the new cabinet, according to the official and other

sources familiar with Hezbollah thinking. Any expansion of Hezbollah's role in government could pose new questions for Western policy in Lebanon. The country has been a big recipient of aid to help it cope with 1 million Syrian refugees on its soil, and its military has been armed and trained by the United States, which deems Hezbollah a terrorist group.

Analysts expect the new government to expand ties with the Hezbollah-allied Syrian government that is shunned by the West. That would further erode Lebanon's stated policy of regional neutrality that Beirut has claimed to uphold even with Hezbollah fighting in support of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad. The US administration has made Hezbollah a target of its new policy to counter Iran after pulling out of the Iranian nuclear deal, a move welcomed by US allies such as Saudi Arabia that view Iran and Hezbollah as a regional threat.

While Hezbollah's arsenal has long made it the most powerful group in Lebanon, it has always limited its role in state institutions that are divided out among sectarian groups. Hezbollah has in the past foregone some of the ministries to which it was entitled and ceded them to allies, the senior official said. This election marks a break with that approach, the official said, though Hezbollah is not seeking to dominate. In the outgoing government, it held the ministries of youth and sport, and industry. A second senior source familiar with Hezbollah's thinking said the group was eyeing the ministries of public works, health, social affairs or telecoms. —Reuters



BEIRUT: Newly elected Lebanese MP Sethrida Geagea arrives at Lebanon's parliament in the capital Beirut ahead of a session to elect a new speaker, on May 23, 2018. —AFP

Israel announces plan to approve 2,500 new homes

JERUSALEM: Israel said yesterday it will give final approval to the construction of 2,500 new homes in the occupied West Bank, the first tranche of settlements since the controversial US embassy move to Jerusalem. The announcement was slammed by the Palestinians as the result of what they called the global community's indifference to Israeli violations of international law, as prospects of a peace process between the sides appeared dim as ever.

Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman announced his intention to request final approval from a planning committee for the building of 2,500 new homes in 30 West Bank settlements. "The 2,500 new units we'll approve in the planning committee next week are for immediate construction in 2018," Lieberman said in a statement, adding he would also seek the committee's approval for a further 1,400 settlement units for later construction.

"We committed to advancing construction in Judaea and Samaria and we're keeping our word," Lieberman said, using the biblical terms for the West Bank. "In the coming months we will bring forward thousands more units for approval." The 2,500 units included 400 homes in Ariel, 460 in Maale Adumim, 330 in the Etzion bloc, and a retirement home in Elkana. Israel's West Bank planning committee was set to convene on May 30 to discuss the request, though this was not officially confirmed. Israel's West Bank settlements are con-

sidered illegal under international law and are bitterly opposed by Palestinians.

'Reward for violations'

In a recent appeal to the International Criminal Court, the Palestinian foreign ministry called Israeli settlements "the single most dangerous threat to Palestinian lives and livelihoods". A senior Palestinian official slammed the Israeli announcement, which he linked to the United States' support of Israel in international forums. "This is the outcome of the US administration rewarding Israel for violating UN resolutions, and of the rest of the international community granting impunity to Israel for its systematic violations of international law," Nabil Shaath said in a statement to AFP.

Yesterday was the first major settlement announcement since the US moved its embassy to Jerusalem on May 14, a move that infuriated Palestinians and intensified protests on the Gaza border, with 60 killed in clashes with Israeli forces that day. Israel sees the entire city as its undivided capital, while the Palestinians want the eastern sector as the capital of their future state. The Palestinians have said that in light of the Trump administration decision to move the embassy, they could no longer trust the US in its traditional role of brokering a peace deal with Israel.

The US ambassador to Israel meanwhile insisted that Trump "hasn't failed on the ultimate deal," the term the US president has used to describe peace with the Palestinians. In a Wednesday interview with Israeli Channel 10 television, David Friedman said Trump was "working on the ultimate deal," with it expected to be presented to the sides "within months." While Israel would expect to retain certain settlements in any two-state peace deal, longstanding international consensus has been that their status must be negotiated. —AFP

International

US biotechs to speed work on Nipah vaccine; virus hits India

Profectus, Emergent get up to \$25m from CEPI coalition

LONDON: A global coalition set up a year ago to fight epidemics has struck a \$25 million deal with two US biotech companies to accelerate work on a vaccine against the brain-damaging Nipah virus that has killed 12 people in India. The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) said yesterday that Profectus BioSciences and Emergent BioSolutions would receive up to \$25 million to advance development and manufacturing of a shot for the bat-borne disease.

There is currently no vaccine or treatment to tackle Nipah, which has a mortality rate of around 70 percent. The death toll from the latest outbreak in Kerala rose to 12 yesterday, following the death of a 61-year-old man who had already lost three members of his family, including his two sons, to the virus. Indian officials said they were awaiting blood test results from a further 16 patients suspected to have the infection.

The experimental vaccine being developed by the biotech companies has produced promising results in animal tests, following more than 15 years of research by scientists at the US-based Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. Based on data so far, Christopher Broder, one of the main researchers behind the project, said the Nipah vaccine in develop-

ment was also "highly likely" to work against the related Hendra virus.

Experts believe both Nipah and Hendra are spread by flying foxes - bats of the genus *Pteropus* - with humans becoming infected by exposure to bat urine and saliva on fruit, or from infected pigs and horses. It can also spread person-to-person. Outbreaks of Nipah occur annually in Bangladesh and 105 people died from the virus in Malaysia 1999, when more than a million pigs were slaughtered to stem its spread. Still, Nipah remains a relatively rare tropical disease - like Ebola - which severely limits the incentive for drug companies to invest in vaccines or drugs.

It was the slow response to West Africa's 2014-2016 Ebola outbreak, which killed more than 11,300 people before an effective vaccine was developed, that prompted the launch of the CEPI coalition in January 2017. The group, which sees itself as a global insurance policy against epidemics, is funded by Norway, Germany, Japan, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Wellcome Trust. Nipah is on the World Health Organization research and development priority list alongside Ebola, Zika, MERS, Lassa and Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever.—Agencies



Nipah has killed 12 in southern Indian state of Kerala

ment was also "highly likely" to work against the related Hendra virus.



KERALA: Medical personnel wearing protective suits check patients at the Medical College hospital in Kozhikode. A deadly virus carried mainly by fruit bats has killed at least 12 people in southern India, sparking a statewide health alert. —AFP

In costly quest for security, US schools face the law of diminishing returns

TEXAS: From gunshot detection devices to wireless panic buttons and bulletproof windows, schools across the United States are pursuing aggressive security measures to prevent a shooting massacre on their campuses. Pressure from parents and community members to find solutions, both high and low tech, has grown in the wake of deadly mass shootings at high schools in Parkland, Florida, and Santa Fe, Texas, among other violent incidents. In the rush to find answers, school security has ballooned into a multi-billion-dollar industry. Meanwhile, some schools are spending precious funds on untested technologies, safety experts said, even though the most robust and effective safety measures can only mitigate the risk, not eliminate it.

"We've seen this huge shift to unproven tactics, based on a lot of emotion," said Chris Dorn, an analyst with Safe Havens International, which conducts on-site safety assessments at hundreds of schools every year. "What we really need to do is to get back to basics." Those include single-point entry that restricts access to buildings, classrooms that lock from the inside, training in emergency protocols and effective supervision of campuses by either police officers or school staff. School officials must also strive to balance the need for security with a desire to preserve an atmosphere conducive to learning, experts said, warning that schools

can become fortified bunkers that feel like prisons to students.

"There's a diminishing amount of returns," Dorn said, noting that even extraordinarily secure places like the Pentagon and the Fort Hood military base have faced shootings. Metal detectors, for example, are expensive, require armed personnel and can create long lines outside buildings, providing yet another target for potential attackers. Many schools have considered door-barricading devices, but experts said they can endanger students by preventing escape and stopping law enforcement from accessing rooms. Instead, schools should ensure their classrooms can be locked from the inside.

Even cameras are not necessarily helpful during an active shooter situation unless they are monitored live at all times, requiring additional personnel. The majority of schools now have single-point entries, forcing visitors during the day to come through one entrance and get approved by a main office, a practice that security experts say is among the most effective. Many districts, like Littleton, Colorado, near the site of the 1999 Columbine High School massacre, have installed video intercom systems to restrict access.

But most schools use multiple points of entry at arrival and dismissal due to the sheer number of students. In Parkland, perimeter gates were opened shortly before the end of the day. School resource officers - armed police officers assigned to campuses - have also become more common, and several states, including Florida and Maryland, have approved funding to pay for more officers this year. Some schools, like Healdton Public School in Oklahoma, have installed expensive bulletproof shelters in classrooms that can shield students from incoming fire.

Even low-budget solutions, like providing classrooms with makeshift weapons - one Pennsylvania school district put buckets of rocks in all of its 200 classrooms - can have unexpected drawbacks if they are used in student assaults. —Reuters

Death toll from Indian protests rises to 13

TUTICORIN: A protester shot during demonstrations against a copper plant in southern India died of his injuries yesterday, officials said, the 13th victim killed by police fire. A curfew remained in pockets of Tuticorin city in Tamil Nadu state where police used live ammunition to disperse protesters this week, provoking international outrage and demands for an immediate investigation.

Calls demanding the closure of the copper smelting plant owned by British mining giant Vedanta Resources had been building in recent months, with residents complaining it was polluting their city. The resistance came to a head Tuesday when police stopped a crowd of thousands from protesting outside the factory. Cars and buildings were set ablaze and rocks hurled at police, who responded with live fire. Eleven demonstrators were shot dead and many people injured in the melee, including 20 police. Another protester died Wednesday when he was struck by rubber bullets in a second day of protests.

The latest victim died in hospital yesterday, two days after being injured, doctors said. "He was brought in a critical condition with bullet injuries and died today," a doctor at the local hospital said. The chief minister of Tamil Nadu has ordered an inquiry but defended the actions of police, which the state's opposition leader called "mass murder". "The police have a duty during protests to maintain law and order, but lethal force can only be used if there is an imminent threat to life," Meenakshi Ganguly, South Asia director at Human Rights Watch, said.—AFP

International

Investigators identify a Russian unit in downing of flight MH17

Russia's 53rd Anti-Aircraft Brigade named in shooting

BUNNIK: A missile system from the 53rd anti-aircraft brigade of the Russian Armed Forces was used to shoot down Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 over eastern Ukraine in 2014, prosecutors investigating the disaster said yesterday. The airliner was hit by a Russian-made missile on July 17, 2014, with 298 people on board, two-thirds of them Dutch, over territory held by pro-Russian separatists. All aboard died. "The buk (missile system) that was used came from the Russian army, the 53rd brigade," Chief Dutch Prosecutor Fred Westerbeke said.

"We know that was used, but the people in charge of this buk, we don't know." Investigators appealed to the public to come forward and help identify members of the crew who operated the missile and determine how high up the chain of command the order originated. "The Russian Federation didn't help us in providing us the information we brought out into the open today," Westerbeke said. "They didn't give us this information, although a buk (missile system) from their military forces was used."

Russia has denied involvement in the incident. There was no immediate comment from Moscow on the investigative development. In an interim up-

date on their investigation, prosecutors said they had trimmed their list of possible suspects from more than a hundred to several dozen. He said investigators were not yet ready to identify individual suspects publicly or to issue indictments, but that when they do he expects cooperation, or a firm international political response. Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte cut short a trip to India to return in time for a cabinet meeting on Friday to discuss the latest findings in the inquiry, the ANP news agency reported.

A Joint Investigation Team, drawn from Australia, Belgium, Malaysia, the Netherlands and Ukraine, is gathering evidence for a criminal prosecution in the downing of the plane. Ukrainian Army General Vasyl Hrytsak, a member of the investigation team, told Reuters it would be crucial to pinpoint who issued the orders to move the missile system. "The next crucially important step is to identify some members of the military in the 53rd brigade of the Armed Forces of (Russia)...who can directly say who was involved in the transfer or operation of the buk (missile system)."

The Dutch Safety Board concluded in an October 2015 report that the Boeing 777 was struck by a Russian-made Buk missile. Dutch prosecutors



Plane shot down in 2014, killing all 298 aboard



HRABOVE: File photo shows part of the Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 at the crash site in the village of Hrabove (Grabovo), some 80km east of Donetsk. —AFP

said in September 2016 that 100 "persons of interest" had been identified in the investigation, while Australian and Malaysian officials had initially expressed hope that suspects' names would be made public in 2017. Eventual suspects are likely

to be tried in absentia in the Netherlands after Russia used its veto to block a UN Security Council resolution seeking to create an international tribunal to oversee criminal complaints stemming from the incident.—Reuters

Ukraine bans Russian news agency

KIEV: Ukraine yesterday banned Russia's state-run RIA Novosti news agency, a week after one of its journalists was detained in Kiev and accused of treason. According to the new sanctions list of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine (NSDC), the RIA Novosti office as well as the Interselekt company which carried out all the agency's economic activities in Kiev are banned for three years. Sanctions include the blocking of assets, limiting or stopping the provision of telecommunications services, and blocking access to the website www.rian.com.ua.

The director of the public media conglomerate Rossiya Segodnya, parent company of RIA Novosti, said the new sanctions were "an indicator of impotence" of the current Ukrainian "regime". "It has nothing left to do, but to pursue its own citizens, to persecute journalists, to pursue freedom of speech, to ban respected media," Dmitry Kiselev was quoted as saying by RIA Novosti. On May 15, Ukraine's SBU security service raided the Kiev offices of RIA Novosti, saying the agency and its journalists had been "used as tools in a hybrid war against Ukraine".

The same day RIA Novosti journalist Kyrylo Vyshynsky, a Ukrainian national who received a Russian passport in 2015, was detained near his house in Kiev and accused of treason. On May 17, Ukrainian court ruled Vyshynsky should be held in detention until his trial. The SBU accused Vyshynsky of travelling to Crimea in 2014 to carry out "subversive" reporting to justify the peninsula's annexation by Russia. —AFP

Due in jail, Spanish rapper vanishes in free speech row

MADRID: Spanish rapper Valtoryc, due to begin a three-and-a-half year jail term for "glorifying terror", insulting the king and issuing threats, was nowhere to be found yesterday as debate over free speech raged in the country. According to media reports Jose Miguel Arenas Beltran-better known as Valtoryc-has left the country, but there was no official confirmation and his whereabouts remained a mystery.

"We've been three weeks without any news from him," Muly Embarek, a member of the 24-year-old's support group said in Brussels at an event on freedom of expression in the European parliament. If it is confirmed, Valtoryc's escape will come just months after Catalan separatist leaders went into self-exile to escape Spanish authorities over their role in a failed secession bid. He is just one of several Twitter users and rappers who have recently been judged-and some sentenced to jail-for glorifying terror or insulting the king in their comments or song lyrics, causing mounting concern over free speech in Spain.

Valtoryc was sentenced last year for lyrics published online in 2012 and 2013 at a time when he was a little-known rapper in the Balearic Islands. These included: "Let them be as frightened as a police officer in the Basque Country" and "the king has a rendezvous at the village square, with a noose around his neck." The reference to the Basque Country hinted at violence by ETA, the separatist group that for decades staged attacks across Spain that left hundreds of officials and civilians dead. He also rapped against Jorge Campos, the head

of Actua Baleares, a party that defends Spanish unity. Valtoryc has since been hit by another complaint by Campos over a recent concert in which he shouted: "Kill a fucking Civil Guard (police) officer tonight." The rapper had been free on bail pending the scheduled start of his prison term yesterday. But on Wednesday, he posted a cryptic tweet: "Tomorrow they will knock down the door of my house to put me in jail. For some songs. Tomorrow Spain is going to make a fool of itself, once more. I'm not going to make it easy for them, it's legitimate and an obligation to disobey this fascist state. Here, no one surrenders."

Free speech under threat?

His lyrics have divided opinion, with some saying they should not land him in jail in a democracy, while others stress that free speech has its limits. It's "not permission to say whatever one wants," said Antonio Torres del Moral, a constitutional law specialist. But for Xavier Arbos, a constitutional law professor at the University of Barcelona, there is a clear "regression with regards to freedom of expression" in Spain. "We're sending a message that groups which feel offended can restrict (people's) freedoms via criminal law, and that's very negative," he told AFP. "The penal code must be the last resort and must be used under the principle of minimal intervention."

In March, Amnesty International said a Spanish law banning "glorification of terrorism" had created a "chilling" environment in which people are increasingly afraid to express alternative views or make controversial jokes. Earlier this week, Spanish Oscar-winner Javier Bardem also sounded the alarm over free speech in Spain as he came out in support of fellow actor Willy Toledo who is due to be questioned by a judge for alleged blasphemy. "It seems to me that being able to (legally) punish (an opinion) is a setback that harks back to the era of Franco," Bardem told reporters in Madrid, referring to the dictatorship of Francisco Franco.—AFP

International

With eye on re-election, Greece leader rolls dice on Macedonia

PM has one eye on legacy, one eye on elections

ATHENS: Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras is taking a big gamble in trying to settle a decades-old name dispute with neighboring Macedonia which could backfire in a pre-election year among voters already jaded by his economic austerity policies. With about 15 months until the next election is due, the 43-year-old leftist leader has already timed Greece's exit from its third international bailout for this summer in the hope that this will start to bolster his currently poor poll ratings.

Despite trailing the main opposition conservatives by up to 20 percentage points in polls, Tsipras has now also opted to go where all his predecessors have failed, by personally reviving efforts to resolve the name dispute with Macedonia. "He is determined to solve it," said a government official. Athens rejects Macedonia's right to use that name, saying it amounts to a territorial claim on a northern Greek province of the same name and also represents an attempt by the tiny ex-Yugoslav republic to appropriate Greek history and culture. Successive Greek governments have blocked Macedonia's bid to join NATO and the European Union over the name dispute, which is of existential importance to Greek nationalists.

In February, hundreds of thousands of Greeks took to the streets of Athens over the issue, a big-

ger turnout than even the biggest protests held to oppose painful austerity measures imposed by Tsipras under pressure from Greece's creditors. "If a deal is done it would be a bonus. He will say 'I pulled you out of bailouts, I settled the Skopje question'. That way he might make up for other losses," an official from his Syriza party told Reuters on condition of anonymity. Skopje is the capital of Macedonia, a mainly Slavic state with a large ethnic Albanian minority which won its independence from Belgrade in 1991 as Yugoslavia dissolved into civil war.

Western pressure

Cracking the Macedonia riddle would earn Tsipras kudos in the European Union and the United States, long impatient with what they perceive as Greek obduracy over the name, which they see as destabilizing for the Balkans. Clearing Macedonia's path into NATO and the EU would also help check growing Russian influence in the region, they say.

The clock is ticking towards an EU summit in late June where most member states want to extend a formal invitation to Macedonia to start ac-

cession talks, and a NATO summit in early July, where Greece's allies also back Macedonian membership. However, political analysts say it would be a big risk for Tsipras, whose Syriza party has already seen its support slide amid harsh fiscal reforms, record unemployment and pension cuts which have left a third of all Greeks living in poverty. "There is still a zero-sum mentality (among Greeks) on this name issue," said Kostas Ifantis, an associate professor of international relations at the Panteion University in Athens.

Tsipras under EU, NATO pressure to settle dispute

Vardar Macedonia (named after a river), Upper Macedonia and, most recently, Ilinden Macedonia, but most Greek political parties reject any use of the name Macedonia, even with descriptive tags. Those parties include both Tsipras's coalition partner, the Independent Greeks, and the main opposition New Democracy party, currently tipped to win most votes in the 2019 election.

Exploiting divisions

New Democracy was also burned by the Macedonia issue when in power in the mid-1990s. A split between moderates and hardliners toppled the government of then-Prime Minister Constantinos Mitsotakis, and many of those who broke ranks then are now back in the party fold. Now led by Mitsotakis's son, Kyriakos, the party takes an uncompromising public stance on the name issue, but observers say the same divisions which existed in the 1990s persist. Some analysts even suggest Tsipras is primarily motivated in his name diplomacy by a desire to split New Democracy. "It is a gamble which was not taken with the aim of closing an open diplomatic problem that troubles the country but as a tool to divide, at least initially, the opposition," Ifantis said.

In weekend consultations over the name, Tsipras failed to secure the support of any opposition party for the 'Ilinden Macedonia' proposal. But for all the risks, a resolution of the name dispute could still ultimately help to boost Tsipras's popularity, said Costas Panagopoulos, head of the Alco polling agency. "There will be reactions from the opposition, regardless of the name, this is clear," said Panagopoulos. "But in the long-term, a solution, despite the opposition and the initial protests... could not hurt Tsipras." — Reuters

Catholic Church takes back seat in Ireland abortion vote

DUBLIN: Wary of putting off voters with an overly dogmatic message, the Catholic Church in Ireland has taken a relatively low-key stance ahead of a historic referendum today on repealing an abortion ban. Few members of the clergy have been seen at pro-life demonstrations and Ireland's Association of Catholic Priests has warned churches against giving anti-abortion campaigners a pulpit during mass. "As leadership of an association made up of men who are unmarried and without children of our own, we are not best placed to be in any way dogmatic on this issue," the ACP said in a statement this month.

While underlining the Church's teaching on the right to life, the statement admitted that "human life is complex, throwing up situations that are more often grey than black and white and that demand from us a sensitive, non-judgmental, pastoral approach". The ACP, which represents more than 1,000 Catholic priests in Ireland—around a third of the priesthood, also said in the statement dated May 5 that it would not engage in the debate further.

Linda Hogan, professor of religion at



DUBLIN: Activists from the 'Love Both, Vote No' campaign, including politician Mattie McGrath (center), hold placards urging people to vote 'no' in the referendum to repeal the eighth amendment of the Irish constitution yesterday. — AFP

Trinity College, Dublin said the Church had made a "strategic decision" to limit its official pronouncements on an issue in which its position is already well known. Hogan said this could be a result of the 2015 referendum on legalizing same-sex marriage when the Church took a more vocal position and lost. That referendum was "a wake-up call", Hogan said. Despite multiple abuse scandals in recent years, the Catholic Church still believed it had "a majority of people supporting their position," she said.

Hoping for 'resounding No'

Around 78 percent of Ireland's popu-

lation declare as Catholics, according to the last census in 2016. But recent opinion polls have shown around half of the population would favor repealing the abortion law, meaning even believers are divided on the issue. "The fact that the yes vote is predicted to be about 53 percent does signal that there is a difference between what the Catholic Church teaches and what Catholics believe," Hogan said. Abortion in Ireland is currently only allowed if the life of the mother is at risk. As a result thousands of Irish women travel to England every year for abortions. — AFP

Abortion bans around the world

PARIS: The focus this week of a referendum in Ireland and a supreme court challenge in South Korea, abortion is still banned in some 20 countries worldwide, while others have highly restrictive laws in place. In South Korea the Supreme Court will consider repealing a law where abortion is illegal except for instances of rape, incest and when the mother's health is at risk. And in Ireland today voters will decide in a referendum on whether to repeal their own law, which outlaws abortion unless there is a real and substantial risk to the mother's life. Here is a snapshot of the global situation on abortion in countries where the laws are the most restrictive.

Total ban

Predominantly Catholic Malta is the only European Union country to totally ban abortion, imposing jail terms of between 18 months and three years if the law is broken. Abortion is also banned in Andorra, the Vatican and San Marino, which are in Europe but not the EU. Globally there are total bans in Congo-Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Laos, Madagascar, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Philippines, Palau, Senegal and Suriname. In El Salvador the internationally criticized criminalization of those found to have terminated pregnancies has led to women being jailed, some serving terms of up to 30 years. —AFP

International

Malaysia anti-graft agents quiz former Prime Minister

Government tots up ballooning debt

KUALA LUMPUR: Former Malaysian premier Najib Razak completed his statement to anti-graft agents yesterday, as the Southeast Asian country's new government revealed some \$50 billion of liabilities adding to debt left behind by Najib's scandal-hit administration. Defeated at the polls two weeks ago, Najib was summoned to explain suspicious transfers of \$10.6 million into his bank account, just a fraction of billions of dollars that went missing from 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), a state fund that he had founded during almost a decade in power.



New government vows to find out where 1MDB money went

The new government led by 92-year-old Mahathir Mohamad has vowed to find out where the 1MDB money went and punish those responsible. Najib has denied wrongdoing, though the new head of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) this week described how an investigation into 1MDB had been suppressed three years ago to stop charges being brought against him.

Najib, 64, appeared relaxed as he left the MACC headquarters some seven hours after arriving. Smiling, he put a finger to his lips to shush journalists so that he could speak. "I have answered all questions as best as I could. And MACC has carried out their duties well and professionally," Najib said, almost exactly what he said after his first visit to the agency two days earlier. He said the MACC had told him the "statement-session" was over. Malaysians are now wondering if charges will be filed. The new government has barred

Najib and his wife, Rosmah Mansor, from leaving the country.

Whistleblower

While Najib was giving his statement, agents also met Xavier Justo, a Swiss national who was the first whistleblower in the 1MDB affair. Journalists saw Justo in the MACC lobby half an hour before Najib arrived. Najib's statement relates to the transfers of 42 million ringgit (\$10.6 million) into his bank account that investigators tracked back to SRC International, a former unit of 1MDB.

