

Friday Times

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Back to school



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

muna@kuwaittimes.net

The back-to-school routine is not easy, because during the summer holidays there is laxity in the hours of eating and sleeping for kids. But with the return of students to schools, things don't go back as they were right away. For many families, the back-to-school period is approaching, and it is a good thing that children will be back to a routine, having an early dinner and going to bed at a reasonable time.

For moms especially, back to school is stressful for a variety of reasons. School fees in Kuwait's private schools are sky high and continue to soar. Supplies and uniforms are also expensive and require repeated trips to market and special budgeting.

Preparing for school, whether by returning from travels or buying school supplies like uniforms, bags, notebooks and other important needs are not the only concerns for families, but how ready are the schools to receive students and the readiness of classes too, especially with regards to air conditioning and water coolers, as well as the necessary medical supervision to ensure the safety of students from any diseases or infection.

I think the back-to-school season has become a burden, especially if the family has to pay for additional lessons after school for the children to help them in their studies.

The back-to-school season will begin in Kuwait and the rest of the Gulf very shortly, so it is important to raise awareness of the health risks that can be transmitted among students, especially in the kindergarten and primary levels. School health specialists agree that the school is an environment that provides an incubator for infectious diseases, and that illnesses can be easily transmitted through the integration and accumulation of pupils in classrooms. This is a natural result because of the presence of children in large groups, who are exposed to pathogens including germs and other vectors of infection. School infections, skin diseases and eye infections are transmitted by viral, fungal and bacterial means.

In any case, early diagnosis and continuous follow-up of the situation of the child, whether by parents or school administrations, is required to avoid problems. I think giving attention to the periodic examination of the skin of schoolchildren and not allowing them to keep their hair and nails too long are effective and vital.

For the prevention of these diseases, several tips are provided by specialized doctors, especially proper nutrition, as it stimulates the immune system and improves the body's ability to fight diseases, including making sure there is no lack of vitamins in the child's daily diet to ensure that the child gets enough of the right foods and enough sleep at night.

I remember when I was young, our parents were keen to make us to go to sleep early. We did not have mobiles that we took to our beds that kept us awake for a long time. Delay in sleeping at night leads to stress issues in the morning, which is a big problem for families today.

Social media occupies a lot of time in the lives of people, whether school kids or others, so it is important for parents to set certain hours during the day to let children use their mobile devices, and not allow these devices to go to bed with them. I hope this year we will not witness any cases of disruption of air conditioning in the light of the very hot weather. We need a good start. Welcome back everyone, and wishing you all a great school year!

PHOTO OF THE DAY



KUWAIT: A marine heritage committee member watches the approaching pearl divers returning from their sea voyage. — Photo by Ahmad Darwish (KUNA)

Kuwait Heritage: 'Al-Shawi' herded Kuwaitis' sheep in the past

KUWAIT: Al-Shawi is an Arabic-inspired word meaning the shepherd who wandered around the desert for sheep, since Kuwaitis in the past relied on goats and sheep to provide them with milk. People in Kuwait used to take their sheep to the Shawi every morning to avoid dirt and reduce the expenses of feeding them. While on this subject, Mohamad Jamal, a Kuwaiti heritage researcher, explained in his book 'The Old Crafts, Trades, and Commercial Activities in Kuwait' that Al-Shawi usually kept sheep in a spacious courtyard to graze outside, located in Kuwait City, in which each Shawi had their own adjacent neighborhoods. Jamal explained that Al-Shawi transported essentials through a bag woven from wool, fixed at the back of the donkey and rode it when walking was tiresome.

