



**20** Ancient Philippine script revival spells debate



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# Assembly panel approves public holiday on Ashoura

Compensation for rain damage soon • MP asks about complaints by embassies

## Zain Group revenue soars 61% to \$2.7bn for first six months of 2019

KUWAIT: Zain Group, a leading mobile innovator with operations in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announced its consolidated financial results for the six months to June 30, 2019. Zain served 49.2 million customers at the end of the period, reflecting a 4 percent increase year-on-year (Y-o-Y). For the first six months of 2019 (H1), Zain Group generated consolidated revenue of KD 811 million (\$2.7 billion), reflecting a growth of 61 percent Y-o-Y.

Commenting on the results, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Zain Group, Ahmed Al-Tahous said: "The group's performance in the first half of the year was very pleasing given the numerous operational and competitive challenges we face in several key markets."

Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO commented: "The first six months of 2019 were exceptional as we recorded impressive net income and EBITDA growth in all key operations,



Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi

namely Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan and Bahrain. Overall, these robust set of results reconfirm that our digital transformation program, efficiency drive, and growth strategy is on track in delivering the ambitious financial targets we have set in a bid to exceed all expectations from our stakeholders."

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly's legal and legislative committee yesterday approved a draft law to declare Ashoura as a public holiday for both the private and public sectors, MP Khalil Abul said. To become effective, the bill has to be approved by the National Assembly when it resumes its sessions in late October. Assembly panels in the past have rejected such proposals.

Ashoura falls on the 10th of Muharram, the first month of the Muslim lunar calendar, when Shiites commemorate the killing of Imam Al-Hussein, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who is highly revered by Shiites as their third imam.

Abul said the committee also discussed the grilling filed by MP Abdulkareem Al-Kandari against the prime minister after the Assembly asked the committee to establish if the grilling was in line with the constitution. The panel postponed any decision until a further meeting after getting the legal response of the government. Kandari has declined an invitation by the panel to attend its meetings.

Head of the Assembly committee studying damage caused by last year's floods MP Adel Al-Damkhi said yesterday the government is expected to start paying compensation for huge damages in the next few



Adel Al-Damkhi



Khalil Abul

weeks. Damkhi said the government had already paid compensation for damages to vehicles worth less than KD 3,000 and has almost completed compiling larger damages for vehicles and houses.

He said the lists are almost ready and Minister of Public Works Jenan Bushehri has said payments will start in the coming few weeks. Floods resulting from torrential rains lashed several areas of Kuwait last November, causing heavy damage to properties. Damkhi also said that the committee called on the

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### News in brief

#### Kushner meets Jordan king

AMMAN: US President Donald Trump's advisor and son-in-law Jared Kushner met with Jordan's King Abdullah II in Amman yesterday, for talks on a controversial US plan for Israeli-Palestinian peace. During their meeting, King Abdullah stressed "the need to achieve a just and lasting peace to ensure the establishment of an independent Palestinian state... with east Jerusalem as its capital, living in peace and security alongside Israel", the court said. He said any peace plan should be based on the internationally backed "two-state solution" and in accordance with the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative. — AFP

#### Reagan made racist remarks

WASHINGTON: Then-California governor Ronald Reagan made racist remarks about Africans, calling them "monkeys" in a newly-discovered Oct 1971 taped conversation with US president Richard Nixon. Reagan, who went on to win the presidency in 1980, had called Nixon to vent his anger at African nations which had defied the US at the UN. "Last night, I tell you, to watch that thing on television as I did," Reagan said. "Yeah," Nixon said. Reagan continued: "To see those, those monkeys from those African countries - damn them, they're still uncomfortable wearing shoes!" Nixon responds with a huge guffaw and went on to gleefully repeat Reagan's remarks in other taped conversations with his advisers. — AFP

#### Sea lion in whale's mouth

LOS ANGELES: In a stunning photo, a wildlife photographer has captured a sea lion falling into the mouth of a humpback whale in what he calls a "once-in-a-lifetime" moment. Chase Dekker, who is also a marine biologist, took the spectacular shot during a whale-watching boat trip off the coast of Monterey Bay, in California, last week. The 27-year-old said he was on a whale-watching boat trip on July 22 when he noticed a group of humpback whales on a feeding frenzy. As the animals were munching on anchovies, an unlucky sea lion failed to get out of the way in time and ended up inside the whale's mouth. Dekker said the whale never closed its jaws on the sea lion, which was probably very shaken by the experience but managed to swim away. — AFP



## Iran to cut zeros, rename currency

TEHRAN: The government in sanctions-hit Iran yesterday approved a plan to remove zeros from the rial and rename the currency - something its people have long been doing to simplify transactions. "The cabinet today agreed on a bill to eliminate four zeros from the currency and that 'toman' will be our national currency," government spokesman Ali Rabieci told reporters in Tehran. The value of the Iranian rial has hit low after record low since last year.

The currency was trading at about 37,000 to the dollar three years ago, but it slumped to around 180,000 last year. That was after US President Donald Trump announced the United States was unilaterally withdrawing from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and reimposing biting sanctions. At the time, long queues were seen outside exchange offices, before the Iranian gov-

ernment took drastic measures by arresting unlicensed dealers and freezing the accounts of speculators.

Currently the rial is trading at around 120,000 to the US dollar on the street, while the official rate is 42,000. This means anyone without a bank card has had to virtually abandon coins and carry around thick wads of banknotes in their purses or wallets just to make everyday purchases. In a bid to simplify transactions, Iranians have long referred to their currency as the toman and chopped off a zero - a unique system that is a source of confusion for foreign visitors.

The Iranian government has now acknowledged this with its latest move, which needs to be forwarded to parliament for final approval. "This will make the national currency more effective," said the spokesman Rabieci. "It will be more in line with common practice in society... the rial is not used that much. 'Coins will once again come into circulation," he added. The International Monetary Fund has forecast Iran's economy to shrink by 6.0 percent this year due to sanctions and rising instability in the Middle East. — AFP



TEHRAN: Iranian rials are displayed in the capital yesterday. — AFP

## Dozens dead in Afghan bus blast as US signals peace progress

HERAT, Afghanistan: At least 34 people were killed in western Afghanistan when their bus hit a Taliban roadside bomb, officials said yesterday, the same day a US peace envoy indicated a peace deal with the insurgents could be imminent. Even in a conflict where civilians die daily, yesterday's blast stood out as particularly devastating, as most of the victims were women and children. The

explosion ripped through the bus around 6:00 am (0130 GMT) in Farah province, authorities said, along a busy highway to neighboring Herat.

"It was dark, and the bus hit a mine," passenger Ali Juma told AFP from a hospital in Herat. "There were many casualties, martyrs and wounded people." The explosion came amid a US push for peace with the Taliban that after several slow months now appears to be making progress. US peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, who spent more than a week in Kabul, yesterday left Afghanistan for Pakistan before heading to Doha, where he is expected to hold a fresh round of talks with the Taliban.

After nearly 18 gruelling years, the US wants to quit Afghanistan in return for

Continued on Page 24



HERAT, Afghanistan: An Afghan man holds the dead body of a child killed when a bus hit a roadside bomb on the Kandahar-Herat highway, at a hospital yesterday. — AFP

## Body of Indian coffee magnate found in river

BANGALORE: The body of billionaire Indian coffee magnate V G Siddhartha was found by a river in southern India yesterday, a day after a letter revealed his concerns over deep financial problems and perceived harassment from tax authorities. The discovery by fishermen ended a two-day search for the founder of the Cafe Coffee Day empire, after he was last seen by his driver walking across a bridge in the city of Mangaluru.

Politicians and business figures called immediately for a probe into Siddhartha's death, as well as the allegations in his letter of harassment from lenders and tax

authorities. "The government should hold a proper investigation into his tragic death," former prime minister H D Deve Gowda said on Twitter as he expressed "shock". A call for an independent inquiry was raised in parliament by opposition Congress MP Manish Tewari.

Siddhartha - whose family had been in the coffee business for 130 years - opened his first Cafe Coffee Day store in 1996 and went on to become one of the world's biggest coffee traders. He owned Asia's biggest coffee plantation and his company was India's biggest coffee exporter. The chain has more than 1,700 stores, mainly in India, but also in Malaysia, Egypt, Czech Republic and Austria, employing more than 30,000 people. Its shares slumped by 20 percent for the second straight day yesterday as news of the body was released.

Continued on Page 24



CHIKMAGALUR, India: Chief Minister of Karnataka B S Yeddyurappa pays homage to the remains of late coffee baron V G Siddhartha yesterday. — AFP

## Local

# Amir, Crown Prince receive top state officials at Bayan Palace



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. —Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



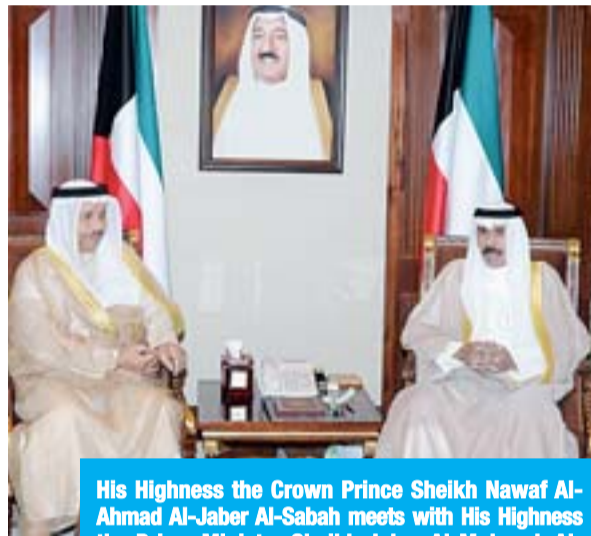
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem.



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His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-

Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-

Hamad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received at Bayan Palace Ghanem, His Highness the PM Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Deputy Prime Minister and

Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. —KUNA

## News in brief

### Defense minister sends condolences

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent yesterday a cable of condolences to the Defense Minister of Pakistan Pervez Khattak, expressing sorrow over the victims of the military plane crash in eastern Rawalpindi city, Pakistan. In the cable, he wished mercy to the deceased and swift recovery to the injured. —KUNA

### Inauguration ceremony

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's representative, Amiri Diwan Advisor Sheikh Fahad Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, left for Mauritania yesterday to attend the inauguration ceremony of President Mohamed Ould Cheikh Ghazouani. —KUNA

### Kuwait oil price up

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti oil went up 90 cents Tuesday, standing at \$64.99 after being at \$64.09 the day before, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said yesterday. The price of the Brent Blend crude went up to \$64.72 pb, the same case with the West Texas Intermediate, which went up to \$58.05 pb. —KUNA

### Exchange rate unchanged

KUWAIT: The exchange rate of the US Dollar remained unchanged at KD 0.304, while the Euro went up to KD 0.339 compared to Tuesday's rates, the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) said yesterday. The CBK added, in its daily bulletin, that the rate of the British Pound Sterling remained at KD 0.369, same did the Swiss Franc at KD 0.306. The Japanese Yen also held its KD 0.002 rate. —KUNA

## Amir's envoy pays respects over Prince Bandar passing



RIYADH: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah offers condolences to Riyadh Governor Prince Faisal bin Bandar bin Abdulaziz Al Saud over the passing of Prince Bandar bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. —KUNA



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah offers condolences over the passing of Prince Bandar bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

RIYADH: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's representative, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah offered his condolences to Riyadh Governor Prince Faisal bin Bandar bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and the Saudi Royal family over the passing of Prince Bandar bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. The Amiri envoy departed the country bound home for Kuwait shortly after. He was accompanied by a delegation consisting of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah. —KUNA

## Bahrain's Premier hails ties with Kuwait

MANAMA: Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, the Prime Minister of Bahrain, yesterday hailed the deep-rooted Bahraini-Kuwaiti fraternal ties that are beyond the description of any words. The Bahrain News Agency quoted him as saying that the sisterly State of Kuwait, its leadership and people, occupy the most precious place in the soul and spirit. He praised the supportive stances of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for Bahrain in all circumstances. His statements came upon reception of Ambassador of Kuwait to Bahrain Sheikh

Azzam Mubarak Al-Sabah who greeted the Premier, marking the end of his diplomatic tenure in the Kingdom. The Bahraini premier expressed deep gratitude and appreciation of Ambassador Azzam's efforts throughout his term in the kingdom in consolidating the cooperation between the two countries, extolling at the same time the ambassador's expertise and efficiency, wishing him success.

Meanwhile, the ambassador expressed his deep gratitude and appreciation to the Premier for his patronage and diligence on boosting the two countries' fraternal ties. He also praised the Premier and the Bahraini government for support that contributed a lot to his successful mission. The ambassador said, "You are the best supporter to bolstering the bilateral ties between the two brotherly countries, and your stances are accorded huge esteem in Kuwait from His Highness the Amir and all Kuwaiti citizens, and your love pulsates in every Kuwaiti's heart and whenever the name of Bahrain is mentioned in Kuwait, they do mention Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa." —KUNA



MANAMA: Prime Minister of Bahrain Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa (right) meets with Ambassador of Kuwait to Bahrain Sheikh Azzam Mubarak Al-Sabah. —KUNA

## Minister hails Kuwaiti-Moroccan 'historic ties'

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh on Tuesday praised Kuwait's exceptional "historic relations" with Morocco. This relationship has been translated through various levels of cooperation, the minister told reporters after attending a Moroccan embassy ceremony held to celebrate King Mohammed VI's 20th anniversary of the accession to the throne. Meanwhile, Morocco's Ambassador to Kuwait Jafar Hakim referenced joint talks hosted by Rabat in April, whereby several agreements were signed most notably in the cultural spectrum. The ambassador also expressed hope that a direct air navigational route would be established between both countries in the foreseeable future, hailing the impact this move would have on reigniting bilateral trade and tourism cooperation. In the meantime, he revealed that the embassy is currently working on preparations with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters to hold a Moroccan cultural week in Kuwait before the end of the year. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh (right) and Morocco's Ambassador to Kuwait Jafar Hakim cut the cake during the ceremony. —KUNA



Deputy Prime Minister and State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh speaks to reporters during the ceremony.

Local

# Kuwait's UN envoy vehemently depllores Syria air strikes

## Two-thirds of Security Council ask UN chief for Syria hospital attacks inquiry

**NEW YORK:** A Kuwaiti diplomat strongly condemned air strikes in Syria's northwestern Idlib region that deliberately targeted civilians while leaving infrastructure in tatters. Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi made the remarks on behalf of his country, alongside Belgium and Germany, during a UN Security Council session dedicated to the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Syria. He strongly urged all parties to take the measures needed to protect innocent civilians and shield the infrastructure from the ongoing aerial bombardments.

Two-thirds of the United Nations Security Council - including the United States, Britain and France - asked Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday to investigate attacks on UN-supported medical facilities in northwest Syria, diplomats said. Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad's forces, backed by Russia, began an offensive on the last major insurgent stronghold three months ago that the United Nations says has killed at least 450 civilians and displaced more than 440,000 people.

Britain, France, the United States, Germany, Belgium, Peru, Poland, Kuwait, Dominican Republic and Indonesia delivered a demarche - a formal diplomatic petition - to Guterres over the lack of an inquiry into attacks on UN-supported facilities. "At least fourteen UN-supported facilities on the list of deconflicted facilities have been damaged or destroyed in northwest Syria since the end of April," they told Guterres, according to the agreed request. "We therefore respectfully request that you consider launching an internal UN investigation into attacks that have damaged or destroyed UN-supported facilities in northwest Syria and report back promptly," they said.

They noted that in 2016 former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon had used his discretionary power to open an inquiry into an attack on a Syrian Arab Red Crescent humanitarian convoy in Aleppo. Guterres' spokesman Farhan Haq confirmed representatives of 10 member states had met with the secretary-general. "We will consider their request," Haq said.

### Hospitals under attack

While the United Nations has shared the locations of humanitarian facilities with the parties to the conflict, UN aid chief Mark Lowcock has told the Security Council that dozens of healthcare facilities have been struck since April. "Is that information used as it's intended, to protect facilities ... or is it being used to target facilities?" Lowcock said to reporters on Tuesday after briefing the council for the seventh time since the Syrian government offensive began.

The 10 members of the Security Council also called on Guterres to investigate why the so-called deconfliction mechanism had failed to deter attacks. Russia and Syria have said their forces are not targeting civilians or civilian infrastructure and questioned the sources used by the United Nations to verify attacks on health centers.

In a July 16 letter to Guterres and the Security Council, Syrian UN Ambassador Bashar Ja'afari said some 119 hospital and health care centers "have been out of commission since being taken over by terrorist groups" and "no longer serve their original purpose and cannot be considered hospitals, health-care centers or even 'civilian objects' under humanitarian law."

### Children killed

Addressing Syria's warring parties, Ambassador Otaibi said UN Security Council resolutions should be respected and abided by, particularly ones dealing with the protection of medical facilities and schools. Citing UN reports, he said a large number of children had been killed in the Syrian city of Idlib during the last month, while the infrastructure in the area has been destroyed, the Kuwaiti diplomat added. He emphasized that Syria's eight-year civil war can only be resolved through a political solution, saying military action will never be the answer to the misery of "three million people, a quarter of whom are children," crammed into the northwestern province. "The people of Syria have witnessed the most despicable crimes as identified by international law," he lamented, saying those responsible for these heinous



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi speaks during a UN Security Council session dedicated to the humanitarian catastrophe in Syria. — KUNA

deeds should be held accountable and face swift justice. On the return of Syrian refugees, he maintained that it should only be done "securely and voluntarily," pointing out that tens of thousands of Syrians remain either detained or missing.

An array of insurgents have a foothold in northwestern Syria. The most powerful is the jihadist Tahrir al-Sham, the latest incarnation of the former Nusra Front which

was part of Al-Qaeda until 2016. British UN Ambassador Karen Pierce told the Security Council on Tuesday that Ja'afari's letter was an admission of Syrian government attacks on hospitals. "That is a war crime and it deserves the utmost, deep investigation so that those units responsible, those military commanders responsible, and the politicians who give them their instructions, can be brought to justice," she said. — Agencies

## Iraq, Kuwait select consultant to invest in joint fields

**BAGHDAD:** Iraq and Kuwait reached an agreement for the selection of a global consultant to prepare a study on the investment of the joint border oil fields, Iraq's Ministry of Oil announced yesterday. The two countries have agreed to choose the British company 'ERC Equipose Pte Ltd' to take over this task,

as the contract will be officially signed in the coming days, ministry spokesman Assem Jihad said in a statement.

The contract empowers the company to prepare studies of the joint productive border fields 'Safwan-Al-Abdali' and 'South Rumaila-Ratqa,' he said. The studies will help the two countries in organizing, exploiting and investing in the border fields shared between them in order to guarantee the right of each party in these fields, he noted.

This agreement is a first step towards signing new agreements to regulate the investment and optimal exploitation of the border fields shared with neighboring countries, in accordance with mechanisms and international agreements adopted. — KUNA

## Kuwait supports humanitarian programs worldwide: Envoy

**GENEVA:** The State of Kuwait is keen on continuing the support extended to humanitarian programs worldwide in line with its leadership's guidelines and orders, a diplomat said yesterday. This statement came from Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN and International Organization's headquarters in Geneva Jamal Al-Ghunaim, during his meeting with Deputy High Commissioner of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Kelly Clements and the Food and Agricultural Organization's (FAO) Senior Adviser for Program Development and Humanitarian Affairs Rodrigue Vinet. Ghunaim added that Kuwait was keen on partaking in vital humanitarian programs led by the UN and the international community to help those in need. His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti people are keen on helping all those affected by natural disasters and conflicts, affirmed Ghunaim.

Meanwhile, Clements said that the UNHCR commended the efforts exerted by Kuwait on the humanitarian level. She affirmed that Kuwait was always on the forefront when it came to aiding people against mishaps, saying that such eagerness to fend off danger was appreciated. Clements revealed that her meeting with Ghunaim focused on Kuwait's voluntary support of the Syrian refugees as announced by the Brussels conference last March. In the meantime, Vinet said that Kuwait was a major contributor to



**KUWAIT'S Permanent Representative to the UN and International Organization's headquarters in Geneva Jamal Al-Ghunaim meets with FAO's Senior Adviser for Program Development and Humanitarian Affairs Rodrigue Vinet.**

FAO's programs to eradicate food shortage and hunger. Kuwait's contributions touched every corner of the globe and desolated areas, he stressed. He added that cooperation with Kuwait had succeeded in protecting the lives of millions around the globe. — KUNA



**GENEVA:** Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN and International Organization's headquarters in Geneva Jamal Al-Ghunaim meets with Deputy High Commissioner of the UNHCR Kelly Clements. — KUNA photos

## Ready for the Beach ??

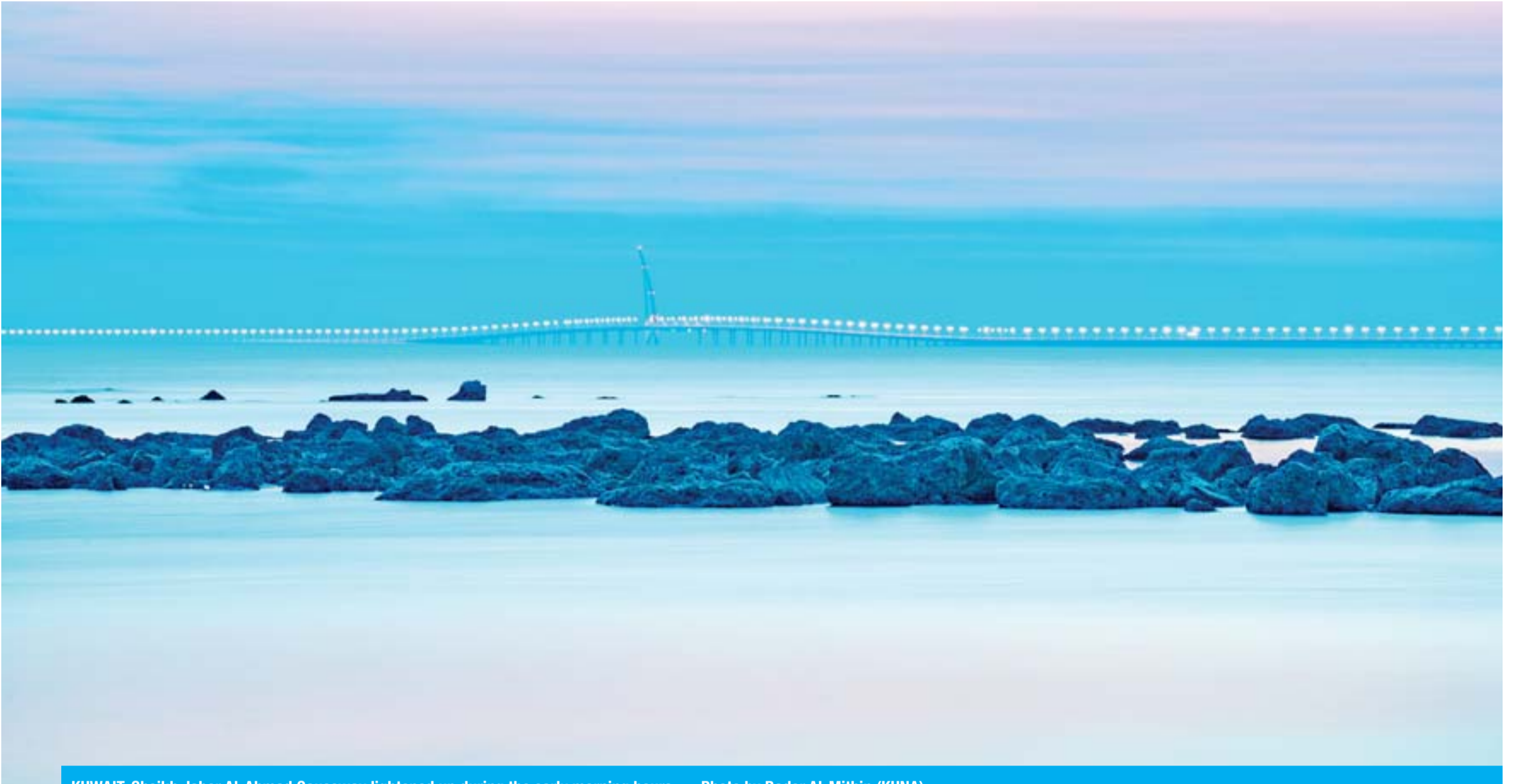
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## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Causeway lightened up during the early morning hours. — Photo by Bader Al-Mithin (KUNA)

# Shrimping season in int'l waters starts today after seven-month ban

## Union calls for studies to determine feasibility of shrimping ban

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR), the General Department of Coast Guard and Kuwait Fishermen Union announced the shrimping season in international waters will begin today. "After a seven-month ban, it is important to follow up with neighboring countries and prepare statistics by concerned authorities to determine the feasibility of banning shrimping, and whether there is an actual increase in the numbers of shrimp after the ban," Head of Kuwait Fishermen Union Thaher Al-Suwayyan said.

He stressed that the ban every year does not result in an increase in stocks of shrimp, because of lack of commitment by some fishermen from neighboring countries. Suwayyan pointed out that the society has been demanding for years and will continue to demand

through official letters to concerned authorities the necessity of stopping the entry of 'Zubaidi' (pomfret), shrimp and fresh imported 'Kanaad' (narrow-barred Spanish mackerel) from neighboring countries during the fishing ban, "as in previous years we relied on local production." He said this will close the door to transgressing fishermen of neighboring countries who export fish and shrimp caught illegally during the ban.

"The authorities must pay attention to the fishermen union's demands to support local products, work to activate the implementation of decisions and agreements with neighboring countries, and avoid harming local fishermen while others make gains in territorial waters," Suwayyan said. He called on all fishermen to abide by Amiri decree 1980/46 and the laws that organize fishing in order to avoid any irregularities, stressing that whoever commits any violation will face consequences.



KUWAIT: These August 1, 2018 file photos show heavy turnout of buyers at the Sharq fish market on the first day of the start of the shrimping season last year. — Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh

## Local

# Ministry to avoid local contracting with expat teachers for next year

## Electricity and Water Ministry denies MEW-PAY app stoppage

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Official sources said the Ministry of Education will not open local contracting with expat teachers for the upcoming school year, because its contracts with teachers from abroad and appointments of Kuwaiti teachers meets the need and covers what the school year and new schools need. The sources said the education ministry does not want to repeat violations attributed to it from the Civil Service Commission when it contracted expat teachers who arrived in Kuwait not as teachers - rather they were registered for other jobs.

The sources said the education ministry is thinking about banning local contracting in the coming years and

limit it to Kuwaitis, children of Kuwaiti women and Gulf nationals only, and as for expats, they will not have a chance except in cases of extreme need.

Meanwhile, the ministry's administrative sector asked its departments to prepare lists of expat employees who are to be terminated, be they teachers or administrators, as per the Cabinet's decision to Kuwaitize the government sector, expecting the list to include more than 400 expats of both genders. In other news, the Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) denied any stoppage in the MEW-PAY application with

regards to enquiry and payment services. Leaked information earlier indicated that MEW Minister Khalid Al-Fadhel asked for the halting of the application in its trial phase for more investigation to ensure authors' rights.



