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Iran 'favors' talks with US, but warns of 'mother of all wars'

Tehran unveils three new precision-guided missiles



TEHRAN: Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said yesterday that Iran favors talks with the US if it lifts sanctions against the Islamic republic, despite his top diplomat turning down a meeting with US President Donald Trump. Rouhani said "peace with Iran is the mother of all peace" and "war with Iran is the mother of all wars" as he defended a landmark 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers.

"Iran favors talks and negotiations and, if the US really wants to talk, before anything else it should lift all sanctions," Rouhani said in remarks aired live on state television. Tensions between Iran and the US have been rising since Trump unilaterally withdrew the US from the nuclear deal in May 2018 and began imposing sanctions on it as part of a "maximum pressure" campaign.

Rouhani, speaking after meeting with his top diplomat, Mohammad Javad Zarif, said Iran was ready for talks regardless of whether or not the US was party to the deal. "Whether they want to come into the JCPOA or not, it's up to them," said Rouhani, referring to the accord known formally as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. "All sanctions should be lifted so that there will be no criminals facing us," he said, accusing the US of committing acts of "economic terrorism" for blocking food and medicine imports.

In response, the US ambassador on disarmament Robert Wood said: "Iran simply needs to make up its mind to decide what it wants to do". "My president has said he is willing to sit down and have a discussion with

Iran. We are not sure Iran wants to have that discussion," he said in answer to a question from AFP on the sidelines of a conference in Geneva.

However Rouhani described as "weird" the US approach of calling for negotiations and then slapping sanctions on Zarif. "So how should we negotiate?" he said yesterday. "The person in charge of negotiations is the foreign minister. He must talk to you." Trump has said publicly several times he is willing to hold talks with Iran even as he lambasts its leadership as corrupt, incompetent and a threat to regional security and US interests.

Twelve months on from the US withdrawal, Iran responded by suspending some of its commitments under the nuclear deal. The situation threatened to spiral out of control with ships attacked, drones downed and oil tankers seized. At the height of the crisis, Trump called off air strikes against Iran at the last minute in June after its forces shot down a US drone.

Rouhani, with Zarif sitting beside him, defended the foreign minister who has faced criticism from hardliners over his role in the deal ultimately abandoned by the Americans. "We had so many economic victories (in the wake of the deal) that it enraged some people," he said. Rouhani said the US made a mistake when it thought "everything will be over" for Iran after "some planned a street riot" in Dec 2017.

At that time, Iran was rocked by days of deadly protests reportedly sparked by austerity measures.

Continued on Page 24

Nobel laureate Toni Morrison dies aged 88

NEW YORK: Toni Morrison, the first African-American woman to win the Nobel Prize for Literature and one of America's best loved writers, has died following a brief illness, her family said in a statement yesterday. She was 88. Barack Obama - who awarded Morrison the Presidential Medal of Freedom - led the tributes, describing her as "a national treasure, as good a storyteller, as captivating, in person as she was on the page". "Her writing was a beautiful, meaningful challenge to our conscience and our moral imagination. What a gift to breathe the same air as her, if only for a while," the former US president wrote on Twitter.



Toni Morrison

Morrison wrote 11 novels, many of them touching on life as a black American, in a glittering literary and award-laden career that lasted over six decades. She also penned numerous essays, poems and

Continued on Page 24

Lebanese kick up stink over smell fix for garbage woes

BEIRUT: Sitting at a plastic table outside her flatbread sandwich shop in the Lebanese capital, Nadime Yazbeck says she wishes the government would deal with the stench from the local trash dump. "They really need to find a solution to these smells," said the 66-year-old Beirut resident, in a spotless white t-shirt and hair net. Four years after a garbage crisis sparked political protests in Lebanon, the stench of trash is back and government plans to quell the smell have only triggered demands for better waste management.

In Yazbeck's neighborhood of Bourj Hammoud, a seaside landfill that reopened to solve the 2015 crisis will be full by the end of the summer. Near the airport, another overwhelmed landfill is to start refusing waste from neighboring areas in protest. On and off for more than a year, the acrid smell of decomposing refuse has wafted into homes and businesses in the capital. Even kilometres away from landfills, residents have raced to close windows to keep out the stink.

Continued on Page 24



BEIRUT: This file photo taken on Aug 16, 2017 shows a general view of the Bourj Hammoud fishing port, in front of a large landfill dump (background). — AFP

High steaks: Cows go from roofs to plates

KARACHI: Syed Ejaz Hassan's annual ritual in Pakistan's megacity of Karachi has kicked off, which will see his cows transported from a roof to plates over the coming days ahead of next week's Eid Al-Adha holiday. Muslims slaughter an animal - a goat, sheep, cow, or camel - on the annual festival in a ritual that stems from the story of the Prophet Abraham (PBUH), commanded by God to slaughter his beloved son Ismail (PBUH). The meat is then distributed in equal parts to the poor, to relatives, and consumed by the family themselves.

In Karachi alone, nearly half a million cows, goats and camels will be sold or sacrificed during the holiday. But in the sprawling city of around 20 million, notorious for its gridlocked traffic, dense neighborhoods and woeful lack of green space, some roofs are transformed into temporary livestock pens ahead of Eid. For Hassan - an entrepreneur



KARACHI: A man stands on a bull being lowered with a crane from a roof of a building in preparation for Eid Al-Adha on Aug 4, 2019. — AFP

- the roof of his four-floor building is the only place with enough space for the hay and troughs necessary to raise the half dozen cattle he hopes to sell for a profit before Eid.

Once the animals are fattened, cranes are then used to bring the animals down from the rooftop to the streets - amusing pedestrians watching from below. "We raised them with love and care," says the 56-year-old Hassan. Even if it is necessary, "it hurts to sacrifice these

animals which we have raised", he adds. While thousands of animals will be slaughtered next week to celebrate Eid, livestock sellers and customers still prefer to add a bit of flamboyance to their purchases, outfitting their animals with leg bracelets or flowers necklaces while others are dyed with henna.

But amongst the lively and chaotic atmosphere in Karachi's livestock markets are bitter negotiations.

Continued on Page 24

Brazil inmate dead after foiled escape dressed as woman

RIO DE JANEIRO: A Brazilian drug trafficker, who had attempted to escape from prison disguised as his teenage daughter, was found dead in his cell yesterday, officials said. Clauvino da Silva, nicknamed "Shorty" or "Baixinho" in Portuguese, made headlines after he was caught Saturday trying to walk out the front door of a Rio de Janeiro jail. Da Silva, 42, wore a silicone mask, long dark wig, glasses, white flip flops and the clothes, including pink T-shirt, blue denim jeans and black bra, belonging to his 19-year-old daughter, who was visiting him. She had planned to stay behind while he made his getaway.



Brazilian inmate Clauvino da Silva wears a wig and mask after he was captured on Aug 3, 2019. — AFP

Da Silva, who was serving a 73-year jail sentence, was caught after guards noticed he looked "suspicious". His daughter and seven other visitors were detained over the foiled breakout.

Continued on Page 24

News in brief

Three pedestrians killed

KUWAIT: Three Asian pedestrians were killed and four others were critically injured in a horrific accident at the entrance of Mubarak Al-Abdullah from King Fahd Road. The motorist who ran over them is a 21-year-old Kuwaiti, who was arrested and is being questioned. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

Degree authentication a must

KUWAIT: The Civil Service Commission issued a circular to government departments asking all Kuwait and expat employees to submit their degrees and certificates - approved by concerned authorities - to prove they are authentic. Sources said the CSC directed expat employees to go to the education ministry to authenticate their degrees, and those who do not do so will be terminated. Sources expected next year will see many terminations of expat employees and the cancellation of allowances from Kuwaitis for not submitting authenticated certificates. — A Saleh (See Page 4)

Local



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. — Amiri Diwan photos



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.

Amir receives Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad at Bayan Palace

Premier cables Egyptian counterpart, voicing sorrow for terrorist attack casualties

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

In other news, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah addressed a cable to his Egyptian counterpart Dr Mustafa Madbouli, expressing condolences on deaths inflicted in the terrorist incident that happened opposite the National Cancer Institute in the Egyptian capital. His Highness the Prime Minister strongly condemned the blatant, criminal act that claimed lives of innocent people: an act that is rejected by all heavenly tenets and humanitarian values. His Highness affirmed the State of Kuwait's unwavering stance in rejecting all forms of terrorism, standing alongside the sisterly Republic of Egypt. He

also expressed support for all measures that may be taken by the Egyptian authorities to face such terrorist acts. He prayed that His Almighty Allah may



Kuwait strongly condemns Cairo blast

bestow His mercy upon the souls of the deceased and wished the injured quick recuperation.

Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-

Ghanem also commiserated with his Egyptian counterparts the loss of life and injuries in the "terror" attack outside central Cairo's National Cancer Institute. This came in a cable addressed to Egypt's Speaker of the House of Representatives Ali Abdel Aal, in which the Kuwaiti parliament chief fiercely condemned the act, which targeted the innocent. Ghanem expressed his total solidarity with the Egyptian people and his full support of measures taken by authorities to ensure the country's safety and stability.

Kuwait strongly condemns Sunday's terrorist blast which left dozens of casualties near the National Cancer Institute in Al-Qasr Al-Aini district in Cairo, said an official source in the Foreign Ministry. The official source reiterated Kuwait's principled and firm rejection of terrorism and violence, as well as solidarity with Egypt in its measures to counter terrorism and establishing security and stability. The source urged

the international community to double its efforts to bring an end to this dangerous phenomenon. The source expressed condolences to the victims' families and wished quick recovery for the injured.

In the meantime, GCC Secretary General Dr Abdullatif Al-Zayani strongly condemned the terrorist blast that happened opposite the National Cancer Institute in the Egyptian capital. In a press release, Zayani described the deadly explosion a brutal act against all human principles and ethics, adding that he has high hopes for the Egyptian security officials to capture perpetrators. Zayani denounced the heinous act and stressed the vital role of international community to fight against terrorism. GCC chief offered his condolences to the Egyptian government and victims' families and wished the injured speedy recovery. At least 20 people were killed and 47 others injured in the explosion outside Egypt's National Cancer Institute in central Cairo. — KUNA

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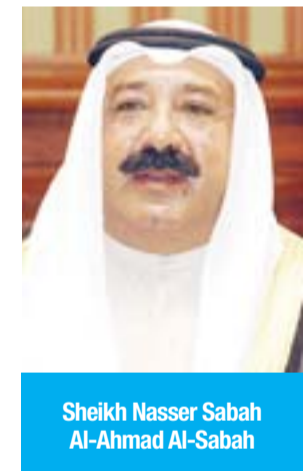
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Defense Minister receives call from Iranian counterpart

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received yesterday a phone call from Iranian Defense Minister Amir Hatami, discussing means of boosting bilateral relations between the two countries. The Iranian Minister of Defense congratulated Sheikh Nasser Al-Sabah on Eid Al-Adha, wishing him full health and well-being and Kuwait more progress and prosperity, in addition to inviting him to visit the Islamic Republic of Iran. In turn, the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense thanked his Iranian counterpart for the call, praising his generous



Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah



Amir Hatami

invitation to visit the Islamic Republic of Iran and wishing further progress for the relations between the two countries. —KUNA

Info Minister, Kyrgyz envoy discuss ties

KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri dis-

cussed with Kyrgyz Ambassador to Kuwait Smargol Adamkulova ways to enhance Kuwaiti-Kyrgyz ties. During the meeting yesterday, Jabri stressed the need to activate cooperation agreements in the field of agriculture and food security for the benefit of the two countries, the ministry said in a statement. Jabri has also welcomed an official invitation to visit the Republic of Kyrgyzstan to learn about the Kyrgyz experience in several fields. — KUNA

Gold prices up, expected to climb further

KUWAIT: The US Federal Reserve's recent decision to slash interest rate on the US Dollar and ongoing trade war between Washington and Beijing contributed to lifting gold prices in the past two days from \$1,400 to \$1,475 per ounce. A report issued yesterday by the Kuwaiti Sabayek company for precious metals said that gold price, according to "most investors," would exceed \$1,500 oz. The yellow metal's rate reached the

highest level since 2013 when it has recently hit \$1,475 oz, buoyed by a weak US Dollar and investors' inclination toward bourses and global stocks. The US Federal Reserve policy of trimming the interest rate will most certainly push the precious metal price higher than the \$1,500 oz, according to the Sabayek Company's report. Continuing commercial war between the US and China will lead to higher commodity prices, thus the US Dollar value is forecast to drop, the report said, indicating that this situation would "serve the yellow metal and cause it to climb in the coming days." Locally, sales in July were low with upcoming summer vacation and the Eid Al-Adha, in addition to hike in global prices due to geopolitical factors in East Asia, as well as the global trade war. The report says the prices in the local market will remain low due to investors' jitters and anticipations. — KUNA



Local



A girl plays the violin.



A boy trains on the Oud.

Kuwait's Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center initiates Children Music School

Professional multinational teachers provide children the opportunity to learn music

KUWAIT: Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center announced yesterday the opening of a Music School for Children to develop their musical skills starting from September. Inauguration of the Music School will be in conjunction with the launch of the center's 2019-2020 third cultural season and comes as part of the center officials' efforts to sponsor talent, creativity and arts, said the Cultural Center in a statement. Educational curriculum in the school will be taught by professional teachers from various countries to provide children, aged six to 12, the opportunity to learn music, the statement added. It will offer Western, Arabic music and multi-level programs for training on Western instruments such as violin, viola, cello, flute, clarinet and piano, in addition to Middle

Eastern Takht, Oud, Ney, Qanun and Middle Eastern violin. The music school will embrace children's musical talents, introducing contemporary and effective musical styles. The Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center aims to nurture the musical scene as well as establishing children's orchestra to highlight Kuwait's music scene, it stated. The first scholastic year will start on September 15 and proceed until December 19. Anyone interested to join can do so by visiting the center's official website (www.jacc-kw.com). The Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center, informally known as the Kuwait Opera House, is a prominent cultural center in Kuwait, located on the Gulf Road in the capital Kuwait City. It is the largest cultural center and opera house in the Middle East. — KUNA



Children learn how to play the Qanun.

Burgan Bank sponsors Ahmadi community initiatives

KUWAIT: Maintaining its long-standing partnership with the Al-Ahmadi Governorate, Burgan Bank recently announced its support of their year-long community initiatives. Dedicated to the betterment of the society across all spectrums, the bank's commitment falls under its social responsibility to serve the residents of the areas within which it operates in.

Accommodating every citizen with the required banking products and services, Burgan Bank retains its strong relationship and presence in the Al-Ahmadi district with five branches. As a leading financial partner that has successfully expanded its network among one of the largest segments in Kuwait, the bank facilitates everyone's needs with a comprehensive suite of offerings backed by premium customer support.

Hessa Hussain Al-Najadah, Manager-External Affairs at Burgan Bank said: "Burgan Bank is proud to contribute to the development of the Al-Ahmadi community as it is an integral part of our strategic vision and reflection of our values - of trust, commitment, excellence and progression. Today, in order to

achieve sustainability and positively impact the future of a country, corporate social responsibility has become a national duty that both advances and empowers its citizens. As a financial powerhouse and aspiring leader in the banking industry, we believe it is essential to foster the combined efforts of public and private entities to achieve real change and complete community well-being."

Ahmad Al-Mulla, Director of Public Relations and Media at Al-Ahmadi Governorate, commended the positive role of the banking sector, specifically Burgan Bank who is both a financial powerhouse and keen contributor to sustainability through its several noteworthy initiatives in Kuwait. He added that Al-Ahmadi enjoys a long history of impactful programs and community initiatives and is driven by the belief that greater cooperation and continued collaborations between the official, civil authorities and voluntary organizations will achieve optimal benefits for the society.

The bank's support of this initiative falls under its dynamic full-fledged community program entitled 'ENGAGE' - Together to be the change. This program sheds light on important aspects affecting every segment of the society by promoting social welfare through educational, cultural and health driven initiatives. Burgan Bank's approach to 'ENGAGE' begins with a vital principle that as a leading Kuwaiti financial institution, its conduct and policies should be aligned with the needs and interests of the community.



(From left) Khaled Al-Mulla, Majed Al-Ajeel, Sheikh Fawaz Al-Khalid Al-Sabah and Hessa Hussain Al-Najadah.

Border crossing to boost trade with Kuwait: Iraqi minister

BAGHDAD: Iraqi Trade Minister Mohammed Al-Ani said on Monday that the development and rehabilitation of the joint Safwan-Al-Abdali border

crossing would contribute to increasing trade between Iraq and Kuwait. This came during a meeting involving the minister and other Iraqi officials, including Interior Minister Yassin Al-Yasiri and the Governor of Basra, read a ministry statement. The minister urged that the project be completed with haste due to the job opportunities the port would provide the Basra community. Recently, Trade Minister Al-Ani met with his Kuwaiti counterpart Khaled Al-Roudhan at the border to agree the development of trade relations the preparation of a comprehensive plan for the port's construction. —KUNA

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Local

Audit Bureau demands action to verify state employees' academic qualifications

Expat employees must authenticate degrees or face termination

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) received several notes from the State Audit Bureau about the mechanism of employee appointments and approving financial allowances for those having university degrees. It called for immediate action towards these notes in order to save public funds and protect the administrative apparatus from forgers, be they citizens or expats.

Informed sources said the CSC began practical measures to deal with the remarks, as it issued a circular to government departments asking all Kuwaiti and expatriate employees must submit their degrees and certificates after being approved by concerned authorities to prove they are authentic. They said this circular includes Kuwaitis' degrees received from abroad, be they diplomas, graduate or postgraduate degrees, as well as expats who were appointed based on their degrees without being approved by the ministry of higher education.

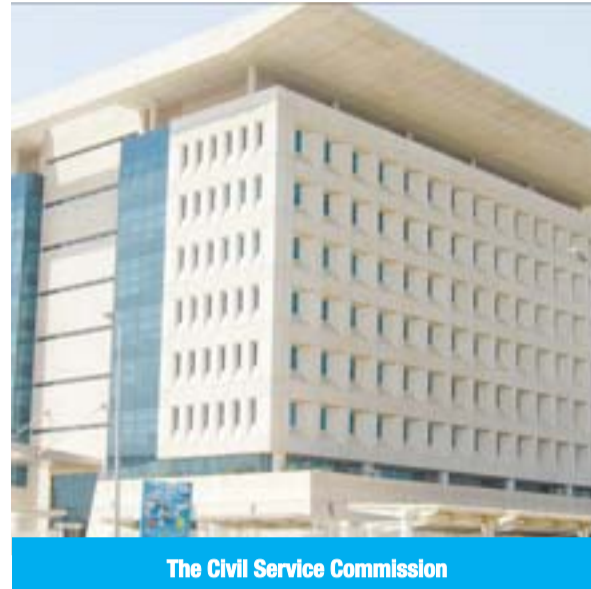
The sources said the CSC started by asking expat employees to go to the ministry of higher education to authenticate their degrees, and those who do not do so

will be terminated. They said the CSC will appoint teams to follow the approved certificates in coordination with government bodies and the ministry of higher education, including for employees who were previously appointed.