Outside of Kuwait springtime, there was a land with grass and water wells where Al-Shawi was spotted sending off the sheep to graze or bringing water in a large pot for them to drink until the day ends, then at the start of sunset, the sheep became full of milk, he added. Shepherds in the east go behind the Darwazat Al-Buraisi in the area now called Mansouriya, while the shep-

herds in Qibla region headed to Shamiya, Jamal mentioned. Some of the most prominent herbs that grow in Kuwait's desert help to increase the amount of milk in cattle to give milk, butter, ghee, as well as providing flavorful sheep meat, he noted, adding that sheep continue to feed on these plants even when their spread recedes in the summer. The number of sheep Al-Shawi has ranges between 150-250 domesticated animals, mostly goats, as the majority preferred to raise goats over ewes, Jamal said.

Al-Shawi was paid half a rupee for each sheep taken care of, and by time it increased to one rupee in the fifties along with one rupee for each goat vaccinated, he pointed out. Jamal went on to say that the Shawi knows all the sheep he took care of and vice-versa, as the herd of sheep followed Al-Shawi around, noting that when the sheep returned in the evening to the city, the owners go to Al-Shawi to receive them and some of them returned to their owners' homes. The most well-known professional Shawis in the past are Shawi Zuweid in Derwazat Al-Abdulrazzaq, Shawi Obeid in Sawabir and others, he said. — KUNA



Ready for the Beach ??



Kuwait Times

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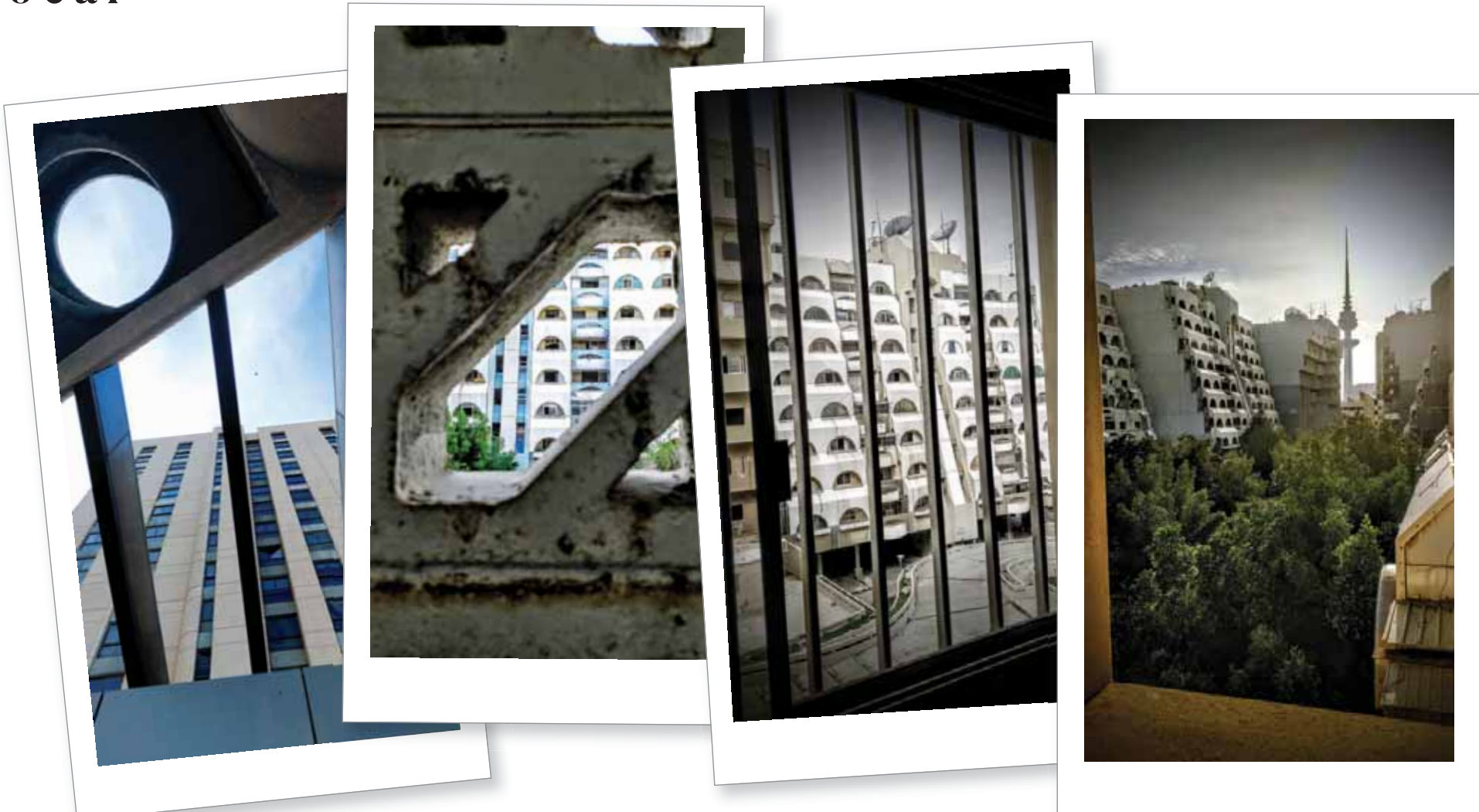
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Documenting Kuwait's disappearing landmarks

