

Friday Times

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News in brief

Kuwaiti, French commanders meet

KUWAIT: Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Armed Forces Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khuder held talks yesterday with visiting French commander of joint operations Rear Admiral Francois Rebour on means of boosting cooperation between the two friendly countries. The army said in a statement that the two sides also discussed military issues of joint concern. — KUNA

Kuwait, Italy ink draft accord

KUWAIT: The ministry of justice yesterday initialed with its Italian counterpart department an accord for mutual legal assistance on criminal affairs. The ministry said in a statement that the provisional agreement stipulated that the two countries would exchange legal assistance on criminal issues, namely lifting evidence, witnesses' testimonies, seizing and confiscating crime-related assets and aid seeking procedures. The Kuwaiti side that inked the initial accord was headed by the assistant undersecretary for legal affairs, Zakariya Al-Ansari. The director of the international cooperation bureau at the Italian ministry of justice led the Italian delegation. The two sides have agreed on signing the final text of the agreement soon. — KUNA

Kuwait aids Jordan foundation

AMMAN: Kuwaiti Ambassador to Jordan Abdulaziz Al-Daihani yesterday delivered to King Hussein Cancer Foundation \$1.6 million in cash aid to support full medical care for patients. The ambassador, in remarks to KUNA on the sidelines of his meeting with the foundation's General Director Nisreen Qatamesh, affirmed Kuwait's keenness on supporting various relief and charitable activities in the Middle East and the world. The humanitarian Kuwaiti gesture toward Jordan coincided with the fourth anniversary of the UN's designation of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as a "Humanitarian Leader" and Kuwait as a "Humanitarian Center". Qatamesh lauded the continuous Kuwaiti aid at official and grassroots levels, depicting the depth of the relationship between the two countries. — KUNA

PHOTO OF THE DAY



A view of Kuwait City seen from the marina at Souq Sharq.— Photo by Amani Alshehab / KUNA

Survey got it wrong



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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The latest survey by InterNations brought surprising results for many Kuwaitis and raised controversy here. The firm collected votes from 14,300 expats representing 174 nationalities living in 191 countries to rate 43 different aspects of life abroad on a scale of one to seven. Some of these aspects include healthcare, safety, childcare, education and the cost of living.

According to the survey, Kuwait sits at the bottom, going down notably in the 'Working Abroad' and 'Personal Finance' indices, ranking 67th among the worst countries for expats. The UAE came in 40th with one of the biggest drops in ranking owing to a drastic decline in indices such as 'Cost of Living' and 'Working Abroad'. Other countries with high declines include Indonesia, Hong Kong and Malaysia.

Personally, I am not convinced with the study or its results. I do not think that the criteria on which it was based are fully accurate. This is my view. I do not say this because I am a Kuwaiti citizen, but there are obvious elements that do not need statistics.

According to statistics by the Public Authority for Civil Information, Kuwait's population by the end of June 2018 reached 4,588,148, of which 1,385,960 are Kuwaitis, while the number of non-Kuwaitis is 3,202,000. Citizens in GCC countries constitute 52 percent of the total population. The massive number of expatriates living here suggest that Kuwait is not as bad as this poll would suggest. Otherwise how to explain the

3.2 million foreigners that choose to call Kuwait home?

There are expatriates who have been living in Kuwait for more than 30 years. If Kuwait is the worst country, how come they stayed this long and didn't leave for any other country? As for job security, the government is reviewing the policies of employment and replacing non-useful expatriates with nationals. They are doing this to protect good, hardworking expats from residency traders. The jobs of some expatriate employees like doctors and teachers are safe.

The second reason is that the number of Kuwaitis expected to graduate from university during the next five years is about 30,000. They need jobs, and the government is required to implement a policy for hiring them. Therefore, targeting non-productive expatriates in government jobs is a normal procedure. According to the study, Kuwait pays the highest salaries for some positions, such as general managers of hotels, with average monthly salaries higher than in Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

I don't deny that there are redundant laborers roaming the streets who came via evil residency merchants that we hear about. I also believe that expatriate labor is one of the reasons for the prosperity of citizens, and the decline in their number can cause some problems due to the refusal of Kuwaiti to do some jobs.

One of the benefits of moving to work in GCC countries like Kuwait is the lack of income tax and the strength of the economy because of the currency rate. If some expatriates seem unhappy with their income, this is because their incomes are not enough to cover their daily expenses. This applies to both citizens and expatriates. Political stability is also found in all Gulf states, which is not available in many countries of the world.

Recruitment companies that participated in the survey continue to focus on the Gulf region as an attractive place for work. So the Gulf is still a good area for expatriates despite what the study claims, and in my view that is a contradiction worth considering.

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Kuwait Times

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Exiting expats impact economy

As foreigners leave, services and real estate sectors slow

By Sajeev K Peter

“We sent our kids home today,” said Lissy Antony, fighting back tears that welled up in her eyes as she walked out of Kuwait International Airport’s departure area with her husband Antony Joseph. For Antony and his wife, parting with their young children Alan and Alena was a traumatic experience. And for their two children, aged 12 and 10, saying goodbye to the country they considered their home presented a psychological and emotional crisis.

As Kuwait introduces new rules and regulations as part of Kuwaitization, thousands of foreigners are either being laid off or restricted from taking up jobs in key sectors. While many expats are compelled to tighten their belts by resorting to the painful remedy of sending their children home, others are left with an even harder choice - leaving the country before things get worse.

While some are quitting Kuwait because they lost their jobs, others are doing it of their own volition in the face of a situation they call “beyond their control”. As the number of foreigners leaving the country rises, the impact has started to ripple through the economy, affecting sales in almost all retail segments - from automobiles and garments to food and beverages and household goods. “For decades, Kuwait remained an Eldorado for expats, especially for Asians. Not anymore. I think it is time we folded up,” said Riyas Ahamad, an Indian engineer working with an oil company in Ahmadi.

According to Expat Insider, Kuwait ranked last in a global poll about working abroad. Respondents reportedly considered a set of indicators including quality of life, ease of settling in and overall general satisfaction. Kuwait came 68th, a position it already held from 2014 to 2016, while it came second to last in 2017, the report said.

‘Lean and mean’

Large-scale retrenchments are taking place in the private sector too. As part of cost-cutting, private universities and schools are firing expats while organizations and hotels are easing out expat staff as part of their new strategy to become “lean and mean”. Many Asian schools admit, albeit secretly, that a large number of parents like Antony have opted to take transfer certificates of their wards to relocate them to their home countries amid radically “deteriorating financial conditions”. Several others are sending their families home as they find it hard to balance their monthly family budget.

“Be it the exorbitant fees for medical services, high petrol prices, new visa regulations or taxation moves, the tide is inexorably turning against expats,” said Alfred Williams, a lecturer at a private university in Kuwait. “In most consumer



segments, there is a palpable drop in sales. Usually there is a lull in sales during summer, but this time it has been slightly higher,” an executive at a supermarket said on condition of anonymity. However, he said no official estimates are available yet for the quarter.

According to a recent report by NBK, growth in its consumer spending index eased to 6.5 percent year-on-year in July. The consumption of durables was flat in July with growth easing to 7.3 percent year-on-year from 10.8 percent in June, as the sector continued to feel the impact of seasonally lower demand during the summer months. Sales of cars, furniture, and luxury items were weaker, while spending on electronics picked up, the report added.

Flats for rent

If the sudden spurt in ‘Flat for Rent’ hoardings across the

country’s residential areas is any indication, one can assume that demand for apartments is in a fairly steep negative price trajectory. “During summertime, usually there will be a drop in demand for residential apartments. This is the time when expats normally seek a ToR (transfer of residence). But this year, we see an unusual trend. The number is surprisingly high,” said Anand Kumar, a supervisor at a real estate firm in Mahboula.

According to Al-Shall economic report, percentage of vacant buildings dropped slightly in the first half of the year, as per PACI figures, increasing to 11.2 percent. They numbered approximately 22,800 buildings out of a total of 203,800 buildings (23,400 vacant buildings, out of a total of 202,400 buildings in the end of 2017, i.e. 11.6 percent).

Hundreds of residential apartments in Kuwait are lying vacant currently amid declining demand and availability of



“
Currently the market is oversupplied and demand appears very weak
 ”

newly-built apartments. Interestingly, apartment owners have begun to show more flexibility towards their customers, either to retain occupants or woo new tenants. In many residential areas like Abbassiya, Salmiya, Mangaf and Fahaheel, building owners have reduced rents to keep their properties occupied. As the rental market in Kuwait is oversupplied currently, rent declines in the country vary from roughly 2.5 percent up to 10 to 15 percent, according to some estimates.

“There were four flats vacant in our building two months ago. But today, there are eight flats vacant in the building,” said Yousef, a Pakistani taxi driver who stays near Don Bosco School in Salmiya.

Market experts are of the view that property owners and tenants may be in the process of converging on a new lower equilibrium price in tandem with building valuations and high vacancy rates for apartments - approximately 13 percent - ac-

ording to the Real Estate Association. “We anticipate prices in this sector to stabilize only if the gap between demand and supply narrows. We don’t expect this to happen anytime soon because currently the market is oversupplied and demand appears very weak,” said Fakruddin Ali, a real estate expert.

According to experts, building prices remain in negative territory. More than 75,000 flats in Kuwait are empty and need to be “absorbed” by the real estate market in four to five years, a recent study warned.

The balancing act

Kuwait has adopted a two-pronged strategy in the face of a volatile oil price scenario to reduce dependency on oil and balance the demography by slashing the burgeoning expat population in the country. According to UN estimates, Kuwait’s current population is 4,206,085 as of August 2018.

Expatriates account for about 70 percent of the country’s population, with 1.1 million Arabs and 1.4 million Asians.

“For policymakers, it is a tightrope walk. No doubt we need to purge the illegal residents of the country and bring the number of expats down to a sustainable level. At the same time, expats are a critical component for the economic growth of the country and its sociocultural expansion. So the focus must be on the quality of the expat population while we adjust the demographics,” said Kareem Ibrahim, a professor at a private university in Kuwait.

Local



THE WOMAN BEHIND THE

portrait



Local math teacher draws realistic portraits in spare moments

By Sahar Moussa

Fatima Hussein, a 30-year-old Kuwaiti math teacher and mother of four, still manages to find time to practice her first passion - art. It started as a hobby in her youth and became an escape from her busy adult life. Her portraits are realistic, and you can almost feel the pain or joy that her drawings depict. So what makes a sensitive artist who pours her feelings into her drawings and blends with her paintings to teach elementary grade mathematics and not art? Kuwait Times spoke with her to discover more.

KT: There is a huge difference between math and art - why did you choose to teach mathematics instead of art?

Hussein: I prefer that my hobby doesn't have a link with my profession.

KT: How old were you when you started drawing?

Hussein: I started drawing when I was seven years old.

KT: Did your parents support your talent when you were young?

Hussein: Yes, they did.

KT: As a married woman with children, how do you find time for drawing?

Hussein: I use any spare time to draw.

KT: Who is your favorite artist, and why?

Hussein: My favorite artist is Leonardo da Vinci. His paintings are distinguished for being precise, mysterious and inspirational.

KT: What is your source of inspiration?

Hussein: Meditation is the most important source of my inspiration.

KT: Which is your school of art?

Hussein: Portraiture, which is a part of the school of realism.

KT: What is portrait art?

Hussein: Portrait art is part of realism. Lately, this art has started to



concentrate on drawing individuals by merging their personality with the artist's feelings. It is a language that the artist translates into what he feels and what he wants to say through these feelings. It is clear and not mysterious for the recipient.

KT: What are the steps that you follow when you start drawing?

Hussein: First I select the picture I want to draw. By using a pencil, I make one horizontal and one vertical axis. Then I make measurements and place points on the board by deciding the spots for the eyes, nose and mouth. After that I draw the features and the face. Finally I start shadowing by using charcoal or colors (which is my favorite step).



Local



KT: When you start any new artwork, do you imagine or copy it?

Hussein: As I mentioned before, I first select a picture that I like and then copy it, but of course I always try to add my special touch to it.



KT: What materials and colors do you use in your paintings?

Hussein: Pencils, pastels and coal.

KT: Which artwork is the closest to your heart?

Hussein: All my drawings are close to my heart - every work I draw leaves an impression on my mind, and I have a huge link with it. Yet the "Crying in Silence" piece is one of the works that affected me to a point that I felt sad while drawing it - as if I was drawing feelings and not a picture.

KT: Did you take drawing courses? Do you have a certificate in drawing?

Hussein: Yes, I have taken a lot of courses. I have an accredited trainer certificate from a college of professional arts in Britain.

KT: Do you give art courses? For which ages and where?

Hussein: Yes I do give art courses to children aged 11 and above. Whenever I have free time, I give courses at my home for women only.

KT: In your opinion, is it possible for anyone to learn drawing? Or is it a must that he/she should have talent?

Hussein: It is possible to learn drawing from zero, yet talent is important. People who already have talent are more creative, unlike mere hobbyists.

KT: How long does it take you to complete a painting?

Hussein: It takes me nearly nine to twelve hours, depending on the details.

KT: Have you displayed any of your drawings in exhibitions?

Hussein: Yes.

KT: What are your ambitions and dreams?

Hussein: I have always longed to become a professional artist.

KT: What advice do you give to someone who loves and wants to learn to draw?

Hussein: First, never stop practicing and always improve yourself. Second, don't give up trying and exploring.

KT: Some of your paintings reflect much sadness and pain - do they reflect your personal experiences?

Hussein: No, not at all, but I like paintings that deliver feelings.



— All images courtesy
Fatima Hussein

Local

Old Bayan Palace: A forgotten monument



When hearing the name “Bayan Palace”, we all imagine the prestigious palace built in the era of the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah in Bayan. However, the current palace derived its name from another older place also named “Bayan Palace”, built by former ruler Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in 1931. The palace was given the name Bayan Palace since it was located on a higher land overlooking its surrounding area.

Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber used the place as a getaway during springtime. According to the “Kuwait’s Letter” book written by Ayoub Hussein and published by the Center for Research and Studies on Kuwait, the palace consisted of three sections. The first included the diwan or council, mosque, maids’ rooms, room of the Amir’s secretary and children’s rooms that were occupied by Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and the current Amir HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The second section included rooms of Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber and his sister Sheikha Mariam Al-Jaber and the kitchen, while the third section held the guards’ residences. As for the palace’s location, the book noted that it was south of Hawally, which was then visited by Kuwaitis in springtime. It added that the palace overlooks all of Hawally’s houses and surrounding lands.

The number of Hawally residents only increased after the palace was built, writer Hussein said, adding that people used to go to the palace’s mosque for Friday prayers. The author noted that the palace was abandoned after the death of Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber in 1950 and it was torn down by 1960 to be replaced by Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital. — KUNA



Hasawi plans to buy English club

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti businessman Fawwaz Al-Hasawi has declared his intentions to purchase a British football club without revealing which one, said informed sources. Notably, Hasawi had earlier bought Nottingham Forest football club before selling when it failed to qualify for the Premier League. The sources predicted that Hasawi plans to buy Charlton Athletic Club, an English professional association football club based in Charlton in southeast London that was founded in 1905 and currently plays in the Premier League.

MoH forms probe panel

The health ministry’s assistant undersecretary for private medical services affairs Dr Fatima Al-Najjar announced that a special committee had been formed to investigate some alleged violations in a private hospital. Najjar added that inspection teams had been sent to the hospital to examine the validity of the hospital staff licenses. She also stressed that all needed measures would be taken against the hospital in case of detecting any violations.

Crimes

Girl killed in fall from apartment

KUWAIT: An Egyptian girl died after falling from her family’s fifth-floor apartment in Salmiya, said security sources, noting that an investigation is in progress to determine whether it was a case of homicide.

Slanderer jailed

The court of appeals sentenced an Asian to 20 months with labor over charges of slandering and threatening the British ambassador to Kuwait on social media networks. Security sources noted that the man had been initially acquitted by the court of first instance before the public prosecution took the case to the court of appeals, pending a final judgment by the court of cassation.

Arrests made

A Syrian, who had been wanted for involvement in seven fraud cases and a six-year prison sentence, was arrested in Farwaniya. A citizen and an Arab expat were arrested in Saad Al-Abdullah for driving under the influence of drugs. Security sources said that the suspects also had some drugs in the vehicle. A case was filed.

Car thefts

A Sri Lankan restaurant delivery driver reported that someone stole the restaurant’s vehicle when he left it for a few seconds with the engine running outside the restaurant to pick up an order. The driver added that the man, who had been standing outside the restaurant, looked suspicious and acted strangely. A traffic citation was issued against the driver for leaving a vehicle with the engine running despite the interior ministry’s repeated warnings and a search is on for the suspect. Meanwhile, a female citizen reported that someone had broken into her vehicle while it was parked outside a beauty salon in Farwaniya and stolen some valuable possessions and KD 120. — *Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Anbaa/Al-Jarida*

Mol executes plan for securing husseiniyas

Undersecretary holds inspection tour

KUWAIT: The interior ministry announced on Wednesday the implementation of a plan for safeguarding husseiniya gatherings during the Islamic month of Muharram, which started Tuesday. In line with the directives of Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Undersecretary Lt Gen Essam Al-Naham, accompanied by Assistant Undersecretary for Operations Maj Gen Jamal Al-Sayegh, held an inspection tour of several husseiniyas and condolence places, MoI's security media department said in a press statement.

Naham conveyed greetings of Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah to the officials responsible for implementing the security plan for husseiniyas, the statement added. He inspected all patrols on all roads leading to husseiniyas, and was briefed on the readiness of security personnel for this plan, according to the statement. He thanked those responsible for husseiniyas for their cooperation and supporting security personnel.

Naham asserted that MoI's aim is to protect lives and properties, adding citizens' security is a top priority of the ministry. He urged security personnel to be vigilant and implement firmly and comprehensively the plan. Finally, he wished Kuwait and the Kuwaiti people everlasting security and safety under the leadership of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Undersecretary Lt Gen Essam Al-Naham, accompanied by Assistant Undersecretary for Operations Maj Gen Jamal Al-Sayegh, is seen during their inspection tour of several husseiniyas and condolence places. —KUNA



Kuwait donates ambulances, medical equipment to Iraq

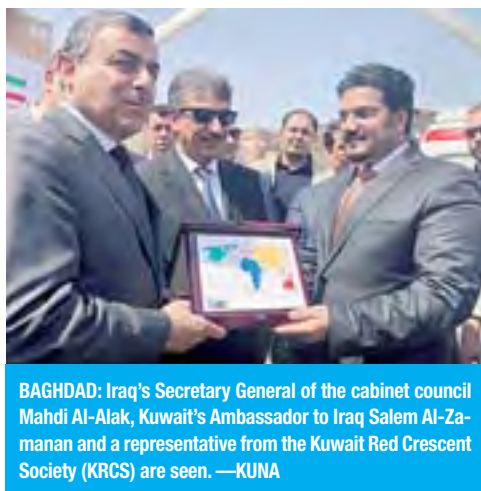
BAGHDAD: Kuwait donated yesterday four ambulances and medical equipment worth \$1.8 million as part of a Kuwaiti campaign to support Iraq, dubbed "By your side." The donation handover, which took place in a ceremony held in Baghdad's Green Zone, was attended by Iraq's Secretary General of the cabinet council Mahdi Al-Alak, Kuwait's Ambassador to Iraq Salem Al-Zamanan, a number of Iraqi officials and a representative from the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS).

Alak said in a speech that such donation and humanitarian support from Kuwait will help in

areas liberated from the so-called Islamic State. "Such an initiative for Iraq has been taken by Kuwait and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, who is keen on providing support for Iraq," Alak added. "We are proud of this connection and we will restore all basic services to the liberated areas with the efficiency needed," he concluded.

Zamanan said that this campaign, which was first initiated by HH the Amir, is to help the Iraqi people recover from difficult times and crises, which resulted in destruction and loss of many vital services needed due to the brutal acts of the terrorist IS. "The donation is provided by the Kuwait Red Crescent Society and consists of four advanced ambulances," Zamanan said.

"The people of Kuwait have supported Iraq since 2003 through humanitarian operations with an allocated sum of \$500 million that was handled back then by Kuwaiti Ambassador Ali Al-Mumen," Zamanan added. "The moves continued through Kuwait's contribution and the campaign 'By your side'," the ambassador noted. —KUNA



BAGHDAD: Iraq's Secretary General of the cabinet council Mahdi Al-Alak, Kuwait's Ambassador to Iraq Salem Al-Zamanan and a representative from the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) are seen. —KUNA

Kuwait re-establishes Supreme Committee for Int'l Health Laws

KUWAIT: The ministry of health has re-established the Supreme Committee for International Health Laws for boosting global health and implementing sustainable development objectives. Undersecretary Mustafa Redha said in a statement yesterday that forming the commission "came as an affirmation of the ministry's adherence to recommendations of external assessment of the International Health Regulations (IHR)" effective since 2017, as well as in response to recommendations by experts and advisors of the

World Health Organization (WHO).

Amid emergence of international disease threats and other health risks, up to 196 countries across the globe had agreed to implement the IHR. This binding instrument of international law entered into force on June 15, 2007. The undersecretary, during the freshly formed committee's meeting, affirmed that its creation was in line with Kuwait's commitment to the WHO treaty on IHR issued in 2005.

Redha affirmed the necessity of communicating with the IHR headquarters for accurate and instant information exchange as stipulated by international recommendations. The National IHR Center has become an integral part of the chain of responses to the MoH emergency scheme. The center holds regular local and external communication to authenticate information and issue recommendations. —KUNA

Temperatures dropping in Kuwait: Met

KUWAIT: The weather in Kuwait is currently in a transitional state from summer to autumn, as temperatures are gradually dropping, Kuwait Meteorological Center said yesterday. The humidity level will increase, affecting visibility especially in coastal areas, meteorologist Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi told KUNA.

Qarawi said the weather yesterday was extremely hot with northwesterly light to moderate winds between 15 to 45 km/h speed. The maximum temperature was between 46 to 48 degrees Celsius. Sea level was between two to six feet. Yesterday night's weather was expected to be relatively hot with light northwesterly wind at 12 to 35 km/h. The lowest temperature between 30 to 33 degrees Celsius and sea

level between two to four feet.

Today morning will be hot and relatively humid with light to moderate northwesterly winds turning into southeasterly with 8-32 km/h speed. The highest temperature will be between 44 to 46 degrees Celsius and sea level at one to four feet. The weather at night will be relatively hot and humid with multi-directional winds going into southeasterly between 8-30 km/h with a chance of light fog in coastal areas. The lowest temperature will be between 29 to 31 degrees Celsius and sea level between one to four feet.

As for tomorrow morning, the weather will be hot and humid, especially in coastal areas, with southeasterly to multi-directional winds of 8-35 km/h. The highest temperature will be between 43 to 45 degrees Celsius with sea level between two to four feet. At night, it will be humid with light to moderate southeasterly to multi-directional winds of 8-28 km/h with a chance of fog and low horizontal visibility. The lowest temperature will be between 26 to 28 degrees Celsius and sea level will be at one to four feet. —KUNA



Nuns 'demand justice' for sister assaulted by bishop

Rising temperatures mean 'more deaths' worldwide

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MANILA: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte (4th left, arm upraised) gestures while visiting the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) Operations Center at Camp Aguinaldo in Manila yesterday, as Typhoon Mangkhut barrels toward the Philippines. — AFP

Super typhoon roars toward Philippines

Typhoon Mangkhut triggers evacuation

MANILA: A super typhoon roared toward the Philippines yesterday, prompting thousands to evacuate ahead of its heavy rains and fierce winds that are set to strike at the weekend before moving on to China. Typhoon Mangkhut, which has already blasted through the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam, is speeding across the Pacific with winds that can gust as high as 255 kilometers per hour.

Authorities said some 10 million people in the Philippines are in the storm's path, not including millions more in heavily-populated coastal China. Thousands began evacuating in seaside areas of the northern tip of the main Philippine island of Luzon, where the storm is expected to make landfall early tomorrow. "We are really frightened. They say it (typhoon) is so strong," said Delaila Pasion, who had fled her home.

"We were too scared to remain." "During the previous monsoon rains, half of our house was destroyed so I wanted to take my grandchildren

to safety," she told journalists. Flooding, landslides and wind damage from the coming storm were top concerns as authorities prepared equipment for rescue and relief operations.



10 million people in the storm's path

Schools were shuttered and some farmers took to their fields to start early harvest of corn and rice that could be ruined by flooding.

'Considerable threat'

An average of 20 typhoons and storms lash

the Philippines each year, killing hundreds of people and leaving millions in near-perpetual poverty. The country's deadliest on record is Super Typhoon Haiyan, which left more than 7,350 people dead or missing across the central Philippines in November 2013. The state weather service said Mangkhut will be the strongest typhoon so far this year, with sustained winds of 205 kilometers per hour.

The typhoon is expected to boost the intensity of seasonal monsoon rains that have already caused widespread flooding in central Luzon, a mainly farming region north of capital Manila. Poor communities reliant on fishing are some of the most vulnerable to fierce typhoon winds and the storm surge that pounds the coast.

"It will bring destruction. They are the ones greatly affected. Even moderate winds can topple their houses," regional civil defense official Dante Balao said. Hong Kong is also in Mangkhut's sights and preparations there were

already underway, though the storm was not expected to hit until Sunday. Social media users and radio commentators in Hong Kong said they were stocking up on food and supplies. The Hong Kong Observatory warned residents to prepare for the storm, saying it posed a "considerable threat".