Efforts to save public funds

Sources expected next year will see many decisions to terminate expat employees for not submitting authenticated certificates and the cancellation of allowance from Kuwaitis who received them because of bogus certificates or those issued by unrecognized universities.



The Civil Service Commission

Fire at disabled club in Hawally

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Hawally and Salmiya fire stations responded to a call about a fire at the Kuwait Disabled Sports Club in Hawally. The fire started in a kitchen adjacent to the main building, which was evacuated and the fire was put out. No injuries were reported in the incident, and an investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the fire.



News in brief

New fish auction timings

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry issued a circular in which it decided the time for local fish auction to be after Asr prayers and imported fish after Esha prayers. The new timings will be in effect from Aug 18. — By A Saleh

Selective tax to cut obesity

KUWAIT: Correspondence among government authorities showed that implementation of selective tax in Kuwait will reduce obesity and smoking by nearly 25 percent during the next five years. Selective tax is an indirect tax that the end user bears as the value of taxing products that are harmful to public health or environment, and they are mainly related to tobacco products, energy drinks and fizzy drinks, without affecting basic needs. Sources said the most important gains from implementing the selective tax in Kuwait, if approved, will be a drop in obesity and smoking rates by 10 to 20 percent by 2023. Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf said this tax has a health dimension, adding the health ministry monitors the negative effects resulting from consuming the three abovementioned products on the individual's health, and stressed this tax does not aim at improving state revenues as much as it is directed at protecting health. — Al-Rai

No IDs for 'bachelors'

KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality Director General Ahmad Al-Manfouhi explained the current procedures in cooperation with other government bodies to evict "bachelors" from private and model residence areas. Manfouhi said in a video display at the ministerial committee of the Council of Ministers that the government asked the Public Authority for Civil Information to take necessary action to prevent issuance of civil IDs to single men for any address within private residence areas. He said there were previous government recommendations to allocate land to build temporary residence for company workers. He added the Cabinet asked the Public Authority for Manpower to coordinate with all government authorities to allow contracted companies to provide suitable residences for their workers within the area allocated for the project until the labor cities are ready. — Al-Rai

3,100 conscription evaders prosecuted

KUWAIT: The defense ministry has sent 3,100 Kuwaitis to courts for evading compulsory military service, Al-Qabas daily reported yesterday. Informed sources said 1,000 of those are youth who did not report from January until July 2019, while 2,100 did not report last year. Sources said sentences were issued against 600 citizens varying between one week in jail and KD 100 to KD 500 in fines.

Nurse beaten

A nurse at Jahra hospital accused two Kuwaitis of beating her and gave police their information. Both are being summoned for questioning, Al-Rai reported. The 27-year-old nurse submitted a medical report stating injuries on her left shoulder. She said that an argument took place between her and two female relatives of a patient, who attacked her.

Family problems

A 21-year-old Kuwaiti complained against his father for beating him, and gave police a medical report stating his injuries, reported Al-Rai. Police will summon the father for questioning. Meanwhile, a Kuwaiti man lodged a complaint against his son for beating him. The son also verbally insulted his father before escaping, according to the police report. The father gave police a medical report. Detectives are looking for the son for questioning and he may face legal action.

Indecent language

A Kuwaiti man complained against his ex-wife, accusing her of insulting him through an SMS that contained indecent language, and gave them a copy of the messages. The woman is being summoned for questioning.

Accident

A Kuwaiti man was sent to Ahmadi police station as a complaint was lodged against him after a car he was driving collided with the gate of an oil facility. Initial investigations revealed that the collision was an accident. A thief climbed over the fence of a Kuwaiti's house, stole valuables and escaped, reported Al-Rai. The citizen was out of his house along with his family, and when he returned, discovered some belongings were missing, although there was no sign of a break in. He went to the police station and lodged a complaint. Detectives are working on the case.

Air gun found

A security guard handed police an air gun he found it in the toilet of a popular Fahaheel mall. A police source said the security guard, while inspecting the parking lot, noticed the weapon in the toilet across from the parking. He called police, who arrived at the scene and took the weapon.

Debtor's watch confiscated

A judge at an implementation department ordered the confiscation of a debtor's watch to sell in a public auction to give the creditor company its value, Al-Anbaa daily reported yesterday. An informed source said a man told the judge that he is in debt of KD 200,000, had paid KD 100,000, and wanted to settle the remaining KD 100,000 over five years. The source said the judge noticed the debtor was wearing an expensive watch, so he asked him about the watch's value. He told him it is worth KD 80,000, so the judge asked policemen to take the watch from him to be sold in an auction.

Theft

Forensic men went to the premises of a sports committee in Nuwaiseeb following theft of gliders and wireless pieces, Al-Anbaa reported. A Kuwaiti authorized by the sports committee told them the eight gliders were in a 14-m-long container, which was locked. Fire walkie-talkies were also missing, along with three wings and two plane seats.



KUWAIT: Municipality Capital branch's head of emergency team Zaid Al-Enezi said that a campaign resulted in issuing warnings to violating properties in Qibla making makeshift rooms and stores without licenses, in addition to constructions that exceeded the licensed areas.

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: An aerial view of Kuwait City. — Photo by Fahad Al-Otaibi (KUNA)

Gulf hajj meeting aims to benefit from various experiences: Kuwaiti official

MAKKAH: Head of the Kuwaiti Hajj Mission Farid Emadi yesterday stressed the importance of the meetings of those involved in Hajj affairs in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, in order to benefit from the various experiences. This came in a statement to the press after presiding over the meeting of heads of missions of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries hosted by the Kuwaiti Hajj Mission at its headquarters in Makkah.

"Each country has its own useful experiences that can be shared so that we can achieve the best performance and to offer better services for the pil-

grims till they return home safely," Emadi said. He praised the great efforts exerted by the government of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques for harnessing all its capabilities so that pilgrims can perform Hajj without any problems or obstacles. He pointed out that the services provided by Saudi Arabia are great and innovative. "Every year Saudi Arabia comes up with new creations and ideas, as well as the use of electronic systems and smart applications," he added, pointing out that the Kingdom seeks to adapt technology to serve pilgrims and facilitate their rituals. — KUNA



MAKKAH: Head of the Kuwaiti Hajj Mission Farid Emadi chairs a meeting with his GCC counterparts. — KUNA



Head of the Kuwaiti Hajj Mission Farid Emadi with Hajj officials in GCC countries.



Head of the Kuwaiti Hajj Mission Farid Emadi with Dr Saad Al-Shathri, Member of Council of Senior Scholars, Advisor to the Saudi Royal Court.

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Can an election stop a no-deal Brexit?



EL PASO: A shopping cart containing food sits outside the Cleo Vista Mall Wal-Mart (background) where a shooting left 22 people dead in El Paso, Texas. — AFP

Blacks at 'highest risk' of US police killing

Latinos express fear, point finger at Trump after mass shooting

WASHINGTON: Black men in the United States are 2.5 times more likely to be killed by the police than their white counterparts, according to a new study published Monday that quantified racial disparities in law enforcement violence. High-profile killings including those of Michael Brown, Charleena Lyles, Tamir Rice, Stephon Clark and many others have brought the issue sustained national attention in recent years, but a lack of official data had prevented accurate estimates about the extent of the problem.

The new study relied on data from Fatal Encounters, a journalist-led effort, as well as the National Vital Statistics System, to analyze the period 2013-2018. It found African American men and women, American Indian men and women, and Latino men all faced higher lifetime risks than their white peers.

"We think that there's ample evidence that police are a threat to public health in the United States," Frank Edwards at Rutgers University, the lead author of the paper published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences said. "They're a lot more violent in communities of color than they are in white communities, and we need to take that seriously when we talk about police reform." Black men had the highest fatality risk, with the researchers estimating 1 fatality from police use of force for every 1,000 male births.

"Those numbers are high. The chances of you being

killed by police in this country is higher than winning a lot of scratch off lottery games," said Edwards. The group was also 2.5 times more likely to be killed than white men, while black women were 1.4 times more likely to be killed than white women. American Indian men were approximately 1.5 times more likely to be killed than white men, and American Indian women were about 1.6 times more likely to be killed than white women.



Blacks more likely to be killed than whites

Latina women were however 17.5 percent less likely to be killed than white women, though Latino men were about 1.4 times more likely to be killed than white men. Asian and Pacific Islanders had the lowest fatality risks. The risks were even more pronounced for young men: more than 1.5 percent of all deaths of black men between

Hundreds of millions of people around the world play first-person shooter games such as "Fortnite" and "Call of Duty," and do not turn into mass murderers. "Violent video games do not contribute to mass shootings, not in whole, not in part," said Ferguson. "It's probably actively causing harm to the extent it distracts people from real causes of violence," he said on Twitter. The American Psychological Association has found a link between violent games and films and increased aggression among children, but says it is only one risk factor.

Mental illness

Trump also tied shootings to "mentally disturbed individuals" who should not have access to firearms. "Mental illness and hatred pull the trigger-not the gun," he said. There is a link in some cases. Marine Corps veteran Ian David Long, 28, who killed 12 at a country music bar in California in November last year, was believed to have post-traumatic stress disorder. Twenty-four-year-old Connor Betts, who killed nine on Sunday at a bar in Ohio, reportedly showed dangerous tendencies while in high school. And Cruz, the Florida high school attacker, had a history of mental health problems.

"On the face of it, somebody that goes out and massacres a bunch of strangers, that's not the act of a healthy mind," Jeffrey Swanson, a professor in psychiatry at Duke University School of Medicine said. Yet, he said, there are 10 million Americans with serious mental illnesses "and the overwhelming majority of them do not engage in violent behavior." Most mass shooters, he said, "do not have the serious identifiable mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, that impairs the brain's ability to reason or see reality, or bipolar disorder."

the ages of 20 and 24 were caused by police, dropping slightly to 1.3 percent between 25 and 29.

Police violence is therefore one of the leading causes of death for these demographics, just behind cancer. Edwards said that one of the study's main limitations was its reliance on media reporting, which likely resulted in a dramatic under reporting of numbers. "Cases have to be reported in the news to be recorded in the data systems we're using, and there's almost certainly cases that were not reported in the news," he said, adding there was "an obligation" for authorities to step in.

Latinos express fear

Meanwhile, US-based Latinos voiced their fears yesterday and pointed the finger squarely at President Donald Trump over a gun massacre that appears to be the deadliest hate crime ever committed against their community. Many said they were still coming to terms with the murders of 22 people on Saturday at a Walmart store in El Paso, Texas, by a man who traveled some 650 miles (1050 kilometers), reportedly to shoot as many Mexicans as possible.

Eight Mexican nationals are among those killed in what authorities are investigating as a case of possible domestic terrorism. At least 25 people were also wounded. For representatives of the Latino community, the mass shooting can be directly linked to the hateful rhetoric on minorities that has flourished since Trump's election in 2016.

"The president's rhetoric has fanned the flames of dis-

cord in this country," Angelica Salas, head of the Los Angeles-based Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA) said. "And as he prefers chaos, he most likely enjoys seeing conflict between communities rise." Dominique Diaz, a resident of El Paso, said the fact that the shooter - identified as 21-year-old Patrick Crusius and in custody - had traveled so far to target a mostly Hispanic region reflected mounting racism and anti-immigrant sentiment in the country. "It's pretty difficult to even comprehend," he said.

For Pablo Alvarado, executive director of the Los Angeles-based National Day Laborer Organizing Network, the shooting in El Paso, which lies right across the border from Mexico and has a large majority Latino population, amounts to a declaration of war against Hispanics. "We have moved from being scapegoats to being targets of this kind of senseless racist violence," he told AFP. "This atrocious act of violence is a declaration of war against our community."

The tragedy in El Paso was one of three mass shootings in the United States in less than a week. Nine people were killed and dozens were injured in Dayton, Ohio, hours after the El Paso massacre. Authorities have not determined a motive for the attack. A week earlier, a 19-year-old gunman opened fire at a garlic festival in Gilroy, California, killing three people, including two children, and wounding a dozen others. — Agencies

Do mental illness and video games drive US massacres?

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump on Monday tied mass shootings that left 31 dead in two US cities over the weekend to hate, violent video games and mental illness. But with 255 mass shooting events counted so far this year in the United States, according to the Gun Violence Archive, analysts say those factors don't explain all the violence. Not all mass shooters show signs of mental health problems, or play violent video games, or have political grudges. But one factor is omnipresent: the ease of acquiring guns.

Violent video games

"We must stop the glorification of violence in our society. This includes the gruesome and grisly video games that are now commonplace," Trump said. It's true that some recent mass shooters played violent video games obsessively. Adam Lanza, who killed 26 schoolchildren and school employees at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut in 2012, spent hours a day playing some of the most violent video games, including one called "School Shooting." Nikolas Cruz, who killed 17 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida in 2018, reportedly played violent video games up to 15 hours a day. But Chris Ferguson, a psychology professor at Stetson University who has studied the issue, says there is no causal link with real attacks.



TEXAS: People pray at a makeshift memorial for victims of Walmart shooting that left a total of 22 people dead at the Cleo Vista Mall WalMart in El Paso, Texas. — AFP

Divisive politics and the internet

Some attacks are also linked to divisive politics, which play out online, especially on the 8chan website. Like two earlier mass murderers, the man who killed 22 at a Walmart in Texas on Saturday, identified in media reports as 21-year-old Patrick Crusius, released a "manifesto" on 8chan attacking the "Hispanic invasion" from Mexico, echoing Trump's own political rhetoric. According to journalist Robert Evans, writing on of Bellingcat, 8chan has turned mass shootings into a video-game-like competition, where body counts are referred to as "high scores." "The act of massacring innocents has been gamified," he wrote on Sunday. — AFP

Child thrown from London gallery has broken spine, legs

LONDON: A six-year-old French boy thrown off a 10th-floor viewing platform at London's Tate Modern gallery has suffered a broken spine, legs and arm, a court heard yesterday. The boy, who was visiting London with his family when the incident happened on Sunday, also has bleeding to the brain, prosecutor Sian Morgan told the court at a hearing for the 17-year-old alleged assailant. The British teenager, who was arrested at the scene, appeared at Bromley Youth Court in southeast London yesterday after being charged with attempted murder.

The boy, who cannot be named for legal reasons, spoke only to confirm his name and address, an AFP reporter witnessed. Wearing a grey jumper and tracksuit, he was white, had short hair and was unshaven. Police have said the victim's condition is no longer life-threatening. "The injured boy remains in a stable but critical condition in hospital with his family, who continue to be supported by officers," a police statement read.

They appealed for anyone who saw the incident to come forward. The contemporary art museum on the banks of the River Thames, Britain's most popular visitor attraction, was evacuated after the incident on Sunday but reopened on Monday. However, the Tate Modern said the viewing platform was closed. The boy fell from there onto a fifth-floor roof and was airlifted to hospital by helicopter. The alleged assailant is due to appear in court again tomorrow. — AFP

Business

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ABIDJAN: Ivory Coast's President Alassane Ouattara (tenth left) poses with delegates and participants for a group photo during the opening ceremony of the 18th African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) forum in Abidjan on Monday. — AFP

US-African trade lagging despite free access

AGOA has not yet been a game-changer for many countries in Africa: US official

ABIDJAN: Trade between the United States and sub-Saharan Africa is in the doldrums despite a 2000 US law designed to boost access to the American market, a conference in Ivory Coast has been told. The African Growth and Opportunity Act, which in 2015 was extended to 2025, provides tariff-free access on 6,500 products to 39 countries, ranging from oil and agricultural goods to textiles, farm and handicrafts. Trade quadrupled in value from 2002 to 2008, a year when it reached \$100 billion, but fell back in 2017 to just \$39 billion, according to figures compiled by the US agency USAID.

The surplus is widely in Africa's favor, but most exports to the US are in oil or petroleum-based products, not the industrialized goods that provide a value-added boost to local economies. "I do not think that AGOA has been the game-changer for many countries on the continent that we

hoped it would be," Constance Hamilton, assistant US trade representative for Africa, told the 18th AGOA Forum, ending in the Ivory Coast's economic capital Abidjan yesterday.

"AGOA has not led to the trade diversification for which we originally hoped," she said in remarks on Monday. "Petroleum products continued to account for the largest portion of AGOA imports, with a 67 percent share," Hamilton said.

"And the volume of AGOA trade remains modest. In the AGOA clothing sector, for example, we get about \$1 billion per year from Africa," he said, adding that this amounted to just one percent of all US clothing imports. The United States is Africa's third biggest trade partner after the European Union and China. But Africa attracts only about one percent of all US foreign investment.

Deputy US Trade Representative Curtis Mahoney said

Washington had drawn up a "variety of new initiatives" to "lay the groundwork for an even closer trade and investment partnership". "We will combine the promise of the AfCFTA with these new US initiatives and help maximize the potential of US-Africa trade," he said. The AfCFTA—the African Continental Free Trade Area—is a scheme for demolishing trade barriers among the 55-member African Union.

The long-negotiated agreement was ceremonially launched at a summit in July, but will need a year to become operational, the AU says. According to the conclusions of a pre-forum meeting of ministers ahead of the Abidjan conference, only 18 out of 39 countries have set down a national strategy for exploiting the benefits of the AGOA. Many African companies either do not know of the advantages that are on offer, or they do not know how to use them, the ministers found. —AFP



ABIDJAN: A woman looks on during the 18th African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) forum, an exhibition of eligible Ivory Coast products on the US market, in Abidjan, on Monday. — AFP

GIG announces net profit of KD 8.1 million for H1 2019

KUWAIT: Gulf Insurance Group (gig) announced a net profit of KD 8.1 million (\$26.7 million), or 45.32 fils per share, for the first half of 2019 compared to a net profit of KD 6.6 million (\$21.7 million) for the same period last year, an increase of KD 1.5 million (\$5 million) or 23.2 percent. This increase is due to the improvement in the Group's underwriting and investment performance results.

Shareholder equity reached KD 90.9 million (\$299.6 million) as at June 30, 2019.

Book value per share reached 508 fils as at June 30, 2019, an increase of 2 percent from December 31, 2018. Gross written premium reached KD 173.1 million (\$570.6 million), a growth of 3 percent compared to the KD 168.1 million (\$554 million) reported in the same peri-

od last year. Net investment income and sundry income reached KD 6.9 million (\$22.6 million) compared to KD 5.5 million (\$18.1 million) for the same period last year, at an increase of 24.8 percent.