### Ministry to focus on hiring Kuwaiti teachers



The Ministry of Education.

## Over 1,100 practicing female doctors in Gulf: Specialist

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Senior general surgery, obesity and intensive care specialist at Amiri Hospital and head of the surgeries committee at Kuwait Surgeons Society Dr Asmaa Al-Rashid said the Kuwaiti female surgeons committee - a part of Kuwait Surgeons Society - was founded to support women to achieve their personal

and professional goals while focusing on their role locally, regionally and at the international level.

Rashid said the committee began its activities in April 2018. The committee has a board headed by Rashid, her deputy Dr Huda Al-Manfouhi, Dr Muneera bin Nikhi and Dr Ilham Al-Hamdan, along with other board members. Rashid said that the goals of the society include boosting contributions of female surgeons in the surgical community, supporting women's health, boosting human development and spreading awareness through leading services. She added the committee adheres to basic values such as integrity, transparency and credibility, in addition to diversity and inclusion.

Rashid said the number of female surgeons is on the rise both internationally and locally due to the

increase in awareness about the role and presence of women in this medical specialty, adding that women were present in surgical specialties in ancient civilizations. She said Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were the first Gulf countries to have female surgeons in the mid-1980s, before other Gulf states followed suit.

She said the number of practicing female doctors and trainees in the surgical specialty is estimated at over 1,100 in Gulf countries, adding they effectively contribute to developing and building both the public and private health sectors. Although the surgical profession is tough, many female surgeons in Kuwait and the Gulf have made several achievements and occupied many academic, leadership and union positions. Rashid said the committee seeks to support medical students and new doctors to join the surgery field.



## Salary certificates forgery gang busted

**KUWAIT:** Criminal detectives busted a gang of four headed by the nephew of a current member of parliament. The gang forged salary certificates and documents for cash loans. A source said detectives received information about a Kuwaiti forging salary certificates from a government establishment and airline companies, besides facilitating loans from banks and companies in exchange for a KD 1,000 fee for each transaction. Detectives found 16 salary certificates ready to be delivered.

### Officers insulted

Two officers and a civil inspector accused a Kuwaiti woman of insulting them after she objected to the method of inspection at Kuwait airport and lodged a complaint against her. The citizen is being questioned to find out what exactly happened.

### Motorbike gone missing

An Egyptian man told police that his motorcycle, which he had parked near an Egaila mall, went missing and lodged a complaint. A security source said the case was referred to detectives to look for the thief.

### Twitter slander

The interior ministry began to tighten the noose against users of several Twitter accounts accused of slan-

der in Kuwait. An informed source said the electronic crimes department is working on discovering the owners of these accounts, announcing there are 1,100 complaints against six such accounts. The cases are of insulting and stirring strife, and they are being investigated. The owners of some accounts were identified as being abroad and orders were given for their arrest as soon as they arrive in the country. The source said charges may be brought against a senior government official who cooperated with the owner of the 'Ateej Al-Masayan' account.

### Drug possession

Three passengers were arrested on arrival in Kuwait in possession of hashish and psychoactive substances. The three were sent to concerned authorities. — Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Qabas and Al-Rai

### News in brief

#### 'Rocket launcher' passenger traveled through military airbase

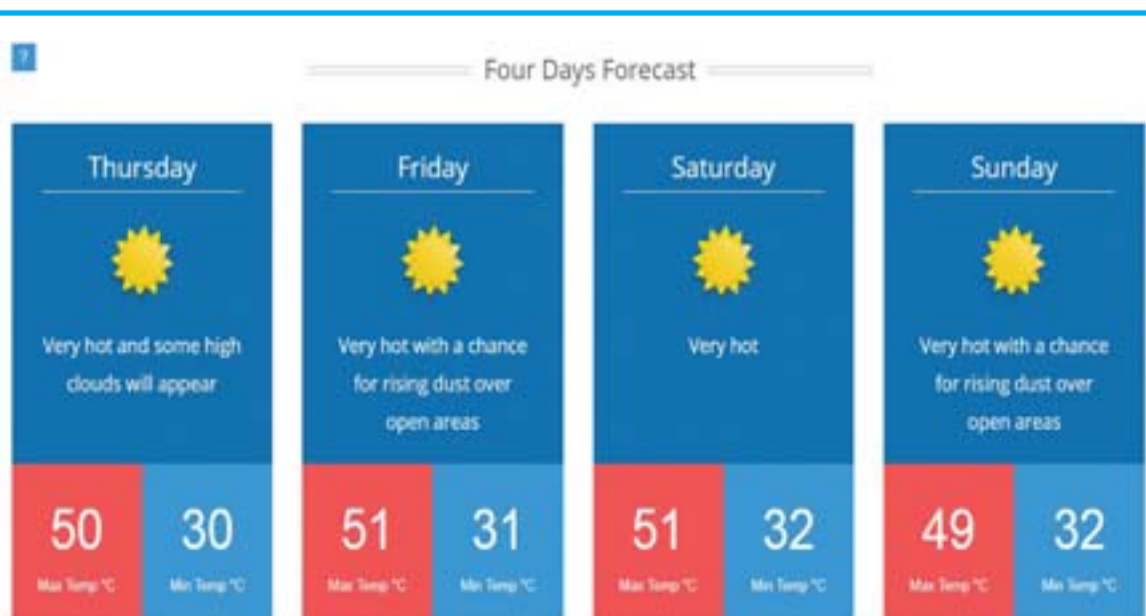
**KUWAIT:** A high-ranking source at the Directorate General of Civil Aviation said the rocket launcher found with a passenger at a US airport, who claimed it was a souvenir from Kuwait, did not go through Kuwait International Airport's passenger terminal, adding that inspection at Kuwait airport is very strict. Military sources said the American passenger is a military man and traveled through the military airport (Abdullah Al-Mubarak Airbase), which is designated for travel by US soldiers. They are not searched by Kuwait authorities, rather by US military police, which makes it the responsibility of the American side. — Al-Jarida

#### Al-Durra to serve Kuwaitis only

**KUWAIT:** The new head of Al-Durra Domestic Helpers Company Fahd Al-Kashty said he took a decision the minute he took over to limit domestic help applications to Kuwaitis only, as helpers used to be distributed to both citizens and expats earlier. Kashty said he reviewed offers of foreign labor and discovered they were very few compared to local demand. He said he is reviewing profits and losses in the company in the past period, and will evaluate the performance of departments. He said available offers now are mostly from the Philippines and India, and foreign offices will be contacted in the future. — Al-Qabas

#### KAC privatization delayed

**KUWAIT:** The project of privatizing Kuwait Airways (KAC) has been postponed for five to seven years, according to sources familiar with the issue. The sources said this is based on two aspects - the first is to modernize the fleet and the second is to eradicate accumulated losses, because it is not possible to sell a failing company to any investor, and the government will not accept allocating shares to citizen that are burdened with losses. Removing accumulated losses need time, as it reached around KD 320 million by the end of 2017. The sources said the finance ministry is committed to pay KD 600 million to KAC, which is what is left from completing its KD 1.2 billion capital after transforming KAC from a corporation into a shareholding company in April 2015. The sources explained that the KD 600 million will not be paid directly, rather by paying the dues for the purchase of new aircraft. — Al-Qabas



**KUWAIT:** A screen grab taken yesterday from the Kuwait Meteorological Department's website showing a four-day weather forecast. It predicts a very hot weekend, with temperatures reaching 50 C degrees today, and 51 C degrees tomorrow and the day after. Multiple heat waves have swept Kuwait this summer, as mercury exceeded 50 C degree on multiple occasions, and even reaching that benchmark in June before summer's official start. UN World Meteorological Organization (WMO) experts said in June that Kuwait recorded the world's highest temperature in recent years; 53.9 C degrees in Mitrabah northeast of the country on July 21, 2016.



**KUWAIT:** Mubarak Al-Kabeer Fire Director Brig Mohammad Al-Muhaimeed received a delegation from Kuwait National Guard headed by administrative support assistant Brig Talla Abdelrazaq Qadeer in Mubarak Al-Kabeer hazardous material fire station. Heads of the Qurain fire station Col Mohammad Al-Eidan and Mubarak Al-Kabeer hazardous material fire station Lt Col Ali Al-Marzouqi attended the meeting, which was held as part of the cooperation protocol between the two sides. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

# International

THURSDAY, AUGUST 1, 2019



12 die as flooding paralyzes Karachi

## Trump denies racist strategy but gets heckled for 'hate'

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TOKYO: Pedestrians walk past a screen in Tokyo reporting about North Korea's missile launch earlier in the day off the coast of North Korea yesterday. — AFP

# North Korea fires 2 ballistic missiles

## N Korea tests more missiles despite efforts at diplomatic solutions

SEOUL: North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles yesterday, the South Korean military said, only days after it launched two similar missiles intended to pressure South Korea and the United States to stop upcoming military drills. The firings follow launches on July 25, North Korea's first missile tests since leader Kim Jong Un and US President Donald Trump met on June 30 and agreed to revive stalled denuclearization talks.

The series of missile tests raises the stakes for US and South Korean diplomats criss-crossing the region this week in the hope of restarting talks aimed at persuading Pyongyang to give up its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs. "North Korea's actions do not help ease military tensions, nor do they help keep the momentum for talks that are under way," South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha told reporters in Seoul before leaving for a Southeast Asian security forum in Bangkok.

Kang urged North Korea to halt the missile launches. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and the top US North Korea negotiator were also headed to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum in the Thai capital, where Pompeo said he was holding out hope that U.S. officials could meet North Korean counterparts.

Trump and Pompeo both played down last week's launches and Pompeo has continued to express hope for a diplomatic way forward with North Korea. The latest launch comes ahead of newly appointed US Secretary of Defense Mark Esper's first official visit to Seoul, which the Pentagon said on Tuesday was scheduled as part of a tour

through Asia in August. US military forces in South Korea were aware of yesterday's launch, a spokesman said.

### New missiles

Yesterday's launches were from the Wonsan area on North Korea's east coast, from which last week's missiles had been fired, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said in a statement. It said it was monitoring in case of more launches. The JCS said later the North had fired ballistic missiles that flew about 250 km (155 miles) and appeared to be similar to those of last week. The missiles, dubbed the KN-23, are designed to evade missile defense systems by being easier to hide, launch, and maneuver in flight, experts said.

Kim described the two KN-23s launched last week as having a "low-altitude gliding and leaping flight" pattern that would make them hard to intercept. Analysts said the range and altitude of yesterday's flights could indicate a demonstration or test of those capabilities. South Korean defense minister Jeong Kyeong-doo told a defense forum in Seoul that stopping a missile like the KN-23 would be difficult, although South Korea's missile defense systems would be able to detect and intercept them.

South Korea's defense ministry also told lawmakers in Seoul it had concluded that a new submarine the North showcased last week was capable of carrying up to three ballistic missiles. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said there was no impact from yesterday's launch on Japan's security. "We will continue to closely cooperate with the

United States and others," Abe told reporters. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said Japan would still seek a summit with North Korea, without conditions, despite the latest launch.

### 'Bargaining chip'

Trump and Kim met on June 30 in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between the two Koreas but Pyongyang has since accused Washington of breaking a promise by planning to hold joint military exercises with South Korea next month and warned the drills could derail talks. Later on, state news agency KCNA repeated calls for the United States and South Korea to end their "hostile" joint drills, but did not mention the missile launches.

"It is a prerequisite for improving the inter-Korean relations and ensuring peace on the Korean peninsula to call an overall and permanent halt to anti-North war drills, the root cause of confrontation and war," it said in a commentary. Moves by the United States and South Korea to rename the approaching exercises were simply double-dealing that proved "confrontational maniacs remain unchanged in their black-hearted intention to stifle" North Korea by force, it added. A top South Korean official said last month the drills would mainly involve computer simulations.

North Korea has also warned of a possible end to its freeze on nuclear and long-range missile tests that has been in place since 2017, which Trump has repeatedly upheld as evidence of the success of his engagement with

Kim. Henri Feron, a senior fellow at the Washington-based Center for International Policy, said the United States and South Korea may need to consider a temporary suspension of the drills, or propose other measures to reduce tensions. "I do think there is a high risk that talks will end altogether if Washington and Seoul continue to ignore North Korea's concern with the exercises," he said.

A summit between Trump and Kim in Vietnam in February collapsed after they failed to reconcile differences between Washington's demands for Pyongyang's complete denuclearization and North Korean demands for sanctions relief. Trump says he has a good relationship with Kim and Pompeo said on Monday he hoped working-level talks could occur soon. Pompeo told reporters traveling with him to Asia on Tuesday he did not know when this would happen but hoped US Special Representative for North Korea Stephen Biegun and his new counterpart could meet soon.

North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho cancelled a planned visit to the ASEAN forum in Bangkok but Pompeo said the Americans were still open to a meeting. Harry Kazianis, of Washington's Center for the National Interest think tank, said the latest launches were a clear attempt by North Korea to put pressure on Washington. Other analysts have said North Korea will be emboldened to press more aggressively for US concessions by Trump's apparent eagerness to hold up his engagement with Pyongyang as a foreign policy success ahead of his 2020 re-election bid. — Reuters

## In Berlin, refugees get classes on sexual consent

BERLIN: In a classroom workshop, students watch a video of a man and woman meeting in a nightclub. The two drink, laugh, dance and kiss. The tone in the room and on the screen quickly changes when the man takes the woman home, locks the door and, when she attempts to leave, he rapes her.

When the grim video ends, seven men in their thirties, refugees who have come to Berlin from Syria, Iraq or Afghanistan, are invited to react and comment. "She has had too much to drink, they are sleeping together," says one, convinced the man in the video took advantage of the young woman's drunkenness to abuse her. "He knew very well what he wanted," says another.

At this point, the workshop's moderator, Carola Pietrusky-Niane, jumps in to explain that "it happens frequently in Berlin, young people drink a lot, take drugs," and in certain cases, this type of aggressive crime can happen. The participants in the four-hour course titled "Together for Security", which is currently only held in Berlin, have joined the class voluntarily. Germany's integration commissioner Annette Widmann-Mauz has called for such sex educa-

tion classes to be more widely offered to refugees, following a gang rape case last year in Freiburg, in which 10 of 11 suspects are refugees.

### Backlash

Several high-profile rape cases committed by migrants have stoked a backlash against the mass influx of a million asylum seekers to Germany since 2015. Mass assaults by recent migrants in Cologne on New Year's Eve 2015-2016, and a rape-murder in 2016 by an Afghan refugee, have been seized on by the far-right in its push against Chancellor Angela Merkel's decision to let in the newcomers. In Germany, there was a 15-percent rise in sex crimes committed by foreigners in 2018, 6,046 offences compared to 5,258 in 2017, according to federal statistics.

The increase is largely due to stricter legislation since 2016, which made it easier to prosecute perpetrators of sex-related crimes. But the cases also underline the challenge of integrating large numbers of migrants, a big proportion of whom are young, single men from countries which would view Western norms as surprisingly liberal. In Norway, migrants were compelled to undergo similar courses between 2013 and 2015, after several rape cases involving refugees.

"These are difficult themes, speak freely," Pietrusky-Niane tells the group, as they discuss the video in a mix of German and Arabic. The session, attended by the seven single men, some of whom are fathers, was organized by the Norwegian group Hero, which manages several hostels for migrants in Germany. The topics in



BERLIN: People attend a four-hour course titled 'Together for Security', a sex education class for migrants in Berlin's Marzahn district. — AFP

the workshop are broad with questions like: How do you know whether a woman is willing? And, how do you react if she isn't?

Advice is given to refugees from countries where displays of affection are banned in public, boys and girls often attend separate schools and rape within marriage is not considered a crime. One of the short videos during the workshop spells out the difference between consensual sex and rape. "It's like asking a person if they want a cup of tea," says the voiceover in English. "If she answers 'Yes, I love it', it's because she wants one. "If she hesitates, you can make the tea and ask again," the video continues. "And if someone says 'No, thank you', don't make the tea and don't get angry—it's the same with sexuality," the video concludes. — AFP

## Mother's 'nightmare' after US teen admits killing Italian cop

ROME: The mother of a US teen detained in Rome over the killing of an Italian police officer spoke yesterday of her shock at the arrest of her "thoughtful boy", as the suspect's father arrived in Italy. Finnegan Elder, 19, has been charged with aggravated homicide along with friend Gabriel Natale Hjorth, 18, following the death of officer Mario Cerciello Rega, who suffered multiple knife wounds in Friday's attack.

Elder has confessed to stabbing Cerciello, 35, with a US Marine partially-serrated, close-quarters combat knife, according to police. But says he mistook the plain-clothed officer for a dangerous drug dealer and used the weapon in self-defense. His father Ethan Elder said on arrival in Rome that "the first thing I need to know is how to get into prison to see my son," before heading directly with his lawyer to the city's Regina Coeli jail, according to Italian media reports. "We feel like our world has come crashing down," Elder's mother Leah said in an interview with Italy's La Stampa daily.

"I don't know how to describe it. It's

like a nightmare we'll wake up from". Their son was high on a mix of spirits, beer and prescription medicines when the attack took place, police said Tuesday. Cerciello had tackled him to the ground during a nighttime drugs raid in a genteel Rome neighborhood. "Finn is a thoughtful boy. The only explanation I can give, if he really is involved directly in this tragedy, is that he was terrified and therefore reacted rashly," the suspect's mother said.

She added that he had in the past taken powerful painkillers for an injury to his hand suffered while working part-time in a car parts shop. He had to have part of a finger amputated after a nasty fall off a ladder which left his left hand partially paralyzed, she said. The teenager took "strong painkillers and opioids" to manage the pain, as well as marijuana, she added. Cerciello and his plainclothes partner Varriale had been tasked with intercepting the Californian teens after an intermediary on a drug deal reported them to the police for stealing his bag after they were sold aspirin in the place of cocaine. — AFP

International

# Angry Sudanese queue for bread in the city where pupils shot dead

## Sudan shuts schools as pupils' killing sparks outrage

**AL-OBEID:** Sudanese vegetable vendor Zain Mohamed is angry as he queues outside a bakery in the city of Al-Obeid, where five schoolchildren were shot dead while protesting against a shortage of bread. "At a time when I should be selling vegetables, I'm here wasting hours in a queue to buy a loaf of bread," Mohamed told AFP, as he waited with dozens of other men and women in front of the bakery in downtown Al-Obeid.

Tragedy struck the city on Monday when six people, including five secondary school pupils, were shot dead at a rally against a growing shortage of bread and fuel in the city. It was a sudden tripling of the price of bread in December that was the spark for the mushrooming protests that led to the toppling of longtime president Omar Al-Bashir by the army in April.

Al-Obeid, the capital of North Kordofan state some 350 kilometers southwest of Khartoum, remained largely quiet during the long months of protests. Bashir addressed loyalist rallies in the state just weeks before his ouster. But Monday's deaths have left the town in shock, prompting the authorities to impose an indefinite night-time curfew. Demonstrators accuse the feared paramilitaries of the Rapid Support Forces of shooting dead the protesters.

### 'Complete deterioration'

After dark, security force patrols criss-cross the city in pick-up trucks mounted with machineguns. But despite the curfew, shops remain open late into the night and residents venture out, even by car, in search of bread and other scarce goods. "Getting food has become a tough task," said Muwawi Saad, an employee at a private company.

## Party headquarters now home to Sudan paramilitaries

**KHARTOUM:** The brown, brick building looming over Khartoum was a potent symbol of the regime of former president Omar Al-Bashir. But now it is home to Sudan's feared paramilitary forces. The Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which sprang out of the notorious Janjaweed militia and helped oust the long-time leader in April, have moved in.

Unfinished and flanked by a yellow crane, the high-walled building, once the headquarters of Bashir's National Congress Party, towers at least nine stories over a city neighborhood close to Khartoum airport. Inside members of the RSF can be seen coming and going, and every time the gates to the complex swing open, their heavily-armed vehicles can be spotted inside. As Bashir's three-decade rule was toppled on April 11 amid a wave of determined protests, the RSF moved into many of the buildings which had belonged to his party.

The ruling military council which seized power after Bashir's ouster, set up a committee to control the seizure of the party's goods and properties. "The property of the party against which the Sudanese revolted has now fallen into the hands of the force they hate," said renowned Sudanese journalist Faisal Mohammed Saleh. It was also paradoxical that "this force, which was set up by Bashir to protect him, aided in his fall and is now occupying the headquarters of his party".

Led by General Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, now the deputy chief of the military council, the RSF is said to include elements of the Janjaweed militia, accused by rights groups of committing war crimes in the Darfur region during Bashir's rule. "I have seen with my own eyes the atrocities committed by the Janjaweed militias in Darfur, they killed and displaced the people there," said Mahmoud, who gave only his first name for rea-

"You have to wait for an hour or even more. Often you pass by one bakery and find that it is shut because there is no electricity." Power cuts are frequent in Sudan including in the capital Khartoum as the authorities struggle to tackle a deepening economic crisis—the driving force behind the uprising against Bashir. For much of his three decades in power, Bashir was able to look to Al-Obeid for support but the city drew scant reward in terms of investment.

Many of its roads remain unpaved and heavy rains this week left huge pools of water for want of drainage. In the downtown area, many houses are built of cement. In poorer neighborhoods, mudbrick is still widespread. "There has been no electricity in our house since this morning," said Babikir Awad, sitting on a chair in front of his single-storey home in the city centre. "We have been suffering for months, but the situation has escalated in the past two weeks."

Frequent power cuts are the biggest complaint. "The main problem is that there is no steady supply of electricity," said bakery owner Mohamed al-Hassan. "Having your own generator means increasing your costs and in turn exposing yourself to losses." Residents are angry that the authorities have failed to resolve the bread shortage. "The city has witnessed a complete deterioration in services," said Shadiya Othman. "This has led to anger."

### Killing sparks outrage

Meanwhile, Sudanese authorities have ordered all schools nationwide to suspend classes indefinitely after crowds of students launched demonstrations against the killing of six protesters including five pupils at a rally in a central town. "Killing a student is killing a



AL-OBEID: Sudanese protesters gather in the central Sudanese city of Al-Obeid yesterday, two days after five pupils were shot dead for protesting against a shortage of bread. —AFP

nation," chanted hundreds of schoolchildren, dressed in their uniforms and waving Sudanese flags, as they took to the streets of Khartoum against the killings in Al-Obeid on Monday.

Sporadic protests by schoolchildren were also held in other parts of the capital and in other cities. Five high-school students were shot dead and more than 60 wounded, some by snipers, when they rallied in Al-

Obeid against fuel and bread shortages, the protest movement and residents said. Late on Tuesday, a doctors committee close to the protest movement said a sixth protester died of wounds after he was "shot with a bullet in the head". The committee did not say if he too was a student. Demonstrators accused feared paramilitaries of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) of shooting dead the teenagers. —Agencies



KHARTOUM: Tires are set ablaze by Sudanese protesters during a rally in the capital Khartoum. —AFP

sions of security. "But the orders were given by the government of Bashir," said Mahmoud, who hails from Darfur but now resides in Khartoum.

### 'Tribal militias'

Some RSF members including senior officers are also alleged to have brutally broken up a weeks-long sit-in in June outside the army HQ in Khartoum, in which at least 127 protesters died, according to a doctors committee linked to the protest movement. RSF chief Daglo denies responsibility, saying the accusations are aimed at tainting the image of his force.

But an official inquiry concluded last week that eight security officers, including three from the RSF, were involved and they are set to be charged with crimes against humanity. Conceived some 10 years ago,

Bashir's party HQ in Khartoum remains a building site, although all work appears to have been stopped for the time being. A decade ago his party decided that an imposing building was to be constructed in the capital, with a senior official at the time saying it would be funded by China.

Beijing was a key ally of Bashir's regime and a partner in exploiting the country's oil riches, until the secession of South Sudan in 2011 saw oil revenues dry up. By taking over the party's sites, "the RSF is trying to consolidate its power over the country", said one businessman, who asked not to be named. But the force which includes ill-trained tribesmen "is struggling to gain the trust of the Sudanese", he added. "The Sudanese see them as tribal militias who are trying to impose their authority by force." —AFP



MAIDUGURI: Smoldering ashes are seen on the ground in Budu near Maiduguri after the latest attack this weekend by Boko Haram fighters on a funeral in northeast Nigeria has left 65 people dead. —AFP

## Nigeria insists Boko Haram is 'defeated'

**LAGOS:** Nigeria's presidency claimed Boko Haram's 10-year-old insurgency had been "defeated" but admitted that international jihadists posed a growing threat. "The position of the Nigerian government is that the Boko Haram terrorism has been degraded and defeated. The real Boko Haram we know is defeated," the presidency said in a statement late Tuesday. It said the country was now facing "a mixture" of Boko Haram remnants, criminal groups and jihadists from the Maghreb and West Africa fuelled by turmoil in Libya and the collapse of the Islamic State caliphate in the Middle East.

"As a consequence of these international gangs, we have seen an increase of trans-border crimes and the proliferation of small arms in the Lake Chad Basin area," the statement said. President Muhammadu Buhari, a former general who vowed to crush Boko Haram when he became president in 2015 for his first term in office, has previously said the group were

"beaten". The uprising began in northeast Nigeria in July 2009 when fighting between the hardline group and government forces left hundreds of jihadists dead, including leader Muhammad Yusuf.

Since then, the bloody campaign has killed some 27,000 people, displaced over two million people and spilled over into neighboring countries. In 2015, the Nigerian army forced the jihadists out of major towns but they remain at large in remote strongholds. Fighters still launch persistent attacks and a breakaway faction loyal to IS, the Islamic State West Africa Province

(ISWAP), has ratcheted up assaults against the military since last year.