The Philippines state weather service said heavy rains and strong winds are expected from Friday over the north and centre of Luzon, along with rough seas on the coasts. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said it expects "substantial damage" on the Philippine path of Mangkhut. Storm surges of up to seven meters are expected to hit coastal areas, it said, while heavy rains could trigger landslides and flash floods. The civil defense office in Manila said towns and cities on Mangkhut's path are preparing government buildings as evacuation centers, stockpiling food and other emergency rations. — AFP

International

Saudi, UAE working to cut risks to civilians in Yemen

The coalition is engaged in an “urgent and good-faith effort”

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has “certified” that Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are working to reduce risks to civilian life in Yemen—a key step to ensuring continued US support to the coalition. Pompeo’s assessment, announced Wednesday, came even as he admitted that the US believes civilian death rates at the hands of the coalition are “far too high.” Under new rules, Congress requires the certification to continue allowing US air tankers to refuel Saudi and UAE warplanes.

The measure comes amid a string of high-profile coalition strikes that have killed scores of civilians, many of them children. In a statement, Pompeo noted that both Saudi Arabia and UAE “are undertaking demonstrable actions to reduce the risk of harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure resulting from military operations of these governments.” On September 1, the coalition admitted that “mistakes” had been made in an August air strike that killed 40 children.

The bombing on a crowded market in part of northern Yemen held by Houthi rebels killed a total of 51 people, according to the Red Cross. In an unclassified report, obtained by AFP, that accompanied Pompeo’s certification, he acknowledged that the US “recognizes that civilian casualties have occurred at rates that are far too high in the Saudi-led coalition’s campaign in Yemen.” The Yemen conflict has triggered the world’s worst humanitarian crisis, with the UN estimating that as many as 10,000 people have died, most of them civilians, since the coalition launched military operations in 2015. Twin strikes south of the rebel-held Red Sea port of Hodeida on August 23 killed 26 children, the United Nations has said. The United States has

drawn sharp criticism for its ongoing support to the coalition, which also includes intelligence sharing and targeting information. In the report, Pompeo said civilian casualties must be reduced “for both strategic and moral reasons.”

The document points to multiple ways the coalition is trying to do this, including by avoiding hitting civilian infrastructure, keeping a “no-strike” list, and by updating rules of engagement. The Royal Saudi Air Force has also pledged to fund \$750 million in US-provided training. The report notes the coalition is engaged in an “urgent and good-faith effort” to support diplomatic efforts to end the war.

‘Farce’

But aid groups slammed Pompeo’s certification, saying it would ensure further civilian bloodshed. “With Secretary Pompeo’s certification, the State Department demonstrated that it is blindly supporting military operations in Yemen without any allegiance to facts, moral code or humanitarian law,” Oxfam America said in a statement. Brookings Institution fellow Scott Anderson said Congress must push for more information on the basis of the certification, and challenge Pompeo if this is deemed inadequate.

And Democratic Congressman Ro Khanna called the certification a “farce.” “The Saudis deliberately bombed a bus full of children. There is only one moral answer, and that is to end our support for their intervention in Yemen,” Khanna said on Twitter. The coalition supports the internationally recognized government of President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi, which is fighting Iran-backed Houthi rebels who seized control of Sanaa in 2014. US De-



SANAA: An injured Yemeni Houthi rebel fighter sits outside the UN offices in the capital Sanaa during a demonstration with other fighters demanding the right to travel abroad for medical treatment. — AFP

fense Secretary Jim Mattis issued a separate statement endorsing the certification, saying the UAE and Saudis are making “every effort” to reduce the risk of civilian casualties and collateral damage.

Mattis last month warned that US support for the coalition was “not unconditional,” noting that the coalition must do “everything humanly possible to avoid any innocent loss of life.”—Agencies

France admits torture ‘system’ during Algeria

PARIS: France admitted yesterday that it instigated a “system” that led to torture during Algeria’s independence war, a conflict that remains hugely sensitive six decades on. President Emmanuel Macron is set to acknowledge that mathematician Maurice Audin, a Communist pro-independence activist who disappeared in 1957, “died under torture stemming from the system instigated while Algeria was part of France”, his office said.

Macron, who was due to visit Audin’s widow, will also announce “the opening of archives on the subject of disappeared civilians and soldiers, both French and Algerian”. During the 1954–62 war, which claimed some 1.5 million Algerian lives, French forces brutally cracked down on independence fighters in the colony ruled by Paris for 130 years.

Hundreds of thousands of young French men were conscripted to fight in a conflict that left deep scars in France’s national psyche as it

wound down from being a colonial power after World War II. The French state has never previously admitted that its military forces routinely used torture during the war. Macron, the first president born after the conflict, sparked controversy on the campaign trail last year by declaring that France’s colonization of Algeria was a “crime against humanity”. He later walked back the comments, calling for “neither denial nor repentance” over France’s colonial history and adding: “We cannot remain trapped in the past”.

Yesterday he visited the widow of Audin, whose disappearance has long been a source of fascination in France. An assistant professor at the University of Algiers, Audin was 25 when he was arrested at his home by French paratroopers, accused of harboring armed members of the Algerian Communist Party. He was tortured repeatedly in a villa in the Algiers neighborhood of El Biar. His widow Josette was told 10 days later that the mathematician had escaped while being transferred between jails.

This remained the official version of events until 2014, when Macron’s predecessor Francois Hollande acknowledged that Audin died in detention. Historian Sylvie Thenault said the French state’s acknowledgement that Audin’s death resulted from a “system” pointed to a broader recognition of wrongdoing. — AFP

Israeli forces take down protest huts at Bedouin village

KHAN AL-AHMAR: Israel security forces yesterday dismantled several shacks built by Palestinian protesters near Khan Al-Ahmar, a Bedouin village in the occupied West Bank that Israel has slated for demolition. Reuters witnesses said Israeli forces arrived at the village before sunrise yesterday and began taking down the newly built protest huts, without touching the Bedouin encampment, the fate of which has become a focus of Palestinian protests and international concern. Israel’s military liaison agency with the Palestinians, COGAT, said on Twitter that five “movable structures that were illegally transported & installed” in the area had been taken down.

The five new huts had been assembled this week by activists from several rights groups and the Western-backed Palestinian Authority in support of the Bedouin community. Khan Al-Ahmar is beside an Israeli highway that runs through the West Bank from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea. Israel’s plan to demolish the village and relocate its 180 residents – Bedouins who scrape a living by raising sheep and goats – to a site 12 km (7 miles) away, has drawn criticism from Palestinians and some European states, who cite the impact on the community and prospects for peace. Palestinians say the demolition is part of an Israeli push to create an arc of settlements that would effectively cut off East Jerusalem from the West Bank, territories Israel captured in the 1967 Middle East war and which the Palestinians seek for an independent state. Last week, Israel’s Supreme Court rejected petitions to prevent the move, siding with the authorities who say the village was built without required permits. Palestinians say such documents are impossible to obtain. — Reuters

International

Hope, skepticism as warring South Sudan leaders ink deal

20 dead as hill collapses on Darfur village in Sudan

ADDIS ABABA: South Sudan's President Salva Kiir and rebel leader Riek Machar signed a much-anticipated peace deal yesterday, the latest attempt to end five years of a vicious civil war that's torn the world's youngest nation apart. Seated before a roomful of regional leaders, diplomats and officials convened in the Ethiopian capital, the two men signed a document meant to end a conflict that began in 2013 and quickly spiraled into a regional crisis.

Hopes were high that the agreement, the details of which were not announced, will end the war which has cost the lives of tens of thousands of people, pushed millions to the brink of starvation and scattered refugees across East Africa. "The eyes of the world are upon us as the South Sudan leaders commit today to press for reconciliation and lasting peace in their country," said Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed at the start of a brief but delayed closed-door meeting after which Kiir and Machar emerged to sign the document. The agreement was greeted with applause and ululations from the delegates, but also concerns from some parties that it might not be honored. Since the civil war began in December 2013 - following Kiir's claim that Machar was plotting a coup-the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) regional bloc, chaired by Ethiopia, has taken the lead on peace negotiations, to little effect. The last peace pact collapsed in July 2016 during days of fighting in the capital Juba that forced Machar to flee for his life.

Words of skepticism

Speaking prior to the agreement's signing, David Shearer, head of the UN Mission in South Sudan, sounded a note of caution. "With the

signing of this revitalized agreement, we should publicly acknowledge it is but one step on the road to peace, but one which lays the foundation for all that follows," he said. His fears were echoed by Britain's Chris Trott, who spoke for the Troika bloc that also includes Norway and the United States and provides key funding to the peace process.

"We remain concerned about the parties' level of commitment to this agreement," he said, citing recent fighting in the northwestern city of Wau and the deaths of 13 aid workers in South Sudan this year alone. The US last week said that 107 aid workers and 13 journalists had been killed since the war began. "The Troika is committed to peace in South Sudan. But in order to be convinced of the parties' commitment, we will need to see a significant change in their approach," Trott said.

After decades of civil war, South Sudan voted to leave its northern neighbor Sudan in 2011, becoming the world's youngest country. The split deprived Sudan of most of its oil reserves, and production was disrupted by the outbreak of war in South Sudan just two years after independence. International frustration with the warring parties peaked in July, when the UN Security Council slapped an arms embargo and sanctions on two military officials to encourage South Sudan's leaders to turn away from the battleground and seek a diplomatic solution.

Hill collapses

In another development, at least 20 people have been killed in Sudan's war-torn Darfur region after a hill collapsed onto their village following heavy rain, a rebel group said yesterday.

cause (the dead leaders) had political experience and expertise", he said. "We have always considered Iran a danger to us. This bombardment has made our fear stronger." But Muludi said he was confident the KDPI would fill the leadership void. Iran said the strikes were retaliation for repeated cross-border incursions by the "terrorist" group. The KDPI is Iran's oldest Kurdish separatist group. It was banned after the Islamic revolution of 1979.

KOYSINJAJQ: A man wearing a white surgeon's mask sprays red paint at pockmarks left in a white wall by shrapnel-honoring comrades who died in an Iranian missile attack in Iraqi Kurdistan. The man is a member of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran, a rebel group based in northern Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region, whose headquarters were targeted by the missile attack on September 8. At least 15 KDPI leaders and members were killed at the base in Koysinjq, according to the rebels.

"The victims have obviously left a big hole", said KDPI Secretary General Mustafa Muludi, one of around 30 wounded in the strikes. "We have suffered a great loss be-

Iran's armed forces chief of staff said on Tuesday that Kurdish leaders in Iraq had given assurances in the past that they would rein in the KDPI and other anti-Iran militants. "But since last year, provoked by America, they broke this pledge," Major General Mohammad Bagheri told Iran's semi-official ISNA news agency. While Iran has called on Iraq to expel the rebels, Baghdad has called the missile strikes a violation of its sovereignty. Kurds, a non-Arab ethnic group, have long agitated for their own state. They number between 25 and 35 million people spread across Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran. In Iran they make up around 10 percent of the population.—AFP



JUBA: South Sudan President Salva Kiir (right) is greeted by officials at Juba International Airport in Juba yesterday, after returning from the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa where the latest peace agreement with opposition leader Riek Machar was finalized. — AFP

Several people are still feared to be buried after rocks crashed down onto their houses in the mountainous Jebel Marra region of Darfur on September 7, the group said. The region is under the control of the rebel Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid (SLA-AW) group, and getting independent information from that remote area is difficult.

"On September 7 a part of a hill collapsed on a village in eastern Jebel Marra killing at least 20 people," said Mohamed El-Naier, spokesman of

SLA-AW. "Dozens more are still buried under the debris. The entire village has been destroyed," he said, adding that those who survived were now living in the open without any shelter. The death toll was confirmed by the shura council of the Fur tribe, the biggest in Darfur. "We urge the United Nations, NGOs and the government to help us find those still missing and to provide shelter to people living in the open," said Amin Mahmud Osman, general secretary of the council, in a statement.—Agencies

Kurd rebels pick up pieces after missile attack

Suu Kyi defends court's decision to jail reporters

HANOI: Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi yesterday robustly defended the jailing of two Reuters journalists who were reporting on the Rohingya crisis, as she hit back at global criticism of a trial widely seen as an attempt to muzzle the free press. The country's de facto leader acknowledged that the brutal crackdown on the Muslim minority—which the United Nations has cast as "genocide"—could have been "handled better", but insisted the two reporters had been treated fairly. "They were not jailed because they were journalists" but because "the court has decided that they had broken the Official Secrets Act", she said.

Wa Lone, 32, and Kyaw Soe Oo, 28, were each imprisoned for seven years last week for breaching the country's headline Official Secrets Act while reporting on atrocities committed during the military crackdown in Rakhine state. Suu Kyi, once garlanded as a global rights champion, has come under intense pressure to use her moral authority inside Myanmar to defend the pair. Challenging critics of the verdict—including the UN, rights groups who once lionized her, and the US Vice President—to "point out" where there has been a miscarriage of justice, Suu Kyi said the case upheld the rule of law.

"The case was held in open court... I don't think anybody has bothered to read the summary of the judge," she said during a discussion at the World Economic Forum, adding the pair still had the right to appeal. Her comments drew an indignant response from rights groups who have urged the Nobel Laureate to press for a presidential pardon for the reporters. "Open courts are designed to shed light on the justice process," said Sean Bain of the International Commission of Jurists.—AFP

International

Gunman kills 5 in California, then himself

Man goes on a shooting rampage

LOS ANGELES: A man went on a shooting rampage in California on Wednesday, killing five people including his wife, before taking his own life. The shooting at multiple locations in Bakersfield in central California was possibly "a domestic violence incident," said Lieutenant Mark King of the Kern County sheriff's office.

Police received their first call at 5:19 pm before responding to the first location, a trucking company, where the rampage began.

Three people were killed there and the shooter, armed with a large caliber hand gun, fled. Sheriff Donny Youngblood told reporters that the suspect first shot a man at the trucking company and then killed his own wife. He chased a person who had witnessed the shooting and killed that person, too. He then fled and shot a couple at a house. Police then received a call from a woman who said she had been carjacked, King said. Officers gave chase and the suspect pulled into a business, got out of the car and shot himself, he said.

King said police were investigating five scenes and interviewing some 30 witnesses to determine what triggered the rampage. The names of the victims have not been released, but they were all from the Bakersfield area, located some 90 miles north of Los Angeles, King said. "We don't believe anyone else was involved and the only suspect was accounted for," he said. Youngblood said the officer who confronted the suspect

after the carjacking wore a body camera, but the footage has not been released. "Obviously, these are not random shootings," said Youngblood, while denouncing the fact that such mass shooting were "the new normal."

It was the latest chapter of America's epidemic of gun violence. Americans make up only four percent of the global population but they own 40 percent of the world's firearms, according to a recent study published by the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva. Of the 857 million guns owned by civilians, 393 million are in the United States—more than all of the firearms held by ordinary citizens in the other top 25 countries combined, according to the Small Arms Survey.

According to Gun Violence Archive, the mass shooting in Bakersfield is the third deadliest in the United States this year after a shooting at a school in Parkland, Florida, in February that left 17 people dead and one at a school in Santa Fe, Texas, in May that left 10 people dead. The shootings have drawn impassioned pleas for stricter gun control.

Following the Parkland shooting, teenage activists, many of them friends of the victims, galvanized a movement for gun control by organizing marches and school walkouts that kept the issue in the headlines for weeks. The outrage prompted Florida to pass the first gun control measure in the state in 20 years. — AFP

Plagiarism allegation riles Spanish leader

MADRID: Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez yesterday denied allegations he plagiarized his doctoral thesis as he battles a raft of problems in a week that has seen him lose his health minister over similar reports of academic irregularities. "The information appearing in certain media claiming the existence of plagiarism in my doctoral thesis is absolutely FALSE," Socialist Sanchez tweeted just two days after Carmen Monton quit as health minister amid reports of irregularities in how she obtained her degree. Spanish media said Monton had been awarded grades without attending classes and that her final project contained plagiarized passages - charges she denied.

"I shall take legal action to defend my honor and dignity if what has been published is not rectified," Sanchez said, referring to a front-page story by conservative daily ABC saying Sanchez used "cut and paste" to produce his doctoral dissertation. The article

claimed the premier's paper on innovations in Spanish economic diplomacy, written in 2012 when he was a professor of economics in Madrid, included sections lifted almost word for word from an article by fellow economists as well as a presentation by a former industry minister.

Online conservative paper Ok Diario similarly accused Sanchez of plagiarism. The leader of the centre-right Ciudadanos party Albert Rivera on Wednesday urged Sanchez in parliament to publish the dissertation, suggesting there were "reasonable doubts" that needed public clarification. "The thesis has been published in accordance with the rules," replied an angry Sanchez, in power only since June when his Socialists replaced the conservative Popular Party mired in allegations of corruption.

His government is a minority administration with just 84 lawmakers in a parliament of 350. To date, Sanchez's thesis is available only at a university library just outside Madrid. It cannot be consulted online and cannot be photocopied, presaging a rush by journalists on the library concerned. Opposition leader Pablo Casado has also been facing calls to step down, with his own academic record questioned. He allegedly obtained a master's degree from King Juan Carlos University without attending classes or turning in a final dissertation. — AFP



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International

Europe court rules against UK over mass surveillance

Britain's mass web-spying faulted by rights court

STRASBOURG: Europe's top rights court ruled yesterday that Britain's program of mass surveillance, revealed by whistleblower Edward Snowden as part of his sensational leaks on US spying, violated people's right to privacy. Ruling in the case of Big Brother Watch and Others versus the United Kingdom, the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France, said the interception of journalistic material also violated the right to freedom of information.

The case was brought by a group of journalists and rights activists who believe that their data may have been targeted. The court ruled that the existence of the surveillance program "did not in and of itself violate the convention" but noted "that such a regime had to respect criteria set down in its case-law". They concluded that the mass trawling for information by Britain's GCHQ spy agency violated Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights regarding the right to privacy because there was "insufficient oversight" of the program.

The court found the oversight to be doubly deficient, in the way in which the GCHQ selected internet providers for intercepting data and then filtered the messages, and the way in which intelligence agents selected which data to examine. It determined that the regime covering how the spy agency obtained data from internet and phone

companies was "not in accordance with the law".

In a further victory for the 16 complainants the court ruled that the program also provided "insufficient safeguards in respect of confidential journalistic material", violating Article 10 of the European convention, which protects freedom of expression and information. But it dismissed claims that Britain further violated the privacy of those on whom it snooped by sharing intelligence with foreign governments. "The regime for sharing intelligence with foreign governments did not violate either Article 8 or Article 10," it said.

Necessary oversight

Snowden, a former contractor with the National Security Agency of the United States, leaked thousands of classified documents to the press in 2013 which revealed the vast scope of surveillance of private data that was put in place after the 9/11 attacks. The documents showed, among other things, that Britain spied on foreign politicians at G20 summit meetings in London in 2009 and that its spy agency collected huge quantities of global email messages, Facebook posts, internet histories and calls, and shared them with the NSA.

Snowden, who fled to Russia, is wanted in the US for espionage. The ECHR noted that national governments enjoy "wide discretion" in deciding what type of surveillance is necessary to protect



STRASBOURG: Macedonian Prime Minister Zoran Zaev (center), flanked by European Parliament President Antonio Tajani (left), arrives prior to deliver a speech during a plenary session at the European Parliament yesterday in Strasbourg. — AFP

national security. But it said such programs require sufficient oversight to keep the surveillance to what is "necessary in a democratic society". It noted that some of the data scooped up by the

GCHQ "could reveal a great deal about a person's habits and contacts". The judgment is not final, as it can be appealed to the grand chamber of the Strasbourg court. — AFP

French 'Spiderman' becomes a citizen

PARIS: The migrant hero nicknamed "Spiderman" for saving a child hanging off a balcony by scaling a Paris apartment block with his bare hands has become a French citizen, according to a government decree. Nimble 22-year-old Mamoudou Gassama from Mali was granted a fast-track to French nationality and a job in the fire service after the daring rescue in May. "This act of great bravery exemplifies the values which help unite our national community, such as courage, selflessness, altruism and taking care of the most vulnerable," said the official document published Wednesday.

Gassama, who had been in France illegally, was catapulted to global fame by the extraordinary feat captured in footage seen by millions on social media. The video showed the former construction worker jumping from one floor to the next, hauling himself up with impressive athleticism towards the four-year-old boy dangling above. He was congratulated in person by President Emmanuel Macron two days later and also met Mali's President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita in the capital of the West African country.

Gassama arrived in France in September 2017 after travelling the perilous Mediterranean migrant route and found a job in the construction industry despite not having the right to work. He has received international acclaim for his bravery but activists have accused the French government of "hypocrisy", pointing to its treatment of other migrants. In August a controversial asylum and immigration bill was signed into French law, designed to accelerate asylum procedures by cutting the maximum processing time. — AFP

Final farewell to UN's Kofi Annan at state funeral

ACCRA: World dignitaries laid to rest former UN secretary general Kofi Annan in his native Ghana yesterday, with calls to keep alive the legacy of a "stubborn optimist" to create a better, more peaceful world. His widow Nane Maria led hundreds of mourners, including world leaders past and present, traditional rulers and global royalty, and called her husband an "extraordinary" person who had a "joy of life". "My love, you are now back home where you started your long journey. But may your wisdom and compassion continue to guide us, wherever we are," she told his funeral in the capital, Accra.

His son, Kojo, said his father had dedicated his life to the ideals of unity, equality, love, peace and respect. "The greatest tribute we could ever pay is to follow his example," he added to conclude a three-hour ceremony of tributes, prayer and song. Annan led the UN from 1997 to 2006 and was the first from sub-Saharan Africa to do so. He died on August 18 aged 80 at his home in Switzerland after a short illness. Thousands of ordinary Ghanaians this week paid their final respects as his coffin lay in state during three days of national mourning. Ghana's President Nana Akufo-Addo called him "one of the truly iconic figures of modern times".

'Stubborn optimist'

Many ordinary Ghanaians described him as a father-figure and a source of national pride, while his brother, Kobina, told the congregation that he was not just a leader and statesman. "We lost a brother, a husband, a father, a grandfather and an uncle, a man of deep conviction who was as committed to instilling the

values of fairness, integrity, kindness and service in each of us as he was to advocating for peace and human rights around the world," he said. "Stubborn optimist that he was, he would want us all to look forward with hope and keep striving to create a freer, fairer and more peaceful world." Current UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres praised his close friend as an "exceptional global leader" who was dignified, courageous and a man of "integrity, dynamism and dedication". "Kofi Annan was the United Nations and the United Nations was him," he added. "As we face the headwinds of our troubled and turbulent times, let us always be inspired by the legacy of Kofi Annan," he said, adding: "Our world needs it more than ever."

'Diplomatic rock star'

Annan, who was originally from Kumasi, the capital of the Ashanti region in southern Ghana, devoted four decades of his working life to the UN, and was known for bringing quiet charisma to the role. He was widely credited for raising the world body's profile in global politics during his two terms in office, facing challenges including wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Annan was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2001, as the world was reeling from the September 11 terror attacks in the United States, jointly with the UN "for their work for a better organized and more peaceful world". Opera singer and UN goodwill ambassador Barbara Hendricks, who performed at his Nobel ceremony, yesterday sang the civil rights anthem "Oh, Freedom". Annan, a proud African, whom Nelson Mandela called "my leader", left the post as one of the most popular-and recognizable-UN chiefs in history, and was considered a "diplomatic rock star" in international circles.

President Akufo-Addo said Annan "brought considerable renown to our country by this position and by his conduct and comportment in the global arena". "The outpouring of tributes from the world over is an accurate measure of the man, a man who gave his life to making peace where there was conflict, to defending the voiceless who were powerless, to promoting virtue where there was evil," he added. — AFP

International

Harassment, anxiety and debt: The working life of young UK women

Young women in Britain are paid less and harassed

LONDON: Young women in Britain are paid less and harassed more at work than men, with most reporting that their job negatively affects their mental health, a survey found yesterday. Almost one in five young women surveyed in England and Wales said they were paid less than male colleagues at a similar level, according to the charity Young Women's Trust, despite government efforts to close the gender pay gap.

Nearly one in four young women also said they had been sexually harassed at work, but only one-third of these reported it to bosses or human resources. Many said they did not know how or feared losing their job. "Sadly, even a hundred years after the first women gaining the power to vote, it's still a rich man's world," said

the trust's chief executive Carole Easton. "Young women's treatment at work, pay and wellbeing are trailing far behind those of young men." Al-



Job negatively affects their mental health

though Britain outlawed sex discrimination in the 1970s, women are under-represented in senior

positions and gender pay inequality remains a persistent problem.

Men on average earn 18.4 percent more than women, according to government data published last year after legislation forcing companies with more than 250 workers - covering almost half of Britain's workforce - to publish their average pay gap. Women were also more likely to be offered zero-hours contracts and their average debts have increased over the last year, found the survey of more than 4,000 people aged 18 to 30. Four in ten women said it was a "real struggle" to make their money last to the end of the month, compared to three in ten men in the same age group.

Worries over work were affecting women's

quality of life, with more than 50 percent saying their job had a negative impact on their mental health, compared to about 40 percent of men. Women had little hope of swift change, with only half believing gender discrimination in Britain will be a thing of the past by the time they are 40.

"Harassment, discrimination, anxiety and debt are facts of life for far too many young women today," Sam Smethers, chief executive of the Fawcett Society, Britain's leading women's rights charity, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "We need to end the misogyny and harassment they experience and give them fair pay at work by ending pay and maternity discrimination." — Reuters

EU votes to stop Hungary 'threat'

STRASBOURG: The European Parliament has launched an action that could unleash unprecedented political sanctions against Viktor Orban's populist Hungarian government for posing a "systemic threat" to the EU's founding values. The move dealt a stunning political blow to Prime Minister Orban, who had told the parliament a day earlier that a scathing report leading to the vote was an insult to Hungary's honor and people.

Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto wasted little time in slamming the vote as "nothing less than the petty revenge of pro-immigration politicians". With elections for a new parliament in May 2019, the vote reflects growing pushback among traditional parties in Europe against the rise of populists, who oppose migration and are accused of undermining the rule of law. Adopted by 448 votes for to 197 against and with 48 abstentions, the motion marked the first time the parliament has initiated steps under Article Seven of the European Union's treaty. An earlier action against Poland was initiated by the EU executive.