Net technical reserves rose from KD 150 million (\$494.6 million) on December 31, 2018, to reach KD 156.3 million (\$515.16 million) as at June 30, 2019. This increase, representing a growth of 4.2 percent, supports the company's technical operations and to protect the policyholders rights, thereby strengthening gig's ability to withstand emergencies and risks that may rise in the future. Total assets reached KD 644.7 million (\$2.13 billion) as at June 30, 2019, an increase of KD 77.6 million (\$255.7 million) or 13.7 percent from December 31, 2018.

Total cash and investments reached KD 285.7 million (\$941.7 million) during the first six months of the year, an increase of KD 32.6 million (\$107.6 million) or 12.9 percent from December 31, 2018.

Khaled Saoud Al-Hasan, gig's CEO, said, "Our results for the first half of 2019 reflect the growth we have achieved. This is also a strong indication of the Group's ability to protect its assets and shareholders' equity. It is also in line



Khaled Saoud Al-Hasan

with our constant strive to provide the best insurance services to our clients across all the markets we operate in, supported by our strategy for regional expansion and increasing our domestic and regional market share."

He added, "We thank our clients for these achievements, as well as the our shareholders, namely KIPCO - Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) - and Fairfax Middle East Ltd for their support. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to our dedicated employees for their efforts."

Global privacy watchdogs warn FB over Libra currency

SYDNEY: Global privacy regulators joined forces yesterday to demand guarantees from Facebook on how it will protect users' financial data when it launches its planned cryptocurrency, Libra. The watchdogs from Australia, the US, EU, Britain, Canada and other countries issued an open letter calling on Facebook to respond to more than a dozen concerns over how it will handle sensitive personal information of users of the digital currency.

The letter follows a chorus of warnings about Facebook's entry into the shadowy world of digital banking, including at a meeting last month of finance ministers and central bankers from the G7 group of most developed economies.

The watchdogs said that Facebook and its subsidiary Calibra "have failed to specifically address the information handling practices that will be in place to

secure and protect personal information". Facebook's handling of user data, highlighted by the Cambridge Analytica scandal, had "not met the expectations of regulators or their own users", they said.

The social media giant's latest project faced similar risks, they said, adding that the "combination of vast reserves of personal information with financial information and cryptocurrency amplifies our privacy concerns about the Libra Network's design and data sharing arrangements". The regulators demanded Facebook provide guarantees that user information, such as transaction histories, will not be shared without explicit consent and that all personal data will be adequately secured by all parties in the Libra network.

Facebook announced the launch of Libra in June, with Calibra slated to run a digital wallet and provide financial services using blockchain technology. The currency is to be overseen by a Geneva-based Libra Association of companies, and Swiss authorities have also pledged tight oversight of the operation. Libra is widely regarded as a challenger to dominant global player bitcoin. Expected to launch in the first half of 2020, Libra is designed to be backed by a basket of currency assets to avoid the wild swings of bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies. — AFP



Business

Zain Kuwait offers Fortinet's solutions to SME customers

Company committed to empowering a more efficient business sector

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced that it has selected Fortinet, a global leader in broad, integrated, and automated cybersecurity solutions, as the preferred vendor of providing managed CPE and Secure SD-WAN solutions for its new managed security services offering designed for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the Kuwaiti Market.

Zain, a Fortinet Managed Security Service Provider (MSSP) Partner, is committed to offering the latest and most advanced security solutions for the Kuwaiti business sector as per the highest international standards. This also comes in line with Zain's digital transformation strategy that aims at empowering a more efficient business sector in the Kuwaiti market.

Zain specially designed its new managed security services offering to meet the security needs of its SME customers, offering them the best-in-class managed CPE and Secure SD-WAN solutions. Based on Fortinet's FortiWiFi security appliance, these new services feature a wide range of capabilities, including an industry leading Next Generation Firewall (NGFW) with full cyber security capabilities, integrated WiFi access point and 4G LTE network connectivity to support customers throughout Kuwait.

With this service, customers can benefit from the simplicity that comes from combining security with networking in a single, cost effective appliance. Customers can also benefit from the integrated SD-WAN capabilities of FortiWiFi, combining full SD-WAN functionality with full next generation security. Additionally, Fortinet solutions also cover all large enterprises' security needs by offering a



wide range of security appliances that meet their individual needs.

Zain is aware of the important role played by Small and Medium Enterprises in achieving economic and social development in Kuwait. The company, being a leading nation-

al company in the private sector, is proud to be a main partner of Kuwaiti SMEs in their journey to success. Zain continues to encourage SMEs to enhance their businesses by offering them services and solutions from the biggest service providers around the world.

US services sector slows; orders hit 3-year low

WASHINGTON: US services sector activity slowed in July as new orders dropped to their lowest level in three years, suggesting the economy lost further momentum early in the third quarter. The report from the Institute for Supply Management (ISM) added to last week's data showing a slowdown in hiring and prolonged weakness in manufacturing in July.

These reports, together with an escalation in the trade war, suggest the Federal Reserve will cut interest rates again next month to sustain the 10-year economic expansion, the longest in history. The US central bank last week cut its short-term rate citing rising risks to the economy from trade tensions and weakening global growth.

"The trade war was already inflicting damage to the economy, and now it has been ramped up," said Jennifer Lee, a senior economist at BMO Capital Markets in Toronto. "The Fed will step in again, likely in October but possibly sooner, but there is only so much already-low rates can do." The ISM said its non-manufacturing activity index fell 1.4 percentage points to a reading of 53.7. It was the second straight monthly decline in the index. A reading above 50 indicates expansion in the sector, which accounts for more than two-thirds of US economic activity.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the services index would slip to a reading of 55.5 in July. The ISM reported last week that factory activity slowed to a three-year low in July, noting that "trade remains a significant issue." The deterioration in the trade relations between the two economic giants pressured financial markets. The dol-



NEW YORK: Women walk in the rain in the financial district in Lower Manhattan in New York City. US services sector activity slowed in July as new orders dropped to their lowest level in three years, suggesting the economy lost further momentum early in the third quarter. —Reuters

lar dropped against a basket of currencies. Stocks on Wall Street tumbled.

Treasury prices rose, with the gap between the three-month Treasury bill rate and 10-year yields jumping nearly 27 basis points, the widest since April 2007. This curve "inversion" between the two maturities has preceded every US recession in the past 50 years.

Slowing economy

Economists said last month's slowdown in the services industry measure was consistent with slowing economic growth. "Although today's reading is consistent with the deceleration that we have been anticipating for some time with the waning of fiscal stimulus and tighter financial conditions, the weaker-than-expected reading hints that tepid growth in the trade-exposed goods sector may be spilling into domestic demand," said Jonathan Millar, an economist at Barclays.

The economy grew at a 2.1 percent annualized rate in the second quarter, down from a 3.1 percent pace in the January-March quarter. Growth estimates for the third quarter are around a 1.5 percent rate. The economy is

slowing largely as the stimulus from last year's \$1.5 trillion tax cut fades.

The ISM described the pace of growth in the services sector as continuing "to cool off, noting "ongoing concerns related to tariffs and employment resources." The ISM's services sector measure of new orders fell to a reading of 54.1 last month, its lowest since August 2016, from 55.8 in June. A gauge of new export orders dropped to 53.5 in July from a reading of 55.5 in June. There was also a further deceleration in prices paid for materials and services, pointing to benign inflation. But a measure of services industry employment increased to a reading of 56.2 in July from 55.0 June. This suggests job growth will likely remain solid, even though the pace of hiring is slowing. The economy created 164,000 jobs in July, pulling back from the 193,000 positions added in June, the government reported on Friday. According to the ISM, 13 non-manufacturing industries reported growth in July, including accommodation and food services, utilities and professional. The five industries reporting a decline included retail trade, wholesale trade and educational services. —Reuters



The company will also bring in new technology and innovation in its features and service model that will lead to major transformation in the industry. Every person irrespective of the social classification they belong should have easy access to taxis in Kuwait and making it the safest, reliable and preferred taxi services in the country. The primary objective and vision being safety of women and children, makes us the people's first choice for ride hail services in Kuwait.

We have a fleet of 1,000 taxis and counting, with well-trained and professional drivers. Along with making it one of the most affordable and safest taxi services, Yala Go also ensures that all documents are vetted and that every car undergoes a vigilant inspection before on-boarding. Customers can download the Yala Go app from Google Play Store and app store. Currently based in Kuwait, Yala Go soon plans to expand to other cities and countries in the future.

Ride hailing app 'Yala Go' launches services in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Yala Go, a new entrant to the ride hailing market announced the launch of its services in Kuwait yesterday. Well-prepared to address the pain-points currently faced by users of ride hailing, it is equipped to transform the space, thereby, increasing the level of convenience for customers. Yala Go would provide services without any surcharges and cancellation fees.

Speaking at the launch, Joe Mathews, CEO of Yala Go, said, "Having gained the experience in the ride hailing industry, I understand the customer's perspective and want to fill the existing gaps through efficient service. We believe in the vision of rendering taxi to all the classes of society whereby making it more of a utility, a need for the masses rather than just a luxury service".

Gulf Bank launches Selfpay and E-loan to online and mobile banking services

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank has announced the latest digital updates to its online banking and mobile application, launching two new, innovative services and updating existing features. Gulf Bank is proud to introduce Selfpay, an easy and convenient way to transfer payments from individuals and groups instantly, and E-loan, a new service that allows customers to seamlessly apply for loans through the app or website.

Selfpay is a new service that allows customers to receive funds immediately to their accounts by sharing a dedicated Selfpay link, which can be sent to a group of individuals at once. The shared link, which can be sent via SMS and email, is valid for 24 hours and allows users to track the status and history of their payments with ease.

Customers looking to apply for consumer loans can now do so easily with E-loan, a new service that allows customers to apply for loans through Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking services. To apply for a loan, customers can fill out a simple online application and submit their required paperwork all in one place, attaching any necessary documents online or through the app. Once submitted, customers can also conveniently track the status of their loan applications online.

Gulf Bank's mobile and online banking services add a new level of daily convenience for Gulf Bank clients, granting them the ability to pay their phone bills and installments anytime, anywhere. With the release of the latest app update, Gulf Bank customers can now transfer funds locally and internationally faster and easier than ever. In an effort to fur-



Ahmad Al-Amir

ther enhance its digital experience, Gulf Bank also makes it possible to purchase e-vouchers, including iTunes and Google Play gift cards, through the app.

Commenting on the new features, Ahmad Al-Amir, Assistant General Manager for External Communications at Gulf Bank said: "We are so proud to announce the addition of two new key features to Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking services. With Selfpay, transferring and receiving payments from a group has never been easier. E-loan allows customers to safely and securely apply for consumer loans from the very comfort of their homes, without having to pay the bank a visit. Digital innovation is always at the forefront of our service offering at Gulf Bank, and we are constantly looking for new ways for our customers to enjoy unprecedented levels of both security and convenience."

To find out more about Gulf Bank's mobile application and online banking services, customers can visit one of Gulf Bank's 58 branches or log on to www.e-gulfbank.com.

On cusp of trade deal, Nigeria clings to protection

LAGOS: Adeleke Adeleke stands in front of a bank of whirring printers spinning out dozens of envelopes a minute in Nigeria's commercial capital of Lagos. His stationery company, FAE Ltd, is thriving and will move into a larger factory nearby by the end of next year. But he sees trouble on the horizon in the form of a new African free trade agreement aiming to unlock a market of 1.3 billion consumers - but which many in Nigeria, the continent's largest economy, view as a threat. "It's definitely not a level playing field," he says.

Africa is forging ahead with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) - a project to create a \$3.4 trillion economic bloc - even as world powers such as the United States and Britain back away from multilateral trade pacts. Its champions - South Africa and Kenya among them - say the deal will provide a shot in the arm to trade between African nations, which accounted for just 17 percent of exports in 2017, and give their companies access to millions of new customers.

But Nigeria is worried it could be flooded with cheap goods from more competitive neighbors, undermining its efforts to revive local manufacturing and expand farming to reduce dependence on crude oil exports. It was one of the last of 54 nations to back the agreement, only signing on last month. Just Eritrea, which did not participate in the negotiations, has not approved the deal. Now that Nigeria is in, however, some trade experts fear its long history of economic protectionism and tepid support for the AfCFTA will undermine the bloc.

"If Nigeria, after signing, decides not to implement, there will be a problem. There are so many administrative ways in which Nigeria can frustrate this agreement," said Bismarck Rewane, CEO of Lagos-based consultancy Financial Derivatives Company (FDC).

Giant underdog?

The size of Nigeria's economy - a

gross domestic product of nearly \$400 billion and a population of some 190 million - belies major weaknesses. Reliance on crude oil sales for around 90 percent of foreign exchange earnings led to neglect of other sectors. Once thriving automobile, textile and agricultural industries atrophied. While nations including Ethiopia and Kenya are investing heavily in railways, highways and power projects with a view to becoming manufacturing hubs, Nigeria's infrastructure remains antiquated.

With a population less than a third its size, South Africa, the continent's second largest economy, produces roughly 10 times more electricity than Nigeria. South African brands, including supermarkets and telecommunication firms, are already conquering Africa. Nigeria garnered just 23 points out of 100 in the World Bank's "trading across borders" scoring due to its jam-packed ports and pot-holed roads, which add significant costs and delays to trade. Kenya, by comparison, scored 68. President Muhammadu Buhari's government is working to catch up.

But those efforts in many cases run counter to the spirit of free trade the AfCFTA embodies. Nigeria has placed import controls on a broad range of items, from rice, cocoa and tomatoes to furniture and footwear. Total duties - tariffs, fees and other taxes - on some imports can top 70 percent. The central bank has also restricted access to foreign exchange for imports of more than 40 items it says Nigeria should produce itself.

Tariff plus levy

A cap on gasoline prices requires heavy subsidies on refined petroleum imports, and the artificially low prices mean 10 percent to 20 percent of Nigerian fuel is smuggled to neighboring Benin, according to estimates by the Major Oil Marketers Association of Nigeria (MOMAN). Import controls on rice, imposed even as local farmers fail to meet demand, have kept prices artificially high and led to smuggling from Benin into Nigeria.

Still, the measures are largely supported in Nigeria, particularly among manufacturers such as Adeleke, who says fellow stationers have benefited from a ban on imports made from a type of paper that would compete with their products. He fears joining the African free trade area could sweep away such advantages. "They have to stay in place," he said. — Reuters

Business

Jazeera Airways launches flights to London Gatwick

First LCC in Mideast to fly long-haul, longest commercial route served by A320neo

KUWAIT: Jazeera Airways, Kuwait's leading low-cost airline, operating regionally and internationally, yesterday announced it will start flying to London on October 27, 2019, serving the British capital in new A320neo aircraft with daily flights.

This will be the first new service to the UK from Kuwait in 55 years. Landing at London Gatwick Airport South Terminal where access to the Gatwick Express train connects passengers directly to central London, the airline has scheduled timings conveniently leaving early mornings from Kuwait and landing just in time for lunch in London, or mid-afternoon on Saturdays. Prices will start from KD 60 one-way in Economy Class, KD 125 in Premium Economy Class and KD 250 in Business Class.

Speaking of the milestone launch, Jazeera Airways Chairman, Marwan Boodai, said: "What better way to continue our expansion in 2019 than to announce London as a new destination of the year. This is a first for a Low-Cost Carrier in the Middle East to fly long-haul, using our new A320neo aircraft. We are very excited to be providing our passengers with one of the most popular destinations from Kuwait and the region and we expect high demand for the route."

Commenting on the new service between Kuwait and London, Michael Davenport MBE, Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, said: "I am delighted to see Jazeera Airways launching this new service between Kuwait and London Gatwick, made possible by the new Air Services Agreement signed last year. It is really encouraging, as we mark the 120th Anniversary of the Kuwaiti-British Treaty of Friendship, to see more Kuwaitis visiting Britain and studying at British universities than ever before."

Stephen King, Gatwick's Head of Airline Relations, added: "This important new route to Kuwait further strengthens Gatwick's network of connections to the Middle East. It provides exciting new opportunities for Britain to do business with a country at the forefront of the oil, financial services and technology industries. It's fantastic news that Jazeera Airways has joined Gatwick's extensive roster of long-haul airlines and we're really looking forward to welcoming them to the airport in October."

Jazeera Airways will serve London with a cabin configuration in three classes: Business Class, a new Premium Economy Class and Economy Class. The Business Class offers passengers a 33-inch seat pitch, 50 kilograms in baggage allowance, priority boarding and a complementary inflight meal. The Premium Economy Class offers passengers a 31-inch seat pitch, while Economy Class offers a 29/30-inch seat pitch. Hot meals will be provided for the first time on Jazeera flights - complimentary in Business Class and Premium Economy, and from the Jazeera Cafe menu for Economy passengers.

Bookings for the Kuwait-London flights are available at jazeeraairways.com, via the Jazeera App or by calling 177. The Jazeera Terminal T5 provides passengers with the ease and comfort of traveling with 12 check-in counters, eight self-check-in kiosks, dedicated passport and security control procedures, duty free shops and restaurants, as well as free WiFi internet service available for passengers when boarding at the T5 gates. T5 also has a dedicated number at 176 and Help Team on-ground to respond to passengers' queries and guide them through the Terminal.