Mahathir met Justo on Sunday. It was documents leaked by the former director of energy group PetroSaudi International, which ran an energy joint venture with 1MDB from 2009 to 2012 that triggered investigations in at least six countries. Mahathir quit as prime minister in 2003 after leading Malaysia for 22 years, but came out of retirement to join the opposition after becoming convinced that Najib, his former protege, was corrupt. Investigators have searched Najib's home and several properties, seizing cash, jewelry and luxury items estimated to be worth millions of dollars. The Star newspaper reported yesterday that the cash found totaled 130 million ringgit (nearly \$33 million).

From bad to worse

Mahathir has also accused Najib's government of understating the national debt and blamed it for abuses that have caused debt to balloon. Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng said



PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia's former Prime Minister Najib Razak speaks to the media after being questioned at the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) office in Putrajaya yesterday. — AFP

Najib's government had committed to making lease payments of 201.4 billion ringgit (\$50.62 billion) for several projects that were designed to circumvent the federal government guarantee and debt limits. The extra obligations brought Malaysia's total debt and liabilities to over 1.087 trillion ringgit as of Dec. 31, 2017, or 80.3 percent of gross domestic product, Lim told reporters.

Earlier this week, Lim said the Najib government had deceived the public and parliament over the country's finances and 1MDB. He also said treasury officials and the country's auditor

general were unable to access certain accounts and reports. In a late night Facebook post on Wednesday, Najib said Mahathir and his finance minister's "alarming and confusing" remarks about the country's debts and 1MDB liabilities "tell half the story".

"While you may want to slander and put all the blame on me to give a perception of a dire financial position to justify why you cannot deliver on your manifesto promises ... you must remember that the country and our people come first," he wrote. — Reuters

Hit by wild weather, Kenya's herders fire up a hot new crop

KITENGELA: In this arid stretch of Kajiado County, where worsening heat and drought have been tough on livestock farmers, Arnold Ole Kapurua is experimenting with a hot new crop: chillis. Ole Kapurua, 29, a farmer and agronomist, now grows two acres of the fiery pods - and is training other farmers to do the same - as a way to protect their incomes in the face of harsher weather linked to climate change.

"With time we realised that we weren't making good money as our livestock income stagnated," he said. "During drought we lost our herds to hunger and diseases while during the rainy season we lost some to floods making us live on a lean budget." But after a bit of research, "I realized that chillis had climate friendly features," he said. While some farmers still rely entirely on livestock in the

region, a growing number are now concentrating their energy on farming chilli, which can be grown with limited amounts of water, said Samuel Ole Kangangi'r, another new chilli farmer.

Over the last five years, more than 100 farmers in the region have begun growing chilli, most after trying other crops, including maize and beans, that didn't cope as well with drought and brought in little money, the farmers said. Well-managed chilli farms can produce an ongoing harvest over six months, with an acre of land producing up to two tones of peppers a week, Ole Kapurua said.

That level of harvest can bring as much as 80,000 Kenyan shillings (\$800) a season, he said. "That cannot be compared to livestock rearing as one cannot afford to be selling a cow every week thus making chilli farming a better option," said the farmer. Solomon Simingor another farmer in Kajiado County, said a farmer with at least two acres of land can earn as much as three times more with chilli than with cattle, in his experience. To provide enough water to keep their plants irrigated, farmers in the region are turning to building small dams to catch water in the rainy season. —Reuters

Malaysian state-linked media left scrambling after election upset

KUALA LUMPUR: After decades of slavishly backing the only government Malaysia had ever known, state-linked media are scrambling to find their feet after the election landslide, seeking to shed a reputation as official mouthpieces but facing a challenge from plucky independent websites. The coalition led by scandal-plagued Najib Razak unexpectedly lost power at the May 9 polls for the first time since independence from Britain in 1957, defeated by a reformist alliance that promised sweeping changes. The toppling of the authoritarian regime has fuelled hopes of a new era.

State-linked media, which had seemed increasingly out of step with the views of many Malaysians yearning for change, wasted no time in switching their support to the new government. They had spent years backing ex-leader Najib-reporting in only a muted fashion on a massive financial scandal that helped to topple his regime-but quickly began giving blanket coverage to a flurry of fresh revelations related to the controversy, and to the new government

of 92-year-old Mahathir Mohamad. Traditionally pro-government media insist they are happy that the shackles have come off and they can now report in a more balanced and fair fashion. Wong Chun Wai, group managing director and chief executive officer of The Star Media Group-which produces leading daily The Star-told AFP it was "a breath of fresh air for all of us". "The public wants reports that will have perspectives from all sides. The media, I am sure, will look forward to that."

But the quick change of tack of some TV stations and newspapers has sparked criticism that they are simply following a decades-old impulse to back the government of the day, and are more interested in their own survival than in fair and balanced reporting. Jahabar Sadiq, who has set up leading news portals in recent years, told AFP that traditional media "seem to be lurching to the other side" by supporting the new government. It appears "they haven't changed their spots but are just going for the newest master in town", he added. —AFP

International

Rebooting food: Finding ways to feed the future

Scientists battling a global time-bomb

VIENNA: Banana trees that fit in a test tube. Burgers made without a cow in sight. Fish farmed in the desert. Robots picking fruit. Welcome to the brave new world of food, where scientists are battling a global time-bomb of climate change, water scarcity, population growth and soaring obesity rates to find new ways to feed the future. With one in nine people already short of enough food to lead a healthy, active life, supporters pushing for a Second Green Revolution argue without major changes hunger will become one of the biggest threats to national security and human health.

To tackle this looming crisis, scientists and agricultural experts are looking to the future - and back to the past - to find innovative ways to produce food. But they admit getting billions of farmers globally - and consumers - to change will be a battle. Bruce Campbell, director of the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) - a global network of scientists - said agriculture had to change to meet global goals on climate change and ending poverty and hunger.

"You need a revolution in the agriculture and food system within the next decade because without it, we're never going to achieve any of the really important (global) goals that we've set," Campbell told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. A visit to a series of white, low-rise United Nations-backed laboratories 35 km outside Austria's ornate capital Vienna provides a glimpse into the food of tomorrow's world. Here, in laboratories and greenhouses packed with genetic sequencing machines, robotic equipment and plants and insects of all sizes, scientists are using nuclear technology to stop insects reproducing and to spur disease-resistant banana trees.

Sub-Saharan Africa has for decades struggled to control bloodsucking tsetse flies that kill more than 3 million cattle and other livestock each year. Meanwhile in Southeast Asia and Australia, the fungal disease fusarium wilt threatens to wipe out bananas, a global favourite rich in micronutrients. But the labs, set up by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), have helped Senegal almost eradicate tsetse flies in one area and created bananas that can stand up to pest threats. "Under climate challenge ... we face many challenges in agricultural production. One of the major issues is more and emerging diseases for plants and animals, and insects," said Qu Liang, director of the joint FAO/IAEA division.

Burgers to drones

Scientists are also working on other innovations - from gene editing of crops and lab-grown meat, to sensors on drones and tractors - that could help to reboot the world's food system and fundamentally change how food is grown, distributed and eaten. But technology is only part of the answer, experts caution. Finding sustainable ways to overcome escalating challenges will require everything from delving into culture and tradition to rethinking subsidies and politics around food, they say.

However almost everyone agrees that change is needed. "Our agri food system is at a critical stage. It must be re-shaped," Shenggen Fan, director general of the Washington-based International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) said. Food monopolizes a huge share of scarce resources, Fan said, and numbers bear this out. Crops take up 11

percent of the land surface, livestock grazing covers 26 percent of ice-free land, and farming accounts for about 70 percent of all water used, according to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Livestock generate more greenhouse gas emissions than transport, according to the FAO, accounting for about 14.5 percent of world emissions. Faced with growing climate concerns, many people - including billionaire philanthropist Bill Gates - are pushing for a Second Green Revolution to develop crops that can be grown in droughts and resist new pests and diseases. The first Green Revolution, which peaked in the 1960s, dramatically boosted harvests in poor parts of the world by introducing high-yielding seeds, fertilizers and irrigation which helped stave off famine in hungry parts of the world.

But the industrial farming era it spurred has failed both consumers and the environment, critics say, by leading to a food system that cripples the environment, contributes to climate change, and concentrates wealth in multi-national companies. "We live in a changing world and we are limited in resources, in terms of land, water, fertilizer," said Ivan Ingelbrecht, head of the plant breeding and genetics laboratory in Vienna. "So having sustainable food production systems is very important," he said, holding a test tube containing a miniature banana tree in his hand.

Hungrier world

One problem, experts say, is that agricultural practices can be hard to change. Nearly 2.5 billion people are involved in small-scale farming, managing about 500 million small farms, according to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). "Agriculture has kind of been stuck for the last 500 years," said Andy Jarvis, research director at the Colombia-based International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT). Machinery and better crop varieties have made agriculture more productive but fundamental problems remain, from reliance on heavy manual labour to difficulties managing pests and diseases, he added. The world's population, meanwhile, has grown both in size and bulk, with no signs of the upward trend abating.

Of the world's 7.6 billion people - a population projected to reach 9.8 billion by 2050 - about 815 million people go hungry daily while 2 billion are overweight or obese, sending health costs soaring. Among them is Yatzri Martinez, aged six from Mexico City, who weighs 38 kg (84 pounds), loves spaghetti and fast-food snacks, and comes from a family plagued by type 2 diabetes. Salvador Villalpando, a specialist doctor who treats her at a child obesity clinic at the Federico Gomez Children's Hospital in Mexico, one of the world's fattest nations, said keeping people from becoming obese is the aim.

"When you get to treat obesity, you're one day too late," he said. Mexico is not alone. Adult obesity rates are increasing in all of the United Nation's 193 member states, including in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia where the focus for decades was eradicating hunger. Globally, about 40 percent of adults



VIENNA: Ivan Ingelbrecht, head of the plant breeding and genetics laboratory, holds a miniature plant in a conical flask at the joint FAO/IAEA laboratories outside Vienna. —Reuters

are overweight and 13 percent obese, says the World Health Organization (WHO), with the surge in obesity in the last three decades presenting a major public health epidemic in both poor and rich nations.

Growing demand for meat and dairy as countries become wealthier is also placing a heavier demand on world food systems, driving climate change as land is stripped of forests and ploughed. The volume of food transported around the world also is exacerbating global warming. However, calls to use more pesticides and fertilizers to get more food from the same land are based on wrong assumptions, said Emile Frison of the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food).

He said there is already enough food available to feed the planet today and in 2050 - but it's in the wrong places or wasted. Globally, one third of all food produced - worth nearly \$1 trillion a year - is binned or wasted, according to the FAO. "It's a matter of access, of waste, of consumption models that are unsustainable. Recommending a technology fix approach is certainly going in the wrong direction," Frison told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Hi-tech solutions

James Rogers, CEO of Apeel Sciences, a California-based start-up company, agrees the planet is producing more than enough calories to feed everyone. But he believes technology can help resolve some key issues, particularly food waste. His company produces a plant-based coating that comes in powder form and, when applied with water, can double the shelf life of fruit and vegetables without refrigeration so farmers in remote areas can get them to market without spoilage. The coating is being tested on mangoes in Kenya and cassava in Nigeria, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Technology is also helping meet the growing demand for meat, without more emission-producing livestock. The ideas harken back to predictions former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill made in a 1931 essay. "Fifty years hence we shall escape the absurdity of growing a whole chicken in order to eat the breast or wing by growing these parts separately under a suitable medium," he wrote. Impossible Foods and Beyond Meat, companies that produce high-tech burgers that taste like the real thing but contain only plants, are winning investment from backers as diverse as Gates and Tyson Foods, the largest US meat processor.

Memphis Meats, meanwhile, is growing meat from animal cells in laboratories, something advocates call 'clean meat' because it is better for the environment. Its backers include Virgin Group boss Richard Branson. Such alternative meats offer "a far more efficient way" to feed demand for tasty protein while cutting environmental damage, said Bruce Friedrich, executive director of The Good Food Institute (GFI), which supports alternative meat companies and lobbies on their behalf. "Plant-based meat and clean meat would be cheaper, more efficient, and would not have bacteria or drug residue contamination. They would be better in every conceivable way," Friedrich told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Widening divide?

To grow enough food despite increasing water scarcity - agriculture today sucks up about 70 percent of global freshwater used each year - farmers are also looking to technology. By tweaking a gene found in all plants, for instance, a team of international scientists have tricked tobacco plants into partially closing their stomata, microscopic pores in the leaf that let water evaporate. The plants grew with a quarter less water and little impact on harvests, said Steven Long, a crop sciences professor at Britain's Lancaster University. Researchers hope the tweak will work as well in cowpea and soybean, main sources of protein in developing countries, and in rice, a major staple food. —Reuters



Welcome to the brave new world of food

International

China scolds US for withdrawing an invite to a major naval drill

Closing door does not promote trust, says Beijing

BEIJING: China's Defense Ministry expressed regret yesterday after the United States withdrew an invitation to China to attend a major US-hosted naval drill, saying that closing the door does not promote mutual trust and cooperation. The Rim of the Pacific exercise, known as RIMPAC and previously attended by China, is billed as the world's largest international maritime exercise and held every two years in Hawaii in June and July.

RIMPAC enabled the armed forces of the world's two largest economies to directly engage with each other. It was viewed by both countries as a way to ease tensions and reduce the risk of miscalculation should they meet under less friendly circumstances. The Pentagon said the withdrawal of the invitation was in response to what it sees as Beijing's militarization of islands in the disputed South China Sea, a strategic waterway claimed in large part by Beijing.

In a brief statement, China's Defense Ministry said the United States had "ignored the facts and hyped up the so-called 'militarization' of the South China Sea", using it as an excuse to uninvite China. "This decision by the United States is not constructive. Closing the door to communication at any time is not conducive towards promoting mutual trust and communication between the Chinese

and US militaries," it added. China's island-building program in the South China Sea has sparked concern around the region and in Washington about Chinese intentions. China says it has every right to build what it calls necessary defensive facilities on its own territory.

Irresponsible remarks

Over the weekend China's air force landed bombers on islands in the sea as part of a training exercise, triggering concern from Vietnam and the Philippines. The ministry reiterated that its building of defense facilities was to protect the country's sovereignty and legitimate rights, and had nothing to do with militarization. "The United States has no right to make irresponsible remarks about this," it added.

"Being invited or not cannot change China's will

to play a role in protecting peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region, and cannot shake China's firm determination to defend its sovereignty and security interests". It is in both countries interests to develop healthy military ties, and China hopes the United States keeps the broader picture in mind, abandon its "zero sum" mentality and appropriately handle disputes, the ministry said.

Pentagon officials have long complained that China has not been candid enough about its rapid

US withdraws invite over Chinese buildup in South China Sea



YOKOSUKA: Photo shows the The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Millus (DDG 69) as it arrives at US Fleet Activities (FLEACT) Yokosuka, to become part of the Forward Deployed Naval Forces (FDNF) in Japan. —AFP

military build-up and using South China Sea islands to gather intelligence in the region. In an editorial on its website, widely-read Chinese state-run tabloid the Global Times said there was no way China could trade in its interests in the South China Sea for access to the exercise. "If the US military increases its activities in the South China Sea, then our side will need to further strengthen its military deployments there," it wrote.

Chinese officials have accused Washington of viewing their country in suspicious, "Cold War"

terms. Speaking at a separate briefing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said China has sovereign rights in the South China Sea and it is not realistic for the United States to use this kind of action to try to coerce Beijing. The United States has dispatched warships to disputed areas of the South China Sea in a bid to challenge China's extensive sovereignty claims in the territory, which is subject to various claims by China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Taiwan, Brunei and Malaysia. —Reuters

Taiwan FM quits after Burkina Faso cuts ties

TAIPEI: Taiwan's Foreign Minister Joseph Wu yesterday tendered his resignation after Burkina Faso announced it was breaking diplomatic ties with the island. "As a government official, I must be responsible for policies, and I have verbally tendered my resignation to the president," Wu told a press conference. Wu added that Taipei was cutting relations with Burkina Faso "to safeguard our sovereignty and dignity" and halting bilateral aid and cooperation programs. Burkina Faso is the second country to dump Taiwan within weeks after Dominican Republic switched recognition to Beijing earlier this month, leaving the island with only 18 diplomatic allies around the world.

It was not immediately clear if Burkina Faso and China would establish diplomatic relations but Wu said it would only be "sooner or later" and that "everyone knows China is the only factor". "Why China chose now to steal our ally, everyone can see although we couldn't go

into the WHA (World Health Assembly), but we are developing deeper relations with more and more like-minded countries. I believe China can see this," he said.

Wu's comments came after the landlocked west African state said earlier Thursday that it was breaking diplomatic ties with Taiwan. "The Burkina government decided today to break off its diplomatic relationship with Taiwan," Foreign Minister Alpha Barry said, in an announcement that follows a string of similar moves by African states since 2000. "Since 1994, Burkina Faso has had cooperation relations with Taiwan," Barry said in a statement.

"But today, changes in the world, the current socio-economic challenges facing our country and our region call on us to reconsider our position." China still considers Taiwan to be a renegade province to be reunified, by force if necessary, even though they split in 1949 after a civil war. The two have been engaged for years in a diplomatic tug-of-war in developing countries. Economic support and other aid are often used as bargaining chips for diplomatic recognition. Relations between Taiwan and China have worsened since President Tsai Ing-wen took office in May 2016 as her government refuses to acknowledge that Taiwan is part of "one China." —AFP

Pakistani mob destroys 100-year-old minority Ahmadi mosque

ISLAMABAD: A mob led by right-wing Muslim clerics tore down the dome and minarets of a 100-year old Pakistani mosque belonging to the marginalized Ahmadi community, officials and the community said yesterday. Ahmadis are one of the most persecuted groups in Sunni-majority Pakistan, with Islamists and religious hardliners labeling them heretics, while harsh Pakistani laws ban them from calling themselves Muslims or using Islamic symbols.

Saleemuddin, a spokesman for the Ahmadi community, said a mob stormed the mosque complex in Sialkot, near the Indian border in Punjab province, overnight. He put the number at several hundred. He said there was collusion between the mob and local government officials, but police denied such accusations. Asad Sarfraz, a police official, said municipal government officials

were at the mosque complex removing what he called "illegal renovation".

"An emotionally charged mob of people belonging to different groups and segments of society reached there and damaged several parts of the building," Sarfraz said. Sarfraz said about 60-70 people were involved and authorities were attempting to identify the attackers. Saleemuddin denied the renovation work was illegal and said the community had obtained permission from the local government to upgrade the building. He shared an application approved by the municipal government with Reuters.

A social media video of the attack's aftermath shows a crowd cheering a local cleric, who then claims to have ransacked the mosque. "I want to thank the Sialkot administration, the DPO (District Police Officer), DC (District Commissioner), the TMA (Town Municipal Corporation), from the bottom of my heart," said the cleric, from the majority Sunni community.

"Because as Muslims it was your responsibility to complete this work." The Ahmadis consider themselves to be Muslims but their recognition of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, who founded the sect in British-ruled India in 1889, as a "subordinate prophet" is viewed by many of the Sunni majority as a breach of the Islamic tenet that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was God's last direct messenger. —Reuters

Lifestyle

Friday Times

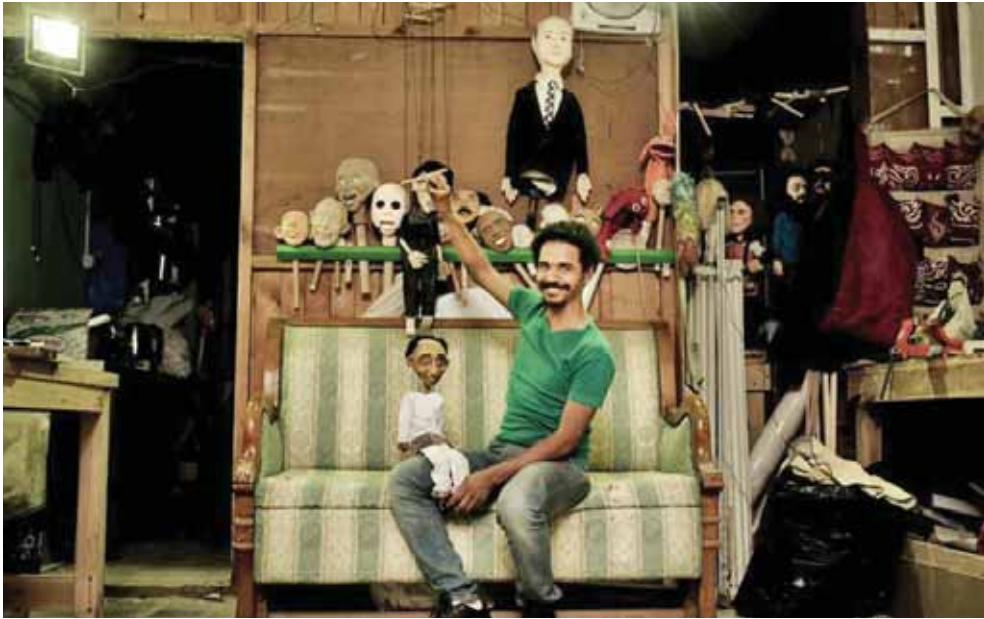
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Egyptian dancers perform the Tanoura during the holy fasting month of Ramadan, at El-Ghuri culture Palace in Cairo. — AFP

In Egypt, a marionette maker strings together memories

See Page 20



Egyptian artist Mohamed Fawzi Bakkar poses for a photograph with his favorite puppets at his workshop, in Cairo, Egypt. — AP photos



People watch a marionette performance with Umm Kalthoum, the most famed singer of classical Arabic music, using puppets made by Egyptian artist Mohamed Fawzi Bakkar, at the El-Sawy Cultural Center.

IN EGYPT, A MARIONETTE MAKER STRINGS TOGETHER MEMORIES



Egyptian artist Mohamed Fawzi Bakkar works on a puppet with wood at his workshop.

“

We all dream of having an academy in Egypt that would teach the art of puppetry and to have a theater in every city

”

In a tiny Cairo workshop, Mohamed Fawzi Bakkar designs and builds marionettes from scratch, hoping to revive a traditional art. The 32-year-old spends hours or even days designing puppets inspired by Egyptian life - farmers, street vendors, butchers and the occasional celebrity. He devotes special care to the faces, hoping to make them as unique and realistic as possible, and then he puts on shows.

Puppet shows were traditionally performed for adults and children alike, often as nightly entertainment during Ramadan, the holy month when Muslims fast from dawn to dusk, which began last week. The art form has deep roots in Egypt.



Marionettes of Umm Kalthoum, the most famed singer of classical Arabic music, and her band, made by Egyptian artist Mohamed Fawzi Bakkar, perform at the El-Sawy Cultural Center.



The workshop of Egyptian artist Mohamed Fawzi Bakkar.



Sculptures of puppet faces made by Mohamed Fawzi Bakkar, lay on a table at his workshop.



A puppeteer of Egyptian artist Mohamed Fawzi Bakkar's team moves a puppet during a performance at the El-Sawy Cultural Center.

When the Ottoman Sultan Selim the Grim sacked Cairo in the 16th century, he was said to have been so amused by a puppet show depicting the hanging of the vanquished Mamluk ruler that he sent the puppeteer to Istanbul to perform it for his son, the young Suleiman the Magnificent. The most famous show of recent times was "El-Laila El-Kebira," or "The Big Night," first performed in 1961. The show recreates a mawlid - a popular street festivals held in honor of local holy figures - with folk songs and dancing. The characters include a village leader, a lion tamer and a belly dancer.



A puppet made by Mohamed Fawzi Bakkar, at his workshop.



Puppets hang on the wall at the workshop of Egyptian artist Mohamed Fawzi Bakkar, in Cairo, Egypt.



Mohamed Fawzi Bakkar, top, prepares puppets during a performance at the El-Sawy Cultural Center, in Cairo.



The face of a puppet in the process being made by Mohamed Fawzi Bakkar.



A puppet made by Mohamed Fawzi Bakkar.

On a recent night at a cultural center in Cairo, Bakkar performed a marionette version of an Umm Kulthum concert, with a puppet standing in for the famed Egyptian diva, who dominated the airwaves across the Arab World from the 1930s until her death in 1975. He laments that there are only two venues for performing puppet shows in Cairo and only a couple dozen marionette artists. "We all dream of having an academy in Egypt that would teach the art of puppetry and to have a theater in every city," he said. "I really dream of having my own theater." — AP



Egyptian dancers perform the Tanoura during the holy fasting month of Ramadan, at El-Ghuri culture Palace in Cairo. — AFP photos



The Tanoura



TO LOVE HONEYSUCKLE, PLANT THE RIGHT ONE IN THE RIGHT SPOT

Who couldn't love a plant with a name that speaks of both sweetness and nurturing? Yet there are those who scorn honeysuckle. And - just as bad - there are those who shower honeysuckles with too much affection. The key to experiencing honeysuckle's sweet side is having the right plant in the right place. The name "honeysuckle" can refer to any of the almost 200 species in *Lonicera*, the honeysuckle genus, not to mention all the varieties within each species. They vary considerably in appearance, growth habit and, shall we say, exuberance.

