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Bashir acknowledges receiving millions of dollars as trial opens

Sudan ex-president sits in court cage, jokes about prison

KHARTOUM: Sudan's ousted president Omar Hassan Al-Bashir acknowledged receiving millions of dollars, a police detective told a court yesterday at the start of a corruption trial that many Sudanese thought they would never see. Bashir listened to the testimony without comment, sitting in a metal cage and wearing traditional white robes and a turban in his first appearance in a Khartoum courtroom. He is charged with illicit possession of foreign currency and accepting gifts in an unofficial manner. Bashir's lawyer dismissed the accusations, telling reporters after the hearing it was usual for leaders to hold amounts of foreign currency.

The veteran leader spoke to confirm his name and age. When asked about his residence, Bashir laughed and said: "Formerly the airport district, at army headquarters but now Kobar prison," referring to the detention complex where he sent thousands of opponents during his rule. Bashir weathered multiple rebellions, economic crises, US sanctions and coup attempts until he was overthrown by the military in April after mass protests against his 30-year rule.

His trial will be seen as a test of how serious authorities are about trying to erase the legacy of a rule marked by widespread violence, wars, economic collapse and the secession of South Sudan. The 75-year-old, who seized power in a coup in 1989, arrived at the courthouse in a convoy with military and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces soldiers. Family members shouted "Allahu Akbar" (God is the Greatest) and he raised his hand in

greeting from the courtroom cage. A small number of family members were permitted inside the cage after the session ended to speak with him. The next hearing was scheduled for Saturday.

Bashir faces a raft of charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide from the International Criminal Court over his role in the Darfur war but yesterday's trial is over graft allegations. London-based rights watchdog Amnesty International has warned however that the corruption trial should not distract from his Darfur indictments.

"While this trial is a positive step towards accountability for some of his alleged crimes, he remains wanted for heinous crimes committed against the Sudanese people," Amnesty said. Amnesty urged the country's new transitional institutions to ratify the ICC's Rome Statute, a move that would allow for his transfer to the international tribunal. The Hague-based ICC has for years demanded that Bashir stand trial, and has renewed its call since his fall.

Bashir's lawyer Ahmed Ibrahim told reporters: "There is no information or evidence with regards to the accusations of illicit gains aimed at Bashir. Anyone in his occupation has to have foreign currency and it was in a room attached to his office in his residential residence."

Bashir was also charged in May with incitement and involvement in the killing of protesters, and prosecutors also want him questioned over suspected money laundering and terrorism

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KHARTOUM: Sudan's deposed military ruler Omar Al-Bashir sits in the defendant's cage during the opening of his corruption trial yesterday. — AFP

News in brief

Govt rejects amending system

KUWAIT: The government has rejected parliamentary proposals calling for changing the current one-man-one-vote election system. The government also rejected increasing electoral constituencies to 10 or amending the current five constituencies. The sources said the government believes the current election system has achieved stability and gave everyone justice and equality in opportunities. It also gave minorities the possibility of gaining National Assembly membership, which was something hard to achieve earlier. Sources said the current system gives everyone a chance to win and closed the door to pre-poll alliances that placed obstacles in front of competent minorities. — A Saleh

Bahrain to join US-led efforts

DUBAI: Bahrain said yesterday it would join US-led efforts to protect shipping in the Gulf amid tensions between Washington and Tehran after a series of attacks on tankers. Bahrain's King Hamad voiced his country's appreciation of the "US role in supporting regional security and stability" during a meeting with US Central Command chief General Kenneth McKenzie, state media said. "The king confirmed the kingdom of Bahrain's participation in the joint effort to preserve the safety of international maritime navigation and secure international corridors for trade and energy," the official Bahrain News Agency reported. — AFP

Pak extends military chief's tenure

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan extended its military chief's tenure yesterday, ensuring stability in what is arguably the country's most powerful position as tensions soar with rival India over Kashmir and Washington is expected to announce a withdrawal deal in Afghanistan. "General Qamar Javed Bajwa is appointed as chief of army staff for another term of three years," read a statement signed by Prime Minister Imran Khan and released by his office. "The decision has been taken in view of the regional security environment." — AFP

Message in bottle found 50 yrs later

WASHINGTON: A man gathering firewood in Alaska discovered a bottle with a handwritten message inside wishing the finder "happy sailing" more than 50 years after it was dropped into the sea by a Russian sailor. "Sincere greetings! From the Russian Far East Fleet mother ship VRFX Sulak," it read. "We wish you good health and long years of life and happy sailing, 20 June 1969." Tyler Ivanoff, a teacher's aide in Shishmaref, Alaska, spotted the bottle on the shore near his village, and pried off the plastic stopper with his teeth. Rossiya 1, a Russian television network, tracked it by its return address in Vladivostok to a retired Soviet ship captain now living in Crimea. — AFP

Regime advance cuts off Turkish convoy in Syria

MAARET AL-NOMAN, Syria: A Turkish military convoy crossed into northwest Syria yesterday, its path blocked by advancing regime troops as tensions soared between Damascus and Ankara. Rebel-backer Turkey said its forces were targeted by an air strike, while the Syrian regime accused Turkish forces of backing "terrorists". The convoy had entered Idlib province before heading towards a key town where Russian-backed regime forces are waging a fierce battle to retake the area from jihadists and rebels.

Turkey claimed an air strike hit its convoy, killing three civilians, though a war monitor said a Russian air raid took the

lives of three rebels in the surrounding area. Russian President Vladimir Putin told French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday that Moscow supports the Syrian army's offensive against "terrorists" in the northern province of Idlib. "We support the efforts of the Syrian army... to end these terrorist threats" in Idlib, Putin said after Macron urged respect for a ceasefire in Idlib.

After eight years of civil war, the jihadist-run region on the border with Turkey is the last major stronghold of opposition to President Bashar Al-Assad's regime. The region of some three million people was supposed to be protected by a Turkish-Russian buffer zone deal signed last year, but regime and Russian forces have upped their deadly bombardment there since late April.

After days of inching forward, Russian-backed regime ground forces on Sunday entered the key town of Khan Sheikhun in

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MAAR HATTAT, Syria: A convoy of Turkish military vehicles is pictured near this town as smoke billows in the background during air strikes by pro-regime forces yesterday. — AFP

Iran warns US as freed tanker leaves Gibraltar

TEHRAN: Tehran said it had warned its arch-foe Washington against attempting to seize an Iranian tanker, which sailed into international waters yesterday after being released from Gibraltar. Iran had been locked in a six-week standoff with US ally Britain since Royal Marines seized the tanker off British territory Gibraltar, on suspicion it was shipping oil to Syria in breach of EU sanctions. Little more than two weeks later, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps impounded the British-flagged Stena Impero tanker in strategic Gulf waters in what London called a tit-for-tat move.

A Gibraltar court on Thursday

ordered the release of the Grace 1, since renamed the Adrian Darya. That was in spite of a last-minute US bid to detain the supertanker on allegations of involvement in supporting illicit shipments to Syria by the Guards, listed as a terrorist group by Washington. Gibraltar's government rejected the request, saying it could not seek a court order to detain the ship because US sanctions against Iran were not applicable in the European Union.

The Adrian Darya had left Gibraltar and entered international waters yesterday, the deputy head of Iran's port and marine authority Jalil Eslami said, cited by state news agency IRNA. Flying the Iranian flag, it was on course for the Greek port of Kalamata, according to shipping data. But the final destination of the vessel and its 2.1 million barrels of oil remains unclear, with authorities in Greece yet to confirm it is expected to dock there.

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GIBRALTAR: An Iranian flag flutters on board the Adrian Darya oil tanker, formerly known as Grace 1, off the coast of Gibraltar on Sunday. — AFP

Malaysia quizzes Indian preacher as pressure mounts

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian police yesterday questioned a controversial Indian Islamic preacher for allegedly making insensitive remarks about race in the multiethnic country, as pressure mounts on authorities to kick him out. Zakir Naik, a radical television preacher who has called the 9/11 attacks an "inside job", left India in 2016 and moved to largely Muslim Malaysia, where he was granted permanent residency. He is wanted in India for inciting extremism and money laundering, and New Delhi last year asked Malaysia to extradite him,

according to reports - a request that was rejected.

Calls are now mounting for action after Naik said Hindus in Malaysia have "100 times" more rights than India's Muslim minority, and suggested Chinese Malaysians should be expelled before he was. Several cabinet ministers have publicly called for Naik to be kicked out, while even Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said he had crossed the line. His lawyer, Akberdin Abdul Kader, told AFP that Naik was "being interviewed by the police" for a second day yesterday, after first being hauled in last week.

Continued on Page 24



Zakir Naik

UK to end EU free movement after Brexit

LONDON: Britain said yesterday it will immediately end freedom of movement for people from the European Union after Brexit on Oct 31, in a policy shift under Prime Minister Boris Johnson. "Freedom of movement as it currently stands will end on October 31 when the UK leaves the EU," a Downing Street spokeswoman said. She added the government planned "tougher criminality rules for

Continued on Page 24

Local

Amir receives greetings, well wishes after recovering from health setback

Crown Prince, National Guard Chief, Prime Minister express relief over Amir's recovery

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a letter yesterday from His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, congratulating him on his recovery following his recent health trouble. In the letter, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf prayed to Allah Almighty to bestow perpetual wellbeing and good health on His Highness the Amir and to protect him for the sake of the dear nation and its well-regarded people, so that he could carry on fulfilling progress and prosperity ambitions. In response, His Highness the Amir sent His Highness Sheikh Nawaf a letter voicing sincere thanks and appreciation to him for his wishes and prayers, wishing him well and everybody good luck in serving the dear nation.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a congratulatory cable from Chief of Kuwait National Guard His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah over his recovery from the minor health setback that he had earlier. His Highness Sheikh Salem, and on behalf of the National Guard, expressed his sincere congratulations over His Highness recovery and he wished him a good health so Kuwait would continue progressing under his

leadership. His Highness the Amir addressed a cable to His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali, expressing his gratitude for his kind words.

In the meantime, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah wished His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-

many more years of prosperity under his watch. In his response, His Highness the Amir thanked the prime minister for his kind words, saying he appreciated the ministers' tremendous concern over his wellbeing.

Also yesterday, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah had also received a phone call from King Abdullah II of Jordan, checking on his health condition. His Highness Sheikh Sabah thanked King Abdullah for his kind feelings, expressing appreciation for his concern which is part of the strong Kuwaiti-Jordanian ties. His Highness the Amir also wished King Abdullah a long healthy life and more development for Jordan.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah had also received a phone call on Sunday from Saudi Arabia King Salman bin Abdulaziz, inquiring about his health after a minor setback earlier in the day. The Saudi king expressed his best wishes and a speedy recovery to His Highness the Amir. His Highness the Amir thanked him for his kind words and gesture, and wishing good health and prosperity for the kingdom under his leadership. Earlier, Acting Minister of Amiri Diwan Mohammad Dhaifallah Sharar said that results of medical examinations His Highness the Amir underwent were good. —KUNA



Saudi, Jordan kings phone Amir

Jaber Al-Sabah well yesterday, fresh off his recuperation from a health setback. His Highness the Prime Minister expressed his warm sentiments, on behalf of himself and all ministers, in a letter he penned to His Highness the Amir, saying the nation looks forward to



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

Crown Prince meets envoy; Speaker hosts UNHCR official

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday Kuwait's Ambassador to Hungary Saad Al-Asousi. Separately, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem received yesterday Director of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees bureau in Kuwait Dr Samer Haddadin. MP Mohammad Al-Dallal attended the meeting, which was held at the speaker's office. —KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Kuwait's Ambassador to Hungary Saad Al-Asousi. —KUNA



National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with Director of the UNHCR bureau in Kuwait Dr Samer Haddadin.

Kuwait, Bangladesh discuss military issues of common interest

KUWAIT: Chief of the General Staff of Kuwait's Army Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khudher met yesterday with head of Bangladesh's military mission to Kuwait Brigadier General Mohammad Abdulmajeed. During the meeting, the two sides discussed subjects of common interest, particularly military ones, defense ministry's directorate of moral guidance said in a press statement. The meeting took place at Khudher's office, noted the statement. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Chief of the General Staff of Kuwait's Army Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khudher meets with head of Bangladesh's military mission to Kuwait Brigadier General Mohammad Abdulmajeed. —KUNA

Int'l banking event to yield holistic sight: Top Kuwait banker

KUWAIT: The International Banking Conference due on September 23, 2019 is chiefly intended to yield a comprehensive view of the industry's future and enrich dialogue with progressive and profound ideas, said Kuwait's top banker. The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) is keen on securing the participation of experts in different aspects and fields of banking and finance, CBK Governor Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel said in a statement yesterday. The event, which will be held under the aegis of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, will bring together decision-makers and thought leaders from across the global financial services sector, he elaborated. Banking

industry leaders are among the many top-level executives and officials confirmed as speakers for the gathering, Hashel boasted. He listed participating regulators as Arab Saudi Monetary Authority (SAMA) Governor Ahmad Al-Kholifey, UAE Central Bank's Governor Mubarak Al Mansoori, Governor of the Central Bank of Bahrain Rasheed Al-Maraj, Governor of State Bank of Pakistan Reza Baqir and Bank Negara Malaysia (Malaysia's central bank) Governor Datuk Nor Shamsiah. Commending the level of speakers taking part in the conference, the CBK chief said that the discussions would produce a comprehensive view of the industry's future. —KUNA



Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel



KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry's Acting Undersecretary Lt Gen Sheikh Faisal Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah inspected Ahmadi refinery and the facilities security department yesterday to check work procedures and the security situation. He was received by the director general of the facilities' security department Maj Gen Saud Al-Khadher and director of vital and oil facilities' security department Col Ahmad Al-Mahmoud. —By Hanan Al-Saadoun

Local

Govt supports entities highlighting Kuwait's achievements: Info minister

Jabri expresses unconditional support towards journalists and media

KUWAIT: The government will use all resources to help entities highlighting Kuwait's achievements in the regional and global scenes, Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri said yesterday. This statement came during the minister's reception of a delegation representing Kuwait Journalists Association's (KJA), which won a seat in the International Federation of

towards journalists and media personnel. The minister further pointed out His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's support to the freedom of expression mentioned in Kuwait's Constitution, stressing that KJA's achievement "is proof of the level of democracy and freedom of opinion and expression that Kuwait enjoys." Meanwhile, member of the IFJ executive committee and KJA member of the board Dhairan Aba Al-Khail thanked the minister for his support, commending the official on forwarding the IFJ's basic announcement on media freedoms in the Arab world to the Arab Information Ministers meetings in Cairo.



KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri receives the Kuwait Journalists Association's delegation.



Minister commends KJA's outstanding achievement

Journalists (IFJ) Executive Committee elections back in June.

During the meeting, Minister Jabri commended the association for their outstanding achievement back in June, expressing his unconditional support

The KJA delegation included Chairperson of the Board Fatima Hussein, Secretary Adnan Al-Rashed, Treasurer Jassem Kamal, and board members Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan and Dhairan Aba Al-Khail. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Information Minister and State Minister for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri receives media figure Bedoor Al-Mutairi. — KUNA

Online journalism complements traditional media: Minister

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Information supports web-based journalism because it is a solid complement to traditional media and an important elements of journalism's development, a senior government official said yesterday. Information Minister and State Minister for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri made that statement after receiving media figure Bedoor Al-Mutairi, Editor-in-Chief of Berwaz online news service, on the occasion of Berwaz winning the Washington-based International Center for Journalists' award for the best promising electronic media project in the Middle East.

Jabri said that Berwaz's win was not easy especially, with competition from a group of the most well-known media websites in the Middle East, noting that Berwaz was selected following multiple rounds of qualifiers that took months. Meanwhile, Mutairi said Kuwait's youth are up to the national responsibility and representing the country in symposiums and international arenas, thanking the information and youth affairs ministries for their support. Mutairi also dedicated the win to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti people. — KUNA



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KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri receives a delegation from the National Union of Kuwait Students (NUKS). — KUNA

Students abroad are Kuwait's future: Jabri

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti students abroad are their country's future and will hopefully contribute immensely to the state's 2035 vision for development, a senior government official said yesterday. Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri made that statement after receiving a delegation from the National Union of Kuwait Students (NUKS). He noted that NUKS-US branch

will hold their annual conference under the auspices of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, affirming that the ministry of youth will do its utmost to help make the event a success. The members of the NUKS delegation commended the minister for his kind words, stressing that the union will make sure to bring out the best from Kuwait's students. — KUNA

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Mohamad, a 50-year-old Pakistani man, repairs laptops at his shop in Kuwait City yesterday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

NCCAL announces 14th Summer Cultural Festival schedule

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) is organizing the 14th Summer Cultural Festival, which will be held from August 20 - September 5, 2019. The festival includes various cultural activities for adults and children, which are open to the public free of charge. The festival will be launched with an opening ceremony (traditional Kuwaiti night) at the Abdulhussein Abdulredha Theatre in Salmiya at 8:30 pm today. Children under 8 years of age are not allowed at the event. The following is a list of activities to be held during the 14th Summer Cultural Festival:

August 21: Old Kuwaiti doors workshop held at the Kuwait National Museum, Hall 2 (10:00 am).

August 21 - 27: 'Me & mom' program at the Amricani Cultural Center (10:30 am).

August 21: A children reading workshop at the Yarmouk Cultural Center (1:00 pm).

August 21 - 27: 'Reading a story' in English and Arabic at the Amricani Cultural Center (3:30 pm).

August 22: 'Me & mom' program at the Amricani Cultural Center (10:30 am)

August 22: A children reading workshop at the Yarmouk Cultural Center (1:00 pm).

August 22: 'History of theatre in Kuwait' exhibition

at the Abdulhusein Abdulridha Theatre in Salmiya (7:30 pm).

August 22: Theater play 'Raya wu Skeena' at the Abdulhussein Abdulredha Theatre in Salmiya (8:30 pm). Children under 8 years of age are not allowed. Entrance is free of charge.

August 22: NCCAL's publications exhibition at the Gate Mall (10:00 am).

August 22: Kuwaiti House Exhibition at the Promenade Mall in Hawalli (6:00 pm).

August 23: 'Me & mom' program at the Amricani Cultural Center (10:30 am)

August 23: A children reading workshop at the Yarmouk Cultural Center (1:00 pm).

August 23: Italian movie 'Happy as Lazzaro' at the Promenade Mall 'Soapbox hall' (8:00 pm).

August 23: Theater play 'Raya wu Skeena' at the Abdulhussein Abdulredha Theatre in Salmiya (8:30 pm). Children under 8 years of age are not allowed. Entrance is free of charge.

August 24: 'Me & mom' program at the Amricani Cultural Center (10:30 am)

August 24: A children reading workshop at the Yarmouk Cultural Center (1:00 pm).

August 24: Quatro Chillo musical concert at the Abdulhussein Abdulredha Theatre in Salmiya (8:30 pm). Children under 8 years of age are not allowed.

Entrance is free of charge.

August 25: 'Me & mom' program at the Amricani Cultural Center (10:30 am)

August 25: A children reading workshop at the Yarmouk Cultural Center (1:00 pm).

August 25: Three-day Exhibition and workshop on monuments in the eye of a child at the Promenade Mall (10:00 am).

August 26: 'Me & mom' program at the Amricani Cultural Center (10:30 am).

August 26: A children reading workshop at the Yarmouk Cultural Center (1:00 pm).

August 26: Summer Creative Art exhibition at the Funoon Hall at Dahiyat Abdullah Al-Salem (7:00 pm).

August 26: Naser Buawadh Folk Band performance at Kuwait Magic Mall (8:30 pm).

August 27: 'Me & mom' program at the Amricani Cultural Center (10:30 am).

August 27: A children reading workshop at the Yarmouk Cultural Center (1:00 pm).

August 28: Poetic evening at the theatre of Kuwait National Library (7:00 pm).

August 28: Theatre play 'Al-Tabia' at the Shamiya Theatre (8:30 pm). Children under 8 years of age are not allowed.

August 29: Theatre play 'Al-Tabia' at the Shamiya Theatre (8:30 pm). Children under 8 years of age are not allowed.

August 29 : NCCAL's publications exhibition at the Promenade Mall (10:00 am).

August 29 : Failaka Island Exhibition at the Avenues Mall (6:00 pm)

August 29 : Trio El Greco musical performance at the Abdulhussein Abdulredha Theatre in Salmiya (8:30 pm). Children under 8 years of age are not allowed. Entrance is free of charge.

August 30: 'Movie 'Everybody Knows' at the Promenade Mall 'Soapbox hall' (8:00 pm).

August 30: Naya Jordanian Musical Band performance at the Abdulhussein Abdulredha Theatre in Salmiya (8:30 pm). Children under 8 years of age are not allowed. Entrance is free of charge.

September 3: Tunisian musical band performance at the Abdulhussein Abdulredha Theatre in Salmiya (8:30 pm). Children under 8 years of age are not allowed. Entrance is free of charge.

September 3: Photography exhibition at the Funoon Hall at Dahiyat Abdullah Al-Salem.

September 4: 'Our Bright History' lecture at the Kuwait National Library (6:00 pm).

September 5: Conclusion ceremony at the Abdulhussein Abdulredha Theatre in Salmiya (8:30 pm). Children under 8 years of age are not allowed. Entrance is free of charge.

Zain recognizes H&S Store internship program graduates

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, recognized the graduates of the H&S Store's summer internship program held for students during the summer in partnership with Zain's Future University Network (FUN) program. The recognition took place during the closing ceremony held at the Zain Innovation Center (ZINC) in the company's main headquarters in Shuwaikh.

Zain's partnership with this program came as part of the company's corporate sustainability and social responsibility strategy, which centers around the development of the education and youth sectors, especially in regards to nurturing and developing business skills within the youth. The company was keen to offer world-class specialized programs for those who are interested in developing their talents within all areas. Zain, being a leader in the Kuwaiti private sector, believes in the importance of enriching the talents of the community in which it operates by adopting such initiatives.

Zain hosted the students and H&S Store officials at its Innovation Center (ZINC) in the company's main headquarters in Shuwaikh, where the summer internship program graduates were recognized for completing the program during the summer season in partnership with Zain's Future University Network (FUN) program. The H&S Store Summer Internship Program aimed at developing students' skills within various administrative and technical areas, including product marketing, customer service, smartphone maintenance, and more. The program also aimed at preparing the students for the job market after completing their studies by working in part-time jobs during the summer vacation.

Zain's Future University Network (FUN) program is a sustainable youth-tailored CSR program for students that bridges the gap between studying and a unique work experience at Zain. This is achieved by recruiting youth as the brand's main ambassadors. FUN is considered one of



KUWAIT: Zain and H&S Store officials with the students at ZINC during the closing ceremony.

the largest sustainable projects that Zain has been developing over the years since its first edition in 2008. It offers university students with a valuable opportunity to benefit from the actual work experience to gain and develop many skills and expertise that they need to enter the job market both professionally and personally.

Zain is always keen on supporting a great number of educational initiatives and programs that caters to developing the youth's skills and talents, including LOYAC's KON Social Entrepreneurship Program brought to Kuwait in collaboration with Babson

College in Boston, considered the most prestigious entrepreneurship college in the United States and the number one institution in the world for entrepreneurship education, as well as the LOYAC AC Milan Soccer School, and more.

Zain is committed to exerting more efforts into offering similar programs that enrich human resources development in all areas. The company will spare no efforts in making its capabilities and resources available as well as reinforce its collaboration with entities and organizations that provide such initiatives and actively develop

Kuwaiti talents. As a leading national company, Zain firmly believes in the advancement of young people's skills and capabilities and looks to empower and prepare them for the important roles they will play in the further progress of the country. H&S Store was established in 2011 with the aim to offer its customers a wide range of high-quality products with a hassle-free shopping experience to insure customer satisfaction in Kuwait and throughout the GCC region, as well as providing specialized maintenance and repair workshops for smart devices.

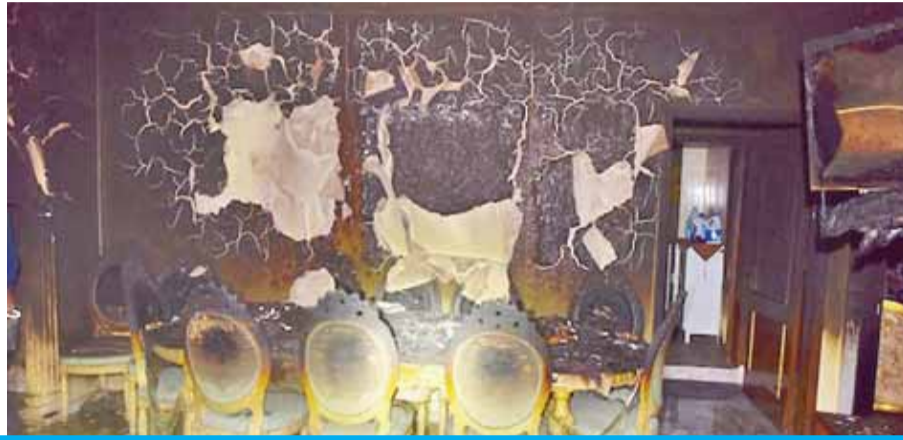
Local

Fire kills Surra man in second deadly blaze in two days

KFSD says construction firms must follow fire safety standards



KUWAIT: The house's living room heavily damaged by the fire.



By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti man died while five others were rescued from a fire that gutted a Surra house yesterday, in the second deadly fire incident reported in the past two days. Firemen rushed to the scene and battled the blaze which started in the ground-floor living room. They were able to rescue two women and three children, who were all in good condition, but firemen were too late to save the Kuwaiti man who succumbed to his injuries. The blaze was put out after the house was evacuated, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) said in a statement. The body of the victim, who was in his 50s, was handed over to Criminal Evidence Department men. Meanwhile, an investigation was opened to determine the cause of the fire. Yesterday's fire was the second fatal fire incident reported in Kuwait in as many days, after a woman died in a blaze in a Sulabiya house on Sunday.

In the meantime, KFSD urged companies involved in the construction of road bridges to abide by fire prevention safety measures. This comes after a fire erupted earlier this month at the construction site of a bridge on Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan Road, also known as the Fifth Ring Road. The fire department's recent comments came after a meeting between KFSD Director General Lt Gen Khaled Al-Mekrad and Public Authority for Roads and Transportation's head Suha Ashkanani discussed ensuring safety at construction sites, a press statement by KFSD read.



KFSD Director General Lt Gen Khaled Al-Mekrad meets with Public Authority for Roads and Transportation's head Suha Ashkanani.

Man commits suicide inside sponsor's ranch

KUWAIT: An Indian man committed suicide by hanging inside his sponsor's ranch, according to preliminary investigations. The coroner recovered the body. The incident was reported by the sponsor, who was surprised by seeing the guard hanging from the ceiling of a makeshift room, so he called the authorities. Further investigations are ongoing.

Workers 'terminated'

Two workers at the subsidized rations branch of a co-op were found weighing the luggage of Asian nationals planning to travel to make sure about their weight before arriving at the airport. The commerce and industry ministry asked the co-op to take action in response to a video clip a Kuwaiti man posted online. The two workers were questioned by co-op officials and they admitted to weighing the baggage in exchange of money. The contracts of the two workers were terminated.

Cop assaulted

A lieutenant colonel was beaten while trying to break up a fight between a Kuwaiti and five others in Sharq. The lieutenant colonel, who is also an investigator, saw five men fighting against one, so he tried to break the fight up, but received some blows. He called backup and the fight was finally broken. Investigations are ongoing.

Neighbors fight

An Egyptian woman found undergarments in front of her door, so she argued with her "bachelor" neighbor and accused him of threatening to kill her, while he accused her of insulting him. A police source said the woman was angry when she saw the undergarments and blamed her neighbor for trying to embarrass her in front of others, and an argument ensued. The woman then went to the police station and complained. The case is being investigated.

— Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai



KUWAIT: Education Minister Humoud Al-Azmi, Public Works Minister Jenan Bushehri and other officials tour Kuwait University's Shadadiya campus yesterday. — KUUNA

Kuwait's Egyptian community dropped to 643,977: Minister

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Manpower issued 62,191 work permits to bring in Egyptian workers during 2018, contrary to the exaggerated numbers mentioned by local media, the Central Statistical Bureau said yesterday. The department added that 23,883 permits were cancelled in 2018. The department said 577 Egyptian workers were appointed in the public sector during 2018, most of whom in the medical, educational and legal professions.

Meanwhile, the bureau said that the total number of Egyptian workers in the government sector reached 40,897 by the end of 2018, 26,545 of whom are male and 14,352 female, while the total number of Egyptian workers in the private sector is 451,960. The department said the Egyptian community in Kuwait dropped by 26,551 people to reach a total of 643,977.

University tour

In other news, Minister of Education Humoud Al-Azmi and Public Works Minister and State Minister for Housing Affairs Jenan Bushehri toured Kuwait University's Shadadiya campus yesterday to inspect the roads leading to the campus and check the latest preparations for the six college buildings that were included in the moving and operation plan for the 2019-2020 academic year. KU Rector Dr Hussein Al-Ansari, Secretary General Dr Muthanna Al-Rifae and Director of the Construction Program Dr Qutaiba Rezouqi were on hand. The tour included field visits to the colleges of Literature, Education, Administrative Science, Life Science, Engineering, Petroleum and

Science, which will be moved according to the approval of KU higher council.

In the meantime, Head of the Education Faculty Department Dr Ibrahim Al-Humoud said care of disabled university students is a responsibility for Kuwait University, as it is not acceptable to seek the help of a secretary to help a disabled student, such as writing for them if they are visually impaired or handicapped, as the secretary is not specialized for such interventions. It is also not realistic for the disabled student to be accompanied by their mother to meet their needs - rather such services are among the requirements of quality education, which commits the university to provide them free of charge.

Meanwhile, Humoud said the KU administration has decided to move several colleges to Shadadiya, but does not allow any faculty members to enter the campus except through complicated procedures and accompanied by a worker to prevent photographing roads and adjacent areas, as it has been noticed that the KU administration is bragging about buildings only because the surroundings are not ready. He said teaching faculty members have not received keys to their offices in Shadadiya two weeks before the university starts.

Electronic sale

Separately, Secretary General of Kuwait Pharmaceutical Society Ali Hadi asked the health ministry to set rules to organize the electronic sale of drugs, food supplements and cosmetics, in addition to mechanisms organizing means of delivering medicines to users under certain conditions. Hadi said current laws do not allow the sale of medicines except at licensed pharmacies, and sale through websites without prescription is a violation of the pharmaceutical profession and its regulatory laws. Hadi said offering and marketing medicine online without permission by the health ministry is a flagrant violation of health ministry decisions that regulate means of promotion and advertisement about pharmaceuticals, which calls for punishments according to health ministry rules.

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Global network nuke sensors went offline after mystery blast

Hot cargo: US seizes tons of marijuana hidden among peppers



SRINAGAR: A general view of the empty playing area of a closed school in Srinagar yesterday. Some Kashmir schools re-opened yesterday but many pupils stayed away, following weekend clashes after India stripped the region of its autonomy and imposed a lockdown two weeks ago. — AFP

Kashmir schools deserted amid fear

Srinagar a city of razor wire and barricades

SRINAGAR: Schools reopened in Indian Kashmir's main city yesterday but most classrooms were empty as parents kept their children home, fearing unrest over the government's decision two weeks ago to revoke the region's autonomy. Some 190 primary schools were set open in Srinagar in a sign of normalcy returning to Muslim majority Jammu and Kashmir where authorities started to ease restrictions on movement last week.

Parents said their children would stay home until cellular networks are restored and they can be in contact with them. "How can we risk the lives of our children?" said Gulzar Ahmad, a father of two children enrolled in a school in the city's Batamalo district where protests have occurred.

"Troops have arrested minor children in the last two weeks and several children were injured in clashes," he said. "Our children are safe inside their homes. If they go to school who can guarantee their safety?" Authorities have previously denied reports of mass arrests. Srinagar's top administrative officer, Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, said on Sunday that adequate security would be provided for schools. "I will take responsibility for any untoward incident," he added.