Photographer captures heritage and local urban public spaces



By Faten Omar

Kuwait's architectural heritage is slowly disappearing, with more and more historical buildings being torn down to make way for new commercial centers. Iconic and culturally relevant buildings like Bayt Lothan, Al-Sawaber and the Municipal Council building are fading into memory. But young photojournalist Abdulraouf Murad sees in these buildings and other parts of 'old Kuwait' memories worth preserving. Kuwait Times spoke with Murad about his passion for photographing Kuwait's architectural heritage.

Kuwait Times: Tell us about yourself.

Murad: I'm a young Kuwaiti man working in the field of customer service in a private investment company. I love traveling, reading, research, documentation and of course photography. In 2012, I created my Instagram profile to be more like a "travel journal", where I used to post photos and information about my trips outside Kuwait. Two years ago, I had a conversation with a friend who claimed that Kuwait is a country where there are only restaurants and cafes! From that moment, I decided to use my profile to explore Kuwait, and recently I have focused more on documenting the urban history of Kuwait and trying to raise awareness of the importance of preserving urbanism, especially with a lack of interest and demolition of Kuwaiti history.

KT: How did you decide to pursue a career in photography?

Murad: I was passionate about photography and documenting happy moments since 2002, when I bought my first digital camera. I was in high school then. That humble camera, with its modest possibilities at that time, contributed to documenting many occasions with friends and family and at school. I still have those pictures and the camera.

KT: Do you prefer to be called an architectural photographer? When did this passion start?

Murad: My passion for architecture started after a visit to Sawaber residential complex in December 2018. The complex's story and its struggles that ended dramati-

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cally with the demolition of the buildings increased my awareness about the importance of preserving the architectural heritage of Kuwait. These historical buildings represent part of Kuwait's history and identity and have witnessed the development and leadership of Kuwait, and shouldn't be treated like this.

I would rather not be described as an "architectural photographer", firstly because I'm still new in this field, and secondly and most importantly, my photography tours are not limited to urban photography. I had an interesting tour to document Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, and another highlighting the use of public transportation in Kuwait. So I might fit more under the category of "photojournalist".

KT: How would you describe your photographic approach?

Murad: I start researching and reading about the subject that I want to photograph. I use books and search engines like Google before the tour, which often starts early in the morning on weekends. I usually take photos using a mobile, but recently I have started using professional cameras. Sometimes when the place is very vast, I make more than one visit. I take a large number of photos and then start working on selecting and editing them. Finally, I collect related and interesting information about the subject of the tour. The end result is posting the tour on my Instagram page.

KT: From where do you get your information about the history of the buildings?