Over the weekend an attack by the Boko Haram group headed by long-time leader Abubakar Shekau killed 65 villagers close to the regional capital Maiduguri. The army has often been criticized for failing to safeguard local communities, with vigilante groups stepping into the void left by the authorities. But the presidency said it was looking to bolster its military capacity and expected the long-awaited delivery of Super Tucano turbo-prop warplanes from the United States "beginning next year". —AFP

### News in brief

#### Kid survives 6-storey fall

**BEIJING:** A three-year-old boy has survived a fall from a sixth-floor balcony in southwest China after neighbors caught him with a large blanket, according to state media. Video of Monday's incident shows the boy clinging onto a slab and trying to climb back up onto the balcony, while his feet kept slipping. Moments later, he lets go and falls onto a large, white blanket held open by onlookers. "I looked up and saw a child was dangling up there. My first reaction was to find something to catch him," said Zhu Yanhui, an employee of a local property management company, who had rushed to the scene. "I thought about rushing over there and catch him with my bare hands, but that would not have worked." Zhu told state broadcaster CCTV. CCTV said the child had no injuries. "I held out the blanket along with others all the while keeping my eyes on the child." —AFP

#### Journalist murdered in Mexico

**CUERNAVACA:** A journalist was found dead Tuesday in the trunk of an abandoned car in Mexico, authorities said, as a media watchdog vowed to investigate whether his "murder" was connected to his work. The body of Rogelio Barragan, director of the Guerrero Al Instante portal, was found "with blunt injuries to the face and an injury to the brain area," the prosecutor's office in the central state of Morelos reported without giving further details. Reporters Without Borders (RSF), which regularly ranks Mexico alongside war-torn Syria and Afghanistan as the world's most dangerous countries for news media, said the journalist had more than 10 years of experience. "We will continue investigating more to be certain about whether his murder had to do with his work" at the portal which employs around a dozen journalists, RSF representative Balbina Flores said. —AFP

#### 15 Ethiopian migrants die

**DUBAI:** At least 15 Ethiopian migrants died after their boat broke down and left them stranded in the Gulf of Aden for a week without food or water, a UN agency said. "Over 90 Ethiopian migrants were stranded on a boat between Djibouti and Yemen for one week with no food and water leading to the death of at least 15 people," the International Organization for Migration (IOM) tweeted late Tuesday. "The migrants were travelling from Djibouti to Yemen when the smugglers' boat broke down. "Those on board reported that lives were lost due to hunger, thirst and intentional drowning, while some people died in Yemen, as they could not reach health facilities in time." The IOM said it was treating one survivor, while the whereabouts of the majority of the survivors were not known. It said they reached the Yemeni port city of Aden, but it was unclear how they got there. —AFP

#### Romania's minister resigns

**BUCHAREST:** Romania's Interior Minister Nicolae Moga resigned on Tuesday amid a wave of public revulsion over a murder case in which police failed to react in time to save a teenage girl. The case has sparked an outcry against the authorities, with thousands of demonstrators taking to the streets of Bucharest on Saturday evening. "I took this decision to safeguard a part of the prestige of the ministry, which has been severely damaged by the faulty actions of some of its employees," said Moga of his resignation. Moga is the third high-ranking official to quit over the case in the space of a week, following the departure of the chief of police, Ioan Buda, and the head of the Special Telecommunications Service (STS), Ionel Vasilca. A suspect, 65-year-old Gheorghe Dinca, was arrested on Sunday in the southern town of Caracal. —AFP

## Libya foes step up air war as ground battle stalls

**TRIPOLI:** Libya's rival forces have taken their battle for Tripoli to the skies as fighting stalls on the ground, alarming UN envoy Ghassan Salame who has stepped up calls for a truce. More than 1,000 people have been killed since commander Khalifa Haftar launched an offensive on April 4 to take the capital, but there have been no major breakthroughs on the battlefield.

Fighters loyal to the UN-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) have kept Haftar's self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA) at bay on the southern outskirts of the city. "The inability of both one camp and the other to make military progress... is pushing them to rethink their military tactics," said Khaled al-Montasser, a professor at Tripoli University. Montasser said that the two sides were now targeting each other's "rear bases, supply centres and troop concentrations".

With the front lines largely static, both sides are resorting to strikes using warplanes and drones supplied by their foreign supporters to span the large distances between populated centres. The LNA said it carried out strikes over the weekend on 10 targets, including a military academy in Misrata, some 200 kilometers east of the capital. Five doctors were killed in the air raids, according to the GNA. The raids came after air strikes Friday on Haftar's strategic air base of Al-Jufra, 650 kilometers south of Tripoli. Its fall would severely degrade the LNA assault. —AFP

## International

# Racial diversity dispute spurs shakeup at US House Democratic campaign arm

## Trump denies racist strategy but gets heckled for 'hate'

WASHINGTON: The congresswoman who heads the campaign arm for US House of Representatives Democrats has acknowledged mistakes after lawmakers complained about a lack of racial diversity within the organization, and she named a Cuban-American as interim executive director as part of a major staff shakeup. The announcement by Representative Cheri Bustos late on Monday followed several days of turmoil at the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC), a controversy that has sidetracked the organization as it seeks to expand the party's majority in the House in the 2020 election.

Lawmakers who are members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus have had multiple conversations with Bustos in recent months "to address concerns about diversity at the DCCC," Alma Acosta, executive director of the caucus, said on Tuesday. Politico reported last week that black and Hispanic lawmakers had complained that the DCCC was not recruiting or retaining non-white staffers in top positions. "Today has been a sobering day filled with tough conversations that too often we avoid, but I can say confidently that we are taking the first steps toward putting the DCCC back on path to protect and expand our majority, with a staff that truly reflects the diversity of our Democratic caucus and our party," Bustos, who is white, said in a statement. Allison Jaslow, an Iraq war veteran and long-time Bustos ally, resigned as DCCC executive director on Monday. Five other senior staffers also left, including communications director Jared Smith, another long-time Bustos aide.

Bustos, who represents an Illinois congressional district won by Republican President Donald Trump in 2016, said she would be "owning my mistakes and learning from them," pledging to work "tirelessly to ensure that our staff is truly inclusive." Jacqueline Newman, who is Cuban-American, was named interim executive director and will lead the search for a permanent replacement in that job. Race has become a divisive issue not only with Trump's attacks on ethnic and racial minority Democrats but also within the Democratic Party as numerous candidates compete to challenge Trump in the 2020 election.

The DCCC has been consistently out-raising its Republican counterpart, and in May hit a record-breaking fundraising number for that month in a presidential cycle off-year at \$8.85 million. In addition, several Republicans have announced in recent weeks that they are retiring from the House. Democrats are defending 41 House seats they took from Republicans in 2018. Politico last week quoted Representative Marcia Fudge, a former chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, as saying it was "shocking" that there was "not one person of color" in any position of authority at the DCCC.

### Trump denies racist strategy

Meanwhile, President Donald Trump has denied any racist "strategy" behind a string of verbal attacks on African-Americans, but found himself being accused of hate by a heckler at a high-profile speech. "I have no strategy. I have zero strategy," Trump told reporters at the White House, when asked about his recent tirades against black and other non-white opponents, as well as the majority black city of Baltimore. "I'm not angry at anybody," he said.

Earlier, Trump denounced the "horrors" of slavery in a speech in Jamestown, Virginia, celebrating the founding of the first local legislature there by English colonists 400 years ago. In his speech, Trump noted that along with the first settlers came the first African slaves, making Jamestown a symbol not just of US democracy but of mass slavery. "We remember every sacred soul who suffered the horrors of slavery," Trump said, calling this the "barbaric trade in human lives." But black Virginia state lawmakers boycotted the event, saying it had been "tarnished" by Trump. "It is impossible to ignore the emblem of hate and disdain that the president represents," the African-American lawmakers said in a statement, accusing

Trump of using "racist and xenophobic rhetoric." And in a rare interruption of a presidential speech, a Virginia state lawmaker heckled Trump and held up a sign reading "Deport hate" and "Go back to your corrupted home." Trump paused his speech while the man was led away but did not say anything.

### 'Least racist'

The president has shown little of that restraint over the last two weeks, with a barrage of racially loaded insults. Trump has laid repeatedly into four non-white Democratic congresswomen, a respected African-American Democratic lawmaker from Baltimore, as well as veteran black civil rights activist Al Sharpton. That pattern has prompted an outpouring of criticism that Trump is deliberately deepening racial divisions in a pitch to his white, working-class base ahead of his 2020 reelection bid. At the White House, he told reporters: "I am the least racist person anywhere in the world."

But he then claimed that Sharpton is a racist and he continued to lash out at Baltimore, suggesting on Tuesday that violent crime there is worse than in Honduras, a country with one of the world's highest homicide rates outside a war zone. "Baltimore happens to be about the worst case," Trump said in an interview with The Washington Post. "If you look at it statistically, it's like, the number of shootings, the number of crimes, the number of everything - this morning I heard a statistic, Baltimore is worse than Honduras, okay?"

According to FBI data from 2017, the latest full-year figures available, Baltimore had a per capita murder rate of 55.8 per 100,000 population, which was less than that of St Louis, Missouri. Honduras registered 41.2 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 2018, with one of its cities, San Pedro Sula, recording a murder



US President Donald Trump

rate of more than 80 per 100,000, according to a report last November by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

### 'Venom for blacks'

The latest remarks came after Trump on the weekend described Baltimore as a "rat and rodent infested mess" unfit for humans and blamed this on Elijah Cummings, the black Democrat who represents much of the city in Congress. He then attacked Sharpton for coming to Baltimore's defense, tweeting that "Al is a con man" who "Hates Whites & Cops!" Sharpton responded that Trump is a bigot with "venom for blacks."

Trump denied Tuesday that the controversy, which breaks with all norms in Washington, has hurt him, claiming instead that residents from Baltimore were phoning en masse to thank him for calling out what he says is the city's disastrous leadership. "African-American people have been calling the White House. They have never been so happy for what our president has done," he said. The claimed flood of phone calls could not be independently verified. However, opinion polls show that support for Trump among black voters nationwide is at rock bottom. —Agencies



## Trump denounces 'horrors' of slavery

### The backstop

The Republic of Ireland shares a land border with the province that both sides want to keep free-flowing after Brexit, both for economic reasons and to maintain the delicate peace deal that brought an end to decades of violence between the pro-Irish and pro-British communities. But post-Brexit, that border will become part of the EU's external frontier and would legally require policing. The agreement struck by Johnson's predecessor Theresa May proposed the so-called "backstop" solution after Brexit.

But eurosceptics believe it gives the EU too much control over the UK and risks constitutionally distancing Northern Ireland from Britain. If a trade deal cannot be agreed by the end of 2020, under the backstop the UK would remain aligned with the EU customs union, while Northern Ireland would additionally stay aligned to some European single market rules, in order to keep the Irish border free-flowing. Neither London nor Brussels can end the arrangement unilaterally.

### A united Ireland?

On Tuesday, Johnson told Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar that the "backstop" plan was unacceptable, putting him at odds with both Dublin and Brussels, which insist the deal is not open for renegotiation. "If they really can't do it then clearly we have to get ready for a no-deal exit," Johnson said on a trip to Wales, adding: "It's up to the EU: this is their call." Varadkar has said previously that

beast." Contreras was among 50 Hondurans who boarded at 1:00 am to get to the tourist town of Palenque, known for its stunning Mayan archeological site.

"They tell us there are lots of security agents who are going to catch us and that's how they sow fear" to make migrants pay more, Contreras said of the tactics used by the "polleros" - people smugglers. Those who don't have enough money are faced with the choice of turning over their valuables or being left behind. "That's where you lose everything you brought: rings, watch. You have to leave it all there," added the construction worker, trying for a fourth time to get across so he can earn enough money to support his wife and children aged two to 10.

### 'Be brave!'

La Bestia's blazing headlights and the screeching sound of metal on the tracks break the humid dawn atmosphere in Palenque. After climbing down from the wagons, migrants walk alongside the rails flanked by the seventh century city as the red sky stretches out overhead. "Be brave!" shouted one migrant with an enthusiasm that provided a welcome counterpoint to the tired faces around him, weighed down by rucksacks and carrying bottles of water. "We crossed rivers and mountains," added Jose Ramon Fuentes. "The aim is to get to the other side, God willing," said the 37-year-old father-of-three, embarking on his first attempt to reach the US in search of work.



LONDON: Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson (center left), accompanied by Britain's Home Secretary Priti Patel, (center right), speaks at the first meeting of the National Policing Board at the Home Office yesterday. —AFP

Johnson's plan to renegotiate the deal by October 31 was "totally not in the real world". Leaving without a deal would throw the border status into confusion and threaten economic catastrophe for Ireland, cutting it off from its UK main trading partner. Varadkar said on Friday that a no-deal Brexit would make the unification of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland more likely.

"People who you might describe as moderate nationalists or moderate Catholics who were more or less happy

with the status quo will look more towards a united Ireland," he said. Northern Ireland is not the only part of the United Kingdom whose status after Brexit is under the spotlight. Johnson visited Scotland on Monday, where First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said last week that Scotland needed an "alternative option" to his Brexit strategy. In Wales, First Minister Mark Drakeford told him that Brexit would be "catastrophic" and to "stop playing fast and loose with our country". —AFP



PALENQUE: Aerial view of migrants on a train known as 'The Beast' in Palenque, Chiapas state, Mexico. —AFP

"Many prefer to go deeper into the jungle and the mountains to get here because both the police and criminals will rob them," said Sister Maria Tello, director of the Casa del Caminante refugee located close to the Palenque train stop. Sister Maria says she doesn't know which routes exactly the migrants take "but even if we knew them, we wouldn't divulge them because that would put (the migrants) in danger." She said migrants arrive "badly hurt and tired," with viral diseases and dehydrated due to the long routes through

inhospitable terrain. Mexico's government insists that its new migration measures are designed to treat undocumented travelers with dignity, looking after their integrity and human rights. "From the moment they take away everything (the migrants) bring, that doesn't seem like good treatment to me," said Sister Maria scornfully. On Tuesday, Mexican authorities freed a Honduran family that had been kidnapped last week in the southern Chiapas state that borders Guatemala. —AFP

## Ukraine seizes Russian tanker over naval clash

KIEV: A Ukrainian court has ordered the seizure of a Russian tanker stopped last week over its alleged involvement in a Ukrainian-Russian naval clash last year, the country's chief military prosecutor said Tuesday. A court, in the southern city of Odessa, ordered the seizure of the tanker Nika Spirit on Monday, according to documents posted by Anatoliy Matios on social media.

"The court seized the said vessel," Matios said. "We did it legally." The Russian owner of the seized tanker, the Altomar Shipping company, told Russian news agency Interfax that its management was "in contact with Ukrainian authorities" to solve a "range of issues related to the vessel". Ukraine's SBU security service said last week it had stopped the Russian tanker, previously known as the Neyma, when it entered the port of Izmail in the southern Odessa region.

Investigators seized documents on board and questioned its 10 crew members. Moscow responded by threatening Kiev with unspecified "consequences", although it later confirmed the 10 crew members had been released and allowed to return to Russia. However Kiev kept the tanker. Russian deputy foreign minister Grigory Karasin told Kommersant FM radio station on Tuesday that the boat was under private ownership and the matter should be dealt with by the courts. "We, of course, will follow this closely," he said.

In November, Russia opened fire on three Ukrainian navy vessels as they tried to pass through the Kerch Strait from the Black Sea to the Sea of Azov. Ukraine says the Russian tanker was used in that confrontation, the most dangerous open clash between the two countries in recent years. According to the SBU, the Neyma had changed its name painted on the hull to "conceal its involvement in the act of aggression". Moscow also captured 24 Ukrainian sailors manning the vessels and plans to put them on trial, accusing them of violating its maritime borders.

The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, a UN-established organization overseeing maritime disputes based in Hamburg, has urged Russia to release the sailors and return them to Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukraine's new leader Volodymyr Zelensky discussed a possible prisoner swap during their first phone call this month. The two former-Soviet neighbors have been caught up in hostilities since 2014, when Moscow annexed Crimea and supported a separatist insurgency in eastern Ukraine. Some 13,000 people have been killed in the war. —AFP

## Boris Johnson visits N Ireland, the heart of Brexit battle

BELFAST: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson yesterday visited Northern Ireland, the key battleground in Brexit and the focus of increasingly tense rhetoric on both sides of the Irish Sea. He arrived in Belfast on Tuesday amid warnings from Irish leaders that his vow to leave the European Union, with or without a deal, risks breaking up the United Kingdom. Those warnings continued yesterday. But during meetings with the province's main political parties he reiterated his determination to split with the EU.

"The Prime Minister made clear that the UK would be leaving the EU on October 31st come what may," a Downing Street spokesperson said. After meeting Johnson, Mary Lou McDonald, the head of Republican Sinn Fein party, said he had "set the compass for a disorderly and a crash Brexit," meaning that there had now to be the opportunity for Northern Ireland to consider joining the Republic. "We've made it clear to him that the extensive planning that he tells us he is carrying out in respect of a crash Brexit has to include the constitutional question," she told the BBC.

## Migrants raking up the risks in crossing Mexico for the US

PALENQUE: He has negotiated dense jungle and clung precariously with other migrants to a freight train, taking on the combined might of two countries' ever more rigid immigration authorities - but Jose Contreras isn't giving up his dream of reaching the United States. Like the many migrants who set out daily for new lives in America, the Honduran father-of-four will not be deterred by the expanding Mexican immigration crackdown prompted by US pressure.

The journey northwards is becoming ever more treacherous since Mexico deployed thousands of troops to its border with Guatemala, which has also signed a pact with Washington aimed at keeping migrants out of the US. Contreras, 31, left San Pedro Sula in northwestern Honduras eight days ago and paid \$26 to be taken across 20 miles of national park from El Naranjo in Guatemala to the Mexican frontier.

The price jumped to \$42 for the onward 40-mile trip to Tenosique, in Mexico, where migrants can jump on the train known as "La Bestia," which means "the



International

# Fly buzzes Duterte as he attacks Philippine priests

## Philippines approves plan to build new Manila airport

**MANILA:** A fly that interrupted his speech was working under the orders of priests, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte joked Tuesday, as he launched a new verbal attack on the country's influential Catholic Church. The fly buzzed around Duterte as he spoke at a school in Manila, landing on his forehead and cheek and causing him to flap his arms in a futile bid to swat away the pesky insect.

"I've had a fight with priests for a long time," the 74-year-old strongman said without missing a beat. "This fly is taking orders from them. It has been following me for some time," he added, drawing laughter from the audience. Duterte later cursed the fly when he missed flicking it with a finger as it landed on a microphone. "Wait until I'm done with my speech. I will smash you with the manuscript," he said.

Earlier, Duterte said the Catholic church's dogma was "simply not acceptable to my God-given common sense". "I have a God. I just don't want to be saddled with religions," he said. The Philippine president has a history of criticizing the Catholic church, which counts some 80 percent of the nation's more than 100 million people as believers. Last year he angered church leaders by taking aim at the biblical version of man's creation, saying: "Who is this stupid God?"

Church leaders have been critical of his policies, including an anti-narcotics crackdown that has left thousands dead. They also oppose his calls for bringing back capital punishment. Tuesday's fly incident was not the first time an insect has ruined one of his public engagements. In May, a cockroach crawled up

his shoulder and down the front of his shirt as he spoke at a campaign rally ahead of congressional elections. Duterte later joked that the bug belonged to the opposition.

### New Manila airport

In another development, the Philippines yesterday approved a plan to build a new airport near Manila, in a bid to ease congestion with the capital's existing airport operating at full capacity. Philippine conglomerate San Miguel will build the airport in Bulakan town, north of Manila Bay, that will feature four parallel runways and serve 100-200 million passengers a year, a government statement said.

"This new international airport is important in helping ease the congestion of the Ninoy Aquino

International Airport (in Manila)," Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade said in the statement. San Miguel, which was the only company to bid for the project, will have to break ground on the \$14 billion project before the end of the year and open for business no later than 2025, the statement said.

The company has said it plans to run the airport, which would be the biggest infrastructure project under President Rodrigo Duterte's government, after obtaining a government concession. The existing Manila airport, which has two runways, handled nearly 260,000 flights and served 45 million passengers last year, according to its website. The announcement came after the close of trade in Manila. Shares in San Miguel rose 1.19 percent to end at 178.00 pesos (\$3.50). — Agencies

## In dragons v tourists fight, the Indonesian villagers to lose out

**BANGKOK:** Thousands of residents of an island in eastern Indonesia are resisting a government plan to relocate them and close the island next year in a bid to conserve rare Komodo dragons. Last week, Indonesian authorities said the island of Komodo would be closed next year to allow for the recovery of the reptiles and the Komodo National Park, the only habitat for the world's largest lizard species. About 2,000 people would also be moved off the island, and risk losing their homes and livelihoods, said Gregorius Afoma, director of human rights group Sunspirit for Justice and Peace.

"These are people who had already lost their land to the park, and suffered as authorities prioritized tourism. Now they will lose again," he said yesterday. "They have not benefited much from the tourism boom, and with the relocation they will be isolated even more, despite evidence that local people help conservation efforts." Globally, there is a growing awareness - and backlash against - the negative impacts of tourism, from environmental damage to the destruction of neighborhoods as local residents are priced out.

Poorer countries in Southeast Asia are particularly ill-equipped to limit the "invisible burden" of overtourism, according to a report earlier this year from the Travel Foundation charity in Britain. Growing tourist numbers forced authorities in Thailand last year to close a beach made famous by the Leonardo DiCaprio film "The Beach" to give its ecosystem time to recover. The Philippine holiday island of Boracay also shut for a clean-up last year after the president raged it had become a "cesspool" and warned of an environmental disaster.

But shutting down destinations is not the right approach unless it is an ecological emergency, said Megan Epler Wood, director of the International Sustainable Tourism Initiative at Harvard University. "Relocation of villagers is a drastic act," she said. Instead, the system should be revamped to "build local communities into the revenue generation process, and manage tourism flows," she said via email. Komodo National Park, a conservation area between the islands of Sumbawa and Flores, drew more than 176,000 tourists from across the world last year.

The park, a World Heritage Site, is home to more than 4,500 dragons which can grow to up to 3 metres in length. It has seen a steady uptick in visitors as cruise ships made stops and a nearby airport was upgraded. Visitors have worsened pollution, damaged the ecosystem and driven up land prices, forcing local residents to abandon farming and make a living from selling souvenirs, said Cypri Jehan Paju Dale, a researcher on Indonesia at Bern University. — Reuters



**BANDA ACEH:** Workers transfer yellowfin tuna from a ship into a waiting truck at a fishing port in Banda Aceh yesterday. — AFP

## 12 die, flooding paralyzes Karachi

**KARACHI:** At least 12 people were killed as monsoon rains lashed Pakistan's port city of Karachi, officials and charity groups confirmed yesterday, while flooding also triggered power outages and overwhelmed the metropolis's fragile infrastructure. Authorities said the deaths occurred largely due to electrocutions caused by ill-maintained power lines even as large segments of the city suffered hours-long outages that lasted up to a day in some areas.

According to the Edhi Foundation—which

oversees a vast rescue services operation in Karachi—up to 15 people were killed during the recent bout of flooding. However government hospitals in the city said only 12 people had died in recent days in flood-related incidents. Outrage simmered in the city after a video went viral on social media showing two children who had been allegedly electrocuted by a power line that had fallen into a puddle.

"The electricity company must be held responsible for the children's death as safety and security is its responsibility," said Faisal Edhi, who heads the Edhi Foundation. Dr Seemi Jamali—director of the state-run Jinnah Postgraduate Medical University—confirmed that nine people were "brought dead" to the hospital because of electrocutions. Another

three bodies, including the children from the video shared online, were taken to the city's Abbasi Shaheed Hospital, a doctor on duty at the facility confirmed to AFP.

The megacity of some 20 million has been inundated with heavy rains since Monday, flooding residential areas and bringing large swathes of Karachi's perennially traffic-congested streets to a halt. "We are living without electricity and water for the past three days and no official rescue came," said 24-year-old resident Qaiser Khan. Hundreds have been killed across South Asia this monsoon season and tens of thousands displaced by the heavy rains. While the annual rains are crucial to replenishing water supplies in the impoverished region, they often turn deadly. — AFP



**KARACHI:** Young boys wade and play among floodwaters during heavy monsoon rains in Karachi yesterday. — AFP

## News TV blackouts in Pakistan draw fresh accusations

**ISLAMABAD:** Pakistani opposition parties have accused Prime Minister Imran Khan of intimidating broadcasters into a blackout on television coverage of his critics, after several TV channels were briefly taken off-air and opposition protests and news conferences passed unreported. Khan denies censoring the media, describing such accusations as "a joke" during a visit to Washington this month, but relations with the press and broadcasters have become increasingly strained since he took office nearly a year ago.

Fuelling the criticism, as Khan headed back from the United States last Wednesday a news conference by opposition leader Maryam Nawaz, which would normally be carried live on TV news stations, went unseen as broadcasters held back from coverage. "Pakistan's media is facing the worst censorship," Nawaz told the news conference, which was broadcast on YouTube. "If any news channel tries to air our presser or rallies, it is threatened to go off air."

Media managers were reluctant to comment publicly when contacted by Reuters, but statements from industry bodies have complained about pressure on journalists and their employers. News groups have also been alarmed by proposals to establish special courts to hear cases relating to the media. The All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) described the proposal as institutionalized "arm-twisting".

"The media is already braving strong pressures in the form of press advices and measures of intimidation from ruling quarters which are tantamount to undeclared censorship," it said. Khan's government dismisses the criticism and says it is dealing with the consequences of abuses by past administrations, who it says used lucrative government advertising business to buy favorable coverage. His Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) party earlier this month posted a series of tweets warning media houses and journalists that they should not "end up propagating (the) enemy's stance" in criticizing the government.

erful military over many years. Some in the media complained of a severe crackdown in the run up to the 2018 general election that saw Khan's PTI party sweep to power. Writers and bloggers say several cases of reporters being abducted and beaten, critical columnists being denied space, advertising business cut to media houses and sackings of unfavorable TV commentators have created a climate of fear and self-censorship.

The military and government have denied state agencies have been involved in any of those incidents. They also reject opposition accusations that the army colluded in bringing the PTI to power. Nawaz's PML-N party says it is the main target of a renewed crackdown, which comes after it aired a video apparently showing one of the judges who convicted party founder and former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif last year on corruption charges saying he had been blackmailed to deliver a guilty verdict. The judge, who later denied the allegations, has since been sacked. In recent weeks planned interviews with party leader Maryam Nawaz, Nawaz Sharif's daughter, have been pulled without explanation at the last minute, while her voice has been repeatedly muted mysteriously during interviews. Geo News TV, the country's biggest private broadcaster, has suffered a series of problems since late July.

Coverage was abruptly suspended and its position on cable dials dropped from a favorable place at the top of the list to a slot near the bottom. Geo TV's Managing Director Azhar Abbas said the broadcaster had received no warning or explanation and had not been notified of who had ordered the changes. "The closure is without any prior notice to the organization by the regulatory authority or the government," he said. "We have made fervent attempts to reach out to ... the military media wing, but officials there also deny any involvement."

"Big brother"

Three other TV channels, 24 News, AbbTakK News and Capital TV, were shut down for one day after they gave Maryam Nawaz live coverage earlier this month. "I was informed by management that they received instructions this couldn't be carried," said Najam Sethi, a 24 News anchor, who had scheduled an interview with Maryam. "We, media owners and journalists alike, are in a state of siege. Pressure to control, manipulate, plant, tilt, block and propagate the news and analysis cycle comes from overt and covert civil-military platforms. Big brother isn't just watching anymore. He is cracking the whip and it's painful."

Ansar Naqvi, the station's director programming and current affairs, said Sethi was asked not to conduct the interview in line with a request from the country's broadcasting regulator. "We have verbal instructions from the regulator to ban Maryam's coverage completely," he told Reuters, adding that there was no written directive. Mohammad Tahir, spokesman for the state-run regulator Pakistan Electronic Media Authority (PEMRA), denied that it had issued instructions to broadcasters not to run interviews. Asked who pulled the interviews, he told Reuters: "We didn't."