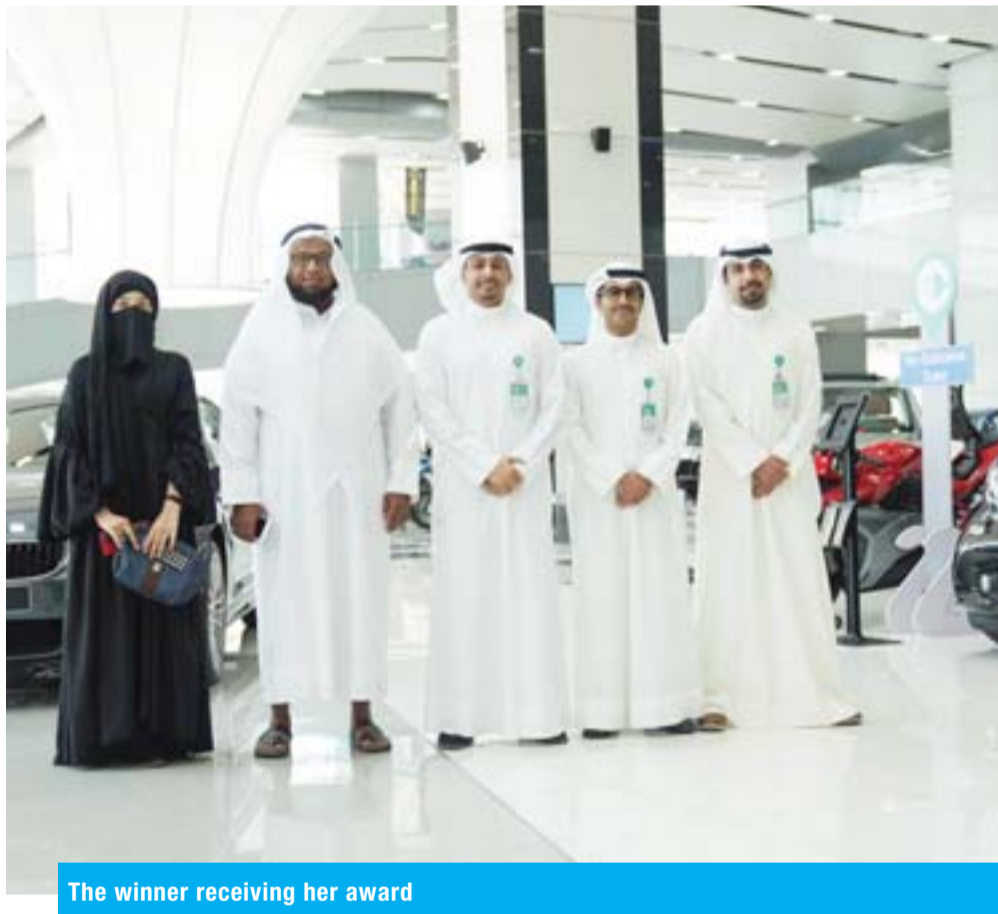
KFH announces Maryam Bakhait as the winner of BMW 420i

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced Maryam Bakhait Mubarak Bakhait as the winner of the second BMW 420i. The draw is part of Win with Hesabi campaign that offers 2 BMW 420i and 120 cash prizes worth KD 250.

The winner was received at the KFH Auto Showroom in Shuwaikh under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Maryam Bakhait expressed her happiness in winning the car, praising the advantages offered by KFH to Hesabi customers including discounts, prizes and exclusive rewards.

Once the social allowance is transferred to Hesabi program, customers enter the monthly draw on a prize of KD 250, in addition to cars. KFH offers "Hesabi for Youth" with a variety of privileges as part of its continued endeavor to provide adequate customer care, innovate new products and services and fulfill the needs of all customers of various age categories and interests. Services and products are tailored to suit customers' needs and provide distinguished service as per global standards regarding quality, accuracy and speed.

"Hesabi" program has been designed to meet the needs of youth and aspire for their active life style. This program presents for



The winner receiving her award

youth many exclusive offers and a wide range of privileges including Hesabi ATM card with a unique design, eligibility to issue Hesabi prepaid card (as per credit regulations of KFH), distinguished offers and discounts etc.

KFH continues to launch marketing campaigns to reward youth customers. Hesabi for

Youth represents the ambitions and expectations of youth category and copes with KFH aspirations to attract the largest portion of youth who represents the major part of Kuwaiti society. Also, the account represents KFH initiative to diversify banking services and products

Turkish Airlines, Bangkok Airways in new codeshare deal

KUWAIT: Turkish Airlines (TK) and Bangkok Airways Public Company Limited (PG) have announced a new codeshare partnership, which will provide their passengers with convenient travel connections from Turkey to destinations in Thailand and other cities in Southeast Asia, commencing on 1st August, 2019. Under this agreement, codeshare flights operated by Bangkok Airways currently covers 16 roundtrip routes on both domestic and international: Bangkok-Chiang Mai, Bangkok-Chiang Rai, Bangkok-Lampang, Bangkok-Sukhothai, Bangkok-Trat, Bangkok-Samui, Bangkok-Phuket, Bangkok-Krabi, Samui-Phuket, Bangkok-Danang, Bangkok-Phu Quoc, Bangkok-Yangon, Bangkok-Mandalay, Bangkok-Nay Pyi Taw, Bangkok-Vientiane and Bangkok - Luang Prabang. In addition, there are two more roundtrip routes that are subject to obtaining government approval which are Bangkok-Phnom Penh and Bangkok-Siem Reap.

Commenting on this agreement Turkish Airlines General Manager, Bilal Eksi said: "Turkish Airlines is pleased to strengthen the long lasting commercial



Bilal Eksi

cooperation with Bangkok Airways by expanding it with a codeshare agreement. As one of the important gateways to Asia Pacific in the region, our passengers will benefit and enjoy greater convenience when connecting to popular Thailand domestic destinations as well as other neighboring exciting travel destinations via Bangkok."

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We got our hands on Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) phone and here is our verdict

KUWAIT: 5G is on and regional telecom operators are quickly developing 5G commercial deployments. GCC countries are in the 1st wave of 5G rollout. Timing is everything, people often say. That's why Huawei is launching the Huawei Mate 20 X (5G), currently claimed as the King of 5G Smartphones and Huawei's first commercial 5G smartphone in the market. It is worth pointing out that Huawei started developing its 5G technology as early as 2009 and have hired thousands of employees engaged in 5G development or invested \$1.4 billion in this technology only in 2017-18.

The Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) was launched last month, let's discover more about it.

Super-fast 5G

The Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) provides a theoretical speed of up to 4.6Gbps download speed, saving you lots of time and frustration when streaming and downloading. Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) is compatible with multiple generations of network technology including 4G, 3G and 2G1. Regardless of your mobile network maturity, high speed connectivity is guaranteed thanks to two chipsets: Kirin 980 and 5G multi-mode chipset Balong 5000. While some 5G phones support only Non-Standalone (NSA) networking mode, Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) is the only 5G smartphone* to support both NSA and Standalone (SA). The SA, the recent version of networking mode, ensures a better performance and

higher efficiency for your phone.

Matrix Triple Camera

Huawei has made the Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) with Leica cameras. On the back, there's a triple camera array in a distinctive square: 40MP wide angle camera, 20MP ultra-wide camera and 8MP telephoto lens. Up front, there's a 24MP selfie camera. The Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) can produce astonishing snaps in a variety of scenarios, ultra-wide and macro shots.

Seamless gaming experience

The Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) has an enormous 7.2-inch OLED FHD+ screen2. It is so huge! For hard gamers, this is an experience like no other. You have a 7.2 inch screen to enjoy with minor little circle hanging down from the top center. Even if you're running graphically-intensive games at high settings, this device stays cool and responsive thanks to the integration of Huawei SuperCool - a groundbreaking cooling solution that utilizes graphene film and vapor chamber to deliver an outstanding cooling performance.

Long-lasting battery

It's quite unfortunate when your device dies down and you do not know if the header was a goal or got deflected. Thankfully, you don't experience this with the Huawei Mate 20 X (5G). It has a massive 4200mAh and Huawei 40W SuperCharge to top up 70 per-



cent of your device in just 30 minutes.

Verdict

If you want to be among the first ones to try out the 5G, the Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) or the King of 5G Smartphones is an interesting device packed with excellent features that is worth your serious consideration.

Rolls-Royce expresses optimism over Brexit plans

LONDON: UK enginemaker Rolls-Royce yesterday expressed confidence over plans for Britain's departure from the European Union, but revealed that the pound's Brexit-fuelled slump has left it languishing in the red. There is an increased chance that Britain will crash out of the EU in October with no trade deal in place under new Prime Minister Boris Johnson, meaning it would default to the World Trade Organization (WTO) tariff system.

Chief Executive Warren East, speaking to BBC radio, said Rolls-Royce was well

positioned because it already traded under WTO rules. "We would obviously prefer a deal because that is probably the best chance of providing certainty for business, but we've always been prepared for contingency-prepared for a no-deal of some kind," East added.

"We're not a 'just-in-time' business like some other businesses, so we are actually in a much stronger position than others. "As far as tariffs and the like are concerned, then most of our business is in aerospace and WTO rules apply anyway." Rolls-Royce has spent £100 million (\$121 million, 109 million euros) to prepare for Britain's EU exit. Yesterday, Rolls also reported "good progress" on fixing problems with its troubled Trent 1000 plane engines. However the group's total net loss still hit £909 million in the six months to June. That compared with a broadly similar after-tax loss of £954 million a year earlier. The 2019 performance was partly skewed by a hefty £763-million charge on the tumbling value of the British pound. —AFP

What's On



Eid Al-Adha escapades: The Jumeirah Edition

As the much-awaited long weekend is around the corner, look no further than Jumeirah to plan your dream getaway. Whether you prefer a daycation or an extended stay, you and your loved ones can experience an array of indoor and outdoor activities at the opulent Jumeirah properties, with activities ranging from pampering spa treatments and sumptuous fine dining to exhilarating water parks and thrilling desert horse-rides. To help you create beautiful Instagrammable moments with your loved ones, Jumeirah Group has unveiled its list of Eid offers that are sure to lead you to your next unforgettable retreat.

DUBAI

Jumeirah Beach Hotel

Heartfelt and personal, timelessly fun, situated upon one of the region's most impressive beaches, Jumeirah Beach Hotel is the archetype of coastal nostalgia. A contemporary five-star family destination, it offers an elevated experience of relaxed luxury. From the beach cabanas, kids club, outdoor and indoor dining, a beautiful lobby and arrival, through to the guest rooms with the best views of the Burj Al Arab anywhere in the city, the Jumeirah Beach Hotel is a jewel that must be seen and experienced. Stay at Jumeirah Al Qasr, Jumeirah Mina A'Salam, Jumeirah Al Naseem or Jumeirah Dar Al Masyaf and enjoy access to the souk, palm-fringed waterways and the stunning 2km private beach. This collection of hotels offers a truly magical destination for those who wish to step back in time.

Jumeirah Zabeel Saray

Nestled on Palm Jumeirah, Jumeirah Zabeel Saray is a recreational haven complete with a pristine private beach, an infinity pool, award-winning restaurants, and an energizing spa - ideal for a fine retreat from the city rush. Make the most of your summer days at luxurious resort with the 'Daycation' package. Cool off at the 59-metre infinity pool or swim in the ocean at the pristine private beach.

Proceed to pamper yourself at the award-winning Talise Ottoman Spa with a 45-minute Turkish Hammam experience or 45-minute massage treatment. Relish a complimentary international set lunch at Plaj Restaurant or dinner at the signature Turkish restaurant - Lalezar to sample Istanbul's delicacies. Tuck into a sumptuous Eid-special brunch at Imperium restaurant, known for blending the best of Arabic and international cuisines. Because the true joy of Eid is found with loved ones, the brunch is a family affair packed with live entertainment, kids' activities and much more.

ABU DHABI

Jumeirah Al Wathba Desert Resort & Spa

Set deep within the desert landscape, this luxurious resort is located 50 km to the south east of Abu Dhabi, in an area where natural beauty abounds. Designed to evoke the atmosphere of a traditional Bedouin village, a soothing sense of understated elegance pervades, and the property is enriched with timeless local detail. Gallop over the dunes on horseback to get a better understanding of the Emirati passion for all things equine. And for even more



insight into Emirati culture, combine your ride with a Bedouin falconry display.

Jumeirah at Saadiyat Island Resort

Experience island life at its best at the eco-friendly Jumeirah at Saadiyat Island Resort. It's hard to beat the views of the 400m beautiful white sandy beach on the

Arabian Gulf and the breathtakingly beautiful scenery and undisturbed wildlife. Take advantage of the UAE Residents offer or the GCC Breaks offer with complimentary buffet breakfast at White, access to 'SPA' for hydra pool, Rhassoul chamber, sauna and steam room, and complimentary use of 'Bodyism Wellness Centre' facilities. The offer also includes unlimited access to the kids and teens clubs.

This Chinese salt and pepper shrimp is a savory-spicy joy

There's probably no recipe that better showcases salt and pepper working in multiple ways and together than Chinese salt and pepper shrimp, an enticing dish of plump, moist fried shrimp with shells as shatteringly crispy and appealing to eat as fried chicken skin, and a killer savory-spicy flavor profile. A quick salt-rice wine soak improved the shrimp's texture, plumping them, as well as contributing flavor; the Sichuan peppercorns gave the dish sparkling spice and aromatic piquancy, while black peppercorns provided a straightforward hit of heat.

We added the black peppercorns and Sichuan peppercorns along with cayenne and sugar to the coating and then fried more of the same with ginger and garlic to make a flavorful paste that we tossed the fried shrimp in for great depth. For an extra jolt of spiciness, we also fried a couple of thinly sliced jalapenos. We like to use frozen shrimp; thaw them overnight in the fridge or under running cold water and blot them dry. Use a Dutch oven that holds 6 quarts or more for this recipe. Serve with steamed white rice.

Crispy salt and pepper shrimp

- Ingredients**
 Servings: 4-6
 Start to finish: 1 hour
 1 1/2 pounds shell-on medium-large shrimp (31 to 40 per pound)
 2 tablespoons Chinese rice wine or dry sherry
 2 1/2 teaspoons black peppercorns, coarsely ground
 2 teaspoons Sichuan peppercorns, coarsely ground
 2 teaspoons sugar
 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
 4 cups vegetable oil
 5 tablespoons cornstarch
 2 jalapeno chiles, stemmed, seeded, and sliced into 1/8 inch-thick rings
 3 garlic cloves, minced
 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
 2 scallions, sliced thin on bias
 Shredded iceberg lettuce

Preparation

Adjust oven rack to upper-middle position and heat oven to 225 F. Set wire rack in rimmed baking sheet and line large plate with triple layer of paper towels. Toss shrimp with rice wine and 1 teaspoon salt in large bowl

and let sit at room temperature for 15 minutes. Combine black peppercorns, Sichuan peppercorns, sugar, and cayenne in small bowl.

Heat oil in large Dutch oven over medium heat until oil registers 385 F. Meanwhile, drain shrimp and pat dry with paper towels; wipe bowl dry with paper towels. Transfer shrimp to now-empty bowl, add 3 tablespoons cornstarch and 1 tablespoon peppercorn mixture, and toss until well coated.

Carefully add one-third of shrimp to hot oil and fry, stirring occasionally to keep shrimp from sticking together, until light brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Adjust burner, if necessary, to maintain oil temperature between 375 F and 385 F. Using wire skimmer or slotted spoon, transfer shrimp to prepared plate and let drain briefly. Transfer shrimp to prepared rack and keep warm in oven. Return oil to 385 F and repeat frying shrimp in 2 more batches, re-tossing each batch thoroughly with coating mixture before frying. Line plate with clean paper towels as needed.

Return oil to 385 F. Toss jalapeno rings with remaining 2 tablespoons cornstarch in separate bowl. Shake off excess cornstarch, then carefully add jalapeno rings to oil and fry until crisp, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer jalapeno rings to prepared plate. After frying, reserve 2 tablespoons frying oil.

Heat reserved oil in 12 inch skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add garlic, ginger, and remaining peppercorn mixture and cook, stirring occasionally, until mixture is fragrant and just beginning to brown, about 45 seconds. Add shrimp, scallions, and 1/2 teaspoon salt and toss to coat. Line serving platter with shredded lettuce. Arrange shrimp on platter and sprinkle with jalapeno rings. Serve immediately.



The key to making your raw kale tender is a little massage

We love the earthy flavor of uncooked kale, but the texture of raw kale can be a little tough. Many recipes call for tossing it with dressing and letting it tenderize in the fridge overnight. This method didn't deliver the tender leaves we were after, and the long sitting time wasn't very convenient. Luckily, we found another technique that worked better and faster: massaging. Squeezing and massaging the kale broke down the cell walls in much the same way that heat would, darkening the leaves and turning them silky.

Caramelized roasted sweet potatoes, shredded radicchio, crunchy pecans, a sprinkling of Parmesan cheese, and a sweet pomegranate vinaigrette turned our salad into a hearty meal. If you can't find pomegranate molasses, you can make your own. Tuscan kale (also known as dinosaur or Lacinato kale) is more tender than curly-leaf and red kale; if using curly-leaf or red kale, increase the massaging time to 5 minutes. Do not use baby kale.

Kale salad with sweet potatoes and pomegranate vinaigrette

- Ingredients**
 Servings: 6-8
 Start to finish: 1 hour
Salad:
 1 1/2 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
 Salt and pepper
 12 ounces Tuscan kale, stemmed and sliced cross-wise into 1/2-inch-wide strips (7 cups)
 1/2 head radicchio (5 ounces), cored and sliced thin
 1/3 cup pecans, toasted and chopped
 Shaved Parmesan cheese
Vinaigrette:
 2 tablespoons water
 1 1/2 tablespoons pomegranate molasses
 1 small shallot, minced
 1 tablespoon honey
 1 tablespoon cider vinegar
 Salt and pepper
 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

Preparation

For the salad: Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 400 F. Toss sweet potatoes with oil and season with salt and pepper. Arrange potatoes in single layer in rimmed baking sheet and roast until browned, 25 to 30 minutes, flipping potatoes halfway through roasting. Transfer to plate and let cool for 20 minutes. Meanwhile, vigorously squeeze and massage kale with hands until leaves are uniformly darkened and slightly wilted, about 1 minute.

For the vinaigrette: Whisk water, pomegranate molasses, shallot, honey, vinegar, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper together in large bowl. Whisking constantly, slowly drizzle in oil.

Add potatoes, kale, and radicchio to vinaigrette and gently toss to coat. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Transfer to serving platter and sprinkle with pecans and shaved Parmesan to taste. Serve.



Health & Science

Beaches choked with stinky seaweed is the new normal

MIAMI BEACH: Slimy, stinky brown seaweed that ruins beachgoers' vacations from Mexico to Florida may be the new normal unless Brazil halts Amazon deforestation, experts say. The culprit, called sargassum, turns clear-blue sea water a murky brown and smells like rotten eggs when it washes ashore and starts to rot.

The seaweed is a natural occurrence on beaches in the Caribbean and elsewhere. It's part of an ecosystem for fish, crabs and birds. But it has proliferated dramatically in recent years, covering shores with thick layers of the weed and forcing tourism officials to clean it up so visitors keep coming. It is an icky nuisance for tourists and an economic and environmental disaster.

"We came from over there, looking for a spot that is cleaner. But it is this way everywhere," said Maria Guadalupe Vazquez, 70, pointing off into the horizon as she lounges in a beach chair in Miami Beach. Authorities brought in trucks and front-loaders Friday to scoop the stuff up and haul it away. They know this is no long-term solution, however. One problem is global warming — the hotter the ocean, the more these weeds reproduce, said Steve Leatherman, an environmental expert at Florida International University.

But the bigger problem is the Amazon river, he added. Scientists say that starting around 2011, much more land along that mighty waterway was cleared for farming. But it yields a poor, muddy red soil so farmers use a lot of fertilizer, which rains wash into the river, where it flows into the Atlantic. And the fertilizer ends up fertilizing the sargassum. "Now there's 20, or 30, 50 times more, 100 times more than we've ever had before," said Leatherman. "We think this is going to be the new normal so we are going to have to find a way to deal with this, and it's going to be difficult," said Leatherman, aka Dr. Beach, as he drove by piles of sargassum on Miami Beach.