Threatening honeysuckles

Hall's honeysuckle, deciduous in northern regions and increasingly evergreen as you travel south, is a vine that bears extremely fragrant, yellowish flowers pretty much all summer long. Although it was welcomed enthusiastically when it arrived here from Asia in 1806, it subsequently spread with equal enthusiasm, leading some gardeners to curse it. Especially where winter cold does not keep growth in check, this plant swallows up banks, rocks, trees and shrubs. If you plant Hall's honeysuckle, keep a watchful eye on it.

Amur honeysuckle, which releases a sweet aroma each spring from yellowish or pinkish blossoms, is another invader that draws critics. This robust shrub will grow as much as 10 feet high and

wide, and as its stems arch to the ground, they can take root to create whole new shrubs, which do the same. The shiny, red berries, paired along the stems later in summer, capture our attention because they look so tasty. Birds like eating them and contribute to this honeysuckle's spread, mostly to abandoned fields and the edges of woods, where it often does battle with the multiflora rose, another invasive shrub.

Honeysuckles worth planting

Not all honeysuckles threaten to take over the world. And these more timid species still abound in qualities. Take, for example, winter honeysuckle, a plant most appreciated in late winter or early spring. Its flowers, though not particularly showy, emit a powerful, lemony fragrance over a long period of time. One of my favorite honeysuckles - one of my favorite plants, in fact - is trumpet honeysuckle. The flowers, unfortunately, have no fragrance, but they make up for that in ostentatious beauty with their clusters of long, red trumpets joined at their bases.

Another favorite of mine is woodbine honeysuckle. Its flowers are more subdued, in pastel purple, pink, and yellow, but they flare wide open and, according to some people (not me), have a fragrance. Both trumpet and woodbine honeysuckle are twining vines

that burst into bloom in early summer, then continue the show at a more restrained pace for almost the rest of the season. To me, every bare telephone pole cries out for this vine. I've clothed two.

One honeysuckle that gets high marks all around is Sakhalin honeysuckle. It's a reasonably sized, rounded shrub with large, red flowers that are followed by red berries. An especially nice feature of this honeysuckle is the golden yellow fall color of its leaves. Despite all the other honeysuckles in the landscape - and some are frighteningly exuberant - let's make an opening for this relative newcomer, introduced in 1917.

Edible honeysuckles

Two more honeysuckles, honeyberry honeysuckle and bearberry honeysuckle, are worth mentioning because of their blue, edible fruits that ripen very early in the season, even before strawberries. These berries have long been harvested in China, Russia and Japan, and the plants have recently been introduced here.

I haven't found the berries to be particularly tasty. Then again, this is a new fruit, at the same point in development now as the apple may have been 2,000 years ago, so I'm willing to wait and see. I'll assume that the nectar - which gives honeysuckles their name - is at least as sweet as that of other honeysuckles. — AP

A look at Kristen Stewart's hairstyles at Cannes



Michael Jackson estate slams ABC TV special on his last days

The estate of Michael Jackson is objecting to an ABC TV special on the end of the King of Pop's life, calling it a crass attempt to exploit Jackson without respect for his legacy or children. The estate said in a statement to The Associated Press on Wednesday that "The Last Days of Michael Jackson" is not sponsored or approved by Jackson's heirs, and will most likely violate their intellectual property rights - an assertion ABC denies.

Advertising for the two-hour documentary set to air yesterday said it will reveal new information on Jackson and focuses on his apparent decline in the run-up to his death at 50 on June 25, 2009. "We believe the special to be another crass and unauthorized attempt to exploit the life, music and image of Michael Jackson without respect for Michael's legacy, intellectual property rights or his children," the estate's statement says. But the network says the documentary is a legitimate work of journalism on a newsworthy subject.

"ABC News' documentary explores the life, career and legacy of Michael Jackson, who remains of great interest to people worldwide," ABC said

in a statement. The estate said ABC was using a copyrighted silhouette and photo to promote the special, but it stopped after demands from Jackson attorneys. The estate expects other intellectual property will be used without permission, including music, photos and artwork.

"It is particularly disheartening that Disney, a company known to strongly believe in protecting its own IP rights, would choose to ignore these rights belonging to the Estate," the statement said. ABC is owned by Disney. ABC responded that the "program does not infringe on his estate's rights, but as a courtesy, we removed a specific image from the promotional material." An autopsy determined that Jackson died of acute propofol intoxication. The superstar had been taking the prescription anesthetic as a sleep aid during preparations for a series of comeback concerts called "This Is It." Former cardiologist Conrad Murray was convicted in 2011 of involuntary manslaughter for giving Jackson a fatal dose of the drug. He served two years in jail for causing Jackson's death. Murray's conviction was upheld in 2014. — AP

Roaring dinosaurs return in 'Jurassic World' sequel

The dinosaurs are back. The roaring creatures return to cinema screens in "Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom", the fifth installment in the sci-fi movie franchise which began 25 years ago. The sequel to 2015's "Jurassic World" sees actors Chris Pratt and Bryce Dallas Howard reprise their roles as Owen and Claire and return to Isla Nublar, three years after its dinosaur theme park was devastated by the creatures escaping confinement.

With a volcanic eruption threatening the surviving dinosaurs on the island, Claire and Owen want to rescue them. "Jurassic World" successfully rebooted the "Jurassic Park" film franchise, which kicked off with the 1993 film directed by Steven Spielberg, taking \$1.67 billion at the box office worldwide. Making the sequel, eagerly awaited by fans, was a "big responsibility", director J.A. Bayona said at a London photocall to promote the film on Thursday.

"You really need to do something that will satisfy them, but at the same time you're looking for something to surprise them... That's the most challenging thing about doing a sequel," he told Reuters. "We also wanted to go back to the sense of fear and suspense that the original 'Jurassic Park' had, so we really enjoyed adding all this tension and this suspense and even horror to this new chapter." Pratt, who also starred in the "Guardians of the Galaxy" superhero films, said there was an appetite for dinosaur films. "Kids love superheroes but kids love dinosaurs as well," he told Reuters. "Science and imagination merge. We feature these creatures that truly at one point walked the earth, which is mind-boggling... Kids love dinosaurs and so does the kid inside the adult." "Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom" begins its worldwide cinema rollout from June 6. — Reuters

'Beyond Vision': An exhibit to touch, smell and hear, too



A visitor interacting with the 'Smellmap: Amsterdam,' by Kate McLean.



Visitors interacting with 'Loopy Tiles and Emerging Objects,' by architects Ronald Rael and Virginia San Fratello.



Visitors interacting with 'Feather Fountain,' by artist Daniel Wurtzel.



A visitor interacting with 'Snow Storm,' a special commission by Christopher Brosius.



Visitors interacting with 'Seated Catalog of Feelings,' by Sosolimited, currently on view in the exhibit 'The Senses: Design Beyond Vision' at Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum in New York.

Cutting-edge technologies and designs can make daily life better, particularly for those with sensory disabilities, a new exhibit here demonstrates. "The Senses: Design Beyond Vision" features works that invite visitors to touch, hear and smell - often in combination (while looking good too). It's on view at the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum through Oct 28. Some of the pieces are already available to consumers, while others are prototypes offering glimpses of what may be to come. The designers hope "to stimulate our sensory responses to solve problems of access and enrich our interactions with the world," says museum director Caroline Baumann.

The family-friendly exhibit includes dozens of touchable works (custom-designed geranium and sandalwood hand sanitizer is provided throughout). And in keeping with the exhibit's focus on accessibility "beyond vision," many of its labels are in braille and feature audio descriptions. "This is very different from other shows because it's about experience. There are a lot of experiences for people to try," says Andrea Lipps, assistant curator of contemporary design at the Cooper Hewitt, who organized the show with Ellen Lupton, senior curator of contemporary design. "Almost every work here engages multiple senses."

The show opens with a large, curvaceous, furry wall embedded with sensors that play music when it's touched. "Tactile Orchestra," created by Studio Roos Meerman and KunstLAB Arnhem, is designed so that one touch prompts a recording of a string instrument playing, and multiple touches result in the playing of the entire musical composition. "Everyone who sees the wall wants to pet it, and the more people who stroke the wall, the more instruments join in," Lipps says. "It's tactile and audio and visual."

Across the room, "Dialect for a New Era" features six translucent pillars, each with a line of text describing an emotional state. Visitors can push a button on each pillar, releasing a scent meant to forge connections between language and smell. The piece is a collaborative work by Frederik Duerinck and Marcel Van Brakel, Polymorf and IFF, along with linguist Asifa Majid and perfumer Laurent Le Guerneck.

Other attractions include a commissioned work by Man Made Music called Alarm Fatigue. Its design aims to improve the sonic environment of hospitals, where the frequent beeping and pinging of medical equipment can be problematic for patients and caregivers alike. There's a 3-D map of the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, DC, that talks when touched (by Touch Graphics), and a Dot Watch, a braille smart-watch.

Electric toothbrush

Vibeat wearable speakers are designed to convert sound into vibrations that can be felt on the skin. Elsewhere, digital animation translates bird chirps into bursts of color and motion. Another section of the exhibit features 3-D printed vessels made from curry or coffee grounds that

smell, well, like curry or coffee (by architects Ronald Rael and Virginia San Fratello).

A work called "Seated Catalog of Feelings," by Sosolimited, sends patterns of vibrations through the seat and back of a chair to evoke odd sensations like "falling backward into a tub of Jell-O" or "getting stroked by an electric toothbrush." Snow Storm, a commissioned work by Christopher Brosius, features balls of felted wool suspended from above, each infused with a scent meant to evoke winter.



"It's fun, but it's also about smell in our living spaces. Wool holds smell much more than skin," Lipps explains. "So spraying perfume on a sweater will make the smell last longer than if you spray it on your skin." And for those struggling with loss of appetite, Ode is a "personal scent player" that diffuses food smells into a room at mealtimes. "When we munch on a crunchy pretzel and or swallow a creamy blob of ice cream, we indulge in the multisensory allure of eating. Although serving food is off-limits in a museum, the exhibition shows how package designers use color and texture to prime our appetite," says Lupton.

Jinhyun Jeon's Sensory Spoons, which are edged with bumps or rippled like waves to stimulate the mouth, highlights the relationship between taste and touch, Lupton says. Elsewhere, jazzy, colorful buttons, handles and grab bars - as illustrated by Dementia Care Bathroom Fixtures by HEWI - promote safety by helping those features stand out better. As with many of the works in the show, they combine style and function and are intended to appeal to both those with and without sensory disabilities. The show is accompanied by a book, "The Senses: Design Beyond Vision," edited by Lupton and Lipps and co-published by the Cooper Hewitt museum and Princeton Architectural Press.

"Design is extending the realm of the senses," Baumann writes in her foreword to the book. "Experimenting with new and familiar materials, customizing products, and embracing the different needs and experiences of users, contemporary designers are capitalizing on our extraordinary powers of perception to enrich and improve daily life."—AP

Photo shows visitors interacting with the 'Tactile Orchestra,' created by Studio Roos Meerman and KunstLAB Arnhem currently on view in the exhibit 'The Senses: Design Beyond Vision' at Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum in New York. — AP photos



Retired plumber Barney Smith, 96, walks through his Toilet Seat Art Museum in Alamo Heights, Texas. — AP photos

A visitor looks as some of the more than 1,350 decorated commode lids at Barney Smith's Toilet Seat Art Museum in Alamo Heights, Texas.

The 'King of the Commode' seeks an heir to his thrones

One tiny kingdom, with many thrones. But it doesn't come with a hereditary title. That belongs, in perpetuity, to Barney Smith - the undisputed "King of the Commode." "There's a lot of me in there," he says, sitting in front of the corrugated metal garage he's dubbed his Toilet Seat Art Museum. There's a lot of, well, everything in there. Smith has one seat decorated with a chunk of the Berlin Wall and another with a piece of insulation from the doomed Shuttle Challenger. There are lids festooned with flint arrowheads, Civil War Minie balls, Amtrak train keys, Pez dispensers - even \$1 million in shredded greenbacks from the Federal Reserve Bank in San Antonio. Every inch of door, wall and ceiling space is covered.

The sign out front - a commode lid, of course - says Smith's art is "NOT FOR SALE." But after five decades and countless offers, the king says everything must go. "At 96, I come out here with a cane. I've gotta hold onto everything to walk," says Smith, who is bent with arthritis and struggles to swing the creaking metal doors open for visitors. "I'm beginning to feel like that I'd rather be in an air-conditioned home in a chair, looking at a good program." Still, walking away will be hard. "This is my life's history here," he says. It started more than 50 years ago, as a way to display hunting trophies.

Smith says his father would spend hours cutting out, sanding and varnishing wooden shields to mount his antlers. The son figured a toilet seat lid would do just fine. "Well, I'm a master plumber, retired," he says. "I thought I ought to stick with my trade." Smith had promised his wife, Louise, that he'd stop at 500. That was 850 toilet seats ago. "If I would have just read my Bible as many hours as I spent on my toilet seats, I'd be a better man," he says with a twinkle in his eye. Smith's workshop is stacked floor to ceiling with cardboard boxes filled with odds and ends. He engraves his works with cast-off drills donated by a local dentist. Smith readily admits that he's no Jasper Johns. "The abstract artist would take it and he would spray a little paint over here and a little bit of paint here and say, 'This is the Alamo,'" Smith says with disgust. "I do detail."

Smith toiled in obscurity until an artist who'd come by to see some of his oil paintings caught a glimpse of his garage and told a local TV station. "They twisted my arm so until I said to come on," Smith says. The piece aired on a Friday. The following Monday, two other stations came calling. Then came the tourists. "And so I just slung the door open," he says. Smith officially opened as

a museum in 1992. Since then, visitors from every state and 83 foreign countries have made their way to this little municipality completely surrounded by the city of San Antonio. He asks that visitors make an appointment. But he doesn't turn anyone away.

Smith uses his walking stick to point out his favorites. Like a lavatory seat from the airplane that carried billionaire Aristotle Onassis's body home to Greece. Or the piece of one of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's "thrones." He regales tourists with the tale of "Old Rip," the "horny toad" who emerged alive after 31 years entombed in the courthouse cornerstone in his hometown of Eastland, Texas. He also treats each to a recitation of "When Earth's Last Picture is Painted" - a Rudyard Kipling poem he was assigned to learn in fifth grade.

Collection are priceless

No one leaves without signing his guestbook - and a toilet seat. Smith is currently working on a seat commemorating the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea. He suspects that will be his last. In 2014, he lost Louise, his wife of 74 years. A few months ago, he fell and broke two ribs. Daughter Julia Murders says they've had offers. A man from India, who wanted to buy the collection for his daughter, offered \$20,000 - about \$15 per seat. "We discussed it and we said, 'Daddy, you know, you've been doing this your whole life. The last few years of your life, you've done nothing BUT this,'" says Murders, 69, who lives nearby. Peo-



Barney Smith center, greets a visitor to his Toilet Seat Art Museum in Alamo Heights, Texas.

ple have told Smith that he's sitting on a pot of gold. But Smith isn't looking to cash in. "I want all 1,350 to be intact in another museum somewhere," he says. "It's not the highest bidder. It's not being raffled off."

Austin writer and publisher Daedelus Hoffman says Smith and his collection are priceless. And he wants to help preserve that legacy. His Cattywampus Press raised more than \$30,000 to produce a full-color, cloth-bound book about Smith. "King of the Commode: Barney Smith & His Toilet Seat Art Museum" is being released Saturday, just in time for Smith's 97th birthday. Hoffman hopes the book will help Smith attract a suitable buyer. If nothing else, he wanted to at least "document this piece of Americana." "For me, Barney's story is about the innate human desire to create and communicate," Hoffman says. "He is a folk artist. And his story and his life work merits preservation." Smith would love for the collection to remain where it is. But if it must move to remain intact, so be it. "I'm ready to give it up and let it go to London," he says. The Louvre, perhaps? —AP

Barney Smith sits next to a commode seat decorated with the words of 'When Earth's Last Picture is Painted' a Rudyard Kipling poem.



Eat the streets: Discovering Mumbai's best street food



Chaat ingredients at a street-side stall

Mumbai is a dizzying, dazzling metropolis, a city that never tires and never sleeps. If you've ever wondered what keeps this Indian megacity going, you'll find the answer in its buzzing streets, filled with a thousand hawkers dishing out cheap eats. Locals always find time to pause at rickety carts in narrow by-lanes for a street-food treat or a glass of 'cutting chai' (the city's famous half-measure of tea) helping a million-strong workforce get on with their day.

Born out of necessity, the city's legendary street food has its origins in its now vanished mills and factories, where multitudes of workers needed quick, inexpensive meals on the go. The streets of Mumbai still burst into life each morning like a rhythmical orchestra as a legion of mobile chefs engage in a daily ritual of chopping, spicing, grilling and frying that goes on late into the night.

As you roam the streets, seek out delicacies such as poori bhaji, a flaky deep fried breakfast pastry served with spicy potato curry, or dabeli, mashed potato with a mouth-watering topping of grapes, spiced peanuts, onions and garlic chutney, sandwiched in a grilled bun. Here are our top picks of the tantalizing street-food on offer in Mumbai.

Chaat your mouth

Chaat - a word derived from the Hindi term chaatna meaning 'to

lick' - is Mumbai's most famous street-food goody. Every nook and corner of the city has its own chaat vendors, serving up spicy, crispy and tangy eats to eager crowds of locals. Favorite chaat ingredients include sev (crunchy fried noodles), pulses, potato patties, onions, coriander and chillies, seasoned with the spice mix known as chaat masala. To indulge in the best Mumbai chaats, head to the crowded khau gallis (food lanes) around Churchgate Station, Ghatkopar station or Bandra's Carter Road. Also seek out the bhelpuri - Mumbai-style chaat with crispy bhel noodles, puffed rice and tamarind chutney - served at Girgaum Chowpatty and Juhu Beach.

The snack that defines Mumbai

Like an Indian version of a veggie burger, vada pav or vada pao is Mumbai's most beloved native dish. A deep-fried potato dumpling stuffed into a bun with a generous portion of spicy green chillies and garlic chutney, vada pav is what urban legends are made of. The story goes that in the early 1970s, a street-food vendor at Dadar station concocted the snack in a moment of inspiration and it was seized on by a local political movement as a symbol of Marathi pride, ensuring enduring popularity. Politics aside, you can still taste the original vada pav, served by the same family for forty years at the iconic Vaidyas' stall, situated on platform 1 of



Pav bhaji was invented as soul food for Mumbai's cotton



Falooda: the perfect meal-finisher for anyone with a sweet tooth

Dadar station. Other top spots for the snack include Ashok Vada Pav, on Kashinath Dhuru Marg in Dadar, and Aaram Vada Pav right opposite CST station.

Some like it hot

Made from fried pulses, onions, chutney and spicy masalas, chana jor garam is a spicy-tart snack that translates from colloquial Hindi as 'super hot chickpeas'. Always refreshing, this portable palate teaser comes in numerous variations and is freshly-prepared for each serving, making it one of the safest street foods to eat. To best experience this tangy treat, head to one of the city's water-facing promenades. You'll find school students and college crowds queuing for their share at many Mumbai hotspots, including Marine Drive, the Gateway of India and Shivaji Park.

The American connection

Perhaps the most popular street snack in the city, pav bhaji arrived in Mumbai thanks to America. Food historians trace its history back to the 1840s, when Mumbai merchants trading in cotton made fortunes due to the global shortage caused by the American Civil War. These mercantile Mumbaikers started work early and finished late, so local hawkers created a fastfood snack of curried vegetables and mashed potatoes, mopped up with a buttery bread roll, for traders to munch when they knocked off at midnight.

Today, the dish can be found throughout the day, at dozens of stalls and moving kiosks across the city. For a satiating portion, visit Sardar Refreshments, opposite the Tardeo Bus Station or Cannon Pav Bhaji opposite the CST subway. Alternatively, for pav bhaji on the go, choose from the many Zunka Bhakar Kendras stands dispersed around Nariman Point.

Anytime is bhajee time

Bhajis and pakodas are Mumbai's favourite fritters - delicious packages of onion, potato, spinach, aubergine, green chillies and other fillings, deep-fried in gram-flour batter. Particularly popular in the rainy season, these quick snacks are served fresh from the pan with green chutney, tomato sauce or piping hot tea. Pick your favourite filling from the many variants on offer at Soam, near Girgaum Chowpaty, or the khau galli food alley at Nariman Point. For an adventurous twist, seek out the innovative 'ice cream bhaji' at Monika Ice Cream at Mahavir Nagar in the western suburb of Kandivali, or Chinese-style pakodas served with a soy sauce dip at Parleshwar Vada Pav Samrat on Nehru Rd in Vile Parle.

Once you have tried all the above, conclude your Mumbai street food trail with a plate of watermelon, pineapple, oranges and Mahabaleshwar strawberries at an outdoor kiosk, surrounded by vendors clinking cold drink bottles. If you're in the mood for something sweeter, order a falooda, a tall glass of vermicelli noodles, dried fruits and nuts, doused with rose syrup and topped with sabza (sweet basil seeds), at the Haji Ali Juice Centre at Breach Candy or Swati Snacks at Tardeo. (www.lonelyplanet.com).



Vada pav - Mumbai's answer to the veggie burger



Presentation is everything at a stall selling chana jor garam

A SIMPLE **SHRIMP PAD THAI** THAT REQUIRES JUST ONE SKILLET

Our version of this take-out classic is surprisingly easy to make and requires just one skillet. While truly authentic pad thai, with its sweet, sour, and salty flavors, requires hard-to-find ingredients like preserved daikon, palm sugar, and dried shrimp, our simplified weeknight recipe uses accessible ingredients to create a simple flavor profile.



ONE-PAN SHRIMP PAD THAI

Ingredients

Servings: 4
 Start to finish: 1 hour
 8 ounces (3/8-inch-wide) rice noodles
 1/3 cup lime juice (3 limes)
 1/3 cup packed brown sugar
 1/4 cup fish sauce
 1 pound extra-large shrimp (21 to 25 per pound), peeled and deveined
 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
 4 garlic cloves, minced
 8 ounces (4 cups) bean sprouts
 Fresh cilantro
 1/4 cup dry-roasted peanuts, chopped

Preparation

Bring 3 quarts water to boil in large saucepan. Place noodles in large bowl. Pour boiling water over noodles. Stir, then let soak until noodles are soft and pliable but not fully tender, stirring once halfway through soaking, 12 to 15 minutes. Drain noodles and rinse under cold running water until water runs clear. Drain well and set aside. While noodles soak, squeeze 1/3 cup lime juice. Whisk sugar, fish sauce, and lime juice together in bowl. Mince garlic. Chop 1/4 cup cilantro. Chop peanuts. Peel and devein shrimp. Pat shrimp dry with paper towels.

Heat oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add shrimp in single layer and cook until spotty brown and cooked through, about 2 minutes per side. Stir

in garlic during last minute of cooking. Transfer shrimp to plate and tent loosely with aluminum foil. Add noodles and lime juice to mixture to now-empty skillet and cook over medium heat until sauce is thickened slightly, about 4 minutes. Add sprouts and shrimp to skillet and cook until shrimp and sprouts are warmed through and noodles are well coated and tender, about 3 minutes. Sprinkle with cilantro and peanuts and serve.

Nutrition information per serving

478 calories; 98 calories from fat; 10 g fat (1 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 143 mg cholesterol; 1894 mg sodium; 76 g carbohydrate; 2 g fiber; 21 g sugar; 21 g protein.

Lifestyle | Food

Amplify the peaches' flavor with this simple, warm dessert

It might seem impossible to improve on a perfect peach, but we decided to try. We wanted a simple, warm dessert that amplified the peaches' flavor. To achieve tender, flavorful peaches with a lightly sweet glaze, we began by tossing peeled and halved peaches with a little sugar, salt, and lemon juice to season the fruit and extract some juice.

To help the peaches heat through and still hold their shape, and to prevent the sugar from burning, we broiled the halves cut side up in a skillet, adding water to the pan to prevent sticking. Once the peaches had begun to brown, we took them out and brushed them with a mixture of honey and butter, and then slid them back under the broiler to caramelize the glaze and produce beautifully browned peaches.

Lastly, we reduced the juices that had accumulated in the skillet into a thick, intensely peachy syrup to drizzle over the warm peaches and topped them with some toasted hazelnuts. Select peaches that yield slightly when pressed. You will need a 12-inch oven-safe skillet for this recipe. Use a serrated peeler to peel the peaches. These peaches are best served warm and with vanilla ice cream or plain Greek yogurt, if desired.