Dutch Greens MEP Judith Sargentini, who spearheaded the vote, smiled broadly and breathed a sigh of relief before embracing parliament supporters in the French city of Strasbourg. "It is a positive sign of this parliament taking responsibility and wanting action," Sargentini told a press conference afterwards. She had urged colleagues not to let Hungary off the hook, declaring that Orban's eight-year rule "violates the values on which this union was built."

The parliament issued a statement calling on EU countries to now "act against a member state to prevent a systemic threat"



STRASBOURG: Member of European Parliament Judith Sargentini (center) reacts after the vote on the situation in Hungary at the European Parliament in Strasbourg. — AFP

to such founding values as respect for democracy, the rule of law and human rights. The vote was based on a report that voiced concerns about judicial independence, corruption, freedom of expression, academic freedom, religious freedom, and the rights of minorities and refugees.

The vote takes the first steps under Article Seven of the EU Treaty, known by some in Brussels as the "nuclear option", which could ultimately strip Hungary of its EU voting rights. Other EU governments could halt any further action, however, and Poland has warned it would do so. A spokeswoman for Poland's Law and Justice (PiS) government told AFP Warsaw was "very worried by the decision," because it "threatens" EU unity.

'Historic vote'

In a brief speech to parliament on Tuesday, Orban vowed that Hungary would resist any attempt to "blackmail" it into softening its anti-migrant stance, which he charged was the motive behind the vote. Though defiant, he was resigned to the

outcome, saying the parliament seemed to have already made up its mind. "Hungary will protect its borders, stop illegal migration and defend its rights," said Orban, who embraces a vision of a Christian Europe and opposes an influx of Muslim and other migrants.

Opposition to Orban's vision does not just come from the left, with disquiet also in the main centre-right parliamentary group, the European People's Party (EPP). The EPP's leader, Manfred Weber, said he would vote in favor of the motion against Orban's government, whose Fidesz party belongs to his grouping.

Weber, a candidate to succeed fellow EPP member Jean-Claude Juncker as head of the commission next year, saw his bloc vote 115 for, 57 against with 28 abstentions. But Hungarian government spokesman Zoltan Kovacs claimed in a tweet that the motion had failed because the overall vote did not receive the support of two-thirds present. It was not immediately clear if Budapest will launch a legal challenge. — AFP

Chile passes law allowing teens over 14 to change their legal sex

VALPARAISO: Lawmakers in Chile on Wednesday passed legislation allowing people as young as 14 to legally change their name and gender identity. The Chamber of Deputies passed the Gender Identity Law by a vote of 95-46. It allows people aged 18 and above to change their name and legal gender, while those aged over 14 can do so with the permission of a parent or legal guardian. The Senate had passed the bill last month, so Wednesday's vote brought an end to a five-year battle in the deeply conservative South American country. The hotly debated legislation had come close to passing several times, but the issue came to a head earlier this year in the final months of former president Michelle Bachelet's term.

"We are witnessing a historic event which we celebrate with great emotion and joy," said Alvaro Troncoso, head of the Movement for Homosexual Integration and Liberation (Movilh). "It will improve the quality of life of thousands of people whose dignity and rights have been denigrated simply by the prejudices that exist against their gender identification." Activists had argued that not allowing people to register legally under the gender they most strongly identified with was a form of discrimination and had caused a variety of social, psychological and legal problems.

"Right now, for the Chilean state, I do not exist," transgender activist Alessia Injoke told AFP shortly before the law was passed. "Right now there is someone called Alejandro who is not me." She said the new law would "grant me legal recognition of my existence: recognizing my identity is recognizing a segment of the population that has been ignored and whose identity has been denied." A survey conducted by Movilh in August of 326 people who identified as transgender revealed that 76 percent of respondents reported having been discriminated against because of their gender identification, limiting their options to find work.

When the new law comes into effect, single people aged 18 or over will be able to legally change their name and gender by filling out a form at the civil registry office, while married people can do so at a family court. — AFP

International

Rising temperatures mean 'more deaths' worldwide

An increase of 3C or 4C could raise mortality rates

TEPIC: Failure to meet global targets to limit rising temperatures will mean more heat-related deaths, researchers said yesterday. Countries have signed the Paris agreement on climate change to limit the rise in global temperatures to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, and ideally to 1.5C. An increase of 3C or 4C could raise mortality rates by between 1 and 9 percent, according to a study published in the journal *Climatic Change*.

"Currently, we are on a trajectory to reach

over 3 degrees Celsius of warming, and if this trend continues there would be serious consequences for health in many parts of the world," said co-author Antonio Gasparrini in a statement. Southeast Asian nations like the Philippines and Vietnam would be most affected by heat-related mortality, along with those in Southern Europe and South America, according to the report.

A drop in cold-related deaths elsewhere would not be enough to offset overall increase, said researchers led by scientists from

the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine who looked at 23 countries for the survey. A nudge in global temperatures from 1.5C to 2C would likely result in less than a 1 percent increase in related deaths in warmer regions such as Southern Europe, South America and Southeast Asia, they said.

The study did not take into account measures to adapt to rising temperatures, or demographic and economic factors, but those could have an impact when it comes to reducing heat-related deaths, said lead author Ana

Maria Vicedo-Cabrera. "Evidence so far suggests that we are adapting to heat, so we expect that in the future, maybe, the mortality risk due to temperatures could be lower compared to today, but still it's not clear," Vicedo-Cabrera told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres warned this week it could be too late to stop "runaway climate change" unless countries take action by 2020 to reduce global warming. (Reporting by Sophie Hares; editing by Jared Ferrie. —Reuters)

'Sex and the City' actress in uphill NY election fight

NEW YORK: Cynthia Nixon, the telegenic, left-leaning "Sex and the City" actress turned activist, faces the electoral battle of her life yesterday in her long-shot bid to unseat New York Governor Andrew Cuomo. The 52-year-old mother of three wants to become the first woman and first openly gay governor of America's fourth most populous state, which leans Democrat but has upstate areas that voted for Donald Trump. But first she faces off against Cuomo, 60, in the state's Democratic primary yesterday. Turnout is usually notoriously low but polling stations open at 6:00 am and close at 9:00pm.

Nixon has campaigned hard to the left, hoping to ride the crest of other upset victories by political first-timers in Democratic Party primaries in congressional seats in places like New York and Boston. "This is not a moment to sit on the sidelines. This is a moment to stand up and fight back," she told an election eve rally. "It is hard to go up against the Cuomo machine and it takes an enormous amount of bravery, but we are tired of the status Cuomo," she added. "We know we can do better."

Yet she heads into the vote trailing Cuomo in every single demographic group, the governor leading 63-22 percent, up from 60-29 percent in late July, according to the latest poll from Siena College. Cuomo, the son of a governor who married a daughter of Robert F Kennedy and had three children before they divorced, has traded hard on his own progressive record and outspent his competitor. He also won a last-minute endorsement from rap star Nicki Minaj,

who told her 20 million Twitter followers that New Yorkers should vote for the governor. "Spread the word. See you at the polls," she wrote.

Bagel meltdown

Nixon has hit Cuomo hard on the crumbling subway, going after his more centrist credentials and for taking donations from Trump in the past, as well as his bevy of corporate donors. She champions economic equality, slams systemic racism, and backs single-payer healthcare, legalized marijuana and public education. Likely to work in Cuomo's favor is that New York allows only registered Democrats to vote in the primary.

Nixon dived into the race last March, but in the final home-stretch, the fight has been dirty. A Democratic Party mailer implied she was anti-Semitic, sparking a furious backlash but Cuomo pleaded innocent. Nixon leapt on what she denounced as a smear campaign, pointing out that she was bringing up two of her children Jewish and attended synagogue. Then she sailed into controversy and free column inches of her own for a bagel order that incensed almost everyone—the incongruous lox, cream cheese, tomatoes and capers on a cinnamon and raisin bun.

Should she pull off the impossible it will be a humiliating blow to a governor said to harbor presidential ambitions, and who served as a cabinet secretary under Bill Clinton at the tender age of 39. But winning state-wide is tough, especially for a first-timer up against the well-oiled and seriously well-funded machinery of a two-time governor running for his third term. "Whether people love him or not, they know who he is," said Michael Miller, professor of political science at Barnard College. "To break through, that requires a lot of money and organization," he said. "A lot of people would be surprised if she did pull it off." —AFP

'Life-threatening' Hurricane Florence closes in on US east

WILMINGTON: "Life-threatening" Hurricane Florence edged closer to the east coast of the United States yesterday, with tropical-force winds and rain already lashing barrier islands just off the North Carolina mainland. The huge storm weakened to a Category 2 hurricane overnight, but forecasters warned that it still packed a dangerous punch - 110 mile-an-hour winds and torrential rains. Georgia joined four other coastal states issuing an emergency declaration as forecasts showed Florence dumping historic amounts of rain on the southern state. As Florence closed in, President Donald Trump and state and local officials urged residents in the path of the storm to evacuate.

"We are completely ready for hurricane Florence, as the storm gets even larger and more powerful. Be careful!" Trump tweeted. Appeals to stay safe came from as far away as space. German astronaut Alexander Gerst tweeted pictures of the monster storm taken from the International Space Station along with the warning: "Watch out, America!" The National Hurricane Center (NHC) downgraded Florence to a Category 2 storm from Category 3 on the five-level Saffir-Simpson wind scale, the second such drop in the space of hours. But the Miami-based NHC stressed it remained "a life-threatening situation" due to the risks of storm surge around coastal areas. Up to 1.7 million people are under voluntary or mandatory evacuation orders, and coastal residents were frantically boarding up homes and businesses and hitting the road on Wednesday as the storm approached. "Get out of its way, don't play games with it, it's a big one, maybe as big as they've seen," Trump on Wednesday. "We'll handle it. We're ready, we're able." "Protection of life is the absolute highest priority," he added.

'Mike Tyson punch'

Florence is forecast to dump up to 40 inches (one meter) of rain in some areas after it makes landfall in North and South Carolina Thursday night or Friday. "This rainfall would produce catastrophic flash flooding and significant river flooding," the NHC said. Life-threatening storm surges of up to 13 feet were also forecast in some areas along with the possibility of tornadoes in North Carolina.

"This is going to be a Mike Tyson punch to the Carolina coast," said Jeff Byard, associate administra-



FLORIDA: Water rolls up and around a bench as Hurricane Florence closes in on US east. —AFP

tor for response and recovery at the Federal Emergency Management Agency. "This is not going to be a glancing blow," Byard said, warning of power outages, road closures, infrastructure damage and potential loss of life. Duke Energy, a power company in the Carolinas, estimated that one million to three million customers could lose electricity because of the storm and that it could take weeks to restore. As of 8:00 am, the eye of the storm was 170 miles east-southeast of Wilmington, North Carolina, moving northwest at 12 mph. The storm was heading for the coast of the two states but heavy rain was also expected in Virginia to the north and Georgia to the south. Georgia Governor Nathan Deal declared a state of emergency "in light of the storm's forecasted southward track after making landfall". "The state is mobilizing all available resources to ensure public safety," Deal said. "I encourage Georgians to be prepared for the inland effects of the storm as well as the ensuing storm surge in coastal areas." A state of emergency has also been declared in Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and Washington. People fleeing coastal North and South Carolina clogged highways as Florence bore down for a direct hit in the low-lying region dense with beachfront vacation homes. The eastbound lanes of several major highways have been shut to allow traffic to flow inland, but the exodus was slow along roads jammed with outward-bound vehicles.

'You can't stop Nature'

In Wilmington, Solange Iliou Thompson closed down her restaurant, Indochine, because all of her employees had left the city. "All my staff are gone," Thompson said. "There's nobody left to work. "But I'm staying," she said. "The building's solid and Buddha will protect us." "What can you do?" she asked. "You can't stop Mother Nature." In a trailer park outside Wilmington, Alondra Espinoza was preparing to leave with her two young children. —AFP

International

Generational fight: Pop star v Uganda president

36-year-old slumboy singer turned MP

KAMPALA: “We used to be scared,” said Josephine Katumba, a 30-year-old hairdresser in Kamwokya, a poor suburb of Uganda’s capital Kampala. “We don’t have fear anymore.” President Yoweri Museveni has long had police beat the defiance out of his opponents, but a 36-year-old slumboy singer turned MP has energized and emboldened Uganda’s youth, worrying the government.

Black scorch marks on the potholed road outside Katumba’s tiny salon mark where residents have routinely burnt tyres to protest the arrest of Bobi Wine, a local boy done good, charismatic pop star and unlikely opposition firebrand. There is “Free Bobi Wine” graffiti everywhere. “People have wanted change for a long time,” said Katumba, nimbly braiding a customer’s hair. “The difference now is that Bobi is young and he speaks for the youth.”

‘Ghetto President’

As a pop star Bobi Wine blended lyrics on social justice and poverty with catchy Afrobeat rhythms, earning him committed fans among Uganda’s often poor urban youth. He took on the nickname of “His Excellency the Ghetto President”. Under his real name Robert Kyagulanyi he won a by-election in 2017 and entered parliament, where his popularity and outspoken opposition to Uganda’s long-time leader shook up the country’s “Groundhog Day”

N Korea ‘willing to denuclearize’

SEOUL: North Korea is “willing to denuclearize” and the US is prepared to end hostile relations, President Moon Jae-in said yesterday as he struck an upbeat tone ahead of his third meeting with Kim Jong Un next week. The summit will be the third between the leaders of North and South Korea this year and comes as talks between Washington and Pyongyang over dismantling the North’s nuclear arsenal have stalled.

Moon conceded there was a “blockage” and both sides needed to compromise to make progress on the controversial subject. “North Korea is willing to denuclearize and therefore willing to discard existing nuclear weapons... and the US is willing to end hostile relations with the North and provide security guarantees,” Moon said.

“But there is a blockage as both sides are demanding each other to act first and I think they will be able to find a point of compromise,” Moon, who helped broker the June summit between Kim and US President Donald Trump and has called for a follow-up meeting between the two sides, added South Korea would help mediate contacts between Washington and Pyongyang to “speed up the denuclearization process”. Trump and Kim Jong Un pledged to denuclearize the Korean peninsula at their historic Singapore meeting.

However, no details were agreed, and Washington

politics. In power since 1986, the 74-year-old Museveni is the only president most Ugandans have known: the country’s median age is less than 16.

Museveni has had the constitution amended twice, to remove term and then age limits, clearing him to run for a sixth term in 2021. The opposition has for two decades been similarly dominated by 62-year-old Kizza Besigye, Museveni’s former friend and personal physician, who has lost four successive elections. Besigye “has become part of an entrenched political system in which change feels impossible without fresh leadership,” said

Kampala-based independent analyst Anna Reuss. Kyagulanyi has swiped the opposition mantle from Besigye and provided a voice for a youthful population fed up with old men telling them what to do. “Besigye is there to help, but he’s not from the ghetto. Bobi can come and talk to us

on the streets,” said Katumba.

Charged with treason

The combination of “his age, his background and his story” make Kyagulanyi a challenge unlike any Museveni has faced during his 32-year rule, said Ugandan writer and political analyst Rosebell Kagumire. She described him as “an outsider who is trying to shake things up”. But in Uganda, shaking

and Pyongyang have sparred since over what that means and how it will be achieved. Last month, Trump abruptly cancelled a planned visit by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to Pyongyang. The new US envoy for the North, Stephen Biegun, said in August Kim had promised “final, fully verified denuclearization” at the Singapore summit. But Pyongyang has slammed Washington for its “gangster-like” demands for complete, verifiable and irreversible disarmament.

South Korea’s Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha said yesterday that making progress on denuclearization talks with North Korea is a “daily concern”. “Getting traction on the denuclearization and peace process that is very much now in motion—it’s a daily concern to get movement on this,” she told a regional economic forum in the Vietnamese capital Hanoi. Speaking on the sidelines of the forum, Kang called for “openness” from the North about their weapons program and added a second Trump-Kim summit should deliver “concrete” results. “A second summit has to be something that really significantly moves the agenda forward,” she added.

The White House said earlier this week Trump had received a “very positive” letter from Kim seeking a follow-up meeting, since adding it is in the process of coordinating a possible second meeting between the two leaders. South Korean national security advisor Chung Eui-yong said yesterday Moon and Kim will discuss “more in-depth and detailed ways to achieve denuclearization”. The two Koreas will be holding a closed working-level meeting on Friday to discuss the logistics of next week’s summit, an official at the South’s presidential office said. —AFP



This combo photo shows Uganda’s President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni and Ugandan politician Robert Kyagulanyi, better known as pop star Bobi Wine. —AFP

things up is risky. Kyagulanyi rode into parliament on a wave of urban, youthful support. He quickly spearheaded resistance to the ruling party initiative removing age limits that cleared the way for Museveni to rule for life, and led protests earlier this year against a new social media tax. The image of Kyagulanyi, in his signature red beret, leading a crowd of supporters through the streets became ubiquitous.

And as candidates he backed won a string of by-elections, Kyagulanyi was even harder to ignore. He

and Museveni went head-to-head in August. Both men travelled to the northwestern town of Arua to canvass for rival candidates on the eve of a by-election and a proxy confrontation ensued. An opposition crowd allegedly stoned Museveni’s motorcade, breaking a car window. Police responded with bullets and Kyagulanyi’s driver was shot dead. The MP himself was arrested—he claims he was tortured and badly beaten while in custody—and charged with treason, as were dozens of others. Kyagulanyi’s candidate, Kassiano Wadri, won the election. —AFP

Lawyer for former Malaysian leader Najib arrested

KUALA LUMPUR: Former Malaysian leader Najib Razak’s chief lawyer was arrested and charged with money laundering yesterday, as authorities intensified a crackdown on corruption linked to the previous government. Shafee Abdullah, 66, one of the country’s most prominent lawyers, led Najib’s legal team when the former prime minister was charged for his role in a multi-billion dollar financial scandal involving state fund IMDB. Najib denies accusations that he oversaw the theft of billions of dollars—but the financial scandal was a key factor in his shock election defeat in May to a disparate opposition led by his former mentor Mahathir Mohamad, 93.

Shafee was slapped with four money laundering charges at the Sessions Court, where he pleaded not guilty and was released on bail. He was arrested early Thursday at an airport where he was scheduled to board a domestic flight for a court case, an officer of the anti-corruption commission told AFP. He was accused of receiv-

ing into his bank accounts two cheques from Najib totaling 9.5 million ringgit (\$2.3 million), one deposited in 2013 and the other in 2014.

Both checks were “proceeds of unlawful activity,” according to the charge sheet. The charges also involved Shafee omitting the money in his income tax returns for those years. If convicted on all charges, he could face fines and up to 40 years in prison. State prosecutor Gopal Sri Ram told reporters the charges arose from the anti-corruption commission’s investigation into the IMDB scandal. Shafee called the charges part of a “political vendetta”. But the state prosecutor said: “This is a serious offence. There is no politics in this, the accused is not a politician.”

Mahathir’s government has embarked on an anti-corruption campaign since taking power, running after several individuals linked to the former government. It has gained custody of a luxury yacht believed bought with stolen IMDB funds by fugitive Malaysian financier Low Taek Jho, who is at the centre of the scandal. Mahathir also wants to take back a private jet belonging to Low, who has denied any wrongdoing. Following Najib’s election loss, police seized a vast trove of items—including expensive handbags and jewelry—from properties linked to him with an estimated value of up to \$273 million. —AFP

International

Nuns 'demand justice' for sister assaulted by bishop

Group of Indian Catholic nuns stage a rare street protest

NEW DELHI: A group of Indian Catholic nuns are staging a rare street protest in the southern state of Kerala demanding justice after an alleged sexual assault of a nun by a bishop. Police have called the bishop named in the complaint for a second round of questioning next week. The bishop has denied wrongdoing. The case comes at a time when the Christian community, which accounts for 19 percent of the state's population, is reeling under an erosion of trust as sexual abuse cases involving the clergy pile up. Five priests were arrested last month in two different sexual assault cases, while last year, a Catholic priest who was trying to flee the country was arrested after a minor he is accused of having sex with gave birth.



5 priests arrested in different sexual assault cases

The nun in a letter said she wanted the Vatican to intervene. She said she was forced to make matters public after several attempts to seek justice from within the church failed. The

protest, now in its sixth day in Kochi, Kerala's financial hub, is gathering momentum as the locals, activists, writers and politicians come out in support. A man, who is on an indefinite hunger strike, lay in front of the stage where the protesting nuns sat. A nun coordinating the protest dismissed allegations that they were trying to disgrace the church.

"Our fight is for the truth. We will not back out unless the truth is established and the nun is given justice," she told Reuters. The Catholic Church in Germany acknowledged a "depressing and shameful" legacy of sexual abuse on Wednesday after a leaked study said clerics had abused thousands of children over 70 years. The leaked study was published on the day that Pope Francis, who has made several attempts to tackle a spreading sexual abuse crisis that has badly tarnished the Church's image worldwide, summoned senior bishops from around the world to the Vatican to discuss the protection of minors. —Reuters



KERALA: Indian Christian nuns and Muslim supporters protest as they demand the arrest of Bishop Franco Mulakkal, who is accused of raping a nun, outside the High Court in Kochi in the southern Indian state of Kerala yesterday. —AFP

Prominent Chinese pastor defiant after church closure

BEIJING: A Chinese Protestant pastor is vowing to keep preaching to his flock despite the closure of his prominent underground church in Beijing, defying the government's intensifying pressure on religious groups. Pastor Jin Mingri had given sermons at the Zion Church, one of the biggest unofficial congregations in the country, for the past decade until local officials shut it down on Sunday.

Its nine other satellite venues have also been closed, but Jin remains adamant that he will continue running the church. "A church is more than just about a space," he told AFP in an interview. "It's about gathering together to worship, it's about belief." Housed on the third storey of a nondescript commercial building in a northern Beijing suburb, Zion had up to 1,600 people attending its services each weekend. But on September 9, some 70 officers stormed into Zion's premises and ordered everyone out, tearing down signs and the church's logo, Jin said.

The local civil affairs bureau said an investigation found that the church "was not registered and carried out activities in the name of social organizations without authoriza-

tion". The church's troubles started in February this year as tighter regulations on religious groups kicked in. Authorities asked that the church install CCTV cameras in the sanctuary. Jin refused. "In the 70 year history of the people's republic, (Christians) have had a lot of harm and ill done to us, so churchgoers wouldn't feel too comfortable about their personal information being made public," he said. "So we said no to the installation."

It marked the start a sustained campaign, with church members threatened at home and at their workplaces, and some evicted by their landlords or asked to leave their jobs because of their links to Zion, Jin said. He added that the authorities have branded his church a "cult". The building's owners were also pressured to prematurely end their partnership, refusing to renew the church's lease after it expired in August and plastering eviction notices outside.

Churchgoers were also handed similar notices whenever they left the building. Since then, Jin estimates the church has lost up to 400 followers. Jin said he is harassed daily by officers and was briefly detained after he tried to retrieve personal items from the shuttered church on Tuesday. Dozens of officers guarded the compound housing the former church this week, preventing AFP journalists from entering the building. "The way they are trying to control religion, they are using tactics from the former Soviet Union... where the church is a political tool," he said. —AFP

Pope meets with US church leaders over clergy abuse

VATICAN: Pope Francis was set to host US bishops and cardinals yesterday to discuss the Vatican's response to a new wave of devastating claims of sexual abuse by clergy. The pope was scheduled to meet Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, who leads the US Conference of Bishops, and Cardinal Sean O'Malley of Boston, who advises the pope on sex abuse issues.

The US Catholic Church has been shaken by the publication of a report on sexual abuse by clergy in Pennsylvania and by the resignation in July of US Cardinal Theodore McCarrick. He was accused of sexually abusing a teenager while working as a priest in New York in the early 1970s. No statement was scheduled to be released following the meeting at the Vatican, said a spokeswoman for the Holy See.

Falling popularity

According to the results of a new poll published by the US news channel CNN on Wednesday, Pope Francis's popularity has nosedived in the US recently. The poll showed that only 48 percent of Americans in general supported the Argentinian pontiff and his popularity has also plummeted among US Catholics to 63 percent from 83 percent 18 months ago. A former ambassador to the Holy See, Monsignor Carlo Vigano, has even demanded the Pope's resignation, accusing him of covering up for McCarrick.

'Church's own 9/11'

On Tuesday, Archbishop Georg Gaenswein, private secretary to Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, described sexual abuse against minors by clergy as the church's "own 9/11". Cardinal DiNardo said he wanted to present a "plan of action" to the pope to make reporting of abuse and misconduct by bishops easier. Referring to the McCarrick case, DiNardo called for a "prompt and thorough examination... into how the grave moral failings of a brother bishop could have been tolerated for so long and proven no impediment to his advancement."

In the US, a group of 5,000 Catholic chief executives have frozen \$820,000 in funds paid annually to the Holy See pending clarification of the sex abuse cases. While Pope Francis has refused to respond to Vigano's allegations so far, the Vatican said on Monday that he was "formulating the eventual and necessary clarifications". Among the clergymen targeted by Vigano, Cardinal Donald Wuerl, the archbishop of Washington and formerly a bishop in Pennsylvania, is accused of covering up the sexual abuse in that state.

He has said he plans to travel to Rome in the near future to meet with Pope Francis to discuss his resignation. On Wednesday, the pontiff called for a meeting of all the heads of Catholic bishops' conferences worldwide at the Vatican next February to discuss the issue of the "protection of minors". More cases are coming to light. In Germany on Wednesday, the conclusions of a study commissioned by the German Bishops' Conference were leaked to the press. They included the finding that more than 3,600 children were sexually assaulted by priests in Germany over nearly seven decades. —AFP

Lifestyle

Friday Times

www.kuwaittimes.net

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2018

Model Joan Smalls walks the runway during the Michael Kors Collection Spring 2019 Runway Show at Pier 17 in New York City. —AFP

**Marc Jacobs brings back
'polished' to NY Fashion Week**

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Lifestyle

Camille Corot's vision revealed in intimate figure paintings

When Camille Corot's figure paintings last went on display more than a century ago, they stunned Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, who paid tribute to the French painter in their groundbreaking Cubist creations.