'Environmental disaster'

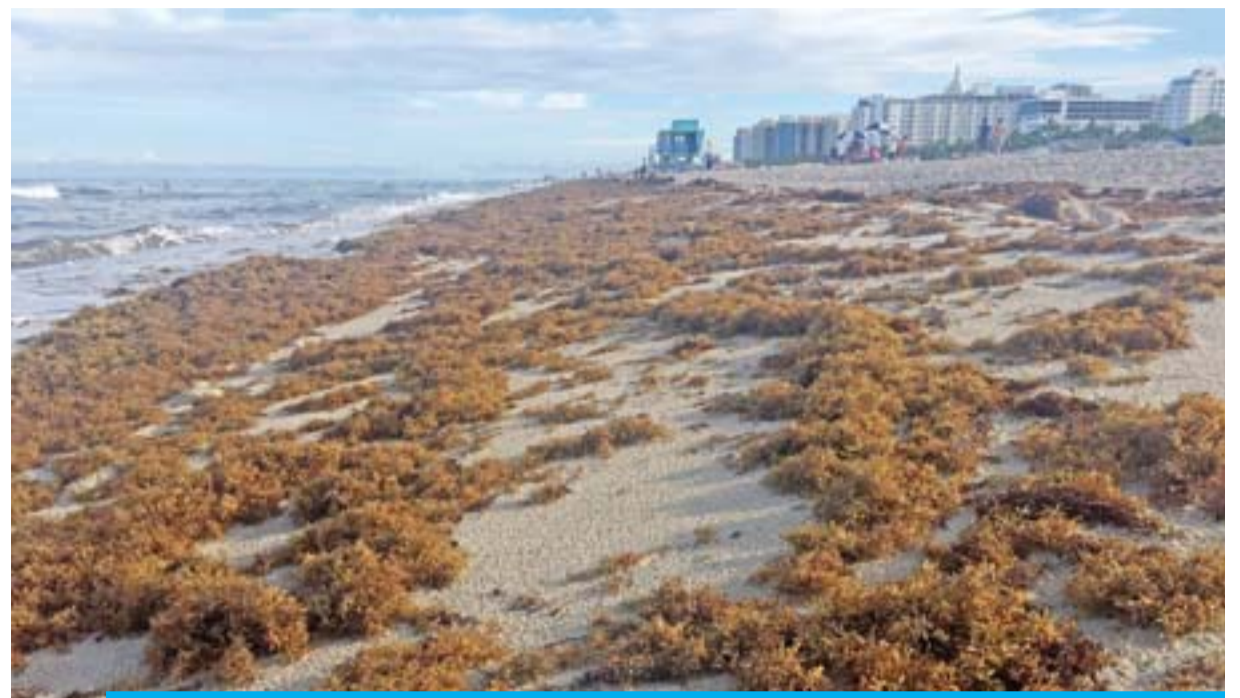
The stuff is nothing new. When Christopher Columbus saw a bloom of sargassum to the west of the Bahamas, it was so thick he thought it was an island. That was out at sea, however. "What happens out in the Atlantic Ocean, it's fine. But now this is an economic and environmental disaster," said Leatherman. The pernicious effects are many: fishing boats have trouble starting their engines. Beaches are disgusting for tourists. Fish choke because the seaweed absorbs too much oxygen. Turtles struggle to find a place to lay eggs. When they do, the babies cannot make it from the shore out to sea. And dead seaweed sinks, smothering coral reefs.

No one has calculated how much damage is being done to countries' fishing and tourism industries. In the British Virgin Islands, the layer of seaweed is seven feet (two meters) thick. Punta Cana, a beach in the Dominican Republic that is famous for its clear water,

has turned brown. Barbados recently declared a national emergency. Mexico has called in the navy to restore the beauty of tourist hub Cancun. "I don't know what's going on but it's really not a good sight to see, you know what I'm saying? We're tourists," said Sed Walker, 48, who was visiting from Los Angeles.

A study published in July by the University of South Florida in the journal *Science* concluded that the seaweed problem, which started in 2001 and showed peaks in 2015 and 2018, is here to stay. Satellite imagery shows blooms of sargassum form at the mouth of the Amazon. From there it spreads across the Atlantic, from the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico to Africa. Scientists named it the Great Atlantic Sargassum Belt (GASB). In 2015 and 2018, it stretched over nearly 5,592 miles. In June of last year, its biomass exceeded 20 million tons.

The study blamed the sargassum explosion on discharges of fertilizer in the Amazon and natural nutrients along the coast of Africa. "A critical question is whether we have reached the point where recurrent GASB and beaching events may become the new norm," wrote Chuanmin Hu, the lead author of the study and a professor of optical oceanography at the university. "Under continued nutrient enrichment due to deforestation and fertilizer use in agriculture," Hu wrote, "the answer is likely positive." — AFP



MIAMI: Sargassum seaweed covers the shore of Miami Beach. — AFP

Uganda begins trial of Ebola vaccine: Health officials

KAMPALA: Uganda said Monday it had started a trial of an experimental Ebola vaccine that may be used in neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo, where an outbreak has killed more than 1,800 people. The trial of the MVA-BN vaccine developed by Johnson&Johnson is expected to last two years, Uganda's Medical Research Council (MRC) said.

The vaccine will be administered to up to 800 health professionals and frontline workers such as cleaners,

ambulance personnel and mortuary and burial teams, in the western district of Mbarara, the MRC said in a statement. MRC spokeswoman Pamela Nabukenya Wairagala said vaccinations had already begun. The MRC said the trial would be led by Ugandan researchers and supported by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

At present there is no licensed drug to prevent or treat Ebola although a range of experimental drugs are in development. The Congo outbreak is the first time that a vaccine has been used as a full-scale weapon against the virus. Health authorities have been issuing the rVSV-ZEBOV vaccine, developed by US pharma group Merck — a product that has yet to be licensed but has been shown to be safe and effective.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has called for its deployment to be expanded and has recommended the

Johnson&Johnson vaccine also be rolled out in order to meet needs. However, the latter move has been resisted. Critics have cautioned against introducing a new product in communities where mistrust of Ebola responders is already high. Congo's former health minister, Oly Ilunga, who stepped down in July, was among the detractors.

The MRC said the Johnson&Johnson vaccine "is safe" and had been tested on more than 6,000 people in Europe, the US and African nations including Uganda. However, its efficacy is unclear because it has never been assessed in an outbreak scenario. By comparison, rVSV-ZEBOV was introduced in Guinea towards the end of a 2013-16 epidemic in West Africa, enabling scientists to conclude it was effective.

The trial taking place in Uganda, where there is no Ebola, will look at the response of the immune system to the vaccine — a key pointer of effective-

ness. It will also look at safety and the attitudes of participants towards the vaccine, the MRC said. Professor Pontiano Kaleebu, the lead Ugandan researcher in the trial, said developing a reliable vaccine was a key component to controlling Ebola epidemics.

"In this trial we hope to avail more information that will help us work towards having a licensed Ebola vaccine," Kaleebu said in a statement. Uganda has suffered Ebola outbreaks in the past but nothing on the scale of the Congo epidemic, which began in August 2018. It is the second-worst outbreak on record, eclipsed only by 2013-2016 epidemic in West Africa, which killed more than 11,300 out of 29,000 documented cases. Uganda has been declared Ebola-free though in June three people from one family died there from the hemorrhagic fever after crossing back from Congo. — AFP

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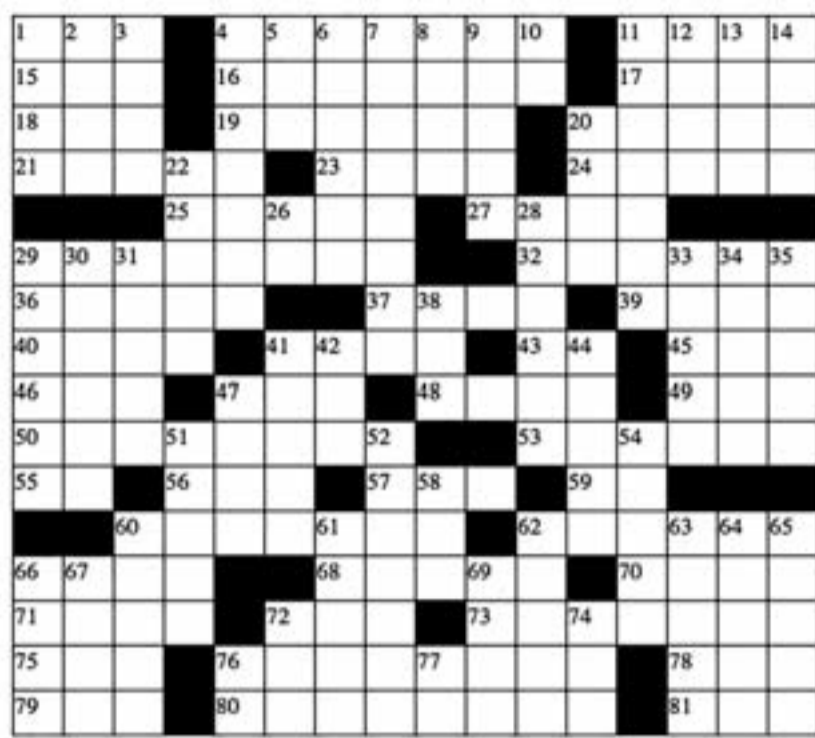
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Stars

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ACROSS

- 1. Annual grass of Europe and North Africa.
4. Having sections or patches colored differently and usually brightly.
11. A Bantu language spoken in Cameroon.
15. 100 pyas equal 1 kyat.
16. In some classifications this category does not include Leguminosae.
17. A translucent mineral consisting of hydrated silica of variable color.
18. The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.
19. Normal relaxed breathing.
21. Material consisting of seed coverings and small pieces of stem or leaves that have been separated from the seeds.
23. A system of one or more computers and associated software with common storage.
24. American professional baseball player who hit more home runs than Babe Ruth (born in 1934).
25. A genus of Lamiidae.
27. Electronic warfare undertaken to insure effective friendly use of the electromagnetic spectrum in spite of the enemy's use of electronic warfare.
29. Of or relating to a caduceus.
32. Relating to of containing or affecting blood.
36. Having the same or similar characteristics.
37. Medium-sized tree having glossy lanceolate leaves.
39. Acute ulceration of the mucous membranes of the mouth or genitals.
40. Qualities that attract by seeming to promise some kind of reward.
43. A soft silver-white ductile metallic element (liquid at normal temperatures).
45. (in golf) The standard number of strokes set for each hole on a golf course, or for the entire course.
46. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
48. An ancient Hebrew unit of dry measure equal to about a bushel.
49. An inflated feeling of pride in your superiority to others.
50. Light teasing repartee.
53. In the same place (used when citing a reference).
55. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
56. Legal document setting forth rules governing a particular kind of activity.
57. A gradual decline (in size or strength or power or number).
59. A public promotion of some product or service.
66. Of or relating to or characteristic of Thailand of its people.
68. Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
70. Paying particular notice (as to children or helpless people).
71. An account describing incidents or events.
73. Alternatively, a member of the family Nymphaeaceae.
75. Perennial herb of East India to Polynesia and Australia cultivated for its large edible root yielding Otaheite arrowroot starch.
78. An adult male person (as opposed to a woman).
79. (folklore) Fairies that are somewhat mischievous.
80. A native or inhabitant of Vietnam.
81. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

- 1. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
2. An Indian nursemaid who looks after children.
3. A village in eastern Ireland (northwest of Dublin).
4. A short introductory essay preceding the text of a book.
5. An informal debt instrument.
6. A parliamentary monarchy in southwestern Europe on the Iberian Peninsula.
7. Large and brightly colored handkerchief.
8. A city in northwestern Syria.
9. Property that is leased or rented out or let.
10. An honorary degree in science.
11. A natural opening or perforation through a bone or a membranous structure.
12. South American armadillo with three bands of bony plates.
13. An international organization created in 1949 by the North Atlantic Treaty for purposes of collective security.
14. (Scottish) A narrow secluded valley (in the mountains).
20. Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
22. A stroke of luck.
26. A state in New England.
28. Affectedly trendy.
30. (zoology) Pertaining to alulae.
31. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
33. A motorbike that can be pedaled or driven by a low-powered gasoline engine.
34. An iconic mental representation.
35. A glancing rebound.
38. An edge tool with a heavy bladed head mounted across a handle.
41. A neutral middle vowel.
42. A federal agency established to regulate the release of new foods and health-related products.
44. A region of Malaysia in northeastern Borneo.
47. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
51. German mathematician who created the Klein bottle (1849-1925).
52. Genus of hardy perennials with palmately lobed leaves and long racemes of small nodding five-petaled flowers.
54. A state in the Rocky Mountains.
58. Call upon in supplication.
60. A unit of elastance equal to the reciprocal of a farad.
61. A drug (trade names Calan and Isoptin) used as an oral or parenteral calcium blocker in cases of hypertension or congestive heart failure or angina or migraine.
62. English Romantic poet (1795-1821).
63. A subsidiary proposition that is assumed to be true in order to prove another proposition.
64. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
65. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
67. Precipitation of ice pellets when there are strong rising air currents.
69. An inflammatory disease involving the sebaceous glands of the skin.
72. Belonging to or on behalf of a specified person (especially yourself).
74. Any of numerous hairy-bodied insects including social and solitary species.
76. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
77. Before noon.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

This is your time for a new beginning and a fresh start. You have already started making many positive changes in your life. Make sure the new habit patterns you are starting are the best ones, as these will become habits you will keep for some time to come.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your hard work is paying off. You will soon see the results. Try not to be too hard on others who are not as careful as you. They can be helpful. Just be sure you check their input and see that it meets your standards. Don't settle for sloppy work.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

If at first you don't succeed... you know the old saying. It is true. Nobody ever won by giving up. Visualize what you want to happen. Make a plan to as to what you need to make it happen. If things to do go as planned on your initial effort then do it again. Repetition is a good thing. You will easily learn from your mistakes. Reach for the stars.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

A bad thing can have good consequences in life. The way you handled something unpleasant has enriched your life. You have come through the fire a stronger person. You are more beautiful than before. Your life may not always be easy. You can handle whatever comes your way. Keep you chin up and your eyes focused on the prize.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

A mentor is what you may find yourself becoming to a younger person in your life. You are admired for your strength. The choices you make in your own life are obviously good ones. You have become an inspiration for many. Be thankful you are admired.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You will experience success in the near future. It may not come in the form of money. Happiness is not measured in gold or dollars. That doesn't mean that happiness and financial success can't come in the same package. If you play your cards right, you can have both. Your world is ready for what you have to offer.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This is day that all that is different and unusual seem to appeal to you. Dress for your mood! Grab attention. Laugh out loud. This is a day to let your wild side come out and play. You will find this a great day to hit the road and turn up the radio. A long drive or day trip may be just what you need to break out of your old routine. Clearing your mind may bring solutions to day-to-day problems. A new outlook on life will be of great value in the days to come.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

This is your time for a new beginning and a fresh start. You have already started making many positive changes in your life. Make sure the new habit patterns you are starting are the best ones, as these will become habits you will keep for some time to come. Meal planning, a gym membership, and exercise in general will be come a new way of life for you. You have to work on your mental discipline and keep your level of determination strong. This is a great time to ask a friend to join you on this journey. We all need to be accountable to someone. This will be a great inspiration to you and you will be appreciated and admired for encouraging someone to be a part of your journey.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

This is a great day for your career wise. You may be just the one for the job that is coming available. It is an awesome day of harmony with not only your friends but with your co-workers. Your ideas and input are greatly appreciated today. Stick to your routine and stay true to yourself and you will experience a great sense of admiration from others. Even though today may find you in a very impulsive mood, resist temptation and think long and hard about decisions you make today. You may be facing some life changing decisions. This is not only a great day to organize your thoughts but also work on organizing your affairs and surroundings.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Out with the old and in with the new. You are ready to develop new habit patterns and put to rest some of your old ways. New beginnings are on the horizon. This is a great time to get out and meet new people. A time of happiness and fresh starts. You only have one chance at a first date, first impression, or first kiss. Make it a good one. Today will be a day you will look back on and smile.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You are entering a phase of emotional directness and may find yourself to be very impulsive. Not putting thought into your decisions is a great way to get yourself in trouble. You are ready for a fresh start in life. Out with the old and in with the new is your motto. All that does not bring happiness to your world will be what you easily turn your back on now. Be sure and make wise decisions as the new habits you develop will set the tone in your life for a long time to come. With determination and focus you will become very successful.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You have always been one to say exactly what is on your mind. You may find yourself extremely outspoken and impulsive today. You may find yourself feeling very passionate today. You are ready for change. The changes you make today will have a great effect on your life for a great while so resist the urge to make impulsive decisions and put much thought into this. You may find yourself in a curious mood possibly paying close attention to and even taking part in a gossip session today. You feel not only the need to discover what drives and motivates others but are spending much of your time and focus trying to figure out the same about yourself.

Wordsearch Puzzle

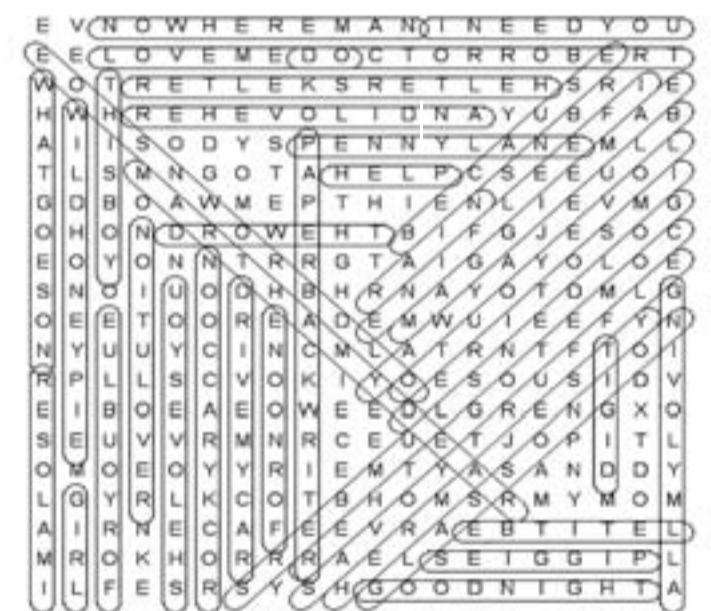
Birds

Find and circle all of the birds that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional bird.



