

Friday Times

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Cholera: The continued crisis



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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Many of us think infectious and deadly disease such as smallpox and cholera diseases have disappeared forever but this is not the case. Recent news reports have spoken of the return of cholera and its emergence in some countries and regions living in unsafe conditions due to a lack of clean water.

Cholera is an intestinal infection caused by contaminated food or water that causes diarrhea and vomiting and can lead to severe dehydration and death in the absence of prompt treatment. Cholera is a preventable and treatable disease. But slow progress in safe water supply, with safe sanitation for the entire population and lack of access to patient health care mean that the disease continues to kill. Cholera remains a heavy burden on the world and vulnerable people and they need help.

In 2010, the rapid spread of cholera following the earthquake in Haiti, reminding the world that this disease is still deadly. An estimated 9,000 people have died of cholera in Haiti since the epidemic began, with thousands more infected. Cholera has always been a heavy burden for impoverished countries, especially in Africa and Southeast Asia. Recent years have seen outbreaks or epidemics of cholera in Cameroon, Somalia, South Africa and Yemen. Now there are fears of a potential outbreak in Iraq and especially in the Basra area.

The United Nations Human Rights Commission in Iraq announced late last month the registration of 18,000 cases in Basra distributed between diarrhea and acute intestinal colic and vomiting, warning of the possibility of spreading cholera in the province. It has documented high levels of salinity in all levels of water fed to Shatt al-Arab, the decline of water in the rivers feeding the residential areas, and the increase of chemical and biological pollutants in the Shatt al-Arab due to the remnants of factories and sewage.

Basra Health Directorate said the risk of registering cholera infections in Basra is high if water salinity continues to rise, especially by the fall of September. Basra is located near the borders of Kuwait and I noticed that the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health (MOH) has been alert to the matter. The Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Affairs of the Ministry of Health, Dr. Majeda Al-Qattan said the ministry has taken all measures to prevent the possible transmission of cholera to Kuwait. Al-Qattan also stressed that there is continuous follow-up regarding the spread of the disease in the province of Basra in coordination with the relevant authorities and the World Health Organization and other international organizations and she noted that everyone must be aware of the importance of clean water sources, unsafe eating and following health instructions for travelers to Iraq at health outlets.

She also advised those coming from Iraq to check the nearest health center when the symptoms of diarrhea within seven days from the date of return to ensure their health and health of their relatives, noting they need not bring any food items with them. So far, no cases of cholera have been recorded in Kuwait, which is good but monitoring the situation is important.

I think there is a need for awareness by all travelers and strict rules about importing food from Iraq or anywhere else for that matter. Official news confirms that Kuwait is clean and free from infectious diseases but it is necessary to partner with border control and customs to ensure no infected persons, animals or food products enter the country.

PHOTO OF THE DAY



Souq Sharq's fish market seen at night. Seafood remains a popular food and can be purchased from reputable fish markets across Kuwait despite recent reports regarding a googly-eyed fish. — Photo by Hassan Mahmoud / Kuna

Deportation or Dignity?



IN MY VIEW

By Nejoud Al-Yagout

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The threat of deportation seems to be a lingering ghost, haunting foreigners from the millisecond they step foot into this country. It strips each visitor of dignity, constantly reminding him or her that taking one step away from local tradition and dogma can cost them their home and profession.

Some have it worse than others. Years ago, they stopped all nationals from one particular country from entering for a few months, because a pimp and drug dealer happened to be passport holders from that country. Obviously, a crime is a crime, and is punishable by law, but why is it that all citizens of the country had to pay the price by not being allowed into the country because a couple were deported? Not a coincidence that citizens of that country were already placed in the lower tier of the 'respect hierarchy', an imaginary pyramid (quite contagious, mind you) that has been conditioned into the minds of both locals and foreigners.

The threat of deportation also applies to less serious violations. In November of 2017, the Director of the General Public Relations warned expatriates that any repeated traffic violation, including not wearing a seat-belt or talking on a cell phone while driving, would result in deportation. And, if a traffic violation is not a shocking

enough reason to impose a forced exile on someone, according to a Human Rights Watch report published merely a year ago, "[m]igrant workers remain vulnerable to ... deportation for minor infractions including ... 'absconding' from an employer." (<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/kuwait>). This is perhaps the most disturbing reason, because it puts the lives of domestic workers at risk if the law will not protect them from running away from a possibly dangerous or abusive situation. Nobody absconds from a home if they are treated well. Nobody. Plain and simple.

But even those in the higher echelons of the mentally constructed foreign scale are always tiptoeing around us, as though waiting for a green light to be able to discuss ideologies critically or come out of the closet or complain about the injustice and discrimination. It's a terrible disposition to find oneself in, especially when people leave their homes in search of a better life here. And it's embarrassing, if not tragic, to witness this as a local and not have the power to change it.

Any time we make our lives better at the expense of other nationalities, we create imbalance, we create resentment, we create the seeds in which racism thrives. We create all the recipes for an ailing, chaotic community. But the beauty of it all is that at any moment, we can reverse these effects and build bridges to bring us all together. What is the legacy we want to leave?

We can see coexistence manifested when we strive to create a society that raises the quality of life for all: Kuwaitis, non-Kuwaitis, the stateless, Muslims, non-Muslims, males, females and everyone in between. Viva l'amore!

Kuwait Times

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Revitalized and refreshed:

The new Fahaheel

By Faten Omar

As part of our occasional series exploring the various areas of Kuwait, Kuwait Times recently visited Fahaheel, one of the busiest areas during the weekends. Fahaheel is a part of Ahmadi governorate. It is located east of Ahmadi on the coast, with several shopping malls and nice cafes on the seaside, which has made the area an attraction for people on the weekends. The Kuwaiti family, Al-Dabbous, is also well known in the area and built many of the businesses there. Al-Kout Mall sometimes organizes live music on the weekends and has a great water fountain display. A new three-storey building is the latest addition to the development of Kout mall. The mall offers all family members the finest shopping and entertain-

ment experience at the same time. The deck outside the food court overlooking the courtyard and the sea is very calm and peaceful.

Salma Ahmed, 37, with two sons in tow, told Kuwait Times that Kout Mall is characterized by contemporary and attractive architectural designs, serving the area's residents and visitors from abroad. "My family spends a lot of time having fun shopping, watching movies or relaxing in the deck outside the mall," she said.

The area has a number of restaurants and beaches. But for Saleh Al-Turki, 46, these modern attractions have ruined the area. "Fahaheel was a nice and quiet area for Kuwaiti families. But with all these modern places such as restaurants and malls, all kinds of people come here. Also, they are always working in the area, and the sound of construction is so annoying," he complained.

Turki is not happy with changes that took place in the past 10 years. He said Fahaheel was a decent area with respectful gatherings, not live music and liberal young people. "Fahaheel is one of the most famous areas in Kuwait, and was known for its families and its adherence to traditions. However, urbanization and modernization began to change the old city with high-rises, markets and modern shopping malls filled with chaos," he said.

Khalid Al-Dossari said that the problem of modern Fahaheel is the commercial markets with no parking lots. "This causes disruption of traffic, especially at the entrances and exits of the area. During Eid, school time and in Ramadan, traffic is doubled. It is difficult for people to return to their homes or go to the malls because of the traffic jams," he told Kuwait Times.



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KUWAIT: Fahaheel is an historic and bustling area of Kuwait in the southern part of the country. Carved into the shoreline, Fahaheel boasts modern shopping complexes, a long beach with walking paths, schools, mosques and loads of residents. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

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Amir's visit to US comes in continuation of consultation between close friends: FM

'Visit's agenda included signing cooperation agreements in vital areas'

WASHINGTON: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah said yesterday that the visit to Washington by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah coincides with challenging conditions in the region and the world, "which require coordination with our friends and allies." "The summit talks between His Highness the Amir and President Donald Trump dealt with the bilateral ties that date back to early last century and grow steadily in accordance with the previously set chart and timetable," he said.

"The agenda of His Highness the Amir's visit to Washington included the signing of a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in vital areas, including customs, communication and security," Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled pointed out. On the meeting between His Highness the Amir and heads of leading US companies, he said the meeting reflected the desire of the US investors to strengthen their presence in Kuwait. "During his meeting with President Trump, His Highness the Amir affirmed that Kuwait adopted the necessary legislations to improve the investment atmosphere and expressed desire to increase the number of US companies operating in Kuwait," he noted.

The summit talks reviewed regional issues, including the Gulf dispute, the relations with Iran, the Middle East peace process, and the situations in Yemen, Syria and Libya. "The talks also dealt with the joint efforts in the framework of the international coalition against terrorism," Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled went on. "We look forward to the next round of the strategic dialogue with the United States, due to be hosted by Kuwait late this year, to continue the consultations on the issues raised during this summit meeting," he added.



WASHINGTON: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah shakes hands with US President Donald Trump in the Oval Office at the White House in Washington, DC, on September 5, 2018. — AFP and Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and US President Donald Trump walk into the Oval Office at the White House in Washington, DC.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and US President Donald Trump are seen inside the Oval Office at the White House in Washington, DC.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and US President Donald Trump are seen outside the West Wing of the White House ahead of their meeting.

Vital role

Meanwhile, Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem commended yesterday the results of the recent visit by His Highness the Amir to Washington and his meeting with US President Trump. In a press release, Ghanem said that "discussions between His Highness the Amir and President Trump did not only focused on bolstering ties within the political and economic domains, it also included other prominent issues such as the status quo in the GCC region, the war in Yemen, the Palestinian cause, and amongst topics."

He added that Trump's description of Kuwait as 'great partner' was evident of Kuwait's vital role in mediating regional issues of paramount importance. It was very important to coordinate efforts between the US and Kuwait to reach fruitful solutions to problems facing the world, said Ghanem, who affirmed that the visit was another milestone in the American-Kuwaiti relations. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and US President Donald Trump hold official talks.

Local

KAC pushes back against KASCO allegations

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways yesterday held a press conference aimed at 'clarifying' a dispute between the airline and Adel Al-Barjas, former chairman of the board of Kuwait Aviation Services Company (KASCO), a wholly owned subsidiary of KAC over allegations of corruption and misuse of public funds. Earlier in the week, Barjas announced that he had filed a case with the public prosecution alleging misuse of public funds by a former KASCO board member. He also claimed in the statement that KAC management had information about the issue but did not take action. Barjas also said he was put under pressure to withdraw the complaint to the public prosecution, though he did not say by whom.

Kuwait Airways management responded yesterday by noting that they had no knowledge of any evidence implicating a former KASCO official. Yousef Al-Jassem, Chairman of KAC read, in Arabic, a prepared statement regarding the matter during yesterday's press conference.

"The board of directors of KAC, as well as the board of directors of KASCO and its executive management, have not yet been informed of the file filed by the former chairman [Barjas] with the Public Prosecution," Jassem explained.

In the statement, the KAC chairman also mentioned an issue regarding the combining of the two roles of KASCO board chairman and executive director, and the plan to amend some articles of association of the company.

"The proposed statute stipulates the possibility of combining the position of the chairman of the board of directors with the executive director of the company. A copy of the minutes of all the meetings of the board of directors of KASCO was requested from January 2018 until the date of the invitation to the meeting to discuss the matter. However, as a matter of fact, is not the right of Kuwait Airways, even if it is the owner of KASCO. In that capacity, it is the general assembly thereof, only after the approval of the KASCO Board of Directors on that request by a meeting called on Thursday morning 6/9/2018, two days after the scheduled meeting with him [Barjas]," according to the statement.

Weighing in on the matter, MP Riyadh Al-Adasani criticized the government and the finance minister for accepting to dissolve the board of directors of KASCO and removing Barjas after he had filed the complaint at the public prosecution over corruption allegations.

Adasani said that Barjas was removed after



KUWAIT: Yousef Al-Jassem, Chairman of KAC (center), speaks during a press conference yesterday. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

four board members resigned together causing the board to be illegal, adding that on the very same day the finance minister appointed one of the resigned members as the new chairman. He vowed that he will continue to monitor the de-

velopments regarding the company.

MP Adel Al-Damkhi also said the actions of the government in KASCO are suspicious and must be reviewed especially after Barjas had filed a complaint at the public prosecution.

Military official lauds cooperation with Japan

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Air Force Commander Air Commodore Adel Al-Hafiz hailed Wednesday the steadily developing Kuwaiti-Japanese relations and cooperation. In statements to reporters on the sidelines of his participation in a reception held by the Japanese embassy in Kuwait for the Japan Self-Defense Forces, Hafiz recalled Japan's support for Kuwait during the liberation war. He also boasted the fruitful cooperation between the two militaries especially in the field of air force training. He looked forward to seeing greater cooperation and coordination with Japan in all military domains in the coming period. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Air Force Commander Air Commodore Adel Al-Hafiz (center) attends a reception held by the Japanese embassy in Kuwait for the Japan Self-Defense Forces. —KUNA

Philanthropist lauds Amir on 'Humanitarian Leader' anniversary

KUWAIT: President of the International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO) Dr Abdullah Al-Maatouq announced yesterday that humanitarian activities would be organized on Sunday, marking fourth anniversary of designating His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as Humanitarian Leader.

Dr Maatouq, also Advisor at the Amiri Diwan and Special Consultant for the United Nations Secretary General, said in a statement that the IICO, its local and external offices, have launched a website promoting major Kuwaiti charitable activities and the organization expertise. The website visitors can post messages expressing

gratitude to His Highness the Amir.

Elaborating, Dr Maatouq said the IICO management had urged volunteers to support efforts for relieving the Rohingya and intensify efforts for aiding other catastrophe stricken nations, in line with directions by His Highness the Amir. He expressed congratulations to His Highness the Amir on the fourth occasion of his UN designation, along with proclaiming Kuwait a Humanitarian Center, expressing pride for such honoring.

Philanthropic action, during His Highness the Amir era, has spread widely across the globe, he said, affirming His Highness' belief in saving lives, relieving the poor from illiteracy, diseases and impoverishment. Maatouq noted His Highness' orders to organize humanitarian campaigns for quakes' victims in Pakistan, Turkey, victims of hunger and draught in Somalia, developing East Sudan, hold the international conference for rebuilding Iraq and host three international conventions in Kuwait to aid Syria. —KUNA

Saudi Arabia hands over Gulf naval force command to Kuwait

MANAMA: General Directorate of the Kuwaiti Coast Guards yesterday took over command of the 31-member Combined Task Force CTF-152 from the Royal Saudi Navy. Kuwait's Interior Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for Border Security, Major General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah, affirmed in a statement, following the hand-over ceremony, the Kuwaiti Navy keenness on bolstering cooperation and security coordination with other naval forces operating in the Gulf region.

Meanwhile, the joint force commander, Colonel Saleh Al-Foudari, has affirmed in a statement that the joint force is tasked with securing waterways in the Arabian Gulf region. The Kuwaiti Coast Guards, which take command of the joint force till September next year, is ready to fulfill the duties; securing the waterways, combating trafficking, piracy, conserving the marine life and fighting other illegal activities in the region, he affirmed. The joint command groups elite officers from GCC states, Jordan, the United States and the United Kingdom. The force, formed in 2004 with personnel from 31 member states, is primarily charged with securing navigation across the Arabian Gulf.

Separately, Bahrain's Coast Guard Commander held talks with Major General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf on Wednesday, focusing on measures to boost maritime cooperation. During the meeting, Bahraini Coast Guard Commander Major General Alaa Siyadi illustrated the expanding role of the Gulf island state's navy, according to state-run Bahrain News Agency (BNA). The Kuwaiti official was also acquainted with the latest marine projects and systems Manama has introduced, BNA added. —KUNA



MANAMA: Kuwait's Interior Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for Border Security, Major General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah (right) is seen during a ceremony where the General Directorate of the Kuwaiti Coast Guards took over command of the 31-member Combined Task Force CTF-152. —KUNA

Local

Demographic structure tops MPs' priorities

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: A number of lawmakers called for holding a special session at the beginning of the parliament's next term to discuss the country's demographic structure, saying that this issue is of 'paramount importance' in the list of priorities agreed upon by the legislative and executive authorities. "Yet the government is still taking the matter easy, and instead of reducing the number of incoming expatriates, particularly mar-

ginal labor, it is noted that the number is on the rise in frightening proportions, as figures show that during the first six months of this year, expats have increased by more than 50,000 persons," the lawmakers said, according to sources familiar with their thinking.

If the request is approved, the session may be held in November, said the sources, adding that the social and health committee has a report that includes immediate and long term recommendations, which include not paying

indemnity to the employee whose services are terminated from the public sector until he produces a paper from the interior ministry showing that he processed all his transactions to leave the country.

Meanwhile, MP Saleh Ashour is preparing a grilling motion against social affairs minister Hind Al-Sabeeh that tackles several issues including her failure to implement parliamentary recommendations to deal with the demographic structure, the sources noted.

Civil movements reject book censorship

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Civil, democratic and progressive organizations in Kuwait issued a joint statement in regards to what they called the 'strict censorship' the information ministry is imposing against freedom of publication. The statement reads as follows:

"Out of the civil political powers' awareness that democracy and its principles are not just a ballot box and an elected national assembly, rather it goes beyond that, as it has to do with freedom, justice and equality from which foundation comes the freedom of opinion, intellect, expression, publication, belief, freedom to receive information and freedom of scientific research. Without the availability of such principles and respecting them, there will not be true democracy no matter what the claims are.

"Kuwait has been plagued for many years with restrictions on freedom, which has taken worrying forms, most notably being ex-

treme, rather malicious censorship by the information ministry on books, be it those printed in Kuwait or abroad in a way that contradicts the simplest of freedom principles. The dangerous part is that the information ministry was not satisfied with the thousands of books it banned in past years, rather it started to ban other books that were allowed before.

"Those harmed by this censorship maliciousness are not only authors and publishers, rather also readers, researchers, the educated and those who like to read, apart from having this practice harm Kuwait's reputation abroad. What is regretful is that some political Islam powers encouraged this practice and inciting against the minimum limits allowed of intellectual and personal freedoms.

"The Civil political powers that are signatory to this statement while condemning this malicious censorship, it calls for a serious move to:

- Reject the malicious censorship method.
- Cancel the malicious ban decisions.
- Amend the print and publication law by canceling the strict restrictions on the freedom of publication, expression and information gathering.

"Signed by: Kuwait Progressive Movement - Kuwait Democratic Forum - Kuwait Liberal Movement - Secular Gathering - National Democratic Alliance."

Kuwait supports UN political process in Libya

NEW YORK: Kuwait renewed its support to efforts exerted by the UN Special Representative and Head of the Support Mission in Libya Ghassan Salame in facilitating a comprehensive political process in the north African country. The State of Kuwait also called on all Libyan parties to reach a peaceful settlement by conducting a transparent election in the country rather than pursuing violence. In his speech before the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) meeting on Libya, deputy permanent representative of the Kuwaiti mission at the United Nations' headquarters in New York advisor Bader Al-Munaikh said.

"The unfortunate security developments taking place lately in Tripoli had its negative impact on the regional and international efforts to spread security and stability in Libya." "We express our concern over the shelling of residential areas, resulting in the death of scores of people, as well as the wounding of 120 others," he added. He called on Libyan parties to imme-

diately halt hostilities, and abide by the ceasefire agreement mediated by UN in order to put an end to the escalating violence in Tripoli and avoid further loss of lives.

He called on the international community and the UNSC to work further in order to reach a permanent solution for the spread of militant groups in Libya by supporting the establishment of united legislative security institutions under the supervision of legitimate. This would contribute to the transitional phase stipulated by the UN to eliminate terror groups such as the so-called Islamic States (IS) and others, he affirmed.

Munaikh praised the role of the UN Support Mission in Libya, which focused tasks to end violence and encourage a positive transformation in Libya. The latest security developments in Libya affected the economic status and state budget of the country as the oil production decreased from one million barrels per day to 315,000 barrels due to the clashes taking place in the oil crescent area.

Nicaragua

Separately, Kuwait's representative to the UN Mansour Al-Otaibi said on Wednesday that his country followed up, with profound concern, the deadly events in Nicaragua. The State of Kuwait, shocked by the scale of violence, asserts the need to bring those respon-

sible for the violence to justice, he said at a UN Security Council session on the situation in Nicaragua. He noted that the Council is meeting against the backdrop of an absence of consensus on the issue before it.

Citing relevant parts of Chapter VI of the UN Charter, which allow the organ to take conflict prevention measures, he emphasized the critical role of regional and sub-regional organizations. Expressing regret at the recent violence and casualties in Nicaragua, he called upon all parties concerned to adhere to all their international obligations, while emphasizing that the Council should put the interests of the Nicaraguan people at the forefront of its efforts.

Meanwhile, the Government of Nicaragua should work with all regional actors, including the Organization of American States (OAS), to overcome the current crisis, Ambassador Otaibi pointed out. He concluded by emphasizing the need to ensure that all established international legal principles are fully respected in the Council's consideration of the issue, especially the principles of the sovereignty and independence of States. Several speakers emphasized that the Council's mandate is limited to threats to international peace and security, not domestic issues, while stressing the importance of the independence and national sovereignty of States.

Educational leaders to be questioned over faulty ACs

KUWAIT: Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Hamed Al-Azmi announced yesterday that a number of ministry leaders would be interrogated about breakdown of air-conditioning sets at schools. The minister, in his resolution, accused Undersecretary Dr Haitham Al-Athari and the assistant undersecretary for public education Fatima Al-Kandari of failure to perform their duties - namely ensuring schools' readiness for the new scholastic year. Others who were included in the decision were staff and directors. The minister has formed two panels to grill the leaders and staff charged with slackness. —KUNA



Dr Hamed Al-Azmi

Crimes

Marijuana, cocaine found with Mangaf drug dealer

KUWAIT: Criminal detectives arrested an American man who was found with possession of six kilograms of marijuana, 250 grams of cocaine, eight liquor bottles, jewelry, expensive watches and 47,000 Philippine pesos. Detectives received tips about the suspect's activity in drug and alcohol trafficking, out of his Mangaf apartment, and was meeting his clients in parking areas within the Ahmadi governorate. When the information was confirmed, a warrant was obtained and his apartment was raided, where the contrabands were found. The man was arrested inside his apartment following stiff resistance. The suspect was sent to concerned authorities.

'Friends' fight

A discussion between a Kuwaiti woman and her two friends escalated into exchange of physical and verbal assaults. The woman told police that her two friends went to her apartment, and while they were discussing personal issues, the discussion became heated and escalated to a point where the two beat her, causing injuries mentioned in a medical report she handed to police. Both women will be questioned and may face legal action.

School fire

An air conditioning unit caught fire at Naseema bin Kaab Al-Ansariya Girls Intermediate School in Rawdha area. The guards immediately cut the power and put out the fire that caused thick smoke and created panic. The AC unit was totally destroyed as it fell to the ground.

Kuwait bans food imports from Iraq

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Ministry of Commerce and Industry has temporarily banned imports of all food products from Iraq due to Cholera outbreak there, an official announced yesterday. Tareq Al-Sabti, the director of public relations and media at the public authority for good and nutrition, declared in a statement lifting a ban on imports of the German cheese, Jocca, fresh and frozen shrimps from Texas, the United States of America. Texas has become free of the acute disease, Hepatopancreatic Necrosis. Moreover, another prohibition has been enforced for bringing in beef, lamb and goat meat from the Kyrgyz Republic due to outbreak of Anthrax. —KUNA

International

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Historic India ruling gives LGBT community new lease on life

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‘TREASON?’ asks Trump as senior official says staff are against him



Displaced Syrians are seen at a camp in Kafr Lusin near the Bab Al-Hawa border crossing with Turkey in the northern part of Syria's rebel-held Idlib province. — AFP

Hundreds flee as Syria, Russia hit Idlib

Could be the last major battle of Syria's seven-year civil war

IDLIB: Hundreds of Syrian civilians fled Idlib province yesterday as the presidents of Russia, Iran and Turkey readied for last-ditch talks on the fate of the last rebel bastion. Government forces and their allies have been massing around Idlib, where aid groups fear what could be the last major battle of Syria's seven-year civil war may also prove the deadliest.

Western powers have warned against a bloodbath but Damascus and Moscow seem adamant that an offensive is needed to root out the jihadists who dominate the province. Sporadic bombardment has targeted armed groups on Idlib's fringes in recent days, with fresh Syrian artillery and Russian air bombardment of the southeast of the province yesterday, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

The attacks prompted terrified residents to flee before a fully-fledged assault gets under way, the monitor said. "Around 180 families, or some 1,000 people" have fled their homes since Wednesday night towards rebel territory further east, said Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman. He said the displaced were mostly villagers from areas near government-held territory and most vulnerable to the early phase of an assault.

Artillery fire also killed one civilian and wounded six more, Abdel Rahman said. In the city of Idlib, resident Mohamed Al-Zir said the most terrifying threat was that of air strikes by the regime or its Russian allies. "These are criminal air forces that commit massacres against civilians," he said. "The strikes are barbaric,

they have no target, they are launched randomly." The number displaced so far is tiny compared to the 800,000 that the United Nations fears may be thrown onto the roads, more than a quarter of the rebel zone's population.

An AFP correspondent in Idlib saw convoys of families heading north, towards areas closer to the border with Turkey and less exposed to the launch of a major offensive. Turkey, which sponsors some of the rebel groups competing with the jihadist Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham (HTS) alliance in Idlib, is scrambling to avert an assault from which it has much to lose. Russia wants Turkey to exert its influence in Idlib to rein in jihadist and other fighters, but Ankara's progress has been slow and HTS remains the strongest force in the province.

"We can work together to render those (radical groups) ineffective. The solution is not to bomb or attack all over Idlib, without any distinction," Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Wednesday. Turkey already hosts three million Syrian refugees and fears a large scale military operation in Idlib will push more over its border.

The fate of the province, which has been used as a relief valve for tens of thousands of fighters and civilians evacuated from other parts of the country following surrender deals, could be decided in Tehran today. The presidents of Russia, Iran and Turkey—the three main power brokers in Syria—are due to meet as part of the ongoing Astana process aimed at ending the conflict.

Successive rounds of talks have failed to halt the war, which

has killed 350,000 people and driven more than 11 million from their homes since it erupted in 2011. Observers have argued that another tragedy could be averted if Turkey gives Russia guarantees on the ground and Moscow understands that a major crisis in Idlib risks undermining its own political goals in Syria.

Russia itself has suggested that the Idlib offensive could be conducted in several phases, giving negotiations a chance to continue in parallel. The next few days could see the launch of an assault restricted to peripheral areas.

Initial targets would include securing Syria's main north-south M5 highway, eliminating groups responsible for drone attacks on Russia's Hmeimim air base and flushing out jihadists from areas close to the Mediterranean coastal heartland of Assad's Alawite minority. Humanitarian groups have warned against any escalation in violence, and Save the Children said on Thursday an assault would have "devastating consequences" for the young. "During seven years of war, these children have seen and experienced things that no child ever should," said its CEO Helle Thorning-Schmidt, calling on the warring parties in Idlib to "pull back from the brink."

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said before heading to Iran that an offensive could trigger "a serious massacre", while his US counterpart, Donald Trump, said the outcome of the Tehran summit would be crucial. "Because the world is watching. That cannot be a slaughter. — AFP

Fearing expulsion, migrants in Morocco go into hiding

The situation has become increasingly difficult and worrying

TANGIERS: “We hide out like wild animals,” said Bamandou Kalli, an 18-year-old Guinean who like dozens of fellow migrants is holed up in Moroccan scrubland in fear of expulsion by the authorities. On the outskirts of Tangiers, a group of migrants rests under the shade of a tree where they have made a makeshift home after fleeing police raids. Ibrahim, a 19-year-old from Guinea, said the situation has become increasingly difficult and worrying.

“We don’t know what will happen, we cling on to life but it’s not easy,” he said. In setting up their new camp, the men have placed carpets and blankets on the parched earth. Food is shared from a cooking pot placed on the ground. They moved to the outskirts of Tangiers, a port city on Morocco’s northern coast, after authorities launched an operation last month targeting people smugglers and the migrants they bring to the country from sub-Saharan Africa.

The campaign came after hundreds of migrants forced their way into the Spanish enclave of Ceuta by storming the heavily fortified border fence. In the Tangiers neighborhoods of Boukhalef and Mesnanatan, police then moved in with the backing of special forces and helicopters, rounding up migrants, witnesses said. While offi-

cials would not comment on the operation, witnesses said numerous people were injured as they were forced onto southbound buses which would see the migrants deported. During one such transfer in early August, two Malians died, one of them a 16-year-old. Moroccan authorities have opened an investigation to determine the circumstances of the “accident”.