Through December 31, the National Gallery of Art in Washington is presenting dozens of portraits of women that are some of the most intimate, rarely seen and modern works of an artist celebrated for his dreamy landscapes. They reveal the 19th century painter as a missing link between the staid formalism of classical and romantic painting with the impressionism and modernism that followed. The tension of works caught between these radically different approaches is palpable. Here, Corot pushed the boundaries of what was acceptable as a finished painting in ways he never dared with his uber-popular landscapes, of which he created nearly 3,000 — not counting the many forgeries. "It is a rarefied arena in which he can be more experimental and try out new things," said exhibition curator Mary Morton, the head of the museum's department of French paintings. The show includes works loaned from some of the most prestigious public and private collections in Europe and the United States.

'Experimental'

There are nudes—daringly devoid of classical references—almost comical riffs on myths and models, often dressed in Italian "peasant" garb and imbued with a kind of erotic melancholy particular to Corot, complete with nonchalant cleavage. The pictures are sometimes hazy but the languid faces emerge into sharper focus out of a dark backdrop with near-abstract elements painted with quick, loose brushstrokes. The sometimes unsettling aesthetics paved the way toward painting for the sake of painting, where a picture that deliberately reveals the artist's hand is presented as finished without being completely resolved. Unlike a separate show at the Musée Marmottan Monet in Paris earlier this year, this one focuses exclusively on Corot's female subjects, apart from a lone picture representing Saint Sebastian. A portrait that bears the mysterious title of "Woman with a Pearl" (circa 1868-1870) references both with its title Vermeer's famous portrait ("Girl with a Pearl Earring") and with her unsettling gaze none less than Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa.

Corot created a myth all of his own in an intriguing composition ("Bacchante with a Panther," 1860) featuring a child mounted on a panther while a reclining nude dangles a dead bird before the feline's mouth, the whole thing made even more enigmatic by dark lighting. Coming full circle, Corot toward the end of his life in the late 1860s and early 1870s depicted his models in studio settings with a hand touching one of his landscapes and the other holding a mandolin, hinting at his love of music.—AFP



Visitors look at Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot's "Woman with a Large Toque and a Mandolin" (c. 1850-1855) at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC.—AFP photos



A woman looks at Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot's "Agostina" (1866) at the National Gallery of Art.



A woman looks at Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot's "The Lady in Blue" (1874) at the National Gallery of Art.



A man looks at Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot's "Springtime of Life" (1871), with "The Artist's Studio" (1870) in the background, at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC.

Weinstein accuser reveals video of apparent harassment

Video footage emerged Wednesday showing disgraced movie mogul Harvey Weinstein apparently sexually harassing a woman who subsequently accused him of rape. Melissa Thompson, who has previously publicly complained of abusive behavior by Weinstein during a 2011 business meeting in New York, gave a tape of the encounter to Sky News. Thompson told the station she had been offering her tech company's video platform to the 66-year-old, and recorded the meeting as part of the pitch. Just hours later, Weinstein allegedly raped her in his hotel room, the woman told Sky News.

AFP reached out to Weinstein's lawyer Benjamin Brafman for comment but there was no immediate response. He was quoted by US-based entertainment magazine People however as denying sexual misconduct by his client. "Several respected journalists and trustworthy individuals have seen the entire video, as Ms. Thompson has been trying to promote it to for several months," Brafman's statement read, according to People.

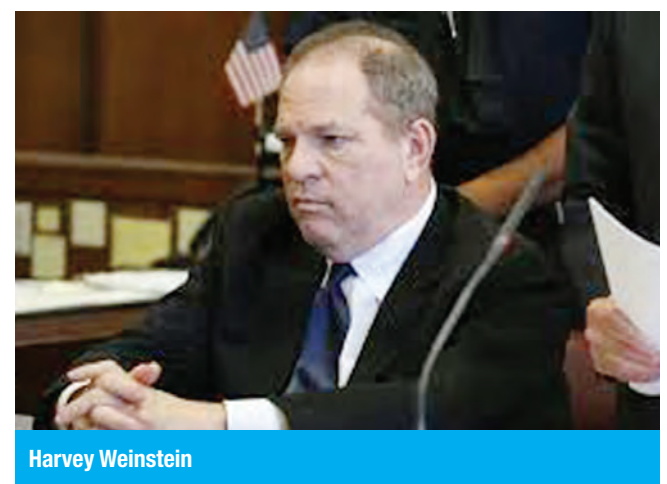
"What they shared with us is that the video, when viewed in its entirety, in context and not in select excerpts, demonstrates that there is nothing forceful, but casual-if not awkward-flirting from

both parties." The former Hollywood titan is seen in the video waving staff away with the words "don't interrupt, don't interrupt" as he enters the meeting. Thompson offers her hand but Weinstein goes in for a hug instead. "That's nice. Let's keep it up. It's not bad," he says as he rubs her back. "Am I allowed to flirt with you?" he is heard asking, and Thompson replies: "Um, we'll see, a little bit."

Naivety

At one point on the recording, Weinstein reaches under a table and appears to move his arm up her leg. "Let me have a little part of you. Give it to me. It's okay, would you like to do it some more?" he can be heard saying. "A little high, a little high, that's a little high, that's a little high," Thompson replies. Weinstein has been accused by dozens of women of a litany of sexual misconduct ranging from harassment to rape. He is out on bail and has pleaded not guilty in New York to six counts allegedly committed against three women in 2004, 2006 and 2013. The next hearing in the case is scheduled for September 20.

The allegations against the once-powerful movie mogul spurred the #MeToo movement that saw women worldwide speak up against sexual harassment and assault by men in powerful positions. Thompson told Sky News Weinstein was "playing a cat-and-mouse game from the very beginning to see how far he could push me, and what my reactions might be so that he could gauge how he would play with (me), where my levers were, what were my vulnerabilities." She is seen watching the footage along with a Sky News reporter, and denies encouraging him, telling the channel: "I think there was a combination of confidence and naivety that led me to this dynamic that we see now, watching



Harvey Weinstein

stein filed in June in which she claimed the producer began to harass and fondle her, several US media outlets reported. She reportedly claimed in court documents that Weinstein tried unsuccessfully to force her to perform oral sex on him before he pushed her on the bed and raped her. But Brafman accused Thompson of trying to bolster her position in the lawsuit. "Any suggestion of sexual misconduct is false. This is a further attempt to publicly disgrace Mr. Weinstein for financial gain, and we will not stand for it. Facts do matter," the lawyer told People magazine.—AFP

Lifestyle



Zoran Milosevic poses with his collection of banknotes and coins from around the world at his home in the village of Pavlovci, 70 km west of capital Belgrade.—AFP photos



Zoran Milosevic holding the last addition to his collection of banknotes and coins from around the world.



A collection of banknotes and coins from around the world at the home of Zoran Milosevi.

Serb spends 36 years collecting currencies, one short

His day job is working as a locksmith but out of hours Zoran Milosevic's passion is to hunt down rare coins and bank notes as part of a 36-year quest to collect all the currencies of the world. At his home in the northern Serbian village of Pavlovci, Milosevic showed off decades of his painstaking work with colorful notes and coins lined up under protective glass. He said he had managed to collect 194 different currencies, including some which are no longer in use, and

his achievement was even more impressive as he rarely left his Serbian home to find them.

Instead he relied on the kindness of friends who went on holiday or lived abroad, and occasionally bought a currency and had it sent through the post. Crucially, and distressingly for Milosevic, he is missing one currency that would complete his collection: the Solomon Islands dollar. The coins and notes from the Pacific archipelago off Australia—some 15,000 kilo-

meters (9,300 miles) from Serbia—remain elusive. My goal is to “demonstrate how small the world is because you can lock it (all the currencies) in a box of 1.5 m² (11 square feet),” he said. If one day he managed to find a Solomon Islands note it would complete his collection and “prove what can be done by human perseverance,” he added.—AFP



Host Chelsea Briggs (right) of Billboard poses the question if Tyler Swift will soon pass Whitney Houston's total number of awards to musicians on stage Bebe Rexha (left), Ella Mai (second left), Kane Brown (center) and Normani (second right) during announcements at “The 2018 American Music Awards nominations” from YouTube Space in Los Angeles, California.

2018 American Music Awards Nominations announced Live on YouTube

The nominations for the 2018 American Music Awards was announced on Wednesday live from YouTube Space LA by a quartet of musical heavy hitters including Normani, Bebe Rexha, Ella Mai and Kane Brown.—Agencies



Kane Brown, Normani, Bebe Rexha and Ella Mai attend the 2018 American Music Awards Nominations Announcement at YouTube Space LA in Los Angeles, California.—AFP photos

Escapism or realism? Top Emmy races pose a choice

Fantasy or realism? That's the question at the Emmy Awards this year as voters choose whether to reward television dramas and comedies that provide comfort and escapism, or bleaker fare that echoes troubled times. Dragons and castles saga “Game of Thrones” and heart-tugging family drama “This is Us” square off against chilling series “The Handmaid’s Tale” and Cold War spy show “The Americans” for the highest honors in television on Monday. Comedies have changed since “Cheers” and “Friends” in the 1990s. This year, the absurdist hip-hop-inspired “Atlanta” and “black-ish,” which both delve into race in contemporary America, compete for best series against the sunny 1950s housewife tale “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel” and Larry David’s chronicle of everyday annoyances in “Curb Your Enthusiasm.”

“What’s fascinating about the Emmys this year is that they are really a reflection of the pressing ideas of our time,” said Tom O’Neil, editor of awards website GoldDerby.com. “In the big races, it’s the #MeToo movement and Black Lives Matter,” O’Neil said. Drama series frontrunner “The Handmaid’s Tale” featured disturbing scenes of women being raped, mutilated, beaten and drowned in its vision of a near-future patriarchal society in which women are forcibly separated from their children.

Fan favorite “Game of Thrones,” a medieval fantasy of warring knights, is seen as the biggest challenger to “Handmaid’s Tale” for the top Emmy prize. “If people



The Iron Throne is seen on the set of the television series Game of Thrones in the Titanic Quarter of Belfast, Northern Ireland.—Reuters

Maisel” and “Atlanta” could not be more different from each other in tone. “Mrs. Maisel,” about a mother who turns to stand-up comedy after a divorce, is an exuberant period piece with a dash of early feminism. “Atlanta,” created by and starring actor-singer Donald Glover, is set in a hard-scrabble community on the margins of the city’s hip-hop culture. “This season of ‘Atlanta’ was so inspired,” said Schneider. “The fact that it is a good story for representation, with a predominantly African-American cast, would be a strong message to send to give the top prize to that.” The Emmy Awards will be handed out at a ceremony on Monday in Los Angeles.—Reuters

Marc Jacobs brings back polished to NY Fashion Week

Marc Jacobs, the darling of American high fashion, kept fashionistas kicking their heels Wednesday, before bringing the house down 90 minutes late with a dexterous display of 1950s glamor, pastels and ruffles. Jacobs returned to the Park Avenue Armory, where his models sashayed down an extra-long glass runway, between transparent chairs. His spring 2019 collection had a 1950s and 1960s feel, all pastels, glamor, puffy dresses but the long delay infuriated guests, some of whom upped and left before the show began. The designer appeared only fleetingly at the end, for the most perfunctory of bows. Guest of honor was rap star Nicki Minaj, dressed in a low-cut red dress with over-sized giant ruffled sleeves.

Elle magazine reported that 37 models in the show opted to have their real hair bleached then dyed in an array of pinks, blues, greens and peaches to color coordinate their dresses with their frocks. "Marc didn't want a 'fun' pastel, he wanted it to have history and for it to look a little vintage," Redken Global Color Creative Director Josh Wood was quoted as saying backstage by the magazine. Hair stylist Guido Palau said the looks, which included a high, swinging pony-tail, were a nod to women such as Barbra Streisand and to celebrate a time when women made an effort to always look polished. "A 'finished' woman is something Marc really wanted to emphasize again. She had been to the salon. It's a very coiffed look," Palau told Elle. If there was one word for the Marc Jacobs evening dress it was ruffles and flounces, adorning the throat, shoulders and skirts of frocks that were so voluminous they had a movement of their own, made genteel and lady-like with little pastel-colored handbags and dainty heels.

'Sunny Side Up'

There was more power suiting, hats with netting and plenty of the bang on color trend of the season—bright yellow and pale lemon. There were also 1980s-style big boxy jackets and a dash of metallics. The final day of New York Fashion Week kicked off earlier with Michael Kors with A-listers Nicole Kidman and Catherine Zeta-Jones front row for a happy collection inspired by the beach. The 59-year-old designer created a set of bright, colorful art panels by Australian-born, Brooklyn-based artist Christina Zimpel that evoked the Caribbean or Mediterranean, a stark contrast to misty views of the Brooklyn Bridge through the windows of New York's sprawling Pier 17.

"Global getaway," "Sunny Side Up" and "From me to you—spread the joy" was how the billionaire Kors summed up the upbeat celebration of color that is bang on the happiness trend for spring 2019. The catwalk was a riot of print and color, from turquoise to watermelon, persimmon and lemon, to floppy floral hats, a fringed lime green skirt and metallic green pant suit with matching bag.

Pants came in all styles, but most striking were floral and broderie anglaise flares with enormous bell bottoms. For evening, dresses were cut for the beach but designed for soiree in metallics. Kors put fringes on jackets, skirts, pants and shoulder bags, a trend this season also on display at Longchamp and Coach.

The Rastafarian look made an appearance, as did pale denim, chunky beach bags, and huge platform sandals, with Kors staying true to his recent M.O. of including curve models on the runway. Joining Zeta-Jones on the front row was 15-year-old daughter Carys, who is reportedly keen to follow parents—dad is Michael Douglas—into the acting business. The soundtrack was beach-baresque with Peter Allen singing "I go to Rio," The Beach Boys singing "Good Vibrations" and snatches of Serge Gainsbourg and Jane Birkin with "Je t'aime... moi non plus." Still to come Wednesday is Barbadian superstar Rihanna, who closes out the week with a Savage x Fenty bash to baptize her brand-new lingerie line—an honor customarily the preserve of Jacobs. The spring 2019 season will then shift to Europe. —AFP



Models walk the runway during the Michael Kors Collection Spring 2019 Runway Show at Pier 17. —AFP photos





Models walk the runway at the Rodarte show during New York Fashion Week: The Shows on September in New York City. —AFP

Top 10 take-aways from New York Fashion Week

New York Fashion Week wrapped up with Rihanna's outrageous Brooklyn party unveiling her new Savage X Fenty lingerie line, snatching an honor traditionally the preserve of creme-de-la-creme designer Marc Jacobs. As the spring/summer 2019 season flits to Europe, with style fests in London, Milan and Paris, here's a quick round up of the top 10 takeaways from the Big Apple.

Happiness is the truth

Dark times be damned was the vibe this season. Why suffer in unease about the Trump presidency, global warming or threat to Western liberalism when you can put on a yellow frock? There were bright colors galore. Yellows, mustards and chartreuse were on display at Carolina Herrera and Kate Spade. Michael Kors dubbed his show "Sunny Side Up." Matthew Adams Dolan sported fluorescent yellow. "Especially today, when things are heavy and dark and difficult and we don't know the way through, it's good to deal with that with a light touch," said Niall Sloan, the creative director at Escada.

Happy Birthday

'Twas the season of anniversaries. Ralph Lauren marked half a century in the business, by inviting A-list stars such as Oprah Winfrey, Steven Spielberg and Kanye West to a black-tie do in Central Park. France's Longchamp turned 70, hosting celebrities at the World Trade Center, while Germany's Escada also jetted Stateside to celebrate 40.

Black is beautiful

Models of color were center stage like never before.

Pyer Moss went for an all-black line-up. Hugo Boss, Kate Spade and Tory Burch had diverse casting. Older women also strutted their stuff at Sies Marjan and Maria Cornejo. Friends and relatives of the designers walked at Vaquera. Women of all shapes and colors frolicked for Rihanna.

Brooklyn

New York's most populous borough, so big that if it was independent it would be the fourth largest city in the United States, has been the den of hipsters and international cool for years. This season it hosted Rihanna's underwear bash. Pyer Moss took the glitterati to a heritage center to honor a collection that embodied black power and Eckhaus Latta took over an industrial space.

Go vote

New York's Democratic primaries are Thursday and a few of the more politically minded urged their guests to head to the ballot box. Red-carpet favorite Christian Siriano endorsed "Sex and the City" actress Cynthia Nixon in her attempt to unseat Governor Andrew Cuomo while Maria Cornejo exhorted guests to "use your voice and vote".

Working women

Keep it powerful, keep it comfortable and keep it straightforward. Those are the mantras for clothes for women juggling careers, families and everything else life flings at you. Escada reimagined the 1980s power suit, making it softer and more modern. There were shades of the same at Marc Jacobs. Tom Ford went back to the pencil skirt. Kate Spade opted for comfort with platforms and

dresses that go seamlessly from day to night.

Rapper cat fight

Nicki Minaj and Cardi B, two of America's most prominent rap and hip-hop artists, nearly came to blows, separated by their security detail as Cardi B curses her rival and lobbs a shoe at her. Cardi B was photographed with a large bump just above her left eye, later complaining that Minaj had criticized her qualities as a mother.

Kaia Gerber

The now 17-year-old daughter of Cindy Crawford and model husband Rande has officially arrived. She was everywhere, walking for Tom Ford, Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren, Longchamp to Proenza Schouler.

Fringes

Tassels and fringes were everywhere from Coach to Michael Kors to Longchamp, adorning sleeves, bags, skirts and shorts.

Up and coming

Critics love to complain that New York isn't daring enough, that Europe is more creative, but there was a smattering of new talent. Sies Marjan has been going from strength-to-strength since being founded in New York by Dutch designer Sander Lak in 2016. Independent brand Vaquera has won plaudits for its originality. Kerby Jean-Raymond is putting Pyer Moss on the map and Wes Gordon injected modernity into his debut collection for Carolina Herrera, a staple with the Park Avenue set. —AFP

Lifestyle | Feature

No bored game: Madagascar's enduring fanorona mania

A stone's throw from the presidential palace in Madagascar's capital Antananarivo, men sit for hours playing fanorona—a cross between chequers and chess—on wooden boards with black and white pieces. “If you're not up to it, just say so, you're just slipping up and trying to bluster your way through,” teased Raymond “General” Rasaminarivo, a renowned fanorona master, in the verbal jousting that typically accompanies the game. Centuries after fanorona first appeared on the Indian Ocean island nation, it still exerts its grip on players of all ages and from all walks of life. Men hunch over their “lakapanorona” boards in concentration, while children use playing surfaces traced into the dirt of their schoolyards, grappling with the game's nearly infinite moves.

The goal of the two-player game is to remove or block the opponent's pieces by moving one's counters towards—called “approach moves”—or away from the rival's counters—“withdrawals”. All of the opponent's pieces left in an uninterrupted line are then removed from the board, bringing the player a step closer to victory. With eyes fixed on the next move, Rasaminarivo's rival Raphael battles to get the upper hand against “the General”—but the ensuing defeat so embarrasses Raphael that he refused to share his surname.

‘Avoid the traps’

“This game demands concentration to identify the routes to victory and caution to avoid the traps,” Raphael says. The General uses insults and snide remarks to try to throw off his opponent but Raphael tries to not take offence. “The opponent's provocation just adds a little spice to the game,” he says with a smile. Fanorona is an extended version of Western draughts or Go, popular in the Far East, using a rectangular board marked with lines and intersections in which each player starts with 22 pieces. The aim is to take the opponent's pieces by moving backwards or forwards along the lines of the game board—



Jean-Marie Andriatsarafara (second left), known as Zamabe, 30-years-old, a player of Fanorona since the age of 11, and champion of Madagascar since 2016, plays a game of fanorona in the capital Antananarivo. —AFP photos

before entirely encircling the other player's counters.

“A single piece can land multiple blows, and a single blow can remove between one and seven of the opponent's pieces,” says Lantohariseta Andriamampianona, technical director of the revered fanorona association. “A player can also decline to eject their adversary's pieces to avoid falling into traps.” Another quirk of the game is that the winner goes into a second round of play, known as the vela, with a handicap. There are multiple theories about how the game came to enchant the island. Some believe that fanorona was the brainchild of Indonesian settlers.

Others swear that the game traces its roots to the 17th century and the first Arab traders to reach Madagascar's shores. But some insist

that the game was born in the Malagasy royal court as a strategic tool to help military leaders plan tactics.

‘Make the game global’

For 27 years, researcher Eris Rabedaoro has been looking into the secrets of fanorona. “I realized that it was a perfect diagram of the universe where we see all the basic laws of physics, mathematics or psychology,” he says. Rabedaoro even likens taking an opponent's pieces to nuclear fission. Raphael and “General” Rasaminarivo have a simpler take on the game—seeing it as a means to “sharpen our minds”. “Fanorona teaches you to anticipate and persevere,” says another player, Andrianasolo Mamy Riana. “It gives you the power to tackle life, it gives you courage.”

The fanorona association's Andriamampianona notes: “In ancient times, fanorona was the preserve of kings and their courts... Today it really has become a game of the people.” Such is the game's widespread appeal that an electronic version for mobile phones was launched four years ago—one of the first video games developed entirely on the island. The free app has been downloaded 30,000 times, according to its developer Mendrika Andriantsihoarana. “A download in Argentina, one in China, two in France, two in Germany, three in the United States—it was a pleasant surprise,” he said. “I think we're nearing the goal we set ourselves when we launched ‘e-fanorona’—to make the game global.” —AFP



People play on a 3D representation of fanorona as practiced by the Malagasy military strategists during the royal era, in the capital Antananarivo.



Men play a game of fanorona in the capital Antananarivo.



Men play a game of fanorona in the capital Antananarivo.



Jean-Marie Andriatsarafara sits in front of a fanorona game set in the capital Antananarivo.



Men play a game of fanorona in the capital Antananarivo.

Nuns get hands dirty, and wet, to save Mexico salamander



A couple of *Ambystoma dumerilii* salamanders, popularly known as achoque, are pictured at the aquaria.



Sisters Ofelia Morales Francisco (left) and Rosa Cortez are pictured next to a bottle of achoque (*Ambystoma dumerilii*) syrup produced by them at Our Lady of Health convent.



Sister Rosa Cortez holds a handbook on the breeding in captivity of the *Ambystoma dumerilii* salamander, popularly known as achoque, at Our Lady of Health convent, in Patzcuaro, Michoacan state, central Mexico. —AFP photos



Sister Ofelia Morales Francisco is pictured while working with *Ambystoma dumerilii* salamander.



Rolling up the sleeves of her immaculate white habit, Sister Ofelia Morales Francisco plunges her hands into an aquarium, grabs a large, slimy salamander and lifts it dripping into the air. The nun is part of a team at a Dominican convent in Mexico that is fighting to save the Lake Patzcuaro salamander, a critically endangered species. Revered as a god by the indigenous Purepecha people and keenly studied by scientists, the salamander—known for its stunning ability to regenerate its body parts—is found in the wild in only one place: the lake near the Convent of Our Immaculate Lady of Health, in the western town of Patzcuaro.

But the lake is badly polluted, and that is where Morales and her sisters come in. They have launched a program to raise the salamanders in captivity, and hope their efforts will one day help the species—*Ambystoma dumerilii*—make a comeback in the wild. It is a job that has required the nuns to step outside their routine of charity and prayer, and get their hands dirty in a field they knew little about at first. That meant, for example, mastering the reproductive habits of the dark green salamanders, which are distinguished by a flowing mane of gills around their heads. “The best way (to get them to copulate) is by mating a male with three females,” says Morales, who has been working on the project for 18 years. Then comes an even trickier task. “We have to raise the offspring very carefully, because they try to eat each other,” she told AFP.

Syrups and soups

The nuns of Our Immaculate Lady of Health did not start out trying to save the salamanders, which are known locally as “achoques.” In fact, they started out by killing them. More than a century ago, the convent began cooking the salamanders into a

syrup that is reputed to cure anemia and chest infections. They likely borrowed the idea from the Purepecha, who worshipped the salamander as the twin brother of the feathered serpent god Quetzalcoatl and traditionally served it up in a soup. The nuns’ syrup sold so well it became the convent’s main source of income. So when the salamanders started to become scarce because of untreated sewage, invasive carp and over-exploita-

tion of the lake, the nuns realized their convent’s survival was at stake as well.

They invited a priest who also happened to be a trained biologist to teach them all about the achoque. Today, they have some 300 salamanders in their care—the maximum their two rooms of aquariums can hold. It is more than enough to keep making their syrup, which sells for 200 pesos (about \$10) a bottle, and give specimens to

universities for research. Occasionally, a salamander still ends up in the nuns’ own cooking pot. “They make delicious soup,” said Morales.

Regenerative powers

The achoque is a close relation of the axolotl (*Ambystoma mexicanum*), another endangered salamander found only in the Xochimilco lake system in Mexico City. Both species are known for their capacity to regenerate their cells. If one loses a tail, it quickly grows another, with no scar tissue. They have the largest amount of DNA of any known species. That has made both salamanders a subject of fascination for scientists hoping to learn lessons that could apply to humans. However, since the 1980s, the achoque’s numbers have plunged “dramatically,” said Maria Esther Quintero, who works on protecting endangered species for Mexico’s National Commission on Biodiversity. “There are very, very few achoques left in the wild,” she told AFP.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature warns the Lake Patzcuaro salamander “is believed to be in very serious decline, and might be close to extinction.” The nuns are hoping their colony can help reverse that trend. “We are trying to rescue this species to do justice for Mother Nature,” said Sister Maria del Carmen Perez, another of the three nuns who staff the aquarium. “If we did nothing, it was going to vanish.” But for now, Lake Patzcuaro is too polluted to reintroduce them there. Quintero said the immediate goal of Mexican officials is to clear invasive species from at least the northern part of the lake. If that happens, perhaps the achoque can be returned to the waters where, according to Purepecha legend, it hid at the dawn of time to avoid being eaten. —AFP



Sister Ofelia Morales Francisco is pictured next to the aquaria where *Ambystoma dumerilii* salamander, popularly known as achoque, are bred at Our Lady of Health convent.