- BLACKBIRD, BUDGIE, CANARY, CARDINAL, CHICKEN, CRANE, CROW, DODO, DOVE, DUCK, EAGLE, EMU, FALCON, FINCH, FLAMINGO, GOOSE, HAWK, HERON, JAY, MAGPIE, MARTIN, MOCKINGBIRD, MYNA, OSTRICH, PARAKEET, PARROT, PELICAN, PIGEON, RAVEN, ROBIN, SEAGULL, SPARROW, SWAN, TURKEY, VULTURE, WOODPECKER, WREN

Beatles Songs 2



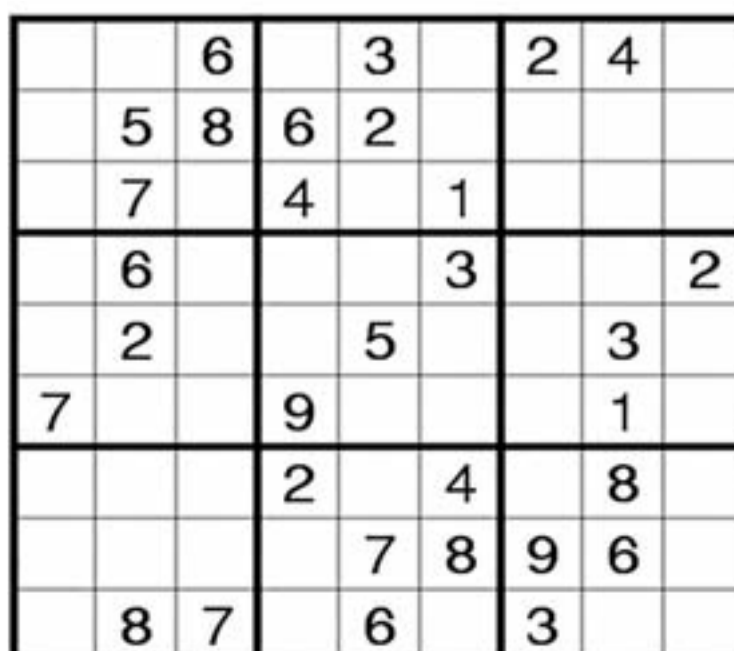
- ALL MY LOVING AND I LOVE HER, BECAUSE, BLUE JAY WAY, COME TOGETHER, DIG IT, DOCTOR ROBERT, DRIVE MY CAR, FOR NO ONE, FOR YOU BLUE, GIRL, GLASS ONION, GOLDEN SLUMBERS, GOOD NIGHT, HELP, HELTER SKELTER, HER MAJESTY, I FEEL FINE, I NEED YOU, I'M A LOSER, I'M SO TIRED, LET IT BE, LOVE ME DO, LOVE YOU TO, MARGIE MAE, MARTHA MY DEAR, NOWHERE MAN, OLD BROWN SHOE, PAPERBACK WRITER, PENNY LANE, PIGGIES, RAIN, REVOLUTION, ROCKY RACCOON, SAVOY TRUFFLE, SHE LOVES YOU, THE WORD, THIS BOY, WHAT GOES ON, WILD HONEY PIE

Hidden song: EVERYBODY'S GOT SOMETHING TO HIDE EXCEPT ME AND MY MONKEY

Yesterday's Solution



Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7, 2019



THE JEMBER FASHION CARNAVAL (JFC)



Pictures taken in Jember show Indonesian models displaying during the Jember Fashion Carnival (JFC) in Jember. — AFP

OVERCROWDED LOUVRE STRUGGLES TO COPE WITH RISING TOURIST TIDE

Like a human wave every few minutes, two hundred or so tourists surge towards the "Mona Lisa," mobile phones in hand to make the best of every second of their time in front of the world's most famous painting. Hundreds of other hearts sink as museum attendants swiftly draw the rope across to hold back the next wave of the queue that snakes round the vast gallery in the Louvre in Paris.

Nobody seems to notice the superb Rubens that line the walls of this monumental corner of the Richelieu wing—everyone is focused on the end of the queue and their big selfie moment. The queuing begins several hundred meters (yards) away under the museum's glass pyramid where tourists join the first of a series of staggered lines that will slowly lead them to their brief audience with Leonardo Di Vinci's masterpiece. Last month, officials had to restrict access to the world's most visited museum for three days because of the chaos caused by queues to see the "Mona Lisa" in her new temporary home in the Medici gallery.

Blockbuster Leonardo show

She will be returned to her traditional spot in the adjoining States Room—which is being refurbished—just before a blockbuster Leonardo exhibition opens at the Louvre in October. But the disruption—exacerbated by an influx of tourists escaping the fierce heat in the French capital in July—has pushed the Louvre to intro-

duce obligatory advance booking by the end of the year to try to control numbers. Already angry staff closed the museum for a day in May to protest about being overwhelmed by the spiraling numbers.

More than 10 million people visited the museum in 2018, with that record likely to be smashed again this year. With between 75 and 80 percent of them—particularly Chinese and Americans—coming to see the "Mona Lisa," the museum's vice managing director Vincent Pomarede insisted that booking a time slot was now essential. "A tourist who comes without a reservation runs the risk of waiting a long time and maybe even not getting in," he told AFP. "It's the only way to guarantee entry." Pomarede said many other major museums already require people to book ahead.

Booking compulsory

"Before the end of the year, all visitors will have to make reservations," he said. For Evelyn and Tai, tourists from Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur, advanced booking made seeing the "Mona Lisa" "fairly painless". "The line is pretty long... but we bought the ticket online so we got a designated time." "It is much better organized than when I last came in 2000," said Stan, a Taiwanese-American visitor from San Jose in California. Finally seeing the painting was "pretty cool", said his 17-year-old son Andy, though he "wasn't blown away by it". New Yorkers

Frank and Jennifer, however, thought the whole experience was "amazing". "It's beautiful... and better than I expected I was expecting a really old building but it's a really modern (setting) for old artifacts and art," Frank added.

Visitors numbers usually peak at the Louvre at Easter. But this year they have continued to soar over the summer, with government advice to seek shelter in air-conditioned spaces like museums during two record heat waves in the French capital further complicating matters. With queues worst in the peak early afternoon period, Pomarede is worried that the 30,000 people who pass in front of the "Mona Lisa" daily will stop visitors seeing some of Louvre's many other treasures such as the Venus de Milo, the Winged Victory of Samothrace, and its staggering collection of 18th- and 19th-century French art.

Until the "Mona Lisa" returns to her home in her more controllable side gallery, "we are promoting other itineraries for visitors to see other work by Leonardo, as well as our Egyptian, Greek and Roman antiquities," he added. In the meantime, the Louvre has borrowed some tricks from the French capital's road traffic management system, including screens at the entrance warning that the museum is full or crowded, as well as warning on its website. — AFP

Victoria's Secret hires first transgender model after criticism

Victoria's Secret has hired Valentina Sampaio as its first transgender model, her agent said yesterday, as the struggling lingerie brand seeks to modernize its image. Daniel Robson at Premier Model Management in London, confirmed the Brazilian model had signed a contract with Victoria's Secret, but declined to comment further. Sampaio posted a backstage Instagram photo of herself in a white dressing gown on a shoot this week, with the hashtags #diversity and #new #vspink #campaign, referring to Pink, the brand launched in 2002 aimed at younger women. Victoria's Secret, famed for the jewel-encrusted bras and dazzling "angel" wings worn by supermodels at its annual fashion show, is battling falling sales as more women shift to cheaper bralettes and sports bras.

The decision to use a transgender model follows a backlash against comments by marketing chief of parent company L Brands, Ed Razek, in Vogue last year, when he said he would not use trans or plus-size models "because

the show is a fantasy". Victoria's Secret and L Brands did not immediately respond to requests for comment or confirm reports of Razek's departure. The high-profile lingerie retailer is rethinking its annual fashion show, after criticism that it is sexist and out of touch as network television viewing figures have slumped.

Sampaio, who has appeared on magazine covers including Vogue Paris, Vogue Brasil and Elle Mexico, is one of a growing number of high-profile trans models, amid pressure for the fashion industry to become more diverse and inclusive. Razek later apologized on Twitter for his "insensitive" comment on trans models, saying, "We've had transgender models come to castings... And like many others, they didn't make it." "I admire and respect their journey to embrace who they really are," said a statement on Victoria's Secret's account. — Reuters

GULF AIR COMMENCES FLIGHT TO MALAGA



Gulf Air, the national carrier of the Kingdom of Bahrain, revealed its first new destination Malaga - Costa del Sol in Spain. Commencing 14 June and operating until 15 September 2019, Malaga will be added as a seasonal summer destination as the airline continues revealing throughout the year its further network expansion plans for 2019. Kuwait Times along with other media personnel were invited on a trip to the new summer destination.

Internationally renowned as the birthplace of Pablo Picasso, Malaga is one of the oldest cities in the world, and gateway to Spain's beautiful Costa Del Sol. It is now also a burgeoning cultural center, and has recently seen three major museum openings - the most significant being the five-year pop-up Centre Pompidou, housed in a futuristic building on the waterfront and displaying a changing selection of 20th- and 21st century paintings by artists like Frida Kahlo and Marc Chagall.



The connecting flight from Kuwait - Bahrain - Malaga landed at Malaga - Costa del Sol International Airport where they were greeted by Juan Millan and escorted to Melia Marbella Banus Hotel. Susana Poras, Executive Consultant of Costa del Sol Tourism Board joined the group for the rest of the trip. The group then visited the city of Ronda on a guided tour through its Old Town and Reservatauro, a biosphere's reserve declared by UNESCO.

The group then headed for a stay at the Gran Hotel Miramar. Gran Hotel Miramar is the first grand luxury hotel ever built in the ancient Andalusian city of Malaga, and is a member of The Leading Hotels of the World and part of the Santos Hotels hotel chain. A historic landmark building in the old city centre which has been painstakingly restored following a two year, 65m Euros overhaul, Gran Hotel Miramar has re-emerged as one of Europe's foremost grand dames, firmly establishing Malaga on the global luxury travel map. The iconic building was designed by celebrated Spanish architect Fernando

Guerrero Strachan, and inaugurated in 1926 by King Alfonso XIII as the Hotel Principe de Asturias. It has undergone many incarnations since then, including a stint as a field hospital during the Spanish Civil War and a 20-year period as the city's courthouse.

The assiduous renovation returned this majestic edifice to its former glory, preserving or revitalizing many of its original features, including intricate Moorish carved wood arches, a beautiful first floor gallery, Andalusian tiling, hand-painted frescoes and ornate stucco ceilings. Set amongst beautifully landscaped grounds, this welcomed addition to Europe's pantheon of grand dame hotels features 190 rooms and suites; a fabulous ballroom; five restaurants and bars including a rooftop chill out zone; an intimate boutique spa; an outdoor pool; and extensive meetings and events facilities.





Gulf Air

"In line with our 5 year strategy to become the airline of choice, and in light of the recent adaptation of the new boutique business model, we are adding a seasonal destination to cater to summer's peak travel demand" said Gulf Air's Chief Executive Officer Kresimir Kucko. He

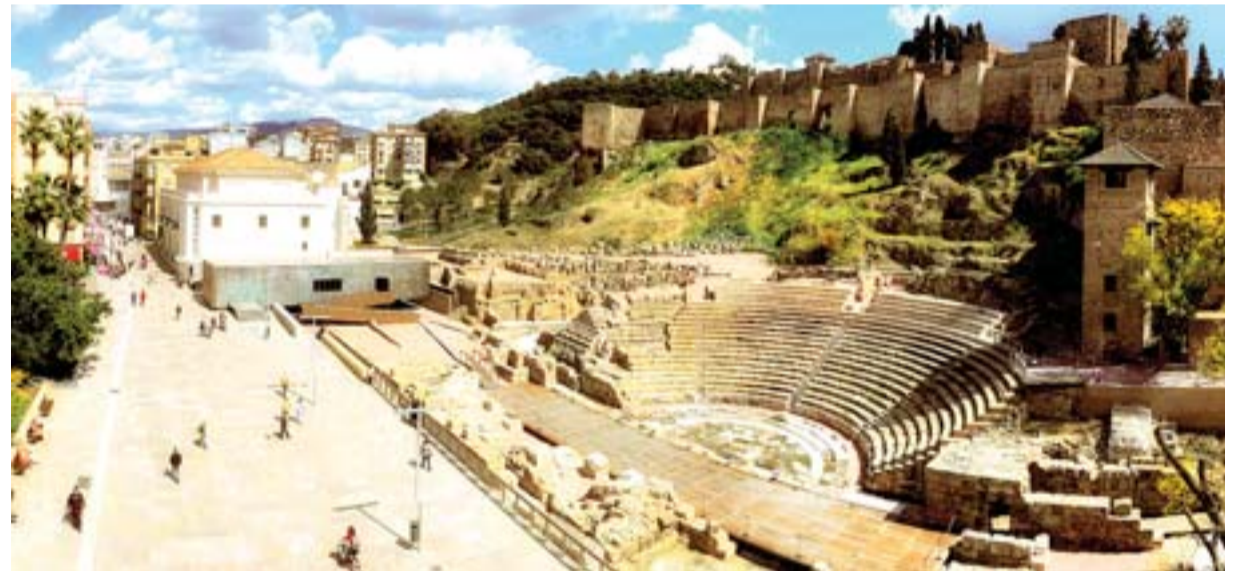
The President of Costa del Sol Tourist Board and the Provincial Government of Malaga, Francisco Salado, has congratulated Gulf Air on the decision to introduce, for the first time, a direct flight between Bahrain and Costa del Sol. "The new flight reinforces the importance of the objectives marked by the Tourist Board and its department of Connectivity & Emerging Markets. Gulf Air and Costa del Sol Tourist Board are already working on a co-marketing plan with the aim of promoting the destination and consolidating the flight frequency and future programming, based on a successful, ongoing, strategic alliance."

Earlier in 2019, Gulf Air announced its new boutique business model concept which will reinforce its focus on product and customer experience. As already done in the hospitality industry, Gulf Air will differentiate itself as a boutique airline that is unique in the way it operates comparing to airlines that are more volume driven. This approach will give the airline a competitive advantage that will translate in its new fleet, new Falcon Gold class offering, new exclusive products, new destinations for 2019 and its presence in the new terminal at Bahrain International Airport due to open towards the end of the year.

With the new business model concept, Gulf Air aims to grow strategically in size, expand to more boutique destinations in 2019 and continue its fleet modernization program by receiving additional 2 Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner's and 4 Airbus A320neos this year.



also commented: "Malaga is known for its summer appeal as a holiday destination and is very popular to our customers in the region. Gulf Air is flying to a direct point in Spain for the first time and we are excited to offer this opportunity to everyone this summer."



A weekend in Bratislava



Bratislava Castle

Best things to see & do



Old Town

The capital of Slovakia is in fact a beautiful, vibrant city full of tones of fun activities and a lot of fascinating history that we can learn about. If you have already seen Euro Trip, there is a good chance that Bratislava will not be very high on the list of European cities. After reading this article and viewing the photos you will quickly see why spending a weekend in Bratislava is the ideal choice for a fun city.

Bratislava is located in the heart of Central Europe only a few hours away from Prague, Vienna and Budapest by train or bus, making it easily accessible from pretty much anywhere in Europe. Bratislava is a relatively small city in terms of European capitals yet it's still the country's largest city. It's set on the edge of the Danube River, surrounded by the Carpathian mountains with an epic castle perched on a hill-top towering over the city below.



Old Town

Old Town

The highlight of most people's visit to Bratislava is of course the historic old town. While exploring its many winding streets and alleys, you'll come across plenty of cute squares, fountains and pastel coloured facades that'll make you want to stop and photograph! It's full of beautiful architecture, a ton of cafes and restaurants, and offers a lively and super fun pub scene. One of the main sites to see in the old town is the 13th century Town Hall building which has seen many changes to its appearance over the years. It now houses the oldest museum in Bratislava, The City Museum, which dates back to 1868 and showcases the history of Bratislava and Slovakia, along with torture tools and other artifacts. You'll catch a great view of the old town from the top of the tower.



Slavin Memorial

Michael's Gate

This iconic symbol of Bratislava is the only preserved gate to the old town making it one of the oldest buildings in the town still standing! Michael's Gate and its tower are located at the entrance to the old town and surrounded by bustling streets with busy cafes and restaurants. Even if you aren't looking for it, you're almost guaranteed to stumble upon it at some point during your stay! The Museum of Arms is located inside of Michael's Gate and tower. The museum costs 4,30 Euros and you'll find history of the town's fortifications as well as medieval weapons, military equipment and firearms. The observation platform at the top of the tower is what draws many tourists as it offers an awesome view of the castle, old town, and streets below.



Man At Work

Bratislava Castle

Bratislava castle dates back to the 9th century and has recently undergone a huge amount of restorative work to get it looking the way it does today.

The city's main landmark can be seen from pretty much anywhere in Bratislava and is easily accessible by foot from the old town. Once you climb your way up the hill and arrive at the castle, you'll be rewarded with panoramic views looking out over the Danube River, medieval town, UFO bridge and tower as well as the rest of the city below. Exploring the castles surrounding gardens won't cost anything but if you want to go inside, you'll have to purchase your ticket at the front door. Tickets also include entry to the Museum of History which covers the history of the castle and surrounding area in great detail and displays a collection of artifacts from ancient times.

Once you enter the castle, you'll find a majestic hall with beautiful white walls decorated in gold detailing as well as a big red carpet - making for excellent photo opportunities.

Make sure you find your way to the Crown Tower - the oldest and tallest tower of the castle. Through a series of steep staircases and narrow passageways, you'll be led to the top of the tower which will give the most breathtaking views of the city, river and surrounding mountains.



Blue Church

Blue Church

This unique and photo-worthy church looks like it was taken straight from a fairy tale book! The interesting design and unexpected blue color is what attracts many tourists to this pretty church. It's a 10 minute walk from the town center and you might need Google maps to direct you but it's worth the walk, especially on a sunny day!



Michael's Gate

UFO Bridge and Tower

If you want to relax while looking at the epic look, you will want to head to the UFO iconic tower in town. It is a 20-minute walk from the city center via the UFO Bridge. Restaurant, UFO watch, tast.groove, is located at the top of the tower and is accessible by lift.

Keep in mind that food and beverage prices are significantly higher than downtown prices (pay per view/experience). If you do not want to branch out, access to the viewing platform, we recommend that you head to the tower around sunset so you can enjoy the magnificent view!

Slavin Memorial

This war memorial is located on a hill near the castle and it's a 30 min walk from the town center. Another option to get there is to take the bus (number 203 or 207) which still involves a fair amount of walking to and from the bus stop, as you can see below. The Slavin memorial is a monument and cemetery dedicated to the fallen Soviet soldiers who liberated the city during World War II. The main monument lies in the center of the cemetery and was built-in 1960 to commemorate the 15th anniversary

With sweeping views over the city below and the

peaceful atmosphere of the memorial grounds, this makes for a quiet spot to relax and escape the bustle of the old town.