Murad: Unfortunately, the Kuwait library has scarce information regarding the history of modern urbanism in Kuwait. I mostly use two important books as references - "Modern Architecture Kuwait: 1949 -1989", which is a significant book by a group of researchers who documented the most important architectural features of Kuwait. The other book is "History of Engineering in Kuwait" by renowned Kuwaiti engineer Sabah Al-Rayes. I also do some online search about the places that I will be visiting.

KT: How long does it take to complete the photo shoot?

Murad: Photo shooting often takes a day or a single visit to the place for several hours - but it may extend in case the place is huge and full of details. After that comes the process of sorting, selecting and editing the photos, which usually takes hours.

KT: What is your favorite photography project and why?

Murad: Sawaber residential complex project. When I learned the complex was abandoned and that there were plans to demolish it, I decided to visit it. I used to think that the complex comprised only of a few buildings



that I saw every day on my way to work, but I was surprised by the size of the project, with its facilities, gardens, play areas and walkways connecting buildings. I wandered inside the magnificent abandoned apartments, and imagined how they were before their owners left. I find a special atmosphere in abandoned places - they have a charming and attractive air.

KT: How do you protect the rights of your photographs in this online era?

Murad: I believe that publishing the photos under the photographer's profile on social media and on specialized sites is an effective way to preserve their rights. There is also another way to preserve their rights - by saving the photos on CDs and recording them at the National Library of Kuwait. Thus they become officially protected.

KT: What advice would you give to photographers who want to pursue a career in photography?

Murad: Make sure you have a message and a good cause for your photography - don't be random. Also, I would say that you do not need professional cameras and sophisticated equipment to become a photographer - the mobile camera does the job often. The most important

thing is your eye and feeling of the beauty and power of the moment and scene.

KT: What do you think about social media? How do you use it in your profession?

Murad: I have benefited a lot from social media in terms of exchanging ideas and suggestions with followers, receiving their positive and negative opinions and their interactions with what I publish. This is my biggest motivation for continuity and development, and there is no doubt that social media is one of the most successful ways to express and share your ideas, awareness and knowledge.

KT: Anything you would like to add?

Murad: In Kuwait, many facilities and buildings have witnessed the antecedence and leadership of the country and its history in the region. I hope that all officials in the state will take care of them and preserve them instead of unnecessarily demolishing and removing them. I also call on all amateur and professional photographers to highlight these places and document them through their lenses to display the unique and beautiful identity of Kuwait, which is way more than just a restaurant or cafe or a shopping mall.



—Photos by Abdulraouf Murad

Water for the birds



PHOTO FEATURE

Residents across Kuwait provide water and feed for animals, especially during the searing summer months. With temperatures regularly above 50+ C even in the shade, many birds for instance rely on the generosity of residents to find fresh water. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



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Local

Oman Sultan Qaboos greets Kuwait's Amir on recuperation

Kuwaiti speaker congratulates Sheikh Sabah on recovery

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday received a cable from Sultan Qaboos bin Said of Oman, congratulating him on recovery following a recent health problem. In the cable, the Sultan of Oman wished His Highness the Amir well and Kuwait further advancement and prosperity under his wise leadership. In response, His Highness the Amir sent a cable to Sultan Qaboos, voicing thanks and appreciation to him for his good sentiments and sincere prayers, and wishing the Sultanate of Oman and its well-regarded people much progress and development under his judicious steering. His Highness the Amir received similar cables from Oman's Deputy Prime Minister Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al-Said and Tunisia's interim president Mohamed Ennaceur.



Tunisia's interim president greets Amir

Meanwhile, His Highness Amir received a congratulatory cable from National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, on recovering from the recent health setback, wishing His Highness Sheikh Sabah wellbeing. In response, His Highness the Amir sent a cable to Speaker Al-Ghanem, thanking him for his kind sentiments. In addition, His Highness the Amir received a congratulatory cable from Chairman of the Jordanian Senate Faisal Akel Al-Fayez over his recovery. Fayez uttered his sincere congratulations over