HONEY-GLAZED ROASTED PEACHES

Ingredients

Servings: 6
 Start to finish: 40 minutes
 2 tablespoons lemon juice
 1 tablespoon sugar
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 6 firm, ripe peaches, peeled, halved, and pitted
 1/3 cup water
 1/4 cup honey
 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
 1/4 cup hazelnuts, toasted, skinned, and chopped coarse

Preparation

Adjust oven rack 6 inches from broiler element and heat broiler. Combine lemon juice, sugar, and salt in large bowl. Add peaches and toss to combine, making sure to coat all sides with sugar mixture. Transfer peaches, cut side up, to 12-inch oven-safe skillet. Pour any remaining sugar mixture into peach cavities. Pour water around peaches in skillet. Broil until peaches are just beginning to brown, 11 to 15 minutes.

Combine honey and butter in bowl and microwave until melted, about 30 seconds, then stir to combine. Remove peaches from oven (skillet handle will be hot) and brush half of honey mixture over peaches. Return peaches to oven and continue to broil until spotty brown, 5 to 7 minutes.

Remove skillet from oven (skillet handle will be hot), brush peaches with remaining honey mixture, and transfer peaches to serving dish, leaving juices behind. Being careful of hot skillet handle, bring accumulated juices in skillet to simmer over medium heat and cook until syrupy, about 1 minute. Pour syrup over peaches. Sprinkle with hazelnuts and serve.

Nutrition information per serving:

154 calories; 47 calories from fat; 5 g fat (1 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 5 mg cholesterol; 98 mg sodium; 28 g carbohydrate; 3 g fiber; 25 g sugar; 2 g protein.



In 20 minutes, you can have summer on the plate with fish

By Melissa D'arabian

Grilled fish is the official dish of summer around our house. There is nothing I love to eat more in warm weather than a piece of fresh seasonal fish cooked on the grill - the slightly sweet flesh offset by a tiny bit of char.

You can use some fish from your freezer stash in a pinch, but ask at the fish counter what is seasonal and freshest, and you won't regret the few extra dollars you'll pay. I used Alaskan halibut for today's recipe, but any firm white-fleshed fish will work great. (Skip the flaky thin fish like Dover sole for indoor cooking, or use a special fine-meshed metal grate.)

Halibut is mild, tender and sweet, and it's a fantastic lean source of protein. A 4-ounce serving has 24 grams of protein, a little over 2 grams of fat, and offers a nice showing of B vitamins and minerals, all for 120 calories.

My go-to strategy for grilling mild white fish is to keep it super simple on the actual grill, and then top it with a quick sauce made from a few ingredients. Pat the fish dry gently, and toss on the grill with just a little salt, pepper and olive oil.

Once the fish is cooked, I top it straight from the grill with the sauce. While the fish is cooking, whip up a sauce with a little acid (like lemon or vinegar), aromatics (like minced garlic, shallot or green onion), herbs, and a tiny touch of fat (like olive oil or butter). Pouring it on while the fish is hot makes the simple flavors come alive like Hugh Jackman playing PT Barnum.

Grilled Halibut with Butter Caper Herb Sauce is an excellent starting point for mastering this easy fish-grilling blueprint that you'll use both on weekends and busy weeknight meals. In under 20 minutes, you can have summer on the plate.



Grilled Halibut with Butter Caper Herb Sauce

Ingredients

Servings: 6
Start to finish: 20 minutes
1 3/4 pounds of fresh Alaskan halibut fillet (or other firm white-flesh fish), checked for bones
1/2 lemon, for squeezing
2 teaspoons olive oil
Salt and pepper

Sauce

2 tablespoons butter
1 clove garlic, minced

2 tablespoons capers, plus a little of the juice
2 tablespoons lemon juice
A handful of chopped tender herbs, like basil, parsley, or cilantro

Preparation

Heat a gas or charcoal grill to medium high. Scrub the grill grates with a wire brush or tongs and ball of foil to clean off burnt food debris, and lightly oil the grates. Squeeze a little lemon juice on the halibut and let it sit a few minutes before blotting it dry gently with a paper towel.

Season the fish with a little salt and pepper. Drizzle the olive oil over both sides of the fish, and use your fingers to coat the whole fillet lightly with oil. Once the grill is hot, place the fish

flesh side down on the grill. Allow to cook about 5-6 minutes on the first side. Use a metal spatula to flip the fish to cook the second side, until cooked through but not dry, about 3-4 more minutes. (To help keep the fish from sticking, don't flip it too soon, and flip the fish with a purposeful, quick motion.)

Meanwhile, heat the butter and garlic in a small sauce pan on the stove at medium heat until the garlic is aromatic, about 2 minutes. Add the capers with a little caper liquid and the lemon juice and whisk to combine. Remove from heat, stir the herbs into the sauce and then pour over the fish just as it comes off the grill. Serve.

Comic

WORD SEARCH

New York City 2

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.

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

- APOLLO THEATER, BALLET, BRONX ZOO, BROOKLYN BRIDGE, CARNEGIE HALL, CENTRAL PARK, CHRYSLER BUILDING, COLLEGES, DIVERSE, ELLIS ISLAND, ENTERTAINMENT, FDNY, HIGH LINE, LINCOLN TUNNEL, MADISON AVENUE, MEDIA, MEMORIALS, METS, MONUMENTS, MUSEUM MILE, MUSEUMS, NETS, NEWSPAPERS, NYPD, OPERA, PARADES, PIERS, PORT, PROSPECT PARK, RANGERS, ROCKEFELLER CENTER, SILICON ALLEY, STATEN ISLAND FERRY, STATUE OF LIBERTY, THE CYCLONE, TOURISTS, TV NETWORKS, UNIVERSITIES, VENDORS, RANGERS, WAVE HILL, YANKEES

Yesterday's Solution

New York City 1

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

- BASEBALL, BASKETBALL, BOROUGH, BROADWAY, BROOKLYN, CHINATOWN, CONEY ISLAND, CULTURAL, EMPIRE STATE BUILDING, ENTERTAINMENT, FASHION, FERRIES, FIFTH AVENUE, FINANCE, FOOTBALL, GRAND CENTRAL TERMINAL, GREENWICH VILLAGE, GROUND ZERO, HARBOR, HIGHRISES, HOCKEY, HUDSON RIVER, IMMIGRANTS, LAGUARDIA AIRPORT, MANHATTAN, MEDIA, MUSICALS, NASDAQ, NEW YORK TIMES, NYSE, PLAYS, POPULOUS, QUEENS, SKYSCRAPERS, SOCCER, SPORTS, STATEN ISLAND, ST PATRICKS CATHEDRAL, SUBWAY, THE BIG APPLE, TIMES SQUARE, UNITED NATIONS, WALL STREET

The hidden message is: THE STATUE OF LIBERTY WAS A GIFT FROM FRANCE AND WAS DEDICATED IN EIGHTEEN-EIGHTY-SIX

CROSSWORD 1918

Grid for crossword puzzle 1918 with numbers 1-80 indicating starting positions.

- ACROSS
1. A knockout declared by the referee who judges one boxer unable to continue.
4. Of or relating to or exhibiting isomerism.
12. A barrier constructed to contain the flow or water or to keep out the sea.
15. An anticipated outcome that is intended or that guides your planned actions.
16. Coelenterate genus of order Madreporaria, including staghorn corals.
17. A flat wing-shaped process or wing-like part of an organism.
18. An industrial city in southern Poland on the Vistula.
20. The seventh month of the civil year.
21. Being two more than fifty.
22. A Loloish language.
23. 30 to 300 kilohertz.
25. Of or relating to Linnaeus or to the system of of taxonomic classification that he proposed.
27. An associate degree in nursing.
28. Any of various types of fold formed by doubling fabric back upon itself and then pressing or stitching into shape.
30. Lower in esteem.
31. Being nine more than forty.
33. Testacean rhizopods.
34. Egyptian statesman who (as President of Egypt) negotiated a peace treaty with Menachem Begin of Israel (1918-1981).
37. Any of various primates with short tails or no tail at all.
38. A software system that facilitates the creation and maintenance and use of an electronic database.
42. Avoid or try to avoid, as of duties,

- questions and issues.
46. Something (especially a game) that is played again.
49. A mountain peak in south central Sri Lanka (7,360 feet high).
50. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
51. A column of light (as from a beacon).
52. An ugly evil-looking old woman.
53. A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 10 liters.
55. At full speed.
59. An acute viral disease marked by inflammation of nerve cells of the brain stem and spinal cord.
62. (botany) Of or relating to or functioning as a cambium.
64. An organic compound that contains a hydroxyl group bonded to a carbon atom which in turn is doubly bonded to another carbon atom.
65. Greater than normal in degree or intensity or amount.
66. Any of several plants of the genus Camassia.
70. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
71. City in Sudan.
74. The battle in 202 BC in which Scipio decisively defeated Hannibal at the end of the second Punic War.
75. Any culture medium that uses agar as the gelling agent.
76. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
77. (Old Testament) The eldest son of Isaac who would have inherited the Covenant that God made with Abraham and that Abraham passed on to Isaac.
78. (used with singular count nouns) Col-

loquial for 'not a' or 'not one' or 'never a'.
79. A region and ancient country in the east of the Balkan Peninsula north of the Aegean Sea.
80. Tropical woody herb with showy yellow flowers and flat pods.

DOWN

- 1. The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
2. A Scottish church.
3. A member of the Siouan people formerly living in the Missouri river valley in NE Nebraska.
4. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
5. Create by shaping stone or wood or any other hard material.
6. A state in northwestern United States on the Pacific.
7. The second day of the week.
8. Remove body hair.
9. Erect plant with small clusters of pink trumpet-shaped flowers of southwestern United States.
10. A theocratic republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
11. Ancient city is southeastern Italy where Hannibal defeated the Romans in 216 BC.
12. Indigo bush.
13. A name that has been assumed temporarily.
14. A state in New England.
19. A Dravidian language spoken in southern India.
24. Any wingless blood-sucking parasitic insect noted for ability to leap.
26. A port city in southwestern Iran.
29. Catch sight of.
32. Australian tennis player who in 1962 was the second man to win the Australian and French and English and United States singles titles in the same year.

- 35. Fallow deer.
36. Type genus of the Tetraonidae.
39. Especially a leaf of grass or the broad portion of a leaf as distinct from the petiole.
40. The capital of Lombardy in northern Italy.
41. A river that rises in central Germany and flows north to join the Elbe River.
43. Formerly a term of respect for important white Europeans in colonial India.
44. Of or relating to Oman or its people.
45. A periodic paperback publication.
47. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
48. A red transparent variety of zircon used as a gemstone.
54. (biology) Covered with hairs especially fine soft ones.
56. Relating to or characteristic of Hungary.
57. A member of the Semitic speaking people of northern Ethiopia.
58. Used of eyes lacking liveliness.
60. Lake in northwestern Russia near the border with Finland.
61. Of or relating to or affecting a lobe.
63. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
67. An independent group of closely related Chadic languages spoken in the area between the Biu-Mandara and East Chadic languages.
68. A woman hired to suckle a child of someone else.
69. (Old Testament) The first king of the Israelites who defended Israel against many enemies (especially the Philistines).
72. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
73. An edge tool with a heavy bladed head mounted across a handle.

Yesterday's Solution

Solved crossword grid with words filled in.

Daily SuDoku

9x9 grid for daily sudoku with some numbers pre-filled.

Yesterday's Solution

Solved 9x9 grid for yesterday's sudoku.

TV Listings

AM MOVIES
ACTION

01:55 911 Nightmare
03:35 Captain America: The Winter Soldier
06:00 I Am Number Four
08:00 Fantastic Four
10:00 Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation
12:20 Kung Fu Yoga
14:15 I Am Number Four
16:15 Captain America: Civil War
18:50 Lost & Found
20:30 Eagle Eye
22:30 Kill'em All

ANIMAL PLANET HD

00:45 Rugged Justice
01:40 Preposterous Pets
02:35 The Pack
03:00 SSPCA: On The Wildside
03:25 Whale Wars
04:15 North Woods Law
05:02 Wildest Islands Of Indonesia
05:49 Lone Star Law
06:36 Meet The Sloths
07:00 Meet The Sloths
07:25 The Pack
07:50 SSPCA: On The Wildside
08:15 Rugged Justice
09:10 Preposterous Pets
10:05 Wildest Islands Of Indonesia
11:00 The Pack
11:28 SSPCA: On The Wildside
11:55 Whale Wars
12:50 North Woods Law
13:45 Preposterous Pets
14:40 Wildest Islands Of Indonesia
15:35 Lone Star Law
16:30 Rugged Justice
17:25 The Vet Life
18:20 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
19:15 Preposterous Pets
20:10 SSPCA: On The Wildside
20:38 SSPCA: On The Wildside
21:05 The Vet Life
22:00 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
22:55 Wildest Islands Of Indonesia
23:50 Lone Star Law

BBC FIRST

00:25 The Detectorists
00:55 New Tricks
01:50 Holby City
02:45 The Level
04:15 Mum
04:45 The Detectorists
05:15 Agatha Raisin
06:00 Doctors
06:30 EastEnders
07:00 Holby City
08:00 Doctors
08:30 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
18:30 Carters Get Rich
19:00 New Tricks
20:00 Trust Me
21:00 Shakespeare And Hathaway: Private Investigators
21:50 Mairgret
23:25 Doctors
23:55 Carters Get Rich

crime & investigation network

00:00 Fred Dineage: Murder Case-book
01:00 Cold Case Files
01:55 Marcia Clark Investigates
03:45 Fred Dineage: Murder Case-book

04:30 Cold Case Files
05:15 The First 48
06:00 The Eleven
07:00 It Takes A Killer
07:20 Cold Case Files
08:05 Homicide Hunter
08:50 The First 48
09:35 The Eleven
10:30 Evil Up Close
11:25 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
12:20 Crimes That Shook Britain
13:15 Cold Case Files
14:10 Homicide Hunter
15:05 The First 48
16:00 The Eleven
17:00 The Eleven
18:00 The Eleven
19:00 The Eleven
20:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
21:00 Evil Up Close
22:00 Escaping Polygamy: After The Escape
23:00 The First 48

COMEDY CENTRAL

00:05 Important Things With Demetri Martin
00:30 Friends
00:55 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
01:20 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper
01:45 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagef
02:13 Disaster Date
02:35 Important Things With Demetri Martin
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
03:25 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
04:15 Catch A Contractor
05:05 MLE Chowdown: Wedges And Wings
05:55 Disaster Date
06:20 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagef
06:50 I Used To Be Fat
07:40 Impractical Jokers
08:05 Impractical Jokers
08:30 Disaster Date
08:55 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagef
09:20 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
10:10 I Used To Be Fat
11:00 Catch A Contractor
11:50 Ridiculousness Arabia
12:15 House Of Food
13:05 Framework
13:55 Ridiculousness Arabia
14:20 Ridiculousness Arabia
14:45 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
15:35 Ridiculousness Arabia
16:00 House Of Food
16:55 Martha And Snoop Potluck Dinner Party
17:20 Martha And Snoop Potluck Dinner Party
17:45 Ridiculousness Arabia
18:10 Ridiculousness Arabia
18:35 Takeshis Castle Thailand
19:00 Friends
19:25 Friends
19:50 Friends
20:12 Friends
20:35 Friends
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper
22:00 Demetri Martin: Person
22:50 Friends
23:15 Friends
23:40 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagef

Discovery Family

00:30 Destroyed In Seconds
00:55 Destroyed In Seconds
01:20 How It's Made
01:45 How It's Made
02:10 America's Cutest Pets
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 Destroyed In Seconds
07:25 Destroyed In Seconds
07:50 America's Cutest Pets
08:40 How It's Made
09:05 How It's Made
09:30 Tanked
10:20 Ultimate Survival
11:10 Destroyed In Seconds
11:35 Destroyed In Seconds
12:00 How It's Made
12:25 How It's Made
12:50 React To That
13:15 React To That
13:40 The Carbonaro Effect
14:05 The Carbonaro Effect
14:30 America's Cutest Pets
15:20 How It's Made
15:45 How It's Made
16:10 Ultimate Survival
17:00 America's Cutest Pets
17:50 Tanked
18:40 Destroyed In Seconds
19:05 Destroyed In Seconds
19:30 React To That
19:55 React To That
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 React To That
23:15 React To That
23:40 The Carbonaro Effect

ID

00:45 Golden State Killer: People Magazine Investigates
01:40 Betrayed
02:35 Blood Relatives
03:30 Deadly Sins
04:25 Nightmare Next Door
05:20 I Almost Got Away With It
06:10 Disappeared
07:00 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
07:25 Shadow Of Doubt
08:15 Nightmare Next Door
09:10 Disappeared
10:05 A Crime To Remember
11:00 Deadly Affairs
11:55 Shadow Of Doubt
12:50 I Almost Got Away With It
13:45 Disappeared
14:40 A Crime To Remember
15:35 Killer Confessions
16:30 Shadow Of Doubt
17:25 Nightmare Next Door
18:20 I Almost Got Away With It
19:15 Disappeared
20:10 A Crime To Remember
21:05 Guilty Rich
22:00 The Boston Strangler
23:50 James Patterson's Murder Is Forever

Disney Channel HD

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 Kitty Is Not A Cat
06:25 Elena Of Avalor
06:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
06:55 Tangled: The Series
07:20 Stuck In The Middle

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

Disney Junior

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
07:30 Jungle Junction
07:50 Handy Manny
08:10 PJ Masks
08:30 Vampirina
09:00 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
09:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
10:00 Trulli Tales
10:30 Puppy Dog Pals
11:00 Doc McStuffins
11:30 The Lion Guard
12:00 Sofia The First
12:30 Sofia The First
13:00 PJ Masks
13:30 PJ Masks
14:00 P-King Duckling
14:30 Vampirina
15:00 Puppy Dog Pals
15:30 Sofia The First
16:00 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
16:30 Trulli Tales

17:00 Vampirina
17:30 PJ Masks
18:00 Sofia The First
18:30 Puppy Dog Pals
19:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
19:30 The Lion Guard
20:00 Vampirina
20:30 PJ Masks
21:00 Trulli Tales
21:30 Sofia The First
22:00 P-King Duckling
22:30 Puppy Dog Pals
23:00 Miles From Tomorrow
23:30 PJ Masks

Discovery Channel HD

00:15 Deadliest Catch
01:05 Mosquito
02:35 Kidnap And Rescue
03:20 Street Outlaws
04:05 Alaskan Bush People
04:50 Kindig Customs
05:35 Storage Hunters
06:00 The Liquidator
06:23 Property Wars
06:45 Storage Hunters
07:10 Storage Wars Canada
07:35 Alaskan Bush People
08:20 The Liquidator
08:45 Property Wars
09:10 Kindig Customs
09:55 Alaskan Bush People
10:45 Kindig Customs
11:30 Deadliest Catch
12:20 The Liquidator
12:43 Property Wars
13:05 Storage Hunters
13:30 Storage Wars Canada
13:55 Kindig Customs
14:40 Deadliest Catch
15:30 Huntwatch
16:20 Street Outlaws
17:05 Flipping Ships
17:50 Bushcraft Build-Off
18:40 The Wheel
19:25 Deadliest Catch
20:15 Street Outlaws
21:00 Fast N' Loud
21:50 Gear Dogs
22:40 Shifting Gears With Aaron Kaufman
23:30 Jungle Gold

Disney XD

06:00 Marvel's Spider-Man
06:25 Lab Rats
06:50 Phineas & Ferb
07:05 DuckTales
07:32 Phineas And Ferb
08:00 Milo Murphy's Law
08:25 Disney Mickey Mouse
08:30 Phineas And Ferb
08:55 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
09:20 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
09:45 Phineas And Ferb
10:00 Kid vs. Kat
10:25 Kid vs. Kat
10:50 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
10:55 Marvel's Ant-Man
11:00 Counterfeit Cat
11:15 Counterfeit Cat
11:30 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
11:55 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
12:20 Gravity Falls
12:45 Milo Murphy's Law
13:00 Lab Rats
13:25 Lab Rats
13:50 Mech-X4
14:15 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
14:40 Milo Murphy's Law
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 DuckTales
17:00 Milo Murphy's Law
17:25 Big Hero 6 The Series: Shorts
17:32 Gravity Falls
18:00 Mech-X4
18:25 Lab Rats Elite Force
18:50 Lab Rats Elite Force
19:15 Walk The Prank
19:40 Phineas And Ferb
19:55 Disney Mickey Mouse

20:00 DuckTales
20:32 Big Hero 6 The Series
21:00 Marvel's Spider-Man
21:25 Star Wars Rebels
21:50 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:55 Two More Eggs
22:00 Phineas And Ferb
22:25 Phineas And Ferb
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am

EHD

00:05 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
00:55 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
01:50 E! News
02:50 WAGs
03:40 WAGs
04:35 WAGs
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 Mariah's World
06:55 E! News Middle East
07:10 Mariah's World
08:10 E! News: Daily Pop
09:10 Botched
10:05 Botched
11:00 E! Royal Wedding Rundown
12:00 E! News Middle East
12:15 WAGs LA
13:10 Live From The Red Carpet
15:00 E! News Middle East
15:15 E! News: Daily Pop
16:15 Botched
17:10 Botched
18:05 E! Royal Wedding Rundown
19:00 E! News
20:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
21:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
22:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
23:00 E! News Middle East
23:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry

itv HD CHOICE

00:10 Broadchurch
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 The Chase
03:25 The Moorside
04:20 The Moorside
05:15 Broadchurch
06:15 Cash Trapped
07:10 The Chase
08:05 Royal Wives Of Windsor
09:00 Change Your Tune
09:55 Broadchurch
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 Royal Wives Of Windsor
16:55 Inside Windsor Castle
17:50 Broadchurch
18:50 Emmerdale
19:15 Emmerdale
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 The Chase
21:00 Royal Wives Of Windsor
21:55 Inside Windsor Castle
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Emmerdale
23:40 Coronation Street

H2 HD

00:00 Hoard Hunters
01:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
02:00 UFO Hunters
02:50 Ancient Aliens
03:40 Ancient Impossible
04:30 The Colour Of War
05:20 America's Book Of Secrets
06:10 America's Book Of Secrets
07:00 Hoard Hunters
08:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
09:00 UFO Hunters

TV Listings

10:00 Ancient Aliens
11:00 Ancient Impossible
12:00 The Colour Of War
13:00 Hoard Hunters
14:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
15:00 UFO Hunters
16:00 Ancient Aliens
17:00 Ancient Impossible
18:00 Hoard Hunters
19:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
20:00 UFO Files
21:00 Ancient Aliens
22:00 Missing In Alaska
23:00 The Colour Of War



00:20 Storage Wars
00:45 Storage Wars
01:10 American Pickers
02:00 Ax Men
02:50 Mountain Men
03:40 Hunting Hitler: Inside The Investigation
04:30 Storage Wars
04:55 Storage Wars
05:20 American Pickers
06:00 Time Team
06:50 Time Team
07:40 Time Team
08:30 Time Team
09:20 Time Team
10:10 Ax Men
11:00 Ax Men
11:50 Ax Men
12:40 Ax Men
13:30 Ax Men
14:20 American Pickers
15:10 American Pickers
16:00 American Pickers
16:50 American Pickers
17:40 American Pickers
18:30 Navy Seals: America's Secret Warriors
20:10 Counting Cars
20:35 Car Hunters
21:00 Counting Cars
21:25 Car Hunters
21:50 Time Team
22:40 Time Team
23:30 Time Team



00:15 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
00:45 Testing The Menu With Nic Watt
01:10 The Food Files
01:40 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
02:05 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
02:35 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
03:30 A Is For Apple
03:55 A Is For Apple
04:25 Dog Whisperer
05:20 Dog Whisperer
06:15 Places We Go
06:40 Places We Go
07:10 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
07:35 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
08:05 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
09:00 A Is For Apple
09:25 A Is For Apple
09:55 Dog Whisperer
10:50 Dog Whisperer
11:45 Places We Go
12:10 Places We Go
12:40 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
13:05 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
13:35 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
14:30 A Is For Apple
15:25 Dog Whisperer
16:20 Dog Whisperer
17:15 Glamour Puds
17:40 Chocolate Covered
18:10 Eat Street
18:35 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
19:05 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
20:00 A Is For Apple
20:30 A Is For Apple
21:00 Dog Whisperer
22:00 Dog Whisperer
22:55 Glamour Puds
23:20 Chocolate Covered
23:50 Eat Street



00:10 Hitler Youth
01:00 Apocalypse World War I
02:00 My Fighting Season
03:00 One Strange Rock
04:00 Hitler Youth
05:00 Situation Critical
06:00 Mega Factories
07:00 Years Of Living Dangerously
08:00 Genius
09:00 Situation Critical
10:00 Breakout
11:00 My Fighting Season
12:00 Exploring Macau
13:00 Mega Factories
14:00 Prince Harry's Story: Four Royal Weddings
15:00 The Human Family Tree
16:00 Breakout
17:00 Inside Combat Rescue: Horrors Of War
18:00 Hitler Youth
19:00 Apocalypse World War I
20:00 Breakout
20:50 Inside Combat Rescue: Horrors Of War
21:40 Hitler Youth
22:30 Apocalypse World War I
23:20 Situation Critical