Protests began after the Aug 5 decision by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government to withdraw Kashmir's special status and integrate it fully into India, with equal rights for all Indians to buy property there and compete for government jobs. Critics said the decision alienated many Kashmiris and would add fuel to a 30-year armed revolt in the Himalayan territory that Pakistan also lays claim to. Paramilitary police in riot gear and carrying assault rifles stood behind steel barricades and coils of razor wire in Srinagar's old quarter to deter a repeat of weekend protests.

In dense neighborhoods such as Batamalo, youths set up makeshift barricades to block security forces from entering. Authorities reimposed curbs on movement in parts of Srinagar on Sunday after overnight clashes between residents and police in which dozens were injured, two senior officials and witnesses said. Reuters journalists visited two dozen schools in Srinagar yesterday. Some schools were lightly staffed and classrooms deserted.

Gates at other schools were locked. Only one student showed up at Presentation Convent Higher Secondary School, which has an enrolment of 1,000 pupils, and went home, said a school official. There were no students at the barricaded Burn Hall school in one of the city's high security zones. "How can students come to classes in such a volatile situation? The government is turning these little children into cannon fodder," a teacher said, among a handful of staff who turned up for work.

Cross border firing

New Delhi's decision on Kashmir has heightened tensions with its neighbor and rival nuclear power, Pakistan, and triggered cross-border exchanges of fire. In the latest incident, two civilians were killed in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir by Indian soldiers firing across the border, Pakistan's foreign ministry said, adding that it had summoned India's deputy commissioner in Islamabad to protest.

"The ceasefire violations by India are a threat to regional peace and security and may lead to a strategic miscalculation," the foreign ministry said. There was no immediate comment from India which has previously accused Pakistan of trying to whip up tensions to draw global attention. Indian Defense Minister Rajnath Singh said on Sunday there would be no talks with Pakistan until it acted against anti-India militant groups operating from its soil. Any negotiation would focus on the part of Kashmir held by Pakistan, he told a political rally in India.

The scenic mountain region is divided between India, which rules the populous Kashmir Valley and the Hindu-dominated region around Jammu city, Pakistan, which controls a wedge of territory in the west, and China, which holds a thinly populated high-altitude area in the north. More than 50,000 people have died in the revolt that erupted against Indian rule in Kashmir in 1989. India blames Pakistan for giving material support to the militants and helping them cross into its part of the mountainous region. Pakistan denies the allegation and says it only gives moral and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri people in their struggle for self determination. — Reuters



KABUL: A decorated car for the bride and groom is seen outside a wedding hall after a deadly bomb blast in Kabul. — AFP

Kabul's wedding industry fears for future after attack

KABUL: For years, as violence raged through Afghanistan, lavish weddings offered a rare opportunity for celebration, but now even that is under threat after last weekend's deadly attack on a party venue sent shock waves through one of Kabul's key industries. Over-the-top, glitzy weddings are a big deal for Afghans and for the economy in Kabul, where showy venues the size of aircraft hangars dot the city and employ thousands of workers.

Wedding hall owners and betrothed couples alike are wondering what's next after Saturday's attack, when an Islamic State bomber killed at least 63 guests and staff, and wounded scores more during celebrations at the Shahr-e-Dubai wedding hall in western Kabul. "Wedding halls were one of the few businesses that were still functioning relatively well despite all the problems," said Ghulam Sakhi Sultani, one of the Shahr-e-Dubai's three owners.

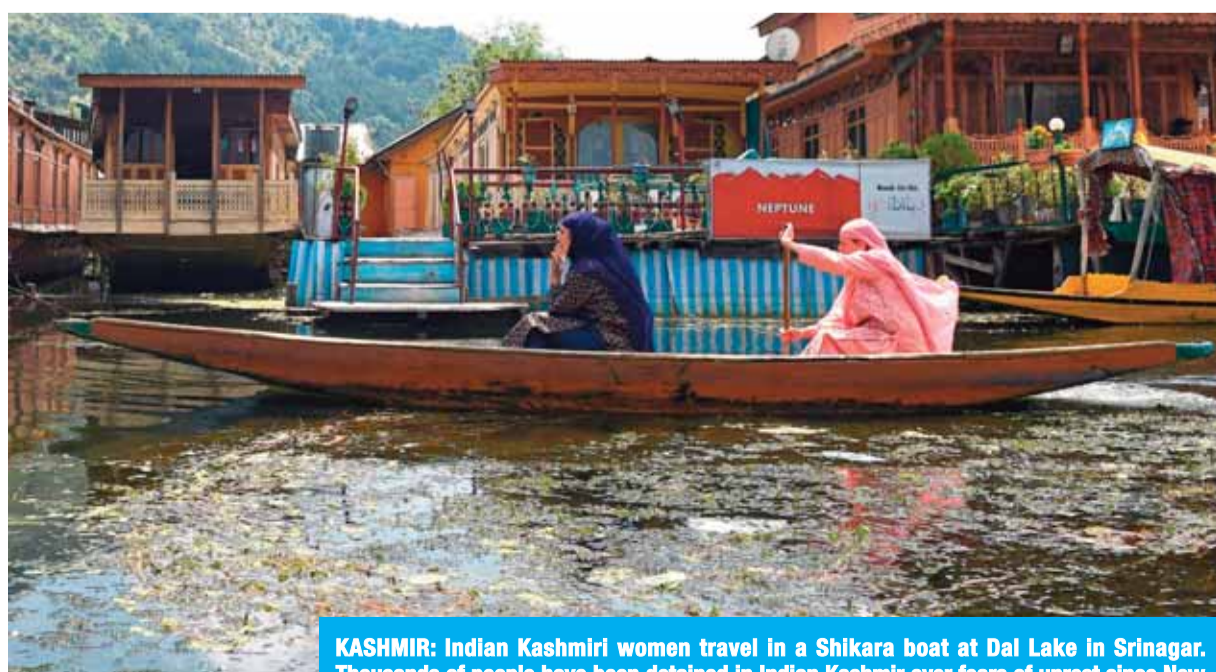
"It will be hard to regain the trust of the people to hold mass weddings inside a wedding hall following this attack." While Afghan weddings have been hit in the past, attacks have typically targeted smaller functions away from the capital. "We fear the terrorists may have chosen mass wedding gatherings as their new targets," said Sultani, who was out of the country when the bombing happened and spoke to AFP by phone late Sunday. Ten of his staff were killed or injured. "Today, most of them did not show up. When we contacted them, they said they fear for their lives."

No security

Saturday's attack exposes the vulnerability of the wedding halls. In a city where bombs go off almost daily and crime is rampant, Kabul weddings typically don't have any security measures at all, and the halls themselves often have few emergency exits. Couples frequently invite more than 1,000 guests, and gate crashers often wander in off the street. Unless VIPs are present, it is considered insulting to frisk guests, and strangers blend in easily with the crowds of friends and relatives. "We will take extra security measures, but it will be hard to stop a bomber among hundreds of guests coming to a wedding party," Sultani said. Sharif, the manager of another Kabul wedding hall who only gave one name, said his business was already suffering, with no new couples calling to book the venue since the attack.

"We are supposed to provide a joyful and safe environment for people to celebrate the start of their new life together, but following the horrific attack last night, everything will change," he said. "I don't think people will trust us or the government for their security any more." The attack underscores both the inadequacy of Afghanistan's security forces and the scale of the challenge they face in a city that sees frequent attacks by IS, the Taliban, criminals and other groups.

Dawood Hotak, a 26-year-old engaged student, blamed local police and said he now plans to get married at home instead of at a wedding hall. "People should be searched before entering the wedding halls," he said. "If there would have been body searches, I am sure the attack would have been prevented." Fellow student Ahmad Jawed, 24, was also angry at the authorities and lamented the lack of security. "How come a wedding hall does not get attacked when there is VIP party or ceremony?" he said. "The security institutions fail to provide security to ordinary Afghans." — AFP



KASHMIR: Indian Kashmiri women travel in a Shikara boat on Dal Lake in Srinagar. Thousands of people have been detained in Indian Kashmir over fears of unrest since New Delhi stripped the restive region of its autonomy. — AFP

International

Turkey ousts Kurdish mayors, launches security operation

Riot police fire water cannon on protesters in Diyarbakir

DIYARBAKIR: Turkey yesterday replaced Kurdish mayors with state officials in three cities and detained more than 400 people for suspected militant links, the Interior Ministry said, a move likely to fuel tensions in the mainly Kurdish southeast. The ministry also said it had launched an operation with some 2,300 commandos against militant fighters of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in southeastern provinces.

The mayors of three major southeastern cities - Diyarbakir, Mardin and Van - are accused of various crimes including membership of a terrorist organization and spreading terrorist group propaganda, the ministry said in a statement. Riot police fired water cannon on small groups of people protesting against the mayors' dismissal in central Diyarbakir, where police sealed off the municipality headquarters with metal barriers. Reuters TV video showed. President Tayyip Erdogan had warned ahead of local elections in March of such a move against elected officials if they were found to have had connections to the PKK.

"For the health of the investigations, they have been temporarily removed from their posts as a precaution," the ministry said, referring to Diyarbakir Mayor Selcuk Mizrakli, Mardin Mayor Ahmet Turk and Van Mayor Bedia Ozgokce Ertan. Police detained 418 people in 29 provinces in a related investigation targeting suspects with links to the PKK, the ministry added. The pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), to which the three mayors belong, said they had been dismissed "on an order based on lies and illegal justifications".

"This is a new and clear political coup. It is a clear and hostile stance against the political will of the

Kurdish people," the HDP executive board said in a written statement. It said the three mayors had been elected with between 53% to 63% of the vote in their cities in March and called for support from other political parties. "This is not just the problem of the HDP and the Kurdish people. It is the shared problem of all Turkey's peoples and all democratic forces," it added.

Opposition slams dismissals

Veli Agbaba, deputy leader of the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), wrote on Twitter that the dismissals were tantamount to fascism and a blow against democracy, while Istanbul's CHP mayor Ekrem Imamoglu also slammed the move. "Negating the will of the people is unacceptable," he wrote on Twitter.

Imamoglu himself was removed from office over irregularities shortly after coming to power in the March election, but won a re-run election in June. More unusually, Turkey's former president Abdullah Gul and ex-prime minister Ahmet Davutoglu, once allies of Erdogan from his AK Party who have emerged as potential political opponents, said on Twitter the dismissals were out of line with democracy.

The removal of the mayors echoed the dismissal of dozens of mayors in 2016 over similar accusations, part of a purge that began after a failed coup. Nearly 100 mayors and thousands of party members were jailed in a crackdown that drew expressions of concern from the United States and European Union. Erdogan warned before the March elections that HDP mayors could again be dismissed if they, like their predecessors, were deemed to have ties to militants.

Former president, PM slam the move



DIYARBAKIR: Demonstrators clash with Turkish police as they protest against the replacement of Kurdish mayors with state officials in three cities yesterday. —AFP

Erdogan frequently accuses the HDP of links to the PKK, which is designated a terrorist group by Turkey, the EU and the United States. The HDP denies such links. The PKK launched an insurgency against the Turkish state in 1984. More than 40,000 people have been killed in the conflict. The Interior Ministry said recent operations had led to PKK militant numbers falling to their lowest level in 30 years, with the number of fighters in Turkey falling to some 600 from around

1,800-2,000 in the past.

Announcing the new operation against PKK militants, launched on Sunday in the provinces of Van, Sirtak and Hakkari, the ministry published images showing security forces firing machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades. The security forces destroyed 43 caves and shelters used by the PKK, the ministry said, adding that operations would continue until all militants in the areas were "neutralized". —Reuters

Saudi to host summit to end Aden standoff

DUBAI: The refusal of Yemeni southern separatists to hand back control of Aden port has delayed a summit in Saudi Arabia that is due to discuss reshuffling Yemen's ousted government to include the separatists and end the stand-off, three Yemeni sources said. Saudi Arabia called for the meeting after the separatist forces on Aug 10 seized military camps and other state institutions in the southern port city, the temporary seat of the Saudi-backed government of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi.

The Aden crisis has fractured the Sunni Muslim military coalition led by Riyadh that is battling the Iran-aligned Houthi group, which controls the Yemeni capital Sanaa. Meanwhile the Houthis have escalated cross-border attacks targeting Saudi energy infrastructure. "Forming a new government has been proposed and the alliance supports it, but inclusion of the Southern Transitional Council (STC) is linked to them fully withdrawing first," said a Yemeni official, who declined to be named.

The official said Hadi, who has no personal power base and has long been out of favor with the United Arab Emirates, a coalition member, may be sidelined if a new deputy is named. The coalition declined to comment on non-military matters. There was no response from the Saudi or UAE foreign ministries or government media offices. So

far, the UAE-backed southern forces have refused to quit military camps, while vacating other state institutions, as they believe it would weaken their hand, the sources said. Hadi's government said it would not attend talks until the "coup" ends.

While separatists have a rival agenda to Hadi's government-demanding self-rule in the south-they are part of the Western-backed coalition that intervened in March 2015 against the Houthi movement that ousted Hadi from power in late 2014. The Aden takeover exposed differences between allies Saudi Arabia and the UAE, which supports thousands of southern fighters. Abu Dhabi, which says the alliance remains strong, has urged dialogue but has not asked separatists to cede control.

The UAE in June scaled down its presence in Yemen under Western pressure to end the war and as rising tensions with Iran threatened security closer to home. Abu Dhabi has said the focus should shift from military tactics to a political solution. "Uniting ranks and improving the (Yemen) government's performance is crucial in the next phase," UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash tweeted on Saturday. Saudi Arabia wants to prevent rival Shiite Iran from building influence near its border by neutralizing the Houthis.

Hadi vulnerable

The conflict, which has killed tens of thousands and pushed Yemen to the brink of famine, has been in military stalemate for years with the Houthis holding Sanaa and most big urban centers. It has rekindled old strains between north and south Yemen-separate countries until 1990. The Aden ten-



AL MA'ALLA: Yemenis drive down a street in Aden's Mualla region. —AFP

sions further complicated United Nations efforts to pave the way for political talks on a transitional governing body to end the war.

The STC has said its forces will hold Aden until the Islamist Islah party, a key component of Hadi's government, and northerners are removed from power positions in the south. "Hadi is incapable of running Yemen due to his age and health. He trusts no one, and this makes things difficult at a critical time," said the Yemeni official.

The official and another Yemeni source said one option being discussed was transferring presidential powers to a new vice president, leaving Hadi, who is 73 and resides in Riyadh, as a figurehead. "It would be good to have a responsible, consensus VP," said a sen-

ior official in the Gulf, while adding that Hadi had to remain to preserve the internationally recognized government. STC accuses Hadi's government of mismanagement, and Islah of being complicit in a Houthi missile attack on southern forces, which prompted the Aden takeover. Islah denies the charge.

The UAE regards Islah as an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, which Abu Dhabi has banned. Riyadh tolerates Islah because it has helped to prop up Hadi. The Houthis, who say they are fighting a corrupt system, point to Aden as proof that Hadi is unfit to rule. "Southern forces are close enough to the sites they vacated to retake them at any moment. They outnumber and out-arm other forces in Aden," another Yemeni official said. —Reuters

Thousands riot in Papua, parliament building torched

MANOKWARI: Riots broke out and a local parliament building was torched in Indonesia's restive Papua region yesterday, as thousands protested against the weekend detention of dozens of Papuan students. Demonstrators took to the streets of Manokwari, the capital of West Papua province, bringing the city of some 130,000 to a standstill as its civic building was nearly reduced to ashes. Some protesters set fire to shops and vehicles, knocked down street signs, and threw rocks at government buildings, according to an AFP reporter at the scene, who estimated several thousand demonstrators were present.

Indonesia's security minister Wiranto, who goes by one name, appealed for calm and said there would be an investigation of the incident that triggered the unrest in Manokwari as well as protests in several other Papuan cities yesterday. "This has clearly disrupted our unity as a nation," he said. The riots marked the latest flashpoint in a region hit by a

decades-old insurgency against Indonesian rule and allegations that its security forces committed widespread rights abuses against its ethnic Melanesian population.

Papua shares a border with independent Papua New Guinea (PNG), just north of Australia. A former Dutch colony, it declared itself independent in the early Sixties, but neighboring Indonesia took control of the resource-rich region following a UN-sponsored independence referendum that was widely viewed as a sham. In Manokwari, three police officers were injured by rock-throwing protesters, authorities said. It was not immediately clear if any demonstrators were injured. Local schools were shut for the day.

Anger boiled over at reports that authorities tear-gassed and detained some 43 Papuan university students in the Southeast Asian nation's second-biggest city Surabaya on Saturday - Indonesia's independence day. Local media and Papuan activists said police in riot gear stormed into a dormitory to force out students who allegedly destroyed an Indonesian flag. Police said the students were briefly questioned and set free. Television footage on Saturday also showed a different group of pro-



MANOKWARI: Protesters take to the street to face off with Indonesian police in Manokwari, Papua yesterday. —AFP

testers demonstrating against the students and shouting racial slurs about Papuans.

The unrest comes after two Indonesian security personnel were killed over the past month in clashes with separatist rebels. Last year, the National Liberation Army of West Papua, part of a

grouping of rebels fighting for Papuan independence, killed at least 19 construction workers at a remote jungle camp in Papua. The employees of a state-owned contractor had been building bridges and roads as part of efforts to boost infrastructure in the impoverished region. —AFP

Chad declares state of emergency in east; ethnic clashes kill 50

N'DJAMENA: Chad's President Idriss Deby declared a state of emergency in two eastern provinces on Sunday, authorizing summary shootings to "save the majority", after violent intercommunal clashes left dozens dead earlier this month. The state of emergency will run for three months in the Sila and Ouaddai regions bordering Sudan where 50 people have died since August 9 in fighting between Arab cattle herders and settled farmers, the president's office said. "From now, we will deploy military forces who are going to ensure the security of the population in the region," Deby said while on a trip to Sila.

"We must disarm all the civilians who have weapons in their hands," he said. "If there is still fighting between Arabs and Ouaddaians... you shoot them from each side to save the majority. You have authorization," Deby said. Deby's comments sparked condemnation from the Chad Convention for Human Rights which said in a statement it was "scandalized by the call to massacre civilians". The rights body said in a statement it was demanding "an immediate halt to these abuses and believes that the responsibility for the genocide that is being prepared will rest with President Deby".

Eastern Chad is in the grip of a cycle of violence between nomadic camel herders and sedentary farmers from the Ouaddaian community. Herders have for decades moved their livestock through the Ouaddai region in rotations between summer and winter pastures. Most of the herders' animals belong to the president's Zaghawa ethnic group, and the farmers say they often escape censure when unrest breaks out between the two sides. Similar conflicts between herders and farmers erupt in other African states, notably Nigeria.

Drought and population growth have aggravated the conflict, while an influx of weapons from conflict-stricken neighbors have made it even more deadly. Deby earlier this month blamed the surge in violence partly on an influx of guns to the former French colony from conflict zones in neighboring Libya, Central African Republic and Sudan, where a protest movement ousted the president in April. "The government has created special disarmament units. We take away the weapons, but the next day more arrive," he said. —AFP



ABECHE: Farmers shelter under a mango tree to avoid the heat and sun, on the road between Adre and Farchana, in the eastern Chad region of Ouaddai. Chad President Idriss Deby has declared a state of emergency in two eastern provinces after violent intercommunal clashes left dozens dead. —AFP

International

UK urges Germany, France to change position and negotiate new exit deal

Leaked documents set out no-deal Brexit challenges

TRURO: Prime Minister Boris Johnson called on France and Germany yesterday to change their position on Brexit and negotiate a new exit deal for Britain, reiterating his stance that he is ready to leave the European Union without a deal if they do not. With Britain set to leave the bloc on Oct 31, it has less than 74 days to resolve a three-year crisis that is pitting the country against the EU, and parliament against the executive. "We will be ready to come out on Oct 31 - deal or no deal," Johnson told reporters in Truro, southwest England.

"Our friends and partners on the other side of the Channel are showing a little bit of reluctance to change their position - that's fine - I am confident that they will," he said. Asked specifically about meetings scheduled this week with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron, he said: "I hope they will see fit to compromise." Johnson took office last month after his predecessor, Theresa May, failed three times to get parliament to approve the withdrawal deal she had negotiated with the EU.

He is insisting Britain will leave with or without a transition deal on Oct. 31 although a majority in parliament have previously tried to prevent a so-called no-deal Brexit. Johnson's calls for the EU to renegotiate the deal have so far been rejected by the bloc's negotiators. That puts Britain on course for an unmanaged exit, which an official assessment published by the Sunday Times said would jam ports, increase the risk of public protests and severely disrupt the world's fifth-largest economy.

In his first foreign trip as prime minister, Johnson will meet Merkel in Berlin on Wednesday and Macron in Paris on Thursday. The European Commission, which is leading negotiations on behalf of France, Germany and other EU members, said it was ready for a no-deal Brexit and that

Britain would suffer most under such a scenario. On Sunday Merkel said Germany would be prepared whatever the outcome.

Ministers in Johnson's Conservative government have played down the leaked no-deal assessment on Sunday, saying the document was old and did not reflect increased funding and planning undertaken by the prime minister since he took office. They accuse the opposition Labor Party and others who are opposed to a no-deal Brexit of undermining negotiations with the EU, saying European leaders will wait to see if parliament can block such an outcome before deciding whether to renegotiate the deal.

Parliament recall?

While Johnson looked ahead to a week of foreign engagements, which includes a G7 meeting in France attended by US President Donald Trump on Saturday and Sunday, he faced increasing pressure at home to recall parliament from its summer break to urgently debate the Brexit crisis. Lawmakers are already fretting that they do not have enough time to stop a no-deal Brexit, and they have yet to agree on a unified approach, which badly damages their chances of success.

Labor leader Jeremy Corbyn joined calls for parliament to be recalled, saying during a speech in Corby, central England that "We will do everything to stop a no-deal Brexit". He said Johnson must not be allowed to use parliamentary procedure to block discussion of the country's future, referring to concerns that Johnson could suspend the legislature until after Oct. 31 or delay a national election even if his government fell before that date.

"We do support the recall of parliament in order to prevent the prime minister having some kind of maneuver to take us out on the 31st of October without any further



LONDON: The buildings of The City of London are viewed from Greenwich Park in the early morning sunshine in London. — AFP

discussion in parliament," Corbyn said. His comments added weight to a demand made on Sunday, signed by more than 100 lawmakers, for a parliamentary recall to discuss what they called a "national emergency". Parliament is currently not due to sit until Sept 3, when it will reconvene for a short session before breaking up again to allow for annual party conferences.

A government source said Michael Gove, the minister in

charge of co-ordinating no deal preparations, would give a statement to parliament as soon as it returns, updating them on the latest progress. He would commit to give regular updates, the source said. Labor wants to bring down Johnson's government and form its own emergency coalition under Corbyn's leadership to delay Brexit. Other opponents of a no-deal Brexit have balked at supporting a plan that would put Corbyn in charge. — Reuters

A WW2 battle reverberates in Poland election

GDANSK: A monument to a battle fought in the opening days of World War Two has become a new frontline in the fight between Poland's ruling nationalists and the liberal opposition in the countdown to a parliamentary election on Oct 13. The granite column that towers over the Baltic port of Gdansk commemorates the seven-day siege of Westerplatte in September 1939, when dozens of Polish soldiers defied the overwhelming firepower of a Nazi German naval fleet.

For many Poles the monument - comprising the column and a small park - is a symbol of national courage, but the ruling Law and Justice party (PiS) accuses the Gdansk municipality, which is linked to the opposition, of allowing the site to fall into disrepair. Near the column stand ruined barracks with rusted wires protruding. Last month PiS rushed legislation through parliament to transfer oversight of the area to the central government in Warsaw.

Critics of PiS say the row over Westerplatte is part of a broader government policy of historical revisionism they say is aimed at fanning nationalist sentiment among voters and discrediting the opposition. PiS officials say the bravery of the Westerplatte soldiers has not been celebrated sufficiently. Since it won power in 2015, PiS has repeatedly accused liberal governments that ruled Poland since the collapse of communism in 1989 of failing to conduct "the politics of history" effectively, allowing young Poles to forget patriotism.

PiS, a socially conservative, eurosceptic party, also says Poland can only be effective in the international arena if its Western allies come to understand and appreciate the extent of its suffering and bravery under Nazi and then Soviet occupation. "After 1989, what we call the politics of memory or history was badly neglected. There was no tool, capacity or desire to carry this symbol," Karol Nawrocki, a historian nominated by PiS to run a World War Two museum in Gdansk, told Reuters. His museum will oversee an overhaul of the Westerplatte site. Underscoring divisions over remembrance, the PiS government has moved the ceremonies commemorating the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of World War Two from Gdansk, where such events have been held in the past, to Warsaw and the town of Wielun, the site of another battle in September 1939. While Gdansk authorities will still hold their own ceremony, events in Warsaw will be attended by U.S. President Donald Trump, who shares the PiS government's views on a range of issues, including migration, climate change and abortion.

Battles over the past

The government's message seems to be working. Opinion polls show PiS likely to win a second four-year term in October with the support of more than 40 percent of Poles. An alliance of liberal parties called the Civic Coalition is polling second with less than 30 percent. Aleksandra Dulkiewicz, the mayor of Gdansk who has long been tied with the opposition, denies the city has neglected the Westerplatte site but says PiS is trying to foment a retrogressive nationalism.

"This is a message that is being used to influence voters," Dulkiewicz said. "Eighty years after the start of World War Two, do we want to glorify war or do we want to think about how to have peaceful relations in the future?" "We should be building relationships between people, between societies, to prevent war," she said. Gdansk, cradle of the Solidarity trade union that toppled communist rule and now one of Poland's most liberal cities, has been the focus of tensions over remembrance in the past.

Last year, the PiS government decided to slash the state subsidy to a museum commemorating Solidarity, saying it had become too supportive of opposition politicians. Criticism of Poland's transition from communism is central to the PiS goal of redefining how national history is perceived. While hailing the end of Soviet domination, PiS says liberal politicians wasted the chance to create a fairer society true to its Christian roots after 1989. — Reuters

Merkel and Orban stress unity on Iron Curtain anniversary

SOPRON: German Chancellor Angela Merkel struck a conciliatory tone yesterday alongside her Hungarian counterpart Viktor Orban as they commemorated the 30th anniversary of a pivotal moment in the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989. Merkel admitted there were still "differences" between the pair over migration but she also emphasized that they agreed on many aspects of the issue, including doing more to tackle the causes of refugee movements.

The two leaders were speaking after marking the anniversary of the "Pan-European Picnic" held at the Austro-Hungarian border in 1989, which saw at least 600 East Germans cross the border and escape to freedom in the West. The first mass exodus of East Germans since the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, it was seen as a key factor in the fall of the wall itself three months later. The commemoration was a rare encounter between two of the great survivors of European politics, with Merkel in office since 2005 and Orban since 2010.

Their last major meeting was in July 2018 when Orban made his first visit to Berlin for three years. It was an awkward affair, during which their divisions were on full display and Merkel accused Orban of failing to respect "humanity" with his harsh anti-immigration policies. Orban has been a sharp critic of Merkel's 2015 decision to open German borders to those fleeing Middle Eastern conflict zones.



SAN DIEGO: Trucks wait in line to exit the inspection facility and enter the United States at the Otay Mesa port of entry at the US-Mexico border. US Customs officers have seized nearly four tons of marijuana worth \$2.3 million hidden in a consignment of jalapeno peppers. — AFP

Hot cargo: US Customs seize tons of marijuana hidden among peppers

LOS ANGELES: US Customs officers have seized nearly four tons of marijuana worth \$2.3 million hidden in a consignment of jalapeno peppers. A sniffer dog alerted officers to a trailer with a shipment of peppers in San Diego on the border with Mexico on Thursday, Customs and Border Protection said.

The CBP statement said "a 37-year-old male Mexican citizen entered the port of entry driving a tractor pulling a trailer with cargo manifested as jalapeno peppers." Officers at Otay Mesa cargo facility found 314 packages of marijuana weighing 7,560 pounds (3.4 tons) mixed among the jalapeno peppers. "I am proud of the officers for seizing this significant marijuana load," said Otay Mesa Port director Rosa Hernandez.

It was the second large haul of marijuana at the facility in days. Officers seized 10,642 pounds of the drug in a shipment of plastic auto parts at Otay Mesa on Tuesday. CBP has seized 113 tons (103 tons) of marijuana so far this year, along with 41 tons of cocaine and 27 tons of methamphetamine. In July authorities seized nearly 20 tons of cocaine with an estimated street value of more than \$1 billion from a ship at the port of Philadelphia in one of the largest drug busts in US history. — AFP



SOPRON: German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban leave a press conference during their meeting in the Hungarian-Austrian border town of Sopron to mark the 30th anniversary of the 'Pan European Picnic'. — AFP

'Germany's southern garrison'

Merkel said at yesterday's press conference that she had faith in incoming European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen to give fresh impetus to finding a common European approach to the migration question. Meanwhile, Orban was asked whether it was incongruous to celebrate the dismantling of borders given that Hungary has erected fences along its southern frontier.

He rejected any contradiction, saying that the walls in 1989 had been taken down so people could live in peace and security and "the new ones are built precisely in order to preserve European peace and security". Due to the Schengen agreement, "in one sense we are Germany's southern garrison," he added. Pressed on the frequent

The Iron Curtain: 5 things to know

PARIS: The Iron Curtain was at first an ideological and then a physical separation of communist Eastern Europe from the West from the 1940s after World War II.

The name

The term "iron curtain" was popularized after it was used by former British prime minister Winston Churchill in a landmark speech at Westminster College in Fulton, the United States, in March 1946. "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent," declared Churchill, then leader of the opposition Conservatives. His comments were seen as an opening salvo in the Cold War, which opposed the Soviet Union and the West for more than four decades. The term had been coined earlier. Russian writer Vasily Rozanov, in his 1918 book "The Apocalypse of Our Time", wrote "an iron curtain is being lowered, creaking and squeaking, at the end of Russian history."

A physical frontier

The ideological barrier between Soviet-controlled Eastern Europe and the West gradually became a physical one spanning thousands of kilometers. To stop their citizens from fleeing to the West, the Soviet-dominated Eastern countries began erecting various forms of barriers using barbed wire, ditches and concrete walls. The separations were controlled through alarms, watchtowers, mines and soldiers. Socialist Hungary put up the first section in 1949, building a 260-kilometre (160-mile) barbed wire fence along its border with Austria.

Berlin Wall

The Berlin Wall was the most famous section of the Iron Curtain and became its symbol. In 1952 Soviet-satellite East Germany constructed a 10-metre-wide barbed wire buffer along the entire length of its border with West Germany. However, people were still able to cross over in the divided city of Berlin, with about three million fleeing the East via this route between 1952 and 1961. To stop this important loss of manpower, East Germany in 1961 began constructing a wall within the city. Made of reinforced concrete and wire mesh, the Berlin Wall stretched for 155 kilometers. It had a heavily controlled no-man's land on the eastern side.

Escape attempts

Eastern European citizens were only allowed to visit the

criticisms leveled at Hungary over the erosion of the rule of law, Orban said they were "politically biased and not supported by facts". "We have our own... constitutional foundations and Christian freedom which we will always protect," he said.

'Liberation from the Soviet yoke'

Earlier the two leaders addressed an ecumenical church service in Sopron, close to where the picnic was held. Orban hailed the fact that the events of 30 years ago had "cleared the way towards German reunification". Hungarians had always known that "our liberation from the Soviet yoke would be definitive and only once Germany was united," he added. Merkel recalled her own memories of seeing plans for the picnic advertised in 1989. She remembered the "uncertainty and worry" when it became apparent the picnic had turned into an escape to the West.

"Everyone knew how the uprising in East Germany in 1953 turned out, as well as the one in Hungary in 1956 and the Prague Spring," she added. She praised the "courage" and "humanity" of the Hungarian border guards who did not fire on the crowds. The events at the picnic reflected the values of "solidarity, freedom and a humane Europe", she said. The two leaders were both personally marked by the events of 1989 but have since taken starkly diverging political directions.