‘A pitiful state’

Walking with a crutch after scrambling over a wall to escape the raid, Wilfried said the operation was “very violent”. “They went into the houses, they took our money and our jewelry, they put us on board (the bus) but they couldn’t take me,” said the 35-year-old from Cameroon. Wilfried said he had already been expelled to Algeria from the Moroccan town of Oujda, despite the border between the two countries being closed. After sneaking back into Morocco he now hoped to reach the Spanish mainland, visible across the water from Tangiers. Jalal, a Moroccan who helped Wilfried, slammed the authorities for using violence during raids in his neighborhood.

“These Africans suffer a lot, they’re in a pitiful state,” he said. “I was illegally in Europe and I was never treated in this way.” Driss El Yazami, head

recorded in June “and he has already been punished by his company for his wrongdoing and apologized to his Kenyan colleague. The personal talk and personal feeling of this young man does not represent the views of the vast majority of Chinese people,” he said, adding Chinese nationals were urged to make “positive contributions to the friendship and cooperation between China and Kenya.” This is not the first time Chinese workers in Kenya have been accused of racism.

Raid on Chinese TV

Three years ago a small Chinese restaurant in the capital Nairobi was shut down by authorities and the owner charged for operating a “no blacks” policy after 5 pm. Earlier this year Kenyan workers on a new Chinese-built railway alleged racism and discrimination by Chinese staff and managers. However, the government dismissed allegations of racism on the \$3.2 billion (2.8 billion euro) signature infrastructure project. Kenyatta was in Beijing this week attending a conference where China promised to invest another \$60 billion in Africa.

Liu’s arrest comes a day after Kenyan police raided the African headquarters of China’s English-language state broadcaster CGTN (China Global Television Network) in Nairobi. The raid was part of Nairobi’s crackdown on illegal immigrants but several journalists were briefly detained. The Chinese embassy said in a statement it would express its concern through diplomatic channels, after several incidents in which nationals with legal documents were hauled into police stations for verification.

“The Chinese embassy in Kenya has lodged representations with Kenyan officials and the relevant people have all been released on that day,” Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told a press briefing in Beijing. “Kenya has admitted inadequacies in law enforcement and apologized.” It has promised to improve the conduct of its lower-level officers to avoid a repeat of this,” she added. — AFP



A picture taken on September 4, 2018 shows men gesturing towards a section of the border fence encircling Spain’s North African enclave of Ceuta which lies on the Strait of Gibraltar, surrounded by Morocco. — AFP

of Morocco’s state-funded National Human Rights Council, said last week the expulsions are legal and that his organization makes sure vulnerable people are protected. Dozens of migrants protested over the weekend outside the prosecutor’s office in Tangiers but were blocked by police, multiple source said.

Witnesses of the raids argue that police fail to distinguish between migrants who are in Morocco illegally and those with the necessary pa-

perwork. In Nador, in the northeast, the Moroccan Association of Human Rights has accused authorities of violence towards women, some of whom were pregnant. Laetitia, a 24-year-old Cameroonian, said some of those affected have been traumatized and others have developed mental health problems. “I thought that Morocco was a country that respected human rights, but seeing how our brothers are mistreated, where are we heading?” — AFP

Chinese man arrested after calling Kenyan president a ‘monkey’

NAIROBI: Kenya has arrested a Chinese businessman after a video of him making a string of racist remarks was widely shared on social media, the government said yesterday. The Chinese national, identified as Liu Jiaqi, has been arrested and is being processed for deportation, said Kenya’s immigration department. “His work permit has been cancelled and (he) will be deported on racism grounds,” the immigration service said on its Twitter feed.

In the two and a half minute video shared on Twitter and elsewhere, Liu, who appears to be in the midst of a dispute with one of his employees, is recorded issuing a litany of racist slurs. “Every one, every Kenyan... like a monkey, even (Kenyan President) Uhuru Kenyatta. All of them,” he said. After the employee suggests Liu should “go back to China” if he feels that way, the businessman responds with further abuse.

“I don’t belong to here. I don’t like here, like monkey people, I don’t like talk with them, it smells bad, and poor, and foolish, and black. I don’t like them. Why not [like] the white people, like the American?” He added that he only stays in Kenya because “money is important”. It was not clear from the video exactly what Liu’s job was in Kenya. Some Kenyans on social media have called for Liu to be charged rather than simply deported.

Zhang Gang, a spokesman for the Chinese embassy in Nairobi, said that according to Liu’s employer, the clip was

Ethiopia reopens embassy in Eritrea

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopia reopened its embassy in the Eritrean capital yesterday, state media reported, the latest step in restoring ties after the two nations ended decades of conflict. Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki and Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed signed a peace pact in July, ending the hostilities that began with a two-year border war in 1998 and degenerated into 18 years of stalemated relations.

Abiy had arrived in Eritrea on Wednesday for his second visit since taking office, inspecting the Red Sea nation’s two main ports before travelling to the capital Asmara. “Ethiopia’s Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed and Eritrea’s President Isaias Afwerki reopened the embassy in a brief ceremony,” Ethiopia’s state-affiliated Fana Broadcasting Corporate reported yesterday.

Abiy, Isaias and Somali President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, who joined the leaders in Asmara, had on Wednesday signed an agreement to “build close political, economic, social, cultural and security ties”, according to Eritrea’s information ministry. Also on Wednesday, an Ethiopian cargo ship arrived in Eritrea’s Massawa port to transport zinc to China, marking the formal reopening of Eritrean ports to Ethiopian trade. Eritrea was once a province of its larger southern neighbor and comprised its entire coastline. — AFP

International

Uncertainty over long-awaited Yemen talks as rebels stay back

Rebels accuse UN of failing to keep promises

GENEVA: Uncertainty hung yesterday over long-awaited talks in Geneva between Yemen's warring parties, as the rebel delegation refused to attend until its demands are met. UN mediator Martin Griffiths, who said Wednesday the meeting offered a "flickering signal of hope" of an end to the years-long conflict, had to postpone their scheduled start.

Yemen's Houthi rebels said they would not join the talks until the UN meets conditions that include transporting their wounded to Oman for treatment and a guarantee that delegation members will be allowed to return to rebel-held Sanaa from Geneva. The rebels accused the UN of failing to keep promises in this regard. The talks are meant to be the first since 2016 when 108 days of negotiations between the government of Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi and rebels failed to broker a deal.

But with government representatives already in the Swiss capital since Wednesday, the rebels remained stranded in Sanaa amid claims the Saudi-led coalition backing Hadi was preventing them from leaving. According to the Houthis' Al-Masirah TV, the UN had been unable to "secure authorization" from the coalition for a plane to transport the rebel delegation, along with wounded insurgents, out of Yemen.

While the Houthis control Sanaa and much of northern Yemen, the coalition controls the country's airspace. Asked about the Houthi charges, Griffiths said Wednesday: "We are working on that." Yesterday, an AFP journalist saw the envoy entering the Geneva hotel hosting the Yemen government delegation. Griffiths had told journalists he would begin informal consultations with the government team, led by Foreign Minister Khaled al-Yamani, while the rebels make their way to Switzerland. But when the two parties eventually meet, there would be no "formal negotiations," the envoy stressed, merely exploratory talks on how to get the parties back to the table.

'Collateral damage'

The UN Security Council on Wednesday urged both sides to "take a first step towards ending a conflict that has brought severe pain and humanitarian suffering to the Yemeni people". Griffiths was hopeful that the talks, expected to last

a few days, "will begin to send a flickering signal of hope" to the people of Yemen. "There is a chance for some tangible progress," he insisted. The government and rebels, however, have said they expect no breakthrough. The foreign minister told AFP this week that the chance of face-to-face sitdowns between the two delegations

“

**Flickering
signal of hope**

”



SANAA: A Yemeni child walks towards a building that was reportedly destroyed in air strikes in the capital. — AFP

was slim to none. All previous attempts to resolve the Yemen war have failed. Griffiths is the UN's third Yemen envoy since 2014, when the Houthis overran the capital Sanaa and drove Hadi's government into exile. The following year, Saudi Arabia and its allies formed a powerful regional military coalition to back Hadi's government in its fight against the Houthis.

The conflict has left nearly 10,000 people dead and pushed the Arab world's most impoverished country to the brink of famine. Yesterday,

the Saudi-led coalition acknowledged there may have been "collateral damage" from August 23 strikes the UN said killed 26 children south of the port of Hodeida. A day earlier, Saudi Arabia shot down a ballistic missile fired by Huthi rebels, with shrapnel wounding 26 people including two children, the coalition said. Yesterday, 16 humanitarian NGOs urged French President Emmanuel Macron to explicitly condemn any attack that causes civilian deaths in Yemen. — AFP

Yemeni boys excited for bus trip before strike, says father

DAHYAN: Little Ali begged his father to let him and his brothers go on a class trip in northern Yemen this summer. None of them would come home alive. Weeks after the August 9 bombing of a school bus in the Yemeni province of Saada, the boys' father is still in shock after having to bury his three young children. "They waved to me from the bus, and I said 'go with God'," said Zaid Tayyeb at his home in Dahyan in Saada province, a stronghold of the Iran-backed Houthis bordering Saudi Arabia.

Tayyeb had refused to send them on the Muslim youth camp trip earlier in the summer, fearing for their safety in Yemen's deadly conflict between the Houthi rebels and a government backed by Saudi Arabia and its allies. But following his children's pleas, he relented and allowed them to board the bus after another group of students returned safely after taking the same route.

"When I woke up that morning, they were all dressed in their new clothes. So I asked them what was going on, acting like I had no idea where they were going," Tayyeb told AFP. "They laughed and reminded me that the faithful never lie. That I had promised to let them go on the (Koranic studies) class trip after they got top marks. "They hugged me tight, got on the bus and waved to me as it pulled away. I turned and walked maybe 100 or 150 meters when the bus was hit."

Tayyeb turned and ran back towards the bus. "There was smoke and debris everywhere. I grabbed the first body I could reach. It was face down on the ground," he said. "It was my son. Ahmed," who was 10 years old. On the wall of the family's living room hang pictures of each child: Ahmed, his little brother Ali, 9, and 13-year-old Youssef. Each photograph is accompanied by the date of their death—"Martyred on 9/8/2018 in the massacre of children in Dahyan". Tayyeb's only surviving son, five-year-old Mohammed, stands under his big brothers' pictures, wearing rebel military garb tailored to his tiny frame. He was too young to take the class trip.

'Collateral damage'

According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, 40 children were killed and 56 wounded in the air strike which was carried out by the Saudi-led coalition fighting the Houthis. Coalition commanders have admitted a small number of mistakes and said the strike had "caused collateral damage", but there has been no public disciplinary action or changes to the rules of engagement.

The rebels accuse the coalition of knowingly targeting children. The coalition says there was a legitimate target—but a mistake in timing. The incident sparked a wave of international anger and the United Nations Security Council has called for a "credible and transparent" investigation. Following the Dahyan attack, UN officials accused the coalition of being behind twin air strikes on August 23 which killed at least 26 children south of the rebel-held port city of Hodeida. The coalition said on Thursday that its investigation into those strikes had found "there might have been collateral damage and civilian casualties." Both parties in the Yemen conflict stand accused of failing to protect civilians. — AFP

With Hezbollah in mind, Israel builds a new wall

ROSH HANIQRA: High in the hills above the Mediterranean, Israeli troops worked while soldiers from a country still technically at war with them peered down from only meters above. The odd spectacle played out this week as Israel continued work on a new concrete wall along its northern border with Lebanon. A few Lebanese soldiers watched from a tower just on the other side.

Israel has spent years building barriers to keep out Palestinians from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip as well as African migrants crossing from Egypt. Earlier this year, new construction began along the Lebanese border, where Israel is building a wall equipped with cameras in the hope of thwarting any attempt by its enemy Hezbollah to infiltrate and attack. It follows up on earlier construction in 2012 of a wall around the Israeli town of Metula next to the Lebanese border. Israel says all portions of the wall will be on its side of the so-called blue line — the UN-established ceasefire line put in place after its withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000. But Lebanon says some sections will cut into its territory and earlier this year pledged a diplomatic push to prevent construction.

Lebanon's plans to explore for oil and gas offshore in waters eyed by both sides have added to the controversy. Israeli military officials told journalists during a tour of the work near the Mediterranean coast on Wednesday that the wall, replacing a fence, was being built for defensive purposes. Israel fought a war with Lebanon-based Shiite militant group Hezbollah in 2006. The border area has remained relatively quiet since. — AFP

Lost generation? 2008 crisis still weighs on millennials

NEW YORK: Marco Saavedra had just graduated from college in 2011 three years after the global financial crisis erupted and just as the Occupy Wall Street movement was picking up steam. Like many in his generation, Saavedra faced slim pickings for jobs after college, a fate that has left millennials with a wealth gap that economists fear they won't ever recover. It has also left them more skeptical about government, worried about the future and more activist. Saavedra, 28, who is undocumented, joined the Occupy chapter in Ohio, and now works at his family's restaurant in the Bronx in New York City, where he is active in immigrant rights campaigns.

Laura Banks, 31, never had any interest in demonstrating, but also has bad memories from her early 20s of going to job fairs where there were almost no jobs. Friends lost jobs and her father, an attorney, had trouble finding clients. "We felt very cornered. We feel like we're behind," said Banks, who now works as a project manager for Express Scripts in St. Louis. She married last year but has doubts about having kids, in part due to fear of another financial crash.

'Lost generation'?

Saavedra and Banks are part of the millennial generation, which includes people born between 1980 and 1996, now the biggest cohort in the United States, a status that makes marketers salivate. But the group also is burdened by high student debt loads, that with the scarcity of jobs

during the Great Recession has resulted in lengthy post-collegiate sojourns in their parents' homes and lingering doubts about the future.

The group is at risk of becoming a "lost generation," the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis warned in a report in May that tracked how the cohort's wealth accumulation lagged historical norms for people in their 20s and 30s. Although it spared no generation, the 2008 financial meltdown was more calamitous for young adults because there was no way to recoup the debt they took on for education, cars and credit cards.

"Because none of these types of debt finance assets that have appreciated rapidly during the last few years — such as stocks and real estate — they received no leveraged wealth boost like that enjoyed by the older cohorts," the report said. Crushing student debt was among the rallying cries of Occupy Wall Street, a movement led largely by young adults who blamed the crisis on corporate greed and a rigged system that benefited the "one percent" at the expense of everyone else.

The group gained its greatest visibility during the almost-two month occupation of Zuccotti Park in lower Manhattan before police evicted activists and removed tents in November 2011. Although much more low profile today, Occupy Wall Street still has a presence on Twitter, where it touts progressive environmental policies, criticizes gentrification and lambasts President Donald Trump over immigration and other issues.

Iffy on capitalism?

But the movement and the crisis have had long lasting impacts on the millennials' outlook. An April 2016 poll released by Harvard University Kennedy School's Institute of Politics showed that just 41 percent of 18 to 29-year olds supported capitalism, higher than the 33 percent that supported socialism, but a low enough number to turn heads.

John Della Volpe, director of polling at the Kennedy School, said millennials remember how the crisis harmed their parents and others who played by the rules. Della Volpe senses broad support among young adults for "compassionate capitalism" to address glaring problems including gross inequality and a compromised campaign finance systems.

"I think they have a different definition of the American dream, which is less around economics and more around flexibility and happiness," he said. Major political parties have largely failed to ignite millennial interest, with two exceptions, Barack Obama's successful 2008 campaign and the 2016 campaign of Bernie Sanders, the white-haired Socialist who gave Hillary Clinton an unexpectedly tough battle for the Democratic nomination.

Support for Trump is somewhat lower among millennials compared to the broader US population, but some of the same trends hold, Della Volpe said. For example, Trump polls best among white millennials without a college de-

gree, mirroring the broader US trend. Democratic socialists scored an unexpected victory in New York in late June, when 28-year-old Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a Sanders supporter, unseated 10-term Democratic Rep. Joseph Crowley, in the Bronx in New York City.

Ocasio-Cortez told The Daily Show's Trevor Noah that she favored greater taxes on the wealthy and livable wages for workers as part of a "moral and ethical economy. Us as millennials, we came of age during a time when 9/11 happened in middle school, the financial crisis happened in college," she said. "We have never really known or grown up in a time of economic prosperity."

Saavedra helped organize an event for Ocasio-Cortez at his parent's restaurant in the South Bronx, La Morada, which is not far from her congressional district. The restaurant is staffed with undocumented workers and proclaims its solidarity with its immigrant-rich neighborhood with a "Resiste" ("Resist!") sign on the exterior.

The family was able to rent the space in 2009 due to vacancies amid the crisis — one positive from that period, Saavedra said. While he may never be able to vote, he plans to remain politically active. "If there's anything that my organizing has taught me it's that there's a lot of other ways to petition and to march and to rally that make political change, even if it's not in a tangible vote." — AFP



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International

Rural areas want far-right to 'Make Sweden Great Again'

An anti-immigration party with roots in the neo-Nazi movement

LINDESBERG: Nestled deep in Sweden's mining country, Lindesberg has an old-time small-town charm: its imposing Lutheran church overlooks cobblestone streets with locals calmly strolling about on their daily errands.

There are no telling signs that this is one of strongest bastions of the far-right Sweden Democrats (SD), an anti-immigration party with roots in the neo-Nazi movement.

The few people out on a rainy day in late August, of various ages and origins, stop to exchange pleasantries, with just days to go before the country's September 9 local and legislative elections. SD, founded in 1988, is tipped to win about 20 percent of votes nationwide, according to an average of seven polling institutes published in the past 10 days. That would make it Sweden's second or third biggest party.

'Good' immigration

Two hours northwest of Stockholm by car, Lindesberg seems a world away from the disadvantaged suburbs of Sweden's big cities — and the associated debate on immigration. Figures provided by municipal authorities show that 186 foreigners were granted residency permits in Lindesberg in 2017, or just 0.8 percent of the 23,000-strong population.

Even Mats Seiboldt, an SD town councillor, claims to say "Yes" to immigration when it is man-

aged "in a good and positive way". Yet the SD is thriving in Lindesberg on voter discontent. In the 2014 election, it clinched 21 percent of votes and eight seats on the Lindesberg town council, second only to the Social Democrats who govern nationally. In one Lindesberg district, SD won 37 percent, its strongest score in the nation. Channeling locals' dissatisfaction, Seiboldt has appropriated US President Donald Trump's slogan, making it his own: "Make Sweden Great Again".

'Economic and cultural threat'

Like other areas swept by waves of populism, growing numbers in the town feel like they're being left behind, observers say. The population is ageing faster in Lindesberg than elsewhere and the proportion of people living off benefits is higher than the national average, according to Statistics Sweden. Many of them blame immigrants. To the typical SD voter, "immigration presents an economic and cultural threat," says Stockholm University sociology professor Jens Rydgren.

SD voters "tend to be male, relatively low educated, over-represented among the working class", he said. The Social Democratic mayor of Lindesberg, Bengt Storbacka, says SD voters have a "wrong perception" of the situation. Still, he expects what he calls the "racist party" to improve even further on Sunday on its local election score from four years ago.



MOTALA: The audience listens to the leader of the right wing party Sverigedemokraterna (Sweden Democrats). — AFP

Five hundred kilometers to the south lies another SD bastion: Horby, a town of 15,000 in the Skane countryside. It is just 30 minutes from Malmö, Sweden's third-biggest city, which has a large immigrant community and is stricken by

gangland shootings. In the 2014 election, SD won nine seats on the Horby town council, second only to the Social Democrats. The far-right was relegated to the opposition by a broad coalition that teamed up against it. — AFP

Putin to blame for spy poisoning: UK

LONDON: Britain said yesterday that Russian President Vladimir Putin had "ultimate" responsibility for a nerve agent attack on a former Russian double agent in England, as it prepared to brief the UN Security Council. London has accused two members of Russian military intelligence of using Novichok to try to kill former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia in the southwestern city of Salisbury.

Security Minister Ben Wallace said Putin bore ultimate responsibility for the poisoning. "Ultimately he does in so far as he is the president of the Russian Federation and it is his government that controls, funds and directs the military intelligence, the GRU, via his ministry of defense." He told BBC radio: "I don't think anyone can ever say that Mr Putin isn't in control of his state.... And the GRU is without doubt not rogue."

"It is led, linked to both the senior members of the Russian general staff and the defence minister, and through that into the Kremlin and the president's office." Britain has previously pointed the finger at Moscow for the March 4 attack, sparking furious denials. In the aftermath, Britain and its allies expelled dozens of Russian diplomats, prompting Russia to respond in kind. The United States also imposed fresh sanctions over the attack.

Britain will brief the UN Security Council later Thursday on its latest findings, with the meeting due to open around 11:30 am (1530 GMT). Moscow on Wednesday again denied involvement in the case, accusing Britain of "unfounded accusations". "Instead of conducting an independent, objective and transparent investigation... London continues to engage in anti-Russian megaphone diplomacy, continuing its propaganda show," the foreign ministry said.

Cyber-war?

The US ambassador to London, Woody Johnson, and the Australian government have offered their support for Britain's stance against Russia. Wallace said his government would seek to "maintain the pressure" on Russia "to say that the behavior we've seen is totally unacceptable". Options include "more sanctions-we are obviously taking it today to the UN to present our case". However he noted that Russia would be there and would likely use its veto on any statement that might arise.

Amid reports that Britain was planning a response in cyber-space, Wallace said the Russians were the main operators behind attacks on British networks. "We retaliate in our way... within the rule of law and in a sophisticated way, that they know the cost of what they do," he said. The Skripals survived the poisoning but remnants of Novichok found in a fake perfume bottle were picked up by a local man weeks later. Charlie Rowley gave it to his girlfriend, Dawn Sturgess, who later died. — AFP

Migration truce shatters in Germany after mob violence

BERLIN: A tense truce within German Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservative camp imploded yesterday after her hardline interior minister defended protests marred by neo-Nazi violence and blasted immigration as "the mother of all political problems". The latest shots across Merkel's bow came just two months after the minister, Horst Seehofer, threatened to torpedo her ruling coalition over the explosive border issue.

An uneasy calm that had taken hold during the summer holidays shattered in the aftermath of a fatal knife attack against a 35-year-old German man in the eastern city of Chemnitz in late August. Three asylum seekers — two Iraqis and a Syrian — are suspects in the killing. Far-right groups and thousands of local citizens took to the streets in the days after the stabbing, with a number of participants attacking people who looked foreign, and showing the illegal Nazi salute.

As Germany's top law enforcer, Seehofer had faced calls to condemn the ugly scenes of marauding mobs that also assaulted reporters and police. He reserved judgment until yesterday's incendiary interview, in which he said he

wished he could have joined the demonstrations. "There is agitation and outrage among the public over this killing that I can understand," Seehofer told the daily Rheinische Post. "If I weren't a minister, I would have hit the streets as a citizen — of course not with the radicals though."

'No mob, no pogroms'

Seehofer insisted he had "zero tolerance for forces that seize on these developments to call for violence or to actually commit it, including against the police". However Seehofer, the most strident critic of Merkel's liberal refugee policy within her coalition, expressed sympathy with the anger that fuelled the protests. "The migration issue is the mother of all political problems in this country. I've been saying that for three years," since Merkel opened Germany's borders to more than one million asylum seekers as other EU countries shut the door to them.

The comments echoed remarks this week by Seehofer's counterpart from Italy, firebrand minister Matteo Salvini, that Merkel had "underestimated" the troubles mass immigration would bring. Merkel pushed back against the gloomy assessments and charges she had been reckless with public safety. "I would put it differently — I would say that the migration issue poses challenges. There are problems but also successes," she told RTL television. "We have a completely different situation than in the autumn of 2015 (at the height of the refugee influx). Hence we can tell people that we have implemented measures to prevent a repetition," including pacts with Turkey and several African countries to fight people smuggling. — AFP

‘TREASON?’ asks Trump as senior official says staff are against him

Assails the newspaper for the ‘gutless’ piece

WASHINGTON: A furious Donald Trump called Wednesday for the unmasking of an anonymous senior official who wrote in the New York Times that top members of his administration were undermining the president to curb his “misguided impulses.” Trump asked if the unsigned op-ed could be considered treasonous, assailed the newspaper for the “gutless” piece and questioned whether the senior official it was attributed to actually existed.

“TREASON?” Trump posted in response to the article entitled “I Am Part of the Resistance Inside the Trump Administration,” which claimed the president’s own staff see him as a danger to the nation. “Does the so-called ‘Senior Administration Official’ really exist, or is it just the Failing New York Times with another phony source?” Trump tweeted. “If the GUTLESS anonymous person does indeed exist, the Times must, for National Security purposes, turn him/her over to government at once!”

In the article, the official stressed they were committed to the Republican agenda, and did not side with opposition Democrats. But, the official wrote, “we believe our first duty is to this country, and the president continues to act in a manner that is detrimental to the health of our republic. Many of the senior officials in his own administration are working diligently from within to frustrate parts of his agenda and his worst inclinations,” the official wrote. “I would know. I am one of them.” The piece was published a day

after excerpts from a bombshell book that also claimed that White House staff were constantly battling to rein in the president’s worst impulses. The Times acknowledged the “rare step” of publishing an anonymous editorial but said the official’s job would be jeopardized if they were



Rein in the president’s worst impulses

identified, and that the paper knew who had written the piece. “We believe publishing this essay anonymously is the only way to deliver an important perspective to our readers,” the paper said.

‘The president’s amorality’

The official’s piece described a “two-track” presidency in which Trump says one thing and his staff consciously does another, for example with regard to what he called the president’s “preference for autocrats and dictators.” Staff actively worked to insulate themselves from Trump’s “impetuous, adversarial, petty and ineffective” leadership style, the writer said.

“The root of the problem is the president’s



WASHINGTON DC: In this file photo taken on June 20, 2018 US Vice President Mike Pence speaks as US President Donald Trump looks on before signing an executive order on immigration in the Oval Office of the White House. — AFP

amorality,” the official said. “That is why many Trump appointees have vowed to do what we can to preserve our democratic institutions while thwarting Mr Trump’s more misguided impulses until he is out of office.” Trump lashed out at the author and at the “dishonest” Times.

“They don’t like Donald Trump and I don’t like

them,” Trump said. “So if the failing New York Times has an anonymous editorial, can you believe it, anonymous — meaning gutless — a gutless editorial — we’re doing a great job.” White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders branded the piece “pathetic, reckless, and selfish” and condemned the Times for publishing it. — AFP

Brazil’s presidential election campaign remains surreal

RIO DE JANEIRO: With a month to go to presidential elections in Brazil, the current campaign can already go down as the most surreal and unpredictable in the country’s history. Up until last week, more than half of Brazil’s 147 million-strong electorate was prepared to vote either for the country’s most famous prisoner, former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, or for a self-confessed fan of Brazil’s 20-year military dictatorship that ended in 1985, Jair Bolsonaro.

The leftist Lula is sitting in a jail cell after he was convicted of accepting a bribe, while right-wing Bolsonaro is known for his controversial remarks branded as racist, misogynist and homophobic by his detractors. The country is plagued by uncontrollable violence, endemic corruption, a budgetary crisis, rising unemployment and a president, Michel Temer, breaking records for unpopularity.

Brazilians have had enough. Almost a third of the population say they don’t know who to vote for, markets are volatile and the currency is falling. None of the other main candidates — Geraldo Alckmin, Marina Silva and Ciro Gomes — have reached double figures in polls. The calamitous presidential race took a decisive turn last week when Brazil’s electoral court ruled that poll leader Lula could not stand due to the country’s “clean slate” law that prevents felons who have lost an appeal from contesting elections.

Having already served two terms from 2003 to 2010, Lula was not just leading polls but had more than twice the share of second-placed Bolsonaro. Lula has appealed his ban to the supreme court and United Nations, but he’s running out of avenues to ensure his name appears on the ballot. “Legally he still has one possibility,” said Michael Mohallem, an analyst at the Getulio Vargas Foundation, a higher education institution specializing in economics and business.

‘Lula the key’

Mohallem says this election “looks like no other.” “Every other candidate’s strategy depends on Lula. He’s the key to the election,” he added. This is uncharted territory for Brazil in an election campaign that has been reduced from 90 to 45 days after a reform. The election soap opera also stands out because of the decisive role “judicial authorities are playing,” said Mohallem.

If Lula is definitively barred from standing, that would leave Bolsonaro, who has spoken out in support of the military dictatorship’s use of torture, as the front-runner for the October 7 first round of voting and almost certain to make it to the second round three weeks later. “Bolsonaro as the leading candidate is quite surreal,” said David Fleischer, a political science professor at the University of Brasilia.

“The people mostly supporting Bolsonaro are under 35 years, so they were born after the military regime,” he added. Absurdly, as Bolsonaro’s Social Liberal Party (PSL) has only nine deputies in parliament, that affords him only eight seconds of television campaign advertising. During the first campaign commercial, he had only enough time to say: “We defend family and heritage.” More than most, Bolsonaro is going to need to rely on his 8.5 million social media followers. — AFP

Ten on board Emirates treated in NY hospital

NEW YORK: Ten people on board a 14-hour Emirates flight from Dubai were taken to hospital in New York on Wednesday after US health authorities mobilized to meet the jet ferrying sick passengers. It came after more than a hundred of the 521 people on board had presented with symptoms ranging from coughing to fever and vomiting.