Man At Work

The quirky man at work statue aka Cumil pokes his head out of a sewer pipe on the street with a cheeky grin on his face. It is debated whether he is trying to catch a peek up women's skirts or if he's just taking a rest during a hard work day of cleaning the sewers.

At some point during your weekend in Bratislava, you must head over to meet Cumil and grab a photo of the cities' most famous statue. He is pretty easy to find while you're exploring the streets. Cumil isn't the only bronze statue hanging out in Bratislava's old town. It won't take you long to stumble upon his many friends that were originally created in an effort to liven things up around the city post-Communist era. They quickly became popular with tourists which led to the addition of many more of these fun statues popping up around the town!

Primate's Palace

This beautiful 18th century pale pink palace is hard to miss as it's centrally located, only a few steps away from the main square. If you enter the Primate's Palace, you can enjoy beautiful red carpets, white walls with gold features and gorgeous chandeliers hanging from the ceiling.

Don't miss out on the Hall of Mirrors, the most famous room of the Palace, as this is where the Peace Treaty between Austria and France was signed in 1805.

Bratislava Traditional Food Tour

A great way to experience a new culture is to sample the local cuisine while learning the history behind it all. It's easy to sit down at any restaurant while you are on holiday, and just order what looks familiar: burgers and chips, pizza, pasta etc.

If you book a traditional food tour during your weekend in Bratislava, you will be guaranteed to get a taste of delicious Slovakian cuisine while wandering through the city and stopping at various restaurants along the way. You'll get to hear all the interesting stories behind each dish and learn plenty of Slovakian history from a local guide.

Free Walking Tour

What's better than a free walking tour to get to know the new city?! There is a walking tour that works twice a day at 11:00 and 15:00. It includes most of the highlights that are in this article and much more! No need to reserve a place, just turn around. Best of all, it's free!

Bratislava Card

The Bratislava card offers free access to museums, attractions and tours in the area as well as unlimited travel on public transport for 24 hours. Save yourself a bunch of money during your weekend trip by grabbing a Bratislava card before you go!

Tourism in Slovakia offers natural landscapes, mountains, caves, medieval castles and towns, folk architecture, spas and ski resorts. Welcome to a marvellous land of national parks, mountains, valleys, forests and rivers



UFO Bridge and Tower

Racism, misogyny: US authorities probe motives of pair of gunmen

EL PASO: One was fueled by racist hatred of immigrants and warned of a “Hispanic invasion”. The other’s motives are less clear but he apparently resented women and compiled a “hit list” of girls in high school. Police and the FBI were trying to piece together yesterday what drove two young American men to commit unspeakable acts of carnage over the weekend. Patrick Crusius, a 21-year-old unemployed white man from the Dallas suburb of Allen, opened fire with a semi-automatic weapon at a Walmart on Saturday in El Paso, Texas.

About 20 minutes before the rampage, which left 22 people dead, he posted a four-page white supremacist “manifesto” on the online forum 8chan that railed against Hispanics. In the document titled “The Inconvenient Truth,” Crusius wrote that the attack “is a response to the Hispanic invasion of Texas”. Crusius claimed he was “defending” the US “from cultural and ethnic replacement brought on by an invasion” and made references to the Christchurch shootings in New Zealand, where a white gunman killed 51 worshippers at two mosques in March.

El Paso police chief Greg Allen said Crusius has not shown any remorse since his arrest and “appears to be in a state of shock and confusion”. According to court documents, Crusius has been unemployed for the past five months and living with his grandparents. In a statement, his grandparents said he had lived with them while attending classes at Collin County College but moved out of their home about six weeks ago.

According to CNN, a Twitter account linked to Crusius frequently shared tweets by President Donald Trump including one with Trump’s name spelled out with guns. In a LinkedIn profile, Crusius wrote, “I’m not really

motivated to do anything more than what’s necessary to get by. Working in general sucks, but I guess a career in Software Development suits me well. I spend about 8 hours every day on the computer so that counts towards technology experience I guess.”

El Paso is about a nine-hour drive from the Dallas area and Crusius appears to have deliberately selected the city because of its heavily Hispanic population. El Paso lies on the Rio Grande River which marks the US border with Mexico, and has a population of 680,000, of which 83 percent are of Hispanic descent.

The motivations of the other gunman, Connor Betts, 24, are less clear but several former friends told US media that he had a history of disturbing behavior, particularly towards women. Also armed with a semi-automatic weapon, Betts killed nine people including his sister, 22-year-old Megan Betts, in Dayton, Ohio, early Sunday morning. He was shot dead by police within a minute. Investigators have found no evidence so far to indicate that the shooting was motivated by racial hatred. “Just based on where we’re at now we are not seeing any indication of race being a motive,” Dayton police chief Richard Biehl said. Betts was white and six of his nine victims were black.

Mika Carpenter, 24, who has known Betts since she was 13 years old, told The New York Times “he was kind of hateful to women because they didn’t want to date him”. The Dayton Daily News reported that Betts had been suspended from Bellbrook High School for drawing up a “hit list” of girls. According to Buzzfeed News, Betts was a member of a “pornogrind” heavy metal band called Menstrual Munchies which performed songs with

Sudanese deal defuses threat of ‘slide into chaos’

KHARTOUM: A hard-won deal between Sudan’s ruling generals and protest leaders has averted a slide into chaos or even civil war but many questions remain about its implementation, analysts say. Under the accord, signed Sunday after mediation by the African Union and Ethiopia, a civilian-majority sovereign council will lead Sudan through a transitional period of three years. “The agreement is not the most ideal but it is better than no deal at all,” said Khaled Al-Tijani, a Sudanese analyst and editor-in-chief of the Elaf newspaper. “Sudan could have slid into chaos or maybe a civil war which makes this deal balanced and rational.” The country has been roiled by political turmoil since mass protests erupted in December against veteran leader Omar Al-Bashir, and the generals who ousted him months later. The signing of the constitutional declara-

tion on Sunday followed protracted talks that were repeatedly interrupted by violence including a deadly crackdown on a sit-in outside the army headquarters in Khartoum. The deal is “a reflection of the balance of forces,” said Magdi Al-Gizouli, analyst at the Rift Valley Institute.

Still, many are eyeing it with skepticism, given that it is “a compromise between contenders with often diametrically opposed interests,” he added. The accord’s implementation “is critically dependent on the goodwill” of the army and the protest alliance, Gizouli said.

The declaration places Sudan’s spy agency, which was last month renamed the General Intelligence Services, under the sovereign council and the executive authorities. It does not, however, outline how the shared responsibility would work, analysts noted. The agency, formerly known as the National Intelligence and Security Service, was used by Bashir as a tool to crush dissent, and also carried out a sweeping crackdown on the anti-Bashir street protests. This is “an example of the formal compromises that were whisked through to avert coming to terms with challenging issues,” said Gizouli. Especially “without authority over the budget of these forces and their composition it is not immediately clear how they can be disci-

Brazil inmate dead after foiled escape...

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A video released by the state prisons administration department shows da Silva stripping off his elaborate disguise in front of officials. Three days after his failed escape, da Silva, a senior member of the Red Command, one of Brazil’s main crime groups, was found dead in his cell in a maximum security prison. Officials said he appeared to have hanged himself with a bed sheet. An investigation has been launched into his death.

Experts estimate hundreds of prisoners are killed in Brazilian prisons every year, mostly in confrontations between rival gangs battling for control of one of the

world’s most important cocaine markets and trafficking routes. Brazil has the world’s third-largest prison population after the United States and China, with more than 800,000 inmates.

The death of Silva is an embarrassment for Rio’s prison authorities, which had initially cheered their actions in preventing his unusual escape plan. Brazil’s jails have become a major headache for new tough-on-crime President Jair Bolsonaro. Last week, at least 57 people died after a prison riot broke out in the northern state of Para. More than 50 inmates died in similar circumstances in May during prison riots in the northern state of Amazonas.

Prison gangs, originally formed to protect inmates and advocate for better conditions, have come to wield vast power that reaches far beyond prison walls. The gangs are linked to bank heists, drug trafficking and gun-running, with jailed kingpins running their empires via smuggled cellphones. — Agencies

High steaks: Cows go from...

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Double-digit inflation, a depreciating rupee, and a range of new taxes in Pakistan this year have translated into much higher prices for animals this Eid. “(The farmers) are demanding exorbitant prices for cattle, almost double to that

of last year,” says Syed Zeeshan. “Last year I bought an animal for 100,000 rupees (about \$625), but I will have to pay 12,000 more rupees (\$75) for a smaller one,” complains another customer Mohammad Inrnan, a small business owner.

Despite the rise in prices, about 80,000 cows have already been sold at a single market in northern Karachi, according to administrator Zaki Abro. To distinguish their stock in the crowded market, sellers have in some cases have chosen names for their animals, including a recently sold bull called Trump, with the hope of attracting customers. “He has similar grandeur and distinction like the US president,” says Abro. — AFP

Iran ‘favors’ talks with US, but...

Continued from Page 1

“This caused Americans to be trapped. They thought Iran’s system is weakened,” he said. “They said, ‘One more push. Iran has reached a stage where if we give it another push, everything will be over.’” This push by “warmongers” deceived Trump and led to his decision to leave the JCPOA, he said.

Rouhani said in any talks the Americans should be ready to negotiate fairly. “Peace for peace and oil for oil,” he said. “You cannot say that you won’t allow our oil to be exported. Strait for strait. It cannot be that the Strait of Hormuz is free for you and the Strait of Gibraltar is not free for us.” Iran has also been locked in a high-seas standoff with US ally Britain since Royal Marines helped to seize a tanker carrying Iranian oil off the British overseas territory of Gibraltar on July 4.

Weeks later, its Revolutionary Guards impounded a British-flagged tanker in the Strait of Hormuz - the conduit for much of the world’s crude. Zarif has confirmed reports he declined an offer from a US senator to meet

Trump at the White House last month despite the threat of sanctions within two weeks. The US imposed its sanctions against Zarif on Wednesday, targeting any assets he has in America and squeezing his ability to function as a globe-trotting diplomat.

Separately yesterday, Iran unveiled three precision-guided missiles, with the defense minister saying they show the country is ready to defend itself in the face of US “viciousness and conspiracies”. The new line-up of air-to-air missiles dubbed the “Yasin”, “Balaban” and a new series of the “Ghaem” were developed jointly by the ministry and Sa Iran, also known as Iran Electronics Industries.

Defense Minister Brigadier-General Amir Hatami hailed their launch as “another significant achievement of power and dignity for the Islamic Republic of Iran”. “It shows that despite the viciousness and conspiracies of the Great Satan America and its mercenaries, the defense ministry will not hesitate for a moment to defend the Islamic republic and to expand security,” he said, quoted by Fars news agency.

The Yasin was a smart, guided missile with folding wings that can be fired from a range of 50 km of its target from manned or unmanned aircraft, Fars reported. The Balaban was guided by GPS and sensors, equipped with folding wings and could be mounted under aircraft, while the Ghaem was a heat-seeking missile that could hit within 50 cm of a target. — AFP



EL PASO: A woman touches a cross yesterday at a makeshift memorial for victims outside a Walmart, near the scene of a mass shooting which left at least 22 people dead. — AFP

themes of sexual violence.

Demoy Howell, a friend of Betts, told the Dayton Daily News that Betts was “always a bit of an oddball”. “He had a dark sense of humor - jokes about people dying,”

Howell told the newspaper. “He would wear all black. I remember sensing a dark energy around him. ‘I think this is less of a hate crime and more of an ‘I hate everybody’ crime,” Howell said. — AFP

plined into a democratic framework,” he added.

There are also questions about the implications of the deal for the feared paramilitaries of the Rapid Support Forces. The protest movement has largely blamed the RSF for a crackdown on a sit-in outside army headquarters in Khartoum on June 3. At least 127 people were killed on that day alone, according to doctors close to the protest movement, who say the violence has cost more than 250 lives since December.

The declaration says the RSF will report to the armed forces’ general command, while an existing law governing the force will regulate its relationship with the executive authority. Eric Reeves, a Sudan expert at Harvard University, says it has always been the case that “there are in effect two armies (including the RSF) under nominal command of the army chief”. RSF paramilitaries have enjoyed a certain level of autonomy under their commander Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, widely known as Hemeti, who is now the deputy head of the military council.

Reeves says the powerful general has managed to ensure “that his forces remain intact” under the declaration. “Insofar as Hemeti retains control of his RSF in its present form, he can threaten any number of actions if the

army generals do not accede to his demands,” he added.

Sunday’s deal signing also revealed fractures within the protest camp after several factions expressed reservations. Sudan’s communist party said the declaration “solidifies the military’s dominance”. Rebel groups from the Sudanese Revolutionary Front said they cannot accept the declaration because it throws up “obstacles to the implementation of a peace deal”. They also complained of being excluded from the talks. Reeves said the rebels’ rejection is “extremely ominous” and should be addressed to ensure peace in the regions of Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

Otherwise the rebel leaders may be caught up in “a game of blackmail” between the generals and protest leaders, said Gizouli. These strains within the Alliance for Freedom and Change protest movement indicate difficulties maintaining a unified front. The umbrella group has secured a parliamentary majority of 201 out of 300 seats, “but there are no guarantees that it would remain intact,” said Tijani. And it remains to be seen whether each side will fulfill their part of the agreement. “Sudan has a record of non-commitment to pacts,” Tijani said. “It is now a question of to what extent this deal will go against that practice.” — AFP

Nobel laureate Toni Morrison...

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speeches and was often referred to as America’s “conscience” for her poignant takes on race and human rights, never afraid of commenting on the day’s weightiest political issues. Her family said she “passed away peacefully” in a New York hospital on Monday night “surrounded by family and friends”. “Although her passing represents a tremendous loss, we are grateful she had a long, well lived life,” they said in a statement, describing her as “the consummate writer who treasured the written word.”

Morrison won the Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award in 1988 for her 1987 novel “Beloved.” Set after the American Civil War in the 1860s, the story centered on a slave who escaped Kentucky to the free state of Ohio. The book was later turned into a film starring Danny Glover and Oprah Winfrey. Morrison received numerous other accolades including the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1993. In 1996, she was honored with the National Book Foundation’s

Medal of Distinguished Contribution to American Letters.

In 2012, Obama presented her with the Presidential Medal of Freedom and in 2016 she received the PEN/Saul Bellow Award for Achievement in American Fiction. “She was a great woman and a great writer, and I don’t know which I will miss more,” Robert Gottlieb, Morrison’s longtime editor at Knopf publishers, said in a statement sent to AFP.

Sonny Mehta, chairman of Knopf, said he could “think of few writers in American letters who wrote with more humanity or with more love for language than Toni”. “Her narratives and mesmerizing prose have made an indelible mark on our culture. Her novels command and demand our attention. They are canonical works, and more importantly, they are books that remain beloved by readers,” he said.

Morrison was born in Ohio on Feb 18, 1931. “The Bluest Eye”, her first novel, was published in 1970 when she was almost 40 years old. She followed up with “Sula” in 1973, going on to publish another nine novels, including the acclaimed “Song of Solomon” in 1977 which won the National Book Critics Circle Award. Her writings touched many, including Obama who recalled reading “Song of Solomon” as a child “and not just trying to figure out how to write, but also how to be and how to think”. — AFP

Lebanese kick up stink over smell fix...

Continued from Page 1

Visitors to the tiny Mediterranean nation have been welcomed off flights by unpleasant odors drifting over the airport. In June, Lebanon’s environment ministry said it had asked an expert to look into the matter and help neutralize the smells. Lebanese-French agronomy engineer Aime Menassa determined causes of the stench to include household waste, “badly stabilized compost”, and sewage. His report unleashed a wave of sarcasm online over a perceived outsider stating the obvious. “Isn’t there a Lebanese who can smell it?” one person asked on Twitter.

Beyond being unpleasant, the smells also present potential health hazards. This winter, researchers at the American University of Beirut measured the rate of hydrogen sulphide, a smelly gas produced by landfills, in the air in Bourj Hammoud. Michele Citton, a waste and water expert at AUB, said the levels of the gas - which has been correlated with possible negative health effects - were higher than expected.

A 2018 study in northern China found children living near a landfill were more likely to have deficient immunity and impaired lung function, the latter strongly related to hydrogen sulphide. But odor suppression is not a sustainable solution, Citton said. “What these smells are saying to the world and to the community in Beirut is basically that there is a deep need to find alternative methods to solid waste man-

agement in Lebanon.” Multi-confessional Lebanon has been rocked by political crises in recent years, especially since the 2011 outbreak of war in neighboring Syria. In 2015, a landfill closure caused trash to pile up in the streets, sparking protests against political leaders, including under the cry “You Stink”. The demonstrations have since died down, but mistrust in the ruling class - that includes former warlords during the 1975-1990 civil conflict - still runs high.

Menassa insists his offer to treat the smell is only meant to be a temporary solution. Under his plan, a “biodegradable” solution would be sprayed onto the surface or spread through mist into the air at three sites across the capital, he said. Transforming smelly gas into minerals, the solution would clean garbage trucks traveling in and out of two sorting stations, and lessen the stench from the composting site near Bourj Hammoud.

But “the idea is not to mist forever”, he said, of the odor-tackling practice that needs to be maintained 24/7 to be effective. “The solution is selective rubbish collection... to avoid having to have to bury these huge volumes in the final landfill.” Experts say half of Lebanon’s waste is organic, and could be better composted if separated out from recyclables at the household level. Environment Minister Fady Jreissati, who came into office in January, says only eight percent of Lebanon’s rubbish is recycled.

His plan for the next two years includes trying to encourage better rubbish sorting, and building a new composting plant near the airport by next spring, he told July’s edition of economic magazine Le Commerce du Levant. He also said a “credible option” would be to widen the Bourj Hammoud landfill - but that would mean destroying an adjacent fishing port. — AFP

Sports

Who's crying now? Australian glee as cricketers rise from Ashes

'Smith, rose above taunts with centuries in each innings'

SYDNEY: Australians basked in rediscovered pride in their cricketers yesterday after Steve Smith inspired a thumping Ashes Test win over England, redeeming himself following a ball-tampering scandal that left the team in disgrace.

Smith, pilloried and banned for a year over the infamous 'Sandpaper-gate' affair, rose above taunts of "We saw you cry on the telly" with centuries in each innings before England crumbled to a 251-run defeat in Birmingham.

"It's a redemption story like no other, from Sandpaper-gate to standing up to England, in England," tweeted 7News Brisbane. "The Miracle of Birmingham", trumpeted The Australian, as any lingering embarrassment from the tampering scandal more than 18 months ago evaporated.