Merkel's upbringing in communist East Germany imbued her with a belief in the importance of liberal values in politics and free market economics. Orban by contrast, while starting as a young liberal centrist in 1989, sees the events of that year as the first step for the nations of eastern Europe to re-establish their sovereignty. Despite the political tensions, Budapest and Berlin enjoy close economic relations. Germany is Hungary's largest trading partner and a major source of foreign investment, particularly in the form of the mighty German car industry. — AFP

West under strict conditions and those who tried to cross over without permission did so at great risk. About 600-700 people died trying to escape East Germany, at least 136 at the Berlin Wall, according to historians. Around 5,000 people made it out, however, often using innovative means. One man crossed via a wire cable shot by bow and arrow from the roof of a building to a relative on the other side. Others escaped by swimming across Berlin's Spree River, via tunnels, or by hot air balloon.

Iron curtain crumbling

The first crack in the Iron Curtain appeared in May 1989 when Hungary decided to start opening its border with Austria. On August 19 the frontier was to be symbolically opened for a few hours for a Pan-European Picnic. More than 600 East Germans holidaying in Hungary at the time took advantage and fled to the West. It was the first massive exodus since the 1961 construction of the Berlin Wall. Soon afterwards Eastern Europe's communist regimes started to tumble.

East Germans began to demonstrate, and on November 9 the regime unexpectedly granted them the right to travel to the West freely. Thousands flocked to the wall, and disoriented border guards opened the checkpoints. Through the night euphoric Berliners celebrated, perched on the wall. Then they used pickaxes to knock out chunks. Within two years the Soviet Union had imploded, the Iron Curtain falling with it. — AFP



BERLIN: This file photo shows West Berliners who are crowded in front of the Berlin Wall early 11 November 1989 as they watch East German border guards demolishing a section of the wall. — AFP

International

Global network nuclear sensors went offline after mystery blast

Nuclear analysts see possible tampering by Russia

VIENNA: The operator of a global network of radioactivity sensors said yesterday its two Russian sites closest to a mysterious explosion on Aug 8 went offline two days after the blast, raising concern about possible tampering by Russia. The Russian Defense Ministry, which operates the two stations, did not immediately reply to a request for comment.

Russia's state nuclear agency Rosatom has acknowledged that nuclear workers were killed in the explosion, which occurred during a rocket engine test near the White Sea in far northern Russia. The explosion also caused a spike in radiation in a nearby city and prompted a local run on iodine, which is used to reduce the effects of radiation exposure. Russian authorities have given no official explanation for why the blast triggered the rise in radiation. US-based nuclear experts have said they suspect Russia was testing a nuclear-powered cruise missile vaulted by President Vladimir Putin last year.

"We're ... addressing w/ station operators technical problems experienced at two neighboring stations," Lassina Zerbo, head of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), said on Twitter overnight. The CTBTO's International Monitoring System includes atmospheric sensors that pick up so-called radionuclide particles wafting through the air. Zerbo said data from stations on or near the path of a potential plume of gas from the explosion were still being analyzed.

'Communication, network issues'

The two Russian monitoring stations nearest the explo-

sion, Dubna and Kirov, stopped transmitting on Aug. 10, and Russian officials told the CTBTO they were having "communication and network issues", a CTBTO spokeswoman said yesterday. "We're awaiting further reports on when the stations and/or the communication system will be restored to full functionality." While the CTBTO's IMS



No comment from Russian Defense

network is global and its stations report data back to CTBTO headquarters in Vienna, those stations are operated by the countries in which they are located.

It is not clear what caused the outage or whether the stations might have been tampered with by Russia, analysts said. "About 48 hours after the incident in Russia on Aug. 8 these stations stopped transmitting data. I find that to be a curious coincidence," Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, a Washington-based think tank. He and other analysts said any Russian tampering with IMS stations would be a serious matter but



ARKHANGELSK: A picture shows buildings at a military base in the small town of Nyonoska in Arkhangelsk region. Russia's nuclear agency chief confirmed that five scientists killed last week were developing new weapons and vowed to continue testing despite the explosion. — AFP

it was also likely to be futile as other IMS or national stations could also pick up telltale particles.

"There is no point in what Russia seems to have tried to do. The network of international sensors is too dense for one country withholding data to hide an event," said Jeffrey Lewis, director of the East Asia Non-Proliferation

Program at the Middlebury Institute in California. The CTBTO's Zerbo also posted a simulation of the explosion's possible plume, showing it reaching Dubna and Kirov on Aug. 10 and Aug 11, two and three days after the explosion. Rosatom has said the accident, which killed five of its staff, involved "isotope power sources". — Reuters

India land laws that give special rights to people and places

BANGKOK: India has revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir state in a bid to fully integrate its only Muslim-majority region with the rest of the country. Article 370 of the constitution allowed the state's permanent residents rights to property, state government jobs and college places. As real estate developers brace for what they say will be a rush by businesses and wealthy individuals to snap up scenic locales in the state, here is a look at seven other land laws in India that give special rights to people and places.

The fifth schedule of the constitution covers areas in 10 states that have large indigenous populations. It gives them power to govern their land and resources, a right which authorities have sought to dilute, saying land is needed to develop industry to generate jobs and incomes in impoverished areas. The sixth schedule of the constitution covers four northeastern states that have large indigenous populations, and grants them rights over their land and resources.

Earlier this year, the Supreme Court ruled that indigenous people in Meghalaya state - which is covered by the law - have full rights over the land and all its resources, and that only they can grant permission for mining. A clause of Article 371 of the constitution applies to the northeastern state of Nagaland, and protects the customary laws and practices of the indigenous Naga people, as well as their right to ownership and transfer of land and resources. A separate clause extends similar protections to the Mizo people of Mizoram state.

The 1996 Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA) gives power over land and resources to village councils in the 10 Indian states covered by the fifth sched-



ALLAHABAD: Flood affected residents of a low income area move their belongings as the water level of the Ganges and Yamuna rivers raised during monsoon rains, in Allahabad yesterday. — AFP

ule, and recognizes customary laws and practices. Consent of village councils is mandatory for land acquisitions by the state, mining licences and other development projects. The northern state of Himachal Pradesh restricts the sale and transfer of farming land to non-farmers without the permission of state authorities, in a bid to conserve the scarce resource in the hilly terrain.

A colonial-era law in the central state of Jharkhand protects indigenous land from being sold or transferred to

non-tribal people. Recent attempts by the state to amend the law led to violent protests. The "Disturbed Areas Act" (1991) of Gujarat state covers more than half a dozen cities, and restricts the sale or transfer of property without permission from local authorities. While aimed at preventing distress sales in places affected by civil unrest, critics say it has led to ghettoisation of minority communities. The law was amended last month to give authorities greater power, including to prevent clustering of communities. — Reuters

India turns tables on traffickers with child-friendly courts

BEED: Radha was just 13 when she had to testify in open court against the people who trafficked her into prostitution in India, as a defense lawyer bombarded her with questions - why didn't she try to kill herself? Or run away? Frightened, Radha attempted to reply, but the judge quickly shut the lawyer down. "I was getting scared with the questions. I was trying to reply when the judge intervened," said Radha, whose full name the Thomson Reuters Foundation has withheld.

"The judge told the lawyer his questions were inappropriate, that I was a small girl. She told me to speak without fear. I felt better after that. I was no longer scared." Trafficking victims in India have long faced similar ordeals - if their case gets to court at all. But Radha's case, which ended in conviction and a 10-year sentence for her traffickers, was unusual. It was tried in one of India's first child-friendly courts in Beed, in the western state of Maharashtra, set up as part of a push to reduce the trauma victims face during trials.

The court is cosy, with sofas arranged in a square around a coffee table and a television on the wall, with an adjoining room with brightly painted walls, toys, chocolates and a bed where victims can rest. A series of orders by India's Supreme Court, a 2015 government directive to make it easier for victims to bring cases and a 2012 child protection law have all helped make the legal system more victim-friendly. Ravi Kant of Delhi-based anti-trafficking charity Shakti Vahini said there had been a "visible change" in the way courts handled cases, though progress was patchy.

"Earlier, victims were asked intimate details of what happened. The questioning lasted long hours when the defense lawyers would raise their voice," he said. "The victims would then give contradictory answers to questions asked to confuse them such as the trafficker's shirt colour. We saw more acquittals than convictions." In recent years, courts have handed rare life sentences to traffickers, denied them bail, recorded victim testimonies on video conference and in some cases ordered compensation for victims even before the trial was over.

Courts in Hyderabad and Delhi have made infrastructure changes to ensure victims do not face the accused in court, while defense lawyers are not allowed to make victims uncomfortable during questioning. In Mumbai - Maharashtra's capital - courts trying cases of sex crimes against children now have a separate cubicle where the victim's testimony is recorded. — Reuters



BANGKOK: Motorists wait for a traffic light to change at an intersection in Bangkok. — AFP

Thailand proposes centers against 'fake news' in Southeast

BANGKOK: Thailand is proposing that tech companies set up centers in each of the 10 Southeast Asian countries to curb the flow of "fake news" and fake accounts, the country's telecoms regulator said yesterday. Such centers would also work as a shortcut for governments to flag misinformation more easily to providers of over-the-top (OTT) service - any digital service done through the internet, including social media - so that they could comply by taking it down faster, said the Thai regulator.

"Thailand has proposed that OTT companies set up a centre to verify news," said Takorn Tantassith, secretary-general of Thailand's National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission. "We asked if it was possible that the companies authorize each country to oversee such centers and in so doing co-operate directly with them," Takorn said after a meeting with tech companies earlier yesterday, adding that the companies would have to finance such operations. The proposal came as telecoms regulators from the 10-member Association of Southeast

Asian Nations (ASEAN) were meeting this week in Bangkok with an aim to come up with regional guidelines to regulate OTT platforms, including taxation policies. The meeting with Takorn yesterday was attended by tech giants including Facebook, messaging app operator Line Corp, Amazon and Netflix, he said. The proposal would be discussed further during the ASEAN Telecommunications Regulators' Council (ATRC) this week, he added.

Takorn said the "coordination and verification centers" would also support a plan by Thailand's new digital minister to prioritize anti-fake news efforts and regulate various kinds of content on websites and social media. Digital Minister Puttipong Punnakanta said in a Facebook post last month that he would set up a "fake news centers" to take down online content from child pornography to insults against the country's monarchy, in addition to tackling "fake news" and "fake accounts". In another Facebook post, Puttipong said he "volunteered to purge content harmful to Thais. Digital media should be clean".

Other Southeast Asian governments have also recently made efforts to exert more control over online content and taken a tough stance against misinformation. Singapore passed an anti-fake news bill in May, forcing online media platforms to correct or remove content the government considers to be false. Vietnam said its cybersecurity law, which was passed last year and banned posting anti-government information online, would guard against fake news. — Reuters

News in brief

19 killed in fuel truck blast

KAMPALA: Nineteen people died when a fuel truck barreled into other vehicles in a busy town in western Uganda and exploded, police said yesterday. The blast occurred Sunday evening in the Kyambura trading centre, a mountainous area near the Queen Elizabeth National Park. "Ten people died instantly when the fuel truck lost control and hit three other vehicles, leading to multiple explosions that also burned 25 small shops," said regional police spokesman Martial Tumusiime. "Of the people that were rushed to the hospital, nine of them have also died as a result of wounds," he added. In 2002, 70 people were killed when an oil truck rammed into a bus in Rutoto, less than 50 kilometers from Kyambura. And in 2013, 33 people died in an explosion after a fuel truck overturned - many having rushed to the scene to siphon fuel. — AFP

Jihadists kill 4 Nigeria troops

KANO: Four Nigerian troops were killed Sunday in an ambush by fighters suspected to be from an IS-affiliated jihadist faction in the country's restive northeast, two military sources said. Attackers believed to be from the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) group opened fire on a military patrol in Mogula village close to the border with Cameroon, killing four soldiers and seizing two machine guns, one of the military officers said. "Our troops came under attack by ISWAP terrorists in Mogula in an ambush in which we lost four soldiers," the first source said. "The attack happened around 11:00 hours when the team was on routine patrol in the area," the officer said. The second officer gave the same toll and said the jihadists seized two military pickups but were forced to abandon them as they slowed their escape due to the poor state of the road. — AFP

Canary fire out of control

MONTANA ALTA: A wildfire raged out of control on the Spanish island of Gran Canaria yesterday, forcing more evacuations as flames in some parts rose so high even water-dropping planes were unable to operate, authorities said. The fire, which is devouring the mountainous centre of the holiday island popular for its breathtaking views, has forced the evacuation of several villages, which according to the census have a combined population of 8,000, a spokeswoman for emergency services said. The exact number of evacuees was unclear. No fatalities have been reported. So fierce is the fire in what is a UNESCO biosphere reserve that in some areas, it "is beyond our extinction capacities," Federico Grillo, head of emergency services in Gran Canaria, said late Sunday. On the northwestern flank of the blaze, flames have risen as high as 50 meters, preventing ground crew from getting near or water-dropping aircraft from flying above. — AFP

Northern Ireland police targeted

BELFAST: Police in Northern Ireland said a device that exploded near the border with Ireland yesterday was designed to lure in and kill officers examining a nearby hoax who were lucky to escape with their lives. Police on both sides of the open border fear if checkpoints return after Brexit they could become a target for militant groups opposed to peace in the region. Prime Minister Boris Johnson says Britain will leave the European Union with or without a transition deal on Oct 31. The border between Northern Ireland and Ireland will become Britain's only land frontier with the EU. How to avoid border checks that existed before a 1998 peace accord ended three decades of violence in Northern Ireland has become the most contentious part of Brexit negotiations. The explosion yesterday occurred near a busy road in an area of County Fermanagh just a few kilometers from the Irish border. — Reuters

Analysis

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For Trump, appeals to white fears may be tougher sell in 2020

US President Donald Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric and focus on the grievances of white voters helped him win the 2016 election. But a Reuters analysis of public opinion over the last four years suggests that Trump's brand of white identity politics may be less effective in the 2020 election campaign. The analysis comes amid widespread criticism of Trump's racially charged comments about four minority women lawmakers and the fallout from a mass shooting of Hispanics in El Paso, Texas, that many Democratic presidential candidates swiftly blamed on the president's rhetoric.

Reuters/Ipsos polling of 4,436 US adults in July showed that people who rejected racial stereotypes were more interested in voting in the 2020 general election than those who expressed stronger levels of anti-black or anti-Hispanic biases. In 2016, it was the reverse. The Reuters analysis shows that Trump's narrow win came at a time when Americans with strong anti-black opinions were the more politically engaged group. While Reuters did not measure anti-Hispanic biases in 2016, political scientists say that people who express them closely overlap with those who are biased against other racial minorities.

This year's poll found that among Americans who feel that blacks and whites are equal, or that blacks are superior to whites, 82 percent expressed a strong interest in voting in 2020. That was 7 percentage points higher than people who feel strongly that whites are superior to blacks. "There is some indication that racial liberals are more energized than the racially intolerant," said University of Michigan political scientist Vincent Hutchings, who reviewed Reuters' findings. "That would seem to be good news for the Democrats and bad news for the Republicans."

The July poll did have a silver lining for Trump. Most white Republicans approve of his performance in office. And over the past four years they have become increasingly supportive of his signature issue: expanding the wall along the US-Mexico border. Some 82 percent now support it compared to 75 percent last year. Trump is clearly still as popular as ever with conservatives who dominate the predominantly white, working-class communities that helped him win in 2016, said Duke University political scientist Ashley Jardina, who also reviewed the poll findings.

In his 2016 campaign, Trump focused on the grievances of white voters who feared the global economy was leaving them behind and who wanted more restrictions on immigration. He employed put-downs of Latino immigrants and inner-city, typically black, residents. He said then that Mexicans were "murderers" and "rapists", and as recently as last year, Trump labeled illegal immigration to the United States an "invasion". Trump has asserted repeatedly that his words are not meant to be racially divisive. "I think my rhetoric ... brings people together," he said earlier this month.

Responding to the Reuters polling analysis, a spokesman for Trump's reelection campaign, Daniel Bucheli, said the president "enjoys broad support from diverse groups of Americans, and this coalition of supporters, to include minorities and first time voters, continues to grow daily". "If there is something we've come to learn about President Trump is that he calls it like it is," Bucheli said, when asked about Trump's recent comments about the lawmakers and others.

Declining anxiety

The Reuters analysis also found that Americans were less likely to express feelings of racial anxiety this year, and they were more likely to empathize with African Americans. This was also true for white Americans and whites without a college degree, who largely backed Trump in 2016. White Americans are also 19 percentage points more supportive of a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants and 4 points less supportive of increased deportations, when their responses from the July poll were compared with a Reuters/Ipsos poll in January 2015.

The July 17-22 poll also found that 29 percent of whites agreed that "America must protect and preserve its White European heritage," down 7 points from a Reuters/Ipsos poll conducted in August 2017 and 9 points down from another Reuters/Ipsos poll in Aug 2018. The poll also found that 17 percent of whites and 26 percent of white Republicans said they strongly agree that "white people are currently under attack in this country, a drop of about 6 points and 8 points respectively from 2017. Paula Ioanide, an expert in American race relations at Ithaca College, said the poll findings were consistent with her research that racial anxieties among whites peaked during the presidency of Barack Obama. Some white Americans "are not feeling as under attack as they did in 2016," Ioanide said. With Trump in the White House, "they've seen a kind of endorsement of the kinds of things that they wanted: A restoration of a white identity that they previously had felt was under attack." — Reuters

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This handout photo taken on Oct 13, 2018 shows local consumers, owners and managers of the first collective farm in the Netherlands arriving to pick up their share of the harvest in Boxtel. — AFP

Dutch 'people's farm' counters climate change

Chickens roam the orchards, cows chew the cud and pigs roll in the mud on a warm day on a Dutch farm - but the pastoral scene is not as traditional as it seems. The farm is owned and run by a cooperative of hundreds of local consumers and aims to change habits in a low-lying country engaged in an existential fight against climate change. Some 200 families decide what the farm will produce - and they will eventually eat - and employ a farmer to tend to the animals for meat and eggs and grow the dozen kinds of fruits and vegetables.

"The main aim of the members is to eat natural products, produced near to where they live, in a more sustainable way," said Douwe Korting, co-leader of the Boxtel cooperative, in the southern Netherlands. "People are really starting to see that a change towards a different way of eating is essential," he added. It costs €2,000 (\$2,200) to join the collective farm, which is 10 minutes by bicycle from the town, and then a weekly fee of around €10 per person. In return, members receive the food they want and stress the importance of knowing what they eat is local and seasonal.

More sustainable

With 15 cows, 20 pigs and 500 chickens, the farm covers about 20 hectares and grows or produces what is col-

lectively decided on by the members, who will ultimately take home their share. A simple, green mobile home, set between the chicken hutch and the cows, serves as both kitchen and farm office. Every Saturday, families come to the farm, often by bike, to fill their bags with produce or the harvest from the orchard, be it vine fruits, root vegetables, beef and chicken. The fresh food now accounts for around 60 percent of 500 people's diet, say its leaders proudly.

Known as Herenboerderij, or People's Farming, the guiding principle is that "everything revolves around the needs and riches of nature, even while using new technologies," said its founder Geert van der Veer. The collective farm idea is groundbreaking in the Netherlands, where intensive farming methods have made it the world's second biggest agricultural exporter after the United States, according to the CBS Dutch Central Statistics Bureau.

But, with about a quarter of the Netherlands lying below the level of the North Sea, the small country is particularly vulnerable to global warming, in which scientists say agriculture plays a key role. A UN report warned recently that the way the world uses land to produce food has to change urgently to curb global warming, or else food security and health will be at risk. "Something has to fundamentally change in our system of production and our

way of feeding ourselves if we want to keep our feet dry," said Van der Veer.

'Has to change'

Dutch Agriculture Minister Carola Schouten in June unveiled a new 135-million-euro aid plan to help farmers transition to "circular" agriculture. The aim, according to the plan, is to "no longer produce as cheaply as possible, but to produce with the least loss of raw materials and with management of the soil, water and nature". A second collective farm, in the central Netherlands, is now due to open. Van der Veer stressed that embracing simpler ways of farming did not mean shunning new technology.

"The path that farming has taken over the years has narrowed, and we are now up against the wall," he said. "We have to go back to the farming of the 1950s, when we still knew what we were doing, while using today's technologies," he said. At his feet, dozens of chickens help to maintain the plants that grow between the trees, fertilizing the soil with their manure - although one day they, too, will be used for food. Soon the poultry will be joined by a robot that can sense when fruit is ripe, as well as a drone that will survey the fields to support the farmer and reduce the need for manpower. "What is certain is that farming absolutely has to change," said Korting. — AFP

Not your father's Peronists: Why Macri flopped with youth

For Luis Joaquin Caro, who was about 2 years old when Argentina last defaulted on its debt in 2001, casting his vote for left-leaning Peronist candidate Alberto Fernandez in the country's recent primary election was a no-brainer. "During the Kirchner years, I lived very well," he said, referring to what now seems like a bygone era of his young life before four years of spending cuts and austerity measures under President Mauricio Macri.

"Today, it's not like that," said Caro, who is from a working-class part of Buenos Aires Province. The 21-year-old said he had always seen former President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner and her late husband former President Nestor Kirchner - whose consecutive terms spanned 2003 to 2015 - as champions of the workers.

Cristina Kirchner, a polarizing figure in Argentina, is the running mate of Fernandez, whose landslide victory

over Macri in the Aug. 11 primary wrong-footed pollsters and shocked investors, who worry that Argentina may fail once again to pay its debts if the left returns to power. Argentine markets plunged into a nosedive last week amid growing fears about a rerun of "Kirchnerismo", when Argentina had currency controls and other interventionist policies.

Caro's sentiments are emblematic of a groundswell of support for Fernandez among younger voters which, while not altogether unexpected for pollsters, shocked them in its magnitude. Part of the challenge for pollsters in Argentina was that young voters, one of the demographics most impacted by high unemployment, are less likely to have a conventional phone where canvassers can reach them - a factor also cited by polling firms in Britain and the United States after upsets in recent years.

For Caro and many other young voters in Argentina, talk of the pain surrounding the 2001 crisis was eclipsed by generous social benefits and subsidies under the Kirchners' that helped pluck their families from poverty after the debt default. "The years of Kirchnerism that I lived during my childhood, I lived very well and maybe at that time, I did not realize it," said Lucila Servelli, 16, who voted for the first time on Sunday, though voting is not compulsory for 16 to 18 year olds. "But comparing it with now, many things have changed. Now, my family had to give up many things," said Servelli, who was not born when Argentina default-

ed in 2001. Young voters have far less in common with Macri, whose term has focused on free-market reforms by stimulating foreign investment and a promised economic recovery that failed to materialize, said political analyst Julio Burdman. Macri's image is saddled with resentment at high unemployment, especially among younger Argentines, he added. To make matters worse, salaries have eroded significantly. That is an extra sting for young voters who are new to the workforce and feeling the pinch in their own pockets for the first time.

For others like 16-year-old Pilar Gil Navarro, the support for Kirchnerism is not just about economics. For her, the Kirchnerist agenda, which is more liberal on social issues, is more in line with her values. "One of the issues that I want to deal with is legal, safe and free abortion," Navarro said. "In the Macri government, there is no Ministry of Health, showing that a lot would have to happen to legalize abortion, which is something Fernandez said is important as a matter of public health."

There is also a certain cache attached to Kirchnerism, which counts high-profile actors and musicians among its supporters, analysts said. Straight-laced Macri, whose supporters are mostly over 50, is viewed as a polar opposite from the Kirchnerismo image of questioning the status quo and confronting an established order. "That, for a young person, is much more seductive than a conservative agenda," said Facundo Nejankis, director of polling firm Opina Argentina. — Reuters

France's Ecole 42: Start-up IT school tears up rule book

On an August morning in Paris, when most of the city is in an advanced state of summer torpor, hundreds of young men and women are sweating it out in the third week of a gruelling month-long endurance test. While the trial is called the "piscine" (swimming pool) and towels dot the ultra-modern building, the contest is not about physical prowess. Welcome instead to the tryouts for Ecole 42, a free computer coding college founded by French telecoms billionaire Xavier Niel in 2013 to help young people find work in IT or, better still, become their own bosses.

Named after the offbeat answer to "the ultimate question of life" in Douglas Adams' comic classic "The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy," the ultra-modern college, with neither teachers nor conventional tuition, quickly gained cult status. Around 40,000 people apply each year for one of roughly 1,000 spots on the program.

Around 3,000 make it to the daunting "piscine" stage, in which the candidates spend 10 to 16 hours a day over four weeks completing projects and doing exams. Some, like Aristide Rivet-Tissot, even sleep and shower on-site - hence the towels. "When you're here, you're so immersed that you sometimes forget the outside world exists!" the bleary-eyed 19-year-old told AFP as he greeted his parents, who had travelled up from the countryside to offer support and collect his washing.

Dropouts welcome

When Niel announced his plan for a free coding college

open to all, including school dropouts - 40 percent of the students do not have the school leavers' "baccalaureat" - France's main IT employers federation gave a muted response, noting that the country already had an abundance of engineering colleges. Six years later, Ecole 42, which is based entirely on project work and peer learning, has disproved the doubters with a 100 percent employment rate among graduates.

Describing a visit to 42 in Paris in a promotional video, Evan Spiegel, the CEO of social media giant Snap, declared: "You feel like you're walking into a school from the future!" Now Niel, who founded the world's biggest start-up incubator in Paris in 2017, is taking his revolutionary model global. After founding a Silicon Valley sister college in 2016, he has his sights set on Rio de Janeiro, Novosibirsk, Tokyo and a slew of other cities, as part of a plan to have 20 partner schools in 14 countries by 2020.

75,000 unfilled jobs

A survey of businesses by France's unemployment administration last year found there were more than 75,000 vacancies in the IT sector. While completing the course's 21 levels takes on average three years, many students are headhunted beforehand. Bastien Botella, co-founder of Clevy, a start-up that develops chatbots, left 42 one-third of the way through the course to take a web design job. A former hotel manager who failed his baccalaureat, Botella had previously been turned down by several traditional IT colleges. "42 was a turning point in my life," said the 33-year-old, whose staff of 21 includes six fellow "42ers" working alongside graduates of some of France's top engineering colleges.

'School from the future'

The school's inclusive approach marks it out in a country which preaches "liberty, equality, fraternity" but which was the worst performer among 36 countries, including the

US and Britain, in a 2015 OECD study on social advancement through education. Fadia Zementzali told AFP she applied after being fired from her job as a telephone saleswoman because she wears a Muslim headscarf. "Here I was welcomed as a human being, not as a veiled woman," said the chatty 31-year-old, who was admitted to 42 in April. The cross-community lure is plain to see in the kaleidoscope of faces clustered around gleaming 27-inch Apple screens in the vast computer room where the "piscine" trials are held. "The digital sector, as we've seen at 42, acts as a social elevator. You have people from very different horizons," said 42 director Sophie Viger. Despite not being certified by the state, the program has won plaudits from politicians across the spectrum. "It has brought innovation into our education system - which is what we need and it's wonderful," then finance minister, now president, Emmanuel Macron gushed on Facebook after visiting the school in 2015. — AFP



In this photo taken on Feb 19, 2019, students work on computers at the "Ecole 42" computer programming school in Paris. — AFP

Business

TUESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2019

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LONG BEACH, California: In this photo taken on August 1, 2019, the US flag flies over a container ship unloading its cargo from Asia at the port of Long Beach. — AFP

US economists see recession in 2020 or 2021

Trump pushes back as raft of data shows mixed picture on American economy

WASHINGTON: A majority of economists expect a US recession in the next two years, but have pushed back the onset amid Federal Reserve actions, according to a survey released yesterday. The survey came out after President Donald Trump pushed back against talk of a looming recession as a raft of US data reports last week showed a mixed picture on the economy. "I'm prepared for everything. I don't think we're having a recession. We're doing tremendously well. Our consumers are rich," Trump told reporters Sunday. "I gave a tremendous tax cut, and they're loaded up with money. They're buying. I saw the Wal-Mart numbers, they were through the roof," he said.

"And most economists actually say that we're not going to have a recession. But the rest of the world is not doing well like we're doing." His chief economic advisor Larry Kudlow also downplayed talk of a recession. "I sure don't

see a recession," he told NBC's Meet the Press. "Consumers are working at higher wages. They are spending at a rapid pace. They're actually saving also while they're spending... So I think actually the second half, the economy's going to be very good in 2019," he said. "We're doing pretty darn well in my judgment. Let's not be afraid of optimism." The National Association for Business Economists (NABE) found far fewer experts now think the next recession will start this year compared to a survey in February. NABE conducted its policy poll as Trump put the Fed under constant attack, demanding more stimulus, but before the central bank cut the benchmark lending rate on July 31.

However, the Fed was already sending strong signals that it intended to pull back on the rate increases made in 2018 due to concerns starting to dog the economic outlook, including the trade war.

If "structural" long and short positions (minimum levels of long and short positions, which never change) are excluded from the analysis, fund managers are running a dynamic net long of only 52 million barrels. The hedge fund community now holds a basically neutral position on petroleum prices, with the global economy replacing US sanctions against Iran and Venezuela as the dominant theme this year.

Falling oil prices have prompted Saudi Arabia and its allies in the OPEC+ group to extend their production restraint until at least the end of the first quarter of 2020. Low prices are also forcing a slowdown in the drilling and completion of new wells in the US shale fields, which should eventually result in slower production growth. But consumption growth is decelerating even more quickly, with most major advanced economies and emerging markets now either in recession or on the brink of it.

From a positioning perspective, the balance of risks has probably shifted to the upside, with plenty of room for hedge fund managers to add more bullish long positions and cover existing bearish shorts.

From a fundamental perspective, however, the balance of risks remains tilted to the downside, with the global economy losing momentum and oil consumption growth slackening. If positive news emerges about the economy, oil prices are primed to rally, but such news is sparse and prices remain under pressure. — Reuters

Trade war skepticism

"Survey respondents indicate that the expansion will be extended by the shift in monetary policy," said NABE president Constance Hunter, who is chief economist at KPMG. Only two percent of the 226 respondents now see a recession this year, compared to 10 percent in February's survey. NABE said. However, "the panel is split regarding whether the downturn will hit in 2020 or 2021." Hunter said in a summary of the survey, which showed 38 percent expect a contraction of growth next year, while 34 percent don't see it until the following year. More economists shifted their recession prediction to 2021, narrowing the gap from the prior report, which had many more expecting the change next year.

The results show 46 percent expect at least one more rate cut this year from the Fed, while about a third see policy holding where it is now, with 2.25 percent as the top end of the policy range. Economists are skeptical about a resolution to

Trump's trade wars, although 64 percent said a "superficial agreement is possible," NABE said. But that was before Trump announced another round of tariffs of 10 percent on the remaining \$300 billion in goods not yet hit by US punitive duties. The new measures will take effect in two stages, on September 1 and December 15.

As Trump continues his vocal campaign criticizing the Fed, the NABE survey found economists are concerned about the impact: 55 percent said his remarks do not influence Fed decisions but do "compromise the public's trust in the central bank." And over a quarter of respondents said the criticism will "cause the Fed to be more dovish than otherwise, thus threatening its independence." The survey also asked about fiscal policy, and a majority of economists said Trump's tax cuts "had an overall negative impact on housing activity over the past 18 months," due to changes in deductions allowed for mortgage interest. — AFP

Hedge funds sell oil as global economy slows

LONDON: Hedge funds cut their bullish positions in petroleum last week for the second week running as anxiety about the slowing global economy and oil consumption trumped optimism over production restraint by OPEC and its allies. Hedge funds and other money managers reduced their net long position in the six major petroleum futures and options contracts by 35 million barrels in the week to Aug. 13, having cut it by 25 million barrels the previous week.

Portfolio managers last week sold Brent (37 million barrels), US gasoline (15 million), US heating oil (9 million) and European gasoil (4 million) as the consumption outlook deteriorated.

By contrast, funds bought NYMEX and ICE WTI (30 million barrels) as new pipelines from the Permian Basin to the coast reduced congestion near the oilfields and supported local prices. Overall, fund managers have cut their net long position in the six major contracts to only 543 million barrels, down from a recent peak of 911 million in April and the lowest total since June and before that February.

Germany warns of possible recession, mulls stimulus

FRANKFURT: The German economy could enter a recession in the third quarter, the Bundesbank warned yesterday, as the debate on government measures to support the economy swelled in Berlin.