00:20 Dark Side Of Crocs
01:10 World's Deadliest Compilations
02:00 Amazonia's Giant Jaws
02:50 Hidden Worlds
03:45 Deadly Game
04:40 Man V. Monster
05:35 Amazonia's Giant Jaws
06:30 Hidden Worlds
07:25 Deadly Game
08:20 Man V. Monster
09:15 Snakes In The City
10:10 Wild Chile
11:05 Gorilla Murders
12:00 Shark Survivors: USA
12:55 Game Of Lions
13:50 Strangest Bird Alive
14:45 Animal Outlaws
15:40 Man V. Monster
16:35 Snakes In The City
17:30 Wild Chile
18:25 1000 Days For The Planet
19:20 Animal Outlaws
20:10 Man V. Monster
21:00 Snakes In The City
21:50 Wild Chile
22:40 1000 Days For The Planet
23:30 Shark Survivors: USA



00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbids Invasion
01:00 Rabbids Invasion
01:24 Sanjay And Craig
01:48 Sanjay And Craig
02:12 Winx Club
02:36 Winx Club
03:00 Harvey Beaks
03:24 Harvey Beaks
03:48 Rabbids Invasion
04:12 Rabbids Invasion
04:36 Breadwinners
05:00 Breadwinners
05:24 The Loud House
05:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
06:36 Harvey Beaks
07:00 Breadwinners
07:24 Breadwinners
07:48 Bunsen Is A Beast
08:12 Rabbids Invasion
08:36 The Loud House
09:00 Regal Academy
09:24 Winx Club
09:48 Hunter Street
10:12 Game Shakers
10:36 Game Shakers
11:00 Game Shakers
11:24 Game Shakers
11:48 Game Shakers
12:12 Rank The Prank

12:36 Massive Monster Mayhem
13:00 Hunter Street
13:24 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky And Dawn
13:48 Bunsen Is A Beast
14:12 Escape From Mr. Lemoncello's Library
15:24 Bunsen Is A Beast
15:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
16:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
16:36 Rabbids Invasion
17:00 The Loud House
17:24 The Loud House
17:48 The Loud House
18:12 The Loud House
18:36 The Loud House
19:00 The Loud House
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 Breadwinners
22:12 Sanjay And Craig
22:36 Rabbids Invasion
23:00 The Loud House
23:24 Regal Academy
23:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles



00:06 Max & Ruby
00:28 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
00:39 Kiva Can Do!
00:50 The Day Henry Met
00:56 Blaze And The Monster Machines
01:18 Blaze And The Monster Machines
01:40 Paw Patrol
01:52 Kid-E-Cats
01:56 Kid-E-Cats
02:01 Shimmer And Shine
02:23 Nella And The Princess Knight
02:35 Paw Patrol
02:58 Max & Ruby
03:21 Dora The Explorer
03:44 Sunny Day
04:07 Nella The Princess Knight
04:30 Shimmer And Shine
04:53 Wallykazam!
05:17 Zack & Quack
05:28 The Day Henry Met
05:32 The Day Henry Met
05:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
06:00 Rusty Rivets
06:13 Paw Patrol
06:25 Paw Patrol
06:37 Dora The Explorer
07:00 Nella The Princess Knight
07:21 Kiva Can Do!
07:32 Kiva Can Do!
07:43 Blaze And The Monster Machines
08:06 Paw Patrol
08:19 Paw Patrol
08:31 Shimmer And Shine
08:54 Nella The Princess Knight
09:17 Paw Patrol
09:41 Rusty Rivets
10:04 Wallykazam!
10:26 The Day Henry Met
10:32 Bubble Guppies
10:56 Team Umizoomi
11:19 Kid-E-Cats
11:24 Shimmer And Shine
11:46 Sunny Day
12:09 Max & Ruby
12:30 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
12:41 Kiva Can Do!
12:52 The Day Henry Met
12:58 Blaze And The Monster Machines
13:19 Blaze And The Monster Machines
13:41 Paw Patrol
13:53 Kid-E-Cats
13:57 Kid-E-Cats
14:03 Shimmer And Shine
14:24 Nella And The Princess Knight
14:36 Paw Patrol
15:00 Max & Ruby
15:23 Dora The Explorer
15:46 Sunny Day
16:08 Nella The Princess Knight

16:31 Shimmer And Shine
16:54 Wallykazam!
17:17 Zack & Quack
17:28 The Day Henry Met
17:32 The Day Henry Met
17:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
18:00 Rusty Rivets
18:13 Paw Patrol
18:25 Paw Patrol
18:37 Dora The Explorer
19:00 Nella The Princess Knight
19:22 Kiva Can Do!
19:33 Kiva Can Do!
19:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines
20:06 Paw Patrol
20:29 Shimmer And Shine
20:52 Nella The Princess Knight
21:14 Paw Patrol
21:38 Rusty Rivets
22:01 Wallykazam!
22:24 The Day Henry Met
22:30 Bubble Guppies
22:53 Team Umizoomi
23:16 Kid-E-Cats
23:22 Shimmer And Shine
23:44 Sunny Day



00:15 How I Met Your Mother
01:05 Seinfeld
01:30 Seinfeld
01:55 Til Death
02:20 Making History
02:45 Making History
03:10 Late Night With Seth Meyers
04:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
04:50 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
05:40 My Boys
06:05 Til Death
06:30 The Mick
06:55 Speechless
07:20 Late Night With Seth Meyers
08:10 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
09:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
09:50 The Simpsons
10:15 Trial & Error
10:40 My Boys
11:05 Til Death
11:30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
12:20 The Mick
12:45 Speechless
13:10 How I Met Your Mother
14:00 Seinfeld
14:25 Seinfeld
14:50 My Boys
15:15 The Simpsons
15:40 Trial & Error
16:05 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
17:00 The Mick
17:30 Speechless
18:00 How I Met Your Mother
19:00 The New Adventures Of Old Christine
19:30 The New Adventures Of Old Christine
20:00 Ghosted
20:30 Trial & Error
21:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
22:00 Better Late Than Never
23:00 The Last Man On Earth
23:25 Late Night With Seth Meyers



00:45 Toy Story
02:30 Pirates Of The Caribbean: On Stranger Tides
05:00 Aladdin
07:00 Oz The Great And Powerful
09:15 Toy Story
11:00 Oz The Great And Powerful
13:15 Finding Dory
15:15 Toy Story 2
17:15 Alice Through The Looking Glass
19:15 The Lone Ranger
21:45 Finding Dory
23:45 Toy Story 2



00:00 The Americans
01:00 The Night Shift
01:50 Suits

02:40 Time After Time
03:30 S.W.A.T.
04:20 The Americans
05:20 Supergirl
06:10 The Blacklist
07:00 Good Morning America
09:00 The View
10:00 S.W.A.T.
11:00 Suits
12:00 The Blacklist
13:00 Scandal
14:00 Time After Time
15:00 The View
16:00 Live Good Morning America
18:00 The Blacklist
19:00 Suits
20:00 Scandal
21:00 Survivor: Ghost Island
22:00 Once Upon A Time
23:00 WWE Experience



01:00 Madhouse
02:45 The Family Fang
04:45 Ghost Town
06:30 Bowfinger
08:15 Who Gets The Dog?
10:00 The Family Fang
12:00 Ghost Town
13:45 Bowfinger
15:30 Who Gets The Dog?
17:15 Meet Dave
19:00 Barbershop: The Next Cut
21:00 Growing Up And Other Lies
22:45 Welcome Home Roscoe Jenkins



01:45 The Hollars
03:25 We Are Many
05:25 Chitty Chitty Bang Bang
08:00 Coming Through The Rye
09:50 The Hollars
11:30 The Dressmaker
13:35 The Ticket
15:20 The Last King
17:10 Wuthering Heights
19:05 A.I. Artificial Intelligence
21:45 Chronically Metropolitan
23:40 The Last King



00:50 Moomin And Midsummer Madness
02:10 Twigson Ties The Knot
03:35 Krazzy Planet
04:55 Simba The King Lion
07:05 Funny Little Cars
08:30 A Town Called Panic
10:05 Rh+ The Vampire Of Seville
11:30 Back To The Sea
13:10 Twigson Ties The Knot
14:35 Krazzy Planet
15:55 Help And Freedom
17:30 Rh+ The Vampire Of Seville
18:55 Ploddy Police Car
20:15 The Happy Cricket
21:45 Help And Freedom
23:20 A Town Called Panic



00:25 The Cable Guy
02:05 Storks
03:45 Brooklyn
05:40 Parental Guidance
07:30 Dreamgirls
09:45 The Cable Guy
11:25 Brooklyn
13:20 A Thousand Words
15:00 Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them
17:15 The Big Year
19:00 Death Becomes Her
20:45 Prometheus
22:50 Before I Wake



00:30 How It's Made

00:55 Food Factory USA
01:20 Strangest Weather On Earth
02:10 Secrets Of The Underground
03:00 Kings Of Construction
03:48 Mythbusters: The Search
04:36 How It's Made
05:00 Food Factory USA
05:24 Strangest Weather On Earth
06:12 Secrets Of The Underground
07:00 How It's Made
07:26 Kings Of Construction
08:14 Mythbusters: The Search
09:02 Secrets Of The Underground
09:50 How It's Made
10:14 Food Factory USA
10:38 Strangest Weather On Earth
11:26 Kings Of Construction
12:14 Mythbusters: The Search
13:02 How It's Made
13:26 Food Factory USA
13:50 Secrets Of The Underground
14:38 Kings Of Construction
15:26 Strangest Weather On Earth
16:14 Mythbusters: The Search
17:02 Secrets Of The Underground
17:50 Kings Of Construction
18:40 Mythbusters: The Search
19:30 How The Universe Works
20:20 How It's Made
20:45 Food Factory USA
21:10 Mythbusters: The Search
22:00 How The Universe Works
22:50 Kings Of Construction
23:40 Mythbusters: The Search



01:25 Dabangg 2
03:00 Dabangg 2
03:35 The Front Row
04:00 Koffee With Karan
05:00 Little Krishna - The Darling Of Vrindavan
06:40 Dulhan Hum Le Jayenge
09:15 Detective Naani
11:55 Kya Kehna
15:00 The Ghazi Attack
17:20 Maine Pyaar Kyun Kiya
20:00 Khatta Meetha
22:55 Parzania: Heaven & Hell On Earth



01:45 Crossing Over
03:30 The Brass Teapot
05:15 All Good Things
07:00 Gangs Of New York
10:15 Avengers: Age Of Ultron
12:30 Diana
14:15 Crossing Over
16:00 Man Of The Year
18:00 Sparkle
20:00 The Great Debaters
22:00 The Wedding Planner
23:45 The Hoax



00:00 Mistresses
00:59 Mistresses
02:00 Devious Maids
03:00 Married At First Sight
04:00 Project Runway
05:00 Cougar Town
05:30 Cougar Town
06:00 Mistresses
07:00 Mistresses
08:00 Devious Maids
09:00 Married At First Sight
10:00 Project Runway
11:00 Cougar Town
11:30 Cougar Town
12:00 Mistresses
13:00 Mistresses
14:00 Devious Maids
15:00 Married At First Sight
16:00 Project Runway
17:00 Cougar Town
17:30 Cougar Town
18:00 Fashion StartUp
19:00 Fashion StartUp
20:00 Project Runway All Stars
21:00 The Fashion Fund
22:00 The Fashion Fund

Stars



Aries (March 21-April 19)

New information confirms something you've known but kept quiet about. Handling a certain person with care is called for now: this is a fragile person whose feelings are easily hurt or offended. Time speeds by as you tend to one task after the next; busy, busy energy for you today! Doing something the best, least expensive, way appeals to you. You reach out to someone who knows a lot about a mystic subject you're studying. Walking along the "wild side" is where you can let your spirit soar, experience and learn of the mysteries of life without limits. Being responsible for an important duty means a great deal to you now. You're on a mission to enjoy every minute of life possible; this could be prompted by a loss of some sort. Taking your time to answer a surprising question feels right to you.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Wanting both feet on the ground, dealing with finances responsibly is the hallmark of the current cycle you're in. You approach all business dealings with serious deliberation and seriousness. Moments of fancy are few and far between, but you're able to stop and "taste the coffee" along the way today. Being new to a class or other environment could ruffle your feathers a bit, but you settle in and get ready to learn. You turn an emotional corner when you discover the truth about someone; there is great relief indicated here! Research plays a large role in a new project or important client; thinking way out of the box is required. Being punctual is difficult, but very necessary right now as you have a schedule that demands being places at the right time. A sense of accomplishment washes over you tonight.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You wake up in the morning curious and willing to do what's needed to get important information. Making progress with a certain project that you're behind on is your one and only focus. People you're closely linked to siblings, neighbors, children, parents unite and take action to prepare for an event. Your home grows more dear to you by the day; you could have a plan to, or are close to, paying off your home. Wisdom comes from experience, not just learning from others. Going with the flow seems difficult when dealing with a new theory or idea. You could find that an appointment causes you to take a short trip. A mentally stimulating event restarts your interest in a possibly profitable hobby; this brings positive vibrations to lighten the dullness you're letting go of now.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Trading ideas and theories with like-minded people brings solutions for the long run. Keeping your finger on the pulse of new technology and trending topics is strongly indicated during this cycle. You try to do something independently but have to ask for assistance; some things simply require teamwork! Raising your family or caring for pets is the center of your world right now; caregiving is something you're getting used to. Being ahead of the game regarding finances is rewarding, especially when you think about what you went through to get here. A change in attitude shows you that you can truly pull things to you and create whatever you want or need in your environment. Being aware of your shortcomings helps you avoid them. Bringing loved ones together later brings happy times.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You have an open-minded view that lets you progress toward goals you want to reach soon. A can-do attitude overcomes obstacles and setbacks that threaten to slow you down. Someone needs your help but is hesitant to ask for it; let your thoughts wander to figure out who this is. Taking new treatments is probable and these will offer great relief. Communicating with others could prove difficult regarding a very sensitive subject; being non-judgmental helps. You schedule a great deal of your life around something or someone else; this could indicate busy, actually hectic, vibrations for you during the rest of this cycle. A hands-on approach to your work makes things work smoothly and efficiently; someone who matters notices! Old family recipes bring back loving, fun memories that warm your heart.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Issues of the heart are prominent during this cycle, even when you fight them, they persist. Pay attention when someone tells you how they feel; this is a sincere person who means well. This is the time for you to make a break with the past and create new domestic and work environments that lead to long-term security. No one can take better care of you than yourself and you've proven this time and again, but a compatible helpmate only makes things better. Making choices in a hurry never serves you well, continue to take your time. You're well known for how you do something in particular and this talent is requested by more than one person! Being able to make yourself available could prove tricky, but you somehow pull it off. Rising to any occasion is something you pride yourself on.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

When you feel yourself being tempted to slow down or completely halt, you get a grip on the situation by looking at what's actually happening. You work with a disturbing circumstance having something to do with someone you care for; breathing in deeply, then fully exhaling puts you in touch with your divine self, which takes you to a place of seeing more clearly. A positive outlook and smiling energy takes you through the hard spots without as much stress. Someone contacts you with good news that brings better vibes! Knowing what's ahead isn't the most important, how we deal with what comes is key. Burning bridges is ill-advised during this cycle; make a mental note of the person suggesting you do this. Some time beneath the stars brings joy and an intimate connection to the universe.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

A longing to be in control and guiding your life is prominent now; you may listen to advice but you don't necessarily agree with or follow it. You appreciate the help of people who lend a hand with a domestic project. Being first in line doesn't always mean you get taken care of first; everything has its own process and this is being impressed upon your mind during this time. Meeting new people seems to happen a lot more than usual now, and you find someone experiencing the same. Taking on new responsibilities could put you in a unique position to learn about a life-changing fact. Gaining a mate is important, but you can't seem to find exactly what you need; perhaps focusing on the changes you need is best. Moving forward, never back, is a hallmark of your behavior now and into the future.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You pay close attention to the organization of things; this involves home, office and other aspects of your life. Being prepared saves a lot of time and money when an unexpected event takes you off track. Some news you hear is surprising and almost verges on newsworthy. People speculate about something new around town that promises to improve things. Your sense of justice is offended when someone gets off without penalties or fines of any kind after committing an act that's considered a crime. You go the extra mile to do the right thing every time you can and you can't possibly understand or forgive anyone purposely doing the wrong thing. You could find that you're swept up into a whirlwind of fun and food later in the day. A celebration of victory brings the day to a nice close.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Trying to stay calm, cool and collected during a heated debate is difficult, but you're able to pull this off very nicely. You concentrate on pulling abundance, health and wealth to you by practicing a positive approach using only thoughts and hopes for what you want, not what you don't want! Being in the right place at the right time takes a lot of pressure off of you as you enjoy new beginnings. Throwing yourself into your work brings results that contribute more than you imagined. New coworkers bring stimulating ideas that bring innovative ways to get better outcomes. Taking on responsibilities for someone else actually helps you in the long run. You could have problems with scheduling when you try to help lighten the load for a special person. Do something for just you before it's too late.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Your ambitions could soar far above what's possible and this brings you down if you let it. You have to force the issue when a deadline approaches and you pull everyone together and toward the finish. Making progress while you can gets you far ahead of the game and gives you the breathing room you enjoy between tasks or projects. Repairing what's broken relationships, vehicles, domestic or work equipment is supported during this time. You have friends in high places that provide information on an event that improves your understanding of how it works. A large undertaking is more than you can handle alone and you gladly welcome the assistance of others. You could imagine yourself stepping into a new position, but when it comes down to it, you're not certain this is what you really want.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You move further away from toxic, unhealthy people, foods and lifestyle; you could struggle with a sweet tooth during this cycle! This could become a family affair; the more the merrier. Taking the lead on a certain project saves headaches for the boss and doesn't hurt your reputation; being dependable is a strong sign of leadership. You have to make a hard choice between giving something up to keep something else or just letting things stay as they are. Someone says something very nice behind your back. A large purchase is fun and it adds ease to your life. You require the nicer things in life to be completely happy and you work very hard to make sure you have them. Doing something just because it's right feels good even though it may not have been what you planned to do; you're happier now.

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	00226	Mexico	0052
Burundi	00257	Micronesia	00691
Cambodia	00855	Moldova	00373
Cameroon	00237	Monaco	00377
Canada	001	Mongolia	00976
Cape Verde	00238	Montserrat	001664
Cayman Islands	001345	Morocco	00212
Central African Republic	00236	Mozambique	00258
Chad	00235	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Chile	0056	Namibia	00264
China	0086	Nepal	00977
Colombia	0057	Netherlands (Holland)	0031
Comoros	00269	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Congo	00242	New Caledonia	00687
Cook Islands	00682	New Zealand	0064
Costa Rica	00506	Nicaragua	00505
Croatia	00385	Niger	00227
Cuba	0053	Nigeria	00234
Cyprus	00357	Niue	00683
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Norfolk Island	00672
Czech Republic	00420	Northern Ireland (UK)	0044
Denmark	0045	North Korea	00850
Diego Garcia	00246	Norway	0047
Djibouti	00253	Oman	00968
Dominica	001767	Pakistan	0092
Dominican Republic	001809	Palau	00680
Ecuador	00593	Panama	00507
Egypt	0020	Papua New Guinea	00675
El Salvador	00503	Paraguay	00595
England (UK)	0044	Peru	0051
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Philippines	0063
Eritrea	00291	Poland	0048
Estonia	00372	Portugal	00351
Ethiopia	00251	Puerto Rico	001787
Falkland Islands	00500	Qatar	00974
Faroe Islands	00298	Romania	0040
Fiji	00679	Russian Federation	007
Finland	00358	Rwanda	00250
France	0033	Saint Helena	00290
French Guiana	00594	Saint Kitts	001869
French Polynesia	00689	Saint Lucia	001758
Gabon	00241	Saint Pierre	00508
Gambia	00220	Saint Vincent	001784
Georgia	00995	Samoa US	00684
Germany	0049	Samoa West	00685
Ghana	00233	San Marino	00378
Gibraltar	00350	Sao Tome	00239
Greece	0030	Saudi Arabia	00966
Greenland	00299	Scotland (UK)	0044
Grenada	001473	Senegal	00221
Guadeloupe	00590	Seychelles	00284
Guam	001671	Sierra Leone	00232
Guatemala	00502	Singapore	0065
Guinea	00224	Slovakia	00421
Guyana	00592	Slovenia	00386
Haiti	00509	Solomon Islands	00677
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Somalia	00252
Honduras	00504	South Africa	0027
Hong Kong	00852	South Korea	0082
Hungary	0036	Spain	0034
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Sri Lanka	0094
Iceland	00354	Sudan	00249
India	0091	Suriname	00597
Indian Ocean	00873	Swaziland	00268
Indonesia	0062	Sweden	0046
Iran	0098	Switzerland	0041
Iraq	00964	Syria	00963
Ireland	00353	Taiwan	00886
Italy	0039	Tanzania	00255
Ivory Coast	00225	Thailand	0066
Jamaica	001876	Toga	00228
Japan	0081	Tonga	00676

Health

Confusion around Ebola vaccine hampers DRC outbreak response

GENEVA: Confusion around an unlicensed Ebola vaccine being used in the Democratic Republic of Congo is complicating efforts to rein in an outbreak of the deadly virus, Doctors Without Borders warned yesterday. DRC health officials launched a small, targeted vaccination campaign this week to help rein in the latest Ebola outbreak in the country, which so far has claimed 27 lives.

The campaign, using an unlicensed vaccine, is beginning with first responders, and will soon move to anyone who has been in contact with suspected cases, and then on to the contacts of the contacts. WHO said Wednesday that some 10,000 people should be vaccinated within the next month. But Doctors Without Borders, known by its French

acronym MSF, cautioned that, among many people on the ground, there was confusion and uncertainty about the vaccine and who could receive the jab.

"The messaging around the vaccine has not been well done," Jean-Clement Cabrol, MSF's emergency medical coordinator, told reporters in Geneva following his latest trip to the affected region. He cautioned against the widespread description of the rVSV-ZEBOV vaccine as "experimental". "I think that using words like 'experimental vaccination' does not simplify things," he said. The vaccine has been deemed highly effective and safe by WHO, but has not yet received a license.

Cabrol also said that all of the talk about the vaccine had given the false impression on the ground

that there would be a mass vaccination campaign, and may have led some to believe the vaccine could magically fix the problem. "We are seeing people today who refuse to be hospitalized, even though they have tested positive, saying that they prefer to wait for the vaccine," he said. This is obviously not good when dealing with Ebola, a virus-caused hemorrhagic fever, which spreads through contact with bodily fluids and which is both highly infectious and extremely lethal.

According to WHO's latest toll, 58 Ebola cases have so far been identified since early April. The current outbreak, which was officially declared on May 8, began in rural northwestern DRC in a very remote area called Bikoro. But it has since spread to Mban-

daka, a city of around 1.2 million people, and there are fears it could spread further afield in DRC and to neighboring countries.

"What is worrying is that almost every day we have new confirmed cases at a quite rapid pace," Cabrol said. He said DRC, WHO and others had responded quickly and robustly to the outbreak, but warned that efforts to inform the population in the affected areas of how best to protect themselves and others was still "insufficient". "A large portion of the population does not understand this illness (and) thinks it is witchcraft" or something similar, he said, adding that there had been threats against doctors and others coming in to care for the sick, and who were accused of bringing the virus with them. —AFP

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Kuwait Times

248 33 199

Global Medical Center Welcomes Dr. Marzouq Al-Bader

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DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot with light variable wind to light to moderate south easterly wind, with speed of 06 - 28 km/h with a chance for carried dust and some scattered clouds will appear later on.