Instead, attention turned to the "redemption" of Smith from a tearful press conference last year to his Test-defining innings which humbled England, just weeks after they were crowned ODI world champions.

Nathan Lyon and Pat Cummins took all 10 wickets as England's second innings folded for 146, but it was the knocks of 144 and 142 by Smith that set up the victory and renewed comparisons with the great Donald Bradman.

At the start of the Test the Australians were mocked as "cry-babies" and endured taunts of "cheats and losers", but five days on they were winners, the Herald's Malcolm Knox noted.

REDEMPTION TALE

Knox described the fidgety Smith's centuries as "pure

cricket alchemy, turning base metals into gold". The net effect of the abuse by England fans "was to knit the Australians together" and bring out their best cricket, he wrote.

"Even as he received his player-of-the-match award, Steve Smith had to speak above the songs of the last desperates whose claim to fame was having seen him cry on the telly. He wasn't crying now." News Corp. Australia's James Matthey said the vocal Edgbaston crowd "wasn't able to provide the spark needed to overcome an Australian team welcoming the ball-tampering trio back into the fold".

Smith, David Warner and Cameron Bancroft were playing in their first Test together since receiving lengthy suspensions for their part in the sandpaper affair.

The Australian called Smith's performance "a redemption tale" and said he "brings to a dressing room a belief in bright sides and silver linings, if not unicorns and rainbows... Has any previous Australian team, it is also worth asking, been so leveraged to the fortunes of a single player?"

Former Australian captain Gregg Chappell, who had his own scandal in the past with the infamous underarm bowling to New Zealand in 1981, said Smith couldn't rest on his laurels.

"He's taken a huge stride towards that redemption," Chappell was quoted as saying. "The way forward for that redemption is to keep making runs." — AFP



Steve Smith

Saudi and Formula One discussing F1 race

LONDON: Saudi Arabia and Formula One are discussing the possibility of holding a race in the country, and team bosses have been asked for an opinion, sources said yesterday. The Times newspaper reported that Formula One and the 10 teams would seek reassurance on issues including human rights, gender equality and media freedom before any race could happen.

Multiple informed sources confirmed to Reuters the substance of the report. They added, however, that Formula One had discussions with many would-be hosts around the world which ultimately came to nothing.

The Times suggested a Saudi race could become a reality as soon as 2021, with the schedule already expected to stretch to a record 22 races in 2020. Formula One and the teams are discussing major sporting and technical rule changes from 2021 and Ferrari boss Mattia Binotto said in Hungary at the weekend that could see an expansion to 24 races.

A Formula One source said that was more to allow flexibility, replacing the existing rule that states teams must agree to expand the calendar beyond 21 races rather than being a target number.

The Middle East already hosts two races, at Sakhir in Bahrain and Abu Dhabi's Yas Marina, with lucrative long-term contracts in place. Bahrain was the first in 2004 but the race has proved controversial, with rights groups accusing the country's rulers of using it to 'whitewash' abuses and improve their image abroad.

Saudi Arabia has come under heightened international criticism over its human rights record after journalist Jamal Khashoggi was murdered and dismembered by Saudi operatives inside its Istanbul consulate last October.

The kingdom lifted a ban on women driving only last year. Formula One published a commitment in 2015 to respect "internationally recognised human rights in its operations globally". Should the talks with Saudi Arabia move up a level, the kingdom would likely be looking at a third regional slot.

This year, Bahrain was the second round of the season after Australia, while Abu Dhabi will be the final round in early December. Any Saudi race would likely need to be separated from the other two regional rivals to protect their investment and the uniqueness of the event. Formula One is broadcast live and free-to-air in the Middle East and North Africa region under a five-year deal struck last March with MBC Group, founded by Saudi businessman Waleed al-Ibrahim.

The rights previously belonged to Qatar's BeIN media group, which blamed broadcast piracy of its pay TV feed as a reason for not renewing. Saudi Arabia already features on the all-electric Formula E calendar and hosted its first race last year on a street circuit at Ad Diriyah, near Riyadh. — Reuters

McCullum calls time on career

TORONTO: Former New Zealand captain Brendon McCullum announced on Monday he would retire from cricket at the end of the ongoing GT20 tournament in Canada. One of the most hard-hitting batsmen of his generation, the 37-year-old McCullum skippered New Zealand to the 2015 World Cup final, where they were beaten by Australia.

He also won plaudits for the aggressive yet sporting way in which he captained his country, before quitting international duty in 2016 after his 101st Test match. McCullum has spent the past few years playing in T20 competitions across the globe, his final stint coming with the Toronto Nationals.

"It is with pride and satisfaction that I am today announcing my retirement from all cricket following the conclusion of the GT20 in Canada," McCullum wrote on social media. "As much as I am proud of what I've achieved in my 20 year professional career - more than I could ever have dreamed of when I first entered the game - I have felt the drive to keep going harder to maintain in recent months." "I look back with pride over the way I've played the game and what I've achieved... I can leave the game knowing I left no stone unturned," he added. "It's been one hell of a ride but I've always maintained that all good things must come to an end." — AFP

Doping in cricket: Shaw ban raises questions for India

NEW DELHI: India's powerful cricket board is under pressure to bring its anti-doping procedures into line with world standards after questions were raised over the ban handed to teenage star Prithvi Shaw.

Shaw, the 19-year-old prodigy often compared to Sachin Tendulkar, last week received an eight-month ban after the Board of Control for Cricket in India ruled he "inadvertently ingested a prohibited substance (terbutaline), which can commonly be found in cough syrups".

Shaw's ban was backdated to March 16, despite the fact he was playing for the Delhi Capitals in the Indian Premier League until May 8. He will be available again from November 16, just after the start of India's international season.

The BCCI insists on handling its doping analysis and sanctions in-house, rebuffing pressure from India's government and the World Anti-Doping Agency to come under the ambit of India's WADA-accredited national anti-doping body.

However, concern is growing about the arrangements, with many calling for more rigorous testing by an independent body. "The Indian Board does not have a robust anti-doping set-up and cricketers are not regularly tested during all national and age-group competitions," The Hindustan Times said, adding that Shaw was given the "lightest sentence possible".

Last year, Indian all-rounder Yusuf Pathan also tested positive for terbutaline and received a backdated ban after the BCCI accepted he took it "inadvertently", offering the same explanation that the drug is often found in cough syrups. Terbutaline is a bronchodilator, expanding air passages in the lungs. Such substances can raise oxygen levels in the blood, helping stamina, speed and recovery, The Hindustan Times said.

James Anderson ruled out of second Ashes Test with injury

LONDON: James Anderson has been ruled out of the second Ashes Test, with England uncertain when he will be fit to return after injuring his right calf. England's record wicket-taker broke down after just four overs in the series opener at Edgbaston and did not bowl again as Australia romped to a 251-run victory.

Scans have confirmed he has no chance of taking part in next week's game at Lord's, the second of the five-match series, with assessment taking place "on an ongoing basis". Anderson's absence is a huge blow for England, whose deflating defeat in Birmingham came just three weeks after they won the World Cup.

After pulling up injured on the first morning in Birmingham, Anderson, 37, was restricted to two batting cameos at number 11. The veteran, who has taken 575 Test wickets, had not played competitive cricket for a month leading into the match after injuring the same calf playing for Lancashire.

"The MRI confirmed that Anderson has suffered a calf injury," said a statement from the England and Wales Cricket Board yesterday. "As a result of the injury, he will commence a rehabilitation programme working with the England and Lancashire medical teams."

"Anderson will miss the second Test match, which starts at Lord's on Wednesday August 14. He will be reassessed on an ongoing basis." Former England captain Michael Vaughan does not expect to see Anderson on duty again until the fourth Test at the earliest and warned his absence could have a big impact in both dressing rooms.

"My concern is you don't underestimate the psychological effect of Jimmy Anderson has on the England team, but also the positive effect it sends through the Australia team," he said. "For them to arrive next week and the week after to know they won't be facing Jimmy... that is monstrous."

A debut for paceman Jofra Archer, one of the stars of England's World Cup campaign, could lessen the blow but he must first prove his own fitness for the five-day game. He was carrying a side strain throughout the tournament and has been sent to play for Sussex 2nd XI to get long spells with the red ball under his belt.



Prithvi Shaw

'CASUAL APPROACH'

BCCI anti-doping manager Abhijit Salvi said the Indian board doesn't do its testing through the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) because it is concerned about its standards. "If we would have been happy with NADA's performance then BCCI would not have had an issue," Salvi told AFP.

"I am sure you have read reports as well about NADA's inefficiencies." He also rebuffed suggestions of a procedural lapse in the Shaw case, given his ban was backdated to a time when he was still playing. Salvi said Shaw had probably been too "casual" by taking an over-the-counter medicine, despite attending "at least three" classes on anti-doping organised by the BCCI.

"He probably had a casual approach to it and that's why he tested positive," Salvi told AFP. The BCCI is the world's richest cricket body and generates about 70 percent of the sport's global revenues. Shaw, meanwhile, is one of Indian

cricket's hottest properties after he hit a century on his Test debut last year, becoming India's second-youngest centurion after Tendulkar.

India's government has repeatedly attempted to bring the BCCI into line with other sports by carrying out its drug testing through the national agency. "A letter has been sent through NADA to the BCCI to get their players tested through them like any other sports body in the country," a source in the sports ministry told AFP last week.

"Because NADA is the only approved agency for handling dope offences, BCCI's response on this matter is still awaited. The ministry is keen for the matter to be resolved as soon as possible." Last year, WADA urged the International Cricket Council to intervene in matter. NADA chief Navin Agarwal told AFP that bringing Indian cricket on board remained a "work in progress".

DIET PILLS

Doping cases are rare in cricket. One of the most prominent was in 2003, when Australia's Shane Warne received a year's suspension for taking a banned diuretic, blaming dieting pills given to him by his mother.

In 2006, Pakistan's Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif escaped bans for testing positive for the steroid nandrolone after the Pakistan Cricket Board accepted they did not take the drug intentionally. One Indian cricketer, who wanted to remain anonymous, said young players shouldn't be expected to monitor what is going into their bodies.

"Nowadays players stay with a team for nearly eight-nine months in a year. They are young boys who hardly know which medicine to consume. To blame them is not right," he told AFP. However, sports medicine expert Saranjeet Singh, who has written a book on drug use in sport, said cricketers simply aren't tested enough.

"It's (Shaw) not a one-off case because cricket does not have the level of testing that is required to check the use of performance-enhancing drugs," Singh told AFP. "There are numerous drugs that help in staying alert, for a better mind, to improve cardiovascular activity and strength. So drugs are everywhere from chess to horse racing. It's time BCCI falls under the NADA ambit to improve its credibility in picking out drug cheats." — AFP

Du Plessis confirmed as S Africa Test captain

JOHANNESBURG: Faf du Plessis will captain South Africa in the Test series against India in October but may not lead the side in all formats, Corrie van Zyl, Cricket South Africa's (CSA) new acting director of cricket said yesterday.

Van Zyl, who was appointed to the acting role following the weekend purge of head coach Ottis Gibson and his coaching staff, said he would chair a selection meeting "in the next day-and-a-half" to discuss future strategy, which would include planning for the 2023 World Cup.

"Faf will be the captain of the Test team," said Van Zyl. "But we need to look forward and we will talk about the white-ball strategy to 2023." South Africa will play three Twenty20 internationals in India next month ahead of the Test series, their first in the new world Test championship, which starts on October 2.

At yesterday's press conference, Thabang Moroe, the chief executive of CSA, said he hoped the appointments in a new structure for the national team would be made before England start a tour of South Africa in December.

On Sunday, CSA said a football-style team manager would be appointed, who would take charge of all aspects of the national team, including the appointment of a coaching staff, the captain or captains and medical and administrative personnel.

Moroe also suggested that policy would be directed from the top. "We want to see a more pro-active style of play with the team taking calculated risks and backing themselves," said Moroe who added that racial "representativity targets" (quotas) would remain in place with a target average of six black players in a team over the course of a season. Moroe also confirmed a growing rift with the SA Cricketers' Association (SACA), saying he wanted more direct communication between CSA and the national team, effectively bypassing SACA.

"There has been a bit of a disconnect between the players and the organisation (CSA)," he said. "We want to streamline the system so decisions can be made almost instantaneously." SACA chief executive Tony Irish is on record as saying the relationship between CSA and the players' body was at an all-time low. SACA has consequently launched a high court application seeking a review of a CSA decision to restructure domestic cricket, made without any SACA consultation. Moroe acknowledged there were differences between CSA and SACA but said there was no breakdown and that SACA would soon be invited to meet with the governing body. — AFP



James Anderson

25 East and Central Asian boxers dominate boxing championship

26 James Anderson ruled out of second Ashes Test with injury

27 Swiss charge German officials in 2006 World Cup fraud probe



SYDNEY: Australian Olympic hurdles champion Sally Pearson poses for pictures in front of the Harbour Bridge after a press conference in Sydney yesterday. Pearson announced her shock retirement, less than 12 months from the Tokyo games, revealing that she had been battling persistent injury problems and could no longer cope. — AFP

Hurdler Pearson retires over injuries

Pearson won gold at 2011, 2017 world championships and 2010, 2014 Commonwealth Games

SYDNEY: Australia's reigning world-champion hurdler Sally Pearson announced her surprise retirement yesterday, as persistent injuries sank her dream of regaining the Olympic title in Tokyo next year.

Pearson, 32, the Olympic gold-medallist in 2012 and a two-time world champion over 100 metres hurdles, said after years of injuries her body "is just not up to it". "After 16 years of being on the Australian team, it's time to hang up the spikes," Pearson told a press conference in Sydney.

Recounting a litany of injuries which have plagued her since she won gold at the London Olympics in 2012, Pearson said the problems were "just ongoing and ongoing". "Every time I want to go fast, the body doesn't want to. So, I don't think I could take any more injuries," she said.

"I have huge doubts for the next year for me to be

able to continue at the level that I expect of myself, and also what the country expects of me when I go to the Olympics." Despite the injury setbacks, Pearson's announcement was unexpected after she reaffirmed a month ago that she was on track to return to competition at the Doha world championships in September.

In addition to her Olympic win in London, Pearson's storied career included golds at the 2011 and 2017 world championships and the 2010 and 2014 Commonwealth Games.

She is the reigning Olympic and world championship record-holder in the 100m event, and a former IAAF Female Athlete of the Year.

'2018 WAS HORRIBLE'

Pearson revealed in an interview with Australia's

Seven Sunrise television programme Tuesday that she had suffered numerous unannounced leg injuries while preparing for the Doha worlds.

"When you count six injuries this year that no one knows about and another whole year to go of training to the Olympics, to try and win gold, I have major doubts my body will make it," she said. "I don't know if I want to put myself through that again."

"2018 was horrible with my Achilles tendon, and not being able to run at my home town Commonwealth Games. That was devastating. I don't think it is fair to do that to myself and my body, as well."

Such injuries had been a constant for Pearson, who suffered a broken wrist from a race fall that derailed her 2015 world titles campaign, then a hamstring problem hit her 2016 Rio Olympics hopes.

She was forced to pull out of the Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast, her home city, last year due to the Achilles issue.

In April, she withdrew from her first competitive event in more than a year at the Australian championships, saying her body was "overheating".

Australian Olympic Committee CEO Matt Carroll hailed Pearson as a fierce competitor and one of the country's all-time great athletes.

"She did not accept compromises or settle for half-measures," he said. "Ultimately, those qualities also drove her to a decision to retire."

"While we are enormously disappointed that Sally will not be going to Tokyo 2020, we understand when an athlete honestly assesses the future and makes that difficult decision to call time." — AFP

Kontaveit downs Sharapova, Kerber falls in Toronto

MONTREAL: Anett Kontaveit spoiled Maria Sharapova's return from injury Monday, rallying to beat the five-time Grand Slam champion 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 at the WTA tournament in Toronto. Sharapova, competing for the first time since retiring from her first-round match at Wimbledon, appeared to be on course for just a fourth match win since January when she went up a set and an early break on the 16th seed from Estonia.

Having forced the third set, Kontaveit gave herself a chance to serve for the match with a break of serve in an epic ninth game. Sharapova hung on through nine deuces before Kontaveit converted her third break chance in a game that lasted more than 15 minutes.

"I was just trying to take it point by point and not think about the score that much. It worked in the end," said Kontaveit, who converted her first match point in the following game when Sharapova sent a service return long.

While Kontaveit readies herself for a second round match against either Venus Williams or Carla Suarez Navarro—who open play on Centre Court today—Sharapova will set her sights on next week's tournament in Cincinnati, where she has received a wild card just as she did in Toronto.

"I don't think this is the time to take a break," she said. The 32-year-old has slipped to 82nd in the world rankings after another season marred by injury. She had missed more than four months in the wake of right shoulder surgery when she returned for the grass court season this year. She was forced out of Wimbledon by a left forearm injury.

Sharapova said Monday's physical battle showed she'd made progress since Wimbledon.

"I put a lot of work in to get to this stage, so I think to finish off this match is good," she said. "Definitely not the result I would have liked, but overall feeling pretty good about it."

"I'm still building the confidence and my form and that's something that's just going to come with time and with match play," she added. "Unfortunately, I just haven't had that yet, so will just hopefully try to build on it."

The top eight seeds in the key US Open tuneup receive first round byes—a group led by world number one Ash Barty of Australia which also includes No. 2 Naomi Osaka of

Japan, fourth-seeded Wimbledon champion Simona Halep and eighth-seeded Serena Williams.

German 12th seed Angelique Kerber was unable to make to the second round, however, the three-time Grand Slam champion beaten 0-6, 6-2, 6-4 by Russian Daria Kasatkina.

Two former champions made it safely into the second round, Caroline Wozniacki and Belinda Bencic both posting straight-sets wins. Denmark's Wozniacki, seeded 15th, shook off an early break of service, rallying from 2-4 down in the opening set to win in 90 minutes.

The Dane, who lifted the WTA's Canadian Premier-level title in 2010 when the tournament was in Montreal, hasn't always thrived in the years in which Toronto hosted, although she did make it to the final in 2017.

"I'm just happy to be here and win another match here and get a good start," Wozniacki said. "We'll see how it goes. Switzerland's Bencic, seeded 11th, advanced with ease, dispatching Russian qualifier Anastasia Potapova 6-2, 6-1.

Despite the lopsided scoreline, Bencic needed four match points to close it out.

Bencic won the second WTA title of her career in Toronto in 2015, beating four of the top-six players in the world, including Serena Williams. But she hasn't played in Toronto since as her precocious WTA rise was stalled by a string of injuries. — AFP



TORONTO: Anett Kontaveit of Estonia celebrates victory over Maria Sharapova of Russia following a first round match on Day 3 of the Rogers Cup at Aviva Centre 19 in Toronto, Canada. — AFP