COOKING ON DEADLINE



Instant Pot Mediterranean Lamb Stew

By Katie Workman

Beef usually hogs the spotlight when it comes to stews, but there are plenty of other meats that can star in this quintessential, cold-weather comfort food. Beef, chicken and here, lamb, a big favorite of my younger son, Charlie. This rich meat also takes well to many flavor combos, and in this recipe, some accessible, Mediterranean-inspired supporting ingredients turn the lamb into a truly delicious stew. If you are a chickpea lover, feel free to add a second can.

These instructions use an Instant Pot, THE appliance of the decade. The Instant Pot is a plug-in pot that performs as a slow cooker, pressure cooker, rice cooker, yogurt maker and a few other impressive cooking tools. In this case, you will first be using the saute function and then the pressure cooker function to cook a tender stew in much less time than it would take otherwise.

Don't have an Instant Pot? You can also make this stew in a slow cooker. Just brown the meat in the slow cooker if it has a saute function, or if not, brown it and saute the vegetables in a pot on the stove, and then transfer everything to the slow cooker with the rest of the ingredients, and cook on low for 8 hours.

If you don't have an Instant Pot or a slow cooker, no worries! You can do all of the sauteing in a pot on the stove, and then add the other ingredients as directed and cook the stew, covered, over low heat for about 3 hours until the meat is tender. Give it an occasional stir to make sure the stew doesn't stick to the bottom. If you prefer to put it into a 300 degrees F oven after all of the ingredients have been combined, that works, too - this should also take about 3 hours. Give that a stir if you think of it every once in a while.

If you don't have brandy, add a healthy glug of red wine instead. This is a soupy stew, and would be fantastic ladled over noodles of any kind or chunks of steamed potatoes. So, whether you approach this old school, new school or somewhere in the middle, the cooler days approaching promise to be flavorful.

INSTANT POT MEDITERRANEAN LAMB STEW

Ingredients:

Servings: 6

Start to finish: 2 hours in the Instant Pot, 9 hours in a slow cooker, or 4 hours on the stovetop or in the oven

1/4 cup flour
 1 teaspoon kosher salt
 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
 2 pounds 1-inch cubes lamb shoulder or lamb stew meat
 2 tablespoons olive oil, or as needed, divided
 1/2 cup sliced leeks
 1/2 cup chopped carrots
 1/2 cup chopped celery
 1/2 cup diced fennel
 1 teaspoon crushed dried rosemary
 1 (28-ounce) can diced or crushed tomatoes
 1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
 2 cups beef broth
 1 bay leaf
 Chopped fresh parsley to serve

Preparation:

In a large shallow bowl combine the flour, salt and pepper. Add

the lamb meat and toss to coat it. Place the inner pot into your Instant Pot. Press the Saute button, and then use the Saute or Adjust buttons (depending on your model) to select the "Normal" or middle temperature. Add 1 tablespoon of the olive oil to the pot, and let it heat for 1 minute.

Add the lamb in two batches and brown on at least a few sides of the cubes, about 2 minutes per side (if you want to brown all of the sides, go ahead, but it's not necessary, and often the pieces of meat aren't really six-sided "cubes"). Remove the meat with a slotted spoon to a plate, add the remaining tablespoon olive oil if there is not oil in the pan, and repeat with the other half of the lamb.

Add the leeks, carrots, celery and fennel to the pot and saute without the lid on for 5 minutes, until everything is slightly tender. Stir in the rosemary for 1 minute. Add the tomatoes, chickpeas, broth, bay leaf and lamb, and stir to combine.

Close and lock the lid. Set the valve to Sealing. Press Cancel, then press Manual or Pressure Cook and use the Pressure Level Button to select high pressure. Set the timer for 45 minutes. Note that the timer will not start to count down until the correct pressure has been achieved. When the Instant Pot beeps, press Cancel. Let the pressure come down slowly for 30 minutes. Release the sealing valve, remove the lid and serve hot in bowls, with parsley sprinkled over the stew.

Nutrition information per serving:

652 calories; 376 calories from fat; 42 g fat (15g saturated; 2 g trans fats); 97 mg cholesterol; 928 mg sodium; 35 g carbohydrate; 9 g fiber; 11 g sugar; 34 g protein.

Pan roasting chicken produces moist meat and crisp skin

By America's Test Kitchen

To develop a bone-in chicken breast recipe that produced moist meat, crisp skin, and a quick pan sauce, we turned to pan roasting, where the chicken is browned in a skillet on the stovetop and then slid, skillet and all, into a very hot oven to finish cooking. This method helped to protect the delicate white meat, which doesn't have a lot of fat, from drying out.

The chicken was added skin side down in a smoking hot skillet, where it formed a gorgeous brown crust and produced plenty of fond. After lightly browning the second side of the chicken, we moved the skillet to an oven at 450 F where the chicken roasted for just 15 minutes. While the chicken rested, we used the browned bits left in the pan to make a flavorful pan sauce. You will need a 12-inch oven-safe skillet for this recipe. If using kosher chicken, do not brine. If brining the chicken, do not season with salt in first step.

PAN-ROASTED CHICKEN BREASTS WITH SHALLOT-THYME SAUCE

Ingredients:

Servings: 4

Start to finish: 1 hour

Chicken:

4 (12-ounce) bone-in split chicken breasts, trimmed, brined if desired

Salt and pepper

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

Sauce:

1 large shallot, minced

3/4 cup chicken broth

2 sprigs fresh thyme

3 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 3 pieces and chilled

Salt and pepper

Preparation:

For the chicken: Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 450 F. Pat chicken dry with paper towels and season with salt and pepper. Heat oil in 12-inch oven-safe skillet over medium-high heat until just smoking. Cook breasts, skin side down, until well browned, 6 to 8 minutes. Flip breasts and brown lightly on second side, about 3 minutes. Flip breasts skin side down, transfer skillet to oven, and roast until chicken registers 160 F, 15 to 18 minutes. Remove skillet from oven (skillet handle will be hot). Transfer chicken to serving dish and let rest while making sauce.

For the sauce: Being careful of hot skillet handle, pour off all but 1 teaspoon fat left in skillet. Add shallot and cook over medium heat until softened, about 2 minutes. Stir in broth, vermouth, and thyme sprigs, scraping up any browned bits, and simmer until thickened and measures 2/3 cup, about 6 minutes. Discard thyme sprigs and stir in any accumulated chicken juices. Reduce heat to low and whisk in butter, 1 piece at a time. Off heat, season with salt and pepper to taste. Spoon sauce over chicken and serve.

Nutrition information per serving:

280 calories; 134 calories from fat; 15 g fat (6 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 109 mg cholesterol; 360 mg sodium; 2 g carbohydrate; 0 g fiber; 1 g sugar; 27 g protein.





Oman's incredible Wadi Ghul is known as the Grand Canyon of Arabia.

10 must-see natural wonders

IN OMAN

Tucked into the southeastern corner of the vast Arabian Peninsula, Oman has historically been isolated by mountains, sand and sea. Today, the same pristine features responsible for the sultanate's seclusion are now acclaimed outdoor attractions. From the world's largest sand desert to endangered sea turtles, hulking baobab trees and ancient 'pillow lavas', Oman has a surfeit of natural wonders that are surprisingly easy and inexpensive to explore.

Wadi Ghul: the Grand Canyon of Arabia

High on the southern slopes of Jebel Shams, the tallest peak in Oman's rugged Hajar Mountains, the elements have hewn a canyon so deep and spectacular that it's called the Grand Canyon of Arabia. Alternating bands of resistant limestone and narrow benches



Squeeze through the narrow crevices of Snake Gorge.

of softer shale have shaped the precipitous walls of this 1000m-deep gorge. You can peer into its depths from the vertiginous Balcony Walk, a 6km round-trip hike that starts at the end of the rough road to Al Khateem and ends at an eerie village abandoned in the 1970s.

A slice of Earth's mantle in Muscat

The stunning backdrop for Muscat's lively waterfront is a chain of rugged hills whose dark-brown hue contrasts starkly with the traditional whitewashed buildings and the Indian Ocean's cerulean blue. These rare rocks comprise a sliver of the Earth's mantle that was shoved atop the Arabian Peninsula during a massive mountain-building episode that reshaped the region 90 million years ago. The ramparts of the imposing Mutrah Fort, built by the enterprising Portuguese in the late 16th century, curve up one such hill, and the stone watchtower located 1.5 km to the east along the Corniche's smooth walking path rises from another mantle promontory that offers a spectacular seaside view.

Snake Gorge

Arabia's premier canyoneering route slithers through a slot so slender that in places you can reach out and touch both walls at the same time. The gorge begins at a narrow gash in the rock a few meters off the 4WD road through Wadi Bani Awf near the lush terraces of Bilad Sayt. To complete the 3km trip, participants must swim, leap, abseil and clamber around large boulders in the shadow of towering limestone walls polished smooth by repeated flash floods. If you're up for the adventure, reputable guides in Muscat can organize the excursion and provide all the necessary safety gear.

Al Hoota Cave

Pointy stalactites, rippling bacon and dainty

popcorn are some of Mother Nature's prettiest decor in the Arabian Peninsula's only show cave. Located a few kilometres west of Al Hamra, the yawning entrance of Al Hoota Cave is accessed via a short electric train ride. The 45-minute organised tours explore the first 500 metres of the oblong cave that groundwater has dissolved from the 95-million-year-old limestone bedrock. The damp underground environment hosts a fragile ecosystem that's home to molluscs, snails, nimble water beetles and a special type of blind cave fish that's only found in a 10 sq km area on the southern slopes of Jebel Akhdar. Lined up dramatically atop a rocky ridge, the Beehive Tombs of Bat, in Oman, are among the most unique ensemble of 4000-5000 year-old burial monuments, towers and remains of settlement in the Arabian Peninsula. They are a Unesco World Heritage Site.

Beehive tombs

Perched on a lonely ridge in the shadow of toothy Jebel Misht, one of Arabia's best rock-climbing cliffs, is a line of beehive tombs the region's Bronze Age inhabitants laboriously constructed between 3000 and 2000 BC. The 7m-high domes are built from quarried blocks of desert-varnished sandstone deposited on the seafloor more than a quarter of a billion years ago. In combination with two neighboring World Heritage archaeological sites, these tombs, located above the village of Al Ayn, comprise one of the world's most complete settlements from the 3rd millennium BC.

Ancient pillow lavas

Northern Oman hosts some of the world's best exposures of pillow lavas: dark, bulbous, pillow-shaped rocks that form where incandescent lava instantly chills as it oozes directly into the frigid sea. The sultanate's pillow lavas formed 95 million years ago, and the same process is occur-



Al Hoota is the only show cave in the region.

Lifestyle | Travel

ring today off the coast of Hawaii. Because the pillows form one atop another, they look like a large stack of several-meter-long wriggling black worms. With your own wheels, you can easily spot hundreds of the 'headrests' in road cuts along the Sohar-Buraimi highway, and you can visit wonderful exposures in Wadi Jizzi, a drainage accessed via the freshly paved Suhaylah Road, which intersects the highway about 45 kilometers west of Sohar.

Green sea turtles

The beautiful coastline near Ras Al Jinz, the Arabian Peninsula's easternmost point, is a crucial Indian Ocean nesting site for endangered green sea turtles. After travelling for years through the open ocean, these remarkable creatures navigate back to the spot where they were born to lay their own eggs. Although sea turtles have thrived on our planet since the time of the dinosaurs, they now face many perils, including entanglement in fishing lines and illegal poaching as well as natural predators. Witnessing a turtle laying a clutch of eggs and laboriously dragging her heavy body back to the sea on a guided tour at the Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve is a highlight for nature lovers.

Baobab trees

Although these hulking giants are more commonly associated with the African savanna, one of the nine species of the world's longest-living and weirdest-looking trees thrive in arid valleys high above the southern coastal city of Salalah. The road into the mountains east of the beautiful seasonal waterfall at Wadi Darbat passes several groves of baobabs, which are easily distinguished by their bottle-shaped trunks, broad girth and large, oval fruit. The Dhofar region hosts about 200 of these rare deciduous trees, which are also known by intriguing nicknames like 'cream of tartar', 'dead rat' and 'upside-down' trees.

Sharqiya sand sea

This photogenic sea of sand is the product of two ingredients: strong winds and an ample supply of sand grains. In the southern Sharqiya Sands, these grains most likely blew in from the coast, whereas in the north, where more than a dozen cosy Bedouin desert camps are located, the grains came from wadis that drain the mighty Hajar Mountains. Strong seasonal winds have sculpted this sand into parallel megadunes whose 35-degree faces are ideal for sand boarding and offroading tours.

Empty Quarter

Despite occupying an area that's only the size of France, the Rub Al Khali desert hosts half as much sand as the entire Sahara. Also called the Empty Quarter because of its lack of settlements, this 660,000 sq km region is the planet's largest contiguous sand desert. Oman's portion features fields of linear dunes, whose shapes can shift with the seasonal winds, separated by parched salt flats. From Salalah, travelers can visit the region on an overnight tour that includes driving up and down the dunes, plodding camel rides, a majestic sunset and an inky, black sky chock-full of twinkling stars. (www.lonelyplanet.com)



The UNESCO-listed beehive tombs are 5000-year-old burial monuments.



Sea turtles return to the Ras Al Jinz beach where they were born to lay their eggs.



The ever-shifting Sharqiya Sands are shaped by Oman's seasonal winds.

Comic

WORD SEARCH

Canada

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 47 letters spell a secret message.



- ALBERTA
- BEARS
- BEAVERS
- BRITISH COLUMBIA
- CARIBOU
- CHARLOTTETOWN
- CURLING
- EDMONTON
- FORESTS
- FREDERICTON
- GEESE
- HALIFAX
- HOCKEY
- IQALUIT
- LABRADOR
- LAKES
- LOONIE
- MANITOBA
- MAPLE LEAF
- MAPLE SYRUP
- MOOSE
- MOUNTAINS
- NEW BRUNSWICK
- NEWFOUNDLAND
- NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
- NOVA SCOTIA
- NUNAVUT
- ONTARIO
- OTTAWA
- PRAIRIES
- PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
- QUEBEC
- SCM
- REGINA
- SASKATCHEWAN
- SNOW
- ST. JOHN'S
- TOQUE
- TORONTO
- VICTORIA
- WHITEHORSE
- WINDSOR
- YELLOWKNIFE
- YUKON

CROSSWORD 2008



ACROSS

1. A sudden abrupt pull.
4. A murderer (especially one who kills a prominent political figure) who kills by a treacherous surprise attack and often is hired to do the deed.
12. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
15. The sign language used in the United States.
16. Five-toed pachyderm.
17. Large brownish-green New Zealand parrot.
18. Australian moundbird.
20. Any of various edible tropical marine gastropods of the genus *Strombus* having a brightly-colored spiral shell with large outer lip.
21. Thigh of a hog (usually smoked).
22. Press or grind with a crunching noise.
24. A federal agency established to regulate the release of new foods and health-related products.
26. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
29. An impudent or insolent rejoinder.
32. God of death.
33. Jordan's port.
37. A large fleet.
40. (used of opinions and actions) Far beyond the norm.
42. A member of a people of Turkic speech and Mongolian race inhabiting vast regions of central Siberia.
44. (anatomy) A structure that resembles a shell in shape.
45. Tastelessness by virtue of being cheap and vulgar.
46. An anti-TNF compound (trade name

- Arava) that is given orally.
49. Any of various long-tailed rodents similar to but larger than a mouse.
50. A distinct part that can be specified separately in a group of things that could be enumerated on a list.
52. (in Scotland) A child.
53. Lower in esteem.
55. A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
57. (of securities) Not quoted on a stock exchange.
58. A public promotion of some product or service.
59. The subject matter of a conversation or discussion.
63. Having undesirable or negative qualities.
65. The sensation that results when olfactory receptors in the nose are stimulated by particular chemicals in gaseous form.
68. A short labored intake of breath with the mouth open.
71. Type genus of the Desmodontidae.
73. Fiddler crabs.
75. Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
76. The compass point midway between east and southeast.
77. Danish chemist who devised the pH scale (1868-1939).
79. A light touch or stroke.
80. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
81. So scary as to cause chills and shudders.
82. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

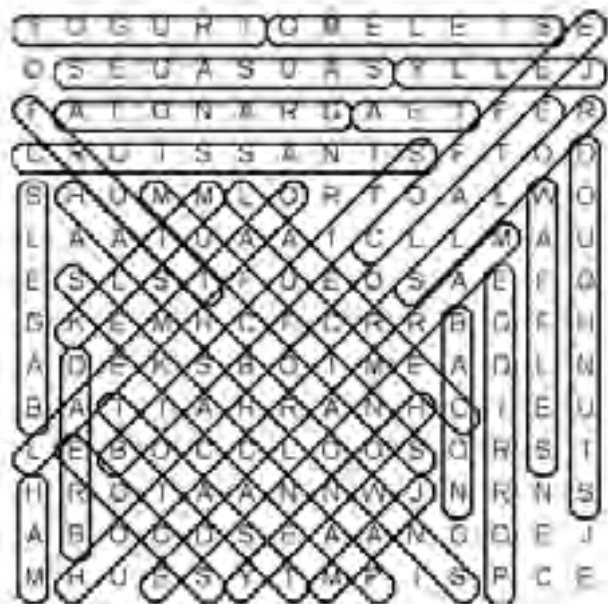
DOWN

1. A fine grained mineral having a soft soapy feel and consisting of hydrated magnesium silicate.
2. A person who makes use of a thing.
3. Sustentacular tissue that surrounds and supports neurons in the central nervous system.
4. (in Gnosticism) A divine power or nature emanating from the Supreme Being and playing various roles in the operation of the universe.
5. Not tense or taut.
6. A toxic nonmetallic element related to sulfur and tellurium.
7. A drug combination found in some over-the-counter headache remedies (Aspirin and Phenacetin and Caffeine).
8. An ancient musical horn made from the horn of a ram.
9. A bar of sand.
10. A ruler of the Inca Empire (or a member of his family).
11. Last or greatest in an indefinitely large series.
12. A Loloish language.
13. Lacking or deprive of the sense of hearing wholly or in part.
14. Fallow deer.
19. A degenerate neutron star.
23. Lap that forms a cloth border doubled back and stitched down v l.
25. Battles in World War II in the Pacific (November 1943).
27. A Japanese cheer of enthusiasm or triumph.
28. A lake in northwestern Russia north of St. Petersburg.
30. A Buddhist who has attained nirvana.
31. Inflict a heavy blow on, with the hand, a tool, or a weapon.
34. The capital and largest city of Ghana with a deep-water port.

35. The dialect of Malay used as the national language of the Republic of Indonesia or of Malaysia.
36. Having wiggly extensions.
38. 1/10 gram.
39. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
41. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
43. A republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
47. Make a loud, roaring sound, as of a car engine, while moving.
48. A drug (trade name Antabuse) used in the treatment of alcoholism.
51. Mosses similar to those of genus *Bryum* but larger.
54. (informal) Exceptionally good.
56. Placed crosswise.
60. A port city of south central Ukraine on an arm of the Black Sea.
61. A person who habitually pretends to be something he is not.
62. Being derived from.
64. (Irish) Chief god of the Tuatha De Danann.
66. A progressive disease of the central nervous system marked by increasing lack of coordination and advancing paralysis and death within a year of the appearance of symptoms.
67. Type genus of the Aceraceae.
69. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
70. A metabolic acid found in yeast and liver cells.
72. The syllable naming the first (tonic) note of any major scale in solmization.
74. One or some or every or all without specification.
78. A yellow trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.

Yesterday's Solution

Breakfast



- BACON
- BAGELS
- BISCHITS
- BREAD
- CEREAL
- COFFEE
- CROISSANTS
- DOUGHNUTS
- EGGS
- FRUIT
- GRANOLA
- HAM
- HASH BROWNS
- HONEY
- HOT CHOCOLATE
- JAM
- JELLY
- MARMALADE
- MILK
- MUFFINS
- OATMEAL
- OMELETS
- PANCAKES
- PORRIDGE
- ROLLS
- SAUSAGES
- TEA
- TOAST
- WAFFLES
- YOGURT

The hidden message is: ORANGE JUICE

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

TV Listings

AM MOVIES ACTION

00:05 Sniper: Ultimate Kill
01:35 Accidental Switch
03:10 Iron Man 3
05:20 The Bodyguard
07:00 911 Nightmare
08:40 Railroad Tigers
10:55 Justice League Dark
12:25 Captain America: The First Avenger
14:35 Street Fighter
16:25 Acts Of Vengeance
18:05 S.W.A.T.: Under Siege
19:40 Captain America: The Winter Soldier
22:00 Ice Agent
23:35 Crossing Point

ANIMAL PLANET HD

00:45 Backcountry Justice
01:40 I'm Alive
02:35 My Cat From Hell
03:25 Whale Wars
04:15 Backcountry Justice
05:02 Wild Africa: Rivers Of Life
05:49 Pit Bulls & Parolees
06:36 Animal Airport
07:00 Animal Airport
07:25 The Jeff Corwin Experience
08:15 Animal Cops Houston
09:10 Whale Wars
10:05 Backcountry Justice
11:00 Wild Africa: Rivers Of Life
11:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees
12:50 My Cat From Hell
13:45 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
14:40 Backcountry Justice
15:35 I'm Alive
16:30 O'shea's Big Adventure
17:25 Animal Cops Houston
18:20 My Cat From Hell
19:15 Extinct Or Alive
20:10 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet

21:05 Wild Africa: Rivers Of Life
22:00 I'm Alive
22:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees
23:50 Extinct Or Alive

crime & investigation network

00:00 Homicide Hunter
01:55 Crimes That Shook Britain
02:50 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence
03:45 Deadly Wives
04:30 Homicide: Hours To Kill
05:15 It Takes A Killer
06:00 Cold Case Files
07:00 It Takes A Killer
07:20 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 Crimes That Shook Britain
13:15 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence
14:10 Deadly Wives
15:05 Homicide: Hours To Kill
16:00 It Takes A Killer
17:00 Homicide Hunter
19:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
20:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence
21:00 Deadly Wives
22:00 It Takes A Killer
23:00 The First 48

COMEDY CENTRAL

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
04:15 Takeshis Castle Thailand
05:05 I Used To Be Fat
05:55 Disaster Date
07:10 Coaching Bad
08:00 I Used To Be Fat
08:50 Bondi Ink.
09:45 Snack Off
10:35 House Of Food
11:25 Lip Sync Battle
11:50 Ridiculousness Arabia
13:10 Impractical Jokers
14:25 Key And Peele
16:30 Ridiculousness
16:55 Ridiculousness
17:20 Ridiculousness
17:45 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
19:00 Friends
19:25 Friends
19:50 Friends
20:12 Detroiters
20:35 Detroiters
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 Takeshis Castle Thailand
22:00 Deon Cole: Cole-Blooded Seminar
22:50 Tosh.0
23:15 Tosh.0
23:40 John Oliver's New York Stand Up Show

19:15 Your Worst Nightmare
20:10 American Monster
21:05 Murder In The Heartland
22:00 Murder Among Friends
22:55 Murder Calls
23:50 Twisted Sisters

Disney HD

00:00 Hank Zipzer
00:25 Alex & Co.
00:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
00:50 Evermoor Chronicles
01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:05 Binny And The Ghost
02:30 Binny And The Ghost
02:55 Hank Zipzer
03:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
03:20 Hank Zipzer
03:45 Alex & Co.
04:10 Alex & Co.
04:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
05:00 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
05:25 Binny And The Ghost
05:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
06:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
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 K.C. Undercover
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
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23:35 Binny And The Ghost

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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

00:15 Street Outlaws
01:05 Salvage Hunters
01:50 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
02:35 Huntwatch
03:20 Street Outlaws
04:05 Alaska: The Last Frontier
04:50 Dirty Jobs
05:35 Storage Hunters
06:00 Beetle Crisis
06:23 Property Wars
06:45 Storage Hunters
07:10 How Do They Do It?
07:35 Alaska: The Last Frontier
08:20 Beetle Crisis
08:45 Property Wars
09:10 Dirty Jobs
09:55 Salvage Hunters
10:45 Racing Extinction
12:20 Beetle Crisis
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 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
17:05 Huntwatch
17:50 Extreme Engineering
18:40 Sinking Cities
19:25 Street Outlaws
21:00 Diesel Brothers
21:50 Street Outlaws: No Prep Kings (Special)
22:40 Street Outlaws: No Prep Kings
23:30 Outback Truckers

00:05 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
03:20 The Hive
03:40 Zou
04:25 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
11:00 Muppet Babies
11:40 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
12:40 PJ Masks
13:55 Muppet Babies Show And Tell
14:00 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
18:45 Vampirina
19:00 PJ Masks
19:30 The Lion Guard
20:00 Sofia The First
20:25 Chip And Dale's Nutty Tales Shorts
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
22:00 Vampirina
22:40 PJ Masks
22:55 PJ Masks
23:15 The Lion Guard
23:45 Sofia The First

AM MOVIES HD COMEDY

01:30 Coyote Ugly
03:30 Galaxy Quest
05:30 Jurassic School
07:15 Taco Shop
09:00 Galaxy Quest
11:00 Jurassic School
12:45 Taco Shop
14:30 Compadres
16:30 Fan Girl
18:15 Memories Of Me
20:15 Baby, Baby, Baby
22:00 Kill Your Friends