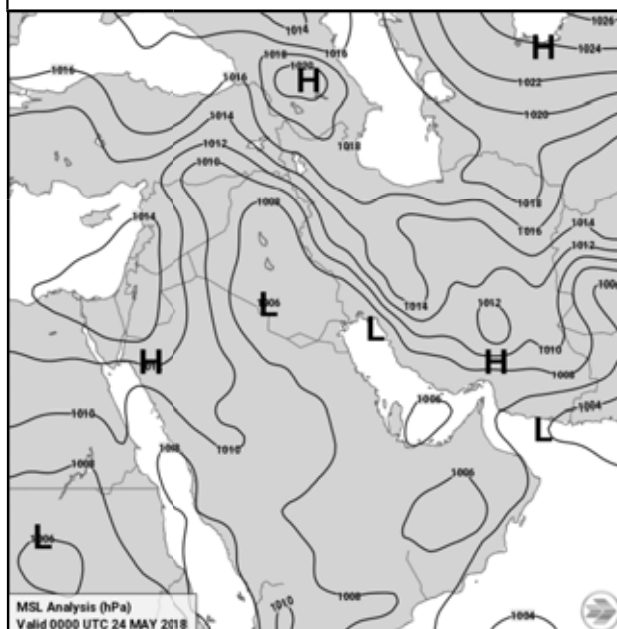
BY NIGHT: Fair with light to moderate south easterly wind to south westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 32 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING

No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	40 °C	31 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	42 °C	26 °C
ABDALY	42 °C	26 °C
BUBYAN	00 °C	00 °C
JAHRRA	42 °C	28 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	39 °C	28 °C
SALMIYAH	32 °C	30 °C
AHMADI	33 °C	31 °C
NUWAISIB	38 °C	27 °C
WAFRA	42 °C	25 °C
SALMY	41 °C	27 °C

SFC. CHART 24/05/2018 0000 UTC



4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	05/25	Hot with a chance for rising dust over open areas	43 °C	26 °C	S-SE	12 - 42 km/h
Saturday	05/26	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	41 °C	24 °C	SE-VRB	10 - 38 km/h
Sunday	05/27	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas and some high clouds will appear	42 °C	24 °C	SE-VRB	10 - 35 km/h
Monday	05/28	Hot and some high clouds will appear	43 °C	25 °C	VRB-NE	06 - 26 km/h

PRAYER TIMES

Fajr	03:19
Sunrise	04:51
Zuhr	11:45
Asr	15:20
Sunset	18:38
Isha	20:07

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

MAX. Temp.	41 °C
MIN. Temp.	23 °C
MAX. RH	59 %
MIN. RH	10 %
MAX. Wind	SE 28 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm



NOTICE

May 24, 2018

Mr. Rajesh Rapaka son of Mr. Daniyelu Rapaka, resident of DoNo: 3-257, Lakkavaram, Malikipuram, East Godavari, Pin: 533253, Andhra Pradesh, India and Ms. Sunitha Yadla daughter of Mr. Babulu Yadla, resident of D.No. 1-63, Padamatipalem, Malikipuram Mandai, East Godavari, Pin: 533250, Andhra Pradesh, India, both Indian nationals presently residing in Kuwait, have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice. Communications in this regard can be made by Email (attachecons@indembkwt.org, welfaresection@indembkwt.org) / letters / telephonic calls (00965 - 22550171, 00965 - 22533125).

(Signature)
(Sanjeev-Saklani)
Attache (Consular) and
Marriage Officer.
Embassy of India, Kuwait.

Ph.00965-22550171 - 00965-22533125
Fax: 00965 - 22573910
Email: attachecons@indembkwt.org
welfaresection@indembkwt.org

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Kulwinder Singh S/O Malkit Singh, Passport No. M5721744, hereby changed my name to Kulwinder Singh Dhindsa. (C 5399) 25-5-2018

EMERGENCY

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AIRLINES

American Airlines	22087425
	22087426
Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306

Business

FRIDAY, MAY 25, 2018

39 Merkel woos China as Trump poses new trade challenge



40 Deutsche Bank slashes over 7,000 jobs in major shake-up



41 Trump versus Rwanda in trade battle over used clothes



TOKYO: In this photo, cars for export park at a port in Kawasaki, west of Tokyo. — AP

Germany dismayed; US weighs tariffs

‘Significant economic damage due to trade conflict is mounting’

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: German automakers reacted with dismay yesterday as the US Commerce Department said tariffs on car imports could be on the horizon, potentially opening a new front in a burgeoning transatlantic trade conflict. “One-sided protectionism has never helped anyone in the long term. Only free and fair trade secures increased prosperity,” a spokesman for industry behemoth Volkswagen said.

American Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross had announced Wednesday he had initiated a so-called Section 232 investigation on auto trade—which would provide the legal basis to impose tariffs, if his department finds imports threaten US national security—after speaking with President Donald Trump on the matter. Ross promised “a thorough, fair, and transparent investigation into whether (auto) imports are weakening our internal economy and may impair the national security.”

The move comes as a June 1 deadline approaches for the White House to decide whether imports from the EU will remain exempt from border taxes slapped on steel and aluminum. Trump’s recourse to national security arguments for potential tariffs echoes his justification for the metals duties. In a separate statement released by the

White House, the president said “core industries such as automobiles and automotive parts are critical to our strength as a nation.”

Germany’s Federation of the Automotive Industry (VDA) noted that German carmakers employ some 36,500 people in the US and car parts producers 80,000 more. And it highlighted German firms’ “significant contribution to the American balance of trade in cars” with their exports to third countries. “An increase in tariff barriers should be avoided,” the body said, saying it had “always spoken out in favor of mutual reductions in tariffs and for free-trade agreements”.

German carmakers exported 494,000 vehicles to the US last year, the VDA said, while the Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK) calculated autos and parts accounted for 28.6 billion euros of Germany’s 111.5 billion euros in exports to the US. Shares in Volkswagen, high-end BMW and Mercedes-Benz maker Daimler were among the worst performers in the DAX index of blue-chip German shares just before midday yesterday.

Global outcry

Imposing car tariffs would open yet another front in the Republican president’s confrontational rows over trade that have drawn

global outcry from allies and partners. “Evidence of significant economic damage due to the trade conflict is mounting,” tweeted economist Marcel Fratzscher of the DIW think-tank in Berlin. “The Trump administration now adding new threats with tariffs on European cars could make things a lot worse.” The latest announcement comes as negotiations with Canada and Mexico over revamping the continent-wide North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) have stalled over auto demands.

Trump had earlier blamed the US neighbors to the north and south for being “difficult” in talks to renegotiate the pact. The contrast with yesterday’s visit by German Chancellor Angela Merkel to Chinese premier Li Qiang could not have been starker. “China and Germany are on the path of promoting multilateralism and bolstering free trade,” Merkel said in Beijing.

Meanwhile Japan’s trade minister Hiroshige Seko said yesterday that car tariffs would “plunge the world market into confusion” and be “extremely regrettable.” Passenger cars make up around 30 percent of Japan’s total exports to the United States and Tokyo has already threatened Washington with retaliation at the World Trade Organization for the steel tariffs.—AFP

International

Tariff fears hit car shares, lira back on the rack

Trump's unpredictable behavior leaves investors on edge

LONDON: World shares fell yesterday as cars became the latest focus of US protectionism worries, while Turkey's lira slumped again despite an emergency interest rate increase. Markets had plenty to digest including minutes from the latest Fed and ECB meetings, but in Asian and European trading it was US plans to investigate auto imports that caused the biggest moves. Japan's Nikkei ended down 1.1 percent after Nissan, Mazda and Toyota all fell. In Europe, BMW, Daimler and Volkswagen lost between 2.8 to 3.2 percent.

The broader market also gave up morning gains on reports Deutsche Bank planned to shed at least 7,000 staff and as Wall Street futures went negative. "The carmakers are getting a bit of a bashing, which is not really surprising following Trump's comments overnight," said CMC Markets analyst Michael Hewson. "Personally, I think he is playing to his voter base, but in the broader context of the trade story it is not positive." The worry for economists is that the move could lead to tariffs similar to those imposed on steel and aluminum in March.

Trump had also called for "a different structure" in any trade deal with China, fuelling uncertainty over the negotiations. Beijing had fired back, calling the car investigation an abuse of national security clauses. In the currency markets, Turkey's lira remained the big mover. It weakened as much as 3 percent, surrendering most of the gains it made the previous evening after the country's central bank jacked up its key interest rate by 300 basis points to prop up the plunging currency.

Investors have sold the lira on concern about the central bank's ability to tame double-digit inflation, particularly after President Tayyip Erdogan - a self-described "enemy of interest rates" - said

he expected to assert more policy control after June 24 elections. The lira, which initially gained in early trade, weakened to as much as 4.7414 to the dollar from a close of 4.59. It hit a record low of 4.9290 on Wednesday before the central bank move. "There is one question," said Aberdeen Standard Investment's Viktor Szabo. "Is it enough or not? And I would think it's not enough".

Take a minute

The dollar dipped after Federal Reserve meeting minutes on Wednesday indicated its policymakers weren't looking to raise US interest rates too fast, though another rise will be warranted "soon" if the economy stays on track. It helped the euro off its recent six-month low even though minutes from the European Central Bank's meeting this month showed more concern about a economic slowdown. It was aided too after China signaled its confidence in the shared currency and as calm returned to Italian bond markets.

Italian President Sergio Mattarella on Wednesday gave political novice Giuseppe Conte a mandate to lead the first government in Italy made up of anti-establishment parties that have vowed to shake up the European Union. "I'm preparing now to defend the interests of all Italians in all places, in Europe and internationally," Conte told reporters after holding two hours of talks with Mattarella. Italy's 10-year bond yield fell 5 basis points to 2.36 percent, pulling back from Wednesday's 14-month highs. The Italian/German 10-year bond yield gap was 7 bps tighter at 183 bps.

That is still well below benchmark 10-year US Treasury yields, which have drifted back to 3 percent in recent days. It has been part of a broader flight to



TOKYO: Pedestrians walk past an electronic indicator showing a foreign exchange rate against the US dollar in Tokyo. — AFP

safety across financial markets. The dollar was down 0.3 percent against the yen to 109.92. "With Trump's unpredictable behavior leaving investors on edge, the Japanese yen has scope to appreciate further in the short term," said Lukman Otunuga, an analyst at FXTM. In commodities markets, US crude was down 1.2 percent at just under \$71 a barrel. Oil prices fell on Wednesday after an unexpected rise in US crude and gasoline inventories.

Brent futures were 1.3 percent lower at \$78.80 a barrel, continuing to move lower after rising

above \$80 last week for the first time since November 2014. The most-traded iron ore futures on the Dalian Commodity Exchange rose for the first time in six sessions yesterday, gaining 0.3 percent. Weak commodity prices continued to put pressure on Australian shares, which ended 0.2 percent lower, extending losses into a sixth consecutive session. New Zealand's benchmark S&P/NZX 50 index was 0.7 percent higher. Gold was slightly higher with spot gold trading at \$1,296 per ounce.—Reuters

Car imports probe gives GM, Ford shares tiny lift

WASHINGTON: Shares of General Motors and Ford inched only marginally higher before the bell yesterday after the Trump administration launched a national security probe into car imports which could lead to new tariffs on foreign competitors while also stirring trade tensions. Washington said on Wednesday it will open a so-called Section 232 investigation into whether imports of vehicles and auto parts harm national security. A similar investigation predated the imposition of tariffs on steel and aluminum imports earlier this year.

The probe prefaces mid-term elections in US industrial heartlands later this year and is seen as part of President Trump's "America First" push to win back manufacturing jobs lost to overseas competitors. Pointing to a mixed bag of effects on US producers after the metals tariffs, analysts were cautious about predicting major gains for US firms and workers from the process.

"Measures like this are ultimately about protecting American manufacturing jobs in states that voted for Trump rather than national security," Morningstar analyst David Whiston said in a note. "We don't see these tariffs (if proposed) lasting forever and we think (they) will ultimately cost American jobs." Ford shares gained around half a percent while those in GM were up less than 0.1 percent in premarket trade in New York, compared to falls of 1.8 to 2.8 percent for German carmakers BMW, Daimler and Volkswagen. — Reuters

What you need to know about the Swiss sovereign money vote

ZURICH: Voters head to the polls on June 10 to decide whether Switzerland should introduce a sovereign money system. Here's what you need to know:

Where does money come from?

Money created by central bank money is legal tender, while deposits with commercial banks represent a claim on central bank money. Those deposits result from banks' lending activities. When a bank grants a loan to a customer, it credits the amount in question to their account in the form of a sight deposit. This deposit disappears from the bank's books as soon as the customer uses it to make payments, but it remains in the banking system.

What is sovereign money?

The initiators want to limit the credit-granting ability of commercial banks by making the Swiss National Bank the only body authorized to produce all new money in Switzerland. Commercial banks would be able to make loans using only funds they hold in long-term savings accounts, obtain from the money markets, or get from the Swiss National Bank in advance. In effect, this would be 100 percent reserve-based banking.

Why is this being voted for now?

Under Switzerland's system of direct democracy, any constitu-

tional issue can be put to a binding referendum after proponents gather 100,000 signatures.

What happens to customer accounts?

Customers would have the option of holding sovereign money accounts. They would pay no interest, be held off the commercial bank's balance sheet and could be withdrawn in full at any time, making them completely safe if a bank collapsed.

What would happen to the SNB's role?

In future, it would implement monetary policy primarily through steering the money supply. It would no longer alter interest rates to stimulate or reduce demand for credit. It would also create debt-free money. Instead of putting francs into the market via purchases of bonds and equities with newly created money, money would be issued directly without having to buy any assets in return. The Swiss government, cantons, or even citizens would get funds in the form of so-called helicopter money. How this would work—would it be a payment or tax cuts—is not yet decided, but it could amount to several hundred francs per citizen.

Arguments for the initiative

Supporters say a 100 percent reserve requirement would make the banking system more resilient by preventing bank runs. Under the current system, they say, banks lend too much during booms and too little in busts.

Sovereign money would restore stability by giving the exclusive power of money creation back to the central bank. The banking lobby, the central bank and the Swiss government oppose the plan, saying sovereign money would be a dangerous and unnecessary experiment. — Reuters

Business

Merkel woos China as Trump poses new trade challenge

Merkel welcomes China moves to open its economy

BEIJING: China said yesterday it would “open its door wider” to German businesses, helping visiting Chancellor Angela Merkel defend free commerce and counterbalance trade threats from US President Donald Trump that are testing transatlantic ties. Germany and China, two exporting nations that run large trade surpluses with the United States, have found themselves in Trump’s firing line and are scrambling to preserve the rules-based multilateral order on which their prosperity rests.



Merkel faces a delicate balancing act on the China trip, her 11th

since becoming chancellor in 2005, as she seeks to show Chinese-German solidarity over free trade and the Iran nuclear deal without harming German ties with long-term ally Washington. In the latest US trade move that has alarmed Beijing and Berlin alike, the Trump administration announced on Wednesday a national security investigation on into car and truck imports that could potentially lead to tariffs.

The announcement hurt share prices of both European and Asian carmakers. China vowed to protect its interests. European countries are also concerned that their exporters could be hurt if China instructs importers to buy more US goods to ease trade disputes with the Trump administration. China has already signaled to state companies to buy more US oil and soybeans, trade sources told Reuters.

Premier Li Keqiang, in a joint media appearance with Merkel at Beijing’s Great Hall of the People, said China and Germany both upheld global free trade, and stressed the huge potential for cooperation between them. Though the

two countries had problems, they could be overcome, Li said. “China’s door is open. You can say it will open even wider,” Li said, standing next to Merkel and stressing “friendly relations” with Germany.

Trump’s “America First” trade policy, his administration’s professed disdain for the World Trade Organization, as well as his withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, have pushed China and Germany into closer alignment, German officials say. However, Merkel’s government also shares many of the Trump administration’s concerns about Chinese business

China opens wider door to German businesses

practices, including what many Western countries have complained are state-backed efforts to pressure foreign companies into giving up trade secrets.

Striding forward

Li said China would protect the interests of German firms investing in China and adjust its rules if needed. “If they come across any problems during their investment, especially when it comes to legal protections, I can clearly tell you that China is striding forward to being a country with rule of law,” Li said. German companies have complained for years about barriers to the Chinese market and the theft of intellectual property.

Merkel welcomed China’s recent announcements that it would further open its financial sector to foreign participation and reduce Chinese joint venture requirements in sectors such as automobiles, a mainstay of German investment in the world’s second-largest economy. But German industry said it was now up to China to deliver



BEIJING: China’s President Xi Jinping (right) meets German Chancellor Angela Merkel at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.—AFP

on its promises of greater openness. “China must rigorously reduce the asymmetries in market access,” said Hubert Lienhard, head of the Asia Pacific Committee of German Industry (APA).

Germany and China should work on a “multilateral global system”, Merkel said, stressing her attachment to the rules-based global framework that Trump is challenging. Trump has also pushed Europe to work more closely with China by pulling out of a 2015 deal between world powers and Iran under which international sanctions against Tehran were lifted in return for Iran accepting curbs on its nuclear program. Euro-

pean countries, Russia and China, which were parties to the deal, are searching for a way to salvage it by continuing to offer economic benefits to Iran in return for its compliance.

Merkel, who personally lobbied Trump not to pull out of the pact but was rebuffed, said Germany and China were “united in the view that we do not want to put this agreement in doubt”. European companies could reduce their business with Iran if they risk US sanctions for trading there, Merkel said, adding with a nod to China: “Of course, this creates the possibility for others to then get more into Iran.”—Reuters

General Electric’s power unit fights for growth as wind, solar gain

NEW YORK: Vistra Energy Corp and Dominion Energy Inc - which serve about 5.5 million electricity customers in more than a dozen US states - both say they are done building combined-cycle natural gas-fired power plants. Instead, they are building large solar plants, which offer plentiful and inexpensive electricity. This bearish view of fossil-fuel energy, reflective of a growing acceptance by utilities of renewable power sources, poses a hurdle to John Flannery’s plan to turn around General Electric Co’s \$35 billion-a-year power unit.

GE’s chief executive spelled out the difficulty on Wednesday. Power profits will be flat this year after falling 53 percent in 2017, he said, and GE is planning that demand for heavy-duty natural gas power plants will be less than half what it forecast just over a year ago, and will stay at that level through 2020. New plant sales are “going to be tough,” Flannery said at an investor conference on Wednes-

day. “This is not going to be a quick fix, but there is, at the end of the day, long-life assets here with intrinsic economic value. We’re going to make the most of what we have there.”

In the long run, Flannery and Russell Stokes, the head of GE Power, have said demand for electricity and natural gas power generators will grow about 2 percent a year - in line with global forecasts - as utilities make a gradual transition to renewable power. Following a strategy he laid out in November, Flannery is cutting 12,000 jobs and \$2.5 billion in costs at the unit. On Wednesday, he said GE has tripled some sales incentives in the power division and is competing aggressively for new contracts to maintain plants and to get the call when utilities need parts or repairs during an unexpected outage, something of which GE had lost sight.

But some analysts and investors are skeptical about the long-term prospects of a business devoted to natural gas and coal power plants

that are falling out of favor with utilities. The competition from solar and wind, along with abundant low-priced gas produced by fracking, is curbing orders for new plants and forcing the closure of old ones. Some utilities are even filing for bankruptcy. “That means companies are going to have trouble selling new fossil-fuel plants,” said Mark Dyson, a principal at the Rocky Mountain Institute, an organization that researches the power industry.

Over 126 years, GE has weathered ups and downs in power market before, and has legions of sales and service people around the world. Last year it booked 26 orders for its newest gas turbines in Mexico, Bangladesh and elsewhere. It is investing in its separate, \$10 billion-a-year renewables unit focused on wind and hydro, which saw revenue fall 6 percent last year. GE also sells battery storage, software and smart-grid technology to work with wind and solar systems. GE power equipment

orders - an indicator of future sales - fell 41 percent in the first quarter, accelerating from a 17 percent drop last year, according to GE’s earnings reports.

GE’s performance reflects the broader trend of utilities shifting to renewables from fossil fuels. Global sales of large natural gas power plants have fallen by half since 2013, according to McCoy Power Reports. Coal and gas-fired plants accounted for just 38 percent of new electricity capacity financed globally last year, down from 71 percent a decade ago. Solar and wind now draw 53 percent of such investment, up from 22 percent, a Reuters analysis shows.

“We see a structural change,” Lisa Davis, the chief executive officer of Siemens Corp, the U.S. unit, said in an interview. “There are fewer large units being sold globally than there were five years ago. I don’t see that changing dramatically going forward.” Siemens is cutting 6,100 power and gas jobs to adjust.—Reuters

Business

Deutsche Bank slashes over 7,000 jobs in major shake-up

Deutsche ready to do what it takes to return to profitability

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: Germany's largest lender Deutsche Bank said yesterday it will slash over 7,000 jobs and dramatically scale back its investment banking activities as it seeks to turn the page on years of losses. The announcement came just hours before the bank's annual general meeting kicked off, where newly appointed chief executive Christian Sewing sought to reassure unhappy investors Deutsche is ready to do what it takes to return to profitability.

"We are not yet where we should be. Therefore we must act, and we must act swiftly and forcefully," Sewing

told shareholders in Frankfurt. In a statement, Deutsche said the number of full-time positions globally would fall from 97,000 "to well below 90,000". "The associated personnel reductions are underway," it added. Deutsche did not mention which countries would be affected, but said a quarter of the jobs in its equities and sales trading business would be cut.

The jobs cull is the first big decision taken by Sewing, who unexpectedly replaced CEO John Cryan in early April. Sewing had already signaled he was planning deep cuts at Deutsche's trouble-plagued investment banking arm, shifting the focus to more stable business activities such as retail banking, particularly in Europe. "We remain committed to our corporate and investment bank and our international presence,"



Sewing seeks to reassure unhappy investors

Sewing said. "We are Europe's alternative in the international financing and capital markets business. However, we must concentrate on what we truly do well."

As part of the revamp, Deutsche added that it will reduce the investment bank's exposures by over 100 billion euros, or around 10 percent.

Deutsche also said it would step up its cost-cutting drive, aiming to reduce adjusted costs to 22 billion euros in 2019, compared with 23 billion this year. "Overall, we see today's announcement as the right step," JPMorgan analysts said in a client note. Investors

appeared unimpressed however, with Deutsche shares slipping 1.10 percent to 10.78 by 0945 GMT, against a Dax index of leading German shares up 0.16 percent.

Angry shareholders

Yesterday's shareholder gathering is likely to be a stormy one, with investors expected to vent their anger over the bank's disappointing stock performance, poor earnings results and last month's turbulent leadership reshuffle. Former CEO Cryan was unceremoniously ousted after coming under growing pressure from leading shareholders and supervisory board chief Paul Achleitner, who accused the Briton of taking too long to get the financial giant back on track after it posted its third year of losses in 2017.



FRANKFURT AM MAIN: This file photo shows the logo on the tower of German Company Deutsche Bank in Frankfurt am Main, western Germany.—AFP

Sewing, a Deutsche veteran, has vowed to refocus Deutsche Bank on retail banking and asset management, seen as more stable sources of income, while slimming down its share trading and other investment banking activities. In corporate banking, Deutsche plans to slash its commitment to the United States and Asia, and instead focus more on Germany and Europe.

Other items on Deutsche's restructuring to-do list include fully integrating subsidiary Postbank into its German retail banking operations

and further reducing its massive holdings of financial derivatives. Deutsche's woes can in part be traced back to its bold attempt to compete with Wall Street investment banks in the years leading up to the financial crisis—which left the German giant saddled with a toxic legacy of risky assets and costly legal challenges. Although ex-boss Cryan was credited with neutralizing the worst legal threats, mostly by paying billions in fines and compensation, he failed to drag the bank back into the black.—AFP

ECB warns against Italy's spending plans

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: The European Central Bank said yesterday that Italy should stick to EU budget rules rather than pump up spending, warning that financial markets could punish the country's new government for recklessness. "A loosening of the fiscal stance in high-debt countries could impact the fiscal outlook and, by extension, market sentiment" towards governments when they try to sell bonds, the ECB said in its biannual financial stability report.

Departing central bank Vice-President Vitor Constancio was more explicit, telling reporters "Italy should keep within the European rules regarding fiscal policy" because "it's in its own interest", according to Bloomberg News. Italy is the third-largest economy in the eurozone and labors under a 2.3-trillion-euro government debt burden, 132 percent of its annual economic output. That ratio is the highest of

any EU nation aside from Greece, and more than double the official EU limit of 60 percent.

The country must turn to investors to refinance hundreds of billions of euros of its debt in the coming years, and could be forced to pay higher interest rates if markets are not convinced it has sound finances. But a coalition deal between the anti-establishment populist Five Star Movement and eurosceptic League parties could see the budget deficit—the amount the government outspends its income—surge as it promises tax cuts, a monthly basic income and rollbacks to money-saving pension reforms.

For now, EU Economic Affairs Commissioner Pierre Moscovici saw yesterday a "fairly good sign" in Italian prime ministerial nominee Giuseppe Conte's openness to "dialogue" with the bloc's executive arm. "I continue to believe Italy will remain a core country of the eurozone," he added. Looking at the 19-nation eurozone more broadly, minutes from the ECB's April meeting released yesterday showed governments were convinced slower economic performance at the start of the year was temporary. "The underlying growth momentum was on the whole assessed to remain intact," the minutes read.—AFP

Canada blocks Chinese takeover of Aecon on national security grounds

SHANGHAI: Canada has blocked a proposed C\$1.51 billion takeover of construction company Aecon by a Chinese state builder on national security grounds, underscoring rising wariness of Chinese firms buying up assets in Western countries. Aecon's takeover by overseas investment and financing arm of China Communications Construction Co Ltd was scheduled to close in February. But this was delayed after Canada extended a national security review.

The Canadian government has now ordered CCCC International Holding Ltd not to implement the proposed investment to protect national security, Canadian Innovation Minister Navdeep Bains said in a statement on Wednesday. "Our government is open to international investment that creates jobs and increases prosperity, but not at the expense of national security," Bains said. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said earlier his government would closely monitor security issues when it decided whether to allow the deal, examining the implications for intellectual property protections.

China's foreign ministry said it hoped Canada could "abandon its prejudices" and provide a level playing field for Chinese enterprises in re-

sponse to a question about the Aecon deal. "In principle, China always opposes the politicization of this kind of trade and investment activity and we oppose the mistaken method of carrying out political interference on the basis of so-called national security reasons," ministry spokesman Lu Kang said yesterday.