Images of the double-decker A380 aircraft isolated on the tarmac at John F. Kennedy International Airport were posted on social media, including by rapper Vanilla Ice who was also on the plane. They showed ambulances lined up on the tarmac next to the A380, the largest passenger airliner in the world. “So I just landed from Dubai and now there is like tons of ambulances and fire trucks and police all over the place,” he tweeted. Emirates confirmed that three passengers and seven crew were trans-

ferred to hospital for “further medical care and evaluation.” “All passengers were screened by the local health authorities prior to disembarkation,” it said. Nine passengers underwent additional medical screening on site before being released, it added.

Eric Phillips, spokesman for New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, said it appeared that some of the ill passengers had come from Mecca, which is experiencing a flu outbreak. “Health officials are processing tests now to determine the cause. Symptoms still pointing to the flu,” he tweeted. Oxiris Barbot, the city’s acting health commissioner, added the results of the tests were expected later at night.

In a statement, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey said that Emirates flight 203 landed at 9:12 am (1312 GMT) “with a report of multiple sick passengers. The plane was taken to a location away from the terminal so that medical personnel from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention could board the aircraft to evaluate the situation and provide immediate assistance,” it added. Emirates announced that the return flight to Dubai, EK204, would be delayed by approximately three hours. — AFP

International

Twin blasts turn regular Kabul wrestling session into massacre

Double bombing ripped through the Maiwand sports club

KABUL: The wrestling mats were spattered with blood, the sports bags and water bottles still strewn across the floor yesterday, hours after a double bombing ripped through the Maiwand sports club in Kabul, killing at least 26 people. A regular training session on Wednesday afternoon turned into a massacre when a suicide bomber shot dead a young, unarmed guard at the entrance before blowing himself up near the scores of wrestlers, some of whom were as young as 10.

An hour later a car packed with explosives detonated outside the club, apparently targeting reporters and emergency workers who had gathered at the scene. Two journalists from Tolo News, Afghanistan's largest private broadcaster, were among the dead. Four media workers were wounded. "There were dead and wounded everywhere," 14-year-old wrestler Sayed Rohullah told AFP from his bed at Isteqal hospital, where dozens of casualties were taken after the twin blasts. "Everyone was covered in glass and pieces of shrapnel, and shouting for their loved ones. 'After the explosion I couldn't feel my legs.'"

Most of the deaths were caused by severe burns and shrapnel, doctors said. Ali Seena, 20,

said the wrestlers had been in the middle of the training session when they heard cracks of gunfire outside. He did not see the suicide bomber enter the room, but he felt the "flying shrapnel" as it pierced his abdomen. "I felt so much pain after the blast," said Seena, whose right hand was also hit by pieces of metal.

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the latest attack, which Afghan health and interior ministries said had killed at least 26 people and wounded 91. Maiwand club manager Pahlawan Shir said he feared the real death toll may be much higher. As many as 150 people were inside the hall in the heavily Shiite neighborhood at the time of the attack, he said. "Some people have already taken their martyrs home. I am still searching for many missing students and coaches." Club employee Eid Mohammad Assad said he saw a vehicle parked near the entrance as he carried some of the dead and wounded from the building. "We were busy... and then the second explosion happened," said Assad, 50, who escaped injury.

'Callous attack'

Grieving relatives, friends and colleagues began the grim process of burying their loved

“There were dead and wounded everywhere”



KABUL: Wounded Afghan wrestler Ali Seena, 20, receives treatment at Isteqal hospital in Kabul after a suicide attack on the Maiwand Club that targeted wrestlers during a training session. —AFP

ones yesterday morning in dusty, barren cemeteries around the city — rituals that have become all too familiar for war-weary Afghans. The attack was widely condemned by Afghan and foreign officials.

"This latest cynical act of terror targeting ordinary citizens of Kabul, along with first responders and journalists, is deeply shocking," Tadamichi Yamamoto, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan, said in a statement. "We join Afghans in ex-

pressing our revulsion at such a callous attack." IS considers Shiite Muslims apostates and has ramped up attacks against the minority group in recent years. The last major attack on Shiites in Kabul was on August 15 when a suicide bomber blew himself up in an education centre, killing dozens of students. The group said it was behind that attack, which drew international condemnation and came amid a wave of deadly violence across the country. —AFP

Malaysia PM denounces caning of lesbian women

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad yesterday denounced the caning of two women convicted of having lesbian sex in violation of strict Islamic laws, after the punishment sparked a storm of criticism. The pair were caned in front of more than 100 spectators in an Islamic court Monday, with one of the women breaking down in tears, after they admitted breaching rules that forbid homosexual relations.

The punishment in conservative northern Terengganu state marked the first time women have been caned for same-sex relations in Muslim-majority Malaysia, according to campaigners, and heightened fears about a worsening climate for the country's homosexuals. Mahathir added his voice to growing criticism, saying he had discussed the issue with his cabinet and they felt the caning "does not reflect justice and tolerance in Islam".

"This gives a bad image of Islam and we be-

lieve that if there are similar cases like this we need to consider giving lighter punishments," he said. "It is crucial we show Islam is not a cruel religion... that humiliates people." Mahathir said as it was a first offence for the women, they should have been given advice rather than being caned. The women, aged 22 and 32, were arrested in April by Islamic enforcement officers after they were found in a car in a public square.

The pair, whose identities have not been revealed, pleaded guilty last month to breaking Islamic laws and were sentenced to six strokes of the cane and a fine of 3,300 ringgit (\$800). Multi-ethnic Malaysia operates a dual-track legal system, with Islamic courts handling religious and family matters for Muslim citizens, who make up over 60 percent of the country's population.

Islamic laws are overseen by individual states in Malaysia. Terengganu state is governed by the conservative Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS), which is not part of the ruling coalition at the national level. The caning came against a backdrop of what activists say is growing intolerance towards the country's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. The Islamic affairs minister has spoken out against homosexuals, while a transgender woman was brutally attacked in the southern state of Negeri Sembilan. —AFP

Thai cave boys in the spotlight, again

BANGKOK: The young Thai football team whose terrifying ordeal in a flooded cave captivated the world earlier this year recounted their memories of their rescue yesterday as they visited a spectacular exhibit chronicling the drama. The interactive showcase, in Bangkok's popular Siam Paragon mall, details the efforts made by a multinational group of experts to get the 12 boys and their 25-year-old coach out of Tham Luang cave in northern Thailand.

Among other things, it features a model of the narrow tunnel that divers had to maneuver the boys through as flood waters rose. Since they were safely extracted two months ago, international and domestic interest in them has remained high, with Hollywood movie deals in the works. Thai authorities banned reporters from speaking to the boys in a bid to help them return to normality after the harrowing experience, with media outlets required to obtain permission from the government before approaching them.

But yesterday's festivities saw the boys cast into the spotlight as they were interviewed by government spokesman Colonel Werachon Sukondhapatipak. They will also be the focus of

a night-time celebration called "United as One", with more than 10,000 people expected to attend, according to authorities. When asked about how their lives had changed after the rescue, Prachak Sutham, the first boy who escaped the cave, said: "Things are the same, but more people know me now."

Team captain Duangpetch Promthep said most of his 300,000 followers on Instagram claimed to be his fans. After an hour-long interview, the boys toured the exhibit, strolling past a model of the stretcher that carried them out. It held a mannequin with an oxygen face mask. The exhibit also featured a statue commemorating the former Thai Navy SEAL diver who died installing oxygen tanks along the perilous route.

The children ended the tour by shuffling through the narrow tunnel, hunching over to get through the exit. Without help from the international divers, "the 13 wouldn't have survived because Thailand doesn't have that experience," said Thipwipa Aranyakasem, 83, who visited the exhibit. Narachai Sikly, 65, who came with his wife, said he was "excited" by how the government worked with the divers to rescue the children. "It is excellent of the government and the group (of divers)." The junta-led government, which came into power after a coup in 2014, has received a boost of goodwill and praise from the Thai public since the rescue of the children and their coach, who has since become a monk. —AFP

Historic India ruling gives LGBT community new lease on life

Activists have hailed the verdict as a major boost

NEW DELHI: India's Supreme Court yesterday struck down a ban on gay sex after a decades-old campaign against a colonial-era law used to hold back homosexual rights. Members of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups held tearful celebrations in cities across the South Asian nation of 1.25 billion people as the historic verdict was read out.

"The law had become a weapon for harassment for the LGBT community," said chief justice Dipak Misra as he quashed the cornerstone of Section 377, a law introduced by British rulers in 1861. "History owes an apology to the members of this community and their families, for the delay in providing redressal for the ignominy and ostracism that they have suffered through the centuries," added the ruling.

India is now one of more than 120 countries to have effectively decriminalized homosexuality. While the court ruling only legalizes sexual acts between adults, gay activists have hailed the verdict as a major boost in the deeply conservative country where religious groups have fiercely opposed any liberalization of sexual morality.

Activists had been fighting the ban since the 1990s, suffering several court reversals before yesterday's verdict. The Delhi High Court decriminalized gay sex in 2009, but the Supreme Court reinstated the ban in 2014 after an appeal by religious leaders. According to official data, seven people were convicted on charges of "unnatural offences" and 16 ac-

quitted in 2016.

"It was a law that propagated homophobia," said Keshav Suri, one of the petitioners against Section 377, who organized a Bollywood-style dance show at his family's luxury Delhi hotel to celebrate the court victory. "In rural areas it is a harassment tool, used by cops, used by authorities for extortion", Suri told AFP in an interview ahead of the verdict.

Many Indian gay professionals have moved to Canada and Europe where they are more accepted, added the businessman who married his partner in Paris this year. India's conservative government had opposed ending Section 377 but said ahead of the hearing that it would leave the decision to the "wisdom" of the Supreme Court. It had warned, however, that judges should not change other aspects of Indian law, such as the right to marriage.

A law that propagated homophobia

'Long battle'

Members of the LGBT community hugged each other and cried outside the Supreme Court in New Delhi as news of the verdict spread. "I am speechless! It's taken a long time to come but finally I can say I am free and I have equal rights as others," said Rama Vij, a college student in Kolkata who gathered with others watching on television. The United Nations praised the activists who led the campaign.

"Today is a day of gay pride, a day of celebration, a day when respect and dignity was finally restored in India for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and in-



MUMBAI: Indian members and supporters of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) community celebrate the Supreme Court decision to strike down a colonial-era ban on gay sex. —AFP

tersex people," said Michel Sidibé, executive director of UN AIDS. "I applaud the brave activists, civil society organizations and community groups that have fought long and hard for this injustice to be reversed."

Despite the pressure on the LGBT community, India has quietly made some strides in sexual rights in recent years. A transgender judge, Joyita Mondal Mahi, presides over courts in West Bengal state, Indian passports now state whether a holder is "male", "female" or "other", and the city of Raigarh, with 139,000 people, has a transgender mayor.

Campaigner Suri's hotels are known for their gay-friendly discos and more professionals are coming out

to challenge the Indian establishment. Many say that gay marriage and equal rights in inheritance and other areas must be the ultimate prize, but they acknowledge that change will not be swift. "This is the first step of the history of a lot of other countries that first decriminalized gay sex, allowed civil unions and then marriage," said Suri. "It is a long battle to equal rights but I am sure we will get there eventually." New Delhi choreographer Mandeep Raikhy, who has used the performances of his dance troupe to highlight the experience of gays, was even more cautious. "I don't want to sound pessimistic but I don't think we will see gay marriage in my lifetime," he said. —AFP

Gay rights across the globe: Death penalty to marriage

PARIS: Homosexuality is still subject to the death penalty in many countries, particularly in the Middle East and Africa, while others allow gay marriage and adoption. After India's Supreme Court decriminalized gay sex yesterday, here is a broad overview of the situation around the world:

Africa: Mostly a crime

Around 30 African countries ban homosexuality, with Mauritania, Somalia and Sudan having the death penalty for same-sex relations. Gay sex is decriminalized in only a handful of countries: Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, the Ivory Coast, Mali and Mozambique. South Africa is an exception, being the sole nation on the continent to allow gay marriage, which it legalized in 2006. It also allows adoption, medically assisted procreation and surrogacy for homosexuals.

Middle East: Repressed

Several countries in the conservative region still provide for the death penalty for homosexuality, including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Israel leads the way in terms of gay rights, recognizing same-sex marriages that are performed elsewhere although not allowing such unions in the country itself. Gay couples can adopt children. There were massive demonstrations in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv in July to protest a law denying surrogacy rights to same-sex couples. Lebanon is also more tolerant than other Arab countries.

Breakthrough in Asia

Much of Asia is tolerant of homosexuality, with remaining taboos gradually being eroded including in Vietnam and Nepal. Taiwan is set to become the first place in the region to allow gay marriage after its highest court ruled in May 2017 that preventing same-sex unions was unconstitutional and gave authorities two years to legalize them. The Philippines' top court in June started hearing arguments for the legalization of gay marriage. In China homosexuality was classified as a mental illness until 2001 and a crime until 1997. Conservative attitudes and discrimination remain widespread. Homosexuality is outlawed by the region's Muslim countries, such as Bangladesh, Malaysia and Pakistan, where it is punishable imprisonment or lashes.

Europe: Pioneers of gay marriage

In 2001 the Netherlands became the first country in the world to allow gay and lesbian couples to marry in a civil ceremony. Fifteen European countries have followed, including Britain — although not Northern Ireland, France and Germany, with Austria due to join in next year. In 2014 Estonia became the first former Soviet republic to authorize same-sex civil unions, which are denied by eastern European countries. In Russia homosexuality was considered a crime up to 1993 and a mental illness until 1999. A 2013 law punishes the promotion of homosexuality among minors. Several western Europe countries also allow same-sex couples to adopt children and 10 permit medically assisted procreation for lesbian couples.

Progress in the Americas

Canada authorized same-sex marriage and adoptions in 2005, and 10 years later the United States legalized gay marriage nationwide. Mexico's federal capital was the pioneer in Latin America, authorizing gay civil unions in 2007 and marriages in 2009 as well as adoption. Same-sex marriages and adoptions are also legal in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Uruguay. Cuba plans a referendum on legalizing same-sex marriage for February 2019. —AFP

International

Two Koreas to hold summit as Kim renews denuclearisation pledge

US efforts to dismantle Pyongyang's nuclear arsenal have stalled.

SEOUL: The leaders of the two Koreas will hold a summit in Pyongyang in September, Seoul said yesterday, as Kim Jong Un renewed his commitment to the denuclearisation of the flashpoint peninsula. The announcement of the September 18-20 summit — the third between the North's leader Kim and South Korean President Moon Jae-in this year — comes as US efforts to dismantle Pyongyang's nuclear arsenal have stalled.

The two leaders will meet in the North Korean capital to discuss "practical measures to denuclearise" the peninsula, South Korean National Security Advisor Chung Eui-yong told reporters. Chung on Wednesday flew to Pyongyang where he handed over a personal letter from Moon to Kim, as Seoul seeks to kick-start the diplomacy that led to the landmark June summit between US President Donald Trump and the North Korean leader.

The two pledged to denuclearise the Korean peninsula at the Singapore meeting but no details were agreed, and Washington and Pyongyang have sparred since on what that means and how it will be achieved. However, in his meeting with Chung, Kim renewed his commitment to that goal, North Korean state media said yesterday.

The two Koreas "should further their efforts to realize the denuclearisation of the Korean penin-

sula", Kim was quoted as saying by KCNA. "It is our fixed stand... to completely remove the danger of armed conflict and horror of war from the Korean peninsula and turn it into the cradle of peace without nuclear weapons and free from nuclear threat."

Moon, who brokered the historic summit between Kim and Trump in Singapore, said he had "high hopes" for his next meeting with the North's leader to achieve a similar feat. "I have come to hope that it will kick-start dialogue between the US and North Korea for the complete denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula," Moon said during meeting with his aides.

High hopes for his next meeting

'Sense of frustration'

The pledge comes after Trump, frustrated with a lack of progress on disarmament, last month cancelled Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's trip to Pyongyang after the North reportedly sent a belligerent letter to the US leader. Stephen Biegun, newly-appointed US envoy for the North, said last month Kim had promised "final, fully verified denuclearisation" at the Singapore summit.

But Pyongyang has slammed the Washington for its "gangster-like" demands for complete, verifiable and irreversible disarmament. Kim emphasised that his "trust in Trump remains unchanged" despite the difficulties, Chung said, and expressed



PYONGYANG: Commuters make their way through a subway station of the Pyongyang metro. — AFP

his intention to work closely with the US to achieve denuclearisation "in the first official term of President Trump." But the North Korean leader also expressed a "sense of frustration" with the international community for not appreciating what he called Pyongyang's "very significant and meaningful" steps, Chung said. Kim noted the North had

dismantled its nuclear test site in Punggye-ri, where nuclear tests "have been made impossible for good", according to the South Korean envoy. "Chairman Kim asked us to convey the message to the US that the US (should) help create situations where he would feel his decision to denuclearise was a right move", Chung said. — AFP

Race to find survivors after deadly Japan quake, landslides

TOKYO: Rescuers scrambled through mud for survivors yesterday after a powerful earthquake sent hillsides crashing down onto homes in Japan, killing at least nine people and leaving dozens of people missing. As many as 30 are feared buried beneath the earth and rubble of multiple, large-scale landslides that struck sparsely populated countryside on the northern island of Hokkaido after a 6.6-magnitude earthquake.

Aerial footage showed wrecked farm buildings at the bottom of a hill as rescue helicopters whirled overhead in a region already affected by the edge of a strong typhoon that ravaged parts of Japan earlier in the week. The quake left almost three million people without power after damage to a major thermal plant supplying the region, with Industry Minister Hiroshige Seko saying it could take "at least a week" for supply to be restored.

Long lines formed outside petrol stations and supermarkets as residents dug in and au-

thorities warned that further quakes could be on the way. Kazuo Kibayashi, an official in hard-hit Abira town, told AFP: "There was a sudden, extreme jolt. I felt it went sideways, not up-and-down, for about two to three minutes."

"It stopped before shaking started again. I felt it come in two waves. I am 51, and I have never experienced anything like this. I thought my house was going to collapse. Everything inside my house was all jumbled up. I didn't have time to even start cleaning," he added. Public broadcaster NHK reported that nine people had lost their lives, many of them in the village of Atsuma, where the landslide engulfed their homes. Thirty-one people were still missing, according to the broadcaster, with around 300 sustaining minor injuries.

Moments after the initial quake, which struck 62 kilometres (39 miles) southeast of the regional capital Sapporo, an aftershock measuring 5.3 rocked the area, with dozens more tremors felt throughout the day. "We will do our best to save lives," Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said after an emergency cabinet meeting.

Government spokesman Yoshihide Suga added: "I urge people in areas shaken by strong quakes to stay calm, pay attention to evacuation information... and help each other." "It's going to rain (in Hokkaido). Please be very careful of further landslides," the spokesman warned. Around 20,000 rescue workers, including police and members of the Self-Defence Forces were responding to the disaster,



SAPPORO: A restaurant worker (R) cooks as quake-affected customers wait to buy food as an electrical blackout shrouds the shopping district in Sapporo on September 6, 2018, after an earthquake hit the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido. — AFP

Suga said. Another 20,000 troops are expected to join the effort. Japan is still recovering from its worst typhoon in 25 years, which struck the western part of the country on Tuesday, claiming at least 11 lives and causing major damage to an important airport.

The quake also caused major transport disruption with all flights cancelled from Sapporo's main Chitose airport, where the shaking brought down part of a ceiling and burst a

water pipe. Local buses and trains, as well as bullet train services were halted. The Tomari nuclear power plant in Hokkaido, which was not operational before the quake, was forced to turn to emergency back-up power to keep its cooling system working, NHK said. A friendly football match between Japan and Chile planned for Sapporo was cancelled, with the Japanese FA citing the quake's severe impact on power and transport. — AFP

Lifestyle

Friday Times

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2018

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This photo shows a customer handling a ball python at the Reptile Cafe in Phnom Penh. — AFP

Cambodian reptile cafe slithers into people's hearts

See Page 24

Cranberries singer drowned accidentally in bath

Late singer-songwriter Dolores O'Riordan, frontwoman of the multi-million-selling rock band The Cranberries, accidentally drowned in a hotel bath after consuming alcohol, a coroner ruled yesterday. The singer, who died aged 46, was found in the bath in her room at the Park Lane Hilton hotel on January 15. Coroner Shirley Radcliffe in London ruled that the cause of death was accidental drowning due to intoxication, but found no evidence of injuries or self-harm. Policewoman Natalie Smart described attending the scene and

finding O'Riordan "submerged in the bath with her nose and mouth fully under the water."

The inquest also heard there were empty bottles in the room. "There's no evidence that this was anything other than an accident," said the coroner. The Cranberries achieved international success in the 1990s with their debut album "Everyone Else is Doing it, So Why Can't We?", which included the hit single "Linger". Follow-up album "No Need to Argue" went to number one in Australia, France and Germany, and number 6 in the United States. The

album also gave rise to politically-charged single "Zombie", an angry response to the deadly Northern Ireland conflict, which hit number one across Europe. The band sold around 40 million records worldwide.

Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar was among the first to pay tributes, calling O'Riordan "the voice of a generation". Around 200 people, including her mother, her three children and her six siblings, attended her funeral, which was held at Saint Ailbe's church in Ballybricken, outside the western city of Limerick, on January 23. —AFP



In this file photo Irish singer Dolores O'Riordan of the The Cranberries performs on stage during the Cognac Blues Passion festival in Cognac. —AFP



In this file photo musician Kevin Barnes, of the Rockers Of Montreal performs during day 1 of the Coachella Music Festival held at the Empire Polo Field in Indio, California. —AFP

Rockers Of Montreal bolt Israel festival, denounce 'apartheid'

Rockers Of Montreal have become the latest musicians to pull out of a festival in Israel, accusing the Jewish state of "apartheid" and urging more activism. The indie rock band—which, despite its name, is from Athens, Georgia and not Quebec—follows the pop singer Lana Del Rey in leaving the three-day Meteor festival, which opened yesterday in northern Israel. The move comes amid a campaign by the BDS movement—Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions—that calls on musicians to shun Israel as a way to press the Jewish state to change its treatment of the Palestinians.

While artists who have heeded the boycott calls have generally released vague, diplomatic statements, Of Montreal—known for its boisterous, synthesizer-driven psychedelic rock—took aim squarely at Israeli policy, while stressing it was not condemning the people of Israel as a whole. "After exhausting all of the different possible ways of justifying playing an Israeli party festival, while the political and military leaders of the country continue their murderous and brutal policies against the Palestinian people, we came to the realization that there is no actual appropriate move other than to cancel the show," Of Montreal wrote on its Facebook page late Tuesday.

"Now is not the time for escapism and celebrations. Now is the time for activism and protests against Israeli apartheid, Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the human rights atrocities being carried out every day in Gaza by Israeli forces," it said. The Israeli military on Wednesday closed the sole crossing to the Gaza Strip, the impoverished, densely populated pocket ruled by Islamist movement Hamas, after demonstrators threw rocks in a protest against a US decision to end funding for the UN agency which runs most of the territory's schools.

Organizers of the Meteor festival have criticized the BDS movement, saying it has "insanely politicized" an event that had no government funding and only had music as its cause. "We believe deeply in music's capacity to transcend and heal humanity's rifts. This is where sincere dialogue and true understanding can take root," it said in a statement issued before the musicians' withdrawals. "Failure to identify that opportunity is an exercise in perpetuating hopelessness on all sides," it said. Prominent musicians who remain on the festival lineup include the US rappers A\$AP Ferg and Pusha T and the California fusionist producers Kamasi Washington and Flying Lotus. —AFP

Confident and content, Paul McCartney rejuvenates sound

As perhaps the biggest living legend of rock, Paul McCartney would raise few eyebrows if he stayed in a comfort zone of rehashing Beatles tunes to adoring nostalgists. Instead, the 76-year-old has recorded one of his most ambitious albums in years, "Egypt Station," displaying not only a predictable confidence in his classic sound but an eagerness to freshen it for a new era. "Egypt Station," which comes out today, reveals an artist who feels on top of his game and has rooted out whatever negativity has built up over the decades.

"I used to drink so much / Forgot to come home / I lied to my doctor / But these days I don't / 'Cause I'm happy with you / I got lots of good things to do," the thrice-married McCartney, his guitar aptly jaunty, sings near the start of the 16-track album. His sanguine tone extends beyond his own life. "Despite Repeated Warnings" is a seven-minute parable about the fledgling fight against climate change and naysayers such as Donald Trump—taken on in the song by earnest passengers on a disaster-bound ship. "The engine's going to blow and we're going to be left down below," McCartney warns before repeated shouts of "Yes, we can do it!" The song shifts gears into four distinct parts with an intensifying guitar and horns fueling a sense of foreboding.

Fresh musical directions

Plenty of the music is Beatles-esque on "Egypt Station" such as "Do It Now," whose intertwining minor-key piano and harpsichord lines belie the message of alacrity. But the music veers in unexpected directions. McCartney bellows like a hard rocker on "Caesar Rock." Even more striking, McCartney embraces the hoots and hollers and electronic voice effects of millennial-generation pop-rock on "Fuh You." As if inspired by the genre, "Fuh You" features some of the album's most banal lyricism—"Want a love that's so proud and real / You make me want to go out and steal."

The song was produced by Ryan Tedder, the singer of OneRepublic, while most of the album was supervised by Greg Kurstin, the in-demand Los Angeles musician best known for co-writing Adele's mega-ballad "Hello."



Paul McCartney

New vigor

"Egypt Station" is the first album in five years by McCartney, who has shown renewed vigor with extensive touring since 2016 and dates scheduled through 2019. The album has no explicit connection to Egypt with the ancient country instead an exoticized metaphor for a distant, dreamlike journey. McCartney, more known for his fascination with India than Egypt, has explained that he sees the album as a travelogue, not merely of place but of sentiment. The album kicks off with a snippet of train noise before "I Don't Know," an unusually subdued opener which McCartney has described as his favorite song on the album, a mid-tempo piano ballad about self-doubt in a relationship.

"Back in Brazil," one of the catchiest tracks on the album, pays subtle tribute to the South American musical powerhouse with its syncopated rhythm section but is marked more by a funky organ and a whirling clarinet solo. On "People Want Peace," McCartney renews the familiar pacifist optimism inherited from the Beatles but offers a 21st-century production, the Gospel vocals and strings reinforced by booming drums. "The message is simple / It's straight from my heart / And I know that you've heard it before," McCartney acknowledges on the song. But he explains: "I'm not quitting while people are crying for more." —AFP

Bannon film ignites row over 'normalizing' far right

If Errol Morris thought he was about to get an easy ride from what Steve Bannon calls the "Hollywood liberal elite" with his new film "America Dharma", he had another thing coming. Journalists after journalist at the Venice film festival pummelled the king of the confessional documentary for giving Donald Trump's former strategist and alt-right hero a platform. Usually post-screening press conferences at film festivals are love-ins, with the auteur gently cradled by reporters and critics after bringing their baby into the world.

But in Venice Morris got a kicking, with reporters queuing up to accuse him of falling into the far-right's trap. When the reviews fell yesterday the verdict—with a few notable exceptions—was damning. Variety lacerated Morris for letting Bannon get away with "playing the role of alt-right Teddy bear... It's hard to escape the feeling that Errol Morris got played," wrote its critic Owen Gleiberman. "If you walked into 'American Dharma' knowing nothing about Donald Trump's former adviser you'd probably find him to be a fascinating, compelling, and at times even charming figure. If that sounds like a swipe against the movie, it is."

'Brazen lies' unchallenged

Morris—who has previously put the often reviled archi-

facts of the Vietnam and Iraq wars, Robert McNamara and Donald Rumsfeld, under the microscope in the Oscar-winning "The Fog of War" and "The Unknown Known"—never "stands up to Bannon's most brazen lies", Gleiberman argued. The sentiment was shared by the Italian and Spanish press. Eric Kohn, chief critic of IndieWire, said the film's ambiguity made it the "most disturbing movie of the year... It's never clear who has the upper hand. "Bannon acolytes may not be persuaded to abandon their leader, and everyone else is left wondering if the bad guys have already won," he said.