"The economy could contract again slightly" this summer, Germany's central bank said in its monthly report, following a 0.1-percent decline in gross domestic product (GDP) in the second quarter.

"According to data currently available, industrial production is expected to shrink markedly in the current quarter as well." Having seen a decline in trade against the backdrop of the trade war, two of its main customers, Europe's biggest economy will enter what it technically defines as a recession should GDP shrink further. Alarmist signals are reviving the political debate between those who support the German government's dogma of balanced budgets and those seeking more flexibility in order to revive the economy.

Germany can afford it on paper after five consecutive years of budget surpluses and interest rates for long-term loans that are extremely attractive to the federal government.

As trade tensions intensify, economists have urged Berlin to fork out cash to avoid a recession, but Chancellor Angela Merkel's government has previously said things were not yet bad enough to warrant loosening the purse strings.

Balanced budget

Citing anonymous sources, Der Spiegel news magazine said Friday that the government "had no intention of continuing to set aside money in the event of a recession". That would mean abandoning the so-called "black zero" doctrine committing the German state to a balanced budget.

On Sunday, German Finance Minister Olaf Scholz hinted at a potential intervention, stating that Germany could "fully face up to" a new economic crisis. "It is sometimes important, when things change completely, for example, for us to have enough strength to react," he said during an open house day at government offices. "If we have debt in Germany that is less than 60 percent of our GDP, that is the strength we need to stand up to a crisis," he added.—AFP

Business

NBK Economic Report

Bond yields trend lower in Q2, GCC issuance hits new record

Saudi Arabia's sovereigns and quasi-sovereigns lead market

KUWAIT: Benchmark global bond yields continued to trend down in 2Q19 amid ongoing trade tensions, central bank dovishness and signs of slowing economic growth. GCC bond yields tracked their global counterparts lower and indeed saw steeper declines partly on increased demand due to EMBI index inclusions. Investors appeared to be relatively unaffected by recent geopolitical tensions in the Gulf, though a further escalation or alternatively falls in oil prices and revenues that jeopardize the fiscal situation pose a downside risk to GCC fixed income markets. Meanwhile, regional debt issuance hit a record \$40 billion in 2Q19, dominated by sovereigns and quasi-sovereigns and led by Saudi Arabia.

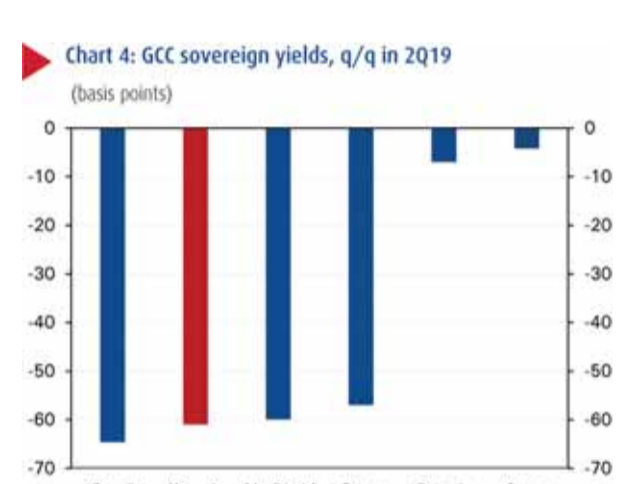
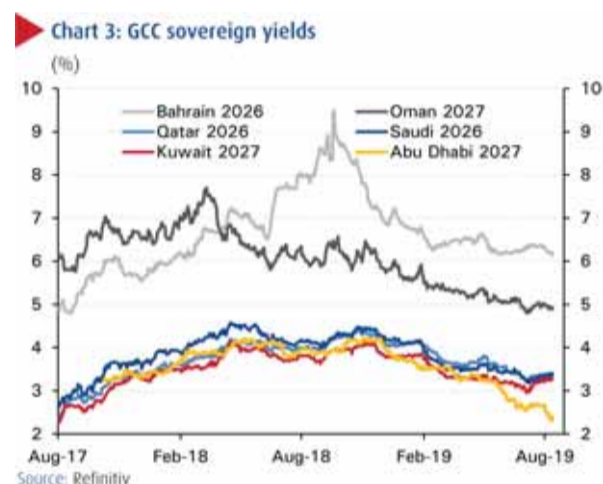
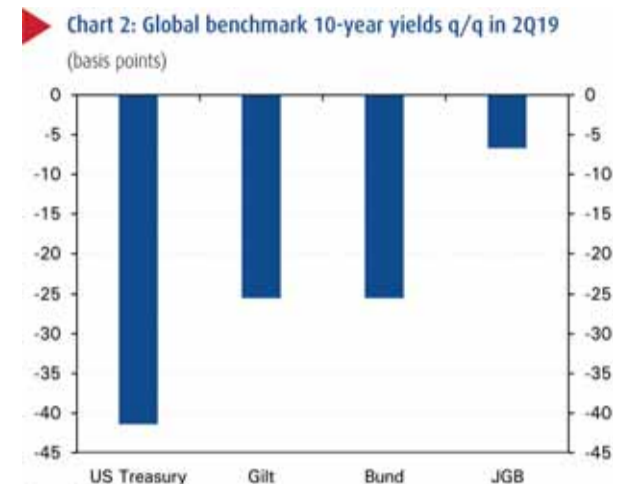
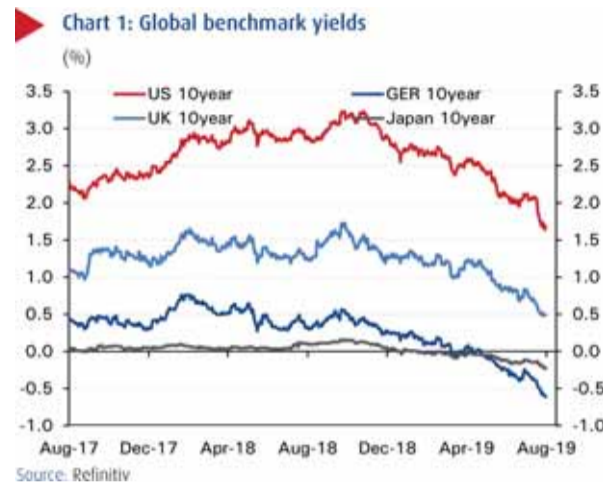


factors but also higher starting points for yields. Brent oil prices reaching above \$75/bbl mid-quarter (though they have since fallen) and bond index inclusion (see below). Declines in medium-term (i.e. 7-8 year) GCC sovereign yields were led by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Abu Dhabi, down 65, 61, and 60 bps respectively in Q2. Demand for Saudi debt may have been boosted by Saudi Tadawul's launch of bond and sukuk trading in April, while the UAE debt market was helped by the enactment of a debt law in late 2018 and the establishment of a debt management office which has improved regulation, access and transparency for bond investors. Kuwait's decline in yields was helped by its strong credit rating and low existing debt levels, partly due to a lack of new issuance. Omani yields were the least changed, affected by delayed reforms and a challenging fiscal outlook relative to some GCC peers.

Regional demand has also been supported by the imminent inclusion of multiple GCC sovereigns in the JP Morgan Emerging Markets Bond Index (EMBI). With \$300 billion in assets under management and an assigned GCC weight of 11.3 percent in the EMBI index, the region is estimated to receive approximately \$30 billion in fund inflows, with more than half going to the larger debt markets of Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Looking forward, GCC yields will continue to be influenced by global yields, which as described above have moved lower on growth concerns. However, declines in GCC yields could be limited if weaker world growth causes oil prices to fall, implying larger fiscal deficits and funding requirements. A further or sustained flare up in regional geopolitical tensions involving Iran could also underpin GCC yields.

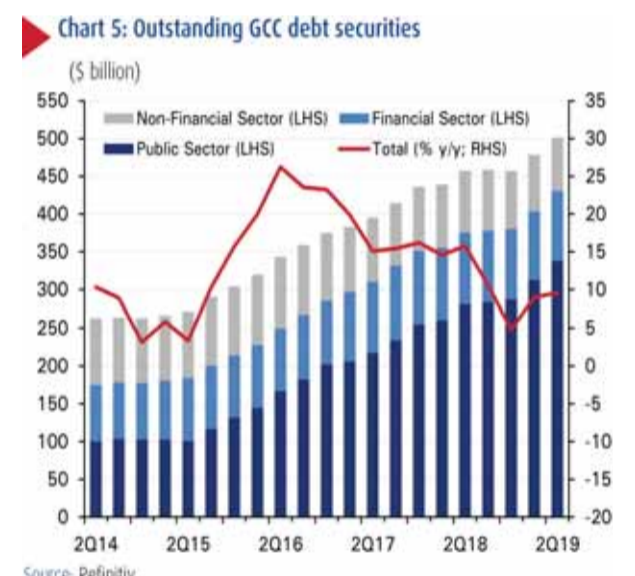
Amid lower yields, GCC bond issuance surged to a record \$40 billion in 2Q19, breaking the previous high of \$32 billion recorded in 1Q19 and paving the way for a strong year overall. This lifted total outstanding debt (foreign and domestic) to \$501 billion at the end of Q2 from \$478 billion in Q1. Issuance was dominated by sovereigns and quasi-sovereigns, with funding for strategic investments by sovereign wealth funds and state-owned enterprises a strong driver. In addition, a large volume of maturing debt has likely helped ramp-up new issuance. Some \$43



billion in maturing debt is scheduled for 2019, of which \$28 billion had matured as of early-August.

The bulk of issuance in Q2 came from Saudi Arabia with \$26.8 billion. This included a jumbo \$12 billion from Saudi Aramco as it looks to foster relationships with international investors ahead of its IPO scheduled for 2021 and in light of its plans to purchase a stake in SABIC. Also of note, Oman tapped international debt markets for the first time this year in July, with a successful \$3 billion issue despite concerns over its fiscal position. Meanwhile, a rise in issuance from the region's financial firms was supported by a reported surge in mergers and acquisitions, especially in the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

With global and regional borrowing costs already low and perhaps set to decline further, issuance could remain strong for the remainder of the year. Moreover, foreign investor appetite for regional paper remains solid, and GCC borrowing needs are supported by expansionary budgets and the recent drop in oil prices if sustained.



International yields fall on trade, Fed rate cut
Ongoing trade tensions, weaker economic data, low inflation, and interest rate cut prospects saw benchmark global yields fall in 2Q19. The declines were led by US 10-year treasuries, which fell 41 bps q/q to 2.00 percent as of the end of 2Q. This resulted in a more pronounced yield curve inversion, with a spread of 12 bps between the 3-month and 10-year yields, which has since widened to 32 bps as 10-year yields sunk to a three-year low of 1.68 percent as of mid-August.

A combination of low inflation and concern over the economic growth outlook due to trade factors could exert downward pressure on longer-term yields going forward, but Fed policy will also be key. While the central bank delivered a rate cut of 25 bps in July as expected, it also hinted that it might not be the start of a broader easing cycle. A more neutral Fed stance might cap further declines in US treasuries in the near-to-medium term, though futures markets are still pricing in at least one more interest rate cut this year given the escalating trade dispute.

Meanwhile, weaker Eurozone growth, particularly declining manufacturing and exports in Germany due to the softer external climate, caused the 10-year German bund yield to cross into negative territory, declining 25 bps q/q to -0.33 percent as of the end of Q2 - lower even than Japan - and further to -0.61 percent by mid-August. Contributing to the decline, the European Central Bank has adopted an increasingly dovish policy stance, boosting the possibility of a rate cut and mulling the reintroduction of quantitative easing. UK gilts also suffered fairly steep declines (-25 bps to a record low of 0.5 percent), amid uncertainty surrounding Brexit and the resignation of prime minister Theresa May, replaced by Brexit hardliner Boris Johnson. Finally, Japanese JGB yields were the least affected by adverse global events, down only 7 bps q/q.

GCC yields drop

GCC yields on the whole saw steeper declines than their global counterparts, influenced by similar

NBK named 'Best Consumer Digital Bank' and 'Best in Mobile Banking'

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) was awarded "Best Consumer Digital Bank" and the "Best in Mobile Banking" in Kuwait by Global Finance Magazine for 2019.

Global Finance, headquartered in New York, was founded in 1987 and is one of the leading publications specialized in economic research and analysis. The magazine has a circulation of over 50,000 and readers in 188 countries. Winning banks were chosen among entries evaluated by a

world-class panel of judges consisting of financial and technology sector leaders and under the supervision of Infosys, the global leader in consulting, technology and digital transformation, in collaboration with the magazine's staff.

Global Finance Magazine uses a variety of subjective and objective criteria for choosing the winners, including: the strength of strategy for attracting and servicing digital customers, success in getting clients to use digital offerings, growth in numbers of digital customers, breadth of product offerings, evidence of tangible benefits gained from digital initiatives, and web/mobile site design and functionality.

NBK always strives to maintain its leading position as a digital banking pioneer through continuously offering new and innovative digital services

and introducing digital transformation standards in traditional bank branches.

NBK Mobile Banking and NBK Online Banking are among the key services offered by the Bank as it caters to the young population in Kuwait, with over 63 percent under the age of 30. Moreover, Kuwait has one of the highest internet and mobile penetration levels in the world.

In 2018, NBK achieved strong growth in mobile transactions, which increased by 40 percent Y-o-Y, thus confirming the success of its efforts aimed at encouraging customers to use digital banking channels.

Digital transformation is a main pillar of Consumer Banking Group's strategy that supports NBK Group's main objective by fulfilling customers' needs and requirements.

NBK Mobile Banking is a safe and

easy channel to manage accounts from anywhere and at any time. Customers can conveniently open a new account, view transactions made on accounts and credit cards, check their NBK Miles Points and NBK Rewards Program Points, pay outstanding credit cards balance, pay bills online, find the nearest branch, ATM or CDM in Kuwait, as well as submit an account statement request and order checkbooks, in addition to a wide array of services.

NBK Mobile Banking is constantly evolving by adding new and innovative services and improving existing services. Some of the newest features include managing banking cards while traveling, increasing the monthly transfer limits and updating customers' contact information, making NBK Mobile Banking the greatest companion while travelling.



EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.		Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.224	Turkish Lira	55.125	Chinese Yuan	0.042005	0.045505
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES		Tunisian Dinar	109.640	Singapore dollars	220.065	Hong Kong Dollar	0.036763	0.039513
US Dollar Transfer	304.800	Jordanian Dinar	430.720	BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL		Indian Rupee	0.003772	0.004544
Euro	341.830	Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.203	CURRENCY	BUY	SELL	Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017
Sterling Pound	373.840	Syrian Lira	0.000	Europe	British Pound	0.363134	0.377064	0.000241
Canadian dollar	230.730	Morocco Dirham	32.391	Czech Korune	0.005107	0.014407	0.00256	0.002113
Turkish lira	55.850	Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd		Danish Krone	0.041225	0.046225	0.002780	0.002256
Swiss Franc	315.850	Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate	Euro	0.330308	0.344008	0.000210	0.002113
US Dollar Buying	297.600	US Dollar	304.090	Georgian Lari	0.103788	0.103788	0.009577	0.007527
ASIAN COUNTRIES		Canadian Dollar	230.300	Hungarian 0.000949	0.001139	0.001139	0.002682	0.003022
Japanese Yen	2.866	Sterling Pound	368.445	Norwegian Krone	0.029785	0.034985	0.001343	0.002113
Indian Rupees	4.290	Euro	341.840	Romanian Leu	0.054468	0.071318	0.005821	0.006121
Pakistani Rupees	1.944	Swiss Frank	297.245	Russian ruble	0.004579	0.004579	0.214622	0.224622
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.717	Bahrain Dinar	808.690	Slovakia	0.009118	0.019118	0.001343	0.001923
Nepali Rupees	2.676	UAE Dirhams	83.195	Slovenia	0.027465	0.032465	0.009599	0.009779
Singapore Dollar	221.430	Qatari Riyals	84.435	Swedish Krona	0.027465	0.032465	0.009567	0.010117
Hongkong Dollar	38.847	Saudi Riyals	81.985	Swiss Franc	0.304480	0.315480	0.00013	0.00013
Bangladesh Taka	3.595	Jordanian Dinar	430.185	Australasia		Australian Dollar	0.198362	0.210362
Philippine Peso	5.838	Egyptian Pound	18.403	New Zealand Dollar	0.189232	0.198732	0.189232	0.198732
Thai Baht	9.907	Sri Lankan Rupees	1.719	America		Canadian Dollar	0.224103	0.233103
Malaysian ringgit	77.954	Indian Rupees	4.297	US Dollars	0.300700	0.306000	0.300700	0.306000
GCC COUNTRIES		Pakistani Rupees	1.919	US Dollars Mint	0.301200	0.306000	0.301200	0.306000
Saudi Riyal	81.334	Bangladesh Taka	3.601	Asia		Bangladesh Taka	0.002982	0.003783
Qatari Riyal	83.771	Philippines Peso	5.859	Arab		Bahraini Dinar	0.802335	0.810395
Omani Riyal	792.203	Cyprus pound	18.090	Bahraini Dinar	0.802335	0.810395	0.018683	0.022023
Bahraini Dinar	809.980	Japanese Yen	3.881	Egyptian Pound	0.000084	0.000084	0.000084	0.000084
UAE Dirham	83.040	Syrian Pound	1.590	Iraqi Dinar	0.000210	0.000210	0.000210	0.000210
ARAB COUNTRIES		Nepalese Rupees	2.679	Jordanian Dinar	0.424997	0.433997	0.424997	0.433997
Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.650	Malaysian Ringgit	73.480	Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	18.422	Chinese Yuan Renminbi	43.520	Lebanese Pound	0.000151	0.000251	0.000151	0.000251
		Thai Bhat	10.870	Moroccan Dirhams	0.021054	0.045054	0.021054	0.045054

Business

ABK-Egypt records 30% increase in net operating profit for H1 2019

Net interest income climbed 34% to reach EGP 643 million

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait - Egypt (ABK-Egypt), one of Egypt's fastest growing banks, has reported strong results for the first six months of 2019. Net operating profit rose 30 percent over the same period last year, to reach EGP 440 million, while net interest income climbed 34 percent to reach EGP 643 million.

Customer deposits grew by 8 percent to EGP 25.96 billion, and total assets increased 11 percent, to exceed EGP 31 billion. During the same period, the Bank's gross loans portfolio grew 13 percent, to EGP 18 billion. The non-performing loan (NPL) ratio stood at 2.39 percent and shareholders' equity at EGP 2.89 billion.

Commenting on the results, Ali Marafi, Chairman of ABK-Egypt said, "These positive results build on the success we achieved in 2018, where we delivered a record net profit, and reflects the consistent efforts of the Bank to provide superior customer service to our clients. This



year, ABK-Egypt has continued to expand geographically within the Egyptian market, while retaining our focus

on our long-term objective of delivering a "Simpler Banking" experience to our clients. With a robust capital base, I am confident we will continue this upward momentum in Egypt."

Khaled El Salawy, CEO and Managing Director said, "We will continue to deliver on our strategic goals. We have expanded our footprint in the Egyptian market, added new services and products that make the banking experience simpler and more accessible for customers, and continued to invest in our employees. We look forward to delivering sustainable growth, and to providing banking experiences that align with our clients' needs."

The bank has rapidly expanded and now has 42 branches with 81 ATMs placed in strategic locations across the country. ABK-Egypt has also opened three specialized centers for Trade Finance services, covering

East and Central Cairo and Alexandria, to cater to the needs of corporate customers.

ABK-Egypt has launched a range of innovative products and services including the ABK Wallet, a mobile application that allows customers to perform various transactions, and automated phone banking services. This year ABK-Egypt launched the World Elite Credit card, which goes beyond standard rewards cards to offer a personalized service to ABK-Egypt's most valued customers, and a Platinum Debit card. ABK-Egypt was named "Fastest Growing Bank in Egypt" by International Finance Magazine, recognizing the Bank's strong performance since entering the Egyptian market as well as "Most Innovative Bank in Egypt". 'Business Live' also recently recognized ABK as the fastest growing bank in the region. The Financial Times Magazine listed ABK Group on the 'movers' list in the region for 2019.

Stimulus optimism boosts stocks, eases pressure on bonds

LONDON: World stock markets rose yesterday on signs that major economies would look to prop up stalling growth with fresh stimulus measures, easing pressure on bonds and dampening demand for perceived safe-havens such as gold.

US stocks surged yesterday on growing hopes that major economies would act to stymie the slowing economic effects of escalating global trade tensions, while technology stocks rose led by a nearly 3 percent gain in Apple's shares.

Hopes of government action to stave off fears of recession - triggered by an inversion in the US bond yield curve - grew. The prospect of Germany's coalition government ditching its balanced budget rule to take on new debt and launch stimulus steps also helped the mood, after boosting Wall Street shares on Friday.

Berlin could make available up to 50 billion euros (\$55 billion) of extra spending, Finance Minister Olaf Scholz said on Sunday, adding that Germany has the fiscal strength to counter any future economic crisis "with full force". MSCI's world equity index, which follows shares in 47 countries, gained 0.4 percent, powered by a 1 percent gain for the pan-European STOXX 600 index. Bourses in London, Frankfurt and Paris all registered gains of more than 1 percent.

The optimism was set to spread to Wall Street, too, where futures gauges were pointing to gains of between 0.9 percent-1 percent.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan gained 1.1 percent. Yet even as signs that major economies would act to support growth emboldened investors, some market players cautioned that the boost to markets from expectations of stimulus was fragile.

"You have just got a little bit of portfolio readjustment, a resetting of expectations. The big question is whether it can last," said Michael Hewson, chief market strategist at CMC Markets. "Talking about fiscal stimulus in Germany is one thing, doing it is something else." As investors tiptoed



NEW YORK: Traders work before the closing bell at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in New York City. — AFP

back to riskier assets, gold fell as much as 1 percent to \$1,496.70 per ounce, with US futures for the precious metal also down.

The Japanese yen, another safe haven that benefits in times of stress, lost 0.2 percent to last trade at 106.57 to the dollar. The dollar index, which measures the greenback against six major currencies, was marginally higher in Europe at 98.179, close to a two-week high reached on Friday. Investors are focused on the annual meeting of central bankers in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, where US Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell will speak at the symposium on Friday. Analysts think Powell's remarks will be aimed at reassuring nervous markets that the Fed will keep its easing stance.

"Powell's speech will set the stage for, at the minimum, a 25 basis points rate cut at the September meeting, stressing that quantitative tightening is over and stressing that

the committee's bias is now back in accommodation mode," said Elsa Lignos, global head of FX strategy at RBC Capital Markets.

The shift towards appetite for riskier assets played out in bond markets, too. Benchmark government debt in the Eurozone off record lows, with Germany's 10-year bond yield steady at -0.69 percent. Its 30-year bond yields also gained.

The 10-year US Treasury yield stood at 1.6097 percent, having pulled away from a three-year trough marked last week as fears of a global slowdown panicked markets. In commodity markets, crude oil prices rose after an attack on a Saudi oil facility by Yemeni separatists on Saturday, with traders also looking for signs that Sino-US trade tensions could ease. Brent crude was 0.3 percent higher, at \$58.81 a barrel. US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were up 0.5 percent, at \$55.12 a barrel. — Reuters

Argentina virtually in default: Fernandez

Buenos Aires: The Argentine opposition candidate, Alberto Fernandez, said that the country would struggle under present conditions to repay a loan to the International Monetary Fund and he would seek to renegotiate the repayment terms, according to an interview published on Sunday by the newspaper Clarin. "I would say that there is only one incontrovertible reality and that is that Argentina in these conditions is not able to repay the debts it took on," said Fernandez, the favorite to win the October elections.

"I have no problem helping the president (Mauricio Macri) to renegotiate in the way that I propose but do have a lot of trouble with it having to explain to the Fund the failings of the president. That the president will have to do," he added. Argentina under Macri signed a stand-by agreement with the IMF in mid-2018 for \$57 billion, pledging in return to implement a significant fiscal adjustment, a pact Fernandez described as "harmful." Fernandez, who last week drubbed Macri in primary elections, said that without the IMF deal the country would have defaulted on its repayments, but added that the relationship with the financial institution had to be one of "respect" not "submission."

"We have to understand that we are virtually in default conditions now and that is why Argentine bonds are worth what they are worth, because the world knows that they cannot be paid," he told Clarin. "We must act sensibly, and it is sensible that Argentina must fulfill its obligations."

Argentine markets collapsed in the week after Fernandez, who has former center-left ex-president Cristina



WASHINGTON, DC: In this file photo, International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Christine Lagarde meets with Argentina's Economy Minister Nicolas Dujovne at IMF Headquarters in Washington, DC. — AFP

Fernandez de Kirchner as his running mate, came in around 15 points ahead of Macri in the primaries, a result that leaves him in a strong position to win the October election without a second round. Argentina, Latin America's third-largest economy, is struggling with economic turmoil that saw the peso currency tumble against the dollar and annual inflation climb above 50 percent.

The peso ended the week 17.58 percent weaker, going from 45.33 pesos per dollar before the elections to 55 pesos on Friday, despite intervention by the central bank. Fernandez, who during the campaign said that the dollar was being held at a "fictitious" value, urged Macri in the Clarin interview to heed the call of the central bank to safeguard its international reserves.

"Even if on Monday they had laid down all of the country's reserves, they still would not have held back the price of the dollar," he added. Fernandez, a former cabinet chief during the administration of former President Nestor Kirchner (2003-2007), said he believed that with the dollar at 57 pesos, inflation would close the year up more than 50 per-

cent. "If I finish my term and have inflation down to a single digit, I will be very happy. That's four years of hard work," he said.

Fernandez said his aim, if he wins the election, will be to reboot Argentina's economy and bolster exports to earn dollars to pay back its debts. He said he would also seek to negotiate with those holding Argentine bonds. "I will do everything necessary to ensure we can export because that way Argentina will produce dollars," he said. "There is no other way. Meanwhile I will speak to our creditors to see if we can come to an arrangement. We must sit down and speak, one to one, as we did with the debt at one time," he said, referring to the debt restructuring he negotiated when he served as cabinet chief in 2005. Fernandez rejected a suggestion by Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro that, if elected, he would shut down the economy. Bolsonaro said Brazil would consider leaving the Mercosur economic bloc if problems arise with Argentina in the event of an opposition victory. "Bolsonaro must relax, I do not plan to shut down the economy. It's silly," Fernandez told La Nacion newspaper. — Reuters

Greek PM on EU tour in bid to soften fiscal targets

Athens: Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis will begin a tour of EU capitals this week, officials said yesterday, in a bid to persuade the country's creditors to alleviate tough fiscal targets. Mitsotakis will begin his meetings with a trip to Paris on Thursday to see President Emmanuel Macron, a government source said. He will then see German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin on August 29 and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte on September 2.

New Greek finance minister Christos Staikouras told the Financial Times this weekend that the government would swiftly implement a program of tax cuts and privatizations to promote growth, reassure investors and "move the economy to an upward virtuous spiral". Mitsotakis, elected last month on a ticket of boosting growth, hopes to win agreement to cut the annual target of 3.5 percent of primary budget surplus which Greece's previous leftist government had pledged to maintain to 2022. Greece exited its final bailout last year. Before his victory, Mitsotakis had expressed confidence that he could persuade Greece's creditors to lower the primary surplus target with a front-loaded program of reforms. "I've...told my European partners that should we be able to deliver real reforms, we should be rewarded with smaller primary surpluses, at least in 2021 and 2022," he told CNBC earlier this year.

"Symbolically it would be a reward for a country that is actually engaging in meaningful reforms," he said. The austerity, maintained by the previous government to boost credibility, is also intended to help cut a public debt that last year stood at 335 billion euros (\$372 billion), or 180 percent of GDP.

The debt load is forecast to fall to 168 percent of GDP this year, but only through the belt-tightening brought in by the previous leftist government which Mitsotakis's New Democracy party says is stifling growth. Macron's office yesterday said he would discuss with the new Greek PM "European and bilateral issues, in addition to eastern Mediterranean issues."

Staikouras next month is expected to announce an early repayment of about one-third of the 8.5 billion euros (\$9.4 billion) bailout debt that it owes to the IMF, the FT said. — AFP

Yen, Swiss franc fall on optimism about central bank action

LONDON/NEW YORK: The safe-haven yen and Swiss franc retreated against the dollar yesterday, as risk sentiment gradually improved after a week of turmoil on hopes that major central banks would look to launch fresh stimulus measures to lift their sluggish economies.

The Japanese currency fell for a third straight session versus the greenback, while the Swiss unit slid to a two-week low against the dollar. Optimism about government action to avert recession concerns in the United States, which was triggered by last week's inversion in the US bond yield curve, rose in advance of the US Federal Reserve's symposium in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, toward the end of the week, where central bankers could announce key measures.

"We think the more accommodative central bank backdrop should help insulate the downside in risk markets," said Mazen Issa, senior FX strategist at TD Securities in New York. "With markets fixated on the (Jackson Hole) symposium later this week and little data to deter focus, we are biased to see an extension of (last) Friday's relief rally in risk extend in the coming days, barring another 'Trump Tweet-bomb,'" he added, referring to US President Donald Trump's penchant for announcing policy or making market-moving comments on Twitter.

In morning trading, the dollar rose 0.1 percent against the yen to 106.51 yen, helping push the dollar index trade higher on the day to 98.239. The euro was up versus the greenback at \$1.101, after falling 1 percent last week, its biggest weekly drop since early July. Against the Swiss franc, the dollar climbed 0.2 percent to 0.9801 franc. Sight deposits at the Swiss National Bank posted another big weekly rise, indicating more intervention from policymakers. FED EYED investor optimism is also likely to be capped before a speech by Fed Chairman Jerome Powell later this week at the Jackson Hole conference. Market strategists believe his comments will be aimed at reassuring nervous markets that the Fed will remain in an easing stance and set the stage for more rate cuts after a quarter-percentage-point rate cut in July.

"Powell's speech will set the stage for, at the minimum, a 25 basis-points-rate cut at the September meeting, stressing that quantitative tightening is over," said Elsa Lignos, global head of FX strategy at RBC Capital Markets. Money markets are pricing in a cumulative 67 basis points of rate cuts from the Fed by the end of the year. — Reuters

AUB congratulates winners of Al-Hassad weekly draw

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank announced on the 18th of August 2019 the winners of its weekly draw of Al-Hassad Islamic account which is the very first draw account in Islamic banking in Kuwait that has reshaped the lives of thousands lucky winners.

Al-Hassad has have over 850 prizes, over a 12 month period.

The weekly draw announced the grand prize winner of KD 10,000 as Wajeeh Haleem Jerjes. 20 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and the winners are as follows: Saleha M J H Alrashid, Esam H A Jaragh, Naser Dh Alotaibi, Wadhwa Abdullah Alzaid, Sherefa Jaber Jazea, Aysha Ali Ahmed, Yousef Johar Hassan, Philomina John Dsouza, Mohammad Saad Alotaibi, Hamad Khaled Alenezi, Jameelah Hanania Enestas, Mohammad Saheb Saleh, Adelah Ibraheem Alrumaih, Sadeq Abdullah Safar, Nadia Sadoun Jassem, Abathar Abdulla Alhalwach, Habib Abbas Abdulla, Martina Horan, Saeed Mohamed Almudaifa and Rabab Jaffar Saleh.

Al-Hassad Islamic Account presents also four quarterly mega prizes of KD 250,000 that will help the lucky winners achieve their dreams and aspirations in addition the monthly draw to win a prize of KD 100,000. One powerful new aspect of the Al-Hassad Islamic Account is the prize draws on the holy occasion of both Eid Ul-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha, when the winning customers will receive the Eid prizes of KD 100,000 each. May the Eid always bring prosperity and blessings to the Islamic nation. Al-Hassad Islamic Account presents also 21 weekly prizes comprised of a grand prize of KD 10,000 and 20 prizes of KD 1,000 each.

Business

Al-Nahedh: Active private sector role makes market more dynamic

KFH is a key partner in KPC's strategic plans

KUWAIT: In an interview with The Oil and Gas Year Magazine, Group CEO of Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh discussed the importance of economic diversification in Kuwait and the private sector's role that can play in this regard.

Al-Nahedh said: "As far as Kuwait is concerned, diversification is a must going forward. The 2015-2016 period was a wake-up call not only for Kuwait but for the entire GCC, a clear indicator that suggested diversification was needed."