AM MOVIES HD KIDS

01:10 The Apple & The Worm
02:30 Dinofroz - An Island In The Sky
03:50 Trolland
05:15 The Secret Of Kells
06:45 Ploddy Police Car
08:05 Felix The Toy Rabbit And The Time Machine
09:35 Simba The King Lion
11:40 The Great Gilly Hopkins
13:20 Azur & Asmar: The Prince's Quest
15:00 The Apple & The Worm
16:20 Catcher: Cat City 2
18:00 Simba The King Lion
20:05 Micropolis
21:35 Teo: The Intergalactic Hunter
23:00 Catcher: Cat City 2

EHD

00:05 Model Squad
01:50 E! News
02:50 Botched
03:40 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
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
14:05 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
15:00 E! News Middle East
15:15 E! News: Daily Pop
16:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
17:10 Model Squad
19:00 E! News
20:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
23:00 E! News Middle East
23:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry

AM MOVIES HD

01:20 Bloodsport
03:05 Kubo And The Two Strings
05:00 Dare To Be Wild
06:40 Knight And Day
08:45 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Out Of The Shadows
10:50 The Guilt Trip
12:30 Hotel For Dogs
14:05 Monster Trucks
15:50 Around The World In 80 Days
17:55 Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation
20:15 Before I Wake
22:00 This Boy's Life
23:55 The Big Short

DISCOVERY SCIENCE

00:05 Food Factory USA
00:30 Kings Of Construction
01:20 Mythbusters: The Search
02:10 Silicon Valley: The Untold Story
03:00 How It's Made
03:24 How It's Made
03:48 Prototype This
04:36 Kings Of Construction
05:24 How Do They Do It?
05:48 Food Factory USA
06:12 Mythbusters: The Search
07:00 How Do They Do It?
07:26 How It's Made
08:14 Kings Of Construction
09:02 Silicon Valley: The Untold Story

AM SERIES HD

00:00 Supernatural
01:00 This Is Us
01:50 Grey's Anatomy
02:40 Criminal Minds

Stars



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Stress plays a bigger role in your life than usual. Under pressure is not the best position to be in to make decisions. When tensions are high like you may experience today, it is best to but off any decisions for later. Hit the road, take a drive, or just do what it takes to add a bit of relaxation into your world. You may find someone turning to you for advice or as a shoulder to cry on. Pouring your time into helping someone may seem to relieve your stress and minimize your own problems. Helping others could be the best way to help yourself.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

The sky is the limit for you today. You are optimistic and can accomplish anything you set your mind to. You have faith and are willing to take chances on an emotional level that may bring great reward and happiness your way. You may be deep within your feelings and have a desire to experience something new. An emotional wanderlust, if you will, is the desire of your heart. Today you are all about you. Your wants, needs, and desires, take over and all you can do is pursue what your heart wants. This is a very productive day for you physically and emotionally. You will find peace and happiness in accomplishing the goals you have set for yourself today. Reach for the stars! You may just be the one that can touch them.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You are making a difference in the lives of more people than you realize. You could qualify as a CREEP. That's a good thing, a compliment. It is an acronym for Constantly Ready to Encourage Every Person. You tend to focus on the other person, not on yourself. You send the message "You are enough." Don't change the way you relate to people. Keep doing what you are doing. You don't have to work at it. It comes naturally for you. Lifting others up lifts your spirits in return.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You are ambitious and have a great desire to be noticed. You want to be the center of attention and stand out in the crowd. You are determined to position everything and everyone in your life to achieve this goal. Today may find you feeding off gossip and seeking understanding of those around you. You are interested in getting to the root of what makes those around you do the things they do. You feel this will give your insight and authority over them. You are well on your way to achieving a level of organization that will put you right where you want to be.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Stress plays a bigger role in your life than usual. Under pressure is not the best position to be in to make decisions. When tensions are high like you may experience today, it is best to but off any decisions for later. Hit the road, take a drive, or just do what it takes to add a bit of relaxation into your world. You may find someone turning to you for advice or as a shoulder to cry on. Pouring your time into helping someone may seem to relieve your stress and minimize your own problems. Helping others could be the best way to help yourself.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

All sparkles may not be gold, but it sure does catch your eye. You have deep appreciation for the beauty surrounding you and find it hard to pass by any sparkling treasure in your path. Admire it and move on Virgo and this could be a very good financial period for you if you can resist the urge to spend. This may be a time of change in your life. The changes you are about to make or may be making may not be supported by those close to you. You may experience conflict or major pushback. You are longing to broaden your horizons, a longing to grow and have new experiences. Remember, Virgo, these things cannot occur without change.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You know who and what are the priorities in your life. Your sense of appreciation is heightened. This is a time you are able to beam with pride when you look at your life situation. You are highly respected and others admire you for what a success you have become. Be sure to appreciate the fact that others seem to always look to you for advice and guidance. Remember to take time for you. You may tend to take the problems of those you love to personally. You can not carry the weight of the world on your shoulders alone. Spend time this evening to unwind. This could prevent you from becoming overwhelmed.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You are a practical person with an abundance of common sense. You are able to use both of these qualities as assets to make your way to the top in the career world. You may be feeling a need to change your focus and tighten your circle a bit. You feel as if you need to spend more of your time and attention on you and yours. At this point you may have accomplished your goal in the workplace but feel you need to continue to work on your goal at home. This will be a balancing act to continue to make sure you thrive in every area of your life. Your communication skills are at all time high and you are able to relate and interact with ease to all who surround you.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Your main focus seems to be family. You crave a solid foundation and know that the root of your success and happiness begins and ends with your family. You have needs and you want to be needed by your family and those closest to you. This is a strong desire you have for your life and you are extremely focused on these relationships. You seem to be holding yourself to the highest possible standards and are extremely strict on yourself. You seem to dismiss anything that does not contribute to your goals. You may find that this is not the best of times to try and get your point across to others. You feel as if you encounter a bit of a block when trying to communicate with others today.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

The sky is the limit. You have set your goals high and by this point you may be look down on them as you soar above and beyond all expectations you had for yourself. You are on fire. You filled with optimistic feelings and on top of the world. This is a great day for your relationship wise as well as in the workplace. You exude confidence today that so many will find as attractive. Your desires are leading you to crave something new. You are willing to try anything today with your "bring it on" attitude. High energy and happiness fill your world today. Enjoy! You may feel led to take chances concerning your relationship that are led by deep emotions today.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

If an emotional argument is what you are seeking today may just in fact be your day. You may feel a lack of support and blocked at every turn. Use your imagination and ability to think outside of the box to find your answers. Others may see you detached or cool on a personal level today. Your tolerance levels may be low and your temper short. You are drawn now to the unique and unusual in this world. Make your ides count. Now is a great time to try new things and visit new places. You should find today as one where you are able to make new friends and have great conversations with everyone you cross paths with.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You may find yourself wanting to broaden your horizons. You know this is a big world and your life is contained in a tiny square of it. It may be time to take a step out of that box and find what the world has to offer you. You could find it difficult to communicate with others today because you find your mind is a million miles away. Curiosity has taken a hold on you and you can't seem to stay focused on the here and now. You may find this evening that a good book may be just what you need to find this escape you have been searching for. A good time for rest and relaxation is in order for you.

COUNTRY CODES

Afghanistan	0093	Jordan	00962
Albania	00355	Kazakhstan	007
Algeria	00213	Kenya	00254
Andorra	00376	Kiribati	00686
Angola	00244	Kuwait	00965
Anguilla	001264	Kyrgyzstan	00996
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	Niger	00227
Cuba	0053	Nigeria	00234
Cyprus	00357	Niue	00683
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Norfolk Island	00672
Czech Republic	00420	Northern Ireland (UK)	0044
Denmark	0045	North Korea	00850
Diego Garcia	00246	Norway	0047
Djibouti	00253	Oman	00968
Dominica	001767	Pakistan	0092
Dominican Republic	001809	Palau	00680
Ecuador	00593	Panama	00507
Egypt	0020	Papua New Guinea	00675
El Salvador	00503	Paraguay	00595
England (UK)	0044	Peru	0051
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Philippines	0063
Eritrea	00291	Poland	0048
Estonia	00372	Portugal	00351
Ethiopia	00251	Puerto Rico	001784
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

As water bank runs dry, Uganda greens hills to soak up rain

MBARARA, Uganda: In the village of Katebe, Ugandan schoolchildren have little choice but to drink from the same water supply as animals. During the dry season from June to August, Kyakatarihwa dam is the only source of water for people and livestock alike in this remote part of southwest Uganda's Mbarara district. "We have no (other) option," said Arinaitwe Kenneth, headteacher of Katebe Primary School, which has 420 pupils.

Nivagaba Pison, 35, came to Katebe five years ago to look after cattle belonging to the local church. Back then, there was enough rainfall to provide drinking water, and the local dam was used for animals only, he said. "Things have changed now - it is dry throughout the year," he added. Two years ago, the community accessed water from a borehole dug by the government a few meters from the school. But it no longer functions, like thousands of other boreholes sunk across the country using public funds and aid money.

Musingwire Jeconious, a scientist with the National Environment Management Authority, blames that on poor stewardship of the land - a trend the agency is trying to reverse. Water resource mapping for southern Uganda indicates reducing groundwater, he said. "Our hills are becoming bare, and then farmers have no soil and water conservation structures to help water sink into soil layers to form groundwater," he said. Experts blame the scarcity of trees and vegetation on deforestation, a growing population and climate change. Uganda loses more than 100,000 hectares of forest cover annually, according to data from the Ministry of Water and Environment. Just over 60 percent of Uganda's water comes from

groundwater sources, it says. But now people drilling for groundwater cannot find it, boreholes are running out of the precious resource, and in the dry season, water is low in lakes and rivers, Jeconious warned.

"It is serious. About 60 percent of shallow wells normally dry up in the dry season," he said. The situation is likely to worsen, warned Member of Parliament Charles Ngabirano, a hydrologist and engineer. Ngabirano said water sources are not being recharged "because we have removed all the vegetation". "The water runs off... instead of sinking into the ground," he said.

River risks

Rainwater feeds the River Rwizi - a source of water for millions of people in southwest Uganda - and deposits sediment, but within a month the river dries up, Ngabirano added. Originating in the Buhweju hills, the famous river flows into Lake Victoria. Several urban centres pump water from the river, before treating it and supplying it to residents. But Mbarara municipality mayor Robert Kakyembezi said households are receiving less piped water in dry seasons when the river level drops.

Encroachment on swamps and other bad landscape management practices - including overgrazing, felling and burning trees to clear land for farming, and planting thirsty exotic tree species such as eucalyptus - threaten the future of the river and several lakes in the region, according to Jeconious. Richard Kyambadde, an officer at the Ministry of Water and Environment, said wetlands are degrading fast in several parts of the country because of urbanization and agriculture. Only 9 percent of



MBARARA, Uganda: Primary school pupils share a water source with cows in Katebe village, Mbarara district, Uganda. —Reuters

Uganda's surface area is covered by wetlands now, down from 13 percent in 1995, he noted.

Wise wetland use

In Uganda, climate change is expected to bring less rainfall overall, while shifting its distribution between seasons and increasing water evaporation rates, calling for creative thinking to recharge groundwater, experts say. When rain falls, some of it sinks into the soil, refilling the aquifers that feed springs and wells. If most of it runs off instead, the water table is not replenished and sources run dry.

To avoid this, government officials and environmentalists in Uganda are encouraging ecological restoration and soil conservation, to increase water penetration into the ground. A joint effort launched a decade ago in the southwest has restored over 500 acres of wetland in the River Rwizi catchment, while farmers have planted millions of calliandra trees which provide fodder and improve soil nutrients. "Things are moving," said Jeconious. But progress is being hampered by a lack of funding, he added. — Reuters

CLINIC PAGE

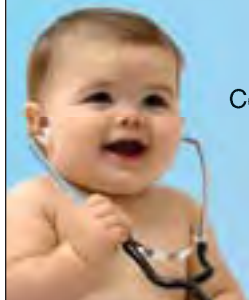


Kuwait Times
248 33 199

DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM

Consultant Pediatrician

Consultant Pediatrician-Canadian & American
Board in Pediatrics-Canadian
Board in Pediatric Emergency



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DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED

Consultant of General Surgery
Laparoscopic 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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DR. MOHAMMAD AL HAJRY
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

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ACADEMIC CERTIFICATES:

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

Specialized in:

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- ◆ Colonic Hydrotherapy & Fecal Incontinence Treatment
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Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:

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- ◆ 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

Dr. Abdullah Al Haddad
Surgery Department
Consultant General Surgery, Laparoscopic & Colo - Rectal Surgeon

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Dr. Ahmad Alaeddine
Head of Cardiology departmenta
at Dar Al Shifa hospital

- Consultant Interventional and conventional cardiologist.
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Classifieds

Kuwait Times
Established 1961

Friday, September 14, 2018



STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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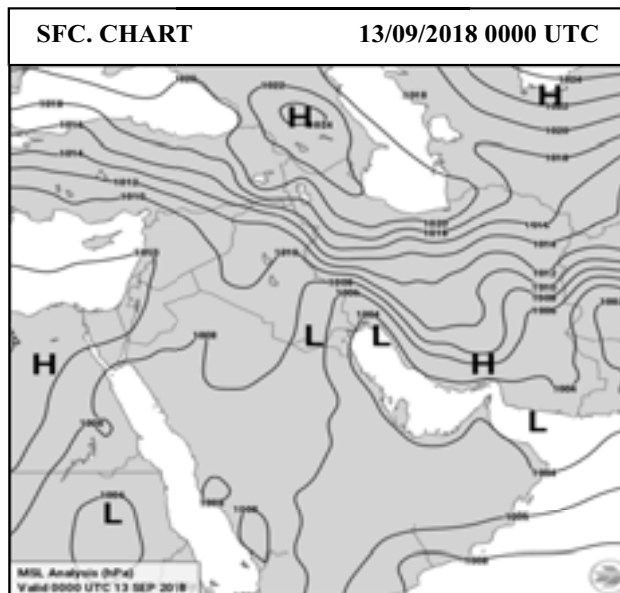
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Very hot with light to moderate freshening gradually north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 45 km/h causing rising dust specially over open areas.

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 35 km/h.

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

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	47 °C	34 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	48 °C	33 °C
ABDALY	48 °C	29 °C
BUBYAN	---- °C	---- °C
JAHRA	48 °C	34 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	44 °C	28 °C
SALMIYAH	44 °C	34 °C
AHMADI	42 °C	34 °C
NUWAISIB	45 °C	29 °C
WAFRA	48 °C	29 °C
SALMY	46 °C	30 °C



4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	09/14	Hot	45 °C	30 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 28 km/h
Saturday	09/15	Hot and Humid + drop in visibility due to fog at night	44 °C	27 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 32 km/h
Sunday	09/16	Visibility will improve gradually and Humid weather and Hot	42 °C	27 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 26 km/h
Monday	09/17	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	44 °C	28 °C	NW-SE	12 - 30 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:12
Sunrise	05:32
Zuhr	11:44
Asr	15:15
Sunset	17:56
Isha	19:14

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	48 °C
MIN. Temp.	28 °C
MAX. RH	27 %
MIN. RH	09 %
MAX. Wind	N 39 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Airlines

Kuwait Airways 171
Jazeera Airways 177
Wataniya Airways 22 066 536
American Airlines 22087425
22087426
Jet Airways 22924455

FlyDubai 22414400
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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

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Business

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2018

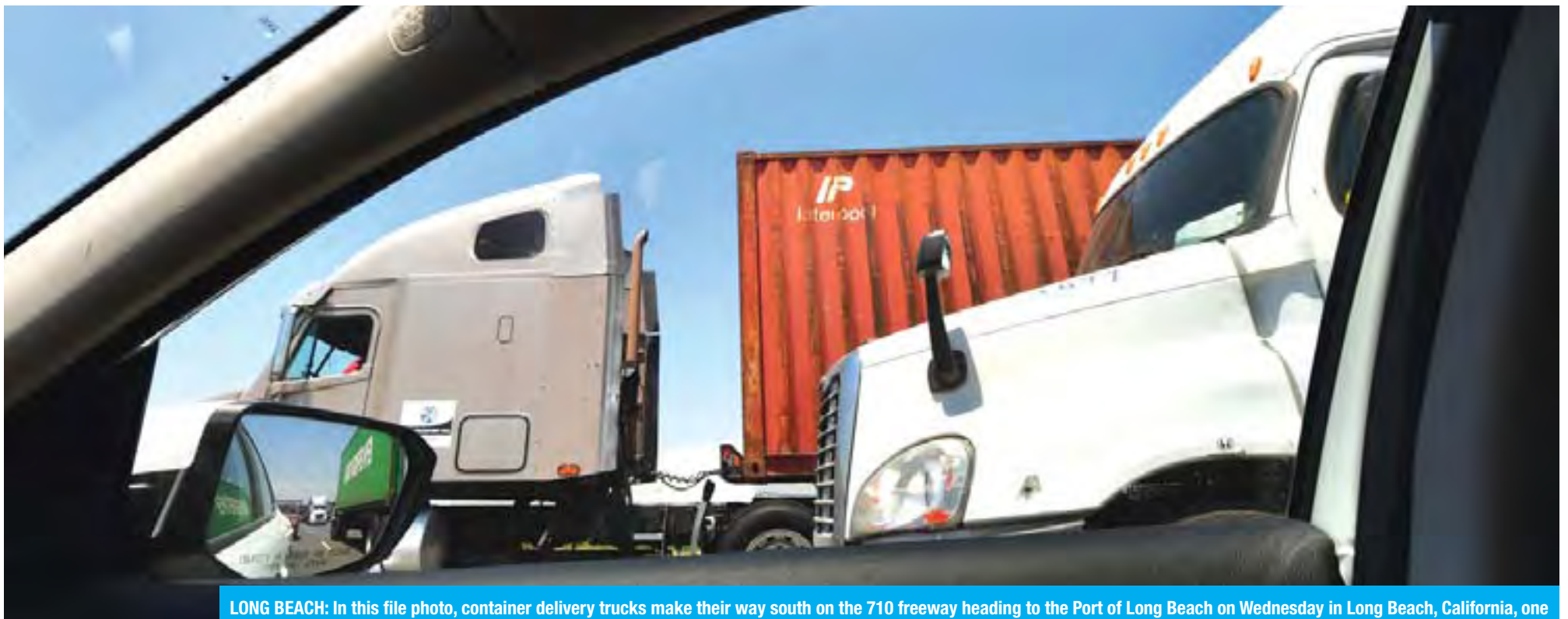
38 'Crucial period' for oil as Iran exports shrink: IEA



39 John Lewis profits evaporate as struggling rivals slash prices



40 Britain sets out the damage for consumers and business



LONG BEACH: In this file photo, container delivery trucks make their way south on the 710 freeway heading to the Port of Long Beach on Wednesday in Long Beach, California, one of the world's busiest seaports and a major gateway for trade between Asia and the United States. — AFP

Tariffs are hurting: US firms in China

Beijing welcomes US trade talks offer as new tariffs loom

BEIJING: The majority of American companies in China say they are hurting from the escalating US-China trade spat, reporting increased costs, lower profits and stepped-up scrutiny, a survey showed yesterday.

The American Chamber of Commerce in China polled more than 430 US companies operating in the country, providing the first detailed look at how Donald Trump's trade fight has harmed business.

His first round of tariffs this summer hit \$50 billion in Chinese products like high-end technology parts and manufactured goods, while Beijing fired back dollar-for-dollar at US soybeans, autos and other farm goods. But US firms are feeling whiplash from both sides as they sell and make goods in China, with Washington's border tax increase and Beijing's counter-punch hurting more than 60 percent of businesses, according to the poll.

It also showed looming tariffs on \$200-billion

of Chinese goods is expected to expand the pain to three-quarters of firms. Chamber president Alan Beebe said the poll would provide officials in Washington and Beijing with facts on how the tariffs are playing out.

Businesses received potentially good news on Wednesday after US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin proposed a fresh round of trade talks between the economic superpowers to avert a full-blown trade war. The talks could stave off the growing costs for American firms, though the two sides have failed to reach an agreement over several rounds of negotiations in spring and summer.

The unpredictability around the trade fight is hampering investment decisions as investors need stability to make sound decisions, Beebe said. Roughly a third of firms are shifting supply chains out of China, or the US, and an equal proportion are delaying or cancelling investment decisions, the survey showed. The data, when

coupled with the results of a similar survey of European firms, is troubling for the health of China's economy, already slowing under the weight of Beijing's battle to cut its debt mountain. The survey released yesterday by the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China polled nearly 200 European firms doing business in China and found 17 percent are delaying investment or expansion plans. The trade fight impact is overwhelmingly negative, said Mats Harborn, president of the EU Chamber.

"We share the concerns of the US regarding China's trade and investment practices, but continuing along the path of tariff escalation is extremely dangerous," warned Harborn.

'Too much uncertainty'

Some 42 percent of American firms report their goods are becoming less attractive to Chinese buyers. Beebe said that could be the consequences of price increases or the psychology

around how people make purchasing decisions. "Chinese customers just see too much uncertainty around buying American and as a result they shift to alternatives," Beebe told AFP.

About half of American firms are making less money, and a similar amount are reporting higher production costs, according to the survey. Some of their employees are paying the price, with 12 percent of firms cutting staff.

Beebe said that may be because survey respondents were mostly smaller firms, adding larger companies "have the ability to withstand the impact of the tariffs but it's going to be the smaller ones that are going to feel the pinch sooner". The White House believes China will waive the white flag after the next round of tariffs on \$200 billion in goods, said William Zarit, the chamber's chairman.

"But that scenario risks underestimating China's capability to continue meeting fire with fire," he added. — AFP

Business

'Crucial period' for oil as Iran exports shrink: IEA

Brent prices waver comfortably between \$70 and \$80 per barrel

PARIS: Global oil output hit a record of 100 million barrels per day in August, but the market may tighten and prices rise as exports from Iran and Venezuela decline, the International Energy Agency said yesterday. "We are entering a very crucial period for the oil market," the IEA said in its latest monthly report. "Things are tightening up." The global record came as output from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries rose to a nine-month high of over 32 million barrels per day (mb/d).

The cartel had agreed in Vienna in June to push up production in order to put a cap on soaring prices.

In recent months, prices have wavered comfortably between the \$70 and \$80 per barrel on the Brent crude futures contract. According to the IEA, a rebound in Libyan production, near-record Iraqi output and higher supply from Nigeria and OPEC kingpin Saudi Arabia have so far managed to offset the impact of shrinking production from crisis-hit Venezuela and Iran.

But with the crisis in Venezuela showing no sign of abating, and with new US sanctions on Iran's oil industry set to come into force on November 4, other producers may have to ramp up production even further if they want to limit the impact on the market.

"It remains to be seen if other producers de-

side to increase their production. The price range for Brent of \$70-\$80/bbl in place since April could be tested," the IEA said.

In May, US President Donald Trump pulled the US out of the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran and said other countries must stop buying oil from Tehran or face American sanctions.

And hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans have fled their country since the nation became engulfed in a political crisis that has sent the economy into free fall. "The situation in Venezuela could deteriorate even faster, strife could return to Libya and the 53 days to 4 November will reveal more decisions taken by countries and companies with respect to Iranian oil purchases," the IEA said.

Iran sanctions loom

Output from OPEC member Iran in August hit its lowest level since July 2016, the IEA said, "as more buyers distanced themselves from Tehran ahead of looming US sanctions", the report said. Top buyers China and India have already cut back purchases from Tehran, and other countries are likely to do the same between now and November. "While Iranian exports have fallen by nearly 500,000 barrels per day since May, shipments from Iraq and Saudi Arabia have risen by 200,000 barrels per day and 60,000 barrels per



SAN FRANCISCO: In this file photo, a Shell gas station advertises its prices in San Francisco, California. Gasoline prices kept US consumer inflation rising in August for the fifth straight month but there were some signs inflation was cooling, the Labor Department reported yesterday. — AFP

day respectively," the IEA added.

In Venezuela too, production dipped in August to 1.24 million barrels a day, and should it continue to decline, may hit 1 million barrels a day at the end of 2018.

OPEC, of which Venezuela is a member, had

already warned that the country's output was at a three-decade low. "If Venezuelan and Iranian exports do continue to fall, markets could tighten and oil prices could rise without offsetting production increases from elsewhere," the IEA warned. —AFP

Turkey central bank surprises markets with big rate hike

ANKARA: Turkey's central bank yesterday surprised markets with a bigger than expected rate hike to battle soaring inflation and boost the lira, prompting the embattled currency to surge in value.

Turkey has in recent weeks been battling through one of the most troubled periods for its economy under the rule of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, with the lira battered on currency markets in August. The Turkish central bank yesterday hiked the one week repo auction rate 625 basis points from 17.75 percent to 24 percent, significantly higher than the Bloomberg consensus of 21 percent.

The lira reacted strongly to the decision, rising by five percent in value to 6.0 lira to the US dollar. It later shed some of those gains but was still up over 2.7 percent in value at 6.15 to the dollar.

The magnitude of the hike was all the more surprising given that just before the decision President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had slammed interest rates as a "tool of exploitation".

The bank had not touched interest rates since early June with markets concerned that the policy of the nominally independent bank is being dictated by Erdogan. There had been indications from the bank that it would raise rates after inflation came in at nearly 18 percent in August, according to official data last week. — AFP

US consumer prices rise modestly; jobless claims near 49-year low

WASHINGTON: US consumer prices rose less than expected in August as increases in gasoline and rents were offset by declines in healthcare and apparel costs, and underlying inflation pressures also appeared to be slowing.

Despite the moderate consumer price increases last month, inflation pressures are steadily building up, driven by a tightening labor market and robust economic growth. Labor market strength was reinforced by other data yesterday showing the number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits dropped last week to near a 49-year low.