That the film was shown on the same day as Paul Greengrass' highly emotional "22 July", the story of far right terrorist Anders Breivik's massacre of 77 people in Norway in 2011, gave an added piquancy to the debate. Furthermore, Bannon arrived in Venice at the center of a storm of protest over his inclusion as a speaker at the New Yorker festival. When the magazine's editor bowed to pressure and dropped him, Bannon damned it as "a defining moment" from his Venice hotel room. "David Remnick showed he was gutless when confronted by the howling online mob," he said. Morris, too, came out fighting against the "hostile questioning" of his film. — AFP



Director Errol Morris arrives for the premiere of his film "American Dharma" presented out of competition during the 75th Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido. — AFP

Rare movie memorabilia on show for London auction

Han Solo's jacket from "The Empire Strikes Back" and Indiana Jones' signature hat top off some dazzling movie memorabilia that went on display in London yesterday before being auctioned later this month. More than 600 props and costumes from film and television, including Marty McFly's hoverboard in "Back To The Future Part II", will go under the hammer in the British capital on September 20. Around a third of the rare and unique lots can be viewed at the BFI IMAX complex ahead of the bidding. "We've got some of the best (items) from the pinnacle of all the films," said Sian Taylor, project manager at organizer Prop Store—namechecking seminal franchises from "Star Wars" and "Batman" to "The Terminator" and "The Lord of the Rings".

The film memorabilia seller has held the annual auction since 2014, and expects this year's collection to fetch a record £3.5 million (\$4.6 million, 3.9 million euros). "It's just getting bigger and better... and it's a very good year," Taylor told AFP of the 2018 crop. The Solo jacket worn by actor Harrison Ford in "Star Wars Episode V-The Empire Strike Back" currently takes center stage at the two-week exhibition. It is expected to be the highest-selling lot and fetch up to £1 million.

That would smash Prop Store's previous record of over £300,000 paid for the motorbike from several "Batman" films. Meanwhile Ford's signature fedora in the Indiana Jones franchise debut "Raiders of the Lost Ark", and his bullwhip from 1984's "The Temple of Doom" are also featured. The hat, crafted by famed Italian milliner Borsalino, is set to sell for £300,000. For potential buyers on a lower budget, the multi-coloured hoverboard ridden by Michael J. Fox in the "Back to the Future" sequel could fetch between £30,000 and £50,000. — AFP



Canadian director David Cronenberg poses outside the festival's palace after he received a Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement award during a ceremony yesterday at the 75th Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido. — AFP



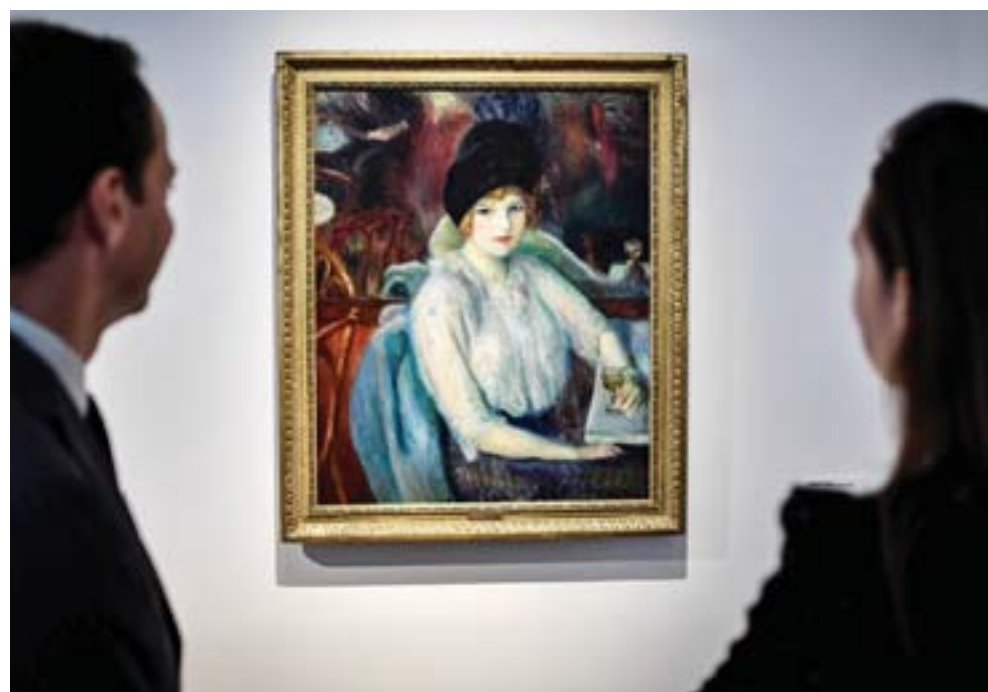
The fedora worn by Harrison Ford's character Indiana Jones in the 'Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark' film is on show at the Imax in central London yesterday and will be auctioned on September 20. — AFP



The jacket worn by Harrison Ford's character Han Solo in the 'Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back' film is on show at the Imax in central London yesterday.



People look at a painting by US artist Edward Hopper named "Chop Suey", that is part of the Barney A Ebsworth Collection, during a presentation of the Ebsworth collection at Christie's auction house in Paris. — AFP photos

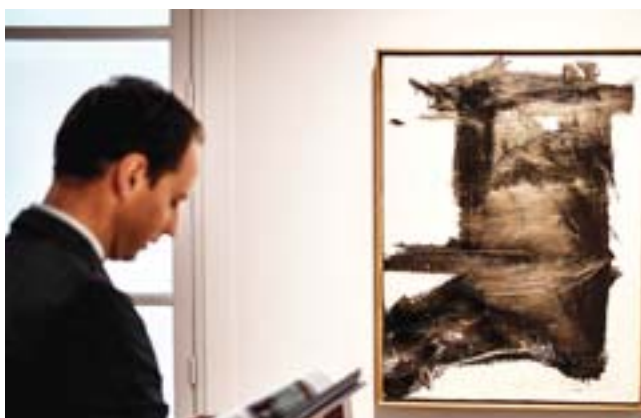


People look at a painting by US artist William James Glackens called "Cafe Lafayette" (Also Known As Kay Laurel).

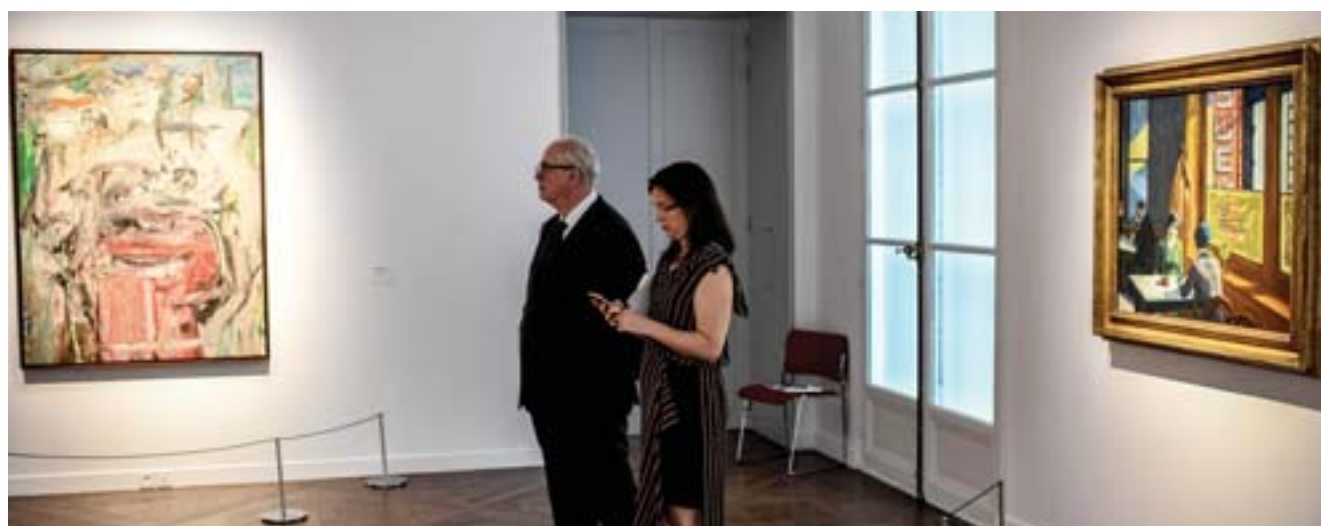
Rare Ebsworth collection of modern US masters set for auction

Nearly 90 works from the Ebsworth collection of modern American masters, including rarely seen paintings by Edward Hopper, Georgia O'Keeffe and Jackson Pollock, will go under the hammer in November, auction house Christie's said Wednesday. Showings of highlights from "An American House: The Barney A. Ebsworth Collection", kicked off yesterday in Paris to coincide with the French capital's Biennale art fair. The works were amassed over several decades by Ebsworth, a pioneer in the luxury travel industry who died in April age 83.

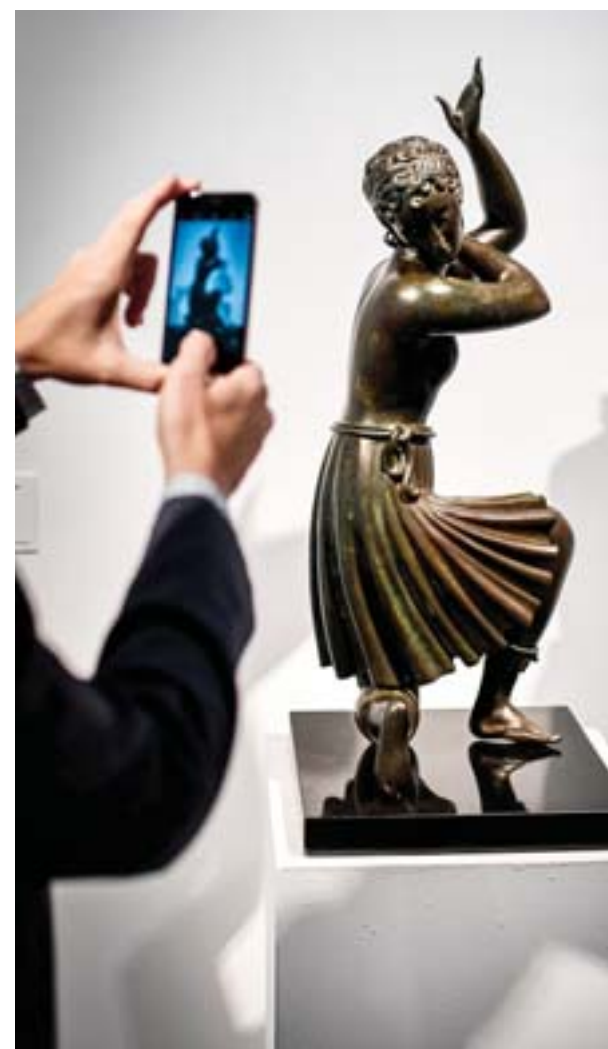
His interest in art was awakened by trips to the Louvre museum in Paris, where he met his first wife while stationed in France with the US Army. Christie's said the collection was expected to be sold for upwards of \$300 million (260 million euros) at the New York auction. "His unique journey as a collector resonates with the influence and art historical connections of Gertrude Stein's Paris, and ultimately set a new high standard for the creation of a nuanced collection of 20th century art," Marc Porter, chairman of Christie's Americas, said in a statement. One of the



A person looks at a catalogue as he walks past the painting by US artist Franz Kline named "Painting".



People look at paintings by US artist Willem de Kooning called "Woman as Landscape" (left) and by US artist Edward Hopper called "Chop Suey" (right).



A person takes a picture with a cellphone of a statue made by Polish and US artist Elie Nadelman called "Dancing Figure".

Lifestyle | Features

Friday, September 7, 2018

stars of the show is "Chop Suey", a 1929 painting by Hopper thought to be his last major work still in private hands, with an estimate of \$70 million.

Hopper has become one of the most popular American artists for European audiences, with a 2012 showing of his seminal "Nighthawks" portrait of a late-night diner scene drawing one of the biggest crowds ever at the Grand Palais in Paris. Pollock's "Composition with Red Strokes" (1950), estimated at \$50 million, and Willem de Kooning's "Woman as Landscape" (1955, \$60 million), are among the other highlights of the sale. Several works by O'Keeffe, who was a witness as Ebsworth's second marriage, according to Seatrade Cruise News, will also be sold, including "Horn and Feathers" from 1937. Along with the three-day showing at Christie's gallery in Paris, works will also be displayed in New York, Hong Kong, London, San Francisco and Los Angeles. —AFP



A person looks at a painting by US artist Georgia O'Keeffe named "Beauford Delaney".



US artist Jackson Pollock called "Composition with red Strokes".



A person looks at a painting by US artist Charles Sheeler called "Catwalk".



A person looks at a catalogue as she walks past the painting by US modern artist Patrick Henry Bruce called "Still life".



US artist Jackson Pollock called "Composition with red Strokes".

STARBUCKS FINALLY OPENS CAFE IN ITALY, HOME OF ESPRESSO

US coffee giant Starbucks opens its first branch in Italy yesterday, with the sprawling Milan 'roastery' at the avant garde of an ambitious plan to conquer the spiritual home of espresso. The Seattle-based multinational is taking on a mainstay of Italian culture: a thick thimbleful of powerful black liquid served at the bar in cafs throughout the country, six billion times a year, according to Italian catering federation FIPE. Not surprising then that Starbucks, which is well-established elsewhere in Europe, has already delayed its entry into the Italian market, originally planned for early 2017. Outspoken former CEO Howard Schultz—who quit the chain in June amid talk that he could run for the White House in 2020—has repeatedly said that the company would come to Italy with "humility".

"During my first trip to Milan in 1983, I was captivated by the sense of community I found in the city's espresso bars – the moments of human connection that passed so freely and genuinely between baristas and their customers," said Schultz, now chairman emeritus after masterminding Starbucks worldwide expansion. The company hopes that its 2,300-square-metre (25,000 square foot) Reserve Roastery—"the most beautiful Starbucks in the world"—will entice customers in for a new coffee experience.

'The right moment'

Matteo Figura of market researchers NPD Group said that Starbucks is entering the Italian market at the right moment. "At the moment, chains account for only 20 percent of Italy's catering trade, the rest are independent businesses. But chains are expanding rapidly, more than four percent" a year, he told AFP.

The way that Italians consume coffee has also changed a lot in recent years. While previously an espresso was "an opportunity to have an energy 'shot'" consumers today increasingly care more about quality and the experience they can have."

Starbucks will primarily target Millennials between 18 and 34 years old, said Figura, adding that the Italian market has room for both traditional cafs and Starbucks, as they target different consumers. "Cracking the home of coffee culture is a tough challenge, with many Italians deriding the move as ridiculous," said Alexandre Loeur, analyst at Euromonitor International. But "while snobbery might initially prevail, the younger generations are more open to the type of specialty coffee offered by the Seattle based brand," he said. "If we look at France, another country with a strong coffee culture, millennial consumers are undoubtedly responding well to speciality coffees. We can therefore infer that Starbucks could do well (in Italy), in the medium to long-term."

'Colossus'

"It remains to be seen if they'll get a foothold in Italy," said Alessandro Panzarino, who runs the Cafe Martini, around the corner from the new Starbucks. He admits to being a little fearful "of this colossus" and expects there to be an initial boom in trade at his new neighbor. "Then we have to see if people get bored after a while," he said, and if people are happy to spend so much, with a traditional Milanese espresso going for around one euro (one dollar). Simone Dusi, 35, won't be swayed. "I really don't like Starbucks coffee," he told AFP. "I like strong coffee (so) absolutely no way to diluted coffee or variants like Frappuccino!" — AFP

Burberry ends bonfire of the luxuries after waste outcry

Britain's Burberry will no longer burn unsold luxury goods to protect its brand after an admission that it destroyed almost \$40 million worth of stock last year sparked a furore over waste in the fashion industry. Burberry also said yesterday it would no longer use real fur such as mink and racoon, in another step to improving its social and environmental credentials which was immediately welcomed by animal rights campaigners. The waste revelation in July from Burberry came only months after the owner of Cartier and Montblanc admitted to destroying some of their unsold watches and coincides with growing public awareness of waste and its environmental impact.

"Modern luxury means being socially and environmentally responsible," said CEO Marco Gobbetti, who is in the process of taking Burberry, where coats sell for more than 2,500 pounds (\$3,234) and handbags are priced at up to 1,500 pounds, more upmarket. Many retailers have been called out in recent years for destroying unsold stock, including by slashing or punching holes in garments before throwing them out. Richemont, owner of luxury watch brands, said it bought back unsold stock from dealers during a recent downturn and recycled the precious metals and stones that were in the high-end pieces. Burberry physically destroyed 28.6 million pounds worth of finished goods in the financial year to April, up from 26.9 million pounds the previous year, including 10 million pounds worth of beauty products such as perfume.

The products are generally those that did not sell via discount outlets and are more than five years old. Burberry said it would try to reuse, repair, donate or recycle its products

while a strategy to make fewer, more targeted collections should help reduce excess stock. It is also working with the sustainable luxury company Elvis & Kresse to transform 120 tonnes of leather offcuts into new products over the next five years.

Growing awareness

Exane BNP Paribas analyst Luca Solca said Burberry's announcement could put pressure on other luxury names to be more transparent about how they handle unsold goods. "Concerns about sustainability are slowly but surely becoming more relevant for luxury goods consumers," he said. Some luxury groups also offer sales to employees and journalists to limit the amount of unsold stock. Both Kering, owner of Gucci and Alexander McQueen, and LVMH, owner of Louis Vuitton, Celine, Christian Dior and Givenchy, declined to comment. In the mass market, major brands have also struggled to shift stock in a fast changing environment.

H&M, the world's second-biggest fashion retailer after Inditex, has said in the past it burns stock, but only when it is damaged or, for example, has high levels of chemicals in it. At the end of May the Swedish group had \$4 billion of unsold stock that it said it hoped to sell. "Under no circumstances do we destroy clothes that are safe to use," a spokeswoman said. Burberry is following the likes of Versace, Gucci and the trailblazer for ethical fashion, Stella McCartney, in removing real fur from its ranges. The moves are part of a series of changes at Burberry where Gobbetti is pinning his hopes on new designer Riccardo Tisci to transform the quintessentially British fashion house. — Reuters

Cambodian reptile cafe slithers into people's hearts

For anyone terrified of an albino python, an orange corn snake or a scaly, bearded iguana, Chea Raty says getting up close and personal at Phnom Penh's first reptile-themed cafe is the only remedy. Taking off from the cat cafes already popular in the Cambodian capital, Chea Raty launched his business to revamp the skin-crawling reputation of lizards and snakes and convince haters that they are simply misunderstood. As customers sip on their lattes and hang out with the reptiles, "they will love them like I do," the 32-year-old told AFP while stroking the scaly neck wattle of an iguana.

The walls of his cafe are lined with lit-up glass tanks containing snakes of various lengths and colors, while a bright macaw screeches in the corner. Some visitors look hesitantly at the cages, others are bolder in their embrace of the creatures. There's no entry fee, so visitors can order a coffee and request a sit-down with a serpentine friend from one of the tanks. An ice tea for a young customer instantly becomes a cool object for a yellow-and-cream-coloured ball python to twist its body around.

A woman giggles as an albino python creeps from her shoulder and wraps behind her head. Nearby, a bearded dragon iguana perches on a table while a man gently pets it. Customer Y Navim was wary at first of a corn snake, an orange-coloured serpent that kills its prey through constriction. But it was soon resting on her palm as she sipped her coffee. "This cafe is quite unique," the 22-year-old said. "I've never seen some of these reptiles before. They are beautiful and scary." To critics who say the animals should be left alone in the wild, Chea Raty says his human-bred creatures "cannot survive there." All of his cafe creatures are imported from Thailand. Business is still slow-going due to the common fears of snakes and lizards. But women, Chea Raty says, are providing an unexpected boost. "They put the pythons around their neck, take selfies, and they are happy." —AFP



This photo shows a customer petting a green iguana at the Reptile Cafe in Phnom Penh. —AFP photos



A customer handling a green iguana at the Reptile Cafe in Phnom Penh.



A customer handling a snake and an iguana at the Reptile Cafe in Phnom Penh.



A customer taking a selfie with a python around her neck at the Reptile Cafe in Phnom Penh.



Reptiles among drinks at the Reptile Cafe in Phnom Penh.



A customer taking a selfie with a ball python at the Reptile Cafe.



A customer handling a ball python at the Reptile Cafe.

For sale: Australian pub in the middle of nowhere

One of Australia's most well-known pubs, located in the country's remote outback thousands of miles from major cities, is on the market for the first time in decades and attracting local and international interest. The 134-year-old Birdsville Hotel is the sole watering hole for the town of Birdsville-population: 140 — and having a drink there has become a must-do for the tourists who make the trek to the town for its centuries-old annual horse races and thriving music festival.

Owner David Brook-whose family has lived in Birdsville since the late 1880s-said the property agents told him there had been "interest from afar" by people wanting to invest in or manage the pub, which is more than 600 kilometers from the nearest big town. For Brook, who bought the pub in 1979, and whose grandmother owned the hotel between 1920-46, the pub's isolation is its chief selling point. "When you explain to them that you can have a (race) meeting and get 6,000 and have a music festival... and get 9,000 for the week-end in a town where there's only one pub, you can work out that it's not a bad business," he said.

The pub, with its sandstone walls, dusty cowboy hats hanging from the ceiling and country music blasting from speakers, is being marketed as "a true Aussie icon" where "everyone wants to say they've had a drink". The tavern has 27 guest rooms, and includes an aviation fuel supply business with small planes and helicopters carrying tourists taking off and landing just across the road.

While other pubs around Australia have modernized and added gambling machines to boost income, Brook has kept the decor simple and focused on offering good service and food. More recently, Birdsville has been boosted by the Big Red Bash, a three-day music festival in the Simpson Desert held annually since 2013 and known as the "most remote concert on the planet". "I hope that it can be kept as just a modest, good business," Brook said. "An investor who is prepared to spend money and make sure that it provides good service, sometimes at the expense-a little bit-of profit. "You can have a big, shiny (pub) in the city that makes a lot of money, or you can have something special out here that you're proud to own." —AFP



This picture shows birds flying at dawn above the 134-year-old Birdsville Hotel in outback Queensland's Birdsville town. —AFP



People enjoying sunset outside the 134-year-old Birdsville Hotel in outback Queensland's Birdsville town.



The comedy duo the Crackup Sisters, S.T. Ruth (R) and Twiggs, posing for pictures outside the 134-year-old Birdsville Hotel in outback Queensland's Birdsville town.



People enjoying themselves at sunset outside the 134-year-old Birdsville Hotel.

Guinness World Records celebrates oldest trapeze artist, highest-jumping dog

An octogenarian flying trapeze artist, the owner of the world's fastest jet-propelled go-kart and a dog named Feather with a flair for jumping are among the record-breaking stars to win a place in the latest edition of Guinness World Records. Others to feature in the 2019 edition of the book, which went on sale yesterday, include the creator of the world's largest knitting needles and an Irish butcher, Barry John Crowe,

who has produced the most sausages - 78 - in one minute.

Betty Goedhart, from California, has been named the world's oldest trapeze artist at 85 and attributes her success to "doing things I enjoy doing". "I'm hoping I encourage people, women, to not think that when they hit the age of 55, they are old. We have got a lot more on our journey," said Goedhart, who only began trapeze classes at the age of 78 but looks as

though she has spent a lifetime swinging through the air upside down.

Another octogenarian honored in the book is Sumiko Iwamura, an 83-year-old Japanese restaurant owner who in the evening turns into DJ Sumirock, the world's oldest professional club disc jockey. British art student Elizabeth Bond, 31, decided to draw attention to her exhibitions by creating knitting needles that measure some 4.42 meters (14 feet 5

inches) in length. Another Briton, Tom Bagnall, 26, racked up a record speed of 112.29 miles per hour (181 km per hour) for a jet-propelled go-kart. Animals also feature among the latest world record-breakers.

Dog owner Samantha Valle from the US state of Maryland trained Feather, whom she adopted from a rescue center, to jump over ever higher hurdles until she set a new canine record at 191.7 cm (6.3 feet). —Reuters

Sirloin steak tips meet their match with tangy corn relish

By America's Test Kitchen

Sirloin steak tips have deep flavor and a tender texture that calls out for a bright and texturally interesting accompaniment, so we chose our Southwestern-inspired Tangy Corn Relish. To keep the sirloin steak tips juicy despite the heat of the grill, we marinated the steak with a mixture of soy sauce, brown sugar, and potent spices and aromatics, which promoted browning and infused the steak with flavor and a bit of sweetness that was complemented nicely by the relish.

We seared the steaks over high heat (finishing them over cooler heat if needed), which helped cook this often unevenly shaped cut thoroughly. Sirloin steak tips are often sold as flap meat, and are available as whole steaks, cubes, and strips. For this recipe, use strips and cut them into 6- to 8-inch-long pieces, if necessary. When grilling, bear in mind that steak tips cooked medium-rare to medium are firmer and not quite so chewy as steaks cooked rare.

GRILLED SOUTHWESTERN STEAK TIPS WITH TANGY CORN RELISH

Ingredients:

Servings: 4-6

Start to finish: 1 hour 30 minutes

Marinade:

1/3 cup soy sauce
1/3 cup vegetable oil
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 tablespoon packed dark brown sugar
1 tablespoon tomato paste
1 tablespoon chili powder
2 teaspoons ground cumin
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
2 pounds sirloin steak tips, trimmed
1 recipe Tangy Corn Relish (recipe follows)

Preparation:

For the marinade, whisk all ingredients in bowl until sugar has dissolved. Toss steak tips with marinade in 1-gallon zipper-lock bag; seal bag, pressing out as much air as possible. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 2 hours, flipping bag every 30 minutes. Before grilling, remove steak from bag and pat dry with paper towels. Discard marinade.

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

For a gas grill: Turn all burners to high, cover, and heat grill until hot, about 15 minutes. Leave primary burner on high and turn other burner(s) to medium. (Adjust burners as needed to maintain hot fire and medium fire on separate sides of grill.)

Clean and oil cooking grate. Place steak on hotter side of grill. Cook (covered if using gas), turning as needed, until well browned and meat registers 120 to 125 F (for medium-rare), or 130 to 135 F (for medium), 10 to 14 minutes. (If steaks begin to burn, slide to cooler side of grill to finish cooking.) Transfer steak to carving board, tent with aluminum foil, and let rest for 5 to 10 minutes. Slice steak thin and serve with relish.

Whisk sugar, flour, salt, and pepper together in large saucepan. Slowly whisk in vinegar and water until incorporated. Stir in corn, bell pepper, onion, mustard seeds, and celery seeds and bring to simmer. Cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are tender



and mixture has thickened slightly and measures about 2 1/2 cups, about 40 minutes. Transfer to bowl and let cool to room temperature, about 2 hours. (Relish can be refrigerated for up to 1 week; bring to room temperature before serving.)

Nutrition information per serving: 618 calories; 327 calories from fat; 36 g fat (10 g saturated; 2 g trans fats); 135 mg cholesterol; 1439 mg sodium; 32 g carbohydrate; 3 g fiber; 19 g sugar; 44 g protein.



A blueberry tart that simply works, so you don't have to

By Sara Moulton

Before our annual circuit around the sun forces us to kiss off the blueberry season, I urge one and all to try this blueberry tart. Super-tasty and much simpler to make than the standard recipe, it features the usual buttery bottom crust, loaded with gobs of fresh berries and topped off with a crispy sweet streusel crumble.

If you happen to be one of those folks who's daunted by the mechanics of pie-making - all that rolling out and crimping! - then this may be the tart of your dreams. The tin used here boasts a fluted edge, which means there's no fancy crimp work required of y-o-u. Even better, the top crust (the crumbly part of the pie) is made by combining some reserved pastry dough with sugar and nuts. In other words, the recipe's one dough does double duty as the pie's top and bottom layers.

Naturally, you'll want to be sure to start with flavorful blueberries. Usually, that's a given during blueberry season, but just to be safe, ask someone at the market if you might taste a berry or two before making your purchase. Bottom line: These berries have to speak up for themselves because there's no "blueberry helper" in this recipe - no sugar or lemon juice added to goose up the flavor of an otherwise bland berry.

Regarding the nuts, I'm prescribing almonds, but if you're nutty for a different kind of nut, swap it in. Finally, you might wonder if there isn't too much doggone streusel in the recipe when you first pile it on top of the berries. Not to worry - just pat it down gently and you'll see that it fits. One last note: You may wonder why this tart takes so long to make. It's because the dough needs resting time, both after mixing it and again after it

has been rolled out so that the gluten has time to relax, ensuring a tender tart crust. So plan to make the dough in the morning or even the day before and then the tart will only take 1 hour 20 minutes to make, bake and cool.