Aecon said it was disappointed with the government's decision and was no longer pursuing a sale process. An executive from CCCC's investor relations team in Beijing told Reuters the company had yet to receive relevant documents from the Canadian government. Ottawa's move comes as Canada is in exploratory trade talks with China as the country seeks to diversify its export markets.

Chinese interests in overseas assets has worried governments elsewhere such as in Denmark, whose officials have expressed concern over Greenland courting Chinese firms, including CCCC, to expand three airports. The Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), which scrutinizes foreign purchases of US assets to protect national security interests, has also been tightening scrutiny of Chinese companies' acquisitions of American firms.—Reuters

Business

Trump versus Rwanda in trade battle over used clothes

Washington threatens to pull Rwanda's trade benefits

KIGALI, Rwanda: Early last year, weeks after Donald Trump was sworn in as president, a little known American trade association filed a petition with the US Trade Representative. That seven-page letter set Africa in the cross-hairs of the new administration's 'America First' trade ideology, pitting the world's largest economy against tiny Rwanda over an unlikely US export: cast-off clothes. In March, the USTR warned Rwanda it would lose some benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), America's flagship trade legislation for Africa, in 60 days after it increased tariffs on second-hand clothes to support its local garment industry.

"The president's determinations underscore his commitment to enforcing our trade laws and ensuring fairness in our trade relationships," Deputy US Trade Representative CJ Mahoney said, announcing the decision. The 60-day grace period expires on May 28. But no matter the outcome, the row is further straining Washington's relations with Africa at a time when it is being aggressively courted by America's global competitors, not least China. Beijing has invested tens of billions of dollars in the continent, most recently as part of its huge Belt and Road foreign trade strategy.

Under AGOA, enacted in 2000 with the aim of using trade to boost development, qualifying African countries are granted duty-free access to the U.S. market for 6,500 exported products. The current dispute, which also initially involved Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, has received none of the attention of Trump's trade war with China or his haggling with North American neighbors. Yet critics – including former US trade officials – see in it a worrying indication of how Washington will approach trade relations with Africa. "It delegitimizes so much of what we've worked for so many years," said Gail Strickler, who served as the top US trade official on textiles until 2015. "I think it's horrible. I think it's sad. I think it's pathetic and I think it's obscene."

Made in Rwanda

Since her husband was murdered in Rwanda's 1994 genocide, Devotha Mukankusi has relied heavily on the UTEXRWA garment factory in the capital Kigali. "I survived the genocide together with my kids. But it's thanks to this job that they have grown up," she said, her voiced raised above the drone of sewing machines as she supervised a group of women assembling police uniforms. Some 800,000 people – 10 percent of Rwanda's population – were killed in the genocide. The economy was crushed.

Rwanda has bounced back in the past decade or so. As part of a drive to become a middle-income country by 2020, it is nurturing a garment sector it hopes can create 25,000 jobs. But domestic demand for locally produced clothes has been stifled, east African governments say, by the ubiquity of cheap, second-hand garments imported from Europe and the United States. The manager of the factory where Mukankusi works says the facility is only running at 40 percent capacity and second-hand garments, which can sell at well below his production costs, are at least partly to blame.

In response, East African Community (EAC) members Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda increased tariffs on used clothing in July 2016. Rwanda hiked import duties from 20 cents to \$2.50 per kilogram. At Kigali's Biryogo market, where shoppers pick through bales of used garments, the downside of the increase in duties was immediate. "Before, even with a little money, you could buy enough second-hand clothes for a child. But some children in my neighborhood are now naked," Fillette Umugwaneza, 24, a mother of two told Reuters. "It is a disgrace to our country."

Rwanda's government argues such hardships will be short-lived. Opening new factories will create more, better paid jobs, while expanding domestic consumption will cut its external trade deficit, it says. That will take time, admits Clare Akamanzi, CEO of the Rwanda Development Board, but early results are encouraging. "Just in the last two or three years ... we've seen almost three times growth in production of garments and textiles for the economy," she said.

The government is also seeking to attract companies targeting the export market, like U.S. designer Kate Spade which assembles high-end handbags in

Rwanda. It's a strategy that has flourished elsewhere in Africa under AGOA, with duty-free exports from the continent to the U.S. market almost quadrupling to over \$1 billion since the law was enacted. The ultimatum from the office of the USTR, however, has thrown up a potential roadblock to fur-

ther growth. It acted after receiving a complaint in March last year from the Secondary Materials and Recycled Textiles Association (SMART), a U.S.-based organisation which represents companies that collect and resell Americans' used clothing. Selling America's used clothing – much of it donated to charities and the bulk of it originally made outside the United States – is a nearly \$1 billion industry. Exports typically end up in poor nations. Africa is a key destination.

SMART said the EAC duty increase violated AGOA. "It basically was a shutdown in the market for my members," SMART Executive Director Jackie King told Reuters. "When Rwanda particularly wanted the duties increased by 1,100 percent, it just wasn't possible to do business there." The USTR agreed to review the AGOA status of all four countries. That decision shocked some veteran trade officials in Washington. "AGOA clearly has a criterion that the beneficiary countries must be eliminating barriers to US trade," said Florie Liser, former Assistant US Trade Representative for Africa under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama. "That's kind of always been there, but no one was looking to go after the AGOA countries."

Self-reliant

The mere prospect of losing AGOA benefits was enough to push Kenya, which in 2017 exported nearly \$340 million worth of apparel duty-free to the United States, to back down. The remaining east African nations initially tried to defend their position at a USTR hearing in July, rejecting SMART's assertion that the new tariffs had cost 24,000 American jobs in the first nine months. Using US trade data, they pointed out that the decline in exports to the EAC that SMART



KIGALI, Rwanda: A worker prepares thread at the Utexrwa garment factory in Kigali, Rwanda. —Reuters

blamed for the job losses had already begun four years before the 2016 duty increase.

Data compiled by agoa.info, an online information portal about AGOA run by the South Africa-based Trade Law Centre, indicates that US used clothing exports to Rwanda in particular actually increased slightly in 2016. SMART has not publicly disclosed the survey of its members used to calculate the job losses, saying it contains proprietary information. The EAC also accused SMART of inflating the importance of the east African market to the industry. Trade data showed the United States shipped around \$24 million worth of used clothing to the EAC in 2016.

SMART, however, added another \$100 million in exports it said were shipped to third countries for processing before being re-exported. By its calculation the EAC represented over a fifth of the US industry's global market. After the July 2017 hearing, Uganda and Tanzania followed Kenya's example and capitulated, agreeing to roll back tariffs to pre-2016 levels. Rwanda has held out. If it does not concede by the end of this month it faces losing duty-free access for its garment exports.

"The United States has been explicit about what Rwanda must do to adhere to the AGOA eligibility criteria," a US official said. "It is up to Rwanda to make a decision." The dispute has provoked dismay in Washington and Africa. "(Africans) are watching. They're shocked and they're livid," said Rosa Whitaker, who was appointed by President Bill Clinton as the United States' first Assistant Trade Representative for Africa and helped draft the original AGOA legislation.

She called the Trump administration's actions bullying and predicted they would backfire. "African countries, from what they're telling me, are feeling abandoned. We've just ceded it to China," Devotha Mukankusi is more matter of fact about the trade tiff. She's survived genocide and the Trump administration doesn't worry her, she said. "My message for Trump is that it won't affect us. We are determined to be self-reliant. We'll make our own clothes." —Reuters



60-day grace period expires on May 28

Uber will soon detail plan to stop using diesel cars in London

LONDON: Uber said it will provide more information in the coming weeks on how it plans to stop diesel using cars in London and of a proposed scrappage scheme, as the court date nears for the taxi app to defend its right to operate in London nears. The Silicon Valley firm said in September it will stop using diesel cars in London by the end of 2019 and that the vast majority of rides will be in electric or hybrid vehicles by then.

"In the coming weeks we'll set out more details of our plan to get thousands of diesel cars off the road as we aim to go fully electric in London by 2025," said Uber's UK general manager Tom Elvidge. Shortly after September's diesel announcement, Uber was deemed unfit to run a taxi service by London's regulator Transport for London (TfL) and was stripped of its licence. Elvidge said the firm had made mistakes. "TfL's decision soon became the latest wake-up call for a company that had grown incredibly quickly but still needed to grow up," he added in a statement. Its appeal will be heard at the end of June. —Reuters

Sports

Stakes high as Crusaders, Hurricanes face off in Super Rugby blockbuster

Whiteley blow for Boks as comeback put on hold

WELLINGTON: There was no hiding the eagerness of Wellington Hurricanes coach Chris Boyd in the leadup to today's Super Rugby blockbuster against the champion Canterbury Crusaders, a clash that could do plenty to shape the Super Rugby playoffs.

The match in Christchurch not only pits the two best sides in the competition but resumes a rivalry that has become intense in recent seasons. "Some games you get a bit more excited about than others ... that's just human nature," Boyd said this week.

The eight-time champion Crusaders lead the Super Rugby standings on 46 points, one ahead of the Hurricanes who have a game in hand. While the Hurricanes have won eight of their last 11 matches against the Crusaders, Boyd and his captain Brad Shields are mindful that playing in a wet and cold Christchurch produces major hurdles against an All Blacks-laden home pack.

In the corresponding match last year, the Crusaders attacked the Hurricanes in the contact areas and strangled the supply of clean, quick ball to TJ Perenara and Beauden Barrett, preventing them from unleashing the tournament's most explosive backline.

The home side will be without captain Sam Whiteley (concussion) and suspended props Joe

Moody and Owen Franks but Shields felt the Crusaders would not veer far from their usual game-plan today. "Winning those small, brutal battles," Shields said yesterday when asked what would be the key to the game. "They're going to be niggly at the rucks, they're going to try and turn our ball over, they're going to try and smack us."

Finishing top of the dominant New Zealand conference is likely to mean home advantage all the way through to the Aug. 4 title-decider, given the third-placed team, South Africa's leading Lions, are well off the pace and with less games to play over the final weeks of the regular season.

"We are expecting everything," Crusaders coach Scott Robertson said. "They are tough, physical. This is what we play for. We enjoy it. I love these weeks."

In Johannesburg, an expected comeback for Warren Whiteley this weekend has been put on hold, effectively ending his chances of an international return when South Africa play Wales and England next month and opening up the Springbok captaincy.

Whiteley, 30, participated in full training this week and was expected to be in Super Rugby action for the Lions against the Stormers in Cape Town on Saturday, hours before new national coach Rassie Erasmus is to name his squad for the June 2 international against Wales in Washington



Crusaders lead standings on 46 points



Coach Chris Boyd and Dane Coles of Hurricanes at the post match interview.

DC and three subsequent tests at home to the touring English.

It would have been a timely return, but Whiteley was left out of the Lions line-up without explanation when the team was named yesterday. He missed six months last year with a groin injury and has sat out most of this year with a troublesome knee injury.

Whiteley was named South Africa captain last year but was injured in the build-up to the final test of the three-match series against France last June.

He missed the entire Rugby Championship campaign against Argentina, Australia and New Zealand, plus away tests against Ireland, France, Italy and Wales in November and December.

Eben Etzebeth took over as Springbok skipper but he, too, has not played this year, having undergone surgery on his shoulder. Though speculation around the captaincy continues, there have been local media reports saying that Etzebeth could be named in the squad after stepping up his training regime in recent weeks. —Reuters

Ricciardo leads Red Bull one-two in Monaco practice

MONACO: Australian driver Daniel Ricciardo produced a record lap around the streets of Monaco yesterday as Red Bull dominated opening free practice for Formula One's most glamorous grand prix.

The 28-year-old mastered the winding, metal-fenced streets with a best time of one minute 12.126 seconds, already quicker than Kimi Raikkonen's 2017 pole position of 1:12.178 for Ferrari. Dutch team mate Max Verstappen was second quickest, 0.154 seconds slower. The 20-year-old was also summoned to stewards after reversing onto the track after running off at the first Sainte Devote corner.

Championship leader Lewis Hamilton and closest title rival Sebastian Vettel were third and fourth, with the Mercedes driver lapping in 1:12.480 and Ferrari's German managing a best effort of 1:13.041.

Hamilton leads Vettel, last year's winner in Monaco, by 17 points after five races. Drivers had predicted before the session started that lap



Daniel Ricciardo

records would tumble thanks to the new hypersoft tyres which are making their competitive debut this weekend and track resurfacing.

Ricciardo was third in Monaco last year, after taking pole and finishing second in 2016, and is aiming to take the final step on Sunday. "Both drivers have got a good feel for the car, the car's working quite nicely, but it's only Thursday morning," Red Bull principal Christian Horner told Sky Sports television.

"We have had a competitive chassis all year and of course the straights are a bit shorter here, so that concertinas it all together." Raikkonen was fifth fastest with Renault's Carlos Sainz sixth and Valtteri Bottas seventh for Mercedes. Mexican Sergio Perez, who holds the race lap record of 1:14.820, was eighth for Force India. —Reuters

China to play Thai hosts in Uber Cup semis

BANGKOK: Defending champions China will face dark horse Thailand in the last four of the Uber Cup after a dramatic day in the women's event yesterday, while South Korea will play top seeded Japan in the semis.

Thailand edged into the final four, with Busanan Ongbamrunphan sparking jubilation among the home crowd by winning the final women's singles 9-21, 12-21 to seal a 3-2 win. Star player world number four Ratchanok Intanon started the tie well for the home side, demolishing Indonesia's Fitriani Fitriani in the first game. But the visitors won the next two points, before a Thai doubles pair clawed back a point and Busanan powered her team to victory. "I am really happy that I can make one point for my team," 22-year-old Busanan said after the match, adding that the home support helped "a lot". As for their chances against China, she said it would be "very tough."

"But I think everyone in my team can do it. I will try my best," she added. China recovered from a nervy start to beat Denmark 3-1. Mia Blichfeldt drew first blood, taking apart world number 5 Chen Yufei in the opening singles.

But 14-times Uber champions China came back strong, with Olympic champion Li Xuerui finding her rhythm in her comeback tournament to beat Natalia Koch Rohde 21-7, 21-9 in 30 minutes. "I was definitely better prepared today," Li told organisers after the match.

Heavyweights Japan and South Korea complete the semi-final line-up, both also stuttering through their quarter-final ties on Thursday. Japan's women clawed back a win following the first match 21-19, 21-16 defeat of world number two Akane Yamaguchi by Taiwan's Tai Tzu-ying, who ranks higher than her.

The top-seeds bounced back with doubles pair Yuki Fukushima and Sayaka Hirota tearing through their rivals in the next match, followed by a routine 21-11, 21-12 win by singles world champion Nozomi Okuhara. South Korea also struggled to get started against Canada, but eked out three wins against their unfancied opposition.

Victory was sealed by 16-year-old An Se-young, who celebrated exuberantly after her 21-13, 19-21, 21-11 win in the third singles over Canada's Brittney Tam. "I told coach Kim (Ji-hyun) that I would dance on court if I won," she said after the match, according to a Badminton World Federation press release.

The prestigious biennial event has brought together 16 top teams from five continents for a week of intense competition for the men's Thomas Cup and the Uber Cup which is contested by the women. —AFP

Sports

Amir removes England cornerstone Alastair Cook in first Test

Cook equals Australian great Border's all-time record

LONDON: Mohammad Amir captured the prize wicket of Alastair Cook after the England opener led a fightback on the first day of the first Test against Pakistan at Lord's yesterday. At tea England were 165 for five, having slumped to 43 for three before lunch after home captain Joe Root had won the toss and batted. Cook, in his 153rd consecutive Test, which equalled Australia great Allan Border's all-time record for successive appearances at this level, revived England with a fine 70.

But shortly before tea he was bowled by Amir, a team-mate when Essex won the County Championship last season, as the left-arm quick produced a brilliant delivery that cut away late off the pitch late to clip the top of the opener's off stump.



Mohd Abbas made the breakthrough

Cook faced 148 balls, including 14 fours Ben Stokes was unbeaten on 36, having hoisted leg-spinner Shadab Khan for the first six of this match. Jos Buttler, recalled as a specialist number seven, was unbeaten on 13.

Root opted to bat first in the opening match of this two-Test series, despite the overcast conditions and a green-tinged pitch offering the promise of assistance for Pakistan's pacemen. Both England and Pakistan's have con-

cerns over their batting so it was a particularly bold decision by Root.

It certainly looked a good toss for Pakistan to lose as three members of an England top-order that repeatedly failed during winless winter Test tours of Australia and New Zealand all fell for single-figure scores. Mohammad Abbas made the breakthrough when he bowled Mark Stoneman (four) with a late swinging delivery to leave England 12 for one in the fourth over. Root, promoted up the order to number three, also fell for four when he drove at a wide ball from Hasan and edged behind to opposing captain Sarfraz Ahmed.

Cook got into gear with a cover-driven four off Amir, but he could only watch as fellow left-hander Dawid Malan (six) became Hasan's second wicket of the morning, with wicket-keeper Sarfraz again making no mistake with the catch. At that stage, England were 43 for three.

Just before Malan's dismissal, Faheem Ashraf rapped the pad of Cook, then on 23, with 'umpire's call' going against Pakistan after they reviewed former Australia seam bowler Paul Reiffel's original decision of not out. England were 72 for three at lunch, with Cook 46 not out and Jonny Bairstow, batting up the



LONDON: England's Alastair Cook watches the ball after playing a shot on the first day of the first international Test match between England and Pakistan at Lord's cricket ground in London yesterday. —AFP

order at number five, unbeaten on 10. Cook, England's all-time leading Test run-scorer, went to fifty with a four to third man off Amir before Bairstow was bowled by Ashraf for 27.

Buttler, having been encouraged to play the

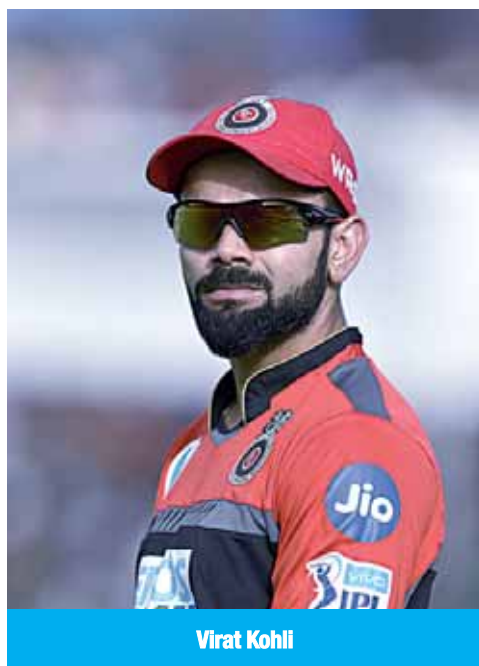
attacking game that makes him such a dangerous white-ball batsman, was quickly into his stride with two fours in three balls off Shadab—a whip through midwicket followed by a cover-driven boundary. —AFP

Kohli to skip Surrey stint after injury

MUMBAI: India cricket captain Virat Kohli has suffered a neck injury during an Indian Premier League (IPL) match and will not play for English county championship side Surrey next month, the country's cricket board (BCCI) said yesterday. Batsman Kohli had signed a one-month deal to represent Surrey in June to prepare for a test series against England this year, but injured his neck while fielding for Royal Challengers Bangalore against Sunrisers Hyderabad last week.

"Kohli, who was scheduled to play for Surrey in the month of June, has been ruled out from participating," the Board of Control for Cricket in India said in a statement. "This decision was taken following assessments by the BCCI medical team, subsequent scans and a specialist visit. The Team India captain will now undergo a period of rehabilitation under the supervision of the BCCI medical team."

Kohli is scheduled to undergo a fitness test at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru on June 15 and the BCCI expects him to be fully fit for the tour of England. India begin their tour of England in July with three



Virat Kohli

Twenty20 internationals and three one-day internationals. They then take on the hosts in a five-test series starting in August.

Ajinkya Rahane was earlier this month picked to lead India against Afghanistan, who play their maiden test in Bengaluru in June, keeping in mind Kohli's county commitments. —Reuters

Warner wife miscarried after ball-tampering scandal

SYDNEY: The wife of disgraced cricketer David Warner revealed yesterday she suffered a miscarriage in the aftermath of her husband's part in a ball-tampering scandal that rocked the game.

Candice Warner said the couple lost the baby a week after his tearful press conference in Sydney in late March after he was sent home from Australia's tour of South Africa and banned for a year.

She attributed the loss to stress and an arduous flight home, describing the couple's devastation at realising she was miscarrying. "I called Dave to the bathroom and told him I was bleeding. We knew I was miscarrying. We held one another and cried," she told the Australian Women's Weekly magazine.

"The miscarriage was a heartbreaking end to a horror tour. "The ordeal from the public humiliations to the ball-tampering had taken its toll and, from that moment, we decided nothing will impact our lives like that again." The couple already have

two children, Ivy Mae, 3, and Indi Rae, 2, and Warner said she discovered she was pregnant again in Cape Town. "We were overwhelmed, knowing another little Warner was on the way," she said. "I don't think either of us realised how much we longed for this baby."

Australia's tour of South Africa had started badly, with Warner charged with bringing the game into disrepute during the first Test for an altercation with Quinton de Kock.

Warner claimed de Kock made a "vile and disgusting" remark about his wife.

"That attack during the first Test in Durban when Quinton called me names — I should've known it wasn't going to end well," said Candice Warner.

She said she was watching on TV with her two children when the ball-tampering incident flared up during the third Test and "I sat slumped on the bed and wondered if I could take any more."

In the aftermath, her husband wanted to return to Australia with Steve Smith and Cameron Bancroft, who were also involved in the scandal, but they were put on separate flights with the Warner family handed the longest route back.

"We got the longest and toughest route. No one knew I was pregnant and Dave did everything to get me home safely, fearing any more strain could affect our unborn child," she said, adding that she was in "a bad state". —AFP

Sports

Celtics push James, Cavs to brink with game 5 NBA win

Game seven, if needed, will be in Boston on Sunday

WASHINGTON: The Boston Celtics, reinvigorated by a return home, beat the Cleveland Cavaliers 96-83 on Wednesday to move within one win of reaching the NBA Finals. Rookie Jayson Tatum scored 24 points to lead five Boston players in double figures as the Celtics took a 3-2 lead in the best-of-seven Eastern Conference finals.

Four-time NBA Most Valuable Player LeBron James led Cleveland with 26 points, 10 rebounds and five assists. But James looked at times as if he were feeling the effects of the heavy load he has carried for the Cavs in these playoffs, coughing up six of Cleveland's 15 turnovers, including four in the second half.

"I think everybody at this point is tired or worn down or whatever the case may be," James said. "I'm fine." Kevin Love, with 14 points, was the only other player to score in double figures for the Cavs, who host game six today trying to stay on track for a fourth straight trip to the Finals.

Game seven, if needed, will be back in Boston on Sunday. James himself is seeking an eighth straight trip to the title series, although he said that streak wouldn't be on his mind come Friday.

"Not at all," he said. "It's just all about just win

every game and it should put us in position to play for a championship.

"We look forward to having an opportunity to force a game seven. It's up to us to see if we can come back here (to Boston) for one more."

The winner of the series will play either the Golden State Warriors or Houston Rockets for the NBA crown. The Western Conference rivals are locked at 2-2 in their series.

With James on the bench to open the fourth quarter, the Celtics pushed a 16-point lead to 21. A 9-0 Cavs run reduced the deficit to 12 points, but Cleveland came up empty on their next four attempts.

"Defensively we gave ourselves a chance," said James noting the Cavs held the Celtics to 36.5 percent shooting. "At one point we had two opportunities to cut it to single digits and missed some really good looks, two three-pointers. We couldn't make. And if you don't make, it's going to come back to bite you."

The Celtics improved to 10-0 at home this post-season, and Tatum said there's no reason they can't wrap up the series today, even though so far the home team has won every game in the series.

“

At one point we had two opportunities

”



BOSTON: Larry Nance Jr. #22 of the Cleveland Cavaliers dunks the ball against Aron Baynes #46 of the Boston Celtics in the second half during Game Five of the 2018 NBA Eastern Conference Finals at TD Garden on Wednesday in Boston, Massachusetts. — AFP

"We've got to be focused, composed and play with a lot of poise and we'll be fine," he said, clearly up for the challenge.

"It's my first year. We're one win away from going to the Finals. It doesn't get any better than that," he said.

The Cavs got off to a rocky start, with five first-quarter turnovers nearly matching their

seven field goals.

With 10:47 left in the second quarter and the Celtics up 17 points, Boston forward Marcus Morris and Cleveland's Larry Nance tangled, with Nance sent sprawling to the floor.

Morris appeared to say something to Nance before turning away, and Nance rose from the floor and shoved him from behind. — AFP

Capitals blank Lightning to reach NHL Final against Vegas

MIAMI: Alex Ovechkin put Washington ahead to stay after only 62 seconds and the Capitals advanced to their first NHL Stanley Cup Final in 20 years by defeating Tampa Bay 4-0 Wednesday. Andre Burakovsky scored two unassisted second-period goals and Braden Holtby made 29 saves for his second consecutive shutout as the Capitals ousted the host Lightning 4-3 in the best-of-seven Eastern Conference Final.