"There is no reason to suspect that the weaker increase in consumer prices in August is the start of another dip like we saw in early 2017," said Paul Ashworth, chief US economist at Capital Economics in Toronto. "With labor market conditions tight, wage growth accelerating and input prices being pushed up by capacity constraints and recently imposed tariffs, there is plenty of upward pressure on prices."

The Consumer Price Index increased 0.2 percent last month after a similar gain in July. In the 12 months through August, the CPI increased 2.7 percent, slowing from July's 2.9 percent advance. Excluding the volatile food and energy components, the CPI edged up 0.1 percent. The so-called core CPI had increased by 0.2 percent for three straight months.

In the 12 months through August, the core CPI increased 2.2 percent after rising 2.4 percent in July. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the CPI climbing 0.3 percent and the core CPI gaining 0.2 percent in August.



SAN FRANCISCO: In this file photo, a help wanted sign is posted on the window of SF Wraps in San Francisco, California. New US claims for jobless benefits fell last week to their lowest level in nearly 49 years as employers struggled to fill open positions, the government reported yesterday. — AFP

The inflation report will probably do little to change expectations that the Federal Reserve will raise interest rates at its Sept. 25-26 policy meeting. The US central bank has raised rates twice this year.

The Fed tracks a different inflation measure, the personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index excluding food and energy, for monetary policy. The core PCE price index increased 2.0 percent in July, hitting the Fed's 2 percent target for the third time this year.

An escalating trade war between the United States and China is expected to drive up inflation. President Donald Trump last week threatened duties on another \$267 billion worth of Chinese goods on top of a \$200 billion tariff list that is awaiting his decision. Washington has already slapped duties on \$50 billion worth of Chinese imports, provoking retaliation from Beijing. — Reuters

World is sleepwalking towards another financial crisis: Brown

Govts have failed to tackle causes of the last major financial crash

LONDON: Former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown warned that the world is on the verge of sleepwalking into another financial crisis because governments have failed to tackle the causes of the last major financial crash a decade ago.

Britain's leader when the collapse of the US investment bank Lehman Brothers triggered the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression said the world is leaderless and was now entering a period of vulnerability.

"We are in danger of sleepwalking into a future crisis," Brown, 67, told *The Guardian*. "There is going to have to be a severe awakening to the escalation of risks, but we are in a leaderless world."

Brown said the global economy had failed to introduce an early warning system and a way of monitoring financial flows so that it was possible to tell where money had been lent and on what terms. "We have dealt with the small things but not the big things," said Brown, who was British prime minister from 2007 to 2010.

Brown said action against financial wrongdoing had not been tough enough and that many banks would expect to be bailed

out again in the event of a future crisis.

"The penalties for wrong-doing have not been increased sufficiently," he said. "The fear that bankers will be imprisoned for bad behavior is not there. There has not been a strong enough message sent out that government won't rescue institutions that haven't put their houses in order."

Brown said the international cooperation that helped tackle the global financial crisis ten years ago may not exist today because countries have become more protectionist.

"The cooperation that was seen in 2008 would not be possible in a post-2018 crisis both in terms of central banks and governments working together. We would have a blame-sharing exercise rather than solving the problem," he said. A spokeswoman for Prime Minister Theresa May disagreed with Brown's assessment and said Britain has built one of the most robust economies since 2008.

"We have reformed regulation to put in place one of the toughest systems in the world and we have made it easier to deal with any issues that emerge on the banking front," she added. — Reuters



LONDON: In this file photo, former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown addresses guests on the issues surrounding Brexit at a Fabian Society event in Westminster Cathedral Hall, London. —AFP

John Lewis profits evaporate as struggling rivals slash prices

LONDON: Profits at John Lewis Partnership were wiped out in the first half of its financial year as Britain's biggest department store chain was forced to match discounting by struggling rivals.

Britain's department stores have been hit by a squeeze in consumers' disposable incomes, higher property taxes and a rise in online shopping, with Debenhams issuing a string of profit warnings and House of Fraser rescued last month by a deal with Sports Direct. John Lewis also pointed to uncertainty caused by Britain's departure from the European Union, drawing fire from British Brexit minister Dominic Raab, who told BBC Radio 4: "It is rather easy for a business to blame Brexit and the politicians rather than to take responsibility for their own situation."

The group, which has rebranded its department stores John Lewis & Partners and its supermarkets Waitrose & Partners to underscore its employee-owned model, said profit before one-off items slumped 99 percent to 1.4 million pounds (\$1.8 million) in the six months to July 28, hit by its department stores' pledge to match prices at rivals and lower sales of big-ticket items.

The group had warned in June that first-half profits, which are always much lower and more volatile than in the second half, would be close to zero. "With the level of uncertainty facing consumers and the econ-



LONDON: Shoppers walk past a John Lewis department store on Oxford Street in London yesterday. John Lewis announced yesterday that half-year profits had dropped 98.8 percent, as they posted pre-tax profits of GBP 1.2 million for the six months leading up to July 28. — AFP

omy, in part due to ongoing Brexit negotiations, forecasting is particularly difficult but we continue to expect full-year profits to be substantially lower than last year for the group as a whole," it said yesterday. Chairman Charlie Mayfield said discounting was at the highest level for a decade, and the number of across-the-board promotions by struggling rivals had doubled year-on-year.

"Considering the devastating impact that delivering its brand strapline 'Never Knowingly Undersold' has had on profits (...) it is no wonder John Lewis & Partners rebranded last week, stepping up its new strategy to shift the focus away from price and on to service," said GlobalData analyst Sofie Willmott.

But Mayfield said the group remained committed to the price matching pledge it introduced in its department stores in 1925, adding the "extremely valuable" promise was even more relevant in a tough market than in a strong one.

John Lewis's 50 department stores and home shops made an operating loss before exceptional gains of 19.3 million pounds, hit also by a decision not to pass on all the cost inflation from a weaker pound, it said. Like-for-like sales fell 1.2 percent.

Cool heads required

Mayfield said the market was tough but Britons had not fallen out of love with shopping, and those retailers that invested in their offers and in the customer experience could thrive. "We are determined to be in that camp," he said. He said the company was investing in own-brand and exclusive products, pointing to early success for its new John Lewis & Partners womenswear collection. The group said its upmarket Waitrose supermarkets were on track to grow profits for the full year, driven by an improvement in like-for-like sales from the first to the second quarter and progress in rebuilding its gross margin. — Reuters

Trade jitters weighing on business investment: Fed

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump's trade wars have many US businesses on edge, prompting some to delay or cut back on planned investments, the Federal Reserve reported Wednesday.

In half the country, meanwhile, a tightening labor shortage is also cutting into sales and causing some companies to delay projects, according to the Fed's latest "beige book" survey of the economy, which said inflation continued to mount.

The world's largest economy grew at a "moderate pace" in the June-July period but growth was "below average" in the St. Louis and Kansas City regions, according to the report, while manufacturing slowed in the district around Richmond, Virginia. The Fed is widely expected to raise interest rates at its next meeting in two weeks to keep a lid on growing inflation amid brisk US economic expansion, steady job gains and historically low unemployment—a policy that has drawn sharp rebukes from Trump.

"Businesses generally remained optimistic about the near-term outlook, though most districts noted concern and uncertainty about trade tensions—particularly though not only among manufacturers," said the report, which gathers accounts from local contacts nationwide. "A number of districts noted that such concerns had prompted businesses to scale back or postpone capital investment."

The report said "six of the 12 districts" pointed to instances where the lack of available workers was eating into sales caused employers to delay projects.

"Wage growth was mostly characterized as modest or moderate." Survey respondents said Trump's trade wars had driven up prices for manufacturers and others, which companies planned to begin passing onto consumers, while also causing prices for key commodities like soy beans to plummet. —AFP

Business

Britain sets out the damage for consumers and business

UK publishes technical notices on 'no-deal' Brexit

LONDON: Britain published new advice to businesses and the public yesterday about how to cope with the disruption that leaving the European Union without a divorce deal would cause to everything from mobile phone roaming charges to vehicle standards.

Recent signals from Brussels have buoyed hopes that the United Kingdom and the EU can agree and approve a proper divorce agreement before the UK leaves on March 29, though the sides are still divided on about one fifth of the detail of a deal. But many business chiefs and investors fear politics could scupper a deal, thrusting the world's fifth largest economy into a "no-deal" Brexit that they say would weaken the West, spook financial markets and silt up the arteries of trade.

Britain has stepped up planning for the effects of such a departure and yesterday published 28 technical notices covering the impact on areas including oil and gas, environmental standards and data protection. Brexit minister Dominic Raab said a no-deal Brexit was unlikely, but that the United Kingdom would manage the challenges and eventually flourish.

"With six months to go until the UK leaves the European Union, we are stepping up our 'no deal' preparations so that Britain can continue to flourish, regardless of the outcome of negotiations," Raab said. For the public, yesterday's notices covered more mundane issues such as driving in the EU and travelling to the EU with a UK passport. The government said British drivers might need to obtain an international driving permit to drive in

the EU. Both sides need an agreement to keep trade flowing between the world's biggest trading bloc and the United Kingdom, home to one of the world's top two financial capitals. "Getting a deal with the European Union is still by far and away the most likely outcome," Raab said. But Moody's Investor Service said the probability of a "no-deal" had risen and such a scenario would damage the economy, especially the automotive, aerospace, airline and chemical sectors.

The other 27 members of the EU combined have about five times the economic might of Britain. They also have a strong incentive to deny the UK a deal so attractive it might encourage others to follow the British example.

Deal or no-deal?

As May tries to clinch a deal with Brussels, she is facing rebels in her Conservative Party who say they will vote down any deal that fails to deliver a sharp break with the EU. Raab, speaking to BBC radio, said he did not believe May's government would lose a vote in parliament on the deal. Michel Barnier, the EU's chief negotiator, said on Monday that a Brexit deal was possible "within six or eight weeks" if negotiators were realistic in their demands.

Last month, the government published 25 technical papers out of a total of more than 80, which detailed how tariffs, financial services, state aid and pharmaceuticals would operate if Britain departs without a divorce deal. Ever since the shock 2016 Brexit vote, major companies have been planning for Brexit, but chief ex-

conference. "Recently, the Venezuelan government has actively promoted economic and financial reform with a good social response. I think a stable Venezuelan development is in the interest of all parties," he added. China has loaned some \$50 billion to OPEC member Venezuela in the past decade, with Caracas repaying debt with oil shipments. The socialist-led Latin American country still owes \$20 billion to Beijing.

Maduro may return home with a new \$5 billion loan and a six-month extension to the grace period to service its debt, according to Venezuelan consultancy Ecoanalitica. Vice President Delcy Rodriguez, who travelled to Beijing earlier this week, met with the president of China Development Bank. Maduro's government has massively devalued the national currency as part of a raft of measures intended to halt the economy's free-fall into hyperinflation.

The International Monetary Fund projects Venezuela's inflation rate will reach 1,000,000 percent by the end of the year. Hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans have fled the country, most of them into neighboring Latin American countries. The trip to China is Maduro's first outside the country since he was allegedly targeted by exploding drones at a military parade in Caracas August 4. He last visited China in March 2017. — AFP

Maduro eyes economic boost in China visit

BEIJING: Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro was expected to arrive in Beijing yesterday to strike deals with his crisis-hit country's biggest creditor. Before departing Caracas, Maduro said the trip was "very necessary, very opportune and full of great expectations."

"We are leaving under better conditions, having activated a program of economic recovery, growth and prosperity. We are going to improve, broaden and deepen relations with this great world power," he said in a televised address on Wednesday.

Maduro is in China for a state visit from yesterday to Sunday, according to the official Xinhua news agency. China's foreign ministry said President Xi Jinping will treat Maduro to a welcoming ceremony and a banquet.

"China is confident that this visit will further enhance political mutual trust, deepen mutually beneficial and friendly cooperation between the two countries in various fields," ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told a regular press



LONDON: Britain's Treasury secretary Liz Truss arrives at 10 Downing Street in central London for a cabinet meeting to discuss 'no deal' Brexit preparations yesterday. — AFP

ecutives say the scale of disruption from a disorderly Brexit is such that it is hard to prepare for. Profit at Britain's biggest department stores group, John Lewis Partnership, was wiped out in the first half as it was forced to match discounting by its struggling rivals on a fiercely competitive high street.

"With the level of uncertainty facing consumers and the economy, in part due to ongoing Brexit negotiations, forecasting is particularly dif-

ficult," John Lewis said. Britexers accept there is likely to be some short-term economic pain but say Britain will thrive in the longer term if cut loose from what they see as a doomed experiment in German-dominated unity and excessive debt-funded welfare spending. Opponents of Brexit fear that leaving the bloc will weaken what remains of Britain's global influence, further undermine its reputation as a haven for investment and hurt the economy for years to come. — Reuters

Booming electric car sales drive lithium rush in Portugal

LISBON: Mining firms are racing to open new lithium mines in Portugal, already Europe's biggest producer of the commodity, thanks to the surge in popularity of electric vehicles powered by lithium-ion batteries. "The more we drill, the more we find," says David Archer as he stands at the foot of a drilling crane perforating the granite rock of mountains near Boticas in northern Portugal to measure its lithium content.

The metal has become a form of precious "white gold" since demand for electric batteries has taken off. Archer's British mining firm, Savannah Resources, expects to open "Europe's most important lithium mine" in 2020 here in the remote highlands of Tras-os-Montes, Portugal's poorest and least-known region.

The company announced Monday that lithium resources at its Mina do Barroso project there were 44 percent higher than previously estimated. Just 25 kilometers (15 miles) away in the town of Montalegre, Portuguese firm Lusorecursos also claims to sit on Europe's "most important lithium deposit" which it expects to begin



Portugal is Europe's main lithium producer. — AFP

mining in 2020, according to its financial director Ricardo Pinheiro. "The battery sector exploded and created a real appetite for lithium," says Lucas Bednarski, managing director of market research site Lithium Today.

Demand for lithium, a silver-white colored metal that is already used to manufacture lithium-ion batteries used in phones and laptops, has taken off with the rising popularity of electric vehicles, which need powerful batteries. "I honestly believe that lithium could be the new gold for Portugal," said European Commission Vice-President Maros Sefcovic, who is responsible for energy policy in the European Union's executive arm. "The reason for that is we expect that by 2025 there will be a market in Europe for batteries worth 250 billion euros (\$290 billion) annually." — AFP

Business

BoE freezes interest rate, cites 'greater uncertainty' over Brexit

Central bank sees more negative impacts from trade war

LONDON: The Bank of England has voted to leave its main interest rate unchanged, it announced yesterday, as it noted "greater uncertainty" surrounding Brexit.

The BoE's nine policymakers, including governor Mark Carney who this week agreed to prolong his stay at the helm post Britain's EU departure next year, all voted at a regular policy meeting to keep the rate at 0.75 percent.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) had in August voted unanimously to raise the rate by a quarter-point to help tame Brexit-fuelled UK inflation. "Since the Committee's previous meeting, there have been indications, most prominently in financial markets, of greater uncertainty about future developments in the withdrawal process," said minutes of the latest meeting.

Finance minister Philip Hammond on Tuesday announced that Carney would remain BoE chief until January 2020 to steer the UK economy

through possibly "quite a turbulent period" post-Brexit.

Britain is set to leave the European Union in March, while there are concerns about possible economic chaos for the nation should it depart without a divorce deal. BoE minutes published Thursday added that "the MPC continues to recognize that the economic outlook could be influenced significantly by the response of households, businesses and financial markets to developments related to the process of EU withdrawal".

Trade war impact

The central bank added that "further protectionist measures by the United States and China, if implemented, could have a somewhat more negative impact on global growth than" forecast by the BoE in August. Last month, the BoE raised its key lending rate for only the second time

since the global financial crisis a decade ago.

The hike had been in response to UK annual inflation holding stubbornly above the BoE's official 2.0-percent target. Brexit uncertainty continues to weigh on the pound, pushing up the cost of goods imported into Britain. A surge in oil prices over the past year has also fuelled inflationary pressures.

Despite Brexit concerns, the BoE on Thursday said the British economy was expected to have grown by 0.5 percent in the third quarter, up slightly on its prediction of 0.4 percent given last month.

It additionally agreed at this week's meeting to maintain the level of its quantitative easing (QE), or stimulus cash, pumping around the British economy at £445 billion (\$581 billion, 499 billion euros).

Elsewhere yesterday, the European Central Bank kept eurozone interest rates at record low



LONDON: A video grab from footage broadcast by the UK Parliament's Parliamentary Recording Unit (PRU) shows Mark Carney, Governor of the Bank of England speaking before the treasury committee in the House of Commons in London. — AFP

levels and confirmed its intention to scale back stimulus by the end of the year. — AFP

ECB scales back crisis measures despite tense growth outlook

FRANKFURT AM: The European Central Bank said yesterday it would withdraw some of its crisis-fighting stimulus, even as trade tensions, emerging market woes and Italy bucking budget rules shade the economic outlook.

From October, the Frankfurt institution will halve its "quantitative easing" (QE) purchases of government and corporate bonds to 15 billion euros (\$17.4 billion) a month, a spokeswoman said. The asset-buying will continue at that rate until the end of December, when the bank "anticipates" the stimulus program will end, "subject to incoming data confirming the medium-term inflation outlook".

ECB governors also left interest rates untouched at historic lows, sticking to their guidance that they would remain unchanged "at least through the summer of 2019". At recent press conferences, ECB chief Mario Draghi had proclaimed "confidence" in the outlook for growth and inflation, saying risks "broadly balanced" between positive and negative are not enough to knock off course the bank's pursuit of stable price growth close to but below 2.0 percent.

That has meant the central bank can press on with its withdrawal from QE-launched in March 2015 to pump cash through the financial system and into the real economy, powering growth and inflation.



FRANKFURT AM: The headquarters of the European Central Bank (ECB) is pictured in Frankfurt am Main, western Germany, yesterday. — AFP

For now, "the fundamental backdrop clearly speaks for the ECB exiting its ultra-loose monetary policies," UBS analysts commented, pointing to relatively steady growth in the eurozone and rising wages likely to stoke prices towards the target.

Nevertheless, "the balance of risks has become more unfavorable in recent months," the bankers added-something journalists will grill Draghi on at his 2:30 pm (12:30 GMT) press conference.

Growing risks

The ECB chief in the summer highlighted the danger of trade friction between the United States and China and the European Union. With President Donald Trump now threatening to hit all imports of Chinese goods into America with tariffs, fears of a global economic slowdown triggered by protectionism have only grown.

Elsewhere, currency crises that have flared in major emerging economies

Turkey and Argentina now risk undermining eurozone export partners like Germany and Spain.

And within the euro area, governments and financial markets fear Italian ministers will honor pricey electoral promises rather than shrinking Rome's tottering debt pile of 132 percent of annual gross domestic product-more than twice the EU target. Despite official reassurances, the so-called "yield spread"-which measures the difference in perceived risk between Italian and ultra-safe German government bonds-remains uncomfortably high.

Neither is macroeconomic data all rosy. While headline inflation reached 2.0 percent last month, "core" inflation-which rules out volatile items like food and energy prices-notched up just 1.0 percent.

And unemployment across the euro area remains stubbornly high compared with other advanced economies, at 8.2 percent-limiting upward pressure on salaries and, indirectly, prices. — AFP

Italy's 5-Star piles pressure on minister over budget

ROME: The largest party in Italy's governing coalition kept up pressure on Economy Minister Giovanni Tria yesterday to boost spending in next year's budget, as EU authorities advised the country to cut its debt. The 5-Star Movement, which shares power with the far-right League, wants at least 10 billion euros (\$11.6 billion) in spending to cover a universal income for the poor, a senior 5-Star source told Reuters on Wednesday.

That is in line with the party's flagship promise made during campaigning for March national election. But Tria, who is not a member of either party, is pushing both to scale down their campaign demands - including ambitions spending plans that have unnerved investors - to keep Italy's debt pile, worth more than 130 percent of output, in check.

Barbara Lezzi, a 5-Star minister, yesterday warned Tria against ditching the universal income proposal.

"If the universal income is not included in the budget then the whole government will be in trouble, not just Tria," she said in a radio interview. Newspapers said Tria had threatened to resign if 5-Star did not back off, reports that an economy ministry source said were baseless.

After Lezzi spoke, 5-Star leader Luigi Di Maio denied that there were divisions with Tria over the budget. "I deny any threat, any ultimatum," Di Maio told reporters during a visit to a company in central Italy. "We are working very well on a budget law that keeps the accounts in order," he said. "There are no divisions, and on this there is the will of all the parties in the government to give Giovanni Tria a hand to reach these results."

For its part, the League is seeking sweeping tax cuts, its main campaign pledge. Both parties also want to roll back a 2011 pension reform and head off a 12.4-billion-euro automatic VAT increase due next year.

In Paris, European Economics Affairs Commissioner Pierre Moscovici said Italy needed to cut wasteful spending and prioritize investment and infrastructure development to help stimulate growth and productivity. "It's in Italy's interest to reduce its very high public debt. — Reuters

Sports

Price stifles Jays as Red Sox earn 100th win

Arcia belts two homers as Angels rout Rangers

BOSTON: David Price pitched seven strong innings, Boston scored a run on a wild pitch, and the Red Sox earned their 100th win of the season Wednesday night with a 1-0 victory over the visiting Toronto Blue Jays. It is the fourth time the Red Sox—who clinched a post-season berth Tuesday—have won 100 or more games in a season and the first time since 1946. Price (15-6) allowed three hits and no walks while striking out seven. Craig Kimbrel pitched around a walk and struck out two in the ninth to earn his 39th save of the season.

ROCKIES 5, DIAMONDBACKS 4

DJ LeMahieu hit a two-run home run in the bottom of the ninth inning, giving Colorado a walk-off win over Arizona in Denver. Both LeMahieu and Nolan Arenado had three hits and a homer for the Rockies, who recorded their 43rd comeback win of the season. Eduardo Escobar and Alex Avila homered for Arizona, which was two outs away from closing the gap on Colorado in the National League West. The Diamondbacks now trail the Rockies by 3 1/2 games, while the Los Angeles Dodgers are 1 1/2 games behind Colorado.

ANGELS 8, RANGERS 1

Francisco Arcia homered twice, doubled and drove in four runs, and Felix Pena threw six scoreless innings to lead Los Angeles over Texas in Anaheim, Calif. Arcia drove in two runs with a second-inning double and hit solo homers in the sixth and eighth innings, his fourth and fifth long balls of the season. Jose Fernandez also homered for Los Angeles, which also got three hits from Andrelton Simmons and two from Shohei Ohtani.

BREWERS 5, CUBS 1

Curtis Granderson went 3-for-4 with a triple, a homer and three runs, and Milwaukee pulled away for a win at Chicago. The Brewers won the series' rubber match and moved within one game of the Cubs for first place in the National League Central. Mike Moustakas finished with a pair of RBIs for Milwaukee, while Lorenzo Cain and Travis Shaw drove in one run apiece. Kris Bryant had the lone RBI for the Cubs, who have lost seven of their last 10 against Milwaukee.

TWINS 3, YANKEES 1

Jake Odorizzi came within five outs of producing the first no-hitter in Target Field history as Minnesota beat New York in Minneapolis. In the 722nd regular-season game since the Twins moved to their current stadium in 2010, Odorizzi (6-10) lost his no-hit bid when Greg Bird roped the 120th pitch into the left-center-field gap for an RBI double. Odorizzi left immediately after allowing Bird's hit. In 7 1/3 innings, he allowed one run, issued three walks, struck out five and tied a career high with 120 pitches. It nearly was the first no-hitter for the Twins since Francisco Liriano had one on May 3, 2011, in Chicago against the White Sox.

A'S 10, ORIOLES 0

Matt Olson belted a three-run homer that proved to be the big hit in a 10-run third inning, and five pitchers combined for a one-hitter as Oakland cruised to a victory at Baltimore. The A's won their sixth consecutive game thanks to that big inning, handing the Orioles their sixth loss in a row. Oakland now has won the first two games of this series and is 5-0 against Baltimore in 2018. In addition to Olson's big blast, Matt Chapman twice drove in runs in the crucial inning. He finished with three RBIs in the third, starting the scoring with a two-run double and ending it with an RBI single.

NATIONALS 5, PHILLIES 1

Bryce Harper, Ryan Zimmerman and Juan Soto homered to lead Washington to a win at Philadelphia. The Nationals swept the three-game series and won their fifth consecutive game overall. The Phillies dropped their fifth in a row. Washington starter Stephen Strasburg (8-7) tossed seven strong innings, allowing one run on five hits and no walks while striking out nine. Zimmerman and Anthony Rendon each had two hits for the Nationals.

WHITE SOX 4, ROYALS 2 (12 INNINGS)

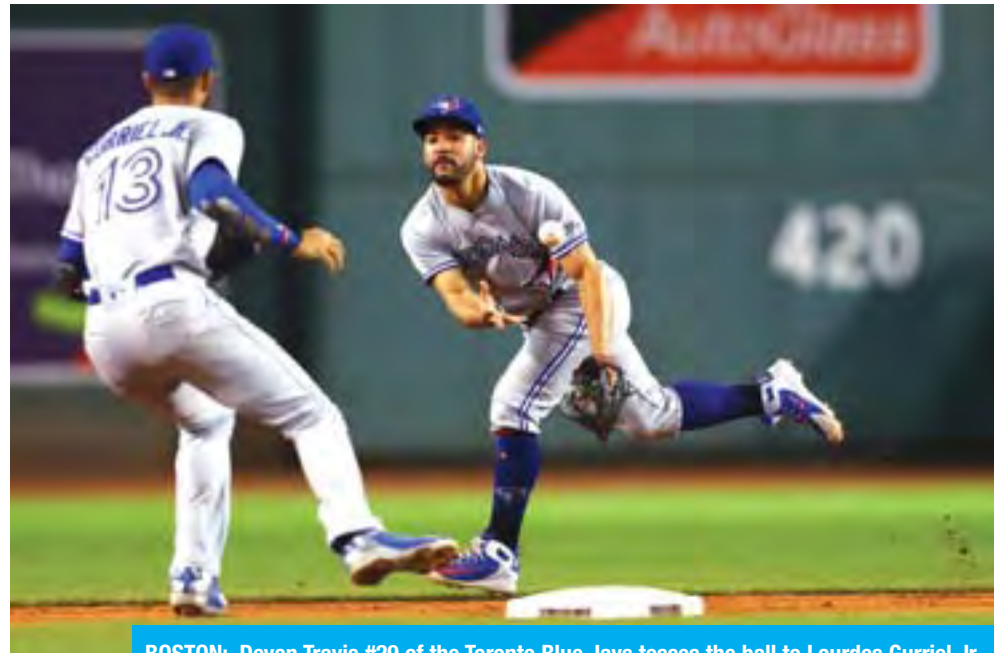
Tim Anderson slugged a two-run home run in the top of the 12th inning to lift visiting Chicago past Kansas City. Jose Rondon also hit a two-run homer for the White Sox, who halted a seven-game losing streak. Adalberto Mondesi went 4-for-5 with two RBIs for Kansas City. The Royals had a seven-game home winning streak snapped.