The government's main spokesperson, Firdous Aashiq Awan, told a meeting of Pakistani newspaper editors in Karachi last week that the PEMRA was an independent body just doing its job. She did not comment on who was behind the blackouts. The Pakistan Broadcast Association (PBA) has condemned the shutdowns, while the US-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) said the blockage of Geo TV was "an unfortunate illustration of how widespread censorship has become in Pakistan".

Journalists' bodies in Pakistan have held demonstrations nationwide. Reporters without Borders said in a statement last week that PEMRA, "takes its lead from the military establishment". The military, which routinely denies accusations of interfering in civilian matters, said it would not respond to unspecified accusations. In Washington, Khan dismissed concerns about media freedom, saying it was freer than the media in Britain. "The criticism I have received from my own press, unprecedented," he said. "So, to say that there are curbs on Pakistan press is a joke." — Reuter

## Indian Muslim 'instant divorce' ban hailed

**NEW DELHI:** The Indian government and women's groups hailed "historic" legislation yesterday that criminalized "instant divorce" for Muslims, but an influential Islamic group said it would launch a legal challenge. India's upper house passed a bill Tuesday banning the centuries-old practice that allowed men to separate from their wives by saying "talaq" - or divorce - three times. Husbands who use it now can be jailed for up to three years or be fined. Some Muslim women's groups celebrated at events across India, which has followed Pakistan, Bangladesh, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates in regulating "triple talaq".

Zakia Soman, a social activist who launched a campaign against the practice nearly a decade ago, said the legislation would serve as a deterrent against the unjust treatment of women, some of whom were divorced with a WhatsApp

message or by phone. "This law is the result of decades of injustice meted out to Muslim women and the unsympathetic attitude of the political class and clergy," Soman told AFP. The government called the parliament vote "historic". "An archaic and medieval practice has finally been confined to the dustbin of history," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Twitter late Tuesday.

### 'Medieval' divorce banned

But other Muslim groups fought the law and even the opposition Congress Party was against it, accusing Modi's right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of targeting one minority group. Zafaryab Jilani of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board vowed yesterday to challenge the new legislation in court. He said the action was part of a wider campaign by Modi's Hindu nationalist party to undermine religious freedom. "We are not surprised by the legislation as it is part of their larger agenda to change the country's constitution and snatch away the rights of minorities," Jilani, secretary of the Muslim group, told AFP. Jilani said a petition against the law had nearly 50 million signatories across India. — AFP



**NEW DELHI:** Muslim women visit the Parliament house to watch the current session from viewer's gallery in New Delhi. — AFP

### Turbulent relations

Pakistan's press has had a turbulent relationship with successive governments and the pow-



# Business

THURSDAY, AUGUST 1, 2019

## Zain Group revenue soars 61% to \$2.7bn for first six months of 2019

Net income rises 13% to \$321 million; 49.2 million customers served by 30 June 2019

**KUWAIT:** Zain Group, a leading mobile innovator with operations in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announced its consolidated financial results for the six months to 30 June 2019. Zain served 49.2 million customers at the end of the period, reflecting a 4 percent increase year-on-year (Y-o-Y).

For the first six months of 2019 (H1), Zain Group generated consolidated revenue of KD 811 million (\$2.7 billion), reflecting a growth of 61 percent Y-o-Y. EBITDA for H1 2019 reached KD 354 million (\$1.17 billion), up 109 percent Y-o-Y, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 44 percent. Net income for H1 2019 reached KD 97.3 million (\$321 million), up 13 percent Y-o-Y, reflecting Earnings Per Share of 22 Fils (\$0.07).

For H1 2019, foreign currency translation impact, predominantly due to the 43 percent currency devaluation in Sudan from an average of 26.5 in H1 2018 to 46.5 in H1 2019 (SDG / USD), cost the Group USD 101 million in Revenue, \$44 million in EBITDA and \$15 million in net income.

In the second quarter of 2019 (Q2), Zain Group generated consolidated revenue of KD 407 million (\$1.34 billion), reflecting a growth of 66 percent when compared to the same period in the previous year. EBITDA for the quarter reached KD 177 million (\$582 million), up 108 percent Y-o-Y, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 43 percent. Net income for the quarter amounted to KD 50 million (\$165 million), up 10 percent Y-o-Y, reflecting earnings per share of 12 fils (\$0.04).

For Q2 2019, foreign currency translation impact, predominantly due to the 38 percent currency devaluation in Sudan from an average of 28.1 in Q2 2018 to 45.6 in Q2 2019 (SDG / USD), cost the company \$46 million in Revenue, \$19 million in EBITDA and \$6 million in net income.

### Key Operational Notes for H1 2019

1. The consolidation of Zain Saudi Arabia (KSA) into Zain Group that started in Q3 '18 resulted in an additional \$1.1 billion in revenue and \$506 million in EBITDA during H1 2019.  
2. Expansion of 4G LTE networks across key markets and the launch of 5G commercial services in Kuwait, coupled with numerous data monetization initiatives saw Zain Group data revenue grow 114 percent Y-o-Y, to represent 36 percent of the Group's consolidated revenue. The consolidation of Zain KSA was the primary contributor to the data growth.



Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi



Zain Group Chairman Ahmed Al-Tahous

tion program, efficiency drive, and growth strategy is on track in delivering the ambitious financial targets we have set in a bid to exceed all expectations from our stakeholders."

Al-Kharafi continued, "Zain Group's financial growth during the period in many key indicators was underpinned primarily by the strategic consolidation of Zain KSA, combined with the Saudi operator's impressive performance, which has driven it to profitability for four consecutive quarters. Zain KSA's market capitalization has more than doubled in the last 12 months, offering further testament of investor confidence in the successful implementation of the company's turnaround strategy and future roadmap."

The Vice-Chairman and Group CEO concluded, "The recent launch of 5G networks in Kuwait was a major milestone, as it allows us to offer more innovative and compelling services to our customers in government, business, IoT, and smart city sectors, bolstering the digital economy in these areas. 5G technology will create vast opportunities in the value chain proposition in numerous industries and will push the telecom sector to a new and exciting phase of growth. Zain is mobilizing all its resources to capitalize on this enormous opportunity in creating shareholder value."

Operational review of key markets for the six months ended 30 June 2019

**Kuwait:** Maintaining its market leadership, the flagship operation of Zain Group saw its customer base serve 2.8 million in a very challenging period that

**Iraq:** Zain Iraq performed exceptionally well in H1 2019 when compared to H1 2018 with revenue reaching \$522 million and EBITDA reached \$220 million, up 14 percent reflecting an EBITDA margin of 42 percent. The operator reported a net income of \$25 million for H1 2019, up 39 percent on the \$18 million profit recorded for H1 2018. The operator added 600,000 customers (up 4 percent Y-o-Y) to reach 15.3 million and witnessed significant growth in data

Revenue, as well as profitable progress in the enterprise (B2B) segment.

**Sudan:** Despite the ongoing social and economic issues in the country, the operator continues to perform well in local currency (SDG) terms, as Revenue grew by 45 percent Y-o-Y to reach SDG 6.4 billion (\$138 million, down 18 percent in USD terms) for H1 2019. EBITDA increased by 36 percent to reach SDG 2.4 billion

(\$52 million, down 23 percent in USD terms), reflecting an EBITDA margin of 37 percent, while net income increased by 31 percent to reach SDG 900 million (\$19 million, down 30 percent in USD terms). Data revenue formed 16 percent of total Revenue, with an impressive growth of 31 percent (Y-o-Y) in SDG terms. Zain Sudan saw its customer base expand 9 percent to reach 15.1 million customers.

**Jordan:** Zain Jordan serves a customer base of 3.7 million at the end of June 2019, maintaining its market leading position. Y-o-Y revenue was stable at \$240 million, with EBITDA up 17 percent to reach \$113 million, reflecting a 47 percent EBITDA margin. Net Income increased 9 percent to \$39 million in H1 2019. With the continual expansion of 4G services across the country, data revenue grew by 4 percent, representing 40 percent of total revenue.

**Bahrain:** Zain Bahrain generated revenue of \$81 million for the first six months of 2019. EBITDA for H1 2019 increased by 41 percent to reach \$28 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 35 percent. Net Income amounted to \$6.7 million, reflecting a 9 percent increase Y-o-Y. Data revenue represents 48 percent of overall revenue.



For Q2 2019, revenue growth 65%, EBITDA growth 106%, net income up 10%

- H1 2019 data revenue grew by 114%, representing 36% of Group revenue
- Chairman, Ahmed Al-Tahous: "The Board is focused on implementation of strategic growth plans to increase shareholder value"
- Vice-Chairman & Group CEO, Bader Al-Kharafi: "An exceptional six-months of profitable growth across all key operations especially Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Iraq"

3. The adoption of new accounting standard IFRS 16 - 'Lease' from the beginning of 2019 resulted in a benefit to EBITDA of KD 37 million (\$121 million), and an increase in net income of KD 3.2 million (\$11 million)

Commenting on the results, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Zain Group, Ahmed Al-Tahous said, "The Group's performance in the first half of the year was very pleasing given the numerous operational and competitive challenges we face in several key markets. The Board is working closely with senior management in maintaining our leadership position in many of our markets and future-proofing the business by investing heavily in our networks and seeking new opportunities in the digital space. We are committed to the region's economic and social prosperity and are sincerely grateful for the enabling environment created by the governments and regulatory authorities across our footprint."

Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO commented, "The first six months of 2019 were exceptional as we recorded impressive Net Income and EBITDA growth in all key operations, namely Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan and Bahrain. We also continue to perform remarkably well in all key financial indicators in local SDG currency terms in Sudan, though this progress is negated by currency devaluations. Overall, these robust set of results reconfirm that our digital transforma-

witnessed improving Net Income for the quarter. The Group's most profitable operation saw its H1 2019 Revenue reach KD 165 million (\$544 million), and net income increase by 10 percent to reach KD 44 million (\$144 million). Zain Kuwait's EBITDA amounted to KD 65 million (\$213 million), an 18 percent increase Y-o-Y, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 39 percent. Data revenue grew by 9 percent Y-o-Y, representing 37 percent of total revenue.

**Saudi Arabia:** The operator continues to grow all its key financial metrics, recording net income for the last four consecutive quarters. For H1 2019, Zain KSA generated revenue of SAR 4.2 billion (\$1.1 billion), a 17 percent increase compared to the same period in 2018. EBITDA for H1 2019 amounted to SAR 1.9 billion (\$506 million), up 60 percent Y-o-Y, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 46 percent. Net income for the period soared to reach an unprecedented SAR 260 million (\$69.2 million), reflecting a significant turnaround on the H1 2018 net loss of SAR 115 million (\$30.6 million). Data revenue represents 44 percent of total revenue and customers served reached 8.3 million.

### Group Key Performance Indicators (KD and USD) for first six months (H1) of 2019

Total Managed Active Customers	49.2 million
Revenue	KD 811 million (USD 2.7 billion) up 61%
EBITDA	KD 354 million (USD 1.17 billion) up 109%
EBITDA Margin	44%
Net Income	KD 97.3 million (USD 321 million) up 13%
EPS	22 Fils (USD 0.07)





## Business

# NBK launches family banking services, the first of its kind in the Middle East

## New services provide exceptional benefits for parents and children

**KUWAIT:** Continuously launching new products and services that cater to its customers' needs, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) introduced the Family Banking Services, the first of its kind in the Middle East. The Family Banking Services enable Premium Banking Customers: Privilege and Thahabi Package holders to share the exclusive products, services and benefits they receive with their family.

Every family member can enjoy the personal attention and a wide range of financial products designed to meet their banking needs. Announcing the new product, Mohammed Akram Hashim, Head of Segments, Consumer Banking Group, National Bank of Kuwait, said: "NBK is committed to providing customers with products and services that are tailored to their needs while ensuring they receive the best banking experience. We designed the Family Banking Services to offer exceptional features that benefit parents and their children as well."

Hashim added: "We promise our customers to continue offering them innovative services that

align with their lifestyle and enhance their banking experience."

Hashim confirmed that the new product gives the entire family the opportunity to enjoy an international banking experience that has long distinguished NBK services. The Bank is proud of its large network of local and international branches with more than 150 branches and subsidiaries in four continents around the world, covering the United States, Europe, Gulf States, the Middle East, China and Singapore.

**Through Family Banking Services, NBK offers customers a wide range of exclusive services that include:**

- Flexible criteria for family members to join Privilege and Thahabi Packages and benefit from the Premium Banking Services
- Free Premium Banking Credit Cards for the first year for family members
- Free access to the airport lounge for families with NBK Visa Signature Credit Card

- Reduced fees on specific NBK Products and Services such as credit cards, prepaid and multicurrency prepaid cards, as well as safety deposit boxes and more
- Luxurious concierge service to meet the family's lifestyle.

NBK provides its banking services to customers worldwide, thanks to its large network which covers four continents. The Bank is present in leading financial centers including Geneva, London, New York, Paris, Shanghai and Singapore, as well as regionally in Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and UAE.



Mohammed Akram Hashim



## Warba Bank to hold Al-Sunbula weekly draw

**KUWAIT:** Warba Bank, "the Best investment Bank" and "Best Corporate Bank" in Kuwait, will be organizing its weekly Sunbula draw number 29 today at 11 am in presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Bank officials. Al-Sunbula both account and fixed deposits are the perfect choices for customers who wish to save money and achieve steady returns while at the same time gain the opportunity to win prizes throughout the year. In line with the bank's mission to develop and differentiate its offerings, Warba Bank has enhanced its Sunbula campaign for 2019 with more cash and prizes reaching more than KD 1 million.

In the running campaign, Warba Bank continued its weekly draws for 5 winners of KD 1,000 each throughout the year, yet introduce the "Mega Draws" that take place on a quarterly basis to reveal five winners, the first winner gets KD 100,000 in cash! The four winners thereafter will each get the latest 2019 Land Cruiser 5.7 VXR. And more, as the last Mega Draw will give away 2 more Land Cruisers!

As per the winning chances, each customer will be participating in the draw for each KD 10 in the Sunbula Account. It is also worth noting that the Sunbula Fixed Deposit rewards its investor with both high expected returns, reaching up to 3.5 percent, as well as winning chances. And such investors have full flexibility in choosing the desired tenure and the profit distribution method.

Furthermore, Warba Bank is leveraging on its Customer Onboarding solution, in line with its ambitious five-year strategy that enables non-Warba Bank customers to request the opening of Al-Sunbula account in a simple electronic manner without having to visit the branch, through 5 simple steps in 5 minutes. New customers will be able to request opening the account at anytime, anywhere, through the new and unique electronic system used to implement this service. Representatives will then contact the customer to determine the appropriate time to visit the branch to get required signatures, verify the customer's identity, deliver his/her debit card, and activate the account.

## Burgan Bank's customers offered 10% discount from sports brand ASICS



**KUWAIT:** Bringing its customers closer to the best brands around the world, Burgan Bank announced its latest offer on "ASICS", the popular footwear and sports equipment brand. Burgan Bank's customers can now enjoy a 10 percent discount from "ASICS" through its long-standing partnership with Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Co, the official retailer of "ASICS" brand and one of the oldest, largest and most successful retail and distribution companies in Kuwait.

Burgan Bank customers can avail the discounted offer by using any of Burgan Bank credit or debit cards. To know more about Burgan Bank's latest offers, or any of its products and services, customers can visit any of the Burgan Bank's branches or Burgan Banks Instagram page on @BurganBankKuwait

## AUB offers discounts up to 25% at Atlantis The Palm in tie-up with MasterCard

**KUWAIT:** Ahli United Bank has announced the launch of its latest premium offers for enjoying thrilling summer vacations with the family, in cooperation with MasterCard at all around Atlantis The Palm resort, one of the most famous and luxurious resorts in Dubai. This offer is valid till October 22nd 2019. Bank's Customers; holders of MasterCard credit cards can enjoy discounts up to 25 percent on accommodation at Atlantis The Palm Dubai resort during the offer validity period.

## EQUATE announces financial results for Q2 2019

**KUWAIT:** The EQUATE Group, a global producer of petrochemicals, yesterday announced its Q2 2019 unaudited earnings, reporting \$231 million in EBITDA, a 59 percent decrease from \$570 million in Q2 2018, and \$822 million in revenue, a 35 percent decrease from \$1,264 million in

Q2 2018. Net income after tax stood at \$126 million in Q2 2019, a 71 percent decrease from \$427 million in the same period last year.

Commenting on the results, Dr Ramesh Ramchandran, CEO and President of the EQUATE Group, said: "Our earnings have been affected by a sudden and strong decrease in ethylene glycol prices, driven by a continued uncertainty of tariffs, volatility in global markets as well as some new capacity that came on line. However, EQUATE's assets across the globe are all based on ethane feedstock, providing us with a competitive advantage. EQUATE will continue to maintain focus on safety and operational excellence as this challenging pricing environment continues."

The EQUATE Group is a global producer of petrochemicals and the world's second largest producer of ethylene glycol (EG). The Group owns and operates industrial complexes in Kuwait, North America and Europe that annually produce over 6 million tons of ethylene, EG, polyethylene (PE), polyethylene terephthalate (PET), styrene monomer (SM), paraxylene (PX), heavy aromatics (HA) and benzene (BZ). The EQUATE Group includes EQUATE Petrochemical Company (EQUATE), The Kuwait Olefins Company (TKOC), as well as a number of subsidiaries such as MEGlobal and Equipolymers. Their products are marketed throughout Asia, the Americas, Europe, the Middle East and Africa.



Bank's customers to use their banking cards instead of cash to book hotels, which promotes using the Bank's credit cards locally and internationally.

## VIVA announces 'Al-Neira' Q1 draw winners



**KUWAIT:** VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, announced the winners of the first quarter of 'Al-Neira' draw, which applies to both VIVA Postpaid and Prepaid customers. Customers earn 1 chance for every KD 1 they spend, increasing their chances to win every time they spend. The names

of the winners were as follows: Eddie Clipayan, Mamdouh Ahmad Hasan Aldeyasti, Najat Dekheel Thani Alsaedi and Taha Abdulrahman.

With a grand total of more than \$ 300,000 to give away, VIVA gives its customers a wonderful opportunity to win 4 amazing cash prizes quarterly of \$ 10,000

each for three quarters, and a mega prize of \$ 200,000 at the final draw. Customers are able to accumulate winning chances upon any VIVA transaction through Direct Debit, VIVA website, VIVA Kiosks, VIVA App or by calling 102. Customers can enter the Draw by sending 300 to 567 as SMS for Free.

## Increasingly cautious global funds build cash buffer; cut equities

**LONDON:** "More caution" was the mantra of global fund managers in July, with recommended equity allocations cut to the lowest since early 2017 and suggested cash holdings increased to the highest in five months, a Reuters poll showed. With no respite from trade tariffs, fund managers remain worried about the global economy despite many major central banks shifting towards policy easing, which has pushed Wall Street stocks to record highs this month.

While falling bond yields have not yet unnerved Wall Street or international stock markets, fund managers recommended a cut in global equity allocations to an average 45.7 percent of the model global portfolio. Recommended allocations at the beginning of 2019 to global equities, at an average 48.5 percent, were the highest in a year but have been cut gradually. July's was the lowest since March 2017. "Some near-term caution

toward stocks is warranted given the strong gains in the first half combined with a slowing global economy, renewed trade tensions and stalled corporate profits growth," said Alan Gayle, president of Via Nova Investment Management.

"Moreover the lack of market participation outside of the large-cap S&P 500 highlights the challenge."

A separate Reuters survey of over 500 economists showed concerns a global economic growth rut is at risk of deepening as trade tensions between the United States and its trading partners were likely to intensify this year. There is no evidence of a resolution to deep differences between the U.S. and China in their year-long trade war, marked by tit-for-tat tariffs. U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday warned China against delaying a deal as a new round of talks got underway in Shanghai.

### Pessimism

Increasing pessimism was also clear in the July 16-30 Reuters poll of nearly 40 fund managers and chief investment officers in Europe, the United States, Britain and Japan. Suggested allocations to cash were increased to 6.5 percent from 6.1 percent in June. That was below a

near four-year high of 7.2 percent set in February when managers ramped up cash holdings.

But despite widespread expectations most major central banks have started - or will do soon - on the path of easing, funds cut their recommended bond holdings to 40.9 percent in July from 41.3 percent the previous month. "We increase the allocation to cash and reduce the exposure to fixed-income ... amid the very high expectations from central banks and the very low level of interest rates," said Filippo Casagrande, head of investments at Generali Investments Partners. When asked where fund managers saw the most risk, the ongoing trade war was the top pick. But a majority of respondents expected monetary policy easing to be the biggest opportunity to seek solid returns in equities, at least, provided central banks do not make a sudden shift away from current expectations.

"The markets are currently responding to the tones of central banks, which led by the Federal Reserve are all in a very dovish mood looking to offset the potential slow-down from trade wars," said John Husselbee, head of multi-asset at Liontrust in London. "Any central bank mood swing could spell trouble for markets as well as any signs of faltering or expansion of the trade talks." —Reuters

What's On



# Spoil your little ones at Symphony Style Kuwait's unique kids' club

Summer is here, and schools are off, which means its holiday time. For families seeking a relaxed escape location with fun entertainment activities for kids, Symphony Style Kuwait, A Radisson Collection Hotel, presents as the ultimate family destination in Kuwait. We, at Symphony Style Hotel, love treating all children and teens to an age-appropriate toys and videos games. So, kids are guaranteed to enjoy an exciting experience at Symphony Kids Club.

Furthermore, after the great success of the kids' club, the hotel has enhanced its facilities to include the Teens Hub, an exclusive space for teenage guests, and a party room for memorable children's parties. Inspired by

Symphony Kids' Club position as an entertainment destination and located on the 3rd floor, the Teens Hub is a dynamic entertainment zone exclusively for teenage boys and girls. The kids will be spoiled with the latest video games for Wii and PlayStation and the Interactive Magic Motion virtual reality experience or simply have a special birthday celebration that is filled with action and excitement.

Do not look further when you start planning for your kid's birthday party and family celebrations, our Party Room with its functional indoor space is the ideal place. It provides special party packages that can be tailored to every child's needs and requirements. Symphony Style Kuwait's expert staff will be

available on end to ensure a memorable occasion, whether they are hosting little superheroes, mini princes and princesses or little wild animals.

The Symphony Kids' Club offers a 500 sqm multipurpose play area, a dedicated cinema, library, dining and sleeping area. Young guests are under the constant supervision of our trained staff, ensuring peace of mind for parents and an exciting adventure for children. Symphony Style Kuwait is committed to ensuring memorable experiences for all guests. The addition of the Teens Hub and Party Room emphasize how much the hotel values young guests and demonstrates why it was named the Best Luxury Family Hotel in Kuwait.



## Memorial mass for Anthony Fernandes

A Month's Mind Eucharistic Celebration for the departed soul of Martin Anthony 'Tony' Fernandes (Kuwait/Borivile/Marcela Goa) will be held on August 5, at 6:30pm at the Holy Family Cathedral in Kuwait City. Tony was a man of great will-power, compassion and a loyal son, faithful husband, a devoted father of seven children and a hardworking businessman.

He was truly a Goan legend in Kuwait, a country he called home for over 50 years before retiring back to his beloved IC Colony in Mumbai. His community and charitable services to the country, church and the community will echo in eternity and will always be remembered fondly. This memorial mass is offered by his children Simona, Vilette, Youla, Vinita, Valencia, Abigail and Shane along with his son-in-laws, daughter-in-law and his grandchildren. Family, friends and loved ones are all invited to attend the service.

## Strawberry Shortcake

### Ingredients

- 2 hard-boiled egg yolks, cooled
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 3 tablespoons semolina flour or fine-grind cornmeal
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 6 tablespoons chilled unsalted butter, cut into pieces plus 2 tablespoons heavy cream
- Sanding or granulated sugar (for sprinkling)
- 1 1/2 pounds strawberries (about 1 quart), hulled, halved, quartered if large
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
- Salt
- 2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice, divided
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons powdered sugar
- 1/2 vanilla bean, halved lengthwise

### Preparation

Pulse egg yolks, both flours, baking powder, salt, and granulated sugar in a food processor to combine. Add butter and pulse until only pea-size pieces remain. Drizzle in cup cream, then pulse 2-3 times to barely incorporate. Transfer dough to a work surface and gently fold on top of itself several times just to bring it together and work in any dry spots.

Using a 2-oz. ice cream scoop, make 6 balls and place on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Do not flatten. Cover and chill until cold, 20-25 minutes.

Preheat oven to 350°. Brush tops of shortcakes

with remaining 2 Tbsp. cream and sprinkle with sanding sugar. Bake until golden and sides are firm to the touch, 28-32 minutes. Let cool.

Toss strawberries, granulated sugar, lemon zest, and a pinch of salt in a medium bowl to combine. Transfer half of strawberries to a large saucepan and add 1 Tbsp. water; let remaining strawberries macerate while you bring strawberries in saucepan to a gentle simmer over medium-low. Cook, stirring occasionally and reducing heat if needed to keep at a low simmer, until strawberries are starting to break down and become jammy and liquid is syrupy, 12-18 minutes. Let cool, then stir in 1 tsp. lemon juice. Stir

remaining 1 tsp. lemon juice into macerated strawberries.

Combine heavy cream, powdered sugar, and a pinch of salt in a medium bowl. Scrape in seeds from vanilla bean; reserve pod for another use. Beat cream until soft peaks form.

Split shortcakes and divide strawberry compote, macerated strawberries, and whipped cream among bottoms. Close with shortcake tops.



# Glimmer of hope as Italy battles 'olive tree leprosy'

## Resistant varieties continue to grow and flower

**GAGLIANO DEL CAPO, Italy:** Working in an arid Italian field of crumbly soil, agronomists are battling a rampant bacterium that has already infected millions of olive trees and could threaten the entire Mediterranean basin. *Xylella fastidiosa*, which has no known cure, has devastated ancient olive trees in Italy's southern Apulia region and beyond, causing 1.2 billion euros of damage to the world's second olive oil exporter after Spain.

Since 2013, the disease has torn through Apulia's olive groves, leaving thousands of skeleton-like trees in its wake, and little hope for farmers. Once *Xylella fastidiosa* bacteria-carried by tiny sap-sucking insects known as spittlebugs-take hold, blocking the tree's ability to absorb water, the plant is doomed.

### Bureaucracy and mafia

The only way to fight the spread of the disease, known as "olive tree leprosy", is to destroy diseased trees, but farmers must seek special permission and say the authorities are not always forthcoming. Doubtful of conspiracy theories that the mafia are killing trees to make way for hotel construction, agronomist Pierfederico La Notte noticed that some trees seemed not to become infected, standing tall and green in otherwise devastated fields.

Suspecting that they may be resistant varieties that can develop the disease to a small degree but continue to grow and flower, the soft-spoken researcher rapidly identified two that appeared to suffer little from *Xylella*. "The Leccino and Favolosa varieties are a starting point, not the finish line," said La Notte, who works for Italy's National Research Council.