He added that "Kuwait Vision 2035 seeks to diversify the country away from both upstream and downstream activities to ultimately hit a more stable output with a certain degree of predictability in fuel prices. Although it is true that more than 50 percent of Kuwait's GDP comes from oil and gas, we also have to account for the investment income of KIA [the Kuwait Investment Authority]. In addition, emphasis is put into developing both technology and human capital as new keys to success."

"Most importantly, the government is also trying to give more space to the private sector to promote sustainability. The active involvement of the private sector will make the market more dynamic and take an important amount of the financial burden off the government's shoulders. In the coming years, it will start to lead this country's development," Al-Nahedh stressed.

On the robustness of Kuwait's financial sector, Al-Nahedh said that for the last couple of years, the Central Bank of Kuwait has introduced the application of the IFRS 9 standard, which tracks the shortages or surpluses of provisions with banks.

"Interestingly, all Kuwaiti banks now have surpluses thanks to the precautionary provision the Central Bank has established. We see that it has applied reforms to the

system in order to reduce excesses." He added. "If you compare this panorama with those of banks in other jurisdictions, for example in the KSA or UAE, they all had shortfalls and had to reinforce their provisions to meet the IFRS 9 standards. This gives you an idea of how conservative our Central Bank is, and the buffer that the Kuwaiti banks have. This, in a way, reflects the strength of our financial sector." He said.

Al-Nahedh expected seeing more steps in the Boursa Kuwait and the CMA [Capital Markets Authority] to guarantee a more robust environment, saying that the free flow of capital is the key to achieving a stable and robust financial system.

Stronger sector

On the benefits of stronger private sector that would bring to the market, he confirmed the market would be more dynamic, flexible and efficient, adding that it is much easier to invest abroad than in Kuwait. "This is due to the high levels of governance and bureaucracy, and the way tenders function in the country, which ends up jeopardizing the functioning of the entire system. In this regard, the private sector is much more efficient. We hope PPPs get revived as this could represent a huge success moving forward. That is why we say: 'Move to private,'" Al-Nahedh explained.

Partnerships with government

Regarding the synergies between KFH and the K-companies, Al-Nahedh said: "We are extremely close with the K-companies, particularly with KPC, because they lead the majority of the projects we are involved in. So far, we have been involved in important projects developed by KPC subsidiaries such as KNPC, KPI, PIC and KIPIC both domestically and abroad. We

meet up with representatives of the K-companies periodically in order to keep updated on projects in the pipeline, so we can anticipate and act accordingly."

KPC's 2040 strategy

On KFH involvement in some of the mega-projects anchoring KPC's 2040 strategy, Al-Nahedh said that KFH is deeply involved in the diverse mega-projects which shape the present and future of Kuwait's oil and gas sector. In 2016, KFH signed a financial contract with KNPC for the Clean Fuel Project. While Islamic banks have a KD 490-million [\$1.61-billion] share in the funding, KD 275 million [\$901.3 million] was directly financed by KFH. The most recent deal we have sealed is a credit-based contract with KIPIC where KFH is in charge of the financing for the \$2.3-billion LNG import facility. Here, we were selected to lead the deal with the Islamic banks, being responsible for a \$500-million share.

"In the international arena, we have successfully led the Islamic tranche that is sponsoring the new Duqm refinery in Oman. KPI is a major shareholder in this mega-project, which has facilities valued at \$4.6 billion. While the financing of the project will be carried out by 29 prestigious funding institutions from 13 countries, we participated with a \$500-million credit package supporting the development of the project," he added.

A key financier

Al-Nahedh said that KFH is leading the Islamic tranche of every transaction flowing into those oil and gas projects sponsored by the K-companies. "We are dealing with all the local Islamic banks, covering the entire market in terms of capacity that could be

financed. There is a drive by the K-companies to provide financing in local currencies for local banks to grow their portfolios and have a share in the rebuilding of Kuwait. We are in charge of channeling these transactions," he added.

Vital role

Al-Nahedh said that KFH will definitely be aligned with KPC's strategic plans, expecting a spurt of oil and gas projects in addition to projects in power generation infrastructure. "We should see more projects coming to life and we will be present. Our role will involve the financing of these projects, the provision of simple and complex banking services as well as consulting and trade facilities. We are involved in nearly every major financial transaction in Kuwait, funding government and private projects, both domestically and abroad. We want to continue playing this vital role," he confirmed.

In line with Kuwait Vision 2035, \$32 billion worth of public projects are planned for the near future, Al-Nahedh expressed his confidence that the banking sector is well-equipped to play an important role when supporting the development of Kuwait's greater project activity in 2020 and beyond.

"In this scenario, KFH is a key component of the 2035 vision as it is the leading Islamic financial institution enabling national development and the growth of the financial services industry," he added.



Mazin Al-Nahedh

White House says 'no recession in sight' despite market turmoil

WASHINGTON: White House officials pushed back on Sunday against concerns that economic growth may be faltering, saying they saw little risk of recession despite a volatile week on global bond markets, and insisting their trade war was doing no damage to the United States.

"There is no recession in sight," White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow said on "Fox News Sunday." "Consumers are working. Their wages are rising. They are spending and they are saving...I think we are in pretty good shape."

US stock markets tanked last week on recession fears with all three major US indexes closing down about 3 percent on Wednesday only to pair their losses by Friday due to expectations the European Central Bank might cut rates.

For a brief time last week bond investors also demanded a higher interest rate on 2-year Treasury bonds than for 10-year Treasury bonds, often construed as a sign of lost faith in near-term economic growth. However, trade adviser Peter Navarro on Sunday likewise dismissed last week's warning signs, saying "good" economic dynamics were encouraging investors to move money to the United States. "We have the strongest economy in the world and money is coming here for our stock market. It's also coming here to chase yield in our bond markets," Navarro told ABC's "This Week." That sort "flight to safety" is typically driven by concerns of global economic trouble - in this case the possibility that the Trump administration's tariff battle may dampen business investment and growth worldwide. The tariffs, Navarro said, "are not hurting anybody here."

The US economy does continue to grow and add jobs each month. Retail sales in July jumped a stronger-than-expected 0.7 percent, the government reported last week, and Kudlow said that number showed that the main prop of the US economy is intact. But manufacturing growth has slowed and lagging business investment has also become a drag. Globally, flagging global trade appears to have pushed the German economy toward recession. A slowdown would be bad news for President Donald Trump, who is building his 2020 bid for a second term around the economy's performance. He told voters at a rally last week they had "no choice" but to vote for him in order to preserve their jobs and investments.

Despite talking up the economy, the president and his advisers have repeatedly accused the US Federal Reserve of undermining the administration's economic policies. On Sunday, Kudlow again pointed the finger at the central bank, describing rate hikes through 2017 and 2018 as "very severe monetary restraint."

The Fed hiked rates seven times over those two years as part of a plan to restore normal monetary policy following the emergency steps taken to battle the 2007-2009 global financial crisis and recession. Even with those steps, the Fed's target interest rate has remained well below historic norms, and policymakers have started cutting rates in response to growing global risks.

Democratic presidential candidates on Sunday joined the many economic analysts who have said the administration's sometimes erratic policies are to blame for increased uncertainty, disappointing business investment and market volatility. "I'm afraid that this president is driving the global economy and our economy into recession," Democratic candidate Beto O'Rourke said on NBC's "Meet the Press." The trade war and the imposition of tariffs was "hammering the hell out of farmers across this country." —Reuters

A peace of mind in summer with Peugeot!

KUWAIT: Kuwait Automotive Imports Company, Kaico Al Shaya & Al Sagar, the authorized distributors of Peugeot cars in Kuwait, launched its exclusive offers for the summer of 2019 offering competitive deals to anyone who chooses to purchase any of the new 2019 models during the summer period.

The exclusive offer comes as a gesture by the company that seeks to reward its Peugeot lovers and spread the joy of the summer holidays. Clients can now get Peugeot SUV 2008, 3008 or 5008 without a down payment and with a monthly installments starting at only KD 94 With an additional maintenance service for 5 years plus 1000 liters of free fuel.

As an additional option to distinguish clients and grant them peace of mind, the company introduced the leasing program for individuals that include periodic maintenance, comprehensive insurance and an alternative car.

Kaico launched the leasing offer to meet the demand of customers who desire to drive a modern Peugeot that includes the latest technology and offers the smoothest ride without the hassle of waiting in the service centers or worrying about accidents. The company stated that it facilitates the completion of transactions in order to achieve the highest levels of customer satisfaction.



Gulf Bank announces winners of Al-Danah weekly draw

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its weekly draw on 18th August 2019, and are thereby announcing the names of the winners for the weeks of 4 - 8 August and 11 - 15 August 2019. The weekly draw consists of five winners who receive KD 1,000 each, every week.

The winners for the week of 4 - 8 August are:

Adnan Abdulwahab Nisif Almisif
Rabab Sayed Almousawe
Najat Jasem Mohammed Alkout
Bilal Abdulrahman Ahmed Alabdullah
Hanan Hussein Said Atah Abdulwahab

The winners for the week of 11 - 15 August are:

Ibrahim Mahmoud Shehab
Hani Ali Nakru
Aysha Hmoud Saad Alazmi
Yousef Ghloom Haji Ahmad
Famar Saoud Mejbil Fajhan Minor
Gulf Bank's third Al-Danah quarterly draw for the prize of KD 500,000 will be held on 25 September 2019. The final Al-Danah draw for KD 1,000,000, will be held on 16 January 2020, where the Al-Danah millionaire will be announced at a live event.
Gulf Bank encourages customers to increase their chances of winning with Al-Danah by depositing more into their Gulf Bank accounts using the new ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking services. Al-Danah offers a number of unique services to customers, including the Al-Danah Deposit Only ATM card, which allows account holders to deposit money into their accounts at their convenience. Account holders can also calculate their chances of winning the draws through the 'Al-Danah



"The decision to buy a Peugeot during the summer is certainly the best," Kaico added.

"As we celebrate the 50 years anniversary of the partnership with Peugeot in 2019, we have shared their success and development together in these years and as an authorized distributor, we will continue to provide customers with the best possible sales and after sales services," said Ashesh Tandon, general manager of Kaico. "We at KAICO care

about the convenience of the customer and therefore we have launched the best offers so that everyone can get a Peugeot without the worries of finances," said Nader Salmeh, Senior divisional manager at Kaico. Peugeot cars are undergoing many difficult tests in the harshest weather conditions to suit the challenging climate in Kuwait and be the most prominent and safe partner in all daily trips and adventures.



Congratulations to the Al Danah weekly winners

Draw of KD 1,000

e-gulfbank.com

Chances' calculator available on the Gulf Bank website and app.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD 200 to open an account and the same amount should be maintained for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al-Danah draws. If the customer's account balance

falls below KD 200 at any given time, a KD 2 fee will be charged to their account monthly until the minimum balance is met. Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the weekly draw within two days. To take part in the Al-Danah 2019 upcoming quarterly and yearly draws, customers must meet the required hold period for each draw.

Health & Science

Canary Islands fire goes out of control, now dubbed an 'environmental tragedy'

MONTANA ALTA: A fire raged out of control on the Spanish holiday island of Gran Canaria yesterday, forcing evacuations as flames rose so high even water-dropping planes could not operate in what was dubbed an "environmental tragedy". The blaze, the third in 10 days in the mountainous centre of the island, has forced the evacuation of several villages, which according to the census have a combined population of 9,000, a spokeswoman for the emergency services said.

The exact number of evacuees was unclear on the island that lies at the heart of the Canary archipelago off the coast of northwest Africa. No fatalities have been reported and tourism on Gran Canaria, which boasts breathtaking views and is popular with foreigners, had not been affected. "This is an environmental tragedy," Canary Islands President Angel Victor Torres told reporters.

Next 48 hours 'critical'

Altogether, 1,000 firefighters and other crew and 14 water-dropping helicopters and planes were working on controlling the blaze, which has destroyed 6,000 hectares, according to emergency services. More helicopters were planned to arrive on Tuesday. This deployment of ground and air forces "is the biggest ever carried out in the Canaries and one of the biggest implemented in Spain in the past few years," said Agriculture Minister Luis Planas.

So fierce is the fire in what is part of a UNESCO biosphere reserve that in some areas, it "is beyond our extinction capacities," Federico Grillo, head of emergency services in Gran Canaria, said late Sunday. On the northwest-

ern flank of the blaze, flames have risen as high as 50 metres (160 feet), preventing ground crew from approaching or water-dropping aircraft from over-flying, the emergency services spokeswoman said. She added around 100 people had been "confined" to the cultural centre of Artenara, unable to leave this village in the disaster zone as all possible evacuation roads were too dangerous to take. Planas said the next 48 hours would be "critical".

'Firestorms'

The fire broke out on Saturday afternoon, just days after another wildfire in the same region forced the evacuation of hundreds. Lourdes Hernandez, an expert on wildfires at WWF, told AFP the blaze had entered the Tamadaba natural park, an untouched pine forest that represents "the main green lungs of the island". The fire is also threatening the Inagua nature reserve, another area of major biodiversity. Two other fires hit the island's centre last week without causing injury.

Hernandez said scientists blamed the rapid propagation of the blazes to climate change, even if fires are often initially triggered by humans, intentionally or not. "The virulence of the fire, the speed at which flames spread, the intensity of the fronts, mean that more extreme weather conditions are generated inside the fire and embers leap sometimes hundreds of metres away," she said. "That's what is known as firestorms. And they're blazes that cannot be approached and cannot be extinguished" by fire-fighting forces.

The centre of the island, the second-most populous of



LAS PALMAS: View of the village of Artenara immersed in a smoke caused by the new forest fire that started in the town of Valleseco, a short distance from the other fire, not yet extinguished, in the Grand Canary Island of Spain. — AFP

the Canary Islands, attracts hikers. But a large majority of tourists who visit Gran Canaria stay in beach resorts. In a statement, the Canary Islands government said the tourism industry on Gran Canaria remained unaffected "given that the fire is confined to upland areas", with no resorts impact-

ed and no flight delays. Torres said all firefighters were working "to contain the blaze in zones where it is heading to populated areas". Planas added that the "maximum priority" was to "preserve human lives". With its arid hot summers, Spain is frequently plagued by huge forest fires. — AFP

Ban on sending wild elephants to zoos a step closer

GENEVA: The regulator of global wildlife trade will likely ban sending African elephants captured from the wild to zoos after countries supported the move, in what conservationists hailed as a "historic win". A large majority of countries voted in Geneva to prohibit the transfer of elephants caught in the wild to so-called captive facilities — a practice animal protection groups have long described as "cruel".

The vote was the first rendered during a 12-day meeting of the parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, which kicked off on Saturday with thousands of conservationists and policymakers from more than 180 countries in attendance. With 46 in favor, 18 against and 19 abstaining, the vote cast in one of two committees secured the two-thirds majority needed to pass, but will still need to be approved by the full conference before the meeting concludes on August 28.

"This decision will save countless elephants from being ripped away from their families in the wild and forced to spend their lifetimes imprisoned in substandard conditions at zoos," Iris Ho, a senior wildlife specialist with Humane Society International (HSI), said in a statement. Specifically, the countries voted to limit trade in live wild African elephants only to conservation in their natural habitats, effectively ending the practice of capturing elephants and sending them to zoos and entertainment venues around the world.

While elephants in western, central and eastern Africa have long been listed among the species in need of most protection under CITES, and thus banned from all trade, some trade has been permitted



BRUGELLETTE: A young elephant from Asia stands near his mother in its enclosure at the Pairi Daiza Zoo. — AFP

in southern Africa, where elephant populations are healthier. Zimbabwe has for instance captured and exported more than 100 baby elephants to Chinese zoos since 2012, according to HSI. "The preliminary decision is a remarkable recognition that elephants don't belong in the entertainment industry," Cassandra Koenen, who heads the wildlife division at World Animal Protection, said in a statement. "It's a huge step in the right direction." — AFP

Bolsonaro takes on Norway for whaling

OSLO: Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro yesterday responded to Norway's decision to halt its forest protection subsidies, taking to Twitter to criticize the Scandinavian country for its whaling practice and post spectacular — albeit misleading — images. "Look at the killing of whales sponsored by Norway," Bolsonaro wrote on Twitter.

The post includes a video and photographs of a spectacular whale hunt, where mammals in the shallow waters of a bay are slaughtered by people wading on shore, armed with hooked knives. The whales' blood turns the waters red. However, the images, reportedly taken on May 29 in Norway, illustrate a "grind", a type of pilot whale hunt practiced exclusively in the Faroe Islands — a Danish territory in the North Atlantic.

Norway is one of the few countries in the world that authorizes commercial whaling, but the whales are hunted individually, at sea from a ship, and with grenade-mounted harpoons. "We can confirm that the video/the photos are not from Norway," the Norwegian fisheries ministry told AFP in an email. "Our whale hunt takes place from ships at sea," he said, arguing that the Norwegian practice was "sustainable".

Bolsonaro was ridiculed on social media for the mix-up. "Haha what a stupid president Brazil has! This is NOT from Norway! We don't kill whales like that. Do your homework to get respected! Fake news' as Trump would have said," wrote one Twitter user. "False information is a crime Mr President," wrote another. Bolsonaro has been taking digs at Norway since the country announced last week that it, like Germany, was blocking 30 million euros (\$33 million) of subsidies to Brazil, accusing it of turning its back on the fight against deforestation.

Norway has been the single largest donor to the Amazon Fund for forest protection, giving almost 830 million euros since its creation 11 years ago. Oslo said Brazil, under Bolsonaro's leadership, "no longer wishes to stop deforestation" and said it unilaterally "broke the agreement" it had on the Amazon Fund. Bolsonaro reacted immediately and angrily. "Norway, isn't that the country that kills whales up there, at the North Pole? And that produces oil too? That is not at all a role model to us. Let them keep their money and let them help Angela Merkel reforest Germany," he said. — AFP

Foreigners arrested over ivory bracelets at Kenyan airport

NAIROBI: A Spanish woman has become the second foreigner in a week to be arrested at Kenya's international airport for wearing an ivory bangle, the wildlife service said yesterday. Spaniard Maria Pich-Aguilera, 50, was arrested on Sunday evening and faces a fine of one million shillings (\$9,800) or 12 months in prison for illegal possession of ivory. The Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) said in a statement she was "arrested at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport with an ivory bangle," while travelling from Nairobi to Tanzania's financial capital Dar es Salaam.

Last week a Frenchwoman was arrested at the airport on her way from France to Mayotte for possession of an ivory bracelet. She pleaded guilty and paid the one million shilling fine. "We noticed this new trend where ivory is smuggled through worked or processed bangles and we have increased surveillance," said an investigator speaking on condition of anonymity. A KWS official, also asking not to be named, said that trafficking included "ornamentals made out of ivory".

"It may be legal in other countries but here it is not. That is why you always hear a call to stop ivory trade all over the world because any small or big demand anywhere pushes poachers to meet the demands." Global trade in elephant ivory has largely been outlawed since 1989 after the animal's numbers plunged from millions in the mid-20th century. The African Elephant Database estimates that by 2015, fewer than 415,000 of the giant mammals remained on the continent.

Thousands of conservationists and policymakers from more than 180 countries are currently meeting in Geneva to tighten rules on trade in elephant ivory and products from other endangered animal and plants. The plight of African elephants is expected to dominate the discussions. Some countries are calling for the strongest possible level of protections for all African elephants, while countries in southern Africa, where populations have traditionally been better protected and healthier, are requesting the resumption of ivory stockpile sales. — AFP

Singapore to bolster defenses against rising sea levels

SINGAPORE: Singapore needs at least \$72 billion to build defenses against rising sea levels, its leader said Sunday as the low-lying city-state gears up against the impact of climate change. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong described climate change as "one of the gravest challenges facing humankind" and said the Southeast Asian country is already feeling the impact through a hotter weather and heavier rainstorms.

He devoted a large portion of a major policy speech late Sunday — which included initiatives on the economy and social issues — on how the city-state will tackle global warming. "Because we are a low-lying island, Singapore is especially vulnerable to one grave threat, and that is rising sea levels," he warned. City planners previously required buildings to be constructed at least three meters above the mean sea level, leaving a one-meter buffer against flooding after high tide.

But if sea levels rise by one meter due to global warming, the buffer could be breached when heavy rains coincide with high tide, prompting the government to require new developments to be built four meters above sea level.

Critical infrastructure like the Changi Airport's new Terminal 5 must be built five meters above sea level. Lee cited findings by Singapore's Centre for Climate Research that the city-state, "is more vulnerable to climate change than the global model suggests" because it is near the equator.

A key measure will be to build the island's coastal defenses, he said. One option is to learn from the experience of the Netherlands which reclaimed from the sea by building a seawall and then draining the water within it to create dry land called "polders", he said. "Polders are a serious option for us," the prime minister said, adding that Singapore will trial the process on a small scale. Another option is to reclaim "a series of islands offshore" and connect them with barrages to create a freshwater reservoir that can serve as a drainage for rainwater, he said.

The coastal defense infrastructure could cost the country at least Sg\$100 billion (\$72 billion) over the next 100 years, he said. "Because this is a 50 to 100-year problem, we can implement a 50 to 100-year solution," he said. "We should treat climate change defense like we treat the Singapore Armed Forces — with utmost seriousness... These are life and death matters." But unlike military defense in which war can be prevented, the rise in sea levels is a certainty — with only the timing being uncertain, he warned. In October, a landmark United Nations report warned that time is running out to avert global disaster and that avoiding climate chaos will require an unprecedented transformation of society and the world economy. — AFP



SINGAPORE: Visitors walk along the bridge leading to the Merlion park. — AFP

Victim-blamers have empathy, but it's for the perpetrators

WASHINGTON: You may have seen it among your own friends: a high-profile #MeToo case triggers responses that assign some or all the blame on a victim of sexual harassment, with men more likely than women to side with an accused male. New research published Sunday in the *Psychology of Women Quarterly* suggests it is men's empathy for other men, rather than their lack of empathy for women, that may be more important in explaining this effect.

"Men are accused of not being empathic enough — I would say they are as empathic as women, they just might have a different focus," Renata Bongiorno, who led the research, at the University of Exeter told AFP. More encouragingly, the work also found "victim-blaming" among men fell when they were asked to see a situation from a woman's perspective — a possible path towards mobilizing both genders against sexual harassment and assault.

The paper described two studies involving around 230 Australian university students who were asked to read about a clear-cut incident of sexual harassment created for the research using examples drawn from real life. The incident related to a female student who was harassed by a male student on the same campus. Over a period of several months, he made repeated unwanted advances that included slapping her buttocks, placing his arms around her waist, and emailing her pornographic images with suggestions they engage in the same acts.

On several occasions after drinking he would bang on her door demanding to be let in to "cuddle," then insult her when she refused to unlock her door. When the female student finally brought the incident to the college's attention, the male student admitted to most of the allegations but insisted he had been joking around, did not mean to upset her, and believed she "enjoyed the attention."

'Dark' side of empathy

In the first study, overall levels of victim-blaming were low and men and women showed equal levels of empathy for the female victim. But men showed greater empathy for the male perpetrator, which helped to explain why they were more likely than women to blame the victim. Bongiorno said this conformed to social identity theory in which members of a so-called "ingroup" are more likely to empathize with other members of the same group and engage in excusing behaviors.

In the second study, participants were asked to focus on how the incidents would affect the life of either the male or female student moving forward. Both men and women who focused on the male perpetrator's point of view showed greater empathy for him and blamed the female victim more. When they were asked to focus on the female victim's point of view, victim-blaming was lower by comparison for both genders.

Bongiorno argued that media depictions that focused too heavily on the potential impact on accused male harassers' careers and lives had damaging consequences that made it harder for victims to speak up. But she said: "I was encouraged by the second study, where we showed that when men have their attention turned toward the victim, their empathy for the male perpetrator was reduced along with their victim blaming. 'I think that's a positive message and way forward for the future.'" — AFP

Australia's Pacific island role challenged in climate row

WELLINGTON: Influential Pacific island leaders have called for Australia to be ousted from the region's main regional grouping, criticizing Canberra's "neo-colonial" attitudes and refusal to take urgent action on climate change. It comes after Australia was accused of muzzling leaders who wanted to use last week's Pacific Islands Forum in Tuvalu to issue a global call for action on climate change ahead of UN-sponsored talks in New York next month.

Australia's Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack then added further insult when he dismissed the islanders' concerns and said they could "come here and pick our fruit" to survive. Tuvalu Prime Minister Enele Sopoaga labelled McCormack's comments "abusive and offensive", challenging Australia's right to a place in the 18-member Pacific Islands Forum. "The spirit of the Pacific way is not understood by these guys, I don't think they understand anything about (it)," he told Radio New Zealand. "And if that's the case, what is the point of these guys remaining in the Pacific Island Leaders' Forum? I don't see any merit in that."

Sopoaga's views echoed those of Fiji's Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama, who over the weekend described his Australian counterpart Scott Morrison as "very insulting" and said China offered a more welcoming brand of diplomacy. Australia has a complex relationship with its Pacific island neighbours, who receive about Aus\$1.4 billion (\$950 million) a year in aid from Canberra. Despite the generous handouts, Pacific islanders often bristle at Australian attitudes to a region that officials in Canberra refer to as "our backyard".

'Difficult conversations'

Sopoaga said the Pacific Islands Forum row on climate

change reminded him of regional meetings decades ago, when "colonial masters" set the agenda. "We are still seeing reflections and manifestations of this neo-colonialist approach to what the leaders are talking about," he told RNZ. Canberra, alarmed at Beijing's diplomatic inroads into the region, last year launched a charm offensive labelled "the Pacific Step-up", aimed at bringing the islands closer and forestalling any chance of a Chinese military base in the region.

But the divisions over climate change exposed at the summit have proved deeper than expected, driving a wedge between Australia and the islands. Pacific leaders view global warming as an existential threat to low-lying nations requiring immediate action, including a rapid transition away from coal, to save their homes.

Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison concedes climate change is real but insists it can be managed in a way that does not hurt the economy, including the lucrative coal industry. Former Kiribati president Anote Tong, a long-time climate campaigner, said China now appeared a better partner in the Pacific because Australia's priority appeared to be preserving its coal industry, not helping to stop global warming.

"It's really about the lesser of two evils, I guess, and at the moment Australia is coming up as the worst of the two evils," he told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. "There's got to be a more respectful way of understanding each other. It cannot be dictated by the coal industry in the background." Tong called for Australia to be suspended from the PIF or sanctioned over its climate stance. Morrison acknowledged there had been "difficult conversations" with Pacific leaders but likened them to a family spat, denying



TUVALU: This handout photo taken and released on August 15, 2019 by the Australian Prime Minister's Office shows Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison (3rd R) talking with other leaders at the Pacific Islands Forum in Tuvalu. — AFP

there was any long-term damage to relations. "Just like any family that comes around the table we discuss all these things through... we've always been there. We will always be there," he told reporters over the weekend. — AFP

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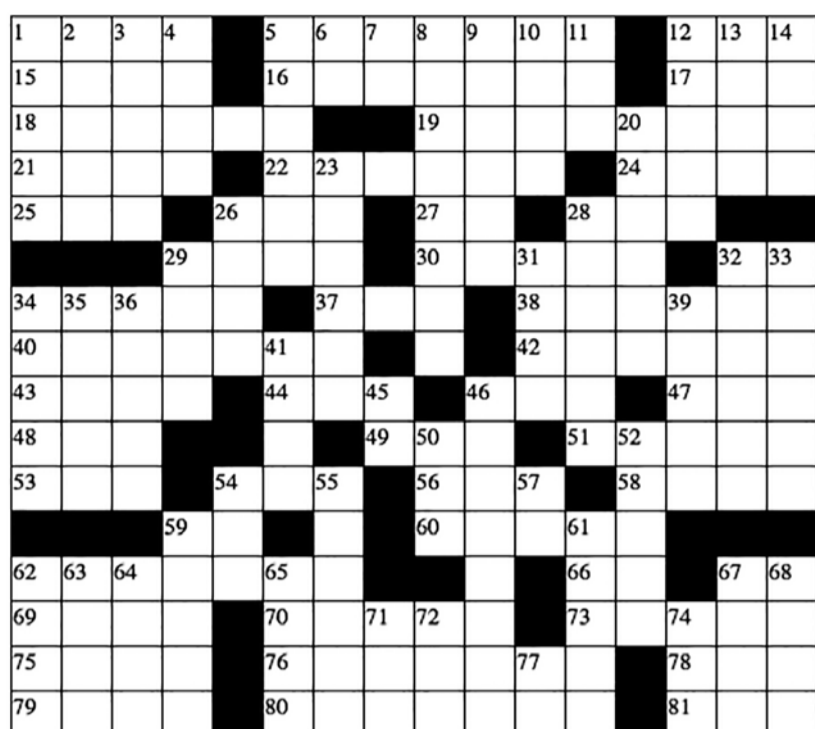
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ACROSS

- 1. A mixture of mashed malt grains and hot water.
5. Subject to or caused by an earthquake or earth vibration.
12. Any of various units of capacity.
15. Widely cultivated in tropical and subtropical regions for its fragrant flowers and colorful fruits.
16. The pelt of a leopard.
17. Of or relating to a member of the Buddhist people inhabiting the Mekong river in Laos and Thailand.
18. A state in the United States in the central Pacific on the Hawaiian Islands.
19. (botany) Of some seeds.
21. In bed.
22. English novelist (born in Poland) noted for sea stories and for his narrative technique (1857-1924).
24. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
25. A coenzyme derived from the B vitamin nicotinic acid.
27. An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.
30. An Indian side dish of yogurt and chopped cucumbers and spices.
34. Any of various hard resins from trees of the family Dipterocarpaceae and of the genus Agathis.
37. A user interface based on graphics (icons and pictures and menus) instead of text.
38. In a cagey manner.
40. Subdue, restrain, or overcome by affecting with a feeling of awe.
42. A sum of money paid in compensation for loss or injury.
43. With no effort to conceal.
44. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
47. A very small circular shape.
48. The 17th letter of the Greek alphabet.
49. The compass point that is one point east (clockwise) of due north.
51. Sound of any kind (especially unintelligible or dissonant sound).
53. Belonging to or on behalf of a specified person (especially yourself).
56. Consisting of or made of wood of the oak tree.
58. A complex red organic pigment containing iron and other atoms to which oxygen binds.
60. English scholastic philosopher and assumed author of Occam's Razor (1285-1349).
62. A member of any of various Indian peoples of central Mexico.
66. A complete metric system of units of measurement for scientists.
69. Any of various strong liquors distilled from the fermented sap of toddy palms or from fermented molasses.
70. A car that is closed and that has front and rear seats and two or four doors.
73. (of complexion) Blemished by imperfections of the skin.
75. Unpleasantly cool and humid.
76. A studio especially for an artist or designer.
78. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
79. Type genus of the Amidae.
80. (Old Testament) Wife of Isaac and mother of Jacob and Esau.
81. A piece of furniture that provides a place to sleep.