BLUEBERRY STREUSEL TART

Ingredients:

Servings: 10

Start to finish: 5 hours (35 minutes active)
 300 grams all-purpose flour (about 2 1/2 cups)
 1/4 teaspoon table salt
 2 sticks plus 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into small cubes and chilled well
 3/4 cup (3 ounces) slivered almonds
 3/4 cup sugar
 5 cups blueberries
 Vanilla ice cream for garnish

Preparation:

In a large bowl, stir together the flour and the salt, add the butter and, working quickly with your fingertips or a pastry blender, mix the dough until most of mixture resembles coarse meal, with the rest in small (roughly pea-sized) lumps. Transfer 2 cups of the mixture to a medium bowl (reserving the rest for the streusel topping), drizzle 4 tablespoons ice water evenly over the 2 cups and gently stir with a fork until incorporated. Gently squeeze a small handful: it should hold together without crumbling apart. If it doesn't, add more ice water, 1/2 tablespoon at a time, stirring 2 or 3 times after each addition until it comes together.

Turn the dough out onto a clean work surface and with the heel of your hand, smear the dough in a forward motion on the work surface to help distribute fat. Gather the smeared dough together and repeat the process. Form the dough into a disk. Chill, wrapped in plastic wrap, until firm, at least 1 hour. Meanwhile, add the almonds and the sugar to the reserved flour-butter mixture and mix well to make the streusel topping. Chill.

Remove the disk of dough from the refrigerator for about 30 minutes before rolling it out.

On a lightly floured surface roll out the dough 1/8-inch thick. Transfer the dough to a 10-inch tart pan with a removable bottom, ease the dough into the pan, pressing it into the corners and trim off any excess dough hanging over the top. Prick the dough all over with a fork and chill it for 1 hour. Remove the streusel topping from the refrigerator.

Put a large rimmed baking sheet on a rack on the lower third of the oven. Preheat the oven to 375 F.

Fill the rolled-out tart shell with the berries and top the berries with the streusel mixture, pressing the mixture down gently. Bake the tart on the sheet pan for 30 minutes. Cover the tart loosely with foil and continue baking until the filling is bubbling, about 30 minutes. Cool in the pan on a rack for 20 minutes. Remove the side of the pan and let cool completely about 45 minutes. Serve each portion topped with ice cream.

Nutrition information per serving: 376 calories; 219 calories from fat; 25 g fat (13 g saturated; 1 g trans fats); 53 mg cholesterol; 62 mg sodium; 35 g carbohydrates; 4 g fiber; 8 g sugar; 6 g protein.



Vase Rock is Little Liuchiu Island's star landmark.

BIG ADVENTURES ON LITTLE LIUCHIU: TAIWAN'S LARGEST CORAL ISLAND

It's midnight, and you're on the beach, wading carefully through the rock pools left behind by low tide. The only sound: the waves rushing back and forth. The only light coming from your head torch. Taking care not to step on the dozens of black, lethally spiky sea anemones you've just spotted lurking in the rocky crevasses, you turn off your light and are plunged into near-total darkness.

Then, you move your feet gently through the shallow water and the reason you came here, in the middle of the night at low tide, is revealed. Like water-bound fireflies, luminescent *Noctiluca* organisms dance in the disturbed water, glimmering as brightly and briefly as shooting stars. A natural phenomenon that can only be glimpsed when conditions are just right. Witnessing this 'star

sand', as the locals call it, is just one of the big adventures you might have on Little Liuchiu, Taiwan's largest coral island.

A hidden island

Little Liuchiu lies nine nautical miles off the southwestern coast of Taiwan, a simple 20-minute ferry journey from the port of Donggang. Bordered by the Taiwan Strait to the west and the South China Sea to the south, Little Liuchiu is Taiwan's only coral island with a significant population - an estimated 13,000 residents live here permanently.

Covering an area of 6.8 sq km, the island lives up to its diminutive name - it takes just 20 minutes to ride a motorcycle, the chief way to travel, around the island without stopping. But what Li-

uchiu, or Lamay Island as you might also see it called, lacks in size, it makes up for in things to do. From snorkeling and diving to chilling on the beach to exploring beautiful temples and experiencing island life, Liuchiu is perfect for a couple of days' getaway.

Underwater adventures on Liuchiu

Little Liuchiu is one of the few coral reef islands that surround Taiwan, making it a great spot to go snorkeling and scuba diving. These lush coral habitats house hundreds of different fish and plants right off the beaches, so it's easy to snorkel independently here. The seas can be choppy, though, so less experienced swimmers should consider taking one of the guided snorkeling trips offered by local guesthouses, which usually provide snorkeling

Lifestyle | Travel

Friday, September 7, 2018

masks, wetsuits and life jackets.

Most people focus their snorkeling activities on the waters around Vase Rock, a well-known landmark at the island's northern point. During peak season and at weekends, the waters around here are likely to be crowded, so it pays to seek out other snorkeling spots. The coast between the Dafu fishing harbor and the Houshi Fringing Reef, on the island's southeastern side, has fewer rocks to scramble over, as well as deeper waters that aren't suitable for less experienced swimmers (and therefore deter the crowds). Look out for others parked up at the roadside for entry points into the water. Wherever you snorkel, you're likely to encounter one or more of Little Liuchiu's largest water-bound residents: huge green sea turtles, some of which can measure more than a meter in length and weigh in at 200 kilograms.

Thanks to the island's diverse and protected ecosystem, it's estimated that more than 100 of these gentle giants live in its waters, happily feeding on the plants and animals that inhabit the reefs. They also breed here, with adult females coming ashore to nest during summer months. While these magnificent animals are remarkably calm around humans, giving you a unique, up-close look at their underwater grace and beauty, care should be taken not to touch them or other marine life.

While most locals are extremely proud of the turtles and participate in activities to protect them and their habitat, you should never go with a guide who feeds the turtles or encourages any physical interaction with them. It's also important to never touch or disturb the delicate reefs, which provide the important ecosystem for all marine life here.

Liuchiu's beautiful beaches

Little Liuchiu has a number of shell-sand beaches nestled amongst the eroded reef rock that makes up most of the coast. Geban Bay is a 100m stretch of sand, fringed by green forests and undisturbed by development. Located on the island's western side, it's a fabulous point from which to watch the sun setting over the clear, blue waters.

Elsewhere, Zhongao Beach, to the west of the island's Baisha tourist harbor, is nestled in a gentle bay that's perfect for swimming and relaxing. It is also one of the key beaches for breeding sea turtles. Between May and October each year, the beach and



Snorkellers can often spot gentle sea turtles swimming in the shallows off Little Liuchiu.

intertidal zone are closed overnight to avoid disturbing nesting creatures.

The beaches and rock pools on the island's southeastern tip is the best places to witness the shimmers of bioluminescent algae,

visible only at low tide in the middle of the night. Exploring this area at night also reveals a myriad of animal life not seen during daylight hours, including strange-looking sea cucumbers, purple-ink-squirting sea hares and shy hermit crabs. Take care when ex-



The stretch of beach at Geban Bay is one of Little Liuchiu's best beaches.

ploring at night - take a torch and watch where you step to avoid injury or damaging anything.

Island life

There are a number of villages dotted around the island, home to Little Liuchiu's laid-back residents, many of whom work in tourism or traditional fishing industries. In recent years, the island has become known for aquafarming, and locals can be seen tending to large oyster cages off the island's west coast. A lack of rivers on the island makes agriculture difficult, so residents have traditionally depended on the sea for their livelihood - often a daily struggle to make a living. Liuchiu is dotted with dozens of temples. The large number (estimates vary between 35-80) is testament to locals' faith in the protection of their gods, to whom they pray for good weather and advice on anything from building a new fishing boat or house.

One of the largest and most important of these is Biyun Temple, located at the centre of the island. Dedicated to Guanyin, the Chinese Buddhist goddess of mercy, the current ornately decorated building dates from the 1950s, although the site has had a temple on it since the early 1700s. Worshippers come to give offerings for weddings, funerals and profitable fish harvests.

On Guanyin's birthday - the 19th day of the second lunar month (around the end of March each year) - the temple is the focus of raucous celebration amongst islanders. Throughout the year, the various temples stage loud operas, performed on mobile stages on the backs of lorries. The distinctive sounds of Taiwanese opera singing fill the warm evening air, entertaining locals with their bawdy stories of love, loss and adventure.

Make it happen

Boats leave from Donggang harbor (around an hour from downtown Kaohsiung by bus) throughout the day, from 7am until around 6.45pm. The last boat back from Liuchiu is at 6pm. Sailings are operated by a number of private companies, but ticket prices are the same for all of them, and there's little difference in the service. Once you've arrived into Liuchiu's Baisha Tourist Harbor, it's easy to find accommodation in one of the island's many guesthouses. Touts flock to the harbor as boats come in, advertising places to stay, so ask around for a room and haggle on price. Most of the guesthouses are centered in the pretty harbor area, where there are also abundant restaurants serving local seafood, as well as a helpful visitor centre that provides maps of the island.



Pink skunk clownfish and sea anemone are amongst Little Liuchiu's rich marine life.

Alternatively, there is a well-equipped campsite, Samaji Resort, on the island's west coast, where you can hire camping equipment or use your own. Some visitors choose to wild camp at spots around the island, although this is technically forbidden.

Getting around Liuchiu

It's easy to hire scooters from one of the many shops near the tourist harbor. This is by far the best and most common way to

get around the island, where there are few cars and no buses. Be sure to have your drivers' license with you. You can also bring a bicycle across on the ferry. There are a few large hills to navigate, but generally the roads are well maintained and quiet. However you travel be sure to keep a look out for and protect crabs attempting to cross the roads as they seek out food and places to breed - signs around the island remind you to slow down at key crab-crossing areas.



The waters around Vase Rock are the most popular place for snorkeling.



Temples on Little Liuchiu put on regular Chinese operas to entertain locals.

Comic

WORD SEARCH

Basketball

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 39 letters spell a piece of Basketball trivia.

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

- ASSIST
BACKBOARD
BALL
BASKET
BENCH
BLOCK
CENTER
CLOCK
COACH
COURT
DRIBBLING
- FOUL
FREE THROW
GAME
HALF-TIME
HOOP
JERSEY
LAY-UP
NET
OUT OF BOUNDS
OVERTIME
- PASSING
PLAYER
POINT GUARD
POINTS
POWER FORWARD
QUARTER
REBOUND
REFEREE
RIM
SCOREBOARD
- SHOOTING GUARD
SHOT
SLAM DUNK
SMALL FORWARD
SNEAKERS
SUBSTITUTIONS
TEAM
THREE POINTER
TIME-OUT
TRAVELING

Yesterday's Solution

Baseball

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

- APPEAL
BALK
BASE
BATTER
BUNT
CATCH
COACH
DEAD BALL
DEFENSE
DOUBLE HEADER
DUGOUT
FAIR BALL
- FAIR TERRITORY
FLY BALL
FORCE PLAY
FORFEITED GAME
FOUL BALL
FOUL TERRITORY
FOUL TIP
GROUND BALL
IN FLIGHT
INFIELD FLY
INFIELDER
INNING
- INTERFERENCE
LEAGUE
LINE DRIVE
LIVE BALL
MOUND
OBSTRUCTION
OFFENSE
OUTFIELDER
OVERSLIDE
PENALTY
PITCHER
PIVOT FOOT
- RETOUCH
RUN DOWN
RUNNER
SCOREBOARD
SHORTSTOP
STRIKE
TAG
THROW
TIE GAME
TRIPLE PLAY
UMPIRE
WILD PITCH

Hidden sentence: A HOT DOG AT THE BALL PARK IS BETTER THAN STEAK AT THE RITZ

CROSSWORD 2003

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
15 16 17
18 19 20 21
22 23 24
25 26 27
28 29 30 31 32
33 34 35 36 37 38 39
40 41 42 43 44
45 46 47 48 49
50 51 52
53 54 55 56
57 58 59 60
61 62 63 64 65 66 67
68 69 70 71 72
73 74 75 76
77 78 79

ACROSS

1. A bachelor's degree in naval science.
4. Small carnivorous nocturnal marsupials of Australia and Tasmania.
12. An honorary degree in science.
15. A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
16. Annual and perennial grasses of savannas and upland grasslands.
17. Chiefly perennial grasses of cool temperate regions.
18. A self-funded retirement plan that allows you to contribute a limited yearly sum toward your retirement.
19. Having fangs.
20. Slender freshwater fishes of Eurasia and Africa resembling catfishes.
22. A state of motor and mental inactivity with a partial suspension of sensibility.
24. Pick consisting of a steel rod with a sharp point.
25. Hard dry sharp-flavored Italian cheese.
27. A narrow headband or strip of ribbon worn as a headband.
28. A hard brittle blue-white multivalent metallic element.
30. Diabetes caused by a relative or absolute deficiency of insulin and characterized by polyuria.
31. Small fishing boat rigged with one or more lugsails.
33. Having been read.
36. A book of the New Testament.
40. Moth having nonfunctional mouth-

- parts as adults.
42. Evergreen Indian shrub with vivid yellow flowers whose bark is used in tanning.
44. Headdress that protects the head from bad weather.
45. Gone by.
46. A religious belief of African origin involving witchcraft and sorcery.
48. The longer of the two telegraphic signals used in Morse code.
50. French mime famous for his sad-faced clown (born in 1923).
52. A state in southwestern Germany famous for its beer.
53. Not only so, but.
56. A public area set aside as a pedestrian walk.
57. An strong upward air current.
61. (legend) Chalice used by Christ at the last supper.
64. A member of an agricultural people in southeastern India.
68. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
69. Give an injection to.
72. Submerged aquatic plant having narrow leaves and small flowers.
73. Light informal conversation for social occasions.
74. Extinct order of jawless vertebrates.
76. A nucleic acid consisting of large molecules shaped like a double helix.
77. A Kwa language spoken by the Yoruba people in southwestern Nigeria.
78. A great raja.
79. A doctor's degree in education.

DOWN

1. Anything that serves as an enticement.
2. Roman Emperor notorious for his monstrous vice and fantastic luxury (was said to have started a fire that destroyed much of Rome in 64) but the Empire remained prosperous during his rule (37-68).
3. A long steep slope or cliff at the edge of a plateau or ridge.
4. Make formless.
5. Fear resulting from the awareness of danger.
6. A fractional monetary unit of Japan and Indonesia and Cambodia.
7. Of or relating to or characteristic of the former country of Yugoslavia or its people or languages.
8. The act of using.
9. Traveling by wheeled vehicle such as bicycle or automobile e.g..
10. Not out.
11. Remove or make invisible.
12. A parliamentary monarchy in southwestern Europe on the Iberian Peninsula.
13. Any spherical or nearly spherical bacteria.
14. The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
21. A drama set to music.
23. A genus of Ploceidae.
26. Wild sheep of northern Africa.
29. Popular music originating in the West Indies.
32. United States evangelical preacher famous as a mass evangelist (born in 1918).
34. 100 agorot equal 1 shekel.
35. Radioactive iodine test that measures the amount of radioactive iodine

- taken up by the thyroid gland.
37. Green algae common in freshwater lakes of limestone districts.
38. Of or relating to a speaker of the Tamil language or the language itself.
39. An advantageous purchase.
41. Fish eggs or egg-filled ovary.
43. The capital of Morocco.
47. Large and brightly colored handkerchief.
49. The 11th letter of the Greek alphabet.
51. The dull explosive noise made by an engine.
54. Polish labor leader and statesman (born in 1943).
55. A gray tetravalent metallic element that resembles zirconium chemically and is found in zirconium minerals.
58. (Greek mythology) The last king of Troy.
59. A Hindu prince or king in India.
60. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
62. Any of various strong liquors distilled from the fermented sap of toddy palms or from fermented molasses.
63. (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
65. An officer who acts as military assistant to a more senior officer.
66. An unofficial association of people or groups.
67. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
70. An emergency procedure consisting of external cardiac massage and artificial respiration.
71. Brief episode in which the brain gets insufficient blood supply.
75. A person who announces and plays popular recorded music.

Yesterday's Solution

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

Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

TV Listings



01:30 Star Trek Beyond
03:35 Desiree
05:15 Dangerous Lessons
07:00 Hunting The Phantom
08:40 Star Trek: Generations
10:45 Star Trek Beyond
12:50 Dangerous Lessons
14:30 Term Life
16:10 In The Line Of Fire
18:20 Extortion
20:15 Deepwater Horizon
22:10 The Duel



00:45 North Woods Law
01:40 After The Attack
02:35 Biggest And Baddest
03:25 Lone Star Law
04:15 North Woods Law
05:02 Wildest Arctic
05:49 Pit Bulls & Parolees
06:36 Animal Airport
07:00 Animal Airport
07:25 The Jeff Corwin Experience
08:15 Lone Star Law
09:10 Lone Star Law
10:05 North Woods Law
11:00 Wildest Arctic
11:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees
12:50 Biggest And Baddest
13:45 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
14:40 North Woods Law
15:35 After The Attack
16:30 The Jeff Corwin Experience
17:25 Animal Cops Houston
18:20 Biggest And Baddest
19:15 Extinct Or Alive
20:10 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
21:05 Wildest Arctic
22:00 After The Attack
22:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees
23:50 Extinct Or Alive



00:00 Homicide Hunter
01:00 Homicide Hunter
01:55 Crimes That Shook Britain
02:50 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence
03:45 I Killed My BFF
04:30 Homicide: Hours To Kill
05:15 It Takes A Killer
06:00 Live PD: Police Patrol
06:40 Cold Case Files
07:00 It Takes A Killer
07:20 Homicide Hunter
08:05 Homicide Hunter
08:50 Homicide: Hours To Kill
09:35 Cold Case Files
10:30 Evil Up Close
11:25 The First 48
12:20 Britain's Biggest Heists
13:15 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence
14:10 I Killed My BFF
15:05 Homicide: Hours To Kill
16:00 It Takes A Killer
16:30 Live PD: Police Patrol
17:00 Homicide Hunter
18:00 Homicide Hunter
19:00 Britain's Biggest Heists
20:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence
21:00 I Killed My BFF
22:00 It Takes A Killer
23:00 The First 48



00:05 Tosh.0
00:30 Nightcap
00:55 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
01:20 Another Period
01:45 The Alternative Comedy Experience
02:10 Tosh.0
02:35 Nightcap
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah

03:25 Nightcap
03:50 Nightcap
04:10 Takeshis Castle Thailand
04:35 Takeshis Castle Thailand
05:00 I Used To Be Fat
05:50 Disaster Date
07:10 Coaching Bad
08:00 I Used To Be Fat
08:50 Bondi Ink
09:45 Snack Off
10:10 Snack Off
10:35 Ridiculousness Arabia
11:00 Ridiculousness Arabia
11:25 Ridiculousness Arabia
11:50 Takeshis Castle Thailand
12:15 Takeshis Castle Thailand
12:40 Impractical Jokers
13:05 Impractical Jokers
13:30 Impractical Jokers
13:55 Martha And Snoop Potluck Dinner Party
17:20 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
18:35 Friends
20:12 Detroiters
20:35 Detroiters
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 Jordan Klepper: Solves Guns
22:25 Why
23:15 Tosh.0
23:38 Tosh.0



00:30 Destroyed In Seconds
00:55 Destroyed In Seconds
01:20 How It's Made
01:45 How It's Made
02:10 My Cat From Hell
03:00 Tanked
03:50 Ultimate Survival
04:40 Space Dealers
05:30 Secret Space Escapes
06:20 How It's Made
06:40 How It's Made
07:00 Destroyed In Seconds
07:25 Destroyed In Seconds
07:50 My Cat From Hell
08:40 How It's Made
09:05 How It's Made
09:30 Tanked
10:20 Ultimate Survival
11:10 Destroyed In Seconds
11:35 Destroyed In Seconds
12:00 How It's Made
12:25 How It's Made
12:50 Space Dealers
13:40 Secret Space Escapes
14:30 How It's Made
14:55 How It's Made
15:20 My Cat From Hell
16:10 Ultimate Survival
17:00 My Cat From Hell
17:50 Tanked
18:40 Destroyed In Seconds
19:05 Destroyed In Seconds
19:30 Penn & Teller Tell A Lie
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 Penn & Teller Tell A Lie
23:40 The Carbonaro Effect



00:45 Diabolical: Deadly Love
01:40 Married With Secrets
02:35 Forbidden: Dying For Love
03:30 Who Killed Jane Doe?
04:25 Betrayed
05:20 Blood Relatives
06:10 I Almost Got Away With It
07:00 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
07:25 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
08:15 Disappeared
09:10 Gone
10:05 Blood Relatives
11:00 The Perfect Suspect
11:55 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
12:50 I Almost Got Away With It
13:45 Betrayed
14:40 Blood Relatives
15:35 Who Killed Jane Doe?
16:30 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
17:25 Disappeared
18:20 I Almost Got Away With It

19:15 Betrayed
20:10 Blood Relatives
21:05 Murder In The Heartland
22:00 Murder Among Friends
22:55 Evil Online
23:50 Diabolical: Deadly Love



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
06:00 Stuck In The Middle
06:25 Tangled: The Series
06:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
06:55 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
07:20 Elena Of Avalor
07:45 K.C. Undercover
08:10 Bunk'd
08:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
09:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
09:25 Tangled: The Series
09:50 Tangled: The Series
10:15 Bizaardvark
10:40 Bizaardvark
11:05 Liv And Maddie
11:30 Liv And Maddie
11:55 K.C. Undercover
12:20 K.C. Undercover
12:45 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
13:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
13:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
14:00 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
14:15 Bunk'd
14:40 K.C. Undercover
15:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
15:10 Kitty Is Not A Cat
15:35 Elena Of Avalor
16:00 Tangled: The Series
16:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
16:50 Raven's Home
17:15 Stuck In The Middle
18:05 K.C. Undercover
18:30 Bunk'd
18:55 Descendants Wicked World
19:00 Raven's Home
19:25 Liv And Maddie
19:50 K.C. Undercover
20:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
20:20 Tangled: The Series
20:45 Bizaardvark
21:10 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
21:35 Stuck In The Middle
22:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
22:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
22:50 Lolirock
23:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
23:35 Binny And The Ghost



00:10 Minnie's Bow-Toons
00:15 Zou
00:30 Henry Hugglemonster
01:00 PJ Masks
01:25 PJ Masks
01:50 The Hive
02:00 Zou

02:15 Zou
02:30 Henry Hugglemonster
02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
03:20 The Hive
03:30 The Hive
03:40 Zou
04:25 The Hive
04:35 The Hive
04:45 Henry Hugglemonster
05:35 The Hive
05:45 PJ Masks
07:00 Muppet Babies
07:15 Puppy Dog Pals
07:35 PJ Masks
07:55 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
08:30 Vampirina
09:00 Sofia The First
09:30 Elena Of Avalor
10:00 Puppy Dog Pals
10:20 Puppy Dog Pals
10:40 Puppy Dog Pals
11:00 Muppet Babies
11:20 Muppet Babies
11:40 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
12:10 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
12:40 PJ Masks
13:55 Muppet Babies Show And Tell
14:00 Claude
14:20 Claude
14:40 Trulli Tales
15:30 Vampirina
16:25 Muppet Babies Show And Tell
16:30 Muppet Babies
16:45 Muppet Babies
17:00 Claude
17:30 Puppy Dog Pals
18:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
18:30 Vampirina
19:00 PJ Masks
19:15 PJ Masks
19:30 The Lion Guard
20:00 Sofia The First
20:25 Chip And Dale's Nutty Tales
20:30 Elena Of Avalor
21:00 Puppy Dog Pals
21:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
21:45 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
22:00 Vampirina
22:40 PJ Masks
22:55 PJ Masks
23:15 The Lion Guard
23:45 Sofia The First



00:15 Street Outlaws
01:05 Salvage Hunters
01:50 Rancher, Farmer, Fisherman
03:20 Street Outlaws
04:05 Alaska: The Last Frontier
04:50 Dirty Jobs
05:30 Storage Hunters
06:00 The Liquidator
06:23 Property Wars
06:45 Storage Hunters
07:10 How Do They Do It?
07:35 Alaska: The Last Frontier
08:20 The Liquidator
08:45 Property Wars
09:10 Dirty Jobs
09:55 Salvage Hunters
10:45 Rancher, Farmer, Fisherman
12:20 The Liquidator
12:43 Property Wars
13:05 Storage Hunters
13:30 How Do They Do It?
13:55 Dirty Jobs
14:40 Street Outlaws
15:30 Salvage Hunters
16:15 Rancher, Farmer, Fisherman
17:50 Extreme Engineering
18:40 Sinking Cities
19:25 Street Outlaws
20:15 Street Outlaws
21:00 Diesel Brothers
21:50 Street Outlaws: No Prep Kings (Special)
22:40 Street Outlaws
23:30 Outback Truckers



00:05 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
00:30 Boyster

00:55 Boyster
01:20 Counterfeit Cat
02:10 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
03:00 Boyster
03:20 Boyster
03:45 Dude That's My Ghost
04:35 Counterfeit Cat
05:00 Guardians Of The Galaxy
05:29 Marvel's Avengers Assemble
06:00 Marvel's Spider-Man
06:29 Big Hero 6 The Series
07:00 Milo Murphy's Law
07:29 Big City Greens
07:45 Big City Greens
08:00 Phineas And Ferb
09:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
10:00 Gravity Falls
11:00 Lab Rats
11:29 Lab Rats
12:00 Phineas And Ferb
13:00 Mech-X4
15:00 Right Now Kapow
15:29 Lab Rats
16:00 Phineas And Ferb
16:15 Milo Murphy's Law
16:30 Phineas And Ferb
16:45 Milo Murphy's Law
17:00 Big City Greens
17:29 Big Hero 6 The Series
18:00 Lab Rats
18:29 Lab Rats
19:00 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
19:29 Kickin' It
20:00 Milo Murphy's Law
20:29 Big City Greens
20:45 Big City Greens
21:00 Marvel's Spider-Man
21:29 Star Wars Rebels
22:00 DuckTales
22:25 Big Hero 6 The Series
22:50 Dude That's My Ghost
23:40 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja



00:05 Botched
00:55 Botched
01:50 E! News
02:50 Botched
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 Botched
06:55 E! News Middle East
07:10 Botched
08:10 E! News: Daily Pop
09:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
12:00 E! News Middle East
12:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
13:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
14:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
15:00 E! News Middle East
15:15 E! News: Daily Pop
16:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
19:00 E! News
20:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
23:00 E! News Middle East
23:15 Very Cavallari



01:15 College Road Trip
03:00 The Little Mermaid 2: Return To The Sea
04:30 102 Dalmatians
06:30 College Road Trip
08:15 Wreck-It Ralph
10:15 Hercules (1997)
12:00 102 Dalmatians
14:00 Wreck-It Ralph
15:45 Pocahontas
17:15 George Of The Jungle
19:00 Old Dogs
20:45 Confessions Of A Teenage Drama Queen
22:30 Pocahontas



00:00 Riverdale
00:45 Riverdale
01:30 Siren
02:15 Grey's Anatomy

03:00 Quantico
03:50 Marvel's Cloak & Dagger
04:35 Riverdale
05:20 Timeless
06:10 The Blacklist
07:00 Good Morning America
09:00 The View
10:00 Marvel's Cloak & Dagger
11:00 Once Upon A Time
12:00 The Blacklist
13:00 How To Get Away With Murder
14:00 Quantico
15:00 The View
16:00 Live Good Morning America
18:00 The Blacklist
19:00 Grey's Anatomy
20:00 How To Get Away With Murder
21:00 Safe Harbour
22:00 Station 19
23:00 WWE Experience



00:00 Fired Up!
01:45 The Internship
03:45 The Brady Bunch
05:30 Memories Of Me
07:30 Who Gets The Dog?
09:30 The Brady Bunch
11:15 Memories Of Me
13:15 Who Gets The Dog?
15:15 Love On The Slopes
17:00 Angus Thongs And Perfect Snogging
19:00 UHF
21:00 Rock The Kasbah
23:00 The Love Guru



00:00 Back To The Sea
01:40 The Adventures Of Scooter The Penguin
03:05 The Happy Cricket
04:30 Jake And The Giants
06:00 Catcher: Cat City 2
07:40 A Doggone Hollywood
09:10 The Secret Of Kells
10:35 Freddy Frogface
12:00 Back To The Sea
13:40 The Adventures Of Scooter The Penguin
15:05 Mia And The Migoo
16:40 The Secret Of Kells
18:05 Swan Princess: Royally Undercover
19:30 Dinofroz Return To The Past World
21:05 Mia And The Migoo
22:40 A Doggone Hollywood



01:35 Wayne's World 2
03:15 Alvin And The Chipmunks: Chipwrecked
04:50 Life On The Line
06:30 The Challenger
08:10 Alvin And The Chipmunks: Chipwrecked
09:45 Down With Love
11:30 Alvin And The Chipmunks: The Road Chip
13:05 13 Going On 30
14:45 Diary Of A Wimpy Kid: Dog Days
16:20 Doctor Strange
18:15 The Core
20:30 Sully
22:10 Casino