"We hope, and we're working on it, to find a much bigger number of resistant varieties," said La Notte, teaching

visiting Egyptian agronomists in a research field outside the ancient town of Gallipoli. Results so far are promising. Branches from resistant varieties that are grafted onto the trunks of sick trees are growing perfectly and even producing fruit, offering a glimmer of hope to the devastated region in the heel of Italy's boot.

### Immunity?

Down the road in the heavily agriculture-dependent region, agronomist and olive oil producer Giovanni Melcarne has lost 90 percent of his plants since *Xylella* arrived, and he is seeking an even better solution: immune varieties of olive tree. While much of his machinery for olive cultivation now lies dormant, he has built an improvised greenhouse, filled with dozens of small olive saplings, among which he hopes to find at least one immune variety.

"We will infect them with the illness, we will contaminate them with the insects that transmit the illness so we have scientific proof that this plant, this indigenous variety that we could cultivate, doesn't catch the disease and so is immune," Melcarne said, carefully labelling a batch of olive saplings. But it will be at least another year before the results are known, given the slowness with which the disease will become visible after infection, something that has helped it spread invisibly, and rapidly.

Drones using infrared cameras can help detect the infection marginally earlier, but the disease's progress is relentless. Known in the United States as Pierce's disease, it devastated California vineyards in the late 19th century. The European Commission describes *Xylella* as "one of the most dangerous plant bacteria worldwide, causing a variety of diseases, with huge economic impact for agriculture, public gardens and the environment." Since it



**RACALE, Italy:** This aerial picture near Racale in the Salento peninsula, in Apulia, southern Italy, shows two varieties of olive trees, some infected, left, with a disease called *Xylella fastidiosa*, a bacteria carried from tree to tree by a little bug, and some resisting the infection, right. — AFP

arrived in the Apulia region in 2013, probably from Costa Rica according to the Italian farmers' union Coldiretti, the microscopic pathogen has killed more than a million olive trees in Italy.

Coldiretti said earlier this month that *Xylella* has infected 21 million trees, and is "spreading inexorably north at a speed of more than two kilometers a month", leaving behind

it "a ghostly landscape". The bug has also attacked orchards in Spain, France and now Iran. Both Greece and Portugal are bracing for its likely arrival. Some 350 plants are vulnerable, including grape vines, citrus and almond trees.

Scientists say there is a real risk the disease will spread to the entire Mediterranean basin, where olive oil is a staple in the diet and vital to the economy. —AFP

## Southern white rhino born at US zoo, could help save species

**LOS ANGELES:** A southern white rhino conceived through artificial insemination was born at the San Diego Zoo in what was called a historic milestone that could help save a subspecies from extinction. The calf was born on Sunday and the mother named Victoria remained calm during the 30-minute labor, zoo officials said in a statement. "We are so pleased Victoria and the calf are doing

well," said Barbara Durrant, the director of Reproductive Sciences at the zoo. "She is very attentive to her baby, and the calf is up and walking, and nursing frequently."

"Not only are we thankful for a healthy calf, but this birth is significant, as it also represents a critical step in our effort to save the northern white rhino from the brink of extinction." The birth marks the first successful artificial insemination birth of a southern white rhino in North America. Victoria was inseminated with frozen semen from a southern white rhino named Maoto in March of last year and carried her calf for 493 days.

The successful birth has raised hopes that artificial insemination could help efforts to genetically recover the northern white rhino, a distant subspecies of the southern white rhino. Only two northern white rhinos remain on Earth and both are female. The last male died last year. There are

an estimated 18,000 southern wild rhinos remaining in the wild but the species is also being decimated by poachers in South Africa at a rate of one every eight hours.

The San Diego zoo currently has six female southern white rhinos, which were relocated to the zoo's Safari Park from private reserves in Southern Africa in 2015. Scientists hope the animals could potentially serve as future surrogate mothers for a northern white rhino. "There are many challenges ahead, but researchers are optimistic that a northern white rhino calf could be born from these processes within 10 to 20 years," zoo officials said.

As to Victoria and her calf, they will remain off-limits to visitors for the time being to allow them to bond. And the newborn can expect a playmate in the near future as another rhino impregnated through artificial insemination is due to give birth in September or October. — AFP



**CALIFORNIA:** In this image courtesy of the San Diego Zoo, a day-old southern white rhino calf stands on its wobbly legs at the Nikita Kahn Rhino Rescue Center at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park, in Escondido, California. — AFP

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- Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- Stomach Balloon Insertion & removal
- Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve-Gastroctomy
- Gallstones & Abdominal Hernia Surgery

**Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:**

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

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

**مسشفى دار الشفاء**  
Dar Al Shifa Hospital  
Tele:1802 555

**DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM**  
Consultant Pediatrician

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

**Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368**  
Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St.1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B

**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.

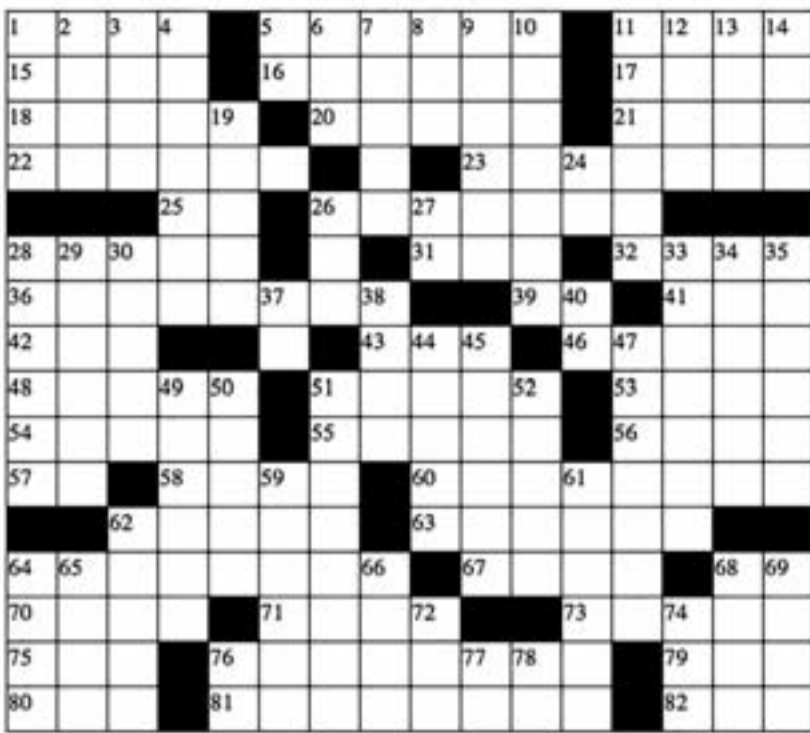
**Scope of clinical Practice.**

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

email: wbuhaimed@gmail.com  
Tel.: 965 22269411/ Mob.: 965 99212228  
Jabriya, 4th Ring Road, Block 1A Floor 9 - Closer Center Mazaya Building

Stars

CROSSWORD 2272



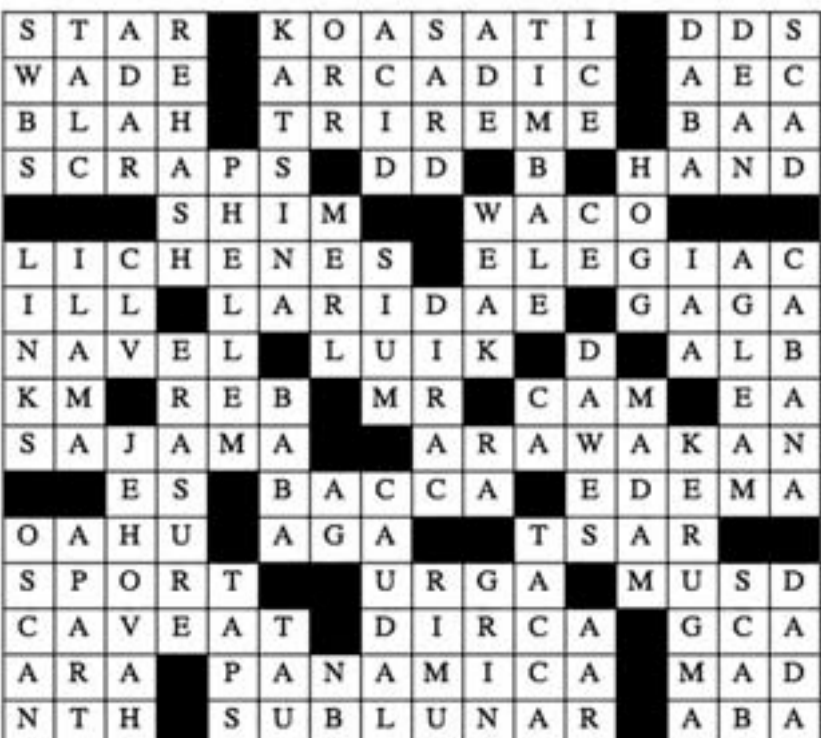
ACROSS

1. A spar rising aft from a mast to support the head of a quadrilateral fore-and-aft sail.
5. Cause to be attached.
11. Any wrongdoing for which and action for damages may be brought.
15. Look at with amorous intentions.
16. A cowboy of the South American pampas.
17. A spread made chiefly from vegetable oils and used as a substitute for butter.
18. A mountain range in western Russia extending from the arctic to the Caspian Sea.
20. Gather, as of as crops.
21. (statistics) Approximating the statistical norm or average or expected value.
22. Flightless New Zealand birds similar to gallinules.
23. An appliance that allows an object (such as a ship's compass) to remain horizontal even as its support tips.
25. The syllable naming the fourth (subdominant) note of the diatonic scale in solmization.
28. Cud-chewing mammal used as a draft or saddle animal in desert regions.
31. 4-wheeled motor vehicle.
32. A member of a Finnish people living in the northwestern Urals in Russia.
36. Pertaining to filberts or hazelnuts.
39. A public promotion of some product or service.
41. The sound made by a pigeon v.l.
42. (British) The dessert course of a meal ('pu'd' is used informally).
43. A chronic skin disease occurring primarily in women between the ages of 20 and 40.
46. A person who makes deceitful pretenses.
48. A large number or amount.
53. A pilgrim who journeys to Mecca.
54. (Old Testament) The second patriarch.
55. To fix or set securely or deeply.
56. A town in north central Oklahoma.
57. A Mid-Atlantic state.
58. An industrial city in southeastern Austria.
60. Immeasurably small.
63. Humorously vulgar.
64. Graceful deciduous shrub or small tree having attractive foliage and small red berries that turn black at maturity and are used for making wine.
67. A state of deep and often prolonged unconsciousness.
70. A Kwa language spoken in Ghana and the Ivory Coast.
71. Resembling or similar.
73. United States neoclassical architect (1847-1909).
75. (informal) 'johnny' was applied as a nickname for Confederate soldiers by the Federal soldiers in the American Civil War.
79. A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
80. Large brownish-green New Zealand parrot.
81. A great raja.
82. (informal) Of very poor quality.

DOWN

1. A painful inflammation of the big toe and foot caused by defects in uric acid metabolism resulting in deposits of the acid and its salts in the blood and joints.
2. A city in northern India.
3. A slick spokesperson who can turn any criticism to the advantage of their employer.
4. (Middle Eastern) Small croquette of mashed chick peas or fava beans seasoned with sesame seeds.
5. A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
6. A label made of cardboard or plastic or metal.
7. Any of numerous perennial bulbous herbs having linear or broadly lanceolate leaves and usually a single showy flower.
8. (informal) Of the highest quality.
9. A Bantu language spoken by the Chaga people in northern Tanzania.
10. National capital of Solomon Islands.
11. An alloy of copper and zinc (and sometimes arsenic) used to imitate gold in cheap jewelry and for gilding.
12. Evergreen trees and shrubs having oily one-seeded fruits.
13. Being or occurring in fact or actuality.
14. A large number or amount.
19. Be going to.
24. A state in New England.
26. The compass point that is one point north of due east.
27. Being nine more than ninety.
29. Separate by avulsion.
30. (Greek mythology) A princess of Colchis who aided Jason in taking the Golden Fleece from her father.
33. (Greek mythology) Sea nymph who was a daughter of the Titans Oceanus and Tethys.
34. A Russian peasant (especially prior to 1917).
35. A salt or ester of hydrochloric acid.
37. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
38. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
40. A person forced to flee from home or country.
44. Of or relating to or affecting a lobe.
45. A medicine that induces nausea and vomiting.
47. Lac purified by heating and filtering.
49. Any of various kinds of wheeled vehicles drawn by a horse or tractor.
50. Leave immediately.
51. (Old Testament) King of Judah who abolished idolatry (715-687 BC).
52. (Philippine) A dish of marinated vegetables and meat or fish.
59. Any of numerous ornamental shrubs grown for their showy flowers of various colors.
61. American and Asiatic trees having edible one-seeded fruit.
62. Jordan's port.
65. Widely cultivated in tropical and subtropical regions for its fragrant flowers and colorful fruits.
66. Long green edible beaked pods of the okra plant.
68. Semi-evergreen South American tree with odd-pinnate leaves and golden yellow flowers cultivated as an ornamental.
69. (Islam) The man who leads prayers in a mosque.
72. The rate at which red blood cells settle out in a tube of blood under standardized conditions.
74. God of the earth.
76. A metric unit of length equal to one billionth of a meter.
77. A state in midwestern United States.
78. A person who announces and plays popular recorded music.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

It seems as if a need for nurturing is stronger than usual in your life. You feel a strong desire to not only care for others, but to have others care for you in return. You have a gift when it comes to sensing the needs of others. Finding someone who is the friend to you that you are to them is a deep desire for you. This is a time you may feel as if some changes need to be made in your world. Out with the old and in with the new seems very appealing to you. This is a time when you feel at your best when you are on the go.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Out with the old and in with the new. Your focus is on ambition, security, and responsibility are areas in your life where you have placed major focus. There are big decisions in your life concerning these areas that need to be made. Knowing you have fallen short of goals in the past has you extremely determined at this point in your life. The easy way is not always the best way. You may reap great reward from your determination. Remember, you can only count on yourself to accomplish your goals. We live in a "what's in it for me" kind of world.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

This is a time of emotional change for you. You may feel two ways at once. You will not be fully committed to either way of thinking. You do know you have a deep desire for change. A change of habits or a change of surroundings. You may feel like hitting the road and taking a little road trip. A clear mind and a soothed soul may be just what the Dr. ordered. You are happiest when you are on the go. Do it. There is nothing to hold you back today. Gemini. Enjoy the ride.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You are feeling some financial stress. That's because you have trouble distinguishing between "Needs" and "Wants." Solve the problem by listing your expenditures in the two categories. To assure objectivity, you may want to enlist the help of a friend to verify the lists. (Utilities are Needs, that new purse is a Want.) Set aside money for Needs, including payments on current debts. Allow yourself the balance to spend on wants. Resisting the temptation to spend more than you have will be difficult at first, but it will soon become habit. And you will be surprised at how quickly you will feel freer, less stressed.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Today finds you talkative and ideas are flowing freely. What a great time to let your creative juices flow! You may find yourself feeling overloaded with ideas and others may not be able to keep up or totally understand what you have to say to them. Don't forget to step back and take a breath. You may find yourself easily excitable and over emotional as these ideas run through your head. Even though your communication skills may not be on point today and you may find yourself at odds with those close to you, your day will be very productive and self-satisfying. Today would be great for writing or journaling. These are ideas you value and want to make note of.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You are special to many. You may feel as if your good deeds go unnoticed. This is a time you have a deep desire to be noticed, admired, and loved. You may ask yourself if you are the friend you want others to be to you. If so, you are on the right track. If the answer is no, strive to become that person. We tend to receive what we give in life. Choose your company wisely and surround yourself with positive people. This is a time in your life where taking a chance can bring great reward. Make a plan and go for it!



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Today finds you high energy and your mind seems to be set on a hair trigger. Try to avoid hasty decisions as this hasn't worked well for you in the past. This is a great time to find an escape. Take a trip, a long drive, or spend some time alone. Do what it takes to calm your mind and spirit. Being grounded will not only be beneficial in decision making but also make you more enjoyable for others to be around. Relaxation is the key to your happiness today.



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)

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. You are the friend others wish to have in their lives.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Understanding is a good word to represent what today may bring to you. A deep understanding of yourself, your thoughts, and your moods! A day of understanding of those who surround you. An ability to communicate and captivate all who are in your presence. Life is becoming uncomplicated and simple to you. From dreams to the super natural all these things stir deep emotions within you. Capricorn. Today is a great day to let your creativity flow. The more you open up to others the more they seem to be willing to open up to you.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Just because something is easy doesn't mean it is the right thing to do or the right way to handle a situation. You may find yourself involved in a situation you need to put great thought into before you act. Actions have consequences. Be sure you are ready to face them. Hard work and determination will help you acquire your goal. Remember, avoid taking the easy way out.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You may find yourself in a bit of a conflict when it comes to balancing your Home Life and work life. You may find yourself passing an opportunity by at work because it will interfere with time with your family. This may be a hard decision to make at this time, but the payoff with your family will be well worth it. In a time for you to make sure your priorities are straight. You have a strong appreciation of your past. You are able to reflect and realize the obstacles and problems of your past talk to the lessons that made you and you are today. You are able to appreciate hardships and look at them in a more positive manner knowing you will come at a stronger person in the end.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Back to School

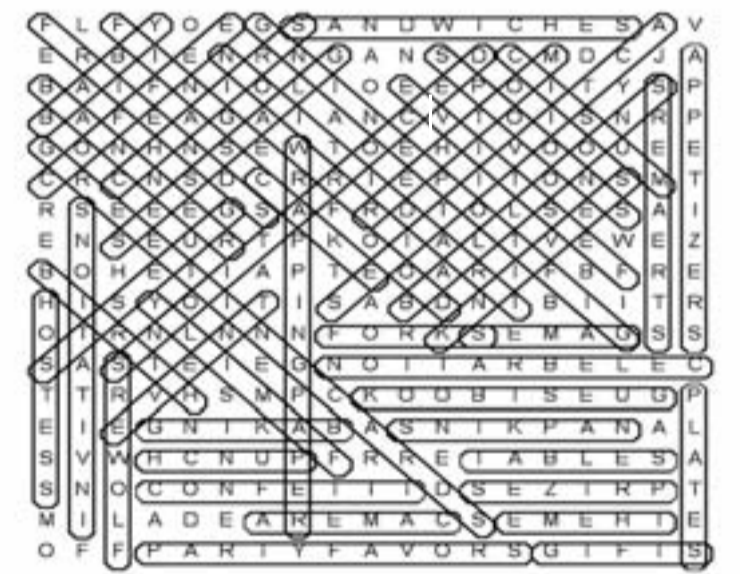
Find and circle all of the School related words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a Mark Twain quotation.



- |             |               |             |                |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|----------------|
| ASSIGNMENTS | ERASER        | LUNCHROOM   | ROLL CALL      |
| BACKPACK    | EXAMS         | MATH        | RULES          |
| BATHROOM    | FIRST DAY     | NEW FRIENDS | SCHOOL BUS     |
| BELL        | GYMNASIUM     | NOTEBOOK    | SCHOOL OFFICE  |
| BINDER      | HALLWAY       | NURSE       | SCHOOLWARD     |
| CAFETERIA   | HOMEWORK      | OLD FRIENDS | SCIENCE        |
| CHALKBOARD  | INTERCOM      | PADLOCK     | SECRETARY      |
| CLASSROOM   | JANITOR       | PAPER       | SEPTEMBER      |
| CLOCK       | LANGUAGE ARTS | PENCILS     | SOCIAL STUDIES |
| COURSES     | LEARNING      | PENS        | STUDENT        |
| DESK        | LOCKER        | PRINCIPAL   | STUDY          |
| DOORS       |               | QUIZZES     | TEACHER        |
| ENROLL      |               |             |                |

Yesterday's Solution

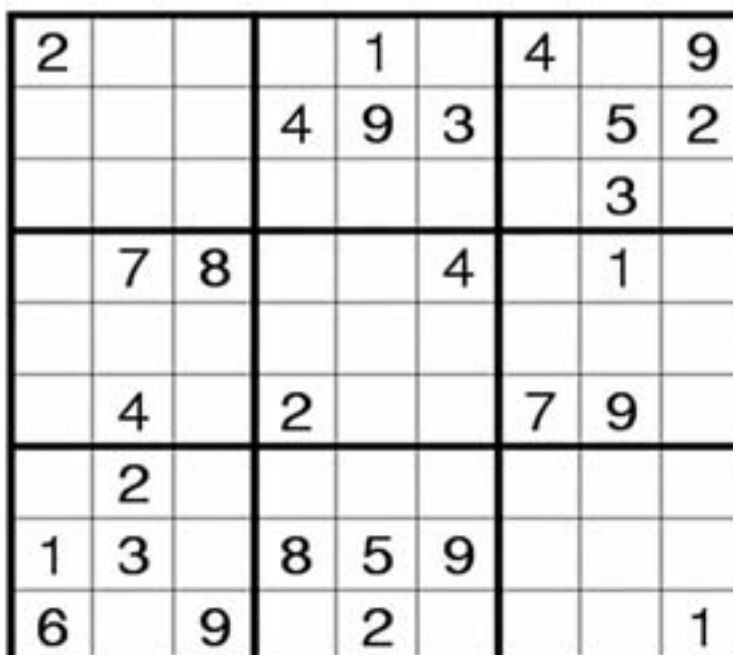
Baby Shower



- |             |              |                |                |
|-------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| ACTIVITIES  | CONFETTI     | GIFTS          | PARTY FAVORS   |
| APPETIZERS  | DECORATIONS  | GLASSES        | PLATES         |
| BABY        | EVENT        | GREETING CARDS | PRIZES         |
| BAKING      | FAMILY       | GUESTBOOK      | PUNCH          |
| BALLOONS    | FESTIVE      | GUESTS         | SANDWICHES     |
| BANNER      | FINGER FOOD  | HOSTESS        | SPOONS         |
| BIRTH       | FLOWERS      | INVITATIONS    | STREAMERS      |
| CAKE        | FORKS        | KNIVES         | TABLES         |
| CAMERA      | FRIENDS      | MOTHER         | THEME          |
| CELEBRATION | GAMES        | MUSIC          | TRADITION      |
| CHAIRS      | GIFT OPENING | NAPKINS        | WRAPPING PAPER |
| COFFEE      |              |                |                |

The hidden message is: LOVE AND JOY ARE WHAT BABIES ARE MADE OF

Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



# Lifestyle

THURSDAY, AUGUST 1, 2019



Nepali devotees watch as a straw effigy of Ghanta Karna burns during celebrations of the Hindu festival of "Gathemangal", also known as Ghanta Karna, in Bhaktapur on the outskirts of Kathmandu on July 30, 2019. The Nepali festival, which celebrates the defeat of the mythical demon Ghanta Karna ("bell-ears"), is celebrated by performing the legendary drama in the streets. — AFP

## Post-mortem: Fan mail piles up at grave of French poet Rimbaud



Bernard Colin, since 37 years guardian of the west cemetery of Charleville-Mezieres where French poet Arthur Rimbaud is buried, opens a letter box dedicated to the poet in Charleville-Mezieres. — AFP photos



Bernard Colin shows his collection of letters dedicated to the poet from all over the world in Charleville-Mezieres.



Bernard Colin poses behind the grave stone at the poet's grave, in Charleville-Mezieres.

Two or three times a week the postman shows up at a cemetery in the eastern French town of Charleville-Mezieres with a letter for a poet who continues to stir passions 127 years after his death. Some of the missives addressed to Arthur Rimbaud contain declarations of undying love for the prodigious enfant terrible of French letters, who passed away at 37 after a rollercoaster life that included an opium-fuelled affair with fellow poet Paul Verlaine as well as a stint as an arms dealer. "Rimbaud, even if you are no longer there, know that I will love you forever," reads one of the letters deposited in the yellow postbox inscribed with the poet's name at the entrance to the graveyard. Another promises him "the sun, moon and stars".

Some of those trying to commune with the dead poet seem to find solace in writing to another tortured soul, who stunned the Paris literary scene as a precocious teen attempting to chart the unconscious mind in poems striking for their modernism. Rummaging through a stack of shoe boxes in which he keeps the correspondence, the cemetery's caretaker Bernard Colin pulls out a handwritten letter from a man named Philippe who is contemplating the "living shreds of my youth, the last promise of my miserable existence." He never fails to be moved by the emotions expressed. "People confide in Rimbaud about their disillusionment. He is their confidant. They talk to him as if he were still alive," the stocky, balding watchman said.

### Charleville's Jim Morrison

The steady trickle of letters and visitors testifies to the renewed interest in the poet, whose mystique was enhanced by his decision to renounce poetry in his prime for a peripatetic existence as a mercenary-turned-merchant-turned-arms-trader. When Colin moved into the caretaker's lodge 37 years ago his predecessor told him "no-one is interested in Rimbaud." "That has certainly changed," he said with a smile. So too has the regard in which Rimbaud is held locally.

As a teen, the poet railed against the strictures of small-town life in Charleville, a town near Belgium that has long labored under a reputation for being dull, and continually plotted his escape. Yet throughout his short life, he would invariably return home in times of crisis, such as when Verlaine pulled a gun on him during a quarrel in Brussels and shot him in the arm. The self-styled prophet struggled to gain acceptance in his hometown, which studiously ignored him up until the 1960s when counterculture figures such as 'The Doors' Jim Morrison began acclaiming him as their idol.

Cottoning onto the tourist potential of brand Rimbaud the town in 1969 got a Rimbaud Museum, and in 2004, on the 150th anniversary of his birth, a house where he lived was transformed into a commemorative space. "Rimbaud



The entrance to the west cemetery (cimetiere de l'Ouest), where French poet Arthur Rimbaud is buried, is pictured in Charleville-Mezieres.

is Charleville-Mezieres's Jim Morrison!" the museum's director Lucille Pannel said, comparing the lure of the poet to that of 'The Doors' frontman whose Paris grave has also become a fan shrine.



The grave of French poet Arthur Rimbaud is pictured at the west cemetery (cimetiere de l'Ouest) in Charleville-Mezieres.

### Empty absinthe bottles

Some visitors to Charleville cheer on Rimbaud's youthful excesses by leaving empty bottles of absinthe or cigarettes packs on his grave. Others take his example further. Colin said he had surprised some couples having sex behind the twin white headstones that loom over the family grave—one for Rimbaud, the other for his sister Isabelle who died at the age of 17.

Among the devotees to have visited the grave recently are American singer-songwriter Patti Smith, who left behind a guitar plectrum, as well as French rocker Hubert-Felix Thieffaine and former prime minister Dominique de Villepin. In a sign of the poet's global appeal, the cemetery also receives a large number of Asian visitors. Colin welcomes them all on behalf of the deceased, to whom he feels a degree of kinship. "After so many years I feel that I know him almost as well as my family," he said. — AFP



This photo shows artist Taipan Lucero doing calligraphy using the indigenous script known as Baybayin, used before Spanish colonization in 1521, at an event in Manila.