DODGERS 8, REDS 1

Joc Pederson hit a home run, and Justin Turner and Yasmani Grandal each drove in three runs as visiting Los Angeles finally beat Cincinnati on its last try this season. The last-place Reds had won all six of the previous matchups, including a four-game sweep at Los Angeles in May. The Dodgers avoided being the first team in baseball history to follow a season-series sweep in one year (6-0 in 2017 versus Cincinnati) by getting swept in the season series the following year. The Dodgers took control of the game with a four-run fifth inning.

RAYS 3, INDIANS 1

Blake Snell pitched seven innings of one-hit ball and struck out nine en route to his major-league-leading 19th victory as host Tampa Bay defeated Cleveland. Snell (19-5) held the Indians to just two walks over the first six innings before Jose Ramirez led off the seventh with his 38th homer of the year, a towering 391-foot shot to left field. It ended a 23-game home run drought for Ramirez, dating back to an Aug. 17 game against Baltimore. Snell, who lowered his ERA to 2.03, departed after the seventh inning. He threw 104 pitches, 61 of which were strikes, in winning his seventh consecutive start. Jose



BOSTON: Devon Travis #29 of the Toronto Blue Jays tosses the ball to Lourdes Gurriel Jr. #13 during the second inning against the Boston Red Sox at Fenway Park on Wednesday in Boston, Massachusetts. — AFP

Alvarado struck out two during a perfect ninth inning to pick up his eighth save.

ASTROS 5, TIGERS 4

Alex Bregman drove in three runs, including two during a four-run, fifth-inning outburst, and Houston completed a three-game series sweep at Detroit. Bregman became the first third baseman in major league history to record 50 doubles and 30 homers in a single season. He also scored a run and was one of four Astros with two hits. Marwin Gonzalez had two hits and an RBI while George Springer and Jake Marisnick each supplied two hits and a run. Gerrit Cole (14-5) gave up two runs on three hits and struck out nine in five innings to notch the victory. Ryan Pressly pitched a 1-2-3 ninth for his first save as Houston won each game in the series by a single run.

PIRATES 4, CARDINALS 3

Jacob Stallings drove in three runs to back a strong, seven-plus-inning stint by Jameson Taillon as Pittsburgh avoided a sweep of a three-game series at St. Louis. Taillon (13-9) allowed two runs on four scattered hits and two walks while striking out four. He left in favor of Felipe Vazquez with two on and no outs in the eighth. Vazquez worked out of a bases-loaded, one-out jam in the eighth and another in the ninth to earn his 32nd save. Taillon hasn't allowed more than three earned runs in 19 consecutive outings, going 11-5 in that span and registering 11 quality starts.

BRAVES 2, GIANTS 1

Tyler Flowers' ninth-inning infield single scored the decisive run, and visiting Atlanta completed a three-game sweep of San Fran-

cisco. The Braves earned their fifth win in a row and stretched their lead in the National League East to 7 1/2 games over Philadelphia. The Giants, who scored one run in each of the series' three games, absorbed their 11th consecutive loss.

PADRES 5, MARINERS 4

Joey Lucchesi beat Seattle for the second time in two weeks, and Austin Hedges and Hunter Renfroe hit home runs as visiting San Diego swept both the two-game series and the four-game season series. Padres relievers Trey Wingenter, Robert Stock, Jose Castillo and Craig Stammen combined for three perfect innings, striking out all nine batters they faced, before closer Kirby Yates allowed a leadoff homer to center field to Kyle Seager in the ninth. Pinch hitter Dee Gordon then singled, and pinch hitter Denard Span grounded into a forceout, with Gordon thrown out at second. Ben Gamel flied out to left. With pinch hitter Chris Herrmann at the plate, Span stole second, but Yates finished with a strikeout for his ninth save of the season.

METS 13, MARLINS 0

Zack Wheeler tossed eight scoreless innings for New York, which cruised past visiting Miami. The two teams, whose scheduled series opener Monday was rained out, were supposed to play a doubleheader Wednesday. However, rains arrived shortly before the 4:10 p.m. ET scheduled first pitch and continued even as the tarp was pulled off around 9 p.m. The game finally got underway at 9:45 p.m., and the Mets announced less than an hour later the second game would be made up as part of a single-gate doubleheader on Thursday beginning at 3:10 p.m. — Reuters

Sports

All Blacks, Boks slugfests are all punched out, say coaches

'It's an aerial game and we've got two big aerial athletes'

WELLINGTON: The days of New Zealand and South Africa dishing up dour, forward-based slug-fests are over, according to the rival coaches who are forecasting an attacking clash in Wellington tomorrow. Forward battles between New Zealand and South Africa are legendary, none more so than in 1956 when New Zealand put heavyweight boxing champion Kevin Skinner into the front row to quell an intimidating Springboks pack and went on to win their first series against South Africa.

But according to Springboks coach Rassie Erasmus, this week's teams may front up physically at the start but the All Blacks' counter-attacking skills will soon kick in. "Everyone always says it's a physical battle between the Springboks and the All Blacks but the way the All Blacks are currently playing there's so much finesse in their game, there's so much taking small opportunities," Erasmus said.

He said that while New Zealand's Tests against Australia and Argentina looked close, "on the small margins they get they really pounce and they score, where we currently are creating opportunities and throw them out the window every single time.

"Obviously both teams will have to pitch physically (on Saturday) because that's New Zealand, South Africa rugby but then I think we have to capitalise on the opportunities like New Zealand do if we want to have a chance in this game."

All Blacks coach Steve Hansen said he expected South Africa to respond with an aerial

bombardment—and even suggested that his reigning world champions were the underdogs. A bonus-point win to New Zealand in the fourth-round Rugby Championship match would see the All Blacks defend their crown with two matches to spare.

It would also inflict a third consecutive defeat on the South Africans who arrived in New Zealand following back-to-back losses to Argentina and Australia as Erasmus tries to embrace a new style of play.

SPRINGBOKS 'PROBABLY THE FAVOURITES'

While the Springboks have only made four changes to their line-up, the All Blacks have altered 15 of their match-day 23. Among the changes, Hansen has moved to counter the Springboks' expected kicking game with Jordie Barrett returning to fullback, Ben Smith moving to the right wing and speedster Rieko Ioane returning from injury to fill the left wing slot.

"It's an aerial game and we've got two big aerial athletes," he said. "We don't have to explain why Reiko's there. He's best player in his position in the world, I think. He'll give us some genuine gas."

Despite South Africa's poor run of form, Hansen said it was important for the All Blacks to remember their narrow one-point victory the last time the two sides met. "The last one could have gone either way. They should probably be the favourites, I reckon," he added.

"We know that South Africa are going to be



Rassie Erasmus (centre).

desperate to put a performance on the park. Very rarely do they lose twice in a row, let alone three times in a row." Despite the All Blacks recording bonus-point wins in their first three matches of the series, Hansen admitted to only being "reasonably happy", partly because of concerns about their high error rate.

"You've got to have the mindset which is that of the underdog. If you sit at the top and say 'we're going good here', you won't be there for too long," he said. "I accept that we're going

okay and you don't want to take away that fact, but you also have to accept the facts that 'we're not doing that right and we're not doing that right'."

But Erasmus took nothing from Hansen's rating of the All Blacks. "He's actually putting more pressure on us to not lose three in a row. We are under the pump," he said. "It's going to be an uphill battle against a team that's number one in the world and they dictate almost every facet of the game." — AFP

Osaka not saddened by Serena row in US Open final

YOKOHAMA: Naomi Osaka said yesterday Serena Williams's row with the umpire during the US Open final had not altered her feelings about winning a Grand Slam, largely because she had no idea how she was supposed to react.

The Japanese player's breakthrough triumph in New York was overshadowed by an explosive row between her opponent Williams and umpire Carlos Ramos which resulted in the 23-times Grand Slam champion being docked a game and fined \$17,000.

At Flushing Meadows on Saturday, the 20-year-old was reduced to tears during the presentation ceremony but on her arrival back in Japan on Thursday, she said she had not been saddened by the incident.

"For me, I don't feel sad because I wouldn't even know what I'm expected to feel," she told a news conference in Yokohama ahead of the Pan Pacific tournament that begins on Monday. "Because it was my first final and my first Grand Slam victory, overall I felt really happy and I know that I accomplished a lot.

"I don't think I even thought about feeling sad because there's no experience for me to draw on (from) any other Grand Slam final." One of the most controversial Grand Slam finals of all time divided tennis and triggered a debate about sexism in the sport, fuelled by Williams's assertion that Ramos would not have dealt with a male player in the same way. Much of the criticism of Williams has centred on how her actions had spoiled a precious



YOKOHAMA: Japan's Naomi Osaka, the US Open women's singles tennis tournament champion, attends a press conference at a hotel in Yokohama yesterday. — AFP

moment for Osaka, who was even moved to apologise for beating the home favourite to a New York crowd angrily booing Ramos.

In becoming her country's first ever Grand Slam singles champion, Osaka, the daughter of a Haitian father and Japanese mother, is also helping break new ground in Japan as her biracial identity challenges the country's self-image as a racially homogenous society. Public attitudes are slowly changing as Japanese society becomes more integrated with the global economy, and the emergence of more ethnically mixed celebrities, especially in sport, is helping. For her part, Osaka is not thinking too much about how her identity is perceived. "For me, I'm just me," said Osaka, when asked whether she represented a 'new Japan' "I know the way that I was brought up, people tell me I act kind of Japanese so I guess there is that." — Reuters

Hamilton energised by round-the-world jaunts

SINGAPORE: Lewis Hamilton insisted yesterday that he had been energised by racking up the air miles while his title rivals were preparing for the toughest race on the calendar in Singapore. The Mercedes driver stretched his lead over Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel to 30 points with his victory at the Italian Grand Prix at Monza two weeks ago.

Hamilton then jetted off on a frantic time zone-hopping schedule that took him to fashion shows for his new clothing range in Shanghai and New York before landing in Singapore. The English four-time world champion denied his hectic off-track life was an unwelcome distraction, instead claiming it actually helped him win races. "I get a lot of energy from these different things that I do," Hamilton told reporters at Singapore's Marina Bay Street Circuit. "I find it stimulating and I think you'll see that my results have shown that for the past several years."

By contrast, title rival Vettel said he had enjoyed "a quiet couple of weeks" since Monza, spent entirely on preparing for what he called "the toughest race of the season". Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo, runner-up in Singapore in each of the past three races, said all he had done since Italy was hit the gym in "seven layers of clothes" to get acclimatised for the steamy, draining race which normally lasts close to the maximum two hours. Hamilton conceded it had been tricky to fit in his preparation, but said he was fully focused for the grand prix weekend, which begins with Friday's two practice sessions. — AFP

Sports

PHOTO FEATURE



—Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Ice queens of Kuwait

By Ramona Crasto

After a long day at work, chasing kids around the house and studying for exams, 22 Kuwaiti women show up for practice every day at the ice skating rink. These women form Kuwait's national ice hockey team that is going to represent the country at the 2019 Asian championships for the first time. Coached by former captain Meshal Al-Ajmi, these women are prepping for the biggest tournament of their lives, which will secure them a place on the international stage.



Defense player Walah Al-Najjer felt a growing passion for ice hockey after her uncle introduced her to the sport five years ago. The team has been receiving intensive training to remain in form, led by captain Rawan Al-Bahouh. The team's manager Laila Al-Khabaz hopes that after bagging third place at the Abu Dhabi tournament, these girls will make Kuwait proud at the Asian championships as well.

The Kuwait Ice Hockey Federation acquired full membership of the International Ice Hockey Federation this year and will be able to vote in the elections of the governing body and the selection of countries that bid to host world championships.



Sports

Friday, September 14, 2018



Sports

India's Shastri under fire after England series defeat

Massive clash with arch-rivals Pakistan next week

NEW DELHI: India coach Ravi Shastri has come under fire for his side's humiliating 4-1 Test series loss to England—a second consecutive away defeat for the world's top-ranked side. The thrashing in England, following the loss in South Africa earlier this year, piles pressure on Shastri ahead of a tour to Australia in November and next year's World Cup—as well as a massive clash with arch-rivals Pakistan next week.

Critics and former captains have rounded on the coach, particularly for his mid-series claim that his team is the best to come out of India in 15 years. "Self-belief is a wonderful quality; but being caught in the bubble of your own publicity is self-defeating," said Sambit Bal, chief editor of cricket website Cricinfo, on Twitter.

"India had their moments but the scorecards say 4-1 and India weren't as good as they should have been," said noted commentator Harsha Bhogle. "This is two overseas disappointments in a row now."

Prior to the final Test at the Oval—which India lost by 118 runs—Shastri had raised eyebrows with lavish praise for his side. "If you look at the last three years, we have won nine matches overseas and three series. I can't see any other Indian team in the last 15-20 years that has had the same run in such a short time," he said.

India have won two recent series in Sri Lanka and one in the West Indies. But his comments rankled former star players. Sourav Ganguly, who was part of the committee that appointed Shastri last year, dismissed the coach's claims as "immature", telling Indian television Shastri must improve the team.

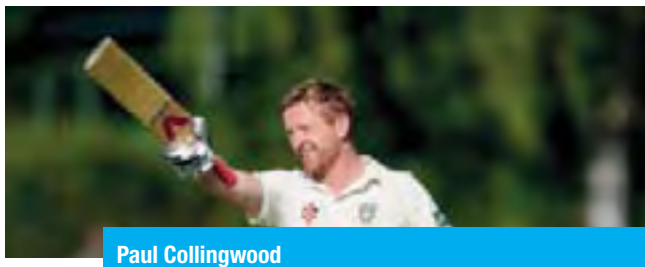
Sunil Gavaskar pointed out that Indian teams of the 1980s had won series in England and the West Indies—as well as a series victory in England as recently as 2007. "The best travelling teams are made by performances on the ground and not by sitting in the dressing room and talking about it," added former Test opener Virender Sehwag.

Captain Virat Kohli leapt to his coach's defence following the final Test on Tuesday. Asked about Shastri's pre-match comments, Kohli said: "We have to believe we are the best side, why not?" In a tetchy exchange, Kohli turned the question on a journalist, who responded "I am not sure". Kohli hit back: "You're not sure. That is your opinion. Thank you." Shastri now has to immediately lift the side for the six-nation Asia Cup starting in the United Arab Emirates tomorrow—without the brilliant Kohli, who is being rested. The whole country will be watching as they take on arch-rivals Pakistan on September



NEW DELHI: (FILES) In this file photo taken on June 22, 2018 Indian cricket team head coach Ravi Shastri (L) speaks as captain Virat Kohli looks on during a press conference in New Delhi. India's cricket coach Ravi Shastri is under fire for calling his side the best to come out of India in the past 15 years as they fell to a humiliating defeat in the England Test series.

19, with Rohit Sharma to lead the side through— Tests at home to West Indies before four Tests out the 50-over contest. India then have two in Australia. — AFP



Paul Collingwood

Paul Collingwood retires from cricket

LONDON: Former England all-rounder Paul Collingwood announced yesterday that he will end his professional career at the end of the season, 22 years after making his first-class debut. A three-time Ashes winner and the only man to captain England to a global trophy after leading them to glory in the 2010 World Twenty20, Collingwood played 68 Tests, 197 one-day internationals and 36 T20 matches.

The 42-year-old has been described by his county side Durham as their "greatest-ever run scorer and most illustrious player". "After much thought and deliberation I have decided to announce my retirement from cricket at the end of the current season," Collingwood said.

"I knew this day would eventually come but it hasn't made it any easier—although it's an emotional decision I know that the time is right and I'm comfortable knowing that I have given every last ounce of energy to the sport." Durham chairman Ian Botham said: "Paul is one of the greatest all-rounders to ever grace the game of cricket and to have him playing at Durham, his home county, for all these years has been an absolute privilege." — AFP

Horoya plot end to Ahly winning streak in Africa

JOHANNESBURG: Horoya of Guinea, whose only African title came 40 years ago, will try tomorrow to end a four-match CAF Champions League winning streak by continental giants Al Ahly of Egypt. The clash in Conakry kicks off the quarter-finals first legs in the premier African club competition with Ahly hoping to lift the trophy a record-extending ninth time.

"Our objective was to reach the quarter-finals, but now we will try to go as far as possible," said 66-year-old France-born Horoya coach Victor Zvunka. "I have a squad of quality players, who are very attentive during training and work hard on matchdays. Working with them is such a pleasure."

But the club who won the 1978 African Cup Winners Cup are underdogs over two legs against Ahly, whose winning run has not been matched by any other of the seven title contenders. AFP Sport previews the first legs this Friday and Saturday as the clubs eye a \$2.5 million (2.15 mn euros) first prize and qualification for the 2018 FIFA Club World Cup.

HOROYA V AHLY

Horoya caused the biggest surprise of the group stage by progressing at the expense of 2016 Champions League winners Mamelodi Sundowns of South Africa. But they could struggle in Conakry against Ahly having won only two of their previous five CAF matches there this season.

Ahly travelled to west Africa confident that they can win

after going to Tunisia during the group phase and succeeding through a goal from leading scorer Walid Azaro, a Moroccan.

SETIF V WYDAD

Wydad Casablanca of Morocco want to become only the fourth club after Ahly, Enyimba of Nigeria and TP Mazembe of the Democratic Republic of Congo to successfully defend the title. They should move closer to achieving that goal by eliminating Entente Setif of Algeria, twice African champions but the least impressive of the eight qualifiers.

Wydad executed a 'win at home and draw away' policy to perfection in the group stage so it would not be surprising if the first leg produced a stalemate.

PRIMEIRO V MAZEMBE

Having reached the quarter-finals for the first time, Primeiro Agosto of Angola are unlikely to go further given the pedigree of opponents TP Mazembe. Mazembe won the last two editions of the second-tier CAF Confederation Cup having lifted the 2015 Champions League—a record of continental success unmatched even by Ahly recently.

Both clubs will bank on DR Congo-born sharpshooters for goals with Jacques Bitumba scoring four for Primeiro in Africa this season and Ben Malango seven for Mazembe.

ESPERANCE V ETOILE

Security personnel are sure to be on high alert in Rades as matches between these arch-Tunisian rivals are often explosive, both in domestic and CAF competitions. Esperance and Etoile Sahel are former African champions who had relatively comfortable passages to the quarter-finals and it is difficult to predict the overall winners.

Anice Badri, part of the Tunisia World Cup squad in Russia this year, is the leading Esperance scorer with six CAF goals while Amine Chermiti has claimed four for Etoile. — AFP

Kane, Salah in spotlight as struggling stars clash

Kane, Salah being hailed as Europe's most feared marksmen

LONDON: Harry Kane and Mohamed Salah have the perfect stage to end their unexpected slumps when the superstar strikers go head to head at Wembley tomorrow. Just four months ago, Tottenham striker Kane and Liverpool forward Salah were being hailed as Europe's most feared marksmen after the pair tore through Premier League defences on a weekly basis.

Yet they go into this weekend's eagerly anticipated clash between Tottenham and Liverpool with concerns about their ability to maintain that breathtaking form in the midst of a post-World Cup malaise. Kane and Salah slugged it out for the Premier League's Golden Boot prize right up to the last game of the season. The Egypt international, with 32 goals, pipped his England rival to the coveted prize despite Kane's first 30-league-goal season. Salah bagged an incredible 44 goals in all competitions in his debut year with Liverpool, earning him the Professional Footballers' Association and Football Writers' Association player of the year awards.

But Salah's season came to a bitter conclusion in the Champions League final when he suffered a shoulder injury after a cynical challenge from Real Madrid's Sergio Ramos. Leaving the pitch in tears, Salah's departure triggered Liverpool's 3-1 defeat and ultimately cast a cloud over his World Cup, where he missed the first match and was unable to stop Egypt crashing out at the group stage.

The 26-year-old returned to Merseyside to kick off the new campaign with a goal in the

demolition of West Ham. But while Salah has scored twice in four games so far for Jurgen Klopp's high-flying Liverpool, he has not been the effervescent figure that tormented opponents last term.

The combination of lethal finishing and off-the-cuff inspiration that made him such a joy to watch has been replaced with a more subdued demeanour that gives the impression he has lost his mojo for now. Replicating the sky-high standards of 2017-18 was never going to be easy for Salah and, ironically, he was warned of the potential for a sophomore slump by Kane last May.

"For me it is about doing it year after year. Any player wants to do it on a consistent basis and that's what defines a good player from a great player," he said. Kane and Salah have a respectful relationship, but their rivalry intensified when Salah questioned the decision to award Tottenham's second goal in April's 2-0 win at Stoke to Kane, after it had initially been credited to Christian Eriksen.

BURNOUT

Kane may have been hurt by the perception he was greedily hunting individual accolades but, undeterred, the England captain finished as top scorer at the World Cup with six goals. Yet, by his own admission, Kane was not quite at his best in Russia despite England's run to the semi-finals and the hangover has continued into the new campaign.

The 25-year-old has just scored two goals in six games for club and country this season, with



LEICESTER: Switzerland's defender Francois Moubandje (L) vies with England's striker Harry Kane during a friendly international football match between England and Switzerland at the King Power stadium in Leicester. —AFP

the statistics behind those numbers making for even more unsettling reading. Sky Sports statistics released this week show Kane averaged 6.7 shots per 90 minutes by the end of August 2017, whereas he currently averages 2.6 shots per match. Amid fears Kane is nearing burnout, England boss Gareth Southgate was forced to de-

fend his decision to bring on his captain as a substitute in the 1-0 friendly win over Switzerland on Tuesday. Ankle ligament damage suffered at the beginning of April, fatigue after such a short summer break and opponents taking extra care to snuff him out have all been mooted as reasons for Kane's problems.—AFP

Ronaldo struggles for goals, Dybala for playing time

MILAN: While Cristiano Ronaldo spent part of the international break on holiday in St Tropez, his Juventus team mate Paulo Dybala found himself in all-too familiar surroundings on the substitutes' bench.

Ronaldo has failed to find the net during his first three games for Juventus following his move from Real Madrid and will continue his quest when the Serie A leaders, early leaders with nine points, host surprise early challengers Sassuolo on Sunday. But if the five-times World Player of the Year is feeling frustrated by his mini-drought—and his reactions on the pitch suggest he is—his worries pale in comparison to Dybala's unhappy start to the season. The 24-year-old Argentine, known as the Jewel for his pace, technique and scoring prowess, has played a pivotal role for Juventus since joining them three years ago.

But, having started Juve's opening game of the season, a 3-2 win at Chievo, Dybala was then left out of the starting line-up for the following two games against Lazio and Parma.

He then joined Argentina on a quick tour of the United States, where he was expected to get at least one start, but had to be content with a second-half substitute's appearance in the second match against Colombia.—Reuters

Give Rashford time to shine, insists Southgate

LONDON: England manager Gareth Southgate believes Marcus Rashford should be given time to flourish despite clamour for the Manchester United forward to be given more minutes at club level. Rashford was one of few bright sparks for Southgate, scoring both England's goals in a 2-1 defeat to Spain and 1-0 victory over Switzerland in the past week. However, he has struggled to hold down a regular first-team place under Jose Mourinho at Old Trafford and will be suspended for United's next three domestic games after being sent off at Burnley before the international break. Southgate, though, used the example of England captain Harry Kane and Cristiano Ronaldo to show that at just 20, Rashford has plenty of time on his side. "We have to remember that Harry, at that age, had hardly played anywhere near the same number of matches for Spurs," said Southgate.

"Even with some of the step-overs and things Ronaldo was doing at that age he wasn't converting them into the number of goals. "So we have to give him time to develop. He has still played a lot of football, although maybe not continuous starts, and I'm really pleased for him that he leaves us full of confidence."

Southgate has raised concerns over the lack of opportunities afforded to English players in the Premier League, making the pool he has to select from ever shallower. Yet, he refused to criticise any of the top six managers, all of whom are foreign, for put-



LEICESTER: England's striker Marcus Rashford celebrates after scoring during a friendly international football match between England and Switzerland at the King Power stadium in Leicester. —AFP

ting their own interests first.

"It's not my business to interfere with club managers. They have a difficult job to do and they have big squads at the top six, with huge competition for places. "Jose thinks the world of Marcus. He's a huge admirer of him, but he has got his job to do. There is huge competition for places at his club so you can understand that." Ruben Loftus-Cheek is another of England's squad that advanced to the semi-finals of the World Cup struggling for minutes at Chelsea. The midfielder made his first start of the season against Switzerland having previously just come off the bench twice for Maurizio Sarri's men. "Right now I am at Chelsea and my focus is at Chelsea and learning at Chelsea," said Loftus-Cheek. "That is in the future and we will deal with that when it comes. "I'm not sure when I am going to play. It is just down to me working hard in training." —AFP

Sport Times

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Ice queens of Kuwait

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