00:05 Food Factory USA
00:30 Mega Builders
01:20 Secrets Of The Underground
02:10 How We Invented The World
03:00 How It's Made
03:48 Futurescape With James Woods
04:36 Mega Builders
05:24 How Do They Do It?
05:48 Food Factory USA
06:12 Secrets Of The Underground

TV Listings

07:00 How Do They Do It?
07:26 How It's Made
08:14 Mega Builders
09:02 How We Invented The World

09:50 How Do They Do It?
10:14 Food Factory USA
10:38 How It's Made
11:02 How It's Made
11:26 Futurescape With James Woods
12:14 Mega Builders
13:02 Secrets Of The Underground

13:50 How We Invented The World

14:38 How Do They Do It?
15:02 Food Factory USA
15:26 How It's Made
15:50 How It's Made
16:14 Futurescape With James Woods
17:02 How We Invented The World

17:50 Secrets Of The Underground

18:40 How Do They Do It?
19:05 Food Factory USA
19:30 How The Universe Works
20:20 Mega Builders
21:10 Gamechangers: Inventing The World

22:00 How The Universe Works
22:50 Futurescape With James Woods
23:40 How Do They Do It?
Star Movies HD
01:30 The Tender Hook
03:15 Monster's Ball
05:00 Take This Waltz
06:45 Man Of The Year
08:35 Swimming Upstream
10:15 Being Flynn
11:50 Confidence
13:20 Meet The Parents
15:05 The Tender Hook
16:45 Fifteen And Pregnant
18:15 Gimme Shelter
20:00 Moneyball
22:15 Godsend
Star World HD
00:00 Vanity
00:30 Vanity
01:00 Vanity
01:25 Vanity
01:55 Married At First Sight
03:30 Who Lives Here?
04:00 Who Lives Here?
04:25 Mistresses

05:10 Devious Maids
06:00 Vanity
06:30 Vanity
07:00 Vanity
07:30 Vanity
08:00 Married At First Sight
09:35 Who Lives Here?
10:00 Who Lives Here?
10:25 Mistresses
11:10 Devious Maids
12:00 Vanity
12:30 Vanity
13:00 Vanity
13:30 Vanity
14:00 Married At First Sight
15:35 Who Lives Here?
16:00 Who Lives Here?
16:25 Mistresses
17:10 Project Runway All Stars
18:00 Project Runway All Stars
19:00 Black Box
20:00 Black Box
21:00 Wedding Band
22:00 Wedding Band
23:00 Vanity
23:30 Vanity

TLC HD
00:20 I Want That Wedding
01:05 90 Day Fianc?: Happily Ever After?
01:50 Say Yes: Wedding SOS

02:35 90 Days To Wed
03:20 Kitchen Boss
03:42 Kitchen Boss
04:05 Toddlers & Tiaras
04:50 Say Yes To The Dress UK
05:12 Say Yes To The Dress UK
05:35 Kitchen Boss
06:00 Kitchen Boss
06:22 Kitchen Boss
06:45 Kitchen Boss
07:07 Kitchen Boss
07:30 Kitchen Boss
07:52 Kitchen Boss
08:15 I Want That Wedding
09:00 Cake Boss
09:25 Little People, Big World
09:47 Little People, Big World
10:10 Little People, Big World
10:32 Little People, Big World
10:55 Cake Boss
11:17 Cake Boss
11:40 Cake Boss
12:02 Cake Boss
12:25 Cake Boss
12:47 Cake Boss
13:10 Cake Boss
13:32 Cake Boss
13:55 I Want That Wedding
14:45 Cake Boss
15:10 Cake Boss
15:35 Cake Boss
16:00 Cake Boss
16:25 Cake Boss
16:50 Cake Boss
17:15 Little People, Big World
18:05 Sister Wives
18:30 Sister Wives
18:55 Sister Wives
19:20 Sister Wives
19:45 Cake Boss
20:10 Say Yes To The Dress: Canada
20:35 Say Yes To The Dress: Canada
21:00 Our Wild Life
21:50 Little People, Big World
22:40 Dr Christian Will See You Now
23:30 Cake Boss
23:55 Cake Boss



Stars



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Aries, all eyes are on you today and that is just what you crave. You have a great desire to be the center of attention. You crave appreciation for your gifts and talents. This will be a time you are able to look back on with pride. You are drawn to romance. This is a great time to spend with a special someone. Share your passion, whether it be cooking a meal together or painting a picture. Involve the one you love in a project tonight. This may bring you closer and the results good be amazing, Aries.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Taurus, this is a day you will crave all eyes to be on you. You crave attention. From the way you dress, to the way you carry yourself, the center of attention is what you can expect to be. All eyes are on you. You will shine today. It seems as if everything conspires to bring out your more unique and unusual qualities. It may seem as if things work in your favor today. Solutions to old problems will come easy. This is a great day to spend some time working on a new invention, Taurus.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Gemini, you may find during this time in your life that romance and social interaction become a major focus. You are understanding and sensitive. You yearn for close and meaningful relationships with others. You feel as though you wish everything in your life to exude a type of elegance and refinement. You want to have the relationship everyone sees as ideal. You experience a level of excitement at the mere thought of having others look at you in envy of your life. You desire not only the perfect relationship, but also the want others to admire you for your high standards of truth and beauty. Being the center of attention excites you, Gemini.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Cancer, your future depends on your ambition and drive. This is a time to follow your gut feelings about things. You should be able to use your intuition to know what trends are coming. Make a move now and you will be ahead of the game. You should find this is a time to make some very profitable decisions. Take action now, Cancer, and you will be ahead of the game.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Leo, spend some time with your friends. You are one of the lucky ones. You have surrounded yourself with friends of all walks of life. Friends of other races, religions, and cultures can be very beneficial to you. Being able to see things from new perspectives can be enlightening. When others are presented with the same problem you are facing they could have a totally different outlook on things. Spending time discussing your problems with others will be very beneficial to you now. What you see as a problem today could be seen as a blessing by your neighbor. Open your eyes, heart, and mind, Leo.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Virgo, you may find yourself focusing on that which intrigues you. Seems you find broadening your horizons as a priority. You are seeking answers. You have a yearning to broaden the horizons and want to gain as much knowledge as possible. Virgo, you want to be in touch with the universe on a grander scale. You are full of curiosity. Travel and furthering your education may be two avenues that would assist you in accomplishing these goals. This may be a day you find yourself overly emotional and should resist the urge to participate in conflict with others.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Libra, you are ready to get serious about taking care of you! Meal planning seems to appeal to you. Organized and healthy are a great combination. You feel great about yourself and about who you are. It is time to take the new healthy you to a new level. You have previously made small changes and now you are ready to dive head first into a new lifestyle. Join the gym, take the walk, get up and get going. Changes now will bring great reward in the future. Live out loud, Libra



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Scorpio, today finds you in a wonderful mood full of appreciation and happiness. You are drawn to the beauty of the world around you. You are loving and nurturing today. You may tend to lavish those close to you with gifts and attention. You have a great sense of peace, happiness, and calm about you today. You put much value into those who are upfront and honest with you. Today you have no time nor tolerance for any perversion, lack of honesty, or those you feel may have secret motives. You are able to see right through this. You are experiencing a degree of mental clarity that has enabled you to conquer this day and all problems and tasks that are presented to you with grace and ease. Scorpio, enjoy this day.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Sagittarius, you may find yourself taking your creativity to new levels. You have always been able to think outside of the box but this time you have taken this to a new level in a totally new area. You have gone "high tech", Sagittarius. You find yourself reaching beyond your boundaries and surrounding yourself with new friends that are like minded. The potential for that successful, new, invention is great. You have a great desire to be in control but now may be the time to step back and work together with your peers. Sagittarius, you could greatly benefit from working together on this project and avoiding conflict.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Capricorn, you seem to be desiring a change in your world. You desire to not only change your views on life but change the way you live it. The unique and different ways of people start to appeal to you. This is a wake up call for you and helps you realize your way is not necessarily always the right way nor the only way. You find this a great day of mental clarity as you face it with an open mind your own thoughts become very clear and you find yourself extremely productive and eager to be surrounded with your peers. This is a wonderful time for you to make any decisions you have been putting off, Capricorn. Enjoy this day and all it brings your way!



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

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



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Pisces, live, laugh, and love. We see this saying everywhere we turn. This is the motto of your day. Your wit and sense of humor attracts others to you today. You are a ray of sunshine in the lives of many. A positive attitude is the only attitude to have. Others admire this about you and are drawn to you. This is an excellent time to present new ideas to others and perhaps ask someone to come on board concerning your most recent venture. Share the wealth and surround yourself with like-minded supportive people, Pisces.

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
Antiga	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	Nigar	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

Cleaning up Tokyo's beaches: An Olympic task

TOKYO: On a blazing hot Tokyo summer day, children squeal with delight as they splash about on a sandy beach, with the skyline of the world's biggest city shimmering behind them. The scene may seem unremarkable but it was unthinkable until recently when local activists decided to clean up the polluted water at city beaches, hoping to leave a legacy from the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

"Tokyo Bay used to have many swimmable beaches," recalls one of these activists, 70-year-old Yuzo Sekiguchi. "But by the time the last Tokyo Olympic Games were held in 1964... the water was polluted by factory effluent." "I decided to bring back clean Tokyo beaches for the next generation," he said. Sekiguchi, whose ancestors fished these waters for generations, used natural elements like seaweed and oysters to purify the waters at a section of the beach in Tokyo Bay, which faces the vast Japanese capital.

"Each oyster can purify 400 litres (105 US gallons) of water every day," he said. The oysters gobble plankton and absorb bacteria, making the water clearer and cleaner. They remain edible though authorities don't recommend consuming them thanks to the bacteria content. The stretch of shore that Sekiguchi has been cleaning up first opened for swimmers in 2012, initially for just a few days as an experiment. But it has been available to swimmers almost all summer round since 2015. This year it is open for 42 days, thanks to popular demand—a week longer than in 2017.

Each year, authorities test the water quality before giving permission for swimming at the beaches. And while Sekiguchi decided to start the clean-up work on his own initiative, he has since received backing, including financial support, from the local government. Despite measures by people like Sekiguchi and improvements in sewerage facilities, pollution in the water around Tokyo has been a concern as the city gears up to host the 2020 Games. Organizers admitted in October last year that prolonged summer rain had temporarily brought high levels of bacteria to the triathlon venue, sparking concern from international Olympic officials.

But Olympic planners say they are confident that a combination of better sewerage facilities and the introduction of underwater screens will keep the water quality to international standards during the Games. "We will create an environment that will enable athletes to perform at their best with a sense of safety," Tokyo 2020 official Hidemasa Nakamura told a recent news conference announcing the triathlon courses.

Unlike other major bay-side cities, such as Sydney or San Francisco, the densely populated Tokyo bay area has few natural landscapes remaining—the result of years of development of public ports, container wharves, and Haneda airport. As a residential area, most of the bay is relatively unloved with rental and purchase prices there far below more fashionable areas of the expensive city. Development of the area dates back to the 16th century but rapid construction and pol-



TOKYO: This picture shows a boy and his father visiting the Kasai seaside park in Tokyo Bay. — AFP

lution from Japan's post-war "economic miracle" made going for a dip there unthinkable to Tokyoites. Kenji Morita, another activist trying to clean up the water, said: "After heavy pollution in the 1970s, people have long forgotten about the sea in part because the Tokyo beaches were transformed into harbors, which are off-limits in general."

Olympic momentum

Like Sekiguchi, the 60-year-old Morita is cultivating laver seaweed and clams in a bid to purify waters in Odaiba, the venue for the

Tokyo 2020 triathlon and marathon swimming. This year, beaches in Odaiba were opened for swimming for nine days as a trial, with the water quality checked daily before bathers were allowed to submerge themselves. Morita said his project had the unexpected benefit of appealing to people with disabilities as Tokyo seeks to improve facilities ahead of the Paralympic Games.

"When I first started this five years ago, I didn't realize it, but this place has easy access for everyone," thanks to ramps and lifts, he said. —AFP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
248 33 199

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DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED

Consultant of General Surgery
Laposcopic and Bariatric Surgery



Academic Certificates – Training

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

Scope of clinical Practice.

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



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

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

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Consultant Cosmetic Dermatologist & Hair Transplant, NY

ACADEMIC CERTIFICATES:

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

SPECIALIZED IN:

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

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

Specialized in:

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

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Dr Hamoud Abdullah Alarouj
ENT Specialist

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

Specialized in:

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

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Scope of Clinical Practice:

- ◆ General & Laparoscopic Surgery
- ◆ Single Port Surgery
- ◆ Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, including Colorectal Cancer
- ◆ Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abscess
- ◆ Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- ◆ VAAFT Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fistuloscope)
- ◆ Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- ◆ Colonoscopy & Gastrosocopy
- ◆ Stomach Balloon Insertion & removal
- ◆ Bariatric Surgery – Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- ◆ Gallstones & Abdominal Hernias Surgery

◆ Colonic Hydrotherapy & Fecal Incontinence Treatment
◆ Laparoscopic mini bypass
◆ Transanal minimally invasive surgery

Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:

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

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IC INTERNATIONAL CLINIC

American Board Certified in General Surgery
Member of the Society of American Gastrointestinal & Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES)
Higher specialization in Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary surgery & Organ Transplantation
Member of many prestigious surgical societies.

- ◆ Day case surgeries
- ◆ Diagnosis, treatment and follow up of all surgical emergencies
- ◆ Surgery for morbid obesity (sleeve, gastric bypass)
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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 32 km/h .

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 22 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings
------------------------	---------------------

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	46 °C	33 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	46 °C	32 °C
ABDALY	47 °C	30 °C
BUBYAN	** °C	** °C
JAHERA	47 °C	33 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	39 °C	30 °C
SALMIYAH	34 °C	32 °C
AHMADI	35 °C	33 °C
NUWAISIB	45 °C	30 °C
WAFRA	47 °C	31 °C
SALMY	46 °C	27 °C

SFC. CHART **06/09/2018 0000 UTC**

MSL Analysis (2F4)
Valid: 0609 UTC 06 SEP 2018

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	09/07	Hot	46 °C	33 °C	NW-SE	08 - 32 km/h
Saturday	09/08	Very hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas	47 °C	33 °C	N-VRB	06 - 28 km/h
Sunday	09/09	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	48 °C	32 °C	VRB	06 - 22 km/h
Monday	09/10	Very hot	48 °C	34 °C	NW-VRB	06 - 30 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:06
Sunrise	05:27
Zuhr	11:47
Asr	15:19
Sunset	18:06
Isha	19:25

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT		
MAX. Temp.	48 °C	
MIN. Temp.	30 °C	
MAX. RH	88 %	
MIN. RH	10 %	
MAX. Wind	S	46 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm	

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

Clinics

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

Business

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2018

38 India's rupee hits record low against the dollar**39** India's tax effect: Thousands laid off despite growth**41** Inflation and economic crisis: Argentines have had enough

WASHINGTON: File picture shows Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland speaks at a press conference August 31, 2018 at the Embassy of Canada in Washington, DC. —AFP

US trade policy at a crossroads with Canada, China

Trump to impose new tariffs on China; rewrite NAFTA

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump's trade policy faces a key crossroads yesterday, as officials try to reach a deal with Canada, and he will decide whether to impose a huge wave of new tariffs on China. With Canada, the largest US trading partner, talks seem to be on track to agree on a rewrite of the North American Free Trade Agreement. But there have been no further discussions with China to try to resolve the bitter dispute with Beijing, and Trump could announce the next step, which would impose steep duties on half the goods the US imports from the world's second largest economy, as soon as yesterday.

The deadline for public comment on the next wave of punitive taxes on \$200 billion of annual imports from China expired yesterday, and Trump reportedly wants to impose the tariffs immediately. That would take the total goods targeted to \$250 bil-

lion of the \$500 billion imported each year. Trump has had Beijing in his crosshairs since he took office, and has applied increasing pressure to try to convince the country to change its policies, allow more imports and reduce the \$335 billion US trade deficit.

In Beijing, China's commerce ministry said yesterday it was readying its countermeasures. "If the US dogmatically implements any new tariff measures against China, China will have to take the necessary countermeasures," commerce spokesman Gao Feng told reporters. Those countermeasures include slapping tariffs on \$60 billion of US imports, Gao said. China previously pledged to retaliate dollar-for-dollar with tariffs of its own, but since it imports less than \$200 billion a year in US goods, it has run out of room to match the US firepower.

But businesses warn there are other ways China can strike back, through regulations and other ad-

ministrative means. The last effort at a negotiated solution came in late August with meetings between low-level officials, but nothing came of them. Gao said the two sides were still in contact and communicating on a working level, and "exchanging opinions on issues of mutual concern to work towards resolving the China-US trade problems."

US businesses have become increasingly concerned about the exchange of tariffs, which are raising prices for manufacturers and hurting US consumers and farmers. But Trump has been unapologetic, insisting that his tough tactics will work.

NAFTA 2.0

Meanwhile, talks are due to continue for another day with Canada to keep NAFTA 2.0 as a three-party trade deal—although Trump on Wednesday said he would "surprise" the public with a new name.

Canada Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland said the sides are making "good progress" towards a deal to revise the North American Free Trade Agreement, but talks will continue to resolve remaining issues.

"The thing about trade negotiations is that nothing is done until everything is done," Freeland told reporters late Wednesday following a meeting with US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer. Officials were tasked with reviewing a series of issues and were due to meet late into the night and report back yesterday, when the ministers will resume talks. "We do believe that a deal that is good for Canada, good for the United States and good for Mexico is absolutely possible." The talks have been hung up over Canada's insistence on retaining a dispute resolution mechanism in Chapter 19, and the US objections over Ottawa's tight controls over the dairy market.—AFP

Business

World stocks fall for fifth straight day on trade fears

Investors brace for another escalation in trade war

LONDON: World shares fell for a fifth straight day yesterday as investors braced for another escalation in a trade war between the United States and China, while emerging-market currencies paused near 15-month lows. The MSCI All-Country World Index, which tracks shares in 47 countries, was down 0.1 percent. Stocks in Europe opened lower, with the pan-European STOXX 600 index losing 0.1 percent. Wall Street was set to open lower.

The main worry for investors was the end of a public consultation period on Thursday for US President Donald Trump's plan to impose tariffs on an additional \$200 billion of Chinese goods. Trump said on Wednesday trade talks with China would continue but the United States was not yet ready to come to an agreement. "In summary, I think equity investors are too cautious, which is surprising because the US market is hitting all-time highs," said Eddie Perkin, chief equity investment officer at Eaton Vance.

"People are too worried about trade wars, so I am inclined to add a bit of risk in export-oriented industrial companies and emerging market equities." Earlier in Asia, MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan dropped more than 1 percent to a one-year trough of 515.24 points. It was last down 0.7 percent. Japan's Nikkei slipped 0.4 percent and Australian shares dropped 1.1 percent. China's blue-chip index fell 1.1 percent, Hong Kong's Hang Seng index 1 percent. Further weighing on sentiment, data out earlier showed German industrial orders fell unexpectedly in July, another sign that facto-

ries in Europe's largest economy are feeling the bite of protectionist trade politics. Investors are also watching for developments as the United States and Canada resume talks about revamping the North American Free Trade Agreement. Canada insisted there was room to salvage the pact despite few signs a deal was imminent.

The dollar, considered a safe haven at times of turmoil because of its status as the world's reserve currency, has generally benefited from the trade conflicts. It has gained 8 percent since the end of March, with currencies in emerging markets taking a hammering. But measured against a basket of currencies, the dollar retreated from the two-week highs it reached earlier this week to stand 0.1 percent lower at 95.09. The euro was a tad stronger at \$1.1628.

Brexit outcome

Sterling held on to gains made on Wednesday as investors positioned for a favorable Brexit outcome. It was last up 0.1 percent at \$1.2920. Emerging markets have been hit by the financial crises in Argentina and Turkey. In Indonesia, the central bank has had to intervene several times in recent weeks to stem the rupiah's slide.

Indonesia's benchmark stock index was last up nearly 1.6 percent while the rupiah also gained a tad. MSCI's index of emerging market currencies, which had earlier paused near 15-month lows, was up 0.1 percent on the day after two straight days of heavy declines. But analysts warned of further losses because investors were no longer looking at Argentina, Turkey and South Africa as



LONDON: People walk through the lobby of the London Stock Exchange in London, Britain. — Reuters

isolated cases. They were fretting over the impact of rising US inflation and interest rates on heavily indebted economies.

"As global monetary conditions slowly tighten, the global economic cycle rolls over and the US President disturbs the global trade cycle, there's definitely more to the EM sell-off than a few unrelated spots of weakness," wrote strategists at Societe Generale in a note to clients. The emerging market equity index has been crunched in the past month or so, falling for six consecutive ses-

sions and down more than 3 percent this week.

A range of factors have hit the stocks: policy tightening by the US Federal Reserve, the crises in Turkey and Argentina, the Sino-US trade war and broader concerns about China's economy. In commodities, oil prices rose, encouraged by a weaker dollar and evidence of strong US fuel demand. US crude rose 0.1 percent to \$68.79 a barrel. Brent was last up 0.3 percent at \$77.50. Gold was stronger with spot gold up 0.8 percent at \$1,205.87 an ounce. — Reuters

India's rupee hits record low against the dollar

MUMBAI: India's rupee hit a new record low of 72 to the dollar yesterday as emerging market currencies suffered more losses. The under-pressure currency of Asia's third-largest economy slid to 72.12 to the greenback in afternoon trade. The rupee has steadily fallen by about 10 percent throughout 2018, after starting the year at 63.67.

Last month it crossed 70 for the first time as India was buffeted by the turbulence of the Turkish financial crisis. The Turkish lira was sent into a tailspin in August by a bitter diplomatic spat with the United States over Turkey's detention of an American pastor for almost two years on terror-related charges. The currencies of other emerging economies heavily dependent on dollar-dominated foreign capital like Brazil, South Africa and Argentina also slipped in August.



ALLAHABAD: Indian vendors return home after selling snacks at the Sangam the confluence of the Yamuna and Ganges rivers in Allahabad. — AFP

The rupee slump is widening India's current account deficit. India is a massive net importer of oil, which is priced in dollars, securing more than two-thirds of its needs from abroad. High oil prices

have been squeezing the rupee, making it less appealing to investors, analysts say. India's central bank has raised interest rates this year in part to help increase the value of the rupee. — AFP

Venezuela breaks monthly inflation record

CARACAS: Inflation in Venezuela broke the 200 percent barrier for a single month in August, bringing it to 200,000 percent over the last year, the sidelined opposition-controlled parliament said on Wednesday. Only two months ago, inflation over a single month had passed 100 percent for the first time, opposition deputy Jose Guerra, a former central bank executive, said on Twitter. It means prices have increased by almost 35,000 percent since the start of the year and 200,000 percent since August 31, 2017.

The International Monetary Fund has predicted inflation will reach one million percent in 2018. The news comes after President Nicolas Maduro launched a series of economic reforms last month to try to arrest four years of recession and a crippling economic crisis that has led to hundreds of thousands of people fleeing the country. Reforms included increasing the minimum wage by 3,400 percent, redenominating the currency-removing five zeros-that was also devalued by 96 percent and fixed to the value of Venezuela's largely discredited cryptocurrency, the petro.

Maduro also bumped up value added tax (VAT), reduced fuel subsidies and created a new levy on remittances sent from outside the country. Those measures came as August's daily inflation rate of 4.0 percent surpassed neighboring Colombia's over the last 12 months (3.12 percent). The opposition-dominated National Assembly holds no real power in Venezuela, although it continues to sit despite its members going unpaid. — AFP

Business

India's tax effect: Thousands laid off despite growth

Small businesses shut down as compliance costs rise

PANIPAT, India: Tilak Raj Bathla's tiny weaving factory is one of the few still humming on a once busy road in the northern Indian city of Panipat, known as the country's "textile city". Nearby, more than two dozen other workshops are locked from the outside, while dogs and cows roam through other abandoned factories. Scrap dealers enquire about idle powerlooms. India launched the Goods and Services Tax (GST) just over a year ago, its biggest ever tax reform, aiming to replace more than a dozen federal and state levies and unify the sprawling economy.

The move improved economic efficiency but critics say the complexities of the new regime have driven many small enterprises out of business and forced hundreds of thousands out of jobs. For Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the drawbacks of the GST, especially the job losses, could prove costly in major state elections later this year and a general election in mid-2019. Bathla says his neighbours, most of them unschooled, could not comply with monthly online filings required under the GST regime.

Some of his customers and suppliers could not afford to hire accountants to navigate a system which has been amended more than 200 times already, while others struggled to cope with delays in tax returns caused by glitches in the centralised software. "I have a GST registration, but I can't work as my vendors and buyers are unable to comply with a complex tax structure," the 50-year-old said, adding his monthly sales had fallen to about 250,000 rupees from about one million rupees before the GST. Only two of his 10 powerlooms are currently being used.

The government has said it is simplifying the tax

measure to make it accessible to everyone. Finance Ministry spokesman D.S. Malik said requests from small businesses have been considered "from time to time." But he declined to comment on job losses. Nevertheless, India's economy gathered pace in the April-June quarter, expanding 8.2 percent compared to 5.6 percent in the same period a year earlier. Economists said the number was coming off a low base as companies held off production in the year-ago period ahead of the implementation of the tax measure in July last year.

Small firms hurting

But while big firms have since shaken off the effects of the change and are set to gain from a uniform tax regime, small businesses across the country are still hurting. A survey by the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) in July found that a fifth of India's 63 million small businesses - contributing 32 percent to the economy and employing 111 million people - faced a 20 percent fall in profits since the GST rollout, and had to sack hundreds of thousands of workers.

Readymade garments, gems and jewellery, leather, handicraft and basic machinery manufacturing are hit the most, industry bodies from across the country say. According to estimates by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, a Mumbai-based consultancy, nearly five million workers lost their jobs over the past year. But it was not clear how many were from small enterprises. India's unemployment rate rose to 6.4 percent in August from 4.1 percent in July last year despite an additional 17 million people joining the workforce.



HARIYANA, India: A scrap dealer searches for useful material at a weaving factory, that was shut a year ago, in Panipat in the northern state of Haryana, India.—Reuters

But it did not give data on how many people were laid off or from which industries. India's labor ministry releases jobs data once in five years, last reporting unemployment at 5 percent in 2015/16 (April-March). More than 50 workers and factory owners Reuters spoke with in Panipat, about 90 km (55 miles) north of New Delhi, said over a third of the city's 10,000 weaving units had closed or curbed production. Chand Multani, president of the Panipat Handloom Owners' Association, pointed to the tax headaches behind a bedsheet that costs

barely \$2 dollar as an example.

The weaving of the sheet, its dyeing, ironing, embroidery and packaging are all done by separate businesses. Under the new system, each business has to pay GST at each stage of production which the businesses can claim back provided they have registered with tax authorities and have a GST number. For a lot of small businessmen this is way too much work. "How can all these different operations comply with tax rules?" asked Multani, waving the sheet in the air.—Reuters

UK to trial non-EU seasonal worker scheme after Brexit

LONDON: Britain announced yesterday it will trial a six-month visa system to let in non-EU seasonal workers to pick crops, as Brexit leaves farmers facing a labor shortage. The two-year pilot program will allow 2,500 workers from outside the European Union into Britain each year to help fruit and vegetable growers, amid dwindling arrivals from eastern bloc members. The scheme, starting in spring 2019 and permitting them to stay for up to six months, is intended to alleviate "labor shortages during peak production periods", according to the Home Office.

"This pilot will ensure farmers have access to the seasonal labor they need to remain productive and profitable during busy times of the year," Home Secretary Sajid Javid said in a statement. Environment Secretary Michael Gove added the government had "listened to the powerful arguments from farmers about the need for seasonal labor". "We will review the pilot's results as we look at how best to support the longer-term needs of industry outside the EU," he said.

Britain's booming horticultural industries, which contributed £2 billion to its economy in 2016, has already been buffeted by the country's impending departure from the EU next March. Farmers have reported sharp drops in the numbers of seasonal workers arriving from countries like Romania and Bul-



FAVERSHAM, United Kingdom: In this file photo, a seasonal worker picks strawberries at a farm in Faversham, south east England. —AFP

garia, which supply the vast majority of fruit and vegetable pickers in Britain. Improvements in labor markets in Eastern Europe and the fall in the value of the UK currency have also exacerbated the problem.