Capitals captain Ovechkin, a seven-time goals champion, will play for the crown for the first time in his 13-season NHL career. The 32-year-old Russian winger had never reached the playoff final four until this month.

"We're really happy but we're not finished, not done yet," Ovechkin said. "We've been waiting for this moment for a long time. We understand what it takes to be in the final." Washington, seeking a first-ever Cup, will face a first-year expansion team, the Vegas Golden Knights, on Monday in game one of the best-of-seven championship series at Las Vegas, Nevada.

"We're pretty excited about the next step," Washington's Tom Wilson said. "It's a crazy feeling.

It hasn't sunk in yet. It's going to be a wild ride in Vegas. It's going to be a historic one. We're looking forward to a heck of a show." Ovechkin, whose 607 regular-season goals are the most of any active player, is a three-time world champion and three-time Olympian for Russia, but missed his compatriots' Olympic gold run at Pyeongchang in February as the NHL did not shut down for players to compete.

"He has just been a beast," Capitals coach Barry Trotz said of Ovechkin. "He has just taken it to the next level. He wants to get us to the next level." The Capitals reached their only prior final in 1998, when they were swept by Detroit.

"Oh my God. It's unbelievable," Ovechkin said. "I can't explain my emotions. I'm just happy for my boys, the organization, the fans. I can't wait to come back home and play in the Stanley Cup Final. It's going to be nuts up there." No Washington team has won a major sports title since the NFL Redskins won the 1992 Super Bowl. Vegas, a club of castoffs from other NHL teams assembled by former Capitals general manager George McPhee, went 2-0 against Washington in the regular season.

Ovechkin, the NHL goals leader this season with 49, put Washington ahead 1-0 with his 12th playoff goal, firing a slapshot under the right arm of Tampa Bay goaltender Andrei Vasilevskiy.

"He wasn't going to be denied," Wilson said of Ovechkin. "He put everything into it. He's a phenomenal teammate. He has battled for this for a long time. So let's keep it going." Austrian-born Swede Burakovsky scored 8:59 and 16:31 into the second period and Nicklas Backstrom added a final goal with 3:43 remaining. — AFP

Djokovic ready for fresh start, says Wilander

LONDON: Far from being a fading force, 12-times grand slam champion Novak Djokovic has shown signs that he is emerging from the toughest spell of his career and is ready for a fresh start ahead of next week's French Open.

The 31-year-old will be seeded down at around 20 for the claycourt slam in Paris, but there will be a few players anxiously eyeing the drawsheet hoping the 2016 champion is not in their vicinity. Last week in Rome Djokovic went toe-to-toe with a rampant Rafael Nadal and though he lost their semi-final 7-6 6-3 the level of tennis he produced in an absorbing contest was much closer to what we have come to expect from the Serb.

If they are in opposite halves of the draw it would not be too much of a stretch of the imagination to imagine the same duo battling for the Roland Garros title on June 10.

"He's coming back for sure, if this slam wasn't called the French Open I think you

would have to put him up amongst the seven or eight favourites," three-times champion Mats Wilander, who will follow Djokovic's progress as part of the Eurosport coverage team, told Reuters.

"Even at the French, (he has a chance), he played very well against Nadal in Rome. Obviously it's easier to play when you have nothing to lose and everything to win in one way, but technically he is back where he was, or very close." A few months ago Djokovic could barely register a win.

His return from the elbow injury that ended his 2017 season after Wimbledon and then flared up again at the Australian Open was more difficult than expected. At Indian Wells, in his first match after losing to Chung Hyeon in the fourth round of the Australian Open, he slumped to defeat against 109th-ranked Japanese Taro Daniel.

"It felt like first match I ever played on the tour. Very weird," was his post-match reaction, admitting that he was battling himself physically and mentally. When he lost to Frenchman Benoit Paire in the Miami first round a week later he said it was "impossible" to play the kind of tennis that made him all but untouchable in 2015 when he was agonisingly close to a calendar year grand slam. — Reuters

Sports

Aston Villa aim to be latest Asian investment success

Cardiff have won automatic promotion again this term

MANCHESTER: Chinese-owned Aston Villa hope to join Malaysian-controlled Cardiff City and Chinese-backed Wolverhampton Wanderers in winning promotion to the Premier League as Asian investors reap the rewards of investments in English second-tier clubs.

Midlands club Villa face west London side Fulham, owned by Pakistani-American Shahid Khan, in Saturday's Championship promotion playoff final at Wembley in what has been dubbed the most lucrative match in world football.

Promotion to the top flight for either club will see an increase in revenue of at least 160 million pounds (\$214.35 million), rising to more than 280 million if they avoid relegation in their first season in the Premier League. For former European champions Villa it would mark a return on the investment made by Chinese entrepreneur Tony Xia, of the Recon Holding Group, who took over the club in 2016 following their relegation from the top flight. Xia paid a reported 76 million pounds to purchase the Birmingham-based outfit from American Randy Lerner and if Villa can win the playoff at Wembley they will be back in the elite after a two-year absence.

Cardiff's Malaysian owner Vincent Tan took control of the club in 2010 and they were promoted to the Premier League as second-tier champions in 2013 but the South Wales side lasted just one season in the top flight.

Cardiff have won automatic promotion again this term along with Championship title winners Wolves, owned by the Fosun Group, who are themselves back in the Premier League after a

six-year absence. Fosun paid a reported 46 million pounds to purchase west Midlands club Wolves from their previous, English, owner Steve Morgan in 2016. While getting to the Premier League involves additional investment in transfer fees and the wages of players and coaching staff, the rewards are huge. This year Southampton, owned by Chinese businessman Gao Jisheng, narrowly avoided relegation but finishing in 17th place was enough for them to pick up over 107 million pounds in annual shared television and other revenues from the Premier League.

However, it is not just a case of simply buying a Championship club, investing some money and getting to the promised land. The competition to get out of the second tier is intense with several big city clubs fighting to do the same.

Simon Chadwick, Professor of Sports Enterprise at Salford University, who has closely followed Asian investment in English football, believes this season's successes highlights the need for intelligent choices of club.

"Each of these clubs has history and heritage, whilst the organisational architecture of them is oriented around being in the Premier League. Investors need to combine stealth, strategy and support. Stealth is needed as promotion may not be immediate; strategy is required to ensure a club is moving in the right direction; and support, especially financially and specifically in the transfer market, is crucial," he said.

Chadwick notes that foreign investors have also been smart to choose executives and managers with knowledge and track records in Eng-



Aston Villa owner Tony Xia (L) has set his sights on the Champions League.

land, such as Steve Bruce at Villa and Neil Warnock at Cardiff. Rob Wilson of Sheffield Hallam University's Sport Industry Research Centre, says newly relegated teams have some advantages for investors, particularly the 'parachute' payments given to such clubs by the Premier League. "Relegation from the Premier League to the Championship can actually increase the interest in new ownership - the lower revenues on offer make the clubs better value and, with the promise of parachute payments and therefore a statistically sig-

nificant competitive advantage of being promoted, the possible returns are large," he said.

There certainly seems to be no let-up in interest in English clubs from Asian financiers. Wigan Athletic, relegated from the Premier League in 2013, fell into the third-tier but are back in the Championship and this week confirmed a proposed sale of their entire shareholding to International Entertainment Corporation of Hong Kong, subject to Hong Kong Stock Exchange and Football League approval. —Reuters

Halilhodzic launches lawsuit over Japan dismissal

TOKYO: Former Japan coach Vahid Halilhodzic launched a lawsuit against the country's football association and its president Kozo Tashima yesterday, saying he was fired illegally just two months before the World Cup. The Bosnian's lawyer Lionel Vincent filed the suit yesterday in a Tokyo district court, court officials confirmed. Vincent has suggested that Tashima, who personally flew to France to fire Halilhodzic in April, should resign over his handling of the dismissal.

Halilhodzic is suing Tashima directly because he believes the Japanese Football Association (JFA) president had acted illegally in dismissing him without consulting the association's board. The Tokyo District Court confirmed a civil suit was filed yesterday, with the plaintiff being Halilhodzic and defendants being the Japan Football Association and Tashima.

"We cannot comment as we have not seen the letter of complaint," a JFA spokeswoman said. "There are media reports that we have been sued for defamation. But we don't believe there are facts that constitute defamation. There are no problems in the process of terminating the contract with former coach Halilhodzic.

"The process of paying remuneration in full for the rest of the duration of his (originally contracted) term has already been completed, based on the contract. The deci-



Vahid Halilhodzic

sion was officially ratified by the JFA board last week but Vincent says this has come too late.

"We were quite shocked after president Tashima decided to terminate Vahid's contract," Vincent told Reuters. "We realised he took this decision without any prior approval of the board of the JFA, which is an infringement of the article of recuperation of the JFA. "It is quite stunning to see

the president, the man in charge of the organisation, take such a decision without any respect for the rules. "If I was them I would seriously consider his resignation for this. It is amazing."

ONE YEN SOUGHT

The lawyer added that they had sought clarification on the decision by the JFA but were yet to receive an acceptable response. Halilhodzic is also demanding a personal apology from Tashima and a nominal fee of one Japanese yen (\$0.009) as compensation.

"For Vahid it was 'okay, we are talking about honour and honour has no price, you cannot buy it,'" Vincent added. "So he thought, well maybe it is worth one yen. Vahid thought that as the JFA is a public interest organisation, asking for a huge amount of money doesn't make sense because it is not why he is doing it.

"Vahid has said 'I want my honour back and so you need to apologise first and acknowledge that you did something wrong to me. It is not acceptable so apologise. "For my honour, one yen please. —Reuters

Belgian Court promises verdict on FIFA player rules

BRUSSELS: The legal action over player contracts pitting Belgian third-tier club Seraing against world football's governing body FIFA was heard yesterday in Brussels and the court could deliver a verdict in a month.

Seraing are challenging FIFA's ban on third party ownership (TPO) of players. The club also took aim at Financial Fair Play Rules and the authority of the Court of Arbitration in Sport.

Legal teams for FIFA and Seraing, who between them brought 18 lawyers, presented arguments for two hours yesterday before a civil court in Brussels. The court said it would consider the case again next Thursday and could render a decision in four weeks.

Football authorities worry that involvement of third party owners with clubs creates conflicts of interest and favours clubs who can afford to form continuing relationships with agents or player owners.

TPO's supporters claim it helps poorer clubs sign and develop young players and spreads the burden of transfer fees because they only buy part of the player's registration. Seraing brought their case when FIFA banned TPO four months after the club signed an agreement in January 2015 with investment fund Doyen Sports based on the potential returns from such contracts.

Seraing refused to accept FIFA's ban and has already been fined 150,000 euros (\$175,900, £131,720). Their legal action is supported by the Spanish and Portuguese leagues, who are also taking a case to the European Commission.

FIFA is backed by European governing body UEFA and global players union Fifpro. Former UEFA president Michel Platini, now banned from football following a graft probe, called TPO "a type of slavery". —AFP

Sports

NFL orders players to stand for anthem or stay in locker room

'Team will have its own rules and make their own decisions'

LOS ANGELES: National Football League owners agreed a new policy on Wednesday that players must stand during the national anthem or incur fines for their clubs, unless they stay in the locker room. The issue of how to handle player protests of kneeling during the pre-game playing of "The Star-Spangled Banner" has loomed over the NFL club owners meeting in Atlanta, with the sport anxious to avoid a repeat of the controversy that divided the league last season.

America's most popular sport found itself at the center of a political firestorm in 2017 after President Donald Trump described players who knelt during the anthem to draw attention to racial injustice as "sons of bit...." who were insulting the flag and the nation.

The remarks prompted a wave of kneeling protests across the league in September, angering some fans and placing several conservative, Trump-supporting team owners in an awkward position as NFL television ratings dropped.

Vice President Mike Pence, who walked out on an NFL game in Indianapolis after some players knelt for the anthem, tweeted a headline of the NFL announcement Wednesday under the hashtag "Winning" and an American flag. Trump

later retweeted the message.

With the NFL's leadership reluctant to issue a blanket decree ordering players to stand for the anthem, the deal approved Wednesday represents a compromise. Under current NFL regulations, all players are required to be on the field during the anthem. The new policy removes that requirement, allowing players who do not wish to stand to remain in the locker room.

NFL Players Association to challenge the policy

Players who do come onto the field for the anthems would be required to stand or teams would be fined. "This season, all league and team personnel shall stand and show respect for the flag and the anthem," NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell said in a statement. "Personnel who choose not to stand for the anthem may stay in the locker room until after the anthem has been performed."

sonnel who choose not to stand for the anthem may stay in the locker room until after the anthem has been performed."

'FALSE PERCEPTION'

Goodell said the NFL would levy fines against teams if players came onto the field and did not stand for the anthem, with teams deciding what punishment if any to pass along to kneeling players.

"If anyone is on the field and is disrespectful to the anthem or the flag, there will be a fine from



SANTA CLARA: File photo taken on October 6, 2016 (L-R) Eli Harold #58, Colin Kaepernick #7, and Eric Reid #35 of the San Francisco 49ers kneel in protest during the national anthem prior to their NFL game against the Arizona Cardinals at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California. National Football League owners reached agreement Wednesday on a policy which would require players to stand during the national anthem but give them the option of remaining in the locker room if they preferred. — AFP

the league against the team," Goodell told reporters. "The team will have its own rules and make their own decisions." Goodell took issue with criticism levied at protesting players being called "unpatriotic."

"It was unfortunate that on-field protests created a false perception among many that thousands of NFL players were unpatriotic," Goodell said. "This is not and was never the case."

Art Rooney II, the president of the Pittsburgh Steelers, said the policy was the result of extensive consultation. "We're not forcing anybody to stand who doesn't feel like it," Rooney said. "But those that are on the field are going to be asked to stand. "We've listened to a lot of different viewpoints including our fans over the past year and this policy is an attempt to get to a place where we have respected everybody's point of view as best as we could." — AFP

Barcelona icon Iniesta joins Vissel Kobe in historic deal

TOKYO: Barcelona legend Andres Iniesta joined Japan's Vissel Kobe yesterday, calling his J-League move an "important career challenge". "This is a very special day for me," the 34-year-old World Cup winner said after signing his contract at a glitzy unveiling in Tokyo.

"I had a lot of offers, other clubs showed an interest in me," added Iniesta, who is reported to have agreed a three-year deal with an annual salary of \$30 million, comfortably a J-League record. "But I chose Vissel Kobe because it was an interesting project. There was also a lot of trust and confidence in me as a person and also as a player—that was a big reason."

Iniesta, who lifted 32 major trophies and made 674 appearances for Catalan giants Barca, was handed his trademark number eight shirt by Vissel owner Hiroshi Mikitani. "I am confident that Iniesta's leadership philosophy and his DNA will be a terrific inspiration for not only

Vissel Kobe but Japanese football," said Mikitani.

"His arrival in Japan will raise the profile of Japanese football globally. Iniesta will inspire and empower us to reach new heights in football in Japan. We are very proud to see this day come." The Spain icon's decision to choose Kobe arguably represents Japanese football's biggest transfer coup, with many top players now moving to cash-rich Chinese clubs in the twilight of their careers.

It also comes as a timely boost to the J-League, which used to attract luminaries such as Brazilian great Zico and former England star Gary Lineker when it began in 1993 but has struggled to attract marquee players in recent years. Iniesta will join former Arsenal striker Lukas Podolski in the western port city of Kobe after he completed a move from Galatasaray last summer. Podolski was quick to send a "welcome" tweet to Iniesta on Thursday.

"I'd like to help take this club forward and help the J-League grow in Asia," said Iniesta, who is set to join his new team mates after the World Cup in Russia. "I'm looking forward to getting to know the Kobe players as quickly as possible to be able to help with that process."

Danish star Michael Laudrup, himself a former Barcelona fan favourite and one of Iniesta's boyhood heroes, also played for Vissel in 1996-97. Vissel currently sit sixth

in the J-League first division standings after 15 games played.

Iniesta, who famously scored Spain's winning goal against the Netherlands in the 2010 World Cup final, had been top of Mikitani's wishlist. The billionaire businessman is also the founder and CEO of Rakuten, Barcelona's main sponsor, and was heavily involved in the deal that brought Iniesta to Japan. Mikitani said Iniesta "plays the most beautiful soccer in the world", predicting his arrival in Japan could lead to an influx of top foreign players joining the J-League.

Iniesta played his final game for Barcelona in a 1-0 win over Real Sociedad last weekend in an emotional farewell to the club he joined as a schoolboy. The mercurial midfielder won nine La Liga and four Champions League titles among a massive haul of trophies at Barcelona.

Iniesta had also been linked to a move to Chinese Super League side Chongqing Lifan but they denied the rumours. As speculation of his next move reached fever pitch, Iniesta tweeted a photo of himself and Mikitani in a private jet overnight, along with emojis of the Japanese flag and a football. Many Japanese fans retweeted the photo of the pair shaking hands and welcomed Iniesta to the country, while one user posted a cartoon meme of Iniesta dressed in a wizard's cloak and waving a wand. — AFP

Istanbul to host 2020 Champions League final

KIEV: Istanbul's Ataturk Olympic Stadium will host the 2020 Champions League final, UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin confirmed in Kiev yesterday.

The 76,000-capacity ground played host to Liverpool's famous comeback from 3-0 down to win the Champions League on penalties over AC Milan in 2005.

UEFA have been under pressure to ensure future final host cities have the hotel and airport infrastructure to cope with the influx of fans, delegates and media for the biggest game in club football.

Liverpool have complained to UEFA after their fans have faced spiralling accommodation and travel costs for fans trying to attend Saturday's final against holders Real Madrid in Kiev, the city which played host to the Euro 2012 final.

"They just don't have the airport infrastructure and the hotel capacity to cope with an event of this size and there isn't another major city within real hitting distance of it," Liverpool chief executive Peter Moore told the Liverpool Echo newspaper.

"It's not only affected Liverpool fans but Real Madrid fans too. There will be lessons learned from this. Rest assured, I've raised this at the highest levels of UEFA."

Ceferin had already reintroduced a tender process for bidding for finals since taking over as UEFA president from Michel Platini. — AFP

Sports

Liverpool can exploit Ronaldo's weaknesses: Alexander-Arnold

Ronaldo going for his fifth Champions League winner's medal

LIVERPOOL: At just 19 years of age, Liverpool's Trent Alexander-Arnold faces a daunting task of stopping five-time World Player of the Year Cristiano Ronaldo in tomorrow's Champions League final in Kiev.

But the fresh-faced right-back isn't overawed by the prospect and believes he can even expose Ronaldo's own weaknesses.

A whirlwind season for Alexander-Arnold was capped by a call-up to England's World Cup squad despite not having yet made his debut for the senior national side.

He has been just one of a number of success stories of Jurgen Klopp's management to end an 11-year wait for Liverpool to reach a Champions League final.

The gulf in experience couldn't be greater in the Ukrainian capital, though, as Real aim for a fourth

European Cup in five seasons. Ronaldo is going for his fifth Champions League winner's medal having also lifted the trophy with Manchester United in 2008.

Yet, despite classing the competition's all-time leading scorer as "one of the best players ever", Alexander-Arnold is still confident the Portuguese can be shut down by an improving Liverpool defence.

"Obviously it will be," he said when asked if

facing Ronaldo is the biggest challenge of his young career.

"He's one of the best players ever. He's done unbelievable things in the game, but he's got weaknesses as well, as every player has.

"Tomorrow we'll try to exploit them and stop him from doing what he does best, to stop him from scoring." Alexander-Arnold is likely to have his hands full with Madrid left-back Marcelo also marauding forward down his flank.

The Brazilian scored in Madrid's first leg semi-final win over Bayern Munich and set up Real's opening goal scored by Karim Benzema in the second leg against the Germans.

However, Marcelo is also often exposed defensively with Bayern right-back Joshua Kimmich scoring in both legs of the semi-final and

could leave space to be exploited by Liverpool's own 44-goal marksman Mohamed Salah.

"It is not just a one man team either," added Alexander-Arnold. "They've got other threats too and unbelievable squad depth.

"Even coming off the bench they've got world class players so it will be tough for everyone on the pitch and everyone will have the task of a direct opponent who is world class. It will be tough, but we're excited for it."

“Everyone who has helped me get better”

Ancelotti replaces Sarri with promise to end Napoli's 28-year title wait

MILAN: Carlo Ancelotti promised to end Napoli's 28-year wait for a Serie A title after it was confirmed on Wednesday he would take over from Maurizio Sarri as coach of the Italian club on a three-year deal. Ancelotti, sacked by Bayern Munich last September, steps in after Sarri was pushed out of the San Paolo Stadium after finishing second in Serie A behind Juventus.

Napoli have not won Serie A since the days of Argentina legend Diego Maradona who led them to their only two titles in 1987 and 1990. "I'm very happy to return to my country and to one of the greatest teams in Italy," Ancelotti said in a statement on his personal website. "(The) aim is to conquer the Scudetto after 28 years. We are thrilled by this challenge and ready to open a new chapter in football." It will be Ancelotti's first job in Italian football since leaving AC Milan in 2009 after leading the club to a Scudetto and two Champions League titles. His son Davide and his son-in-law Mino Fulco will also be on the Napoli coaching staff.

Ancelotti hammered out a deal throughout Wednesday with Napoli president Aurelio De Laurentiis who later confirmed Sarri's departure on Twit-



Carlo Ancelotti

ter. "I'd like to thank Maurizio Sarri for his valuable contribution to the Napoli cause," De Laurentiis said.

"He brought joy and prestige to Naples and Napoli fans all over the world with an entertaining brand of football that drew praise from all quarters. Well done, Maurizio-Aurelio De Laurentiis."

Italian film producer De Laurentiis then announced Ancelotti's arrival with a staged photo of the pair standing back to back holding imaginary guns ready for a shootoff. "I'm really happy and honoured to be the coach of a team from such a unique city with such incredible fans. Forza Napoli always," Ancelotti then said in a message posted in four different languages—Italian, English, French and Spanish. Ancelotti said that he had chosen Napoli despite offers from all over Europe and Asia as well as the Italy national coaching job. His aim was "to return Napoli to the highest position of the Serie A and Champions League". —AFP



KIEV: Liverpool fan reacts as he poses beside the UEFA Champions League Cup on display at the fan zone in Kiev yesterday, ahead of the football match between Real Madrid and Liverpool FC tomorrow at the Olimpiyskiy Stadium. —AFP

Born in West Derby, a stone's throw from Liverpool's Melwood training ground, Alexander-Arnold is living the dream having graduated from the club's academy to break through into the first team.

He also scored the first of Liverpool's 46 goals in the Champions League this season way back in August in a playoff against Hoffenheim just to make the group stages.

Alexander-Arnold hailed the role Klopp has had in his development, and insists he isn't dis-

tracted by the fact he will be headed to Russia with England hot on the heels of tomorrow's final.

"It's down to my team-mates and everyone who has helped me get better, the manager, everyone in the background that's helped me," he added.

"We've all pushed forward as a group and got better over the course of the season. It's exciting times over the next few weeks, but the focus is on Saturday." —AFP

Neuer injury-free at start of pre-World Cup camp: Loew

EPPAN: Germany goalkeeper Manuel Neuer is on track to regain full fitness in time for next month's World Cup after recovering from a foot injury that has sidelined him for most of the season, national team coach Joachim Loew said yesterday.

Speaking at the start of a training camp in northern Italy ahead of the tournament, Loew sounded confident that the 32-year-old German captain, part of his 2014 World Cup-winning team, would play in Russia.

Bayern Munich keeper Neuer has not played since breaking a bone in his foot back in September that required surgery, putting his chances of making the finals in doubt. "He trained a week at Bayern, here he is training fully and can also deal with the intensity level," Loew told reporters.

"We will see from day-to-day. If he has the feeling that he is at 100 percent then he can be there in Russia. Should there be any problems we would need to discuss it. But as

things stand now he has no problems whatsoever and things look good." Loew is also expecting to have Jerome Boateng back in the squad later this week as the central defender has recovered from a groin injury suffered last month.

"Everything is going according to plan and by next week I expect him to be taking part in training," said the 58-year-old coach, who this month extended his contract to 2022. The Germans are preparing for the fourth time in Eppan, high in the Italian Alps, with Loew praising the conditions for his players as they get ready for their title defence.

"We have the best conditions here, proximity to the pitch, a good hotel, the pitch is in a very good state, short travel times, so everything to have a good preparation." Germany will remain in Italy until June 5, a day after the deadline for the final squad announcement. Loew has taken 27 players to the training camp with four facing the cut.

The Germans, who will travel to play a warm-up match away to Austria in Klagenfurt on June 2 before returning to Italy and then going home to face Saudi Arabia in Leverkusen six days later, are in Group F with Sweden, South Korea and Mexico. —Reuters

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BOSTON: LeBron James #23 of the Cleveland Cavaliers goes to the basket against the Boston Celtics in Game Five of the Eastern Conference Finals during the 2018 NBA Playoffs on Wednesday at the TD Garden in Boston, Massachusetts. — AFP

Celtics push James, Cavs to brink with game 5 NBA win

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