Cultural advocate Leo Emmanuel Castro holding pieces of bamboo inscribed with indigenous Baybayin script.



Cultural advocate Leo Emmanuel Castro teaching students the indigenous script known as Baybayin, used before Spanish colonization in 1521, in Manila.

## Beyond ABCs: Ancient Philippine script revival spells debate

With deliberate golden strokes, artist Taipan Lucero proudly brings an ancient script back to life, in the hope of promoting an endangered but contentious part of the Philippines' heritage. Once confined to history classes, Baybayin, a 17-character indigenous script used before Spanish colonization, is making a comeback among the nation's millennials, young professionals and diaspora. Even as technology renders writing by hand outdated, online clips of calligraphy and digital fonts for the script have gripped the smartphone generation and now Baybayin—last used hundreds of years ago—is appearing on everything from tattoos and t-shirts to mobile apps.

Proponents hail the curvilinear text as a crucial part of Philippine identity, but in a country with 131 government-recognized languages—critics say investing in the promotion of one ancient text over others is controversial and impractical. "It's bittersweet. It made me proud knowing our ancestors were literate," said Lucero, who studied calligraphy in Japan but returned home to apply his skills to reviving Baybayin. "What's sad about this is what's being propagated in our education system. It's like our history started with being colonized by Spain," the 31-year-old added.

Baybayin was the form of writing used before the Spanish arrived in 1521 and missionaries had to learn it initially to spread Catholicism before forcing locals to adopt their Roman alphabet, historians say. Its resurgence has prompted calls from some for a law declaring Baybayin the national script. But regional scholars say the text is important mainly to Tagalogs—the people historically based in and around the capital—rather than to all Filipinos.

### 'Wiped out'

Advocates say reviving Baybayin will provide an antidote for a nation grappling with its colonial past and is a way of celebrating indigenous history. Many are proficient in English because of the American occupation—Spain ceded control to the US in 1898—and the Philippines only became independent in 1946. "It's a great achievement to invent our own writing system," Leo Emmanuel Castro, executive director of



Leo Emmanuel Castro holding a piece of bamboo inscribed with indigenous Baybayin script at his shop in Manila.

cultural group Sanghabi, told AFP. "Our language is gender-neutral. Professions and pronouns have no sex whereas English is very sexist," he added.

The campaign to bring Baybayin to the mainstream advanced in January when the lower house passed a bill mandating its use in signs and educational materials. It stalled in the Senate but the proposal has been refilled in the new session that started in July. Holiday hotspot Boracay island has already ordered the use of Baybayin in signage, in a bid to counter the proliferation of Chinese characters for tourists.

However regional cultural advocates say such efforts threaten all of the nation's indigenous scripts. Their anger is rooted in a 1937 proclamation that Tagalog be the basis of the national spoken language now called Filipino, and they see the revival of the Baybayin text as another blow for the nation's linguistic diversity. "The Philippines has become a country only for the Tagalogs," explained Michael Pangilinan, an advocate of the Kulitan script of Pampanga province, who warned local identity would be "completely wiped out" if using Baybayin becomes mandatory.

"The Philippine state makes us ashamed of who we are until the Kapampangan people themselves are the ones repressing their own language and culture to become Filipinos (Tagalog)," he said in an e-mail to AFP. Of the 17 documented Philippine syllabaries—systems of consonant and vowel syllables—only four remain in use among indigenous communities today, according to UNESCO.

### Mere novelty?

"When it comes to a national discussion, you need to use the dominant language known by the majority," countered Jay Enage, chairman of Baybayin Buhayin, a group lobbying for the bill. But the practicalities of bringing a historic script into modern use, teaching it in schools, and honing it to fit places of work and 21st century life, may be the biggest challenge. "It will just be a novelty, for display," said Joselito Delos Reyes, professor of creative writing and popular culture at Manila's University of Santo Tomas. "It won't be a platform for communication," he added, saying lawmakers should instead prioritise improving education infrastructure and teachers' salaries.

Virgilio Almario, chairman of government commissions on language and culture, said it was important to walk the line between losing scripts to extinction and being practical about usage. "We need to balance this carefully. We need Filipino as a bridge language but we should also appreciate the languages of all communities," he said.

More than division, advocates say Filipinos should see opportunity in belonging to a multilingual country. "The heart and soul of a country is its culture. The problem is that we don't value it due to our colonial mentality," Filipino-American Baybayin artist Kristian Kabuay told AFP. Asked if the current Baybayin resurgence is just a fad, calligrapher Lucero insisted it was vital Filipinos take the time to understand the script's importance. He added: "It's part of our culture and our identity and if we forget about it, we throw away part of ourselves." — AFP



National Museum researcher Leo Batoon pointing to a Baybayin character etched on a glass window at the National Museum in Manila.



Leo Emmanuel Castro inscribing indigenous Baybayin script onto a piece of bamboo at his shop in Manila. — AFP photos



A woman takes a look at the "Tiny Pricks" project at Lingua Franca store in New York City.



Pieces of the "Tiny Pricks" project are seen at Lingua Franca store.



Textile artist Diana Weymar points to some of her "Tiny Pricks" project pieces at Lingua Franca store during an interview with AFP in New York City.

## Darn it! The US artist stitching together Trump quotes

"Drain the swamp." "Such a nasty woman." "Crooked Hillary." An American artist has found a novel way to record President Donald Trump's most outlandish comments for posterity: through embroidery. Diana Weymar is inspiring hundreds of women from around the world to channel their feelings toward Trump by sewing quotes of his into old textiles, including doilies, baby bibs and even underwear. The result is the "Tiny Pricks Project," a 900-strong collection of colorful needlework pieces featuring Trumpisms, many of which are currently on display at an exhibition in New York.

"This is a creative way of dealing with the madness, which I think is hard to find," Weymar, 50, tells AFP. "I think a lot about this project as pricking your conscience," she says, explaining the title. "And of course there's a reference to other kinds of pricks, umm other meanings," Weymar adds, laughing. It all started in January last year when she stitched "I am a

very stable genius" onto an old cloth of her grandmother's and posted it on Instagram.

Weymar received an overwhelming response, so she started to sew one or two a week but quickly found that she couldn't keep up with the rate at which Trump delivered outrageous statements. She held workshops and invited other stitchers to send her their attempts. Weymar has completed around 450 items herself and received the same number again, including from France, Britain and Australia. For many of the participants, all of which have been opponents of Trump, it is a cathartic process and a way to protest.

"It does inspire me to want to do it because, you know, you feel so helpless and frustrated at the current state of the nation," Rebecca Gerstung, a visitor to the exhibition, tells AFP. It's "putting something terrible into something beautiful and using the needle to stab probably helps the anger!" the 45-year-old adds.

### 2,020 by 2020

The collection contains some of Trump's most oft-used phrases such as "Witch hunt!" and "No collusion." "I want great climate," reads another, stitched onto images of flowers.

Weymar, based in Canada, is reluctant to call it an anti-Trump exhibition, describing it as "a record" of what he has said, and would welcome items from supporters of the president. "It hasn't happened yet but I think it would be interesting to see what those pieces look like next to pieces made by people who don't support his policies," she says. Weymar wants to collect 2,020 pieces by the 2020 presidential election and hopes they could even influence how people vote. "I hope the collection will be large enough to travel to swing states," she says. — AFP



Textile artist Diana Weymar poses for a picture next to her "Tiny Pricks" project at Lingua Franca store during an interview with AFP in New York City.



Textile artist Diana Weymar shows the first piece of her "Tiny Pricks" project at Lingua Franca store during an interview with AFP. — AFP photos

# Homegrown fashion emerges in troubled Somalia

Every time young fashion designer Hawa Adan Hassan makes a new gown for a paying customer, she also makes her dreams come true. "My whole life, fashion design was a dream," says the 23-year-old university student, who last year began running a cottage business out of her family's home in Hamarweyne, the historic heart of Somalia's coastal capital Mogadishu. For Hassan, it began with art, when she found herself drawn to sketching clothes rather than the animals and landscapes preferred by her peers. Then she set to work on tailoring to turn her images into reality. "I realized this could be my field of expertise," she says. For decades, war and upheaval left ordinary Somalis focused on the daily matters of life, death and survival.

workshop can hear children playing in nearby rooms and cooking smells waft in from the kitchen. Her elder brother has been an investor, helping to buy sewing machines and other equipment. Now the business is taking off, she says. "In the beginning, it was my father, elder sister and brother who helped me start but now I'm self-reliant and can make a living out of my work," she says proudly. Like many Mogadishu residents who have become inured to violence, Hassan dismisses the city's frequent bombings and shoot-outs, describing them as an "inconvenience"



Hawa Adan Hassan, 23 year-old, university student, uses a sewing machine at her home in Mogadishu, Somalia.

and affluent. "I like clothes designed by Somalis because they fit and make you look attractive," says 22-year-old student Farhiyo Hassan Abdi. "Imported costumes are mostly out of shape and don't look good on you." "I don't go for imported clothes anymore," she adds, pointing out that the price of local fashion is often cheaper than the imports and it is easy to have alterations done. But these young designers and customers, seeking out unique fashion and wanting to look good, seem to live in a world apart from others in the city.

Dahir Yusuf, a 49-year-old father, is appalled by his teenage daughter's love of designer clothes, which he considers immoral. "These young girls are crazy about designer clothes, which are mostly fitted and reveal the features of their bodies," he says, tutting. "Morally, it is not



Abdishakur Abdurahman Adam, 19 years old, secondary school student and fashion designer for women and men, cuts fabrics.

Bombings by Al-Shabaab jihadists still dog Mogadishu today. But a creeping cosmopolitanism is challenging entrenched conservative attitudes and many Somalis are undaunted by wanting a look that stands out. Somalia's clothing stores traditionally adhere to a simple formula: imported garments for the well-to-do, locally-made clothes for the rest. But Hassan and others are starting to alter that picture with locally-designed, handmade attire for the high end of the market.

In such a nascent industry, Hassan is, by necessity, self-taught. "I used to watch fashion design shows on TV, and every time I watched one, I tried to grasp the ideas by drawing what I saw," she says. Her favorite was "Project Runway", a US-made reality program fronted by German model Heidi Klum. "When I started I had no-one as a role model. It is just something I dreamed up," she says, adding that she now finds inspiration in the likes of Lebanese fashion designer Elie Saab.

### 'Clothes with a story'

In her home studio, Hassan sketches and inks new designs of abaya gowns and hijab headscarves, in a variety of black or bright colors, tight and loose fittings, with plain or embroidered finishes. Fashion has also become a family affair, with Hassan's father-a tailor by trade-and older sister helping cut and sew the clothes. Visitors to the



A saleswoman at the Mkeni Designs shop, dresses a mannequin with new fashion creations in Mogadishu. — AFP photos

that can mess up her delivery schedules.

Muna Mohamed Abdullahi, another start-up fashion designer, is on a mission to encourage local people to take pride in products made in Somalia. "Some people come to my shop and, when they realize that these clothes are designed and made locally, they run away because they have a negative impression about locally-made clothes," says the 24-year-old. Like Hassan, Abdullahi is self-taught. "I was my own role model," she says-and insists she is more than just a tailor aping the work of others. "A designer creates clothes with a story, but a tailor makes it without thinking, they just duplicate," Abdullahi says.

### Generation gap

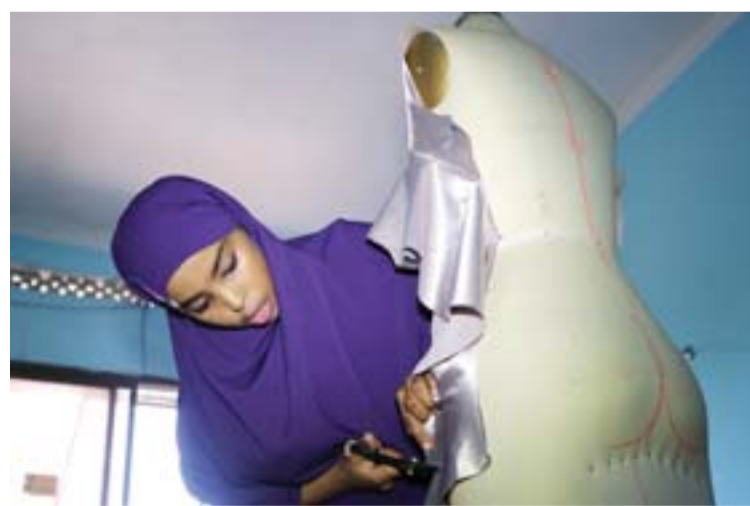
The designers' customers are mostly young, like them,

good to wear such things." As a male fashion designer, Abdishakur Abdurahman Adam faces down double-criticism in pursuit of dreams.

"In Somalia it is very difficult for a boy to become a fashion designer, because people believe this is women's work," says the slim 19-year-old, who was introduced to fashion by watching catwalk shows on satellite TV. Nevertheless, he plans to continue, designing for both women and men, hoping to compete with foreign imports. "What I do is just to create fashionable clothes with the material I have here without spending more money so that it looks like something from overseas." — AFP



Hawa Adan Hassan checks her new finished fashion design.



Muna Mohamed Abdullahi, 24 years old, owner of Mkeni Designs, cuts some fabrics on a mannequin.



Rahma Abdullahi Mohamud (right) and Hani Hussein take selfies pictures with a mobile phone, after buying clothes designed by fashion designer Muna Mohamed Abdullahi, at Peace Garden in Mogadishu, Somalia.

## Pyer Moss designer to helm new fashion line for Reebok

Acclaimed Haitian-American designer Kerby Jean-Raymond will create a new fashion line for Reebok, his label announced Tuesday, as the struggling sportswear manufacturer seeks to revive its brand. Jean-Raymond, whose work has highlighted police brutality against African-Americans, will serve as artistic director of a new division called Reebok Studios, Pyer Moss said in a statement. Jean-Raymond rose to fame at New York Fashion Week in late 2015 when Pyer Moss's spring 2016 collection took inspiration from the Black Lives Matter movement, which campaigns against racism

towards black people.

He is considered one of the best fashion designers of his generation and his designs regularly feature references to African-American culture and the community's role in the history of the United States. Reebok, a subsidiary of German sportswear giant Adidas, has teamed up with several high-profile designers over the years including Victoria Beckham and Demna Gvasalia, now with Balenciaga. The tie-ups have come with the growing "athleisure" trend, which has seen sportswear take over the fashion landscape.

Reebok's turnover fell 3.0 percent on-year in 2018, data showed in March, continuing a struggle for growth that has persisted since Adidas took it over in 2005. It has been collaborating with Jean-Raymond since 2017. — AFP



Haitian-American designer Kerby Jean-Raymond.



Members of the crew assemble the 14-meter long sailing reed boat Abora IV in the town of Beloslav, Bulgaria.— AFP photos

## An ancient Egypt-to-Black Sea route? Adventurers to test theory

Were the ancient Egyptians able to use reed boats to travel as far as the Black Sea thousands of years ago?

A group of adventurers believe so, and will try to prove their theory by embarking on a similar journey in reverse. In mid-August the team of two dozen researchers and volunteers from eight countries will set off from the Bulgarian port of Varna, hoping their Abora IV reed boat will take them the 700 nautical miles through the Bosphorus, the Aegean and as far as the island of Crete.

The team is specifically seeking to prove a hypothesis lent credence by Herodotus, the expedition's German leader, Dominique Goerlitz, told AFP. The ancient Greek historian wrote: "Egyptians sailed through the Black Sea to get materials that they could not have from the east Mediterranean." Goerlitz, 53, and his team say they drew inspiration for the design of the 14-metre (46-foot) boat from ancient rock drawings from upper Egypt and the Caucasus.

### Bolivian know-how

The construction was carried out with the help of volunteers and two members of the Aymara indigenous community from Bolivia's Lake Titicaca, Fermin Limachi and his son Yuri. It is no accident that the Abora IV bears a striking resemblance to the famous Ra II reed boat that



Members of the crew assemble the 14-meter long sailing reed boat Abora IV.

Norwegian adventurer Thor Heyerdahl used in his 1970 attempt to cross the Atlantic-Limachi's father helped build that vessel too. Large bundles of totora reed were lashed together with ropes to form the main body of the vessel before it was equipped with a wooden mast and two reed compartments for sleeping.

In all, 12 tons of totora reed and two kilometers (a mile) of rope went into making the boat, which will have two sails-measuring 62 square meters (670 square feet) and 40 square meters (430 sq

ft), Fermin said. "The main question of all is whether this boat... is able to cross the difficult island shelves of the Aegean Sea," Goerlitz said.

Reaching the Cyclades islands and then Crete will be crucial for proving his initial hypothesis, he added, as the Minoan civilization which flourished there from 2,700 to 1,200 BC was long proven to have traded with Egypt. Once hoisted into the water on Thursday, the boat will need two and a half weeks to soak, taking in between five and 10 tons of water. Thanks to the billions of air chambers inside its porous construction material, the boat cannot crack or sink, according to Goerlitz.

### Dangers on the high seas

During his last such expedition, the Abora III in 2007, he set out from New York bound for southern Spain in a bid to prove that Stone Age man made similar trans-Atlantic journeys. Goerlitz's team sailed for 56 days before a storm ripped apart his boat 900 kilometers (560 miles) short of Portugal's Azores Islands. "I am 100 percent sure that this ship will never sink. And as long as the ship is floating we have a safety raft here," said volunteer Mark Pales, a 42-year-old electrician from the Netherlands.

Another volunteer, Heike Vogel, a parcel company employee from Germany, was looking forward to her first time sailing, after helping on two



previous expeditions without venturing on board. "It will be a new situation for me," said Vogel, 35. In order to communicate with large cargo vessels on their way—a major danger on the high seas—Goerlitz's crew will have modern satellite and radio communication equipment on board. "Of course, it would be totally arrogant and stupid (not to use modern equipment). It is an experiment of science and not of risk," he said.— AFP

A member of the crew assembles the 14-meter long sailing reed boat Abora IV.



A member of the crew assembles the 14-meter long sailing reed boat Abora IV.



Members of the crew assemble the 14-meter long sailing reed boat Abora IV.



A member of the crew assembles the 14-meter long sailing reed boat Abora IV.



In this file photo Cardi B accepts the Album of the Year award onstage during the 2019 BET awards at Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles, California.— AFP

## Cardi B cancels US show because of 'security threat'

US rapper Cardi B canceled a concert in Indianapolis Tuesday evening due to concerns over a "security threat," she said on social media. Indianapolis police confirmed the cancellation, citing an "unverified threat to the artist." "There is no immediate threat to public safety, this (is) not an active incident. Ongoing investigation," the department said on its official Twitter account. The 26-year-old rapper posted a video on Twitter and Instagram of what appeared to be rehearsals at the Bankers Life Fieldhouse earlier in the day. "Dear Indiana people I'm so sorry for today," she posted on Twitter. "Unfortunately there was a security threat that is currently under investigation right now. My safety and your safety first."

On Instagram she said, "I'm so sorry guys I never dealt with a situation like this before and I'm not taking any chances. I love you guys," followed by two heart emojis. The superstar, who has a one-year-old daughter with her husband, the rapper Offset, also posted a screenshot of a statement from the show's promoters Mammoth Live saying the concert had been postponed due to "a security threat and safety concerns." Annoyed fans tweeted that the show was canceled only "minutes" before it was scheduled to start, but others expressed their support for "caring about our safety."

Bankers Life Fieldhouse's Twitter account said the concert would be rescheduled for September 11 and promised to honor tickets for the show's original date.

Earlier in the day, the outspoken artist, who has professed her support for US presidential candidate Bernie Sanders, tweeted to remind her followers to watch the Democratic debate. In January, she posted a profanity-laced video on Instagram blasting President Donald Trump and the lengthy US government shutdown. Last month the Grammy-winning musician, born Belcalis Almanzar, pleaded not-guilty to attempted assault charges related to her alleged involvement in a 2018 strip club brawl in her hometown of New York.— AFP





ADDIS ABABA: Young Ethiopian girls take part in a national tree-planting drive in the capital on July 28, 2019. — AFP

## Going green: Ethiopia's bid to plant four billion trees

**ADDIS ABABA:** These days whenever Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed appears in public, he removes his jacket, rolls up his sleeves, grabs a shovel and gets to planting a tree. Abiy is leading by example as Ethiopia plans to plant a mind-boggling four billion trees by October, as part of a global movement to restore forests to help fight climate change and protect resources. The country says it has planted nearly three billion trees already since May.

On Monday, state employees were given the day off as Abiy sought to get the rest of the country involved, and the government claimed a "record-breaking" 350 million trees were planted in only one day. "I think we demonstrated the capacity for people to come together collectively and deliver on a shared vision," Billene Seyoum, Abiy's press secretary, told AFP. The figure has attracted skepticism about the sheer number of volunteers this would require, and the logistics involved.

"I personally don't believe that we planted this much," said Zelalem Worqagegnehu, a spokesman for the opposition Ezema party. "It might be impossible to

plant this many trees within a day." Yet Zelalem also noted that hundreds of members of his party planted trees of their own on Monday, and suggested the actual total was beside the point. "We took this as a good opportunity to show solidarity with the citizens," he said. "Our concern is the green legacy, making Ethiopia green."

### Planting only first step

Ethiopia's forest cover declined from around 40 percent half a century ago to around 15 percent today, said Abiyot Berhanu, director of the Ethiopian Environment and Forest Research Institute. "Deforestation has become very grave in many parts of Ethiopia," he said. The recent tree-planting drive has targeted areas that have been stripped of their trees over the years, Billene said. The types of new trees planted have varied from region to region. "A lot of nurseries have been working on producing more saplings over the past couple months," Billene said, while some of the saplings and seedlings had come from abroad.

Reforestation is a major component of global initiatives to recapture carbon emissions. It can also purify water, produce oxygen and bolster farmers' incomes, said Tim Christophersen, chair of the Global Partnership on Forest and Landscape Restoration. But Christophersen said planting trees was only the first step. "The most important factor is grazing pressure. If you plant a tree and a day later the goats come along they will absolutely eat the tree first before they eat the dry grass next to it," he said. "We don't speak so much about planting trees but about growing trees."

He said planting 350 million trees would require about 350,000 hectares - an area bigger than Luxembourg - and added that a volunteer could realistically plant about 100 trees a day. "It is not impossible, but it would take a very well organized effort," he told AFP. He said that Ethiopia was one of only five countries ranked as having a "sufficiently ambitious" contribution to the 2015 Paris climate agreement, the UN's pact to curb global warming. Trees take in carbon from the air as part of the process of synthesis and store it in

their leaves, branches and trunks.

Abiy's tree-planting drive is part of a national environmental campaign, known as the Green Legacy Initiative, that includes cleaning waterways and making agriculture more sustainable. Billene said the turnout Monday indicated that the prime minister's environmentally-friendly message was resonating. "Everyone was clear and understood the long-term vision," she said. "They actually bought into the benefits of what it means to have a green country."

If Ethiopia really did plant 350 million trees on Monday, it would have smashed the current world record of around 50 million held by the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. However an official determination may have to wait. So far, Ethiopia has not attempted to register its achievement with Guinness World Records Limited, spokeswoman Jessica Dawes told AFP in an email. "We are always on the lookout for new record breaking achievements however, and so we would encourage the organizers of this event to get in touch with us to register an application," Dawes said. — AFP

## Can diet help cancer treatment? Study offers clues

**TOKYO, Japan:** Diet is already a key part of managing diseases like diabetes and hypertension, but new research adds to a growing body of evidence that it could help cancer treatment too. The study, published today in the journal *Nature*, found restricting intake of an amino acid found in red meat and eggs significantly enhanced cancer treatment in mice, slowing tumor growth. "These are very strong effects, and they are effects that are as strong as we would see with drugs that work," said lead researcher Jason Locasale, an associate professor at Duke University's School of Medicine.

"What this study is showing is that there are many situations where a drug by itself doesn't work, but if you combine the drug with the diet, it works, or the

radiation therapy doesn't work well, but if you combine... with the diet, it works well," he told AFP. The study focused on restricting intake of the amino acid methionine which is key to a process called one-carbon metabolism that helps cancer cells grow. Methionine restriction has already been associated with both anti-aging and weight loss, but its importance to cancerous cells suggested it could also be a promising way to enhance cancer treatment.

### 'Starving the cancer'

The researchers first tested methionine restriction in healthy mice to confirm it was having the desired effects on metabolism and then moved to testing it in mice with colorectal cancer and soft tissue sarcomas. They found that a low dose of chemotherapy, which on its own had no effect on colorectal cancer, led to "marked inhibition of tumor growth" when combined with methionine restriction. Similarly, combining methionine restriction with radiation therapy in the case of the soft tissue sarcoma reduced tumor growth. "You're starving the cancer cells of certain nutrients, at a very basic level," explained Locasale.

He cautioned that the results should not be extrapolated beyond the cancers tested so far, and that the research was far from being tested in humans. "This is certainly not a be-all, end-all to cancer, this is not some panacea," he said. "What it's showing is that there are very interesting interactions between the food we eat, how it changes metabolism... and then how those changes in cellular metabolism might have an effect on tumor growth."

Independent experts also warned against reading too much into the study just yet. "Before drawing any conclusions about the potential for dietary restriction as an approach to treating cancer, human studies are needed," said Paul Pharoah, a professor of Cancer Epidemiology at the University of Cambridge.

### 'Really exciting'

Locasale and his colleagues extended the research by testing a methionine restricted diet in six healthy humans, and found that the effect on human metabolism appeared similar to that seen in mice. That suggests that the diet could have a similar effect on certain tumors in humans, though Locasale warned it was far

too early to draw any definitive conclusions. And Tom Sanders, professor emeritus of nutrition and dietetics at King's College London, warned that "there is no evidence from this study to suggest following a vegan diet with help patients with cancer."

Locasale said he hoped to eventually test the research in humans with cancer, but noted that nutrition research often struggles for funding because it proposes treatments that are not easily monetizable. Still, he said the work adds to a body of research that suggests diet may play an important role in cancer treatment. Last year, a study showed one type of chemotherapy drug was more effective in combination with a diet low in sugar and high in protein and fat. Other cancers appear to be better combatted in combination with low-sugar diets.

"It's just a really exciting area right now... where we're seeing that diet has a huge effect on human health," Locasale said. He hopes for a future where doctors will eventually be able to advise cancer patients to follow specific diets to assist their treatment. "We're not there yet, but the goal is to eventually get there." — AFP

## Dozens dead in Afghan bus blast...

Continued from Page 1

various security guarantees from the Taliban, including that the insurgents won't let terror groups operate in the country. Khalilzad, who was formerly US ambassador to Afghanistan, said his visit to Kabul had been his "most productive" yet in his new role. "I'm off to Doha, with a stop in Islamabad. In Doha, if the Taliban do their part, we will do ours, and conclude the agreement we have been working on," Khalilzad tweeted.

In another sign of progress, the Afghan peace ministry announced the government had formed a negotiating team for separate peace talks with the Taliban, ahead of potential talks in Oslo in August. The move is hugely significant, as the Taliban have until now refused to negotiate directly with the government of President Ashraf Ghani, which they consider illegitimate. The Taliban did not immediately respond to the announcement of the 15-member delegation. The push to end the Afghan war has ignited widespread concern among Afghans that in Washington's rush to exit its longest war the Taliban will be returned to some semblance of power.