DOWN

- 1. United States naval officer and historian (1840-1914).
2. Jordan's port.
3. Fastened with stitches.
4. (of persons) Highest in rank or authority or office.
5. Prepared by cutting.
6. The branch of engineering science that studies the uses of electricity and the equipment for power generation and distribution and the control of machines and communication.
7. (Greek mythology) A maiden seduced by Zeus.
8. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
9. A percussion instrument consisting of a pair of hollow pieces of wood or bone (usually held between the thumb and fingers) that are made to click together (as by Spanish dancers) in rhythm with the dance.
10. Lacking sufficient water or rainfall.
11. A lipoprotein that transports cholesterol in the blood.
12. A loud harsh or strident noise.
13. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
14. United States physiologist (born in Germany) who did research on parthenogenesis (1859-1924).
20. Washing out a hollow organ (especially the stomach) by flushing with water.
23. Medieval artillery used during sieges.
26. God of death.
28. A soft cotton or worsted fabric with an open mesh.
29. Any of a group of Indic languages spoken in Kashmir and eastern Afghanistan and northern Pakistan.
31. The United Nations agency concerned with civil aviation.
32. A monosaccharide sugar that contains the aldehyde group or is hemiacetal.
33. A group of independent but interrelated elements comprising a unified whole.
35. A genus of Indridae.
36. Any of numerous fruits of the gourd family having a hard rind and sweet juicy flesh.
39. A republic in the Asian subcontinent in southern Asia.
41. Gully or streambed in North Africa and the Middle East that remains dry except during rainy season.
45. An associate degree in nursing.
46. Someone who prefers negotiations to armed conflict in the conduct of foreign relations.
50. A cry or noise made to express displeasure or contempt.
52. Of or relating to or measured in ohms.
54. The cry made by sheep.
55. Any fungus of the family Boletaceae.
57. One thousand periods per second.
59. (India) Absolutely first class and genuine.
61. The fourth month of the Hindu calendar.
63. The biblical name for ancient Syria.
64. A Loloish language.
65. A male monarch or emperor (especially of Russia prior to 1917).
67. (Greek mythology) The goddess of youth and spring.
68. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
71. A young woman making her debut into society.
72. Fermented alcoholic beverage similar to but heavier than beer.
74. Tag the base runner to get him out.
77. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

A friend may confide in you this day and you may find yourself tossing the information around in your head most of the day. Think about this—perhaps this person confided in you because he or she needs a listening ear, not necessarily for feedback. You will be able to help—patience. Follow your heart. You contribute to harmonious relationships with family members today. Financial problems can be settled. When you invest... Seek investments you believe in—making money can become doubly rewarding. Start by supporting a good cause. Time spent alone this evening can be very healing. Meditate and get your life together before going out.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Close personal ties to other people are a focal point for your feelings—marriage and other partnerships could be a key arena for your activities. You may be able to bring the family or perhaps a group of your friends together to enjoy a play, a musical or an art exhibit. Achievement in poetry and art may be possible now. Your whole world may seem trance-like or dreamy. Movies, books and all other forms of escape could prove enjoyable. This is a great time to reflect and understand your own path and any changes you might want to make. Your emotions and the feelings of those around you may be very easy to understand.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

There is time this morning to complete unfinished business, organize your desk and place a few plants around your work space. Make room for an extra sweater and some rain gear... Just in case. This afternoon you may be asked to lead a group in some project where a conservative mind is an important factor. In working with so many different age groups of people, you are still able to mold the group into one mind so that every person can contribute as one. You are wise to encourage each individual in the group for suggestions and help. Working within a group can include trust and fair play and some backing that adds up to a successful end result for your company. A loved one needs your support this evening.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

This is a good time for clear deliberation and problem solving. This is a vital day in which much energy and action is utilized. You could find yourself able to really communicate and get your ideas across to others. You are in a serious frame of mind and may find yourself dealing with matters of much concern and responsibility. A clear-minded insight serves you well. This is a very good time to communicate your goals and put them into words. Perhaps it is time for an employee review, but if not, it is certainly a good time to take your own notes that will help you focus on a few goals.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You may find your attention drawn to subjects like law, politics, education, travel and religion. These are certainly some of the areas in which an emotionally charged drama will be played. Perhaps this is a better time to think and study—you have a real appreciation for ideas. You may find yourself enjoying a long conversation, writing a letter or making a special phone call. You may find yourself being put to good use by your friends, or it could be that circumstances force you to reorganize and be more conservative. All of this should go rather smoothly. Your more common-sense qualities are valuable.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Hectic emotional energy, especially this morning, slows you from that long-desired camping trip or out-of-town visit with friends. Patience wins out and you will be on your way soon. Fun and adventure are on the schedule this day. Take a chance on something exciting, creative and fun. Socializing is your talent and you can use it to your best interest—networking. This evening, new energies seem to fill you up with fresh ideas and thoughts. You could be at your most imaginative. New creative endeavors, including writing, will be well worth your time and effort.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

The home and family scene are likely to be in a state of change now—this may mean moving, an addition to the family, or such. High-tech equipment impinges on the domestic environment somehow. An eccentric relative attracts some notice. You like for things to go smoothly and sometimes the bumps in the road are difficult to work through but you have the strength and enthusiasm to succeed and not become unsettled. You will do your best to close the gap between any misunderstandings among family members or between friends just now. Close personal ties to other people are a focal point for your feelings—marriage and other partnerships could be a key arena for this.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

At heart, you have a deep sense of responsibility and purpose and this seriousness is genuine and felt by others. Your inner resources and emotions are accented. A group discussion may find you stepping in to lend a focus. Expect a sense of support and goodwill from those around you. You may be able to enjoy and value your own life situation today or feel especially kind toward a friend or loved one. A visitor to your home may want to know about a fun sightseeing tour, or a play. Your unique and unusual qualities make you the center of conversation: everything is positive. You may find that others are supportive of your ideas.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You may feel more reflective rather than expressive this morning. A new project is looming before you and a time limit may be involved. You might want to discuss the preliminaries with the most available supervisor. Pulling in a temporary helper may be of some importance. You, however, are good at isolating what doesn't work. You find ways to eliminate any difficulty and you move forward. Tonight you may find yourself helping someone move or caring for children so that friends can have some time alone.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Family and security are things that rattle your chain more than ever now. These are areas where you make new beginnings and bold moves—things you are willing to fight for... Things in which it pays to be careful. Unconventional hobbies and other forms of self-expression may be enjoyed today. Too much time spent with your own project, however, may play havoc with someone else's plans. Refinement and relationships are the keys to emotional satisfaction for you. Harmony and beauty are deeply satisfying—and the lack of them can be emotionally unsettling. Be sure to set aside time for others today.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Your love of truth makes philosophy and religious ideas lifelong habits. You appreciate things of a global or universal level and travel or studies of foreign lands could be a part of this interest. You may enjoy the company of friends this afternoon. Appearances mean little to you and you value honesty and sincerity in friends and partners. This is a time when you may feel very passionate, or during which your feelings, emotions and basic life urges undergo change and transformation. You feel more personal and direct and find that you waste less time with hurt feelings than before.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

An outgoing and very expressive cycle of experience has begun for you at this time. Now more than ever, you want to be admired and appreciated by others, to do and create things that stir their hearts. This is child's play: this is romance; this is taking a chance. This may be a time you find yourself among friends or family that look to you for guidance. Figuring things out takes on special significance for you. A heightened interest in health and diet, as well as an urge to get things organized into a rational system, is a part of this. Much mental busywork goes on today. Friends, group projects and community concerns could play a key role that effects your career direction. Altruism and humanitarian efforts can affect your work and life-path.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Chess

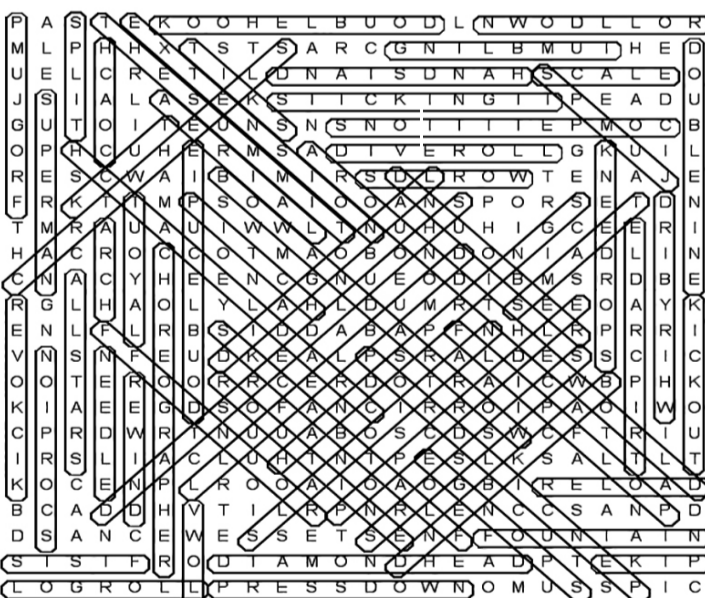
Find and circle all of the Chess words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message. Note: QUEEN and QUEENING are separately hidden and do not overlap.



- ATTACK BISHOP BLITZ CHESS BLOCKED BLUNDER CAPTURE CASTLING CENTER CHECKMATE CHESSBOARD
CHAMPIONSHIP DEEP BLUE DIAGONAL EN PASSANT ENDGAME EXCHANGE FILE FISCHER FORK GAMBIT
GRANDMASTER JUMP KASPAROV KIBITZING KING KING PROMOTION QUEEN QUEENING ROOK LOSE MATE IN TWO MIDDLEGAME OPENING
PAWN PIECE PROMOTION QUEEN QUEENING ROOK SACRIFICE TOURNAMENT WIN

Yesterday's Solution

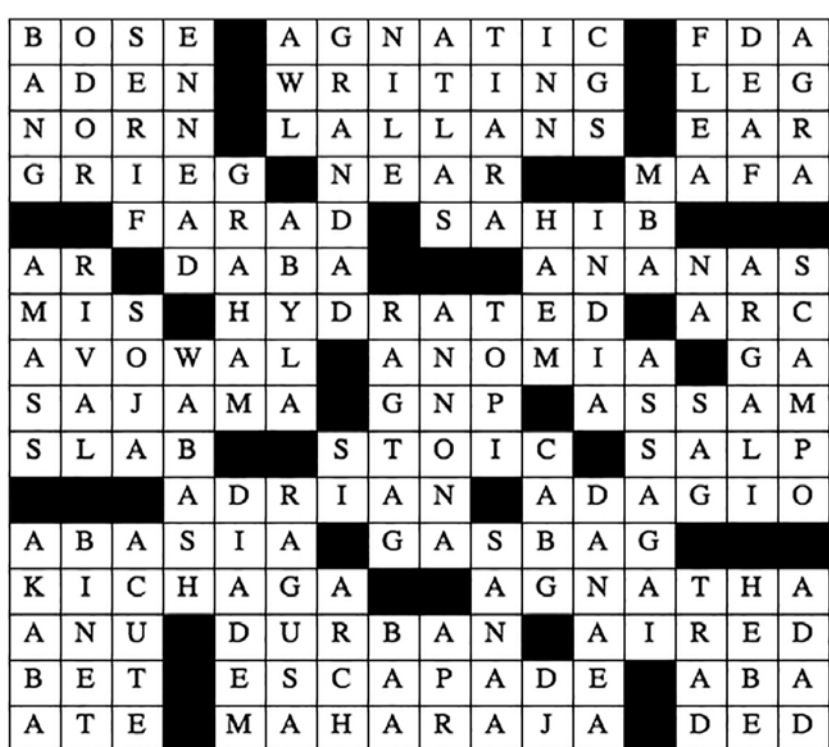
Cheerleading - All Star



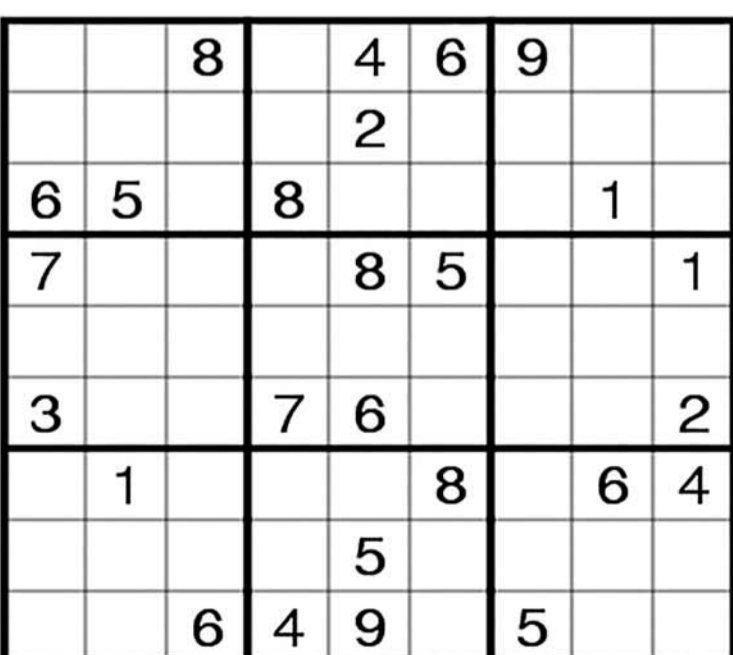
- AERIAL ALL STARS ARCH AROUND THE WORLD BACK BEND BOW AND ARROW CARTWHEELS CHOREOGRAPHER COACH COMPETITIONS CRADLE CATCH DIAGONAL DIAMOND HEAD
DOUBLE CUIPE DOUBLE FULL DOUBLE HOOK DOUBLE NINE EXTENSION FISTS FLAT BACKS FLIP FLOP FOUNTAIN FROG JUMP HANDSPRINGS HEADSTAND
KICK OUT KICK OVER KNEE DROPS LAYOUT LOG ROLL LOW V NATIONALS NEEDLE PENCIL DROP PITCH POP CRADLE PRESS DOWN REBOUND RELOAD ROLL DOWN ROUND OFF ROUTINE SCALE SCISSORS SCORPION SHOULDER STAND SKIT SPLIT SPONGE STICKING IT SUPERMAN TEAMS THE SUMMIT TRIP CRADLE TUCK TUMBLING WHIRYBIRD WORLDS

The hidden message is: ALL STAR CHEERLEADING IS A TEAM SPORT WHICH COMBINES GYMNASTICS, ACROBATICS AND DANCE, SET TO MUSIC.

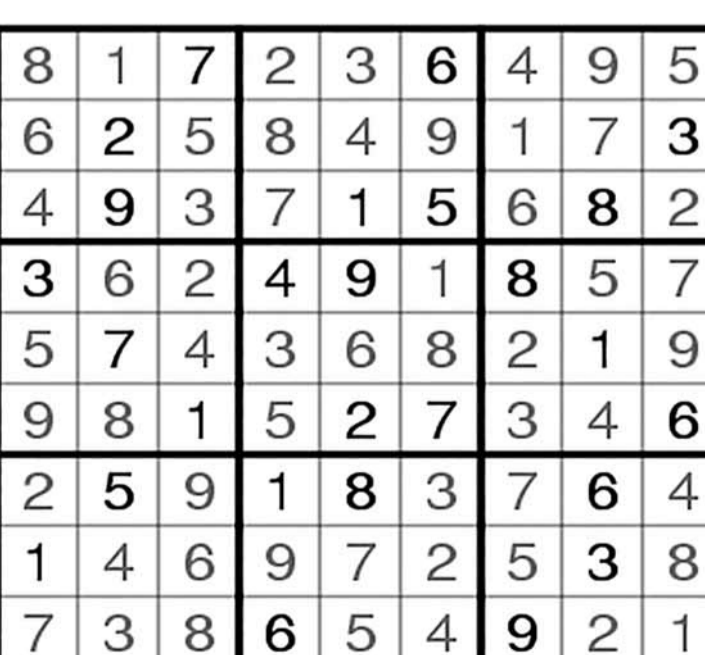
Yesterday's Solution



Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

TUESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2019



Dancers get ready to participate in the Havana Carnival in Havana yesterday. This year the Carnivals are dedicated to the 500 years of the Havana Foundation . — AFP



Guests attend the 50th anniversary celebration of Woodstock.—AFP photos



Mick and Amanda Jenkins attend the 50th anniversary celebration of Woodstock.



Artist Christopher Peter Vanderessen attends the 50th anniversary celebration of Woodstock.

HIPPIES YOUNG AND OLD KEEP THE 'REAL WOODSTOCK' FLAME ALIVE

The Woodstock name has become more brand than spirit for many hippies, but people spanning the generations continue to seek its aura, looking for more "authentic" ways to pay homage to the spot where it all began. People like visual artist and activist Christopher Peter Vanderessen shun "commercial" events like those held at Bethel Woods Center for the Arts, where the grounds that hosted the 1969 Woodstock stage are located and a handful of veteran acts like Santana are playing for the 50th anniversary weekend. The 45-year-old is among those in a generation too young to reminisce about that 1969's weekend of peace, love and music, but who value the ideals that Woodstock came to symbolize enough to carry them on.

Wielding a walking staff etched with beaver teeth marks and wearing a long black cloak emblazoned with neon paint, he journeys each year to the forest behind the old Yasgur farmstead—also part of the sprawling original grounds that were lent to Woodstock organizers by a benevolent farmer in 1969. Scores of people camp out annually there to honor what they consider to be the original festival's spirit. Children run wild as people of all ages dance, paint and relax in hammocks among the tall pine trees, and a number of local bands play for the crowd.

A muddy path flanked by greenery snakes among dozens of makeshift stands proffering crystals, pipes, tapestries and tie-dye T-shirts with slogans like "Make America Grateful Again"—a reference to the

quintessential 1960s rockers The Grateful Dead mashed with US President Donald Trump's slogan. "This is a little different than all the other Woodstock things," the 45-year-old told AFP as the sun crept through the clouds, casting glimmers of light on the colorful yarn he threaded among trees at his campsite to create an intricate web.

"This is more of a family reunion. It's not the commercial stuff," he said. "What they don't get about Woodstock, was that it was meant to be this big commercial." But facing a crush of people and lack of barriers the original Woodstock became free, Vanderessen recalled, "so for most of us it's a pilgrimage to come here. It's not about, 'Who is on the lineup.'" "It's just that we need to be here."

Living the Woodstock story

Those gathered in the woods behind Yasgur's farm are decidedly younger than the crowd convened at the Bethel center, where the beer comes from a sponsored tent rather than a new friend's cooler. Mick and Amanda Jenkins, Pennsylvania natives who are respectively 37 and 34, subscribe to the hippie lifestyle—what they call "ideas of non-showy simplicity"—they say their parents imparted on them.

For Amanda, it's important to thread hippie principles of peace through the generations as part of preserving "a legacy and a story that needs to be told." "If somebody is not there to tell this story, then the story dies," said the high school teacher, flower crown like a halo atop her wavy blonde locks

and crystals including an amethyst, a healing stone, in hand. Perched against a tree nearby Michael Mahana, a three-year-old with a blonde bob, plays in the mud with sticks, far from the tech-rich environments of his peers.

His mother, Californian Shronnie Jean Miller, 42, says she grew up living on the road as a "dead-head"—a groupie of the Grateful Dead who follows the band's tours—and that camping out in the woods is "like my Ritz." A local who goes by the name "Teach" came over to give her son a child's size poncho in case the rains sweep in. "It's all peace and love and a good vibe," she said. "We're all just at home in the woods."

For New York state resident Vanderessen, who in addition to web building specializes in painting people's clothes while they're still wearing them, being a hippie is simply "being aware of social change, and being a part of the change rather than... complaining about what other people are doing. As he's done for three decades he'll be back next year to this hippie enclave, not for nostalgia for what was but rather what he believes could be—a more relaxed, more inclusive society. "It's about respecting what was there but also showing how we're evolving and changing," the psychedelic trance music fan who sports long dark hair said. "That's what Woodstock is about." "It shouldn't be a concert, it should be a worldwide holiday." — AFP



Artist Christopher Peter Vanderessen attends the 50th anniversary celebration of Woodstock.



A woman makes bubbles during the Yasgur Road Reunion- 50th Woodstock Anniversary Celebration.

Lifestyle | Features

Obamas' first film charts life in US factory under China bosses

"They refer to us as the foreigners," says a downbeat employee at the Ohio car glass factory where hundreds of Chinese laborers have come to work, far from their wives, children and homeland. But the worker in question is American, not Chinese, and is finding life very different under new management after billionaire "Chairman Cao" swept into town to reopen the shuttered, iconic former General Motors factory in 2014. This is "reverse globalization," say Oscar-nominated directors Steven Bognar and Julia Reichert, who filmed the GM plant's closure in 2008 and returned to chronicle its reopening by Fuyao corporation for the documentary "American Factory."

The film charts a Midwestern rust belt community's journey from optimism at the giant plant's reopening—bringing back vital jobs—toward creeping anger and disillusionment as the Chinese management imposes its strict, exhausting demands on workers and sacks those who don't comply. The all-access look at how both American and Chinese workers, from blue-collar to management, had their lives transformed by powerful global economic forces caught the eyes of none other than Barack and Michelle Obama.

The former first couple acquired "American Factory" at January's Sundance Festival, and will release it on Netflix and in select theaters from August 21 as the first offering from their Higher Ground Productions company. "Mrs. Obama said it resonated with her because her father had done an intense, hardworking job for decades just to provide for his family, and she felt the Midwestness of the film in what she saw on screen," Bognar told AFP. "She felt her own family in the film, and I think the President felt there was a certain amount of policy issues and big broad globalization" themes in the documentary, added Reichert.

'Cultural chasm'

The battle for economic supremacy between the US and a rising China is perhaps the defining geopolitical story of the 21st century. The filmmakers set out to understand what that rivalry looks like on a human level, and were granted extraordinary access by Fuyao founder and chairman Cao Dewang, who was as interested in bridging the cultural divide and showcasing Chinese capitalism as making a profit. "The chairman's a maverick—he's very much his own person, an independent self-made business guy," said Bognar.

"He'd seen our earlier film and liked it, and so he took a chance on us," he added, referring to 2009's "The Last



In this file photo Julia Reichert, Lindsay Utz, Steven Bognar and Chad Cannon pose at Film Independent Presents Special Screening Of "American Factory" at ArcLight Hollywood in Hollywood, California. — AFP photos



In this file photo Steven Bognar and Julia Reichert pose at Film Independent Presents Special Screening Of "American Factory" at ArcLight Hollywood in Hollywood, California.

Truck: Closing of a GM Plant." In the new documentary's early scenes, genuine attempts by the US and Chinese workers to bond with their new colleagues, including fishing and shooting lessons and shared Thanksgiving dinners, appear to bear some fruit. But as the new Chinese owners become alarmed by heavy financial losses, they fire the American middle managers and increasingly invoke their Chinese replacements' sense of nationalistic pride to spur harder work, leaving the workforce ever-more divided.

Despite promises, wages remain frozen far below those of the GM era, while workers' attempts to unionize and confront slipping safety standards are aggressively shut down from above. "The cultural chasm was wider than people anticipated," said Bognar, noting that the new Chinese owners felt equally baffled and let down by

the attitudes of US workers. "To their credit, as the pressure mounted they did not kick us out, they certainly could have kicked us out at any point," he added.

'Sense of unease'

While the factory in Moraine, Ohio is of symbolic significance due to its size and legacy, it is not unique—Chinese-owned factories are now abundant across the American South and Midwest. Like Fuyao, many are housed in the same buildings formerly shut down by American bosses who shipped jobs overseas to Mexico and elsewhere. "You're getting a slice of what globalization really looks like on a human level," said Reichert, adding: "I think the film leaves you with a sense of unease."

Nobody has tapped into that disquiet better than

President Donald Trump, whose 2016 victory was built on successes in Ohio and nearby Michigan and Wisconsin. For Ohio-based Reichert and Bognar, who have spent years interviewing blue-collar workers, that result was no surprise. "We saw that coming, being in Ohio—the enthusiasm, the yard signs," said Reichert. "Hillary Clinton was not well liked."

Trump promised the region's laid-off workers they would get back their jobs. Earlier this year, another enormous GM factory in nearby Lordstown, Ohio became the latest to close. But in a strange quirk, even as Chinese investment in the US has plummeted by over 80 percent under Trump's tariff war, jobs like those provided by Fuyao have become an important lifeline. — AFP

'Good Boys' tops N. American box office

Universal's kid-oriented comedy "Good Boys" topped the North American box office this weekend, taking in an estimated \$21 million for the weekend, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations reported Sunday. It was the first time an R-rated comedy had placed No. 1 since the same studio's Melissa McCarthy film "The Boss" in early 2016, according to Hollywood Reporter. "Good Boys," produced by Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg, follows three 12-year-olds—played by Brady Noon, Jacob Tremblay and Keith L. Williams—as they desperately try to get into a kissing party.

The three-day weekend was a good one for Universal, as last week's top movie "Fast & Furious Presents: Hobbs & Shaw"—starring Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson and Jason Statham—slipped just one spot from first to second, taking in \$14 million. In third spot for a second straight week, showing considerable staying power, was Disney's animated "The Lion King," at \$11.9 million. Its all-star voice cast includes Rogen, Donald Glover, Beyoncé, James Earl Jones and Chiwetel Ejiofor.

Sony's new animation "The Angry Birds Movie 2" placed fourth, at \$10.5 million. That was a big drop from the original "Angry Birds" movie, which opened in May 2016 at \$38.2 million. And in fifth was Lionsgate's "Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark," at \$10.1 million. Based on the children's horror books, it stars Zoe Colletti, Michael Garza and Gabriel Rush. Rounding out the weekend's top 10 were:

"47 Meters Down: Uncaged" (\$9 million)
"Dora & the Lost City of Gold" (\$8.5 million)
"Once Upon a Time in...Hollywood" (\$7.6 million)
"Blinded by the Light" (\$4.5 million)
"The Art of Racing in the Rain" (\$4.4 million).

— AFP



In this file photo taken (from left) Actors Brady Noon, Jacob Tremblay, Keith L. Williams and Chance Hurstfield arrive for the premiere of "Good Boys", at the Regency Village Theatre in Westwood, California. — AFP



The Ignalina nuclear power plant is pictured in Visaginas, Lithuania. — AFP photos



A man stands inside the monitoring room inside the inoperative Ignalina nuclear power plant in Visaginas, Lithuania.



Tour guide Jurgita Norvaisiene points at a measurement device during a guided tour inside the monitoring room of the inoperative Ignalina nuclear power plant in Visaginas, Lithuania.



People take part in a guided tour at the inoperative Ignalina nuclear power plant in Visaginas, Lithuania.

HBO's 'Chernobyl' sparks tours, stokes fears in Lithuania

Walking along the top of Lithuania's decommissioned nuclear reactor, the set of HBO's critically acclaimed "Chernobyl" TV series, tourist Vytas Miknaitis says he's not "afraid at all." "They know what they're doing," the retired computer engineer from Chicago says, referring to organizers of the three-hour tour of the Ignalina power station in eastern Lithuania. Similar in design to Chernobyl, some 450 kilometers (280 miles) away, the Ignalina reactor provided the backdrop for the show's outdoor scenes, shot last year.

The Baltic state's only nuclear power plant built in Soviet times was open to the public even before the "Chernobyl" drama first aired in May but has since seen a steady uptick in visitors on the heels of the show's success. Tourists don white overalls, walk on top of the reactor and tour the various work stations, including a command post built to resemble the one in the series.

They can even pretend to be the protagonists pushing the various buttons. Ignalina plant spokeswoman Natalija Survila-Glebova said that the series had attracted a new stream of visitors, mostly Lithuanians but also foreign tourists from countries like Poland, Latvia and Britain. Last month, there were 900 visitors, she told AFP, adding that tours were "almost completely booked through the end of the year". Due to the ongoing dismantling work, tours are only open to adults.

Dark tourism

The Soviet Union's Chernobyl plant, in what is now Ukraine, was the scene of the world's worst nuclear disaster, when one of its reactors exploded in 1986 during testing. It polluted a big part of Europe, with the area immediately around the power plant the worst affected. In recent

years, the abandoned site has become a "dark tourism" destination, even before the eponymous TV drama that has picked up 19 Emmy nominations.

Lithuania, which like Ukraine is a former Soviet republic, began decommissioning Ignalina in December 2009. The European Union made its closure a condition of the small country's 2004 entry into the bloc as the plant had two reactors that were the same model as those at Chernobyl.

Drab is fab

"Chernobyl" tours have also sprung up in other parts of Lithuania where the series was filmed, including the capital, Vilnius. Visitor Vytautas Kastanauskas, who works in tourism, marveled at how the producers were able to recast parts of the picturesque city as a Soviet-era industrial outpost. "The atmosphere of the time and the nature of the relationships between people, everything was recreated perfectly in the series," the 47-year-old, who experienced Soviet times, told AFP.

The northern Fabijoniskes neighborhood was transformed into Pripyat, a city of nearly 50,000 people near Chernobyl that was abandoned after the disaster. The makers of "Chernobyl" used the drab, grey district, with row upon row of Soviet-era housing blocks, as the location to shoot Pripyat's mass evacuation. And one young Lithuanian has even refurbished his grandparents' Fabijoniskes apartment in the Soviet style and opened it up to visitors and Airbnb stays.

Jurate Pazikaite, of the Vilnius Film Office, says that the series has "focused a lot of attention" on the city of around half a million people, putting it on the map as a prime location for filmmakers. Tax breaks for production

companies introduced in 2014 have lured a growing number of crews, she said.

The BBC's 2016 miniseries adaptation of Leo Tolstoy's "War and Peace" cast Vilnius as both 19th-century Moscow and the Austrian Alps. A new HBO drama series, "Catherine the Great" starring Oscar winner Helen Mirren, has also partly been shot in the Lithuanian capital.

Emergency iodine, sirens

But the "Chernobyl" series is not only generating curiosity and pride in Lithuania. It has also fed into unease that was already felt over a new nuclear plant, set to open in neighboring Belarus. Spearheaded by the Russian state energy corporation, Rosatom, the plant, featuring two reactors, each with a capacity of 1,200 megawatts, is expected to go online later this year.

Lithuania says that the facility in the northwestern Belarusian town of Ostrovet, just 20 kilometers (12 miles) from its border, does not meet safety standards. Minsk rejects the claim. "The Chernobyl series has affected us deeply, my friends and I talk about this topic (nuclear risk)," says Ieva Nagyte, a 27-year-old, who works at the Vilnius Academy of Arts. "If the Ostrovet nuclear reactors exploded, I'm not sure we'd know what to do," she told AFP.

However, Lithuanian authorities are preparing for the worst—they have stockpiled iodine tablets used to ward off certain forms of radiation poisoning, established evacuation routes and are testing emergency sirens, according to the internal affairs ministry. — AFP

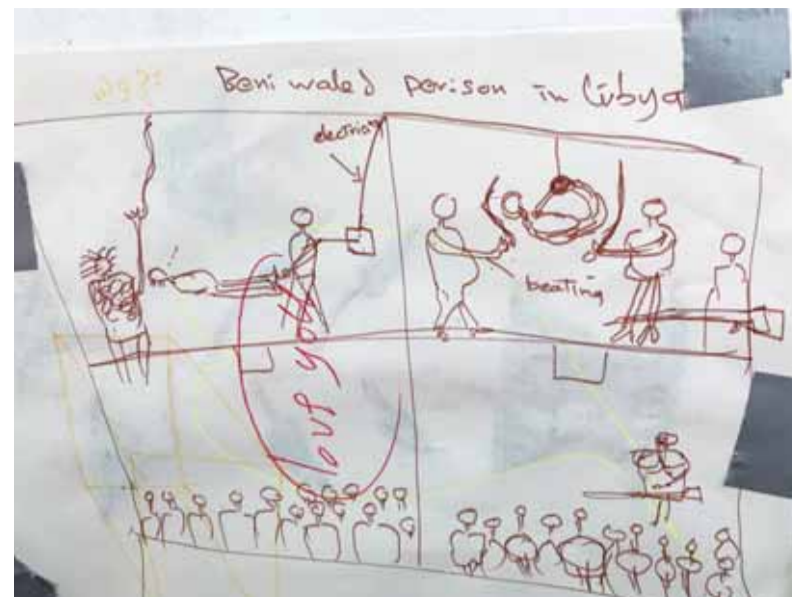
Lifestyle | Features



A rescued migrant called Adam, 18, poses next to his drawing of a torture scene in Bani Walid secret prison in northwest Libya, onboard the 'Ocean Viking' rescue ship. — AFP photos



A rescued migrant called Ezzo poses next to his drawing depicting his village at the bottom of the Nuna Mounts in southern Sudan.



A picture taken onboard the 'Ocean Viking' rescue ship shows a drawing of a torture scene in Bani Walid secret prison in northwest Libya made by a rescued migrant called Adam.



A picture taken onboard the 'Ocean Viking' rescue ship shows drawings made by rescued migrants.



A picture taken onboard the 'Ocean Viking' rescue ship, shows a drawing made by rescued migrants depicting the rescue operation.



Migrants watch or wait for a haircut as migrant and barber Abdulmoniem Ahmed (not pictured) from Darfour shaves the head of another young migrant on deck of the 'Ocean Viking' rescue ship.



Migrant and barber Abdulmoniem Ahmed (left) from Darfour shaves the head of another young migrant on deck of the 'Ocean Viking' rescue ship.