Although the sector estimates it needs more than 80,000 people to meet its needs each year, Minette Batters, president of the National Farmers Union (NFU), hailed the pilot scheme "a major victory". But Nick Marston, of industry body British Summer Fruits, was skeptical it would be anywhere near sufficient. "Our farms are reporting staff shortages of 10-20 percent already," he said, adding they need quadruple the 2,500 workers permitted in the trial. "This number will have little effect on the current shortages UK farms are facing as we speak."—AFP

Macri accused of 'abuse of power'

BUENOS AIRES: Argentina's attorney general is looking into an accusation of "abuse of power" against President Mauricio Macri after he agreed to a \$50 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund, his office said Wednesday. Attorney General Jorge Di Lello has also asked that Argentina's IMF agreement be suspended until a decision is made whether to proceed with a case against Macri.

"There's a formal accusation because there's an attribution problem and it's possible that the president and his ministers did not have the right to sign such an accord," Javier Delio, the attorney general's secretary, said. The case comes from a complaint made by former lawmaker Claudio Lozano and the city rights observatory, who accuse members of the executive of "abuse of power and violation of public duties in bypassing congress to sign an accord with the IMF."

The plaintiffs claim that Argentina's 2018 Budget Law does not authorize the executive to sign agreements with the IMF. The

case has been passed to a federal judge to study the evidence and decide whether or not to proceed with an investigation. In June, Macri agreed a three-year \$50 billion loan with the IMF to try to solve the country's economic woes. Argentina was facing mounting inflation, budget deficits and a weakening currency.

However, despite receiving an initial \$15 billion tranche of the loan in June, Argentina's economy has worsened while investor confidence dropped. Inflation over the last 12 months is at around 30 percent while the peso dropped to a record low of almost 40 against the dollar last week, with the Central Bank trying to stop the rot by hiking interest rates to a world-high 60 percent.

Macri's Finance Minister Nicolas Dujovne spent the last two days in talks with the IMF in Washington, looking to negotiate an accelerated disbursement of the remainder of the loan. "We're looking to reach an agreement with the IMF so that we can stabilize the situation in Argentina," Dujovne told journalists. He said Argentina's recession meant its citizens "are having a hard time" but that he was "convinced we're going to quickly reverse this situation." —AFP

Business

US to help nations replace Iran oil, may consider waivers

Sanctions' aim is to target Iran oil revenues

NEW DELHI: Washington will consider waivers for Iranian oil buyers such as India but they must eventually halt imports as sanctions are imposed on Tehran, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said yesterday. Pompeo, who is in Delhi with US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis for talks with their Indian counterparts, told reporters some buyers of Iranian oil would take a "a little bit of time" to unwind their trade with Iran. The United States is pushing all countries to halt oil imports from Iran after President Donald Trump in May withdrew from a 2015 deal between Iran and six world powers and ordered a re-imposition of sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

Some sanctions came in effect on Aug 6 and the rest, notably in the petroleum sector, will take hold on Nov 4. Trump has warned that anyone trading with Iran would not do business with the United States. "We will consider waivers where appropriate but that it is our expectation that the purchases of Iranian

crude oil will go to zero from every country or sanctions will be imposed. So we'll work with the Indians, we committed that we will do that," Pompeo said.

Despite Trump's efforts, government officials in India, the world's third-biggest oil



**Iranian oil
replaced with
US products**

importer and Iran's top oil client after China, say that it would be difficult to fully halt supplies from Tehran. "Many countries are in a place where it takes a little bit of time to unwind and we'll work with them I'm sure to

find an outcome that makes sense," Pompeo said, adding that the United States would be 'happy' if Iranian oil is replaced with American products.

Nevertheless, India's August oil imports from Iran plunged by a third as the state refiners waited for government permission to buy oil using Iranian tankers and cover. In a sign of New Delhi's desire to keep buying Iranian oil, Reuters reported this week that India had allowed its state refiners to use Tehran's tanker and insurance cover after western and Indian shippers started winding down their Iran operations ahead of the Nov 4 deadline.

To lure Indian buyers and protect its oil revenue, Iran has been offering extended credit terms and almost free shipping. "But our mission set is to ensure that Iran doesn't engage in malign behavior with wealth that comes from countries around the world. Thus the purpose of the sanctions," Pompeo said.—Reuters



NEW DELHI: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo shakes hands with India's Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj before the start of their meeting in New Delhi. —Reuters

Italian debt set for one of its best weeks

LONDON: Italian debt is heading towards one of its best weeks since the euro zone debt crisis as the Italian anti-austerity government's apparent willingness to curb budgetary excesses has the market sighing with relief. Italian debt yesterday extended gains made earlier this week on remarks from Italian ministers that suggested spending in 2019 would remain within European Union rules. "There are a lot of hopes in the markets that it will agree a budget below 3 percent (of GDP) and I think we will see a lot of headlines in the next few days confirming that," said DZ Bank strategist Sebastian Fellechner.

Deputy Italian Prime Minister Luigi Di Maio said on Wednesday the forthcoming 2019 budget would be "courageous", but would nonetheless keep state accounts in order. Budget talks between officials in Italy's ruling coalition of the anti-establishment 5-Star Movement and far-right League are set to continue today, with more headlines likely to emerge as officials brief the media on these talks. Italy's 10-year bond yield fell another six basis points to 2.88 percent, making it a 36 basis point drop for the week so far.

Barring the week commencing June 11 this year—when that yield fell over 50 bps—this would make it the best week for Italian

10-year debt since September 2012, back when the European Central Bank stepped in with strong measures to tackle the euro zone debt crisis. Italy's five-year borrowing costs shed 8 bps to 2.09 percent and two-year yields were down 5 bps to 1 percent; both down more about 48 bps this week so far. Yields are still well above the levels of April and early May, when Italy's 10-year borrowing costs went as low as 1.71 percent.

Investors have heavily sold off Italian bonds since the new government took office in June on concerns that the coalition may implement budget plans that would put the country's already-huge debt pile under strain and breach EU fiscal rules. And they will remain cautious over the anti-establishment government's stance on spending and on EU membership. "Even if they agree on a (EU-friendly) budget now, the topic is not off the table. It will accompany us during the next year, because they could hit higher spending at any time citing extraordinary circumstances," said Fellechner of DZ Bank.

France raised 8.5 billion euros in an auction on Thursday from the sale of bonds of varying maturities. Spain also held an auction, selling 4.92 billion euros of bonds. Other euro zone bond yields edged higher, adding to a week of rises. Germany's 10-year government bond yield, the benchmark for the region, inched higher to 0.38 percent, up five bps for the week so far. But that yield could come under downward pressure as the session wears on, with the United States possibly announcing a fresh round of tariffs, which could fuel a bid for safe assets such as government bonds. —Reuters

France urges 'wake-up call' on tax for US web giants

PARIS: French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire called yesterday for EU leaders to heed a "wake-up call" on a plan to tax US technology giants, amid signs of growing resistance to the French-led initiative. "I urge my European counterparts to hear the wake-up call; that they listen to what European citizens want," Le Maire told France 2 television. The tax, which Paris hopes to implement early next year, targets multinationals which declare their revenues from across the 28-member European Union in a single low-tax jurisdiction, depriving other countries of billions of

euros in fiscal revenue.

It would mainly affect US companies with worldwide annual turnover above 750 million euros (\$870 million), such as Facebook, Google, Twitter, Airbnb and Uber. "European citizens want justice, they want fiscal justice," Le Maire said. "They don't understand why we allow companies like Google, Amazon and Facebook pay 14 percentage points less in tax than small and midsize businesses, or a European company," he said. The tax is expected to be high on the agenda as EU and eurozone finance ministers meet in Vienna this weekend.

But France's proposal, which would require backing by all EU members, appears to be running into resistance. Germany's Bild newspaper reported Wednesday that Finance Minister Olaf Scholz, who had given his backing to the plan, now believes that "demonisation" of tech giants was "not efficient". Bild cited an internal ministry note which said that "publicly declaring that companies like Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon should pay taxes on their revenues is not defensible." —AFP

China warns of retaliation if US slaps new tariffs

BEIJING: China will be forced to retaliate if the United States implements any new tariff measures, China's commerce ministry warned yesterday, as the world's two biggest economies remain locked in an intensifying trade war. Global markets were on edge after US President Donald Trump threatened fresh tariffs on another \$200 billion in Chinese imports. "If the United States, regardless of op-

position, adopts any new tariff measures, China will be forced to roll out necessary retaliatory measures," ministry spokesman Gao Feng told a regular news conference.

China will closely monitor the impact from any fresh tariffs and adopt strong measures to help Chinese or foreign firms operating in China to overcome difficulties, said Gao. The Trump administration is ready to move ahead with a next round of tariffs after a public comment period ends at midnight in Washington yesterday, but the timing is uncertain, people familiar with the administration's plans said. The new duties will start to hit consumer products directly, including furniture, lighting products, tires, bicycles and car seats for babies. —Reuters

Business

Inflation and economic crisis: Argentines have had enough

Argentine peso lose value against dollar

BUENOS AIRES: Every morning, Ezequiel Gonzalez takes a two-hour bus ride from his Buenos Aires suburb to the city hospital where he's in charge of maintenance. And like many Argentines he is feeling first-hand the pinch of government austerity measures. Even working the maximum possible overtime, he earns 20,000 pesos (\$500) a month—which is not enough to afford the “asado” barbecue that traditionally brings Argentine families together on Sundays.

“That’s just for birthdays. Meat has become too expensive,” Gonzalez complains. “Enough! We can’t keep living in a state of permanent sacrifice, the price of meat is going up every day.” The economy is in a fragile state. The currency has lost more than 50 percent of its value against the dollar since the start of the year, inflation is due to surpass 30 percent by the end of 2018 and interest rates have just been hiked to a world-high 60 percent.

In a desperate bid to steady the ship, President Mauricio Macri agreed a \$50 billion loan with the International Monetary Fund in June, but the outlook has continued to deteriorate. “The situation worsens every day, I don’t know how all this will end,” worried Gonzalez. Public ire is directed in equal measure at the center-right government and the IMF, with daily street protests.

“IMF Out!” messages adorn many walls while some protesters have taken to banging cooking

pots in a pointed reference to them being underused for their main purpose. It’s not quite a repeat of the street protests from the economic crisis of 2001, but discontent is widespread. “I’m beside myself. I feel helpless, I’m afraid of being hungry and unable to pay for my medication once I’m retired a year from now,” said Garciela Perez, a 64-year-old teacher.

“I’m afraid of being hungry”

Government of the rich

“People have been waiting two years for things to get better, we’re losing patience, it seems like those governing us aren’t up to

the economic challenges,” said 50-year-old Antonio Buffo, a newspaper stall owner. Argentina’s economy reacted particularly badly last month to news that Macri had asked the IMF to speed up disbursements of the remaining \$35 billion in loans, the next \$3 billion of which wasn’t due until November.

Even new austerity measures announced on Monday, slashing the government’s bureaucracy in half and restoring taxes on grain exporters, haven’t reversed the gloomy trend. And this in the year Argentina hosts the G20 meetings of the world’s largest economies. “This government, they’re leaders who govern for the rich,” said Edith Zaida, a domestic employee who works nights looking after an elderly lady. The 42-year-old has to support four children aged between



BUENOS AIRES: This combination of pictures shows the facades of closed stores at Palermo neighborhood in Buenos Aires, Argentina.—AFP

five and 14 on the minimum wage of 12,000 pesos a month.

She lives in Tigre, 30 kilometers (20 miles) from the capital, and spends at least three hours a day in public transport. She is nostalgic for the leftist government that preceded Macri’s—and which the current leader blames for Argentina’s economic woes. “Cristina Kirchner did more to

look after the poor. Maybe she stole, but we had something to eat when she was president,” added Zaida, referring to Kirchner being investigated for allegedly receiving millions of dollars in bribes. “I’m very worried. Sometimes I cry. I want to leave the country.” President from 2007 to 2015, Kirchner could yet make a comeback as Macri’s popularity has been in decline. —AFP

Facebook to build \$1bn Singapore data centre

SINGAPORE: Facebook said yesterday it will invest over \$1 billion to build a data centre in Singapore, its first in Asia, powered by renewable energy and adapted to the city-state’s tropical climate. The centre is expected to be operational around 2022, and will host Facebook servers and centralize its IT operations, Thomas Furlong, Facebook vice president of infrastructure data centers, told reporters. The 170,000 square meters site in the land-scarce city-state will be stacked over 11-storeys, and will come with custom features to cope with the steamy temperatures, which rarely drop below 25 degrees Celsius.

These include a new state-of-the-art cooling system which uses water rather than air and will work better in the humidity, as well as a building facade made of perforated, lightweight material to allow for better air flow. The company expects it to be run on 100 percent renewable energy, like its other data centers. The Sg\$1.4 billion facility will be the first data centre designed and constructed by Facebook in Asia as the company



PARIS: In this file photo in Paris shows the logo of the social network Facebook on a broken screen of a mobile phone. — AFP

increasingly relies on custom-built facilities to meet its needs, Furlong said. It will be Facebook’s 15th data centre worldwide.

Furlong said Facebook, which has 2.23 billion monthly active users as of the end of June, chose Singapore because of its robust infrastructure, availability of skilled labour and ease of doing business with the government. Google has also built two data centres in the city-state, and announced this month it was starting work on a third, bringing their investment in the sites to \$850 million. Despite its popularity in Asia, Facebook has also faced criticism, particularly in Myanmar where it was used as a platform for the army and Buddhist hardliners to spread hate speech against the Muslim Rohingya minority. —AFP

Tencent to check IDs to enforce game limits for minors

SHANGHAI: Chinese tech giant Tencent said yesterday it will launch a real-name identification system in its hit mobile video game “Honor of Kings” to enforce playtime restrictions on underage players. The measure comes on the heels of new efforts by the government to regulate China’s highly popular video game industry, including restrictions on the number of new releases to address concerns over children’s eyesight.

Starting next week, new “Honor of Kings” users will have to provide their identification details, which will be checked against a police database, according to a statement on the game’s official WeChat social media account. The company also plans to expand the system to all its other titles. Tencent’s shares closed down 3.2 percent in Hong Kong fol-

lowing the announcement. The system will allow the company to check if the player is underage and should be included in its “anti-obsession” system, which limits minors to one or two hours of playtime in the online multiplayer battle game.

Tencent launched the anti-addiction system last year to “ensure children’s healthy development” as concerns grow in China that long periods online are posing a serious threat to the country’s youth.

The Shenzhen-based firm decided last year to limit “Honor of Kings” users who are 12 years old and younger to one hour of play a day and block them from signing into the game after 9 pm. Those between 12 and 18 years old are limited to two hours per day. The identification system will take effect around September 15 and verification of all new users will be completed before the end of the month.

Earlier in August, Tencent was ordered to pull the hit game “Monster Hunter: World” from sale just days after it debuted, as China had halted approvals for new video game titles. Amid the regulatory squeeze, the company’s profits fell two percent in the second quarter from the previous year, the first such drop in over a decade, according to Bloomberg. — AFP

Ohtani shrugs off surgery talk, homers twice to lift LA Angels

A's celebrate fame names, then knock off Yankees

TEXAS: Just a few hours after it was recommended to Shohei Ohtani that he have Tommy John surgery, the two-way player homered twice, singled twice and led the Los Angeles Angels to a 9-3 victory over the Texas Rangers on Wednesday night in Arlington, Texas. An MRI exam Wednesday morning revealed new damage to the ulnar collateral ligament in Ohtani's right elbow, and the club would like the 24-year-old right-hander to have surgery that likely would keep him off a major league mound until the 2020 season.

Ohtani, who hasn't yet decided whether he'll have the surgery, is not affected by the injury when he hits, and Wednesday's game was a perfect example. He walked in the first inning, had an infield single in the third, homered to lead off the fifth, singled to lead off the seventh and hit a two-run homer in the eighth while batting third in the Angels' lineup as the designated hitter. His home runs were Nos. 17 and 18 for the season, tied for the most by a Japanese-born rookie in the majors (Kenji Johjima in 2006). Ohtani scored four runs, drove in three and had a stolen base.

Rockies 5, Giants 3

Trevor Story produced the first three-homer game of his career, and surging Colorado beat San Francisco in Denver to complete a three-game sweep. Story's big night off starter Andrew Suarez (6-10) helped the Rockies earn their fifth straight win and increase their lead in the National League West to 1 1/2 games over the Los Angeles Dodgers and two games over the Arizona Diamondbacks. Story's second home run, hit in the fourth inning, went an estimated 505 feet, according to Statcast. It is the longest home run in franchise history and the longest since Statcast began measuring home run distances in 2015. It was also the longest homer hit at Coors Field in its 24-year history.

Mets 7, Dodgers 3

Zack Wheeler pitched seven strong innings, and Wilmer Flores drove in two runs as New York cruised to victory at Los Angeles. Wheeler (10-7) gave up three runs on three hits with nine strikeouts, ending his streak of holding opponents to two earned runs or fewer at eight consecutive outings. Wheeler had held his last four opponents to one earned run or none. Max Muncy hit a two-run home run for the Dodgers, his 32nd of the season. Los Angeles lost for just the third time in its past 12 games but fell for the second time in three games.

Red Sox 9, Braves 8

Brandon Phillips hit a two-out, two-run home run in the top of the ninth inning in his Boston debut, allowing the American League East leaders to complete a three-game sweep at Atlanta. After rallying from a 7-1 deficit with a six-run top of the eighth, only to fall behind again by virtue of a Freddie Freeman home run in the bottom of the inning, the Red Sox flipped things again in the ninth after Andrew Benintendi drew a one-out walk from A.J. Minter, the Braves' sixth pitcher. Minter (4-3) got a second out but then served up Phillips' first home run of the season in just his fifth major

league plate appearance. Craig Kimbrel worked around a two-out walk in the last of the ninth to register his 38th save. Teams had been 0-487 this season when down by six or more runs entering the eighth inning before the Red Sox's rally.

Athletics 8, Yankees 2

Oakland celebrated the induction of its first class of its Hall of Fame with a four-run first inning that led to a victory over visiting New York. The win was the second in three games against the Yankees for the A's, who moved within 3 1/2 games in the race for the first wild-card spot in the American League and the home-field advantage in the single-elimination playoff game. Luis Severino (17-7) lasted just 2 2/3 innings for the Yankees, who lost for the sixth time in their past 10 games.

Astros 9, Twins 1

Alex Bregman homered for the fourth time in five games, and Houston completed a three-game home sweep of Minnesota. Bregman, who had his streak of consecutive games with a homer snapped at three on Tuesday despite hitting three doubles in the that game, knocked in five runs Wednesday. He smashed a two-run homer to left field with two outs in the third inning, and he added a three-run double in the eighth. Houston's Jose Altuve snapped an 0-for-19 skid with an RBI double in the sixth that scored George Springer, who went 3-for-5 with three runs. The Astros extended their winning streak to five games and capped a 10-game homestand at 7-3.

Cubs 6, Brewers 4

Daniel Murphy and Kyle Schwarber hit home runs, and Ben Zobrist added two RBIs to back left-hander Jose Quintana as Chicago avoided a three-game sweep with a win at Milwaukee. The second-place Brewers fell four games behind the Cubs in the National League Central, but they are still clinging to the top spot in the NL wild-card race by a half-game over St. Louis. Milwaukee put its first two runners on in the ninth against Cubs reliever Pedro Strop, but he came back to get a flyout, a forceout and a strikeout to notch his 12th save. Quintana (12-9) pitched around a few trouble spots to go 6 2/3 innings, allowing two runs on five hits.

Cardinals 7, Nationals 6

Matt Adams homered twice, including a three-run shot in the first inning, and drove in four runs as St. Louis edged host Washington. St. Louis' offensive power helped starter Miles Mikolas (14-4) on a night when the Nationals cut an early 7-1 deficit to just one-but the Cardinals held on. Mikolas gave up four runs and scattered 12 hits through 6 2/3 innings. Carlos Martinez took care of the final two innings and earned his first save this season since being converted into a reliever down the stretch.

Marlins 2, Phillies 1

Rookie Sandy Alcantara earned his second win in his second major league start, pitching seven scoreless innings and leading Miami to victory over visiting Philadelphia. Rookie Austin Dean



TEXAS: Shohei Ohtani #17 of the Los Angeles Angels runs the bases against the Texas Rangers at Globe Life Park in Arlington on September 5, 2018. — AFP

supported Alcantara (2-0) by driving in both of Miami's runs. The Phillies failed to take advantage of the last-place Marlins in the three-game series, losing twice. Philadelphia, in second place in the National League East, sits three games behind the Atlanta Braves.

Indians 3, Royals 1

Corey Kluber allowed a run on just two hits to become the first 18-game winner in the major leagues, and Edwin Encarnacion's fifth-inning RBI groundout produced the deciding run as Cleveland fended off visiting Kansas City. Kluber struck out 10 and walked just one in 6 2/3 innings, leaving with a runner at first base in the seventh. Oliver Perez struck out the Royals' Brian Goodwin to end the inning. Cody Allen struck out two batters in a perfect eighth inning, and Brad Hand struck out the side in the ninth to earn his 32nd save and give the Indians the rubber game of the three-game series.

Mariners 5, Orioles 2

Mike Leake didn't allow an earned run in six innings, and Seattle hit three solo home runs to defeat visiting Baltimore. Mitch Haniger, Nelson Cruz and Denard Span homered for Seattle, which took two of three games in the series. Edwin Diaz earned his 53rd save of the season. Leake (9-9) allowed two unearned runs on seven hits. He didn't walk a batter and struck out four. Leake won for the first time in 12 starts dating to late June. He was 0-5 during that stretch.

Pirates 3, Reds 2

Colin Moran hit an RBI double, and Gregory Polanco and Francisco Cervelli each drove in a run with a single as host Pittsburgh topped Cincinnati to complete a three-game series sweep. The Pirates improved to 12-4 against the Reds this season. Pittsburgh starter Jameson Taillon (12-9) extended his streak of starts with three earned runs allowed or fewer to 18, even though he wasn't at his sharpest. He gave up one run and eight hits in five innings, with six strikeouts and no walks.

Blue Jays 10, Rays 3

Aledmys Diaz hit a three-run home run in a seven-run first inning, and Toronto went on to defeat visiting Tampa Bay to avoid a three-game series sweep. Billy McKinney added a solo homer for the Blue Jays, and Lourdes Gurriel Jr., Devon Travis and Kendrys Morales each had three hits and an RBI. Kevin Kiermaier homered twice for the Rays.

Tigers 10, White Sox 2

Ronny Rodriguez and JaCoby Jones hit back-to-back homers during a six-run fourth inning, and Detroit battered host Chicago. The game was interrupted by a 28-minute rain delay in the second inning and a 33-minute delay in the fifth. Mikie Mahtook also homered during the big inning, and Jeimer Candelario had a solo shot along with two other hits while scoring twice. Jim Adduci and Nicholas Castellanos contributed three hits apiece and combined for three runs and two RBIs for the Tigers. — Reuters

Sports

Blood, violence damage eSports' Olympic bid, Alisports boss says

ESports gaining mainstream acceptance

JAKARTA: Blood and violence in video games is preventing the acceptance of eSports at the Olympics and Asian Games, the head of Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba's sports arm said. ESports, which are played and watched by millions worldwide and are gaining mainstream acceptance, were a demonstration event for the first time at the Asian Games in Jakarta that concluded on Sunday.

But plans to grant eSports full medal status at the Games' next edition have been placed on hold, and the International Olympic Committee has expressed reluctance to admit them. "It has to fit the spirit and the value of the Olympics. The content should not be violent," said Zhang Dazhong, founder and CEO of Alisports, which helped to promote the demonstration event. "Blood in video games is the problem. The line to violence can be blurry but when it comes to blood it's easy to define," he told AFP.

Although describing the Jakarta events as a "success", Zhang said OCA chiefs had objected to the number of violence-based games and requested more sport-related titles such as Pro Evolution Soccer to be chosen in future. Online

battle games such as League of Legends, Clash Royale and Arena of Valor were among those featured. "We need to get more sports-related games in," said Zhang. The OCA's objections were echoed in comments by Olympics chief Thomas Bach in Jakarta Sunday. "We have to draw very clear red line saying that no game which is contrary to the Olympic values can have a place in the Olympic podium," he said.

“Blood in video games is the problem”

‘A time to start and finish’

Tournaments of various styles of video games have grown in popularity worldwide in recent years, with shooting, strategy, and fighting for multi-player teams evolving into major arena events.

Asia has lead the boom, with China the world's largest gaming market. Alisports is backing the charge toward full medal status for eSports. But eSports face additional obstacles to their full admission at the next regional Olympics, Zhang admitted. One logistical hurdle is that eSports lack a single international federation. "It's a reason that restricted this sport's promotion globally, so we hope an association will be established soon and can help set up a global standard," he said.



SHANDONG: Students practice computer games in an eSports class at the Lanxiang technical school in Jinan, in China's eastern Shandong province. — AFP

Additionally there are health concerns over the non-athletic nature of the competition. Beijing said last week it would restrict the number of video games released, and take steps to curb playing time by minors to address growing rates

of childhood short-sightedness. According to Zhang, the more regulated world of eSports would not be affected. "Video games are entertainment, people may get addicted to play for a long time," he said. — AFP

Ozil return out of the question

MUNICH: Germany coach Joachim Loew has confirmed there is no chance of Mesut Ozil returning to the squad in the wake of the player's bombshell retirement from international duty in July. "I think everything has been said about this. When a player announces his resignation like that, you don't pick him for the squad eight or nine weeks later," Loew said at a press conference ahead of Germany's UEFA Nations League game against World Cup winners France.

"Players who have resigned will not have a role to play in future." Ozil, capped 92 times, announced his retirement from international football in the wake of Germany's disastrous World Cup campaign, with his statement accusing the German FA (DFB) president, Reinhard Grindel, of racism.

Loew, meanwhile, regrets not having been able to speak to the Arsenal star about his decision. "Mesut and I enjoyed a lot of success together over the years. I have tried several times to reach him on the phone, without any luck, and I will continue to try and make contact with him in future," he said. Germany are desperate to put their summertime blues behind them on Thursday when they host the French—the team who succeeded them as World Cup winners—in Munich.

The start of the brand new Nations League has thrown up a mouthwatering match for Loew's side, which will retain a core of players who so badly underperformed in Russia. "We are facing a new beginning. I feel that there is a positive impatience among the players to make amends for the summer," Loew said at the Allianz Arena. Loew, who resisted calls to resign after a disastrous World Cup campaign, is now under pressure to show that he is the right

man to lead Germany into a new era of success. He has a contract until 2022, having extended his deal in the spring.

"He has done a lot of thinking since the World Cup," midfielder Toni Kroos said of his coach. "From our training sessions, I feel like we are changing one or two things, and I hope that people see that tomorrow." Veteran midfielder Sami Khedira was among those left out of the squad, while youngsters Thilo Kehrer and Kai Havertz have been called up for the first time. Manchester City's Leroy Sané also returns after his controversial exclusion from the World Cup squad.

Adjustment in style

The Germany boss is also expected to make tactical changes, having admitted last week that a focus on dominant possession football was his "biggest mistake" at the World Cup. "We have been very successful with possession football in recent years, and we won't give up on that vision," said Loew on Wednesday, although he conceded that Germany needed to adjust their style. "Against teams like France, we don't need to have 70 percent of possession. We need to make sure we get the right balance and focus a bit more on the defense."

In his open appraisal of the World Cup disaster last week, Loew also identified a lack of motivation and questions over the team's mentality. "We didn't have the same incredible team spirit that we had in 2014," admitted Loew. "We weren't a tight-knit group from the word go." The Ozil affair has been amplified by reports of a dressing-room rift, with players of an ethnic minority background, such as Ozil and Jerome Boateng, on one side, and the likes of Thomas Mueller and Toni Kroos on the other.

"Of course we have guys with different interests, but there are no rifts," insisted Mueller on Tuesday, adding that the game against France was an opportunity to put such talk to bed. — AFP

Joshua focused on Povetkin as mega-bouts loom

LONDON: Anthony Joshua insists he won't be distracted by thoughts of potential mega-bouts against Deontay Wilder and Tyson Fury as the world heavyweight champion prepares to defend his titles. Joshua will put his WBA Super, IBF, WBO and IBO belts up for grabs against Russia's Alexander Povetkin on September 22. It will be the British fighter's first bout at Wembley since he stopped Wladimir Klitschko in April 2017. Joshua has been repeatedly linked with clashes against heavyweight division rivals Wilder and Fury. But the 28-year-old is aware mandatory challenger Povetkin is the first danger he must tackle. "Povetkin is a massive threat because he wants to be in the position that I'm in," Joshua told Sky Sports News.

"I'm not here to prove that I'm a prospect, I've proved myself and it's hard to stay here now. I've got to be wary but he's got to be wary of what I bring to the table as well which will make it a good fight. "This is world level boxing, elite boxing, world championship boxing. "Povetkin is a real game changer. It will be a good fight, it's not going to be a quick one. "We can both take a lot of punishment and dish out a lot of punishment and it's the first one to go. "I'm at that stage where I do want to look past Povetkin because the division is alright, it's amazing, there's some real good challenges out there."