According to a UN report released Tuesday, 1,366 civilians were killed and another 2,446 wounded during the first six months of 2019. Afghan officials blamed the

Taliban for yesterday's explosion, saying they had planted a bomb along a busy highway with the aim of hitting security forces. The insurgents did not deny or claim involvement, saying they would investigate the "sad incident".

Muhibullah Muhib, a police spokesman for Farah province, said all the victims were civilians, mostly women and children. "A passenger bus travelling on the Kandahar-Herat highway hit a Taliban roadside bomb killing 34 innocent people and wounding 17 others," he said. Sediq Sediqqi, a spokesman for the Afghan presidency, confirmed the toll, blaming the incident on the Taliban, while Nasrat Rahim, the interior ministry spokesman, called the blast a "barbaric act of the terrorists".

"Sadly, this senseless loss of life is all too common in Afghanistan," Onno van Manen, the Afghanistan director for Save the Children, said in a statement. "Just in the past month hundreds of children have been killed or injured as a result of explosive weapons." The Taliban, who now control or influence about half of Afghanistan's territory, recently signed on to a vague pledge to reduce civilian casualties, but violence has continued unabated.

Civilians have long paid a disproportionate price in the nearly 18 years since the US invaded Afghanistan, and last year was a record for civilian casualties. Numbers are down by 27 percent so far this year, but children accounted for almost a third of the overall total of civilian deaths and injuries. The bloodshed is only expected to worsen now that official campaigning for Afghanistan's presidential election, set for September 28, is underway. At least 20 people were killed Sunday, the first official day of the campaign, and 50 wounded when a suicide attacker and gunmen targeted the Kabul office of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's running mate, Amrullah Saleh. — AFP

## Assembly panel approves public...

Continued from Page 1

ministry of public works to penalize companies that were involved in faulty projects and roads. MP Omar Al-Tabtabaei yesterday sent a series of

questions to Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah over complaints received by the ministry from foreign embassies and consulates against social media activists, newspapers and other local media. He inquired about the number of complaints received from foreign missions in the country and then referred by the ministry to legal authorities for action. The lawmaker asked for the number of such complaints against tweeters, local publications and television channels and a copy of each complaint. He also inquired about the number of complaints filed by Kuwaiti embassies abroad.

## Body of Indian coffee magnate...

Continued from Page 1

Police said Siddhartha, aged about 59, left Bangalore late Monday, telling his family he was going to a hill resort but instead asked his driver to take him to Mangalore. He ordered the driver to stop the car and started walking along a bridge as he talked to someone on his phone before disappearing, according to police. Fishermen finally found his body early yesterday on a riverbank, according to police.

Siddhartha's empire came under increasing pressure after tax authorities launched raids on company offices

in 2017. In a letter to the Cafe Coffee Day board, the 57-year-old chairman had admitted mistakes in handling his financial affairs. But he said he had suffered pressure from lenders and Indian tax authorities. "I am very sorry to let down all the people that put their trust in me," said the letter, which was released by the company as it held an emergency board meeting on Tuesday. "I fought for a long time but today I have given up as I could not take any more pressure from one of the private equity partners forcing me to buy back shares."

Siddhartha said he had faced "a lot of harassment" from the Indian tax authorities. "My intention was never to cheat or mislead anybody. I have failed as an entrepreneur," he said. Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, head of Biocon, one of Asia's leading bio-pharmaceutical companies, said Siddhartha appeared to be under "unbearable stress" and the circumstances should be investigated. — AFP



## Sports

# Pirates snap a 9-game skid as benches clear

**CINCINNATI:** Corey Dickerson homered twice and drove in a career-high five runs to help the Pittsburgh Pirates end a nine-game losing streak with an 11-4 win against the host Cincinnati Reds on Tuesday night in a game marred by a wild brawl. A benches-clearing fight broke out in the ninth when Reds reliever Amir Garrett charged the Pittsburgh dugout from the mound as he was being removed from the game. Jared Hughes had been ejected earlier in the inning for hitting Starling Marte after both sides had been warned.

Reds right fielder Yasiel Puig, who minutes earlier had reportedly been traded to the Cleveland Indians, started a second skirmish that continued for several more minutes. Puig was ultimately ejected as well. Dickerson, who sat out the previous three games with left groin discomfort, had a two-run single in the third inning, a two-run homer in the fifth and a solo shot in the seventh. Jose Osuna hit a three-run homer in the ninth for Pittsburgh, which halted its longest losing streak in eight years.

## CARDINALS 2, CUBS 1

Paul Goldschmidt continued his torrid stretch with a go-ahead home run in the sixth inning — his seventh homer in the past eight games — and host St. Louis held on to beat Chicago. Tommy Edman added two hits and two stolen bases for St. Louis, which broke a first-place tie with the Cubs on the eve of the trade deadline. The Cardinals improved to 13-5 since the All-Star break. Javier Baez drove in the lone run for Chicago, which has lost three of four and six of eight. Cubs right-hander Yu Darvish (3-5) drew the hard-luck loss despite holding the Cardinals to two runs on six hits in six innings. He walked none and struck out nine, two shy of his season high. Giovanny Gallegos (3-1) got the win in relief.

## ASTROS 2, INDIANS 0

Justin Verlander allowed two hits and struck out 13 over seven innings as visiting Houston blanked Cleveland. Robinson Chirinos belted a solo homer and former Indians outfielder Michael Brantley added an RBI single later in the fifth inning for the Astros, who have won three in a row and 10 of their last 12 games. Houston's Jose Altuve posted his second straight three-hit performance and Yuli Gurriel had a one-out single in the second inning to extend his hitting streak to 17

games. Verlander (14-4), who recorded his first win in Cleveland since 2013, has 43 strikeouts over his four-start winning streak.

## A'S 3, BREWERS 2 (10 INNINGS)

Matt Olson belted a walk-off home run off Josh Hader in the 10th inning to give host Oakland win over Milwaukee in the opener of a three-game interleague series in Northern California. Chris Bassitt and five relievers combined on a seven-hitter, helping the A's prevail in the first meeting between the clubs since 2016. Blake Treinen (5-3) pitched the top of the 10th to get the win. Olson's homer, his 22nd of the season, was the left-handed hitter's ninth off a lefty pitcher this season, and just the second of his career in extra innings. It was the fourth home run Hader (1-4) surrendered to a left-handed batter this season.

## BRAVES 11, NATIONALS 8

Adam Duvall had two solo home runs among four hits, Josh Donaldson crushed a three-run homer and Julio Teheran allowed just two runs as Atlanta blasted host Washington to even their three-game series. Ozzie Albies and Ender Inciarte each had three hits as Atlanta won for just the fifth time in 13 games. The Nationals, meanwhile, are still 38-19 since May 24. Washington trailed 11-1 in the seventh. Teheran (6-7) went 6 2/3 innings and allowed seven hits. Washington's Juan Soto hit a two-run homer in the ninth, and Brian Dozier added an RBI single to trim the margin to 11-8 before Luke Jackson retired the side. Washington starter Erick Fedde (1-2) allowed nine runs on nine hits with four walks and four strikeouts as his ERA rose from 3.40 to 4.67.

## PHILLIES 4, GIANTS 2

Drew Smyly tossed seven scoreless innings, Rhys Hoskins homered and host Philadelphia defeated San Francisco. Jean Segura ripped three hits while Cesar Hernandez, J.T. Realmuto and Adam Haseley added two hits each for the Phillies. Bryce Harper also walked three times and scored one run. Smyly (2-5) gave up four hits. He recorded five strikeouts against just one walk while throwing 103 pitches, 71 for strikes. Brandon Belt and Stephen Vogt each had a pinch-hit homer in the eighth for the Giants, who had won 19 of 24 entering this game.



**CINCINNATI:** Amir Garrett #50 (middle white shirt with out hat) of the Cincinnati Reds engages members of the Pittsburgh Pirates during a bench clearing altercation in the 9th inning of the game at Great American Ball Park. — AFP

## RAYS 6, RED SOX 5

A two-hit, three-RBI performance from Avisail Garcia pushed Tampa Bay to victory over host Boston. Despite falling behind in the first and again in the fifth, the Rays responded both times to claim the first contest of a three-game set. With the victory, the Rays moved a 1 1/2 games ahead of the Red Sox in the American League East standings. Rafael Devers (two runs scored) and Andrew Benintendi (home run, three RBIs, run scored) had three hits apiece for the Red Sox.

## DIAMONDBACKS 4, YANKEES 2

Christian Walker and Carson Kelly hit solo homers, and Arizona recorded a victory over host New York, moving to 14-5 in interleague play this season. Adam Jones lifted a sacrifice fly in the first, and Nick Ahmed hit an RBI single in the fourth for the Diamondbacks, who won for the fifth time in their last 12 games.

rebounded from dropping three of four in Miami. The Yankees lost for the sixth time in nine games and dropped to 0-3 this season against Arizona. Tyler Wade hit his first home run of the season for New York.

## TWINS 2, MARLINS 1

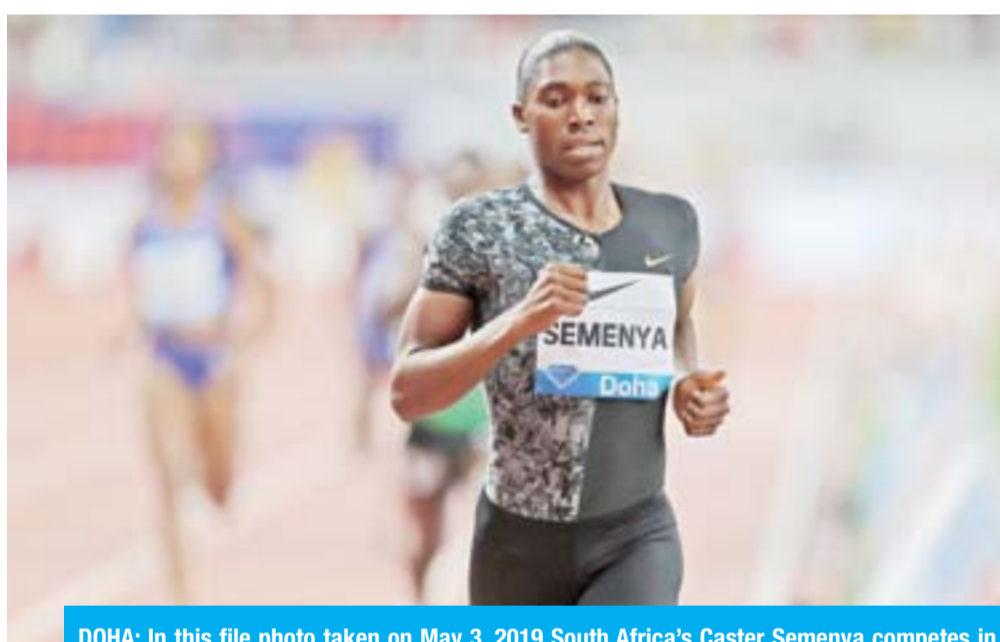
Jake Odorizzi picked up his career-high 12th win of the season as Minnesota defeated host Miami. Odorizzi (12-5), who won 11 games in 2014, held Miami to four hits, one walk and one run in 5 2/3 innings. He struck out five batters and lasted 103 pitches. Marlins rookie Zac Gallen (1-3) pitched seven solid innings but took the loss. First baseman Garrett Cooper, who leads the Marlins in batting average (.294), left the game in the third inning due to tight left hamstring. Cooper was replaced in the lineup by Martin Prado, who took over at third base with Neil Walker moving to first. — Reuters

## IAAF hails 'parity and clarity' after Semenya ruling

**PARIS:** A Swiss court ruling that blocks South African Caster Semenya from defending her world 800m title in Doha in September creates much-needed "parity and clarity" in athletics, the sport's governing body said yesterday. A judge at the Swiss Federal Tribunal on Monday revoked a temporary suspension on the IAAF's controversial testosterone-curb rules, meaning two-time Olympic champion Semenya can no longer compete in events between the 400m and mile, as she did in June and July.

"The IAAF welcomes the Swiss Federal Tribunal's decision today to revoke its Super-Provisional Order of 31 May 2019 after hearing the IAAF's arguments," the International Association of Athletics Federations said after the judge's ruling was made public yesterday. "This decision creates much-needed parity and clarity for all athletes as they prepare for the World Championships in Doha this September."

Semenya had appealed to the Swiss court in May after failing to get the new IAAF regulations overturned by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS). The IAAF added that it would maintain its position in the remainder of proceedings at the Swiss Federal Tribunal that "there are some contexts, sport being one of them, where biology has to trump gender identity, which is why the IAAF believes (and the CAS agreed) that the DSD (differences of sexual development) regulations are a necessary, reasonable and proportionate means of protecting fair and meaningful com-



**DOHA:** In this file photo taken on May 3, 2019 South Africa's Caster Semenya competes in the women's 800m during the IAAF Diamond League competition. — AFP

petition in elite female athletics".

### 'People can be mean'

Semenya is classified as a woman, was raised as a woman and races as a woman. But for the IAAF, women like Semenya, with certain masculine attributes due to DSD, are classified, biologically, as men. It is a position hotly contested by South African officials. In the build-up to the 2009 world championships in Berlin, where Semenya went on to win gold in the 800m, the South African had to undergo gender verification testing to confirm her eligibility to compete in the women's category.

She was subsequently put on medication to reduce her testosterone levels, spending six months sidelined by the IAAF. Semenya, born

with the "46 XY" chromosome rather than the XX chromosome most females have, described the experience as like that of being treated like a "human guinea pig" and vowed never to again allow the IAAF to enforce medication upon her in order to compete.

The Swiss Federal Tribunal, in its ruling released yesterday, was also not optimistic for Semenya's ongoing appeal. It concluded "in a first summary examination, that Caster Semenya's appeal does not appear with high probability to be well founded". "The CAS, after thoroughly evaluating the expert evidence, found that the '46 XY DSD' characteristic has a direct impact on performance in sport, which could never be achieved by other women," the tribunal said. — AFP

## Basketball Africa League reveals debut host cities

**NEW YORK:** The NBA-backed Basketball Africa League (BAL) unveiled host cities Tuesday for its inaugural season, with Kigali, Rwanda, as the named host city for the first semi-final and championship games. Cairo, Egypt; Dakar, Senegal; Lagos, Nigeria; Luanda, Angola; Rabat, Morocco and a Tunisian city, Tunis or Monastir, were announced as the sites for BAL regular-season games. The BAL, featuring 12 club teams from across Africa, is set to begin play in March 2020.

"Today's announcements mark another important milestone as we head into what will be a historic first season," BAL president Amadou Gallo Fall said. The 12 teams will be divided into two six-team conferences, each conference playing games in three of the six host cities. Each team will play five regular-season games, with the top three clubs in each conference advancing to the playoffs.

The "Super Six" will play a round-robin format to determine the BAL Final Four that advance to Kigali in late spring 2020 for the single-game elimi-

nation semi-finals and final. The BAL also announced Nike and the Jordan Brand would each provide the official uniforms and gear for six of the clubs in the league's first business partnership. The NBA announced its first collaboration to operate a league outside North America in February, working alongside world governing body FIFA. Both plan to dedicate financial support and resources for training of African players, coaches and referees.

### Trail Blazers agree on extension

The Portland Trail Blazers have agreed on a three-year, \$100 million NBA contract extension with guard CJ McCollum, US media reported Tuesday. ESPN, citing McCollum's agent, reported the deal, and the player himself responded Tuesday to congratulatory tweets from teammate Jusuf Nurkic and other NBA players. McCollum, who would have become an unrestricted free agent after the 2020-21 season, instead looks set to stay in Portland for five seasons.

McCollum played a key role in the Blazers' Western Conference semi-final victory over the Denver Nuggets, scoring 37 points in game seven to help Portland reach the conference finals. The Trail Blazers were swept by the Golden State Warriors, but will be aiming to contend again in the upcoming season after locking up both McCollum and Damian Lillard. The Blazers have inked Lillard to a four-year, \$196 million extension. — AFP

## Ko aims to join elite group at British Open

**WOBURN:** Ko Jin-young first attracted international attention when she finished runner-up to Inbee Park at the 2015 Women's British Open at Turnberry. Four years on, and Ko arrives at this week's Women's British Open at Woburn as the world number one and seeking to join an elite group of golfers who have won three majors in one season.

Ko first claimed the world's top ranking when she won the first major of the season — the ANA Inspiration. She snatched top spot back from fellow South Korean Park Sung-hyun with victory in the Evian Championship on Sunday. Winning back-to-back majors would be a huge feat and the 24-year-old would become only the seventh player to gather three major titles in a single campaign.

Ben Hogan and Tiger Woods have done it in the men's game and Babe Zaharias, Mickey Wright, Pat Bradley and Inbee Park, in 2013, are the women who achieved the same feat. "I was always looking forward to this week, but to win in Evian has made it even more special," Ko said. "I honestly can't remember much

about Turnberry but I missed the cut last year. "My game has undergone a big change since then. I got a new short game coach, and a mental trainer. That's the difference.

"Because it is two majors in a row I am feeling like there is no Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. It is two straight four days. "But to win two or three Majors in a year is really tough. I have a chance this week and I will do my best." Next year, Ko has another big goal as she targets an Olympic debut in Tokyo. "I'm excited that I might play in the Tokyo Olympics," she admitted. "The Olympics are really important for Korea. It would be so good."

### 'Really cool'

Georgia Hall melted home hearts last year when she won the British Open at Royal Lytham and St Annes with her father working as her caddie. The defending champion heads a strong entry from the host country. Charley Hull, who grew up playing at Woburn, and Melissa Reid, third in this season's LPGA Championship, will also be aiming to mount a serious challenge.

"The year has gone by very quickly," said Hall. "I'm excited to be back and to be able to be in England. I think it is really cool. "I haven't played the course at all this year. When it was here three years ago, I practised quite a bit and I didn't do very well. — AFP

## McIlroy joins Tiger at Japan's first PGA Tour event

**TOKYO:** Former world number one Rory McIlroy will join 15-time major-winner Tiger Woods at Japan's first PGA Tour tournament later this year, organizers announced yesterday. Woods had already confirmed his participation, but McIlroy's addition considerably brightens the star power at the \$9.75 million Zozo Championship in October.

"It is wonderful we have the opportunity to compete in Japan this year and I'm truly excited to be heading" to the tournament, the 30-year-old Northern Ireland star said in a press release. McIlroy's commitment is "a fantastic addition," organisers of the Zozo Championship said. "I know golf fans in Japan are very supportive and knowledgeable of the game and it'll be really cool and fun for the PGA Tour players to perform in front of



**MEMPHIS:** Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland plays a shot on the 12th hole during the final round of the World Golf Championship-FedEx St Jude Invitational at TPC Southwind. — AFP

them for the first time," McIlroy said. "In my career, I've won all around the world and it'll be an achievement if I can register my first title in Japan."

McIlroy, the world number three, is currently ranked second on the FedExCup points list.

The four-time major-winner was world number one for 95 weeks between 2012 to 2015. A total of 78 players, including the leading 60 players from the FedExCup points list, will compete at the Zozo Championship in Chiba, near Tokyo, from October 24-27. — AFP

## Sports

# Root and Paine's different routes to Ashes captaincy

## 'Captaincy is 90 percent luck and 10 percent skill'

**BIRMINGHAM:** One seemed destined to be a Test captain at 23; the other was thrust into the leadership following an extraordinary crisis and not long after he'd thought of quitting cricket. When England's Joe Root and Australia's Tim Paine walk out for the toss prior to the first Ashes opener at Edgbaston starting today they will have taken very different routes to get there.

England used to put a premium on so-called 'leadership qualities', picking the captain ahead of the rest of the side, whereas Australia would select their best XI and appoint one of them as skipper. But an increasingly congested international schedule, which deprives Test regulars the chance of sustained captaincy experience in county cricket, prompted a change in England's approach.

Neither Root, nor his predecessor as England captain, Alastair Cook, has been regarded as superb tacticians. But as top-order batsmen, guaranteed their place in the side, they have been obvious captaincy candidates particularly as, unlike frontline bowlers, they don't have to worry about when to bring themselves on.

When Root took over in 2017, he had been a captain in just four first-class matches, one of which saw him dubbed "Craptain" by his Yorkshire team-mates after Middlesex chased down a target of 472. Former England off-spinner Graeme Swann voiced fears that captaincy would have a negative impact on Root's run-scoring. Root's responded with a match-winning 190 against South Africa at Lord's, in his first match in charge, and a century in England's first day-night Test, against West Indies at Edgbaston.

### Lead from the front

But he went more than a year before again reaching

three figures in a Test, a period that included a 4-0 Ashes series loss in Australia. Now England will hope a return to number three allied to the responsibility of leading from the front will improve the 28-year-old Root's conversion rate of fifties to hundreds (41-16 at present). Paine's road to the captaincy was far rockier and not just because of a belief that wicketkeepers already have enough to do in the field.

He was set to retire in 2017 and take a job with a cricket equipment manufacturer, yet by March 2018 he was Australia's captain. Paine made his Australia debut in a neutral Test against Pakistan at Lord's in 2009 and he appeared the heir to Brad Haddin as the long-term wicketkeeper.

A finger injury blighted his career and there were times when he was not even the first-choice wicketkeeper for Tasmania. But when rival glovemen Peter Nevill and Matthew Wade were dropped ahead of the 2017/18 Ashes, Paine made the most of his recall. Then came the 2018 ball-tampering scandal during a Test in Cape Town, which saw then Australia captain Steve Smith and vice-captain David Warner given year-long bans by Cricket Australia for their roles in a flagrant breach of the rules.

Paine, now 34, was thrust into the captaincy to help instill values that would sit well with Australia's shocked fans, never mind opponents who had become weary of the team's crude 'sledding,' or verbal abuse. Paine is the first captain chosen to lead an Australia Test tour of England primarily because he is a 'decent chap' since Ian Johnson in 1956 — a series England won. But given its 19 years since Australia last won an Ashes in England, perhaps captaincy by macho posturing hasn't



**BIRMINGHAM:** Australia's captain Tim Paine attends a press conference on the eve of the first Ashes cricket test match between Australia and England at Edgbaston. —AFP

worked for them. In the words of the late Australia captain Richie Benaud, a hugely successful and sporting

skipper: "Captaincy is 90 percent luck and 10 percent skill, but don't try it without that 10 percent." —AFP

## Tsonga ousts eighth-ranked Khachanov at Washington ATP

**WASHINGTON:** France's Jo-Wilfried Tsonga defeated his first top-10 rival in nearly two years, ousting Russian second seed Karen Khachanov 6-4, 2-6, 7-5 on Tuesday at the ATP Washington Open. The 34-year-old Frenchman, ranked 70th in the world, outlasted eighth-ranked Khachanov after one hour and 58 minutes, turning back the clock to reach the third round of the US Open hardcourt tuneup event.

"I played very good tennis," Tsonga said. "Everything went OK. Just very happy to go through. It's good to see some results for all the hard work." Tsonga, who lost his only Grand Slam final to Novak Djokovic at the 2008 Australian Open, had dropped six matches in a row against top-10 rivals since beating fifth-ranked German Alexander Zverev in October 2017 in a Vienna quarter-final.

There's a revitalized spark in Tsonga, who won his 17th ATP title in February at Montpellier as a 210th-rated wildcard. He fired 13 aces and won 80 percent of his first-serve points. "When you play so long, sometimes you don't feel like yourself," Tsonga said. "Sometimes you lose your personality. I try to keep it and bring it back on court. When you are like this, it's a lot better." Tsonga advanced to a third-round match against British 13th seed Kyle Edmund, who defeated South Africa's Lloyd Harris 6-1, 6-4.

Russian third seed Daniil Medvedev reached the third round by ousting US wildcard Bjorn Fratangelo 6-3, 6-4. The world number 10 might face an injured rival in the third round as 40th-ranked hometown favorite Frances Tiafoe beat Kazakhstan's Alexander Bublik 6-1, 7-6 (7/5) then quickly departed with a foot injury. "I'm very happy to return home with a win," 16th seed Tiafoe said in a statement. "Unfortunately at the end of my match I felt a tweak in my foot. In the interest of making sure I can play my next match to the fullest, I will be getting my foot checked out."

Australia's Bernard Tomic wasn't so lucky, withdrawing from his first-round match with a finger injury. German lucky loser Peter Gojowczyk replaced him and outlasted Russian Andrey Rublev 7-6 (8/6), 4-6, 7-6 (7/2). Khachanov, who earlier this month became the first Russian in the top 10 since Mikhail Youzhny in 2011, is coached by Vedran Martić but has worked the past couple weeks with former world number three Nikolay Davydenko.

"We started to train in Moscow, so that's the preparation I've had with him, for 10-11 days, and then I asked him to come here as well," Khachanov said. "We just started with him. I don't want to make any official announcement yet. But he started to help me two weeks ago. Hopefully he can join the team." Together with Medvedev, Khachanov has signaled a new rise in Russian tennis. "It's great for the country and great for us to be higher, slowly reaching new goals," Khachanov said. "Hopefully we're moving up slowly a long ways." —AFP

## All Blacks trim squad for Bledisloe Tests

**WELLINGTON:** The All Blacks have dropped five players in a 34-man squad named yesterday for the upcoming Bledisloe Cup Tests against Australia. Shannon Frizell, Dalton Papalii, Josh Ioane, Asafo Aumua and Karl Tu'inukuafe all failed to make the cut, denting their prospects of heading to Japan for the Rugby World Cup later this year.

The players named Wednesday will face Australia in the Bledisloe Cup opener in Perth on August 10, which also doubles as a Rugby Championship match, and a second Test in Auckland on August 17. The Wallabies have not won the Bledisloe since 2002 and All Blacks coach Steve Hansen said the New Zealanders saw retaining the trophy as second only to defending the World Cup in their priorities for 2019. "Bledisloe Cup Tests are always massive Tests," he said. "We know that the Wallabies will be confident after their win over Argentina and desperate to win this first match, so we're looking forward to getting to Perth and getting into our Test preparation."

Star centre Sonny Bill Williams was named in the squad but will miss the Perth Test as he plays domestic rugby in a bid to overcome fitness issues. Fly-half Josh Ioane was not named in the squad but has been invited to join the All Blacks' training camp to further his development. Hansen initially had a 39-man squad for the opening Rugby Championship fixtures and will wield the axe again next month when he unveils his 31-man squad for the Rugby World Cup.

### New Zealand:

Forwards: Dane Coles, Liam Coltman, Codie Taylor,

## Teen star Coco, top seed Stephens crash out of WTA

**WASHINGTON:** Coco Gauff, the American teen who electrified Wimbledon with a last-16 run, and US top seed Sloane Stephens crashed out Tuesday in round one of the WTA Washington Open. Eighth-ranked Stephens, the 2017 US Open champion, lost to Sweden's Rebecca Peterson 6-2, 7-5 while 15-year-old qualifier Gauff fell to Kazakhstan's 84th-ranked Zarina Diyas 6-4, 6-2. "Every loss is something I learn from," Gauff said. "Overall it was a good experience."