A rescued migrant called Arun Mohamed poses next to his drawing of the Darfur under the bombs, onboard the 'Ocean Viking' rescue ship.



A rescued migrant called Arun Mohamed poses next to his drawing of the Darfur under the bombs, onboard the 'Ocean Viking' rescue ship.

Migrants' drawings depict their nightmares and best memories

Torture in Libya, war in Darfur, a home village in southern Sudan and the emblematic baobab tree in Senegal—the drawings displayed on the bridge of the Ocean Viking rescue ship tell of the lives of the migrants on board. As they wait for a welcoming port in Europe, the 356 migrants plucked by the ship operated by SOS Mediterranean and Doctors without Borders (MSF) were invited to take some crayons and paper and draw their

worst nightmares and their best memories. Surrounded by his countrymen, Arun Mohamed explains his images to an AFP correspondent aboard the vessel.

Sudan's Darfur region was in flames when he fled in 2011 during the conflict to go to the capital Khartoum and then on to Libya. His drawing showed planes targeting his home, the roof on fire and his family fleeing. A sketch by Adam, 18, who dreams of becoming a professional foot-

baller, depicts a young man in Libya hanging from the ceiling, his feet and hands tied, as two men thrash him before other prisoners lined up. "Yes, it was like that, we waited in a line, each one facing his turn," murmurs some in the crowd that had gathered around the artwork.

Another image was a map of Libya in blood red. "Good-bye hell," says the artist Allahaddin, smiling and making a V sign for victory. Some like Ezzo prefer to

remember good things: his bucolic village on the banks of a lake where he learned to swim not far from Nuba Mountains in Sudan. The drawings also tell how the migrants floundering at sea in small, flimsy boats were saved 10 days ago and taken aboard a big red rescue ship, as the Ocean Viking remains stranded in the Mediterranean waiting for a European nation to allow it to pull into port. — AFP



People attend a recital by Turkey's pianist and composer Fazil Say against deforestation near the town of Kirazli in Turkey's Canakkale province, in northwestern Turkey.

Turkey pianist performs against cyanide gold mine deforestation

Hundreds of Turks on Sunday attended a piano recital by composer Fazil Say in protest at deforestation for the construction of a cyanide gold mine in northwestern Turkey. Canadian mining firm Alamos Gold Inc., which has bought the site near the town of Kirazli in the Canakkale province, has faced strong resistance from activists over the last two weeks. Environmentalists have launched a campaign to halt the construction of the mine over allegations that tens of thousands of trees have had to be cut down.

Authorities, however, dispute this saying only around 13,000 trees have been cut down and that they will be replanted later. Activists argue that the mine-related activities in the region could severely damage the environment. After the concert, opponents walked to the mine site in protest. — AFP



Turkish pianist and composer Fazil Say gives a performance against deforestation on the site of a controversial gold-mine project near the town of Kirazli in Canakkale province, northwestern Turkey. — AFP photos



Two women stand before the plaque of their pets after placing offerings at "Te Dong Vat Nga" pagoda, which means all lives are equal, a cemetery for pets in Hanoi.



A woman prays before the plaque of her dog at "Te Dong Vat Nga" pagoda. — AFP photos

Ghost month grub: Dead pets get earthly feast at Vietnam animal cemetery



A woman cleans the plaque of her dog at "Te Dong Vat Nga" pagoda.

Sausages, grapes, milk and mooncakes are laid at the gravestones of beloved cats and dogs at Hanoi's pet cemetery—an earthly feast for the souls of dead animals believed to return from the afterlife for a meal to mark ghost month. Dozens of pet owners turned out for a solemn ceremony at the "Te Dong Vat Nga" pagoda—which means all lives are equal—where thousands of dogs and cats have been laid to rest in the burial grounds on site. It is a feasting ritual more often performed across Vietnam for dead ancestors whose souls are believed to wander the earth during ghost month and are honored with a large meal offering before it closes at the end of August.

But the charismatic dog-loving Buddhist who runs the pet graveyard believes animal souls should be treated with the same dignity as human ones. "We love dogs and cats not just in this life but in the next life as well," said Nguyen Bao Sinh, who opened the graveyard 50 years ago. He says he's cremated or buried around 10,000 animals—including the odd turtle, bird or fish—and charges \$45 to \$65 a year to pet owners to set up plaques and mini gravestones for their lost pets.

It's a small price to pay for those who want to make sure their beloved animals are comfortable in the afterlife. "Bon deserves to have a decent resting place permanently so that he can be at peace," Nguyen Anh Minh

told AFP after leaving milk, yoghurt and grapes for his husky who died earlier this year. For Nguyen Thi Xuan Trang, giving her dog Quoc—who she thought of as a son—a proper burial has brought her peace of mind.

"I bought him peanuts and a mooncake because those were his favorite foods," she said. Cemetery owner Sinh said people thought he was crazy when he opened the site in a country where dog and cat meat is sometimes offered as menu items for hungry diners. Though cats and dogs are more commonly kept as pets in Vietnam these days, it's not unusual to see guard dogs confined to cages or illicit animal parts like rhino horn or pangolin scales used in traditional medicine.

Sinh, a former soldier who's now deceased dog accompanied him to the battlefield during the Vietnam War, hopes the pet graveyard will help people see animals in a new light—and spread a message of kindness. "Animals and humans are equal," he said. "When you love an animal you will not be cruel to human beings." — AFP



Lighted candles and incense are placed before a plaque of a dog at "Te Dong Vat Nga" pagoda.



Nguyen Bao Sinh, the owner of a cemetery for pets leads a prayer ceremony for dogs and cats at "Te Dong Vat Nga" pagoda.



People burn votive offerings of paper money for dogs and cats at "Te Dong Vat Nga" pagoda".



Nguyen Bao Sinh, the owner of a cemetery for pets, prepares for a prayer ceremony for dogs and cats at "Te Dong Vat Nga" pagoda.



Nguyen Thi Xuan Trang touches the plaque of her dog while praying at "Te Dong Vat Nga" pagoda.



A woman looks at the grave of dogs and cats at "Te Dong Vat Nga" pagoda.

Libyans chose danger at sea over peril at home

AT SEA: For three young Libyans plucked from a deflating dingy in the Mediterranean, the perils of trying to cross the sea were still preferable to what they had left behind in their war-torn home. Salah, Khalil and Ibrahim, aged between 19 and 22, sat in a corner of the Ocean Viking vessel operated by SOS Mediterranean and Doctors without Borders as it waited for permission to dock at a port. They sat apart from other migrants from Sudan, Chad, Ethiopia, Senegal and the Ivory Coast who have fled torture and abuse in Libya where most of them had gone to seek work. "I had no idea how dangerous the sea could be," says Khalil, 20. "But Libya is collapsing - you cannot live there," he adds, pulling an imaginary trigger.

Before he fled Libya, Khalil was a taxi driver. While driving the route from Sabha, his hometown in the center to the eastern city of Benghazi, he was stopped by militia loyal to Khalifa Haftar, a strongman who holds sway in the region. He said he was thrown into prison where he languished for three months alongside hundreds of others and was beaten daily, pointing to a scar in the corner of his mouth. He later made a break for freedom with about 15 fellow prisoners, running the gauntlet of their jailers who fired on them as they fled. "People were shot around me but I didn't stop," he said. "I was hit too."

Luca, the ship's doctor who removed the bullets

embedded in Khalil's body, says such wounds are nothing new among those fleeing from conflict areas. With his taxi taken from him, Khalil returned to his family. "I just wanted to live a normal life," he said. But a month later fighting broke out in his town and his mother told him to flee. "She had no idea of how dangerous the crossing could be," Khalil says. "Neither did I. I was happy to try the sea." But by the time he was rescued by Doctors without Borders on Aug 12, the blue rubber dingy he was sharing with 104 others was on the verge of sinking.

Nineteen-year-old Salah joined the forces of the Government of National Accord of Fayez Al-Sarraj. But he soon realized that he was not cut out for war. "If I had stayed, I would have been killed - either by Sarraj's men for fleeing, or by Haftar's men for fighting for Sarraj," he said. He got a number from a Sudanese, and left the same day - with just time for one last selfie with his family.

Ibrahim's reason for fleeing was the color of his skin. "My father was black - he is dead. My uncle died in the fighting. My school was bombed. My mother said to me 'Libya is not a country for you.'" "My Sudanese friends were like a family to me. One from Darfur was killed right in front of me as we were on our way to play football," he said. "I didn't want to fight. I was terrified on that blue boat, but Libya is more dangerous than our sunken vessel." — AFP



(From left) Salah, 19, Ibrahim, 22 and Khalil, 20, three migrants from Libya, sit on deck of the 'Ocean Viking' rescue ship on Sunday during a search-and-rescue operation in the Mediterranean Sea. — AFP

Cairo's Baron Palace facelift sparks outcry

CAIRO: Egyptian authorities have defended renovation works at a historic Cairo palace after the site's new look sparked mockery on social media. The site, dubbed the Baron Palace, was built between 1907 and 1911 by wealthy Belgian industrialist Edouard Empain. The baron also spearheaded the development of the surrounding upmarket neighborhood of Heliopolis. Built in a style reminiscent of the Cambodian Hindu temple of Angkor Wat, the striking building set amid lush gardens has long since fallen into disrepair.

But work to restore the building has sparked outcry. Many have taken issue with white marble additions to the building's rosy pink stone exterior, saying the materials are of poor quality and not in keeping with the original style. One Twitter user asked: "Who is the fool behind the restoration of Egypt's palaces? Our heritage is being systematically destroyed." A Facebook page called Egyptian Historians chided officials for the

"warped" restoration. "Be honest with yourselves and admit that you ruined it... you are literally demolishing our monuments," a post on the group's page said.

Antiquities Minister Khaled El-Enany dismissed online criticisms as "fake news". "I didn't hear one word of truth in all these social media comments," he said in a statement. His ministry said the colors of the palace had faded from weather damage over many years. "The restoration is a real dream and we will breathe life into this abandoned landmark," Enany added. General Hisham Samir, who heads up the ministry's engineering branch, said the colors were "correct and are backed up by historical sources".

The works began in July 2017 in cooperation with the Belgian government and will cost 100 million Egyptian pounds (over \$6 million), the statement added. Samir told AFP that the work is expected to be completed by year's end with plans to open the building to the public by early 2020. Egypt's multitude of historical monuments and buildings are a major draw for tourists, though the country has often faced accusations of neglecting these sites. The government has recently launched various restoration projects to stimulate tourism, a key sector that has suffered in recent years due to political insecurity and sporadic militant attacks. — AFP



CAIRO: This picture taken on Sunday shows restoration works ongoing at the historic "Le Palais Hindou" (also known as the "Baron Empain Palace") in the Egyptian capital's Heliopolis district. — AFP

Iran warns US as freed tanker...

Continued from Page 1

As the ship finally sailed eastward, Iran said it had warned the United States through the Swiss embassy in Tehran, which represents US interests, against trying to seize it again. "Iran has given necessary warnings to American officials through its official channels... not to make such a mistake because it would have grave consequences," said foreign ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi. Speaking at a news conference, he dismissed the notion of any link between the seizure of the Iranian tanker off Gibraltar and the British-flagged tanker in the Gulf. "There is no connection whatsoever between these two vessels," said Mousavi. "There have been two or three maritime violations made by that ship," he said, referring to the Stena Impero held off Iran's Bandar Abbas. "The court is looking into it. We hope the (investigation) is completed as soon as possible and the verdict is issued."

The spokesman said the tanker's release was a blow to US "unilateralism". "The Americans have not been very successful with their unilateral sanctions that have no legal basis. They should come to their senses that bullying and unilateralism cannot get anywhere in the world today." Mousavi urged other countries not to accept sanctions the US has imposed on Iran "because they're not legitimate and have no legal basis".

Bashir acknowledges receiving millions...

Continued from Page 1

financing. On Saturday, Sudan's ruling military council, which took over after Bashir's ouster, signed a power-sharing agreement with the main opposition coalition, paving the way for a transitional govern-

ment and eventual elections. The pact sets up a sovereign council as the highest authority in the country, but largely delegates executive powers to the cabinet of ministers. The sovereign council was due to be sworn in yesterday, but it was delayed after one of the five nominees put forward by the opposition alliance representing protest leaders turned down the job. The spokesman for the Transitional Military Council, Lieutenant General Shams El Din Kabbashi, said the formation of the new ruling body would be delayed by 48 hours on the request of the opposition coalition. — Agencies

Iran's judiciary chief Ebrahim Raisi called for legal action to be taken against Britain over the vessel's detention. "Now following the release of the ship, the Islamic Republic of Iran should seek damages," he told state television. But despite the tanker's release, Iran still faced a dilemma over its ultimate destination and that of its oil, said Commerzbank analyst Carsten Fritsch. "The tanker was renamed... but the problem with US sanctions remains," he told AFP. "I don't see any buyer in the Mediterranean apart from the sanctioned regime in Syria. Returning to Iran will be difficult since it would need to make the whole trip around Africa."

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif was unable to give anything away when asked during a trip to Finland if the oil would be offloaded in Greece. "Now because of US sanctions we cannot be very transparent with the destination of our oil," he told a news conference in Helsinki. In its decision ordering the tanker's release, Gibraltar said it had received written assurances from Iran that the ship would not be headed for countries "subject to European Union sanctions". Iran denied it had made any promises about the ship's destination to secure the release. Tensions between Iran and the United States have been rising since President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the US from a landmark nuclear deal in May 2018 and began imposing sanctions against the Islamic republic. Iran has responded to Washington's "maximum pressure" campaign by suspending some of its commitments under the nuclear deal. The situation has 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. — AFP

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Heatwaves longer, deadlier even in a 2 Celsius world

PARIS: Northern hemisphere summers will deliver dangerously longer heatwaves, droughts and bouts of rain even if humanity manages to cap global warming at two degrees Celsius, scientists said yesterday. With one degree of warming since pre-industrial times so far, extreme weather of this kind has already become more intense, with a single heatwave in 2003 leading to 70,000 excess deaths in Europe alone.

But the new study, published in the journal Nature Climate Change, is the first to quantify how much longer such events are likely to last if temperatures rise another degree. "We could see a significant shift in summer weather conditions," said lead author Peter Pfleiderer, a doctoral researcher at Humboldt University in Berlin. "Extreme weather would become more persistent - hot and dry periods, as well as consecutive days of heavy rain would all get longer."

Even small increases in the duration of extreme weather events can have devastating impacts on human health, food production, biodiversity and even economic growth. During the 2018 heatwave in Europe, for example, several hot and dry spells - each lasting weeks - led to wheat yield losses of 15 percent in Germany. In the United States, the past 12 months have been the wettest on record, with large swathes of the heartland

immobilized by continuous rainfall and flooding.

The study looked at the changes in the northern hemisphere climate system that might be driving more extreme weather. "The climate models show a systematic weakening of the large-scale summer atmospheric circulation-including the Jetstream and storm tracks - as the planet warms," said co-author Dim Coumou, a researcher at Vrije University Amsterdam. "The increase in weather persistence can be linked to a weakening of this circulation."

As it slows down, hot and dry conditions can build up over the continents. At the same time, water-bearing hurricanes and typhoons can persist longer in one place. According to the new findings, the chance of hot periods lasting longer than two weeks in a 2C world will go up by four percent compared to today, with even larger increases in eastern North America, central Europe and northern Asia.

Drought-like conditions of more than 14 days will become 10 percent more likely in central North America. And bouts of sustained heavy rain will jump by more than a quarter across the entire northern temperate zone. All of these impacts would come on top of more intense droughts, deluvian rains and heatwaves, such as the record-setting temperatures that scorched much of the northern hemisphere in June and July of this year.

"For warming above 2C we would expect even further extremes of heat persistence," co-author Carl-Friedrich Schuessner, the head of climate science and impacts at Berlin-based Climate Analytics, told AFP. "Bearing in mind the current slow pace of reducing emissions puts the world on track to 3C, our study underlines the need for urgent action." — AFP

Malaysia quizzes Indian preacher...

Continued from Page 1

He is accused of making an intentional insult aimed at provoking a breach of the peace, according to state news agency Bernama.

Mahathir said Sunday that Naik "can preach but he wasn't doing that... he was talking about sending the

Chinese back to China, Indians back to India, that's for me a political move", according to the news agency. The government has in the past appeared reluctant to move against Naik for fear it could upset some Muslims as well as provide ammunition to political opponents.

In 2010 Naik - who founded the Peace TV channel, which has a huge global following - was barred from entering Britain. In a July 2008 broadcast Naik suggested that Al-Qaeda was not responsible for the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States. "Even a fool will know that this was an inside job," he said in the video, claiming then-President George W Bush was behind the plot. — AFP

UK to end EU free movement...

Continued from Page 1

people entering the UK" as part of the new hard-line stance. "Details of other changes immediately on October 31 for a new immigration system are currently being developed," the spokeswoman said.

The change comes amid growing fears Britain is set to leave the 28-member bloc without a divorce deal in two and a half months. Around 3.6 million EU citizens already in Britain have been told to apply for "permanent settled status", under an interior ministry scheme started by Johnson's predecessor Theresa May. So far

Regime advance cuts off Turkish...

Continued from Page 1

the south of the stronghold. Yesterday afternoon, a new loyalist advance saw pro-Damascus fighters take control part of the highway north of Khan Sheikhun, effectively blocking the Turkish military convoy from continuing south. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based monitor with a network of contacts in Syria, said this would stop the convoy ever reaching a Turkish monitoring post south of Khan Sheikhun.

Earlier in the afternoon, an AFP correspondent saw the convoy stop on the Aleppo-Damascus highway in the village of Maar Hattat, just north of Khan Sheikhun. Analysts say regime forces want to retake the key road that connects Damascus with the northern city of Aleppo, both of which they control.

Earlier, an AFP correspondent saw a military convoy of around 50 armored vehicles including personnel carriers and at least five tanks travelling southwards along the highway. The Observatory reported Syrian and Russian air strikes aimed at hindering the convoy's advance. Turkey's defense ministry "strongly" condemned the attack, saying regime operations were "in violation of the existing memorandums and agreements with the Russian Federation".

The Damascus regime meanwhile denounced the

convoy's crossing from Turkey. "Turkish vehicles loaded with munitions... are heading towards Khan Sheikhun to help the terrorists," a foreign ministry source said, using the regime's blanket term for rebels and jihadists.

This confirmed "the support provided by the Turkish regime to terrorist groups," state news agency SANA reported the source as saying.

Yesterday morning, a Russian air strike hit the rebel vehicle leading the convoy just outside Maaret Al-Noman, 15 km north of Khan Sheikhun, killing a Turkish-backed fighter from the Faylaq al-Sham group, the Observatory said. It also killed two other opposition fighters, it added. After the convoy entered the town, Russian and Syrian warplanes targeted the area in an apparent "attempt to prevent the convoy from advancing", Observatory chief Rami Abdel Rahman said.

On Sunday, pro-regime forces backed by Russian air strikes took control of Khan Sheikhun's northwestern outskirts. Fighting continues to the east and west of the town, the Observatory says. The seizure of Khan Sheikhun and territory further east would encircle a patch of countryside to its south, including the town of Morek where the Turkish observation post is situated.

The Turkish army earlier said the convoy was heading towards Morek. Analyst Nawar Oliver said the latest developments in Khan Sheikhun were likely linked to a "disagreement" between both signatories. He said Turkey had likely sent the convoy to avoid its troops being "threatened" or placed "at the mercy of the regime and Russia". It may have also taken a "decision to protect Khan Sheikhun", he said. — AFP

Sports

Washington Nationals hit eight home runs in 16-8 rout of Milwaukee Brewers

Cubs rely on long ball to top Pirates in Williamsport

WASHINGTON: The Washington Nationals capped off a productive week on offense by slugging a franchise-record-tying eight home runs in a 16-8 rout of the visiting Milwaukee Brewers on Sunday afternoon. Brian Dozier (three hits, four RBIs) and Juan Soto smacked a pair of homers, and Matt Adams (three hits) and Anthony Rendon mashed three-run shots. Victor Robles and Adam Eaton notched solo dingers for the Nationals, who tallied 19 hits and won for the sixth time in seven games, including a 17-7 win over Cincinnati on Wednesday. Catcher Yan Gomes went 3-for-5. For the Brewers, Mike Moustakas had three hits, two homers and five RBIs, and Ben Gamel went 4-for-5 with a homer.

Astros 4, Athletics 1

Right-hander Zack Greinke earned his 200th career victory, and visiting Houston avoided a series sweep with a win over Oakland. Alex Bregman went 4-for-4 and belted his 30th home run of the season, a three-run shot in the fifth inning that erased a 1-0 deficit and allowed the Astros — who had lost the first three games of the series — to snap a five-game losing streak. Greinke (13-4) held the A's to one run and four hits in seven innings en route to his third consecutive win since joining the Astros in a trade last month.

Mets 11, Royals 5

Pete Alonso hit his 40th home run of the season, establishing a National League record for rookies, as New York defeated host Kansas City. Alonso's ninth-inning blast cleared the Mets bullpen in left. He broke a tie with the Dodgers' Cody Bellinger, who hit 39 in 2017. Trailing 4-3, the Mets scored six runs off the Kansas City bullpen in the seventh inning to seize the game. Jeurys Familia (4-1) picked up the win after a scoreless sixth before the Mets rally.

Braves 5, Dodgers 3

Rafael Ortega, recalled from the minor leagues last week, hit his first career grand slam to lift Atlanta over visiting Los Angeles. Ortega connected in the sixth inning against reliever Dustin May (1-2) for a long homer to right field, his first since being recalled from Triple-A Gwinnett on Tuesday. The Braves won the final two games of the three-game series between two division-leading clubs. The Dodgers won four of six against Atlanta this season.

Cubs 7, Pirates 1

Nicholas Castellanos, Jason Heyward and Anthony Rizzo homered to help Chicago drub Pittsburgh in the MLB Little League Classic in Williamsport, Pa. Kyle Schwarber added a two-run single, and Kris Bryant an RBI double for the Cubs, who won their second in a row following a four-game losing streak. Chicago won its first road series since taking two of three against Washington from May 17-19. The first two games of the series were played at PNC Park in Pittsburgh.

Indians 8, Yankees 4

Mike Clevinger struck out 10 in five scoreless innings to win his seventh straight decision. Mike Freeman hit a three-run homer and Cleveland gained a split of its four-game series at New York. Freeman, who started at third base as Jose Ramirez rested, hit his fourth homer of the season in the second and doubled twice. Francisco Lindor barely cleared the fence with a solo drive, and rookie Oscar Mercado accounted for Cleveland's final three runs with a double and a two-run homer in the eighth. The Indians scored 27 runs and hit 10 homers in their two wins at Yankee Stadium.

Red Sox 13, Orioles 7

Rafael Devers lined a tie-breaking RBI double that sparked a six-run sixth inning as Boston rallied to beat visiting Baltimore. Boston has won five in a row. The Red Sox rallied from an early 6-0 deficit with help from Devers, who finished 4-for-5 with two doubles, a two-run homer and four RBIs. The Orioles have lost seven in a row and 12 of 13.

Rockies 7, Marlins 6 (10 innings)

Garrett Hampson hit a soft single to left field with the bases loaded in the 10th inning, and Colorado beat Miami in Denver. Nolan Arenado hit a pair of home runs, Charlie Blackmon also went deep and Carlos Estevez (2-2) got the win for the Rockies, who posted their first sweep since claiming a three-game set against the Arizona Diamondbacks from June 18-20. Harold Ramirez had three hits and drove in a pair of runs for the Marlins.

Rays 5, Tigers 4

Ji-Man Choi hit a two-run single in the bottom of the ninth to give Tampa Bay a win over visiting Detroit. Tommy Pham hit a two-run homer and scored twice for the Rays, who took two of three in the series. D'Arnaud knocked in the other run for Tampa Bay, while Jose Alvarado (1-5) pitched a scoreless inning of relief to pick up the win. Tigers starter Matthew Boyd reached the 200-strikeout mark for the season. He held the Rays to one run on two hits and walked just two in seven innings.

Cardinals 5, Reds 4

Paul Goldschmidt belted a two-run homer, and Tommy Edman also went deep as visiting St. Louis edged Cincinnati. Lane Thomas and Marcell Ozuna each drove in a run for the Cardinals, who earned a split of the four-game series against Cincinnati with their seventh victory in their past nine contests. Tucker Barnhart ripped a two-run single to right field in the ninth inning off Carlos Martinez to trim St. Louis' lead to 5-4, but the right-hander struck out two of the next three batters to secure his 14th save.

Padres 3, Phillies 2

Joey Lucchesi pitched six strong innings, and



WASHINGTON: Brian Dozier No 9 of the Washington Nationals and Juan Soto No 22 celebrates a win after a baseball game against the Milwaukee Brewers at Nationals Park in Washington. —AFP

Austin Hedges went 4-for-4 with a tiebreaking home run in the seventh as San Diego defeated host Philadelphia. Phillies superstar Bryce Harper left the game after five innings because of dehydration, the team said. The heat index on the field exceeded 100 degrees. Luis Urias also homered for the Padres, who took two of three games in the series.

Mariners 7, Blue Jays 0

Yusei Kikuchi pitched a two-hitter on the way to his first major league shutout and was supported by four home runs as visiting Seattle topped Toronto. Kikuchi allowed one walk and struck out eight. Kyle Seager, Austin Nola, Tom Murphy and Keon Broxton homered for the Mariners, who took the rubber match of the three-game series. It was the first win for Kikuchi (5-8) since June 23, a span of eight starts in which he lost three times. His previous win had been May 19.

Twins 6, Rangers 3

Jorge Polanco hit a three-run triple with two outs in the eighth inning to break a 3-3 tie and carry Minnesota to a four-game series sweep of host Texas. Sam Dyson (5-1) picked up the win, allowing one run on three hits over an inning of relief. Taylor Rogers struck out Rougned Odor with runners on first and second for the final out for his 19th save. Shin-Soo

Choo went 2-for-5 with a home run, Hunter Pence had three hits and a walk, and Jeff Mathis drove in two runs for Texas, which lost its fourth straight game.

Diamondbacks 6, Giants 1

Merrill Kelly allowed one run and six hits over 5 2/3 innings to help Arizona end a four-game losing streak with a win against visiting San Francisco. Wilmer Flores had two hits, including a solo homer. David Peralta also homered, and Adam Jones had two RBIs in his first start in center field this season for Arizona. Giants left-hander Madison Bumgarner (8-8) was aiming to win his third straight start and sixth consecutive decision. He allowed four runs and six hits in six innings, striking out nine and walking two.

Angels 9, White Sox 2

Matt Thaiss finished a triple short of the cycle and drove in four runs, and Kole Calhoun, Shohei Ohtani and Anthony Bembboom homered to back seven strong innings from Griffin Canning and lift host Los Angeles to a win over Chicago. Los Angeles out-hit Chicago 15-7 in the series finale and won three of four games over the weekend. Thaiss provided the only run support the Angels needed in a pitching matchup of rookie right-handers, drilling a three-run home run to right field against the White Sox's Dylan Cease with one out in the second inning. —Reuters

Power takes wreck-marred, storm-shortened IndyCar win

NEW YORK: Australia's Will Power won Sunday's storm-shortened and crash-marred Pocono 500, stretching his string of IndyCar seasons with a victory to 13 while American Josef Newgarden boosted his season points lead.

Racing was stopped for lightning after 128 of 200 scheduled laps over the unique 2.5-mile (4km) tri-oval course at Long Pond, Pennsylvania.

A few minutes later, leader Power was declared a winner with New Zealand's Scott Dixon second, France's Simon Pagenaud third, US rookie Santino Ferrucci fourth and Newgarden fifth.

"Over the moon," Power said. "I had a few issues during the race but I just kept coming back. When it was time to go I went.

I was so determined. "It'll be my 13th year in a row winning a race. I had been thinking about that."

Power won at Pocono in 2016 and 2017 and was second last year, but it was only his second victory since taking last year's Indianapolis 500. He will defend his only other title next week at Gateway in Madison, Illinois.

The race was marred by a stunning first-lap crash that caused no severe injuries but involved five of the 22 drivers, including defending race champion Alexander Rossi, whose season title hopes suffered a blow despite a front-row start.

Newgarden improved his gap over Rossi from 16 to 35 points with three races remaining in the season, although Dixon, the defending IndyCar season champion, and Pagenaud, this year's Indianapolis 500 winner, tightened their gap behind Rossi.

It was Dixon's fourth consecutive top-two finish. A qualifying rainout left season points to decide starting spots with Newgarden on the pole alongside 2016 Indy 500 winner Rossi and Pagenaud and Dixon in row two.

But just outside the second turn of lap

one, Japan's Takuma Sato moved down from the outside, his left rear tire hitting the front right tire of Rossi's car, sending Sato careening into Ryan Hunter-Reay, the crash also collecting Swedish rookie Felix Rosenqvist and James Hinchcliffe.

Rosenqvist, who was evaluated at a nearby hospital and released, skidded along the outer retaining wall and fence in a wreck eerily like one last year that left Canadian racer Robert Wickens unable to walk.

"I can't even begin to understand how after last year Takuma thinks any sort of driving like that is acceptable," Rossi said. "Turning across two cars like that at that speed is disgraceful and upsetting."

"This is ridiculous," Hunter-Reay said. "I thought we learned our lesson here... it all hand-grenaded." "After last year, I don't think anybody had to say anything," said Hinchcliffe. "It's such a waste."

Sato explained: "I thought it was all clear. Everybody got close and unfortunately we made contact. I'm not really overly aggressive overtaking or anything." Rossi strategist Rob Edwards saw it differently, saying, "Someone made something pretty silly happen going into turn two." —AFP

76ers' Bolden pulls out of Australia World Cup campaign



Jonah Bolden

SYDNEY: Australia have suffered a setback after Jonah Bolden joined Philadelphia 76ers' teammate Ben Simmons as a no-show for the upcoming basketball World Cup in China.

The power forward, who starred for the Boomers in their 81-73 win over Canada in an exhibition game on Friday, with 12 points and five rebounds off the bench, cited "personal reasons".

Australia coach Andrej Lemanis said he supported the decision. "My first thought is always with the player in these situations — having to withdraw from the national team is tough for anyone," he said in a statement late Sunday.

"From a team perspective, the timing is sub-optimal, but again, we are very fortunate to have the depth of talent we

have in this country available to take up this opportunity."

A replacement will be named soon, likely ahead of the Boomers' two pre-World Cup clashes against a depleted United States in Melbourne this week. Bolden's withdrawal follows a decision by Simmons — who recently signed a five-year, US\$170 million contract extension with 76ers — to also skip the World Cup, which tips off on August 31.

Other Australian NBA standouts who will not be playing include Thon Maker (NBA commitments), Ryan Broekhoff (birth of his child) and Dante Exum (injury). Despite their no-shows, Australia still boasts several NBA stars, including Utah Jazz's Joe Ingles and Patty Mills of the San Antonio Spurs —AFP



Will Power

Sports

Thomas holds off Cantlay to win with record at Medinah

Japan's Hideki Matsuyama finished third on 268

WASHINGTON: Justin Thomas captured his 10th career US PGA title on Sunday, holding off fellow American Patrick Cantlay down the back nine to win the BMW Championship in record-smashing fashion.

The 2017 PGA Championship winner seized his first triumph since last year's WGC Bridgestone Invitational, defeating Cantlay by three strokes, and claimed the top spot in the US PGA playoff point standings entering next week's season-ending Tour Championship.

"I was really nervous today," said Thomas, who began the day with a six-stroke advantage. "It's hard to play with the lead. I was enjoying it though. I forgot how hard it is to win. That's why it has taken this long. I've been working hard to get back to it and it feels great."

Thomas fired a four-under par 68 to finish 72 holes at Medinah on 25-under 263, shattering the former mark of 23-under at the 116-year-old event shared by American Dustin Johnson and Australian Marc Leishman.

Thomas birdied four of the last eight holes at the suburban Chicago layout to fend off Cantlay, who closed with birdies on four of the last six holes and nine birdies in all. "I just stayed patient," Thomas said. Patrick made that very interesting. I hit the ball so bad to start the day. I couldn't hit a fairway. That was a hard start."

After seeing his lead shrink to two shots, Thomas landed his approach two feet from the cup at 11 to set up a birdie and surged to the finish. "That birdie on 11 was huge," he said. "It kind of propelled me."

Thomas, who won the 2017 FedEx Cup playoff crown, made himself the player to beat in next week's Tour Championship at East Lake in Atlanta. Thomas will start at 10-under par with a two-stroke lead over second-place point producer Cantlay in next week's event under a new points format that ensures the tournament winner will capture the playoff crown. For Thomas, that means sitting on a

lead for four days before he swings a club. "I'm just going to go out there and try and play as well as I can," Thomas said. "I'm going to try not to look at the leaderboard. I've got to drive the ball a whole lot better than I did this week." Japan's Hideki Matsuyama finished third on 268 after his second 63 in three days, a third-round 73 spoiling his title bid. He needed only 20 putts Sunday. American Tony Finau finished fourth on 270, one shot ahead of countryman Brandt Snedeker and Spain's Jon Rahm.

But Finau's 69 was not enough for him to overtake Bryson DeChambeau for the final automatic berth on the US team for December's Presidents Cup in Australia, qualifying for which ended Sunday.

TENSE DOWN THE STRETCH

Thomas opened with a bogey and even with tap-in birdies at the par-5 fifth and seventh holes saw his lead shrink to only two over Cantlay after he also made bogey at 10. The tap-in birdie by Thomas at 11 was followed by Thomas matching Cantlay's 15-foot birdie putt at the par-3 13th with a 12-foot birdie putt of his own to stay three ahead. Cantlay lipped out a seven-foot birdie putt at 14 then drove the green at the par-4 15th but missed a 17-foot eagle putt. Thomas and Cantlay each birdied 15 and Cantlay botched a four-foot par putt at 16 to leave Thomas four ahead with two holes remaining.

Cantlay sank an 18-foot birdie putt at the par-3 17th and a 38-footer for birdie at 18 but Thomas closed with a 14-foot birdie for the win. Players who moved into the final 30-man Tour Championship field by their results at Medinah included Matsuyama, 2009 US Open winner Lucas Glover and fellow American Jason Kokrak. Tiger Woods, last year's Tour Championship winner, and Jordan Spieth were among those unable to claw their way back into the top-30 in order to qualify for East Lake. — AFP



MEDINAH: Justin Thomas of the United States celebrates with girlfriend Jillian Wisniewski and the Wadley Cup after winning during the final round of the BMW Championship at Medinah Country Club No. 3 in Medinah, Illinois. — AFP

'Frightening' Archer can be England's next superstar

LONDON: There have been few more explosive test debuts than the one made by England's Jofra Archer in the second match of the Ashes series against Australia at Lord's. Although England failed to win the match, Archer's hostile spell on the fourth day served notice that the 24-year-old Barbados-born fast bowler has the ability to enjoy a stellar career.

The bare statistics do not tell the whole story. Archer took two wickets in the first innings and three in the second as Australia limped to 154 for six to force a draw on Sunday and remain 1-0 up in the series.

But he left a trail of devastation in his wake, hitting Australia's leading batsman Steve Smith with a sickening blow to the neck which forced him to retire hurt. Smith returned to the crease but awoke on Sunday morning suffering from concussion symptoms which ruled him out of the rest of the match.

Archer also struck Smith on the forearm and Marnus Labuschagne, test cricket's first substitute in place of Smith, on the helmet with the second ball he faced. His team mates were impressed.

"Out on the field Jofra has clearly made a big impact," England captain Joe Root said. "The dynamic he adds to the bowling attack is fantastic. What a couple of brilliant spells we have seen from him already! It is an exciting prospect, going into the rest of the series."

England all-rounder Ben Stokes described Archer's performance as "frightening". "I am not sure there will be a better debut in terms of announcing yourself in the team," Stokes said. "The spell was incredible to watch. We are very lucky he is in our team. He gives you an extra dimension." Many of the Australian team have played with Archer in the Indian premier League and



Jofra Archer

had known what to expect. "It didn't surprise us," captain Tim Paine said. "We've seen Jofra in Australia for a few years now. We know the package he brings. It's something every team wants to have."

Archer contributed hugely to England's World Cup victory this year, bowling the Super Over in the final

against New Zealand, and has the potential to make an even bigger impact in the longest format of the game.

"With Archer, I am excited for the next few years of test match cricket. We have got a superstar," former England captain Michael Vaughan, who led his team to victory in the 2005 Ashes, told the BBC. — Reuters

Quick turnaround may see Smith miss third Ashes Test

MELBOURNE: Batsman Steve Smith must be free of concussion symptoms for 24 hours before he can begin return to play protocols, Australia's sports medicine manager has said, making him a doubt for the third Ashes test starting on Thursday.

Smith suffered a sickening blow to the neck from a Jofra Archer bouncer during the second test at Lord's, forcing him off the ground for a medical assessment.

The right-hander returned to the crease 40 minutes later before being dismissed for 92 but he was then ruled out of the final day's play and replaced by Marnus Labuschagne, who became test cricket's first concussion substitute.

With the third test starting at Headingley in Leeds on Thursday, time may be Smith's biggest enemy.

"He needs to be symptom free for 24 hours before he even gets to start the process," Cricket Australia's Alex Kountouris told reporters in Melbourne yesterday.

"So he is just recovering and sleeping, taking some time to feel better then after that he begins the process but there is obviously a very short time before the next test."

Kountouris added that the decision on when Smith was able to return would be made solely by team doctor Richard Saw, who would follow the Cricket Australia protocols.

Saw made the decision to take Smith

from the field on Saturday and, after a series of tests indicated no signs of concussion, allowed the batsman to continue his innings.

Smith, however, had developed symptoms overnight and after further testing on Sunday, which is part of the process, Saw ruled him out of the fifth day.

"Delayed concussions are reasonably common," Kountouris added. "About 30% of concussions are delayed. So it's not uncommon and why we test the players the next day."

Kountouris added that any criticism about allowing Smith to return to the crease was misguided, given he had not presented with any signs.

"Everything he (Saw) did was according to the protocol," Kountouris said. "At the time Steve did not have a concussion. He was fine to play. If we left him out of the game it would have been for only what we saw on the field."

"The reality is that only about one in five or six head impacts end up being concussions, which is why we monitor them. If you look at that game there were three other head impacts and only Steve developed a concussion."

"If we pulled every player out who had a head impact we'd be pulling out 80% of the players who don't have a concussion. That would be an over reaction."

The second test ended in a draw, with Australia leading the series 1-0 after winning the opener at Edgbaston. — Reuters

Sharjeel says sorry in bid to resurrect Pakistan career

LAHORE: Disgraced former Pakistan opener Sharjeel Khan took the first step towards resurrecting his career yesterday by apologising for indulging in the spot-fixing in 2017 that earned him a five-year ban.

The 30-year-old met with Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) anti-corruption officials who directed him to undergo a rehabilitation programme, putting him on track to return to the sport.

"I offer my unconditional apology to the PCB, my teammates, fans and family for the irresponsible conduct that brought embarrassment to everyone," Sharjeel was quoted as saying in a PCB press release.

"I request for forgiveness and assure I will show more responsibility in my future actions," he said.

The left-hander was a rising star and playing in the second edition of the Pakistan Super League in Dubai when he was charged with deliberately not scoring on two balls at a certain time of the match in return for money from bookies.

Pakistan has a long and sordid history of spot-fixing — where a specific part of a game is rigged, as opposed to match-fixing, where the whole result is.

Half of Khan's ban was suspended.

The PCB said he has been given a roadmap to revive his career.

"Sharjeel has completed his two and a half years of ineligibility and will now complete rehabilitation before the end of the year and then reintegrate into top level cricket," the statement said.

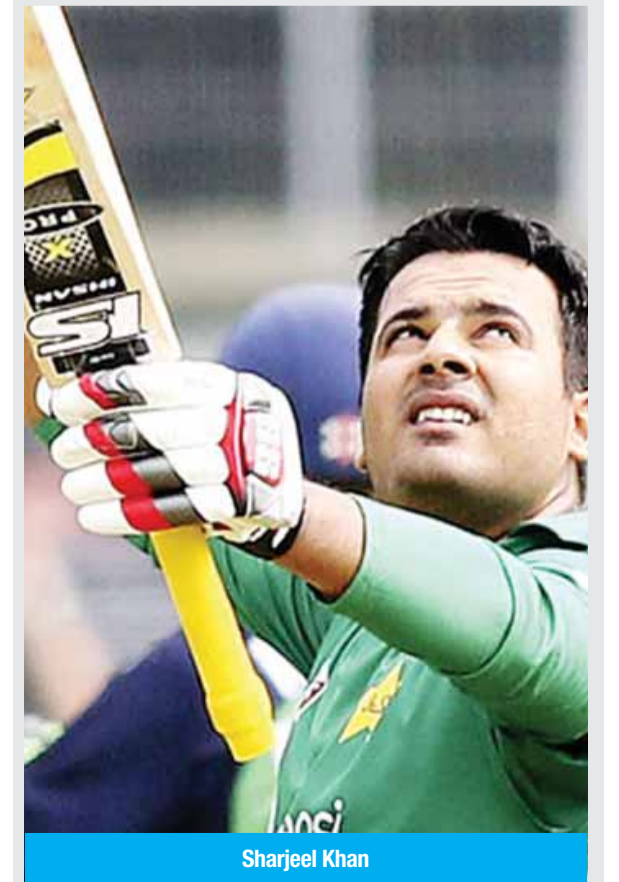
The rehabilitation, among other things, will also include attending and delivering lectures on the PCB Anti-Corruption Code.

Khan will also have to visit orphanages as part of community service, and participate in integration sessions with Pakistan's national players and support personnel.

In his statement, Khan reminded fellow players to "strictly and religiously" follow the PCB's anti-corruption code.

He said he planned to return first to club cricket as he needed time to build up his fitness and form.

At the time of the ban, Sharjeel had played one Test, 25 one-day internationals and 15 T20 matches. — AFP



Sharjeel Khan

England unchanged for third Test

LONDON: England named an unchanged squad yesterday for this week's third Test against Australia at Headingley. The injured James Anderson, England's all-time leading Test wicket-taker, will continue his bid to return later in the series by playing in a county 2nd XI match starting today.

England's selectors kept faith with the XI that drew the rain-affected second Ashes Test at Lord's on Sunday, with the hosts having the better of an exciting last day before Australia held out to preserve their 1-0 lead in the five-match series.

Surrey left-arm seamer Sam Curran, who did not play at Lord's, retained his place in a 12-man squad for the third Test, which starts at England captain Joe Root's Headingley home ground on Thursday.

With just a four-day turnaround between Tests in London and Leeds, major changes were always unlikely. Now England will hope that is sufficient time for World Cup-winning fast bowler Jofra Archer, who took five wickets while repeatedly topping speeds of 90 mph on his Test debut, to recover from the 44 overs he sent

down at Lord's. Anderson did not play in the second Test because of a calf injury that restricted him to just four overs in Australia's 251-run win in the series opener at Edgbaston. He is, however, to step his rehabilitation this week by playing for Lancashire 2nd XI against Leicestershire in a three-day friendly match in Liverpool.

Anderson's fitness will be assessed continually ahead of the fourth Test at his Old Trafford home ground starting on September 4. While England's fallible top order remains a concern — World Cup-winning opener Jason Roy has made just 40 runs in four innings this series — the selectors have resisted the temptation to bring in new faces.

They were under less pressure to make changes after the uncapped duo of Dom Sibley and Zak Crawley, considered to be of the best young openers in England, were both out for low scores on Sunday.

Sibley got a duck for Warwickshire against Somerset on Sunday and Kent batsman Crawley was dismissed for just five against Essex.

England squad

Rory Burns (Surrey), Jason Roy (Surrey), Joe Root (Yorkshire, capt), Joe Denly (Kent), Ben Stokes (Durham), Jos Buttler (Lancashire), Jonny Bairstow (Yorkshire, wkt), Chris Woakes (Warwickshire), Jofra Archer (Sussex), Stuart Broad (Nottinghamshire), Jack Leach (Somerset), Sam Curran (Surrey). — Reuters

Sports

PSG suffer defeat at Rennes with 16-year-old in starring role

PSG without forward Neymar for a third successive game

RENNES: Champions Paris Saint-Germain slipped up in their second league game of the season losing 2-1 to Rennes on Sunday in a repeat of April's French Cup final with a 16-year-old playing a starring role.

Edinson Cavani scored after less than 15 minutes of play for the visitors in Brittany before Mbaye Niang and Romain del Castillo responded for the home side.

PSG were without forward Neymar for a third successive game this term with the world's most expensive player continuing to be the subject of interest from Barcelona and Real Madrid.

Angolan-born 16-year-old Eduardo Camavinga starred in Rennes midfield, and proved to be key in his team's winning goal, along with experienced playmaker Clement Grenier.

Rennes boss Julien Stephan said Camavinga, the first player born since January 2002 to feature in Europe's top five leagues, had continued to improve since making his first team debut in April.

"It's more than six months he's been training with the professionals. He's settled in well with the squad," he told broadcaster Canal+.

"We've prepared him with the players, the staff and the whole club so he can evolve in the right conditions.

"He started doing it at the end of last season and he's confirming all the talent we think he has at the start of this season," he added.

PSG skipper Thiago Silva admitted his side stepped off the gas after their good start through Cavani's effort.

"We started well but we eased off a bit, I don't know why, we lost concentration," he told Canal+.

"It wasn't the real PSG. Rennes played well, they were solid defensively, they were more careful than us," he added.

The Parisians dominated the early proceedings and showed their quality with two good chances within the opening quarter of an hour of play.

Firstly Julian Draxler's half-volley skimmed over the bar before Cavani's header hit the post after 14 minutes.

Uruguay forward Cavani made up for hitting the woodwork by scoring 20 minutes later after a defensive howler from Rennes captain Damien da Silva. The centre-back received the ball in his own box but his misplaced pass to goalkeeper Romain Salin was intercepted by Cavani who tucked it away to make it 1-0.

FOUR-MINUTE FEVER

The sides were back level just before the half-time whistle.

Right-back Hamari Traore found Niang in the box with a soft cross and the Senegal forward took two light touches, held-off Marquinhos before smoothly curling his effort past Alphonse Areola.

The Bretons took the lead than four minutes later of the second-half following a sublime cross from Camavinga.

Midfielder Camavinga found a free Del Castillo, starting instead of suspended Flavien Tait, who easily beat Areola with a header. The hosts refused to settle for the one-goal advantage and had a superb chance to make it 3-1 on 62 minutes.

Benjamin Bourigeaud played his corner to front post and centre-back Jeremy Gelin's header glanced past Areola but hit the post and dribble out for a goal-kick.

Youngster Camavinga could have added a third himself but his half-volley skied over the crossbar.

Kylian Mbappe and Cavani had a late chances but they could not save PSG and Thomas Tuchel's blushes, losing to the side who finished in 10th



RENNES: Paris Saint-Germain's French forward Kylian Mbappe (R) vies with Rennes' French defender Damien Da Silva during the French L1 football match between Rennes (SRFC) and Paris Saint-Germain (PSG), at the Rosharon Park stadium in Rennes, northwestern France. —AFP

place in the league last season.

Earlier on Sunday Saint-Etienne salvaged a late point at home to promoted Brest with new signing

Denis Bouanga's 83rd minute effort claiming a 1-1 draw and it finished goalless between Reims and Strasbourg. —AFP

Alves scores winner on Sao Paulo debut

SAO PAULO: Brazil veteran Dani Alves scored the winning goal on his debut for Sao Paulo on Sunday, weeks after signing a three-year deal with the club. Alves, 36, found the back of the net in the 40th minute to score the only goal of the game against Ceara.

Alves and Spanish international Juanfran, 34, are the stars for Sao Paulo, who snapped up both players after their contracts with European clubs expired. Alves' return to Brazil after 17 years playing for top clubs in Europe has had a big impact on his home country.

The right-back played for Sevilla before going on to play for Barcelona, Juventus and PSG, collecting nine national league titles along the way — six in Spain, one in Italy and two in France.

He has collected 40 trophies in all with club and country including three Champions League titles with Barcelona and two UEFA Cups with Sevilla. He has also won two Copa Americas with Brazil, most recently in July when he was named player of the tournament as he captained them to victory over Peru in the final at the Maracana in Rio de Janeiro.

Juanfran arrived in Sao Paulo after an extensive career in Spain where he played for Real Madrid, Espanyol, Osasuna and Atletico Madrid. —AFP



SAO PAULO: Dani Alves (L) of Sao Paulo controls the ball during their Brazilian Championship football match against Ceara at Morumbi stadium, in Sao Paulo, Brazil. —AFP

Five talking points from La Liga weekend

BARCELONA: Five talking points from the weekend in La Liga:

Barcelona began their title defence with a 1-0 defeat by Athletic Bilbao on Friday, while Zinedine Zidane's Real Madrid beat Celta Vigo 3-1 on Saturday. Here are the five big talking points from the weekend in La Liga.

BARCA SHOW WHY NEYMAR ON SHOPPING LIST

Rumours in Spanish media have linked Barcelona with Paris St. Germain forward Neymar all summer, even though the Catalans already signed Antoine Griezmann from Atletico Madrid.

However as Athletic shut out Ernesto Valverde's side, shorn of injured captain Lionel Messi, it became evident why Barcelona want to bring the Brazilian back to Camp Nou.

Valverde was forced to throw on Rafinha Alcantara for Luis Suarez after the Uruguayan tweaked a calf muscle, while B team winger Carles Perez was also thrown on to no avail as the Catalans tried to win the game.

Eventually 38-year-old Bilbao legend Aritz Aduriz won the hosts the game with a spectacular late scissors kick, showing more cutting edge than Barcelona had mustered all night.

SAME OLD REAL MADRID

After their last shambolic campaign Real Madrid invested heavily over the summer, spending 300 million euros on new recruits to refresh the team.

However Zinedine Zidane picked a side to face Celta Vigo which could have turned out last season for Madrid. Star signing Eden Hazard picked up a thigh injury on Friday, while Ferland Mendy is also sidelined.

Other new signings Luka Jovic and Eder Militao watched from the bench as the old guard picked up a good result in Vigo. Two players who have been continuously touted to leave this summer, Gareth Bale and James Rodriguez, were involved — the Welshman starting and the Colombian watching from the bench as an unused substitute.

Bale created a goal for Karim

Benzema with a fine dribble and it seemed like little had changed from Zidane's first era in charge.

TRIPPIER'S ADVENTURE STARTS WELL

Not many English players try their luck in La Liga but Kieran Trippier joined Atletico Madrid from Tottenham this summer. The former Burnley right back made his debut as Atletico beat Getafe 1-0 on Sunday and it was his cross which created the goal for Alvaro Morata.

Trippier attacked with abandon and gave Atletico a dangerous outlet on the right flank, with other crosses causing the Getafe defence problems. There are question marks over the England full back's quality in purely defensive tasks, but starting with a solid display and a clean sheet at the Wanda Metropolitano was a good way to respond.

SOLDADO AND CAZORLA ROLL BACK THE YEARS

The most entertaining game of the weekend in Spain was a 4-4 draw between Villarreal and Granada on Saturday, with each side boasting a veteran Spain international who hit the target. Santi Cazorla opened the scoring from the penalty spot and was the

standout player in the thriller on Spain's east coast.

However former Villarreal and Tottenham striker Roberto Soldado inspired the newly promoted side to fight back from 4-2 down, heading home on his debut to pull Granada within one goal of the hosts. Another Soldado header was nodded over the line by Antonio Puertas in the 81st minute for the Andalusians' equaliser.

ACHILLES TENSION

Real Madrid midfielder Luka Modric and Getafe striker Jose Molina were both dismissed this weekend for nearly identical fouls, with the pair catching the Achilles tendon of an opponent with their studs. Neither challenge would have been greeted with a red card in previous La Liga seasons, leaving players and fans angry with the decisions. Deliberate attempts to hack an opponent on the Achilles tendon from behind are to be punished with sendings off this season.

"The truth is that I don't understand it because last Friday we had a chat (with the refereeing federation) and they made it clear that it was (to be a red) when it was done intentionally," said Getafe coach Jorge Borradalas. "I don't understand it in the case of Modric or Jorge Molina." —Reuters

Balotelli signs for home town team Brescia

MILAN: Mario Balotelli will return to Italy with home town team Brescia after it was confirmed on Sunday he has signed for the newly-promoted club. The Italian forward has penned a "multi-year contract" and will be officially presented on Monday, the northern team confirmed on their website.

"Mario returns home," Brescia said in a statement. "The return to Italy, after three years, was made possible by Mario's determination and enthusiasm to return to Brescia, the city where he grew up and where, since he was a child, he stood out for his physical and technical skills," the club continued.

Balotelli, who was born in Sicily but adopted and raised just outside Brescia, has reportedly agreed a three-year deal with the Serie B champions after being released by Marseille in June. "Finally back in MY CITY," Balotelli posted on social media along with a video collage of photos and clips of different moments of his career.

Balotelli made his debut in local team Lumezzane in

Serie C as a 16-year-old, before moving to Serie A giants Inter Milan in 2007. However, Balotelli's debut in the Brescia shirt is not imminent as the striker has to serve a four-match ban and his return could be on September 25 against Juventus.

Sky Sports Italia reported Balotelli has signed a three-year deal worth three million euros (\$3.3 million) for the first year, plus a further three million if the club remains in Serie A.

In the following two years he will receive six million euros per season if Brescia remain in Serie A, Sky reported. The 29-year-old rejected a move to Brazilian club Flamengo as he pushes for a place in the Italian national team as Euro 2020 approaches. —AFP

Bayern Munich offer Coutinho fresh start on loan

MADRID: Barcelona's Philippe Coutinho has joined Bayern Munich on a one-year loan worth 8.5 million euros (\$9.5 million) with an option to buy, the Spanish club confirmed yesterday. "The agreement provides for an option for Bayern to buy at a 120-million-euro fee," Barcelona said.

The 27-year-old Brazilian joined Barcelona from Liverpool in January 2018 for an initial 120 million euros in a deal that included another 40 million euros in potential add-ons. But the international midfielder's stint at Barcelona never worked out as hoped despite huge excitement around his arrival at the Camp Nou. Initially tried in midfield where he plays for Brazil, Coutinho was pushed into the front three by Ernesto Valverde last season but the switch never paid off and fans rarely glimpsed the form he showed at Liverpool. "Coutinho: story of a massive disaster," headlined yesterday's Barcelona-based Sport newspaper. Speculation about his future had shadowed Coutinho over the summer with French champions Paris Saint-Germain mentioned as a likely destination in a deal linked to a potential Neymar return to Barcelona.

Coutinho's place in the side looked shaky following the arrival of French World Cup winner Antoine Griezmann from Atletico in July and he was left out of the squad for the first game of the new La Liga season on Friday, a 1-0 loss to Athletic Bilbao.

The player, who has scored 21 goals in 75 games for Barca in all competitions despite being unsettled, said he was delighted with the move to Germany. "For me, this move means a new challenge in a new country with one of the best clubs in Europe," Coutinho said on Bayern's website.

"I'm very much looking forward to that. Like FC Bayern, I have big ambitions and I'm convinced that I can achieve them together with my new teammates." The German club hope he will provide reinforcement in attack following the departure of veteran duo Arjen Robben and Franck Ribery at the end of last season. "With his creativity and outstanding skills, Philippe is a player who will immediately strengthen our attack," Bayern CEO Karl-Heinz Rummenigge said.

Meanwhile, Uli Hoeness has confirmed he is stepping down as president of Bundesliga giants Bayern Munich and will not stand for re-election in November. The 67-year-old told German daily Bild at a golf tournament on Sunday that he will remain on the board at Bayern, "but will relinquish my presidency when the time comes".

That means Bayern members will vote for a new head of the defending Bundesliga champions at the annual general meeting in November with Hoeness to step down as head of the club's board. After 40 hugely successful years in charge, Hoeness will hand over the reins and former Adidas boss Herbert Hainer, currently his deputy on the club's board, is widely tipped as his successor. —AFP

Live		Matches on TV
		(Local Timings)
ENGLISH FOOTBALL LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP		
Birmingham City FC	V Barnsley FC	21:45
beIN SPORTS		
Derby County FC	V Bristol City FC	21:45
beIN SPORTS		
Hull City V	Blackburn Rovers FC	21:45
beIN SPORTS		
Middlesbrough V	Wigan Athletic	21:45
beIN SPORTS		
Sheffield Wednesday FC	V Luton Town	21:45
beIN SPORTS		

25 Power takes wreck-marred, storm-shortened IndyCar win



26 Thomas holds off Cantlay to win with record at Medinah



27 PSG suffer defeat at Rennes with 16-year-old in starring role



MASON: Daniil Medvedev of Russia poses for photographers after defeating David Goffin of Belgium during the men's final of the Western & Southern Open at Lindner Family Tennis Center in Mason. —AFP

Medvedev beats Goffin for Cincinnati crown

Keys locks up WTA Cincy title with victory over Kuznetsova

CINCINNATI: Daniil Medvedev, coming off back-to-back ATP finals defeats, held off David Goffin 7-6 (7/3), 6-4 Sunday to win the ATP Cincinnati Masters. The ninth-seeded Russian finished with an ace after saving break points in the final game, lifting a first Masters 1000 trophy after settling for runner-up finishes to Nick Kyrgios in Washington and Rafael Nadal in Montreal last weekend.

"These have been the best three weeks of my life," Medvedev said. "My mentality was the best, my serve was the best, my tennis has been really consistent. I didn't have one bad match, I hope to continue this way for next few weeks."

After his full-on post-Wimbledon schedule, the winner admitted: "I'm so exhausted, I almost can't talk now." He also revealed that he was starting to cramp in the final game, when he tossed his racket in anger before saving break points.

"I think my Montreal final against Rafa was important," he said of hanging on. "I was maybe able to use that experience that I had and David did not." Medvedev, who only recently gained the ATP Top 10, now will find himself ranked fifth as a result of his three-week run of form.

"I don't check the rankings every two minutes, but I do look after I do well at a tournament," he said. "If I had lost I'd be seventh, now I'm fifth." Medvedev followed up his semi-final upset of defending champion Novak Djokovic as he controlled feisty Belgian Goffin to win an ATP leading 31st hardcourt match.

He has the most match wins on any surface this

year with 43. Spanish superstar Nadal, who did not play this week — is second with 41, followed by Roger Federer on 39. Medvedev stamped himself a contender for the US Open, the final Grand Slam of the season that starts in Flushing Meadows in a week.

Goffin was competing in his second final of 2019 after losing to Federer in Halle. "Congratulations to your team," he told Medvedev. "Once again, an unbelievable week for you, fantastic. I think you are ready for New York."

Medvedev powered to a 4-1 lead in the opening set but had to win it in a tiebreaker as Goffin, coached by 2002 Australian open winner Thomas Johansson, fought back. But Medvedev's break in the opening game of the second set was all he needed as he avenged a loss to Goffin at Wimbledon this year.

Earlier, Madison Keys came from a break down in both sets to defeat Svetlana Kuznetsova 7-5, 7-6 (7/5) on Sunday to win the WTA Cincinnati crown. The 2017 US Open finalist notched her fifth career title and second this season after a win in Charleston in April.

She'll return to the top 10 in the world rankings with the US Open a week away. Kuznetsova, a two-time Grand Slam champion working her way back up the rankings after a series of injuries, was broken back in the 10th game of each set by 16th-seeded Keys — who fired 13 aces on the way to victory.

"If my team had told me a week ago that I

would be here, I would have laughed in their face," admitted Keys, who had endured two opening-match defeats since a second-round exit at Wimbledon. Keys belted a total of 43 winners with 33 unforced errors and broke Kuznetsova three times.

Kuznetsova was the fourth Grand Slam winner Keys beat during the week, a string that included Spain's Garbine Muguruza, reigning Wimbledon champion Simona Halep and Venus Williams. "It was a tough draw from the very start," Keys said. "I definitely think I played some of my best tennis consistently this week."

"I'm obviously really happy and really proud of myself," she added, while stressing she won't let the performance put more pressure on her at the US Open. "It's definitely more of a building block," she said.

Despite leading both sets, Kuznetsova never had a set point in either. Keys winning the final four games of the first set before dropping her serve in the third game of the second. Keys broke Kuznetsova to level at 5-all and ran out the winner in the ensuing tiebreaker as the Russian sent a service return long on Keys's second match point.

"I just really focused in on obviously really important games and was able to make her play a lot of balls," Keys said. "I think when I was doing a good job at moving forward and kind of trying to neutralize some of her deep, heavy, spiny shots, I was able to get out in front in the point and play a little bit more offense."

Former world number two Kuznetsova, who



MASON: Madison Keys poses for photographers after defeating Svetlana Kuznetsova of Russia in the women's final. —AFP

received a wildcard into the draw, beat top seed Ashleigh Barty, world number three Ashleigh Barty and 2017 US Open champion Sloane Stephens on her way to the final. "I had a lot of matches where they could have gone either way, including this one," said Kuznetsova, who will jump from 118th to 31st in the rankings and said

she'd had a "great week." "I had chances but she hit the ball well and was more aggressive. I'm happy with how I played, I'm feeling great," she said. "It could give me more motivation in the future," Kuznetsova added. "I just want to rest and get ready for the Open." —AFP

Trippier, Morata combine to give Atletico winning start

MADRID: Alvaro Morata headed in a sumptuous Kieran Trippier cross to ensure a new-look Atletico Madrid beat Getafe 1-0 on Sunday and made a winning start in La Liga. Trippier looked right at home at the Wanda Metropolitano when his bending ball was nodded in by Morata before two red cards in four minutes, one for each team, made it 10 against 10 before half-time.

Getafe striker Jorge Molina and Atletico left-back Renan Lodi were the players sent off and then Morata missed a penalty, earned after a mesmerizing run from Joao Felix, Atletico's 126 million euro signing from Benfica.

It was enough for Felix to depart to a standing ovation and Atletico held on, even if this was perhaps not the statement opening to the season that Diego Simeone might have hoped for. After losing Antoine Griezmann to Barcelona, Atletico have spent close to 250 million euros this summer, just over half of that on Felix, whose electric run lit up an otherwise rather disjointed contest.

The 19-year-old is supposed to be the heartbeat not only of a new team but a different style too, one that is more attractive to watch and that could even pip Barcelona and Real Madrid to the title. But Getafe were stubborn opponents, showing again why they finished fifth last season, only narrowly missing out on a place in the Champions League to Valencia on the final day.

Felix aside, Atletico's other debutants impressed, including Lodi, before he was sent off, and Trippier, the first Englishman to play for Atletico since the Spanish Civil War and 20th in the history of the Spanish top flight.

The former Tottenham defender's pin-point cross was

the highlight of a confident performance that earned regular praise from the home fans. The early signs were encouraging as Trippier and Lodi pushed high and wide, like wingers, and the former almost played Koke in with a superb first-time pass.

Felix showed some nice touches and his team-mates were quick to protest on his behalf after Leandro Cabrera barged him over. Trippier was the team's best outlet and Atletico might have scored had he managed to pick out either Felix or Morata in the middle after a brilliant pass from Saul Niguez.

He had another chance moments later though and this time Trippier was more precise. A bending cross from the right allowed Morata to head in and Trippier enjoyed the celebrations, rousing the crowd on his way back and accepting a huge roar in return.

Getafe had struggled to find a way into the match but two red cards in four minutes threatened to shift the balance. First, referee Cuadra Fernandez turned a yellow card

into a red for Molina after consulting VAR, the striker catching Thomas Partey late down the back of his heel. Then Lodi was handed a second yellow for planting his hand in the face of Damian Suarez.

Atletico dropped Saul into left back before Felix was sacrificed later in the second half, Mario Hermoso coming on for his debut where Lodi had started. But not before Felix produced the most exhilarating moment of the match, for which an otherwise rather muted debut will be remembered.

Collecting the ball in his own half, he slid past one Getafe opponent, nutmegged another and then weaved through two more. After motoring 30 yards, he was finally brought down by Bruno for a penalty, the fans cheering as if they had seen a goal.

It should have been worth one but Morata's shot was pushed wide by David Soria and Getafe remained in touch. Getafe kept it close and Morata should have made it two when sent through in injury-time. One was enough. —AFP