Those future challenges will almost certainly be a high-profile clash against American WBC world heavyweight champion Wilder and possibly fellow Briton Fury. Wilder and Fury announced that they have agreed to fight each other, although a date is yet to be set for the clash. Joshua was asked if he was surprised the pair were set to meet. "Not necessarily," he said. "I think because they both need that fight. "They are at that stage of their career, 10 years in, where they need meaningful fights as well. "They are both building up their records, they've been in the game a long time." — AFP

Sports

Uighur footballer chases China landmark in troubled times

Tianjin Teda midfielder called up by China coach

SHANGHAI: The scion of a footballing family is primed to become the first Uighur to represent China's national team, amid growing international concern about the fate of the ethnic minority group. Mirahmetjan Muzepper was born in the ancient Silk Road city of Kashgar, in China's far-western region of Xinjiang, where tough security measures are in place against what the government calls a separatist and Islamic extremist threat.

Up to one million Uighurs and other Muslim minorities have been detained in internment camps in Xinjiang, according to estimates cited by a United Nations panel. But China has branded reports of such camps "completely untrue", saying it has made the region safer. Against that murky backdrop, Tianjin Teda midfielder Muzepper has been called up by China coach Marcello Lippi and is hoping to make his debut either against Qatar on Saturday or versus Bahrain three days later. Muzepper featured at the 2010 Asian Games for China's under-23 team and was included in the senior training squad the same year.

But he did not make the team on that occasion and now 27, he hopes to convince Italian World Cup winner Lippi to give him the nod for his first full cap, in what would be a landmark footballing occasion at a troubled time for Uighurs. "It is different from before," Muzepper told state broad-

caster CCTV this week, comparing his time with the senior side in 2010 to now. "I was quite young then, but the pressure is quite big this time." Muzepper, whose father and grandfather were footballers, added: "As long as I am given the chance, for every match I will give 100 percent. 'I hope that I can get the chance.'"

Muzepper, who can play on the wing or in central midfield, has been ever-present this season for mid-table Tianjin, playing 18 times in the Chinese Super League (CSL), scoring one goal and providing two assists. Underlining the sensitivity of the

Uighur question in China, state media have shied away from mentioning Muzepper's ethnicity. However, he is proud of his heritage and said in an interview last year: "Xinjiang players have that unyielding (character) in their bones. 'Even though my skills are not as good as yours, I can use my efforts to make up for it.'"

Muzepper hoping to make his debut either against Qatar

'Missing' youth star

Beijing-based Brandon Chemers, editor-in-chief of the Wild East Football website specializing in China, said that it was "hard to discount the possibility" that Muzepper's call-up is politically motivated—perhaps a demonstration of national unity orchestrated from the top? "But I don't think so," he said. "This side is a bit more experimental than



NANJING: Photo shows Tianjin Teda's Mirahmetjan Muzepper preparing to throw the ball during the Chinese Super League football match between Jiangsu Suning and Tianjin Taida in Nanjing in China's eastern Jiangsu province. —AFP

previous ones and I think Lippi wants to see what he can do.

"Muzepper's not setting the world on fire, but he's having a decent enough season with Tianjin," added Chemers, who estimates there are about 10 Uighurs playing in the CSL. President Xi Jinping is leading an ambitious move to improve China's footballing fortunes, but there are signs that Uighur footballers are not safe from Beijing's "counterterrorism" drive in Xinjiang.

In June, professional footballers' union FIFPro

said it was "concerned" about 19-year-old Erfan Hezim, an Uighur and a youth international for China who plays for CSL side Jiangsu Suning. Hezim was detained in February "for visiting foreign countries", said the US-funded Radio Free Asia, citing anonymous sources in Xinjiang. In June, the forward—who has been pictured with Lionel Messi—was listed as a player on Jiangsu's website. But as of yesterday, he was no longer on there. Jiangsu failed to respond when contacted by AFP. —AFP

Honda: Playing against Usain Bolt would be 'awesome'

PHNOM PENH: Keisuke Honda is looking forward to an "awesome" showdown with sprint king-turned-footballer Usain Bolt in Australia, the Japanese star forward said Tuesday after his first training session with Cambodia's national team. The Central Coast Mariners signed Bolt in August with the hopes of turning the eight-time Olympic champion into A-League material by the start of the season in October. Honda told reporters in Phnom Penh — where he serves as volunteer general manager for the Cambodian squad — that he was unaware the world's fastest man would one day be his competitor. "I didn't know when I signed with Melbourne Victory," said the former AC Milan player, who joined the Australian club's roster last month.

"It would be awesome if I can play against

him." The first game between the two clubs is set for November 11.

After his first practice with the Cambodian team, Honda reiterated his plans to "fix and improve" the side's on-field performance. "I want to contribute all my experience to the Cambodian national team," he said. "My mission is to change Cambodian soccer right now... but of course that's not easy." Honda was not optimistic about his team's chances against Malaysia for Monday's friendly. "It will be a difficult game as Malaysia is a very good country, it's very strong," he said.

Honda, with his trademark bleached blonde hair, emerged as a force to be reckoned with in 2010 when he helped propel Japan to the last 16 of the South Africa World Cup. In July, the footballer teamed up with Hollywood star Will Smith to launch a venture capital fund aimed at helping "people in disadvantaged environments". While he is now a full-time A-League player, Honda has said he will visit Cambodia for practice sessions whenever possible and communicate with players via video conference. Cambodia's FIFA ranking sits at a dismal 166, but in recent years the side has packed out stadiums during home appearances. —AFP

Mancini determined to rekindle Italy love affair with football

MILAN: Roberto Mancini takes charge of his first competitive game as Italy coach in Friday's Nations League opener against Poland in Bologna with the tough task of rekindling the nation's love affair with their national side, decimated after the low of their World Cup fiasco. The former Inter Milan and Manchester City boss was appointed in May after the four-time winners' shock failure to qualify for the World Cup for the first time since 1958. Mancini's job will be to rebuild a new and vibrant side going into the European Championship in two years' time and heading towards the 2022 World Cup in Qatar. The Nations League — in which Italy will also be up against European champions Portugal in Group 3 — will have an impact on seeding for Euro 2020.

And the 53-year-old has insisted that a key to his strategy was to bring in new blood after the departure of several veterans, including iconic goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon, in the wake of Italy's World Cup play-off defeat to Sweden last November. Buffon's exit has opened the way for 19-year-old AC Milan 'keeper Gianluigi Donnarumma. "We're a great group, very young," said Donnarumma at the team's Coverciano training centre near Florence. "We're determined to

bring Italian football back where it deserves to be. It's our duty." Italy have plummeted to an all-time low of 21st in the FIFA rankings.

They were eliminated in the group stage at the 2010 and 2014 World Cups, although they fared better at the European Championship, reaching the final in 2012 and the quarter-finals in 2016. But Mancini said he wanted to "try something different" and focus on youth, with four uncapped players including Roma's Nicolo Zaniolo, who is 19 and has yet to start in a Serie A game. "When I looked at TV and saw my name among the players called up I was overwhelmed, I didn't expect it. I called my father and he started crying," said Zaniolo, whose father Igor played for several Italian clubs including Genoa. "I will work with humility, commitment and by watching the best and trying to steal some of their secrets."

'Strong message'

Italy's under-21 side reached the semi-finals of the 2017 UEFA Under-21 Championship, while the under-20s finished third at the FIFA U-20 World Cup in 2017. Mancini called on the coaches of Serie A squads to give younger players more playing time to build on their potential. "We're trying to send a strong message from Coverciano. We're convinced that those who play well at youth level can do so even at a higher level," said Mancini. "At this historic moment there are not many Italian players playing on a consistent basis. Because of this, we have included many young players to increase the number of players so we can get to know them better." —AFP

Sports

Free from jihadist grip, Iraqi weightlifters target medals

Athletes narrate their ordeal under IS rule

MOSUL: Two years ago, the Islamic State group offered two successful Iraqi weightlifters a choice - either they compete in the Rio Paralympics, or stay in Mosul, then controlled by the jihadists. An easy way to escape the group's two-year occupation of Iraq's second city, one might think. But there was a big catch. "IS wanted us to hoist their flag instead of the Iraqi national flag in international competitions," says Faris Al-Ajeeli, referring to himself and fellow weightlifter Thaer Al-Ali.

Going to Rio and disobeying IS would have left their families back in Mosul at risk of reprisals. So "we couldn't go to Brazil", says Ajeeli, who had come away from London 2012 with a silver medal. The two athletes have much else in common. They are both polio victims in their early 40s and are setting their sights on the 2020 Paralympic Games in Tokyo. The 2016 Rio Games - the only ones missed by the duo in over a decade - were a "lost opportunity", says Ali, who won a bronze medal at Beijing in 2008.

Training among ruins

Iraq's Paralympic Committee showed understanding, says Tamer Ghanem, the weightlifting duo's trainer for the last 15 years. The two athletes "got an exemption without being penalized, because they had a good reason" not to participate in Rio, he tells AFP. IS seized control of Mosul during a lightning 2014 offensive, turning it into the de facto Iraqi capital of a "caliphate" that stretched across a third of Iraq. The two athletes refused to allow the setback to get to them.

India eager to spoil Cook's England farewell

LONDON: Ravi Shastri has promised India "will not throw in the towel" when they face England in the fifth Test at The Oval starting today despite having already lost the series. England's 60-run win in the fourth Test at Southampton gave them an unassailable 3-1 lead in the five-match contest. It also meant India, for all they are the world's top-ranked Test side, had now won just one of their last nine series outside Asia. The Oval clash has been given added significance by the fact it will be the last appearance before international retirement for Alastair Cook, England's all-time leading Test run-scorer. But India coach Shastri, who helped his country to a 1986 series win in England, is determined the tourists spoil the party.

'Get tough mentally'

"This is a team that will not throw in the towel," Shastri told reporters at The Oval on Wednesday. "It will come out there and look to compete and not be on the first flight home, rest assured that's exactly what we will do." The frustration for India, who earlier this year lost 2-1 in South Africa, is that two Tests in the current series - a 31-run loss in the opener at Edgbaston

Living under IS rule, they continued to juggle their training, work commitments and family lives.

In May 2017, after much of Mosul had been prised back from the jihadists' control by government forces, Ajeeli flew to the world weightlifting championships in Eger, Hungary. Dressed in orange and black lycra, he lifted 215 kilograms (474 pounds) and won a gold medal in the 107-kilogram plus category, retiring to his wheelchair grinning from ear to ear. This new medal was just the latest for the Iraqi flag bearer of Beijing 2008. In 2004, he won gold in Athens, and again in 2006 at the Asian Paralympics in Malaysia. And he has won trophies at regional and continental level.

Ali was also at Athens for the 2004 Paralympics, where he won a weightlifting bronze. He came back from Hungary with a silver medal in the under 97-kilogram category, by lifting 210 kilograms. But while the jihadists were vanquished in Mosul more than a year ago, athletes' training conditions in northern Iraq remain woe. Ajeeli, the chief chemist at Mosul's Al-Salam hospital, has even been forced to transform the second floor of his home into a makeshift weightlifting gym. Fortunately, he has willing accomplices in his four daughters. While the eldest is only 12, they have all helped fit out the room and arrange the weights discs.

Wearing 'Iraqi colors'

Ajeeli says he is determined to "hoist the Iraqi colors high (in Tokyo)... as in all previous competitions". Ali, who struggles to feed his children for

and the Southampton clash could well have gone their way, particularly if captain Virat Kohli had enjoyed more support with the bat. Kohli is the leading batsman in the series with 544 runs at an average of 68, including two hundreds, yet he will end up on the losing side. "I think you have got to get tough mentally," said Shastri when asked how India could improve their away record.

"We have run teams close overseas and we have competed. But now it's not about competing. We have to win games from here. "The scoreline says 3-1 which means India have lost the series, what the scoreline doesn't say is that India could have been 3-1 or it could have been 2-2. And my team knows it. They would have hurt and rightly so after the last game." England, despite having won the series, face several awkward problems of their own, with uncertainty surrounding whether Jonny Bairstow, as is his wish, will keep wicket, rather than Jos Buttler and what that means for their respective batting positions.

It looks as if off-spinning all-rounder Moeen Ali, fresh from bowling England to victory at Southampton, will continue to bat at three as he did in the second innings of the fourth Test, thereby allowing captain Joe Root to bat in his favored spot at number four. The vexed longer-term question of who replaces Cook at the top of the order remains, as does what England should do when James Anderson - who needs just four more wickets to equal Australia great Glenn McGrath's record of 563 for the most Test wickets taken by a pace bowler - finally calls it a day. — AFP



MOSUL: Iraqi paralympic weightlifter Faris Al-Ajeeli trains in the northern city of Mosul as his two daughters watch. — AFP

lack of work, trains in a cramped public sports complex in Mosul's Al-Muthanna neighborhood. The facility was partly destroyed during the months of intense combat between security forces and IS. It is now nothing more than a concrete shell, the gates and windows whisked away by looters. A fresh coat of paint on the walls fails to disguise damage caused by shells and looting.

Confronting the heat in the absence of air conditioning - or even electricity to power a fan - Ali trains tirelessly, as he has every day since

starting weightlifting at the age of 14. Lingering restrictions by the security forces on transporting goods to Nineveh province mean sports equipment cannot be sent to Mosul. But the duo's 57-year-old trainer Ghanem hopes improvements in security will soon permit new gear to arrive. The two weightlifters pack their bags. On September 8, they will compete in Japan in the Asia-Oceania paralympic weightlifting championships. They will set out with one goal - to secure entry to the 2020 Games in Tokyo. — AFP

Jonny Bairstow to keep wicket in India finale

LONDON: Jonny Bairstow will keep wicket for England in the fifth and final Test against India at The Oval, the England and Wales Cricket Board announced yesterday. Bairstow broke a finger keeping during India's 203-run win in the third Test at Trent Bridge, with England limited-overs gloveman Jos Buttler taking over behind the stumps in Nottingham.

Buttler was England's keeper again, with Bairstow deployed as a specialist batsman, in a series-clinching 60-run win in the fourth Test at Southampton. However, England, who are 3-1 up in this five-match campaign, have returned the gloves to Bairstow for the Oval Test, which starts on Friday. "Jonny Bairstow will keep wicket after recovering from a broken middle finger," said an ECB statement. As happened in the second innings at Southampton, all-rounder Moeen Ali is due to bat at number three, with England captain Joe Root continuing in his favored position of number four.

'Quality keepers'

But England have retained the same 11 play-

ers for what will be national record run-scorer Alastair Cook's final Test before the 33-year-old former captain retires from international cricket. "Jonny's been the Test keeper for a long time now and has done a fantastic job," Root said at The Oval yesterday. "It's not a reflection on the way Jos went about things in the last game at all. "But long-term, you look at scheduling of all international cricket across the formats, and sharing that workload could be really key in terms of keeping everyone fresh and ready at the top of their game."

He added: "I think it's a great way for those two guys to drive each other's games forward as well. We're very fortunate to be in the position where we have two quality keepers." Root, however, was adamant he had not succumbed to 'player power' from Yorkshire colleague Bairstow, who has made it clear he wants to keep wicket in Tests. "No, definitely not," he said. "I made it very clear if he's going to be the Test match wicket-keeper he is going to have to keep working really hard and that he might have been performing well for a long period of time but he's going to have to keep doing that. "I'm confident we have the right balance and team for this last game," Root added. England team to play India in fifth Test include: Alastair Cook, Keaton Jennings, Moeen Ali, Joe Root (capt), Jonny Bairstow (wkt), Ben Stokes, Jos Buttler, Sam Curran, Adil Rashid, Stuart Broad, Jimmy Anderson. — AFP

Griezmann pleads case for Ballon d'Or after FIFA snub

France star insists he deserves to be on the podium

PARIS: France star Antoine Griezmann insists he deserves to be on the podium for this year's Ballon d'Or after winning the World Cup and major silverware with Atletico Madrid. Griezmann came third in 2016 in the voting behind Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi for the most prestigious individual award in football, despite not winning anything. That year was agonizing for the forward as he lost the Euro 2016 final with France and the Champions League final with Atletico.

But this season fortune has smiled on Griezmann, who starred in France's triumphant World Cup winning campaign in Russia after an impressive year at Atletico, who won the Europa League and UEFA Super Cup. "Comparing 2016 and this year, for me I have to be in the top three," the 27-year-old told French sports daily L'Equipe. "In 2016, I lost two finals and was in the top three. This time I have won three finals." Asked if not winning it would be unfair, Griezmann replied: "Not unfair, but I would wonder what more I could do. I have won three trophies, stood out at decisive moments, but it is not me who votes."

Ronaldo and Messi have dominated the Ballon d'Or over the last decade and the Portuguese superstar will be a contender again this year after winning the Champions League with Real Madrid. But Griezmann, who rejected a move to join Messi at Barcelona in the close season, admits ending their stranglehold over the

award would be special. "I think about it, especially the closer I get to it. The Ballon d'Or is a prestigious award, and it is the highest you can go as a player. There are trophies in your league, in the World Cup, the Euro, but it's not the same," he said.

However, there are signs that Griezmann's glorious 2018 on the field might not be enough. UEFA gave their award for the best player of last season to Luka Modric, skipper of the Croatia side that reached the World Cup final and a Champions League winner with Real. And Griezmann was omitted, along with the rest of his France team-mates, from the final three nominees for FIFA's player of the year award. The finalists for that prize are Modric, Ronaldo and Mohamed Salah, the same three who made up the podium for UEFA's award.

Asked about the FIFA snub, Griezmann replied that "it's bizarre, and a shame. It is a trophy given out by FIFA, isn't it? And the World Cup is organized by FIFA, right? We win the World Cup, and there is no French player there. That is their choice but it is surprising that there is no world champion." The Ballon d'Or award was run jointly by FIFA and magazine France Football until the end of 2016, since when world football's governing body have reverted to giving out their own prize. While a panel of supporters, national team captains, coaches and journalists vote for the FIFA award, only journalists vote for the Ballon d'Or.—AFP



MUNICH: France's forward Antoine Griezmann kicks the ball during a training session in Munich, southern Germany. — AFP

Ambitious China turn to Hiddink to fulfill Olympic hopes

SHANGHAI: Highly respected Dutch coach Guus Hiddink looks poised to take on a leading role in China's aggressive push to finally become a force in international football. The 71-year-old was pictured this week-glasses perched on his nose and taking notes—watching China's under-21 side beat Myanmar 1-0 at home, amid reports that he is set to be formally appointed coach to lead the team into the Tokyo Olympics in 2020. When confirmed by the Chinese Football Association (CFA), the former Dutch national team manager will join another well-known veteran, the Italian World Cup winner Marcello Lippi, in China's coaching set-up.

The 70-year-old Lippi has been in charge of the senior side since 2016 and overseen a steady improvement, although China still failed to reach the World Cup in Russia and languish at 75th in the FIFA rankings. "Although the Chinese Football Association has not officially announced it, the famous coach Hiddink has begun to enter the role of head coach," the state Xinhua news agency said, noting that he remained in the stands during the under-21s' win over Myanmar on Tuesday. Soccer News said that Hiddink—whose last job was a caretaker spell at Chelsea in 2015-2016—met the players before the game.

The Dutchman will be paid just less than four million euros (\$4.7 million) a year after tax, Chinese media have said. He is being brought in as the Tokyo 2020 Games loom into view and as the Chinese government pushes an ambitious agenda to ramp up football from grassroots all the way to the senior team. Like Lippi, Hiddink comes with a wealth of experience at club and international level. In addition to his two emergency stints at Chelsea, he also coached Real Madrid, PSV Eindhoven and Valencia, among others. Hiddink is perhaps best known for inspiring co-hosts South Korea to a shock semi-final spot at the 2002 World Cup.—AFP

Beckham team to be known as 'Inter Miami'

MIAMI: David Beckham's new Major League Soccer franchise will be known as Inter Miami, it was confirmed Wednesday. A statement said Beckham's team, which is due to join the league in 2020, would be officially named Club Internacional de Futbol Miami. The name, which mirrors Serie A giants Inter Milan, was chosen to reflect Miami's status as a "truly global location that welcomes and embraces all cultures and communities."

"This is such a proud day for myself and for the entire team," Beckham said. "It's an honor to announce the new name and crest to our fans," added Beckham, Miami MLS Owner and President of Football Operations. "We are taking another important step in establishing our club and today marks an important moment in the history of Club Internacional de Futbol Miami."

Inter Miami's black and pink club crest features two herons standing back to back set against the backdrop of an eclipse. The club's motto—"Libertas, Unitas, Fortuna"—pays tribute to concepts of freedom, unity, solidarity, inclusiveness, opportunity and good fortune for all, the club said. "Our city and our fans draw their strength from the dreams of a global population that calls Miami home," said Miami MLS Managing Owner Jorge Mas. "It is only fitting that our name pays tribute to the inclusiveness that makes us who we are." —AFP

Sports

Friday, September 7, 2018

Weary Nadal ready for Del Potro's merciless barrage

Djokovic eyes Nishikori revenge

NEW YORK: World number one and defending champion Rafael Nadal will put his weary body on the line against a merciless Juan Martin del Potro today with a place in the US Open final at stake. Nadal, the three-time champion, faces 2009 winner Del Potro and is two wins from clinching an 18th Grand Slam title. That would be just two behind Roger Federer and with an 11-5 career head-to-head advantage over the giant Argentine, he would usually be a comfortable favorite. But this has been an unpredictable US Open with Federer knocked out by Australian world number 55 John Millman in the fourth round and Nadal coming close to joining his greatest rival at the exit door.

Whoever gets through today will have yet another major challenge on their hands in Sunday's final where either Novak Djokovic or Kei Nishikori will await. The 32-year-old Nadal needed four hours and 49 minutes to get past Dominic Thiem 0-6, 6-4, 7-5, 6-7 (4/7), 7-6 (7/5) in an epic quarter-final which concluded at just after 2 am on Wednesday. Now, in his seventh semi-final at the US Open, Nadal is braced for another marathon with Del Potro, the third seed. In July, Nadal came back from two sets to one down to beat Del Potro in the Wimbledon quarter-finals after four hours and 48 minutes.

A month earlier, Nadal had cruised past del Potro in straight sets in the semi-finals at Roland Garros on his way to an 11th title in Paris. "It will

be a very tough one. Juan Martin is a great player everywhere," said Nadal who will be playing in a seventh semi-final in New York. "But the challenge of playing him on hard of course is even higher for me personally than playing against him on clay." Nadal has been on court at this US Open just six minutes short of 16 hours. He played back-to-back four-setters against Karen Khachanov and Nikoloz Basilashvili before recovering from breaks down in the third and fourth sets against Thiem.

11th semi-final for Djokovic

Del Potro has unleashed 66 aces and spent three and a half hours fewer on court than Nadal. The 29-year-old is in his third semi-final at the US Open and sixth at the majors. That figure would have been higher had he not missed 14 Grand Slams in his career due to a series of wrist surgeries. "It could be another big battle just as at Wimbledon," said Del Potro. "I like to play always with the No 1 of the world, doesn't matter the tournament or the conditions or the weather."

Meanwhile, two-time US Open champion Djokovic will be playing in his 11th consecutive semi-final in New York, just two months after defying the odds to lift a 13th major at Wimbledon. The 31-year-old Serb holds a 14-2 advantage over Nishikori including wins at Wimbledon and Rome this year. However, one of Nishikori's wins came in the semi-finals in New York in 2014



NEW YORK: Juan Martin Del Potro of Argentina plays against John Isner of the US during their Men's Singles quarterfinal match at the 2018 US Open at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York. — AFP

when the Japanese star finished runner-up to Marin Cilic. "When Kei is on, he's a top-five, top-10 player," said Djokovic. "He has a great two-handed backhand, great footwork and is one of the quickest players on tour."

Djokovic needed two four-setters in his opening rounds but cruised through in straight sets against Richard Gasquet and John Millman. He dropped serve just twice in the last two outings. — AFP

Young drivers pose a triple headache for Mercedes F1 boss

LONDON: Formula One world champions Mercedes may have to rethink their junior program if young drivers like Frenchman Esteban Ocon are unable to find a race seat, according to team boss Toto Wolff. The sport's annual game of driver musical chairs is in full swing but Mercedes have a problem, with three of their highly-rated proteges still looking for a place and not enough available.

Ocon, a 21-year-old rising star at Force India, Britain's Formula Two championship leader George Russell and Germany's Pascal Wehrlein are all drivers Mercedes want to see in Formula One but who have nothing guaranteed. "As it stands (we have) three really talented kids with the lack of opportunity," Wolff told reporters in Italy at the weekend. "And this has come to a point now where we need to decide what we want to do in the future."

Mercedes' problem is that most of the remaining vacancies are at teams who are either linked to rival manufacturers or, like Red Bull-owned Toro Rosso, have young driver programs of their own and promote from within. They have little interest in drivers that Mer-

cedes want to place but keep on long-term contracts. Of the three Mercedes-powered teams, former champions Williams will need a replacement for Lance Stroll who looks sure to take Ocon's place at Force India - a team now controlled by the Canadian's billionaire father.

Williams are last in the championship and facing a big hit on sponsorship and prize money, however, and that means commercial considerations are likely to come into play. Mercedes could offer a discount on the engines to sweeten a deal but none of their juniors would bring the sort of funding that others might muster. Wehrlein, 23, has raced for now-defunct Manor and then Ferrari-powered Sauber but lost his seat at the end of the 2017 season. While Mercedes found him a seat in the DTM German Touring Car championship, they are pulling out of that series at the end of the year to focus on Formula E.

Ocon was set to join Renault, but Australian Daniel Ricciardo scuppered that move by deciding to leave Red Bull, and McLaren this week closed another door by taking 18-year-old Briton Lando Norris. Russell, 20, will leave Formula Two if he wins the championship. Wolff said funding a junior team was not an option for cost reasons and the current model of support was backfiring if young Mercedes drivers ended up being 'stigmatized' by other teams. "If we can't find a solution for these guys, I question the junior program in the future," said Wolff, whose factory team has four-times world champion Lewis Hamilton and Finland's Valtteri Bottas confirmed for 2019. — Reuters

De Marchi wins stage 11; Yates clings onto Vuelta lead

MADRID: Italy's Alessandro De Marchi held off the challenge of Colombian Jhonatan Restrepo to win the 11th stage of the Tour of Spain on Wednesday, as Britain's Simon Yates held onto the overall lead. Yates, of Mitchelton-Scott, withstood a series of late attacks, in particular from Movistar's Nairo Quintana.

BMC's De Marchi and Katusha-Alpecin rider Restrepo both pulled clear of a large breakaway group, which had been spearheaded by France's Thibaut Pinot with around 80 kilometers to go. De Marchi then outlasted Restrepo on the final ascent to finish on his own for a third stage victory in this event, following up those he won in 2013 and 2014. "If I waited for the sprint, I think for sure I would have been second," De Marchi said. "The only option I had was to try everything on the last climb and honestly I didn't feel the best (in my) legs, it was just about the mind."

De Marchi crossed the line, with his arms outstretched, 28 seconds ahead of Restrepo. Italy's Franco Pellizotti was 59 seconds back in third at the end of the longest stage of the race at 207.8 kilometers. Yates had to dig deep to

stay clear of Movistar pair Quintana and Alejandro Valverde heading into Thursday's 12th stage between Mondonedo and Manon. The 26-year-old, who led this year's Giro d'Italia for long periods before a dramatic late collapse, holds a one-second lead over 38-year-old veteran Valverde, with 2016 champion Quintana only 13 seconds further adrift.

"It was a really crazy race today and the boys rode great again, they're going to be tired now," Yates told his team's website. "It was ok for me, I was in the peloton just trying to save energy. We worked hard over the first 100km marking and closing the moves, trying to control it, but there comes a point when you can only control it for so long." Both Movistar leaders, who so often have produced Grand Tour podium finishes but struggled for wins, suggested that Mitchelton had been riding too defensively in the peloton as they tried to reel in Pinot and the other escapees.

"Some other teams might not be racing for victory, but it's not our case," said the 2009 winner Valverde. "Mitchelton? It's their philosophy. They never push to defend a result, they push when they think they can inflict harm on their rivals." Colombian Quintana added: "Mitchelton not pushing with us? Well, they just chose to ride that way. It was their way of acting today-staying on the others' wheels, profiting from their work. "We thought we had a responsibility here; maybe the others don't care, but we felt we had to work." The 12th stage is another hilly affair, before the riders head back into the mountains for three straight days from today. — AFP

Free from jihadist grip, Iraqi weightlifters target medals

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MOSUL: Iraqi paralympic weightlifter Thaer Al-Ali (right) is pictured during a training session with trainer Tamer Ghanem, in the northern city of Mosul. — AFP