The US Open women's hardcourt tuneup event lost its only top-10 entrant in Stephens and its star attraction in 146th-ranked Gauff, whose loss came in her first main-draw match since she fell to eventual champion Simona Halep at Wimbledon. "I'm looking forward to the US Open and hope I can make a good result there," Gauff said. "I'm going to work on being more aggressive and trusting myself a little more on the court."

Gauff has been shocked at the whirlwind speed at which her life has changed and that crowds still pack every seat to watch her. "I'm happy for all the support,"

said Gauff. "I thought it would settle back after a couple weeks but I guess people are still excited. "All this has changed so quickly so it's hard sometimes but having the experience is definitely going to help me for the US Open."

Stephens, whose first WTA title came at Washington in 2015, exited with one win or less for the eighth time in 10 non-Grand Slam starts this year. "I could have played better," said Stephens. "It was hot. Tough conditions. But you know from here only thing you can do is improve." Stephens, 26, split with coach Kamau Murray in late 2018 after four years together and has been guided by Sven Groeneveld for the past two months.

"I've tried to have a good attitude and let the chips fall where they may going forward," Stephens said. "We're starting fresh. We've done pretty well. I need to have fun and enjoy what I'm doing." Peterson collected her first victory in nine tries against a top-10 rival. "Fought for every point that was out there," Peterson said. "I stayed in the moment." Diyas dispatched the crowd favorite before a packed second stadium. "I knew there was going to be a big crowd and they were going to support her so I was ready for it. I was more aggressive. I served better. "She's so young but she's really good. She's so strong and she has a big serve. She's moving well. I think she's going to be very big in the future."



**WASHINGTON DC:** Coco Gauff addresses the media during the Citi Open - Preview at Rock Creek Tennis Center. —AFP

### 'Sky is the limit'

Gauff, who can't yet drive, has impressed foes and friends alike. "She's cool. She's locked in and ready to go," said 40th-ranked ATP pal Frances Tiafoe. "She will have a hell of a career. The sky is the limit if she stays focused." US second seed Madison Keys — ousted by US wildcard Hailey Baptiste 7-6 (7/4), 6-2 — was impressed at Gauff's poise in Wimbledon's intense atmosphere.

"How she has handled it and how mature

she is — she's so wise beyond her years," Keys said. "I was just really impressed with how well she handled herself on court. I'm not sure that many of us could have done so well. "Everyone knew she was a great player and that she could do a lot. The fact she did it right off the bat was pretty impressive." Gauff is already a role model, Keys saying: "It has been fun watching her and reminding myself I used to be that excited to play." —AFP

## Will India dump Shastri? Moody among challengers

**NEW DELHI:** India's hunt for a new coach has attracted top international names, including Australian Tom Moody, despite skipper Virat Kohli backing Ravi Shastri to get a new deal, reports yesterday. The deadline for applications ended Tuesday as the Indian side

set off for a tour of the West Indies with pressure mounting on Shastri after the team were upset by New Zealand in the World Cup semi-final.

According to media reports, Moody, former New Zealand coach Mike Hesson, Sri Lanka stalwart Mahela Jayawardene, ex-India player Robin Singh and former India manager and current Zimbabwe coach Lalchand Rajput are all in contention with Shastri. It was also widely reported that former Test player Pravin Amre

applied for a batting coach post, while South Africa's Jonty Rhodes is eyeing the fielding position.

While Shastri remains favorite and has an automatic entry in the process, Singh told The Hindu newspaper that after losing in the semi-finals in two straight World Cups and the world T20 championship "a change could be good for the side". Shastri's contract ended with the World Cup but he and his support staff have been given a 45-day extension for the West Indies tour that

starts Saturday.

The post will be picked by the national board's Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC), comprising World Cup winning captain Kapil Dev, former head coach Anshuman Gaekwad and ex-women's team captain Shantha Rangaswamy. Kohli had made his choice clear before leaving for the West Indies, saying the team has a "great camaraderie" with the former India all-rounder and will be "happy" if he continues. —AFP

## Sports

# Real Madrid's pre-season struggles continue with loss to Tottenham

## An enterprising and more aggressive Spurs team

**MUNICH:** Real Madrid's disastrous pre-season continued on Tuesday as they lost 1-0 to Tottenham in Munich. "Our defeat was well deserved," Real midfielder Tony Kroos told German TV after the match. It's true that we're not quite in good shape." In the second match of the evening, Bayern Munich thrashed Fenerbahce 6-1.

Champions League runners up Tottenham will play Bayern in the final. Real will have a chance to find winning form run against a Turkish side that finished their game against the host in disarray. For Spurs, Harry Kane scored the only goal of the game with a deft finish after pouncing on a disastrous pass by Marcello, who was trying to prevent a throw in, after 22 minutes.

Humiliated 7-3 last week by Atletico Madrid, Real could thank goalkeeper Keylor Navas, starting in place of injured Thibaut Courtois, for preventing a heavier against an enterprising and more aggressive Spurs team. Madrid survived some goalmouth scares in the first half. After the break, Dele Alli went close twice and 17-year-old Troy Parrott hit the inside of the post. Zinedine Zidane's team have conceded 13 goals and lost three of their four warm-up games. "We started off very badly, the opponent took advantage of our mistakes," said Kroos.

### No real threat

With Gareth Bale, the source of turmoil in recent weeks, left out of the squad for the trip to Munich and James Rodriguez yet to start after returning from Bayern, Real rarely threatened. Star summer recruit Eden Hazard was invisible. Both teams will be in action again tomorrow. Tottenham play the winner of the Tuesday's second match, between Bayern and Fenerbahce. Real will have the opportunity to make amends tomorrow against the loser.

Zidane's men then travel to Austria to face Salzburg on August 6, then to Italy for a match against AS Rome, the last friendly before the starting the Spanish league away to Celta Vigo on August 17. In the late game, Bayern scored five in the first half with two goals from Thomas Muller and



**MUNICH:** Real Madrid's Brazil midfielder Rodrygo (R) and Tottenham's Argentinian midfielder Erik Lamela vie for the ball during the Audi Cup football match between Real Madrid and Tottenham Hotspur. — AFP

one each from Renato Sanches, Leon Goretzka and Kingsley Coman. "We played well from the beginning," said Mueller who completed his hat-trick in the second half. "Fenerbahce made mistakes with our pressing. When

you come into the dressing room at half-time five goals ahead, you necessarily feel good."

Fenerbahce's German international attacker Max Kruse scored a late consolation goal. — AFP

## Evra reveals row with United chief Woodward

**LONDON:** Patrice Evra has revealed he threatened Manchester United executive vice-chairman Ed Woodward during a heated row over his future at the club in 2014. Former France defender Evra retired from football on Monday after a glittering career that included an eight-year spell with United. The left-back played for United from 2006 to 2014, winning five Premier League titles and one Champions League crown among a host of honors.

But the 38-year-old, who had a short-term deal with West Ham last season, didn't always enjoy a smooth ride at Old Trafford. Evra had told Woodward he intended to leave United when his contract expired at the end of the 2013-14 season, but after initially accepting his decision, Woodward announced he had triggered a one-year contract extension against the player's wishes.

Evra went ballistic and threatened Woodward when he spoke to him about the deal. Two months later the defender, then 33, joined Juventus for £12 million. "Before the end of that season Ed told me: 'Patrice, you're going



**MARSEILLE:** In this file photo taken on August 23, 2017 then Marseille's defender Patrice Evra holds a press conference at the Velodrome Stadium. — AFP

to stay for another year because we've got an option in your contract," Evra told Sky Sports on Tuesday. "But I told him I needed to leave because of family reasons. He shook my hand and said he understood. Then in May I was having dinner in Dubai on my birthday and had a text from my agent.

"He told me to go somewhere quiet and sent me a message with the statement from United saying they were pleased to renew my contract for another year. I went

mad, I was really disappointed. I called Ed and swore on the phone, even threatened him. He said I couldn't talk to the director of football like that and that he was going to fine me. "After that Ryan Giggs called and said I couldn't leave just because of one man, but it gave me an excuse to leave. I'd already said to my wife we were going to leave, but inside I didn't ever really feel I could. That gave me a little push."

Evra's revelation of the Woodward bust-up came on the same day he admitted his success in football was inspired by his humble childhood. "I had nothing. We had nothing. But I was living as if I had everything," Evra wrote in the Players' Tribune. "If I could tell you one secret about my life, this would be it. Anyone can be happy - anyone can love this game. Without this mindset, my friend, I would not be sitting here as a recently retired left back who played for France, Juventus and Manchester United.

"I would probably still be sitting outside a shop in Paris, begging for money to buy a sandwich. "I'm not joking. When I grew up in Les Ulis, a commune in the Paris suburbs, I was living with my parents and some of my brothers and sisters. I have 24 of them. "So we were about a dozen people in the same house. My father was providing a lot of our income through his job as an ambassador. "That's what took our family from Senegal, where I was born, to Brussels and then to Les Ulis. But when I was 10 he divorced my mother. He took the sofa and the TV and even the chairs." — AFP

## Heat and lawsuits: A story of European football clubs in Asia

**SUZHOU:** Huge entourages, heavy security and demands for the sort of police protection normally reserved for heads of state — European football teams jetting across Asia leave nothing to chance, but sometimes run into problems anyway. The money-spinning pre-season tours are a far cry from 30 years ago, when the likes of Manchester United would play friendlies against local sides, or at most hop over to Ireland.

United, now a global brand, sent staff to Shanghai several times ahead of last week's friendly against Tottenham to ensure that the Hongkou Stadium pitch was up to scratch. Paris Saint-Germain dispatched a chef ahead of the team's arrival in each location in Asia to check that the food adheres to the players' strict pre-season diets. Security — which usually means keeping away overzealous fans — has been a primary concern for the clubs fanning out across Asia this month.

Manchester City coach Pep Guardiola was accompanied by a beefy member of security as he made the short walk to the team coach inside the bowels of Nanjing Olympic Stadium. Autograph and selfie-hunters were left empty-handed. City's guarded approach — their security detail was never far away — angered China's state news agency Xinhua, which accused City of an "attitude of arrogance". Guardiola retorted: "Maybe one journalist is a little bit upset, I don't know why, but it's far away from what is reality."

### 'No vacation'

When it comes to accommodation for City, United, Paris Saint-Germain, Juventus and the rest, it is only the best. Guardiola and his expensively assembled squad — plus dozens of club staff — took over the exclusive, 130-room Banyan Tree hotel in Shanghai. Rooms at the self-styled "urban retreat in the city's most scenic location" start at nearly 2,000 yuan a night (\$300).

PSG brought a heaving delegation of 120 people for their trip to Shenzhen, Macau and Suzhou, among them eight security personnel with walkie-talkies and at least two cooks in club-crested chef

uniforms. While in the Chinese city of Suzhou for Tuesday's 3-0 win over Sydney FC, PSG pitched up at the deluxe Fairmont Yangcheng Lake hotel. However, the French champions' midfielder Julian Draxler said that being holed up in a hotel — no matter how swanky — could be "quite boring".

Throw in training in fierce heat, and media and commercial duties, and Draxler said it was no holiday. The 25-year-old German World Cup winner told AFP that he was happy to be in China and meet Chinese fans, but conceded: "Honestly, when we are in pre-season, we see the hotel, the plane, the bus and the pitches. "It's not like we go out and try some restaurants or go shopping." In China, because of internet restrictions, players have not been able to while away the hours on social media or read news from back home — which Newcastle United's young goalkeeper Freddie Woodman said was a blessing.

### 'Survival' for Guardiola

The visits — Singapore, Japan, South Korea and Australia were also on some itineraries — are ultimately about creating profits and goodwill, but not every visit has ended well. According to South Korean media, demands from Juventus to have a police escort — normally reserved for visiting heads of state — were refused. Juventus arrived at the stadium for an exhibition match in Seoul 15 minutes after kick-off, delaying the game by an hour, after their plane from China landed late.

The Italian champions then riled fans by keeping star attraction Cristiano Ronaldo on the bench. More than 2,000 South Koreans plan to sue the sports agency involved. There is little teams can do about temperatures touching 40 degrees (104F), heavy rain, jet lag, traffic and flight delays. Bad weather saw PSG stuck in Suzhou on Wednesday morning, while City's flight to China was delayed by two days because of a paperwork problem. When they finally arrived, Guardiola hardly looked delighted. "It's survival," he grimaced. — AFP



**TACOMA:** Allie Long #6 (L) and Megan Rapinoe #15 of Seattle Reign FC are celebrated by the City of Tacoma for their 2019 World Cup victory for the United States Women's National Soccer Team prior to taking on the Chicago Red Stars during their game at Cheney Stadium. — AFP

## USWNT right to pursue equal pay: Men's union

**LOS ANGELES:** The union representing players on the US men's football team Tuesday slammed "false accounting" used by US Soccer president Carlos Cordeiro in claiming the federation had paid women players more than men. Cordeiro made the claim on Monday in an open letter to federation members, with mediation looming in a federal lawsuit brought by players on the women's team that accuses the federation of "institutionalized gender discrimination" that includes inequitable compensation when compared to players on the men's national team.

"This is more of the same from a federation that is constantly in disputes and litigation and focuses on increasing revenue and profits without any idea how to use that money to grow the sport," the men's players' union statement said. "The women's national team players deserve equal pay and are right to pursue a legal remedy from the courts or Congress." The

issue was center stage as the United States triumphed in the Women's World Cup in France in July, chants of "equal pay" raining down on the champions after they defeated the Netherlands in the final.

Lawyers for the women players filed a lawsuit on March 8 demanding equal pay and conditions to their less successful male counterparts. US lawmakers have proposed legislation that would block federal funding for the 2026 Men's World Cup — to be hosted jointly by the United States, Mexico and Canada — until the federation pays its women's national team "fair and equitable wages."

Cordeiro said Monday that, in fact, women players were paid \$34.1 million by the federation from 2010 to 2018 in salaries and bonuses — including National Women's Soccer League salaries for national team members — while members of the men's national team were paid \$26.4 million over the same period. The figures did not include bonuses received by US Soccer from FIFA for World Cup performances because, Cordeiro said, the federation couldn't be held responsible for the disparity in those sums. When the bonuses are included, members of the men's team earned a combined \$41 million between 2010 and 2018, while the women received \$39.7 million. — AFP

## Rooney's future is in MLS ahead of All-Star clash

**ORLANDO:** Wayne Rooney stressed Tuesday that his future remains in Major League Soccer amid new suggestions his family are unsettled in Washington and want him to return to England before his current contract expires. The former England and Manchester United forward bristled when asked about stories circulating in England that wife Coleen has demanded he quits North America when his current DC United contract expires at the end of 2021.

Rooney, in Orlando ahead of Wednesday's MLS All-Star match against Atletico Madrid, says he has started work on his coaching badges and admits he wants to follow the likes of new Chelsea coach Frank Lampard and make the transition from player to manager. The striker signed a three-and-a-half year deal last summer following his move from Everton. But when asked by AFP if his wife has put down demands for him to quit football for the sake of his family, Rooney snapped: "Is that what was in the media? That my wife has got her own way?"

"Those reports are a bit far fetched. I'm concentrating on playing for DC United and trying to get them into the playoffs. "I haven't thought about anything beyond that. "I am a bit tired as I left on Tuesday morning at 4am to come to Orlando but I feel in good shape." Rooney has enjoyed his spell in MLS, scoring 23 goals in 42 appearances.

At the age of 33, however, the Liverpool-born star knows his playing career won't last forever. "Coaching is something which I have thought about for a long time," Rooney said. "I'm in the process now of going through my badges. It would be a shame for me to finish playing and just walk away from the game. "I have a desire to go into management and hopefully the right opportunity will come up."

Rooney will team with fellow European star Zlatan Ibrahimovich and Carlos Vela, the Mexican forward and current MLS goals leader, against an Atletico side boasting the likes of Spanish international Diego Costa and Portuguese wonderkid Joao Felix. LA Galaxy forward Ibrahimovich, 37, gave the impression of someone who would rather be resting than taking part in an exhibition game in the searing Florida heat and humidity.

The Swede, however, undoubtedly loves the limelight, telling AFP: "It's a game which has to be played. It's important for MLS. This is their global window to play against a fantastic team like Atletico, but I just hope no one gets injured. "All of our players have important games to come in our own season. We're over halfway through now. "I'm enjoying it in MLS though. I just how consider how my body feels. If I feel good, I'll continue to play. "What do I want to do after I finish playing? I don't know. My whole life has been football." — AFP

## FIFA, UEFA in fresh call for Saudi action on pirate broadcaster

**PARIS:** FIFA, UEFA and several of the world's top football leagues yesterday renewed calls for the Saudi government to crack down on alleged piracy of television rights by the "beoutQ" network. FIFA and UEFA were joined by the English Premier League, Spain's La Liga, the German Bundesliga, Italy's Serie A and the Asian Football Confederation to "collectively condemn in the strongest possible terms the ongoing theft of our intellectual property by the pirate broadcaster known as 'beoutQ'."

They also called "on the authorities in Saudi Arabia to support us in ending the widespread and flagrant breaches of our intellectual property rights taking place in the country". The collective have been working since May 2018 to monitor and compile evidence against beoutQ, whose broadcasts they said were "regularly and on an industrial scale made available on an illegal basis".

"Following thorough analysis by technical experts of how beoutQ operates from a technical perspective, we are satisfied that beoutQ is operating specifically to target customers in Saudi Arabia and is utilizing the facilities of at least one Saudi Arabia-based entity." However, the collective have been unable to find a Saudi law firm willing to act on their behalf. "As copyright holders we have reached the conclusion, regrettably, that it is now not possible to retain legal counsel in Saudi Arabia which is willing or able to act on our behalf in filing a copyright complaint against beoutQ," a statement released by FIFA said.

"We feel we have now exhausted all reasonable options for pursuing a formal copyright claim in Saudi Arabia and see no alternative but to pursue beoutQ and a solution to this very serious problem of piracy by other means." It added: "Given the scale of beoutQ's piracy in Saudi Arabia and that the piracy continues unabated, we request that the (Culture and Information) Ministry and the Saudi Government take swift and decisive action against beoutQ." — AFP

## 25 IAAF hails 'clarity' after Semenya ruling



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## 27 Real Madrid's pre-season struggles continue with loss to Tottenham



BIRMINGHAM: England's captain Joe Root (L) and Australia's captain Tim Paine hold the urn containing the Ashes on the eve of the first Ashes cricket test match between Australia and England at Edgbaston. — AFP

# Cricket's oldest rivalry: Ashes begins today

## England seek a 'double' as Australia eye Ashes history

**BIRMINGHAM:** England return to 'Fortress Edgbaston' for the first Test against Australia today looking to round off an already memorable season by completing a World Cup and Ashes double. If the World Cup remains the pinnacle of the 50-over game, for England and Australia there's nothing quite like a renewal of Test cricket's oldest rivalry. But now there's arguably more at stake for both sides than the series result.

For England, a home season billed as the most important in a generation started brilliantly with their impressive run to a first men's World Cup title. International cricket in Britain emerged from behind its satellite television paywall for the first time since the celebrated 2005 Ashes so that millions could watch England's nerve-shredding Super Over win against New Zealand at Lord's earlier this month.

Building on that groundswell of support is a key part of the England and Wales Cricket Board's post-tournament strategy. Regaining the Ashes represents an ideal

chance to keep those new followers on board, even if none of the five Tests are on free-to-air television. For Australia, an Ashes series win under the dignified leadership of Tim Paine would help draw a line under the ball-tampering scandal in South Africa that led to long bans for former captain Steve Smith, David Warner and Cameron Bancroft.

All three batsmen are likely to feature at Edgbaston, with Bancroft set to hear the same booing that greeted Smith and Warner during the World Cup. Australia have not won an Ashes in England for 19 years, with their batsmen struggling against the heavily stitched Dukes ball on pitches that offer seam movement. Yet the first Test will be Australia's opening first-class match of the tour, although the likes of Bancroft, who has been captaining English county side Durham, have recent experience of local conditions.

The way an England side featuring several World Cup stars were dismissed for just 85 by Ireland at Lord's last

week before winning the first Test between the countries tells its own story of ongoing top-order woes. England captain Joe Root plans to move back to number three to help shore up a top order featuring novice Surrey openers Rory Burns and Jason Roy. James Anderson, England's all-time leading Test wicket-taker, is set to return from a calf injury to lead an attack that could feature World Cup hero Jofra Archer.

### 'Keep the energy going'

Australia, meanwhile, are poised to put their faith in a rapid four-man attack featuring James Pattinson and Pat Cummins. Several of England's World Cup winners appeared jaded against Ireland but Anderson, who no longer plays one-day internationals and so was not involved in that success, hopes he can revive any flagging spirits.

"For some of us this is the start of our international summer and it's our job to keep the energy going as a team," said Anderson, 37 on Tuesday. With runs expected

to be at premium while the bowlers hold sway, England will hope all-rounders such as Ben Stokes, restored to the vice-captaincy, can again make valuable contributions with the bat. Australia have not won at Edgbaston in any format since 2001, a run that includes their recent World Cup semi-final loss to England, when Roy made a sparkling 85.

England, by contrast, have won their last 11 internationals at the raucous Birmingham ground. But a congested schedule, the result of officials cramming an Ashes into the same season as a lengthy World Cup, could have a bigger bearing on the series, the first in the ICC's new World Test Championship. "I really believe it's a big ask for the fast bowlers on both sides to play five Tests in six weeks," said Australia great Steve Waugh, the victorious captain in the 2001 Ashes, who is mentoring the current squad. "Depth in the squad will be important but I honestly think if I was a betting man I wouldn't back either side because I don't know who's going to win." — AFP

## The Ashes: Three key battles

**LONDON:** World Cup winners England are switching their focus to regaining the Ashes, with Australia desperate to beat their oldest enemy away from home for the first time since 2001. AFP Sport looks at three key battles in the five-Test series that starts at Edgbaston today:

### Warner v Roy

Both England and Australia have batsmen at the top of the order with the ability to dictate the pace of an innings and with something to prove. Australia's David Warner, who had an impressive World Cup campaign, is resuming his Test career after serving a ban for his part in last year's ball-tampering scandal in South Africa.

Warner, 32, who has scored 21 Test centuries, has the knack of quickly taking the game away from the opposition and England will be desperate to get him early. Jason Roy, 29, has played a single Test, against Ireland last week, after 84 one-day internationals for England and will be

keen to show he can bring his swashbuckling style into the Test arena.

But Australia paceman Josh Hazlewood has warned him that Test cricket is a different ball game from the frenetic limited-overs format. "We'll see how Roy goes in Test cricket," said Hazlewood. "He has only played one Test match and it's a lot different opening the batting in a Test than a one-day game, that's for sure."

### Smith v Root

When Australia and England last met, in Australia in 2017-18, Steve Smith and Joe Root were the opposing skipper. Since then, Smith has been stripped of the captaincy and he is preparing for his first Test outing since being banned over last year's ball-tampering incident. Smith, like Warner subjected to some rough treatment from the English crowds during the World Cup, will feel he has something to prove.

Averaging an eye-catching 61.37 in 64 Tests, with 23 centuries, Smith is still the main man for Australia and he scored a total of 687 runs in the teams last met, hitting three centuries in five Tests. Root's Test average has dipped below 50 but he remains one of most feared players in the game and England's finest batsmen, with 16 Test centuries under his belt.

The Yorkshireman is moving back up to

number three to boost England's struggling top order. Since Root dropped a place during the India series last year, several options have been tried, including Moeen Ali, Jonny Bairstow and Joe Denly. But none has settled the debate and now Root is ready to return to a position from which he scored his Test-best 254 against Pakistan in 2016.

### English guile v Australian pace

England have a new weapon in pacer Jofra Archer but the key to their Ashes bowling attack will be veteran opening bowlers James Anderson and Stuart Broad. Anderson and Broad, with more than 1,000 Test wickets between them, lack the sheer pace to frighten batsmen but are masters of exploiting English conditions with swing.

Australia, on the other hand, have a battery of fast bowlers who could inflict real damage on England's fragile top-order. "Australia have bowlers who can blast you away — Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, James Pattinson and Josh Hazlewood," said former England paceman Steve Harmison. "But if they don't get it quite right they can go at six an over. Broad and Anderson will very rarely go at six an over. They'll be down on pace compared to the opposition, but they'll have total control of what they're doing." — AFP

## Klopp, Salah head nominations for FIFA Best awards

**PARIS:** Liverpool coach Jurgen Klopp and three players — Mohamed Salah, Sadio Mane and Virgil van Dijk — headed nominations released for the FIFA Best awards that will be presented in Milan on September 23. Klopp led Liverpool, and that vital trio of players, to the Champions League trophy and also second place to Manchester City in the Premier League.

Juventus' Cristiano Ronaldo and Barcelona's Lionel Messi also make the shortlist for the men's award along with PSG's Kylian Mbappe, Tottenham's Harry Kane, Belgian Eden Hazard and Dutch duo Frenkie de Jong and Matthijs de Ligt. American Alex Morgan and coach Jill Ellis will be favorites for the female player and women's coach awards after spearheading the USA to the women's World Cup title in France last month.

### The Best FIFA Men's Player

Cristiano Ronaldo (POR/Juventus); Frenkie de Jong (NED/Ajax/Barcelona);

Matthijs de Ligt (NED/Ajax/Juventus); Eden Hazard (BEL/Chelsea/Real Madrid); Harry Kane (ENG/Tottenham); Sadio Mane (SEN/Liverpool); Kylian Mbappe (FRA/Paris Saint-Germain); Lionel Messi (ARG/Barcelona); Mohamed Salah (EGY/Liverpool); Virgil van Dijk (NED/Liverpool)

### The Best FIFA Women's Player

Lucy Bronze (ENG/Lyon); Julie Ertz (USA/Chicago Red Stars); Caroline Graham Hansen (NOR/Wolfsburg/Barcelona); Ada Hegerberg (NOR/Lyon); Amandine Henry (FRA/Lyon); Sam Kerr (AUS/Chicago Red Stars/Perth Glory); Rose Lavelle (USA/Washington Spirit); Vivianne Miedema (NED/Arsenal); Alex Morgan (USA/Orlando Pride); Megan Rapinoe (USA/Reign FC); Wendie Renard (FRA/Lyon); Ellen White (ENG/Birmingham City/Manchester City)

### The Best FIFA Men's Coach

Djamel Belmadi (ALG/Algerian national team); Didier Deschamps (FRA/French national team); Marcelo Gallardo (ARG/River Plate); Ricardo Gareca (ARG/Peruvian national team); Pep Guardiola (ESP/Manchester City); Jurgen Klopp (GER/Liverpool); Mauricio Pochettino (ARG/Tottenham); Fernando Santos (POR/Portuguese national team); Erik ten Hag (NED/Ajax); Tite (BRA/Brazilian national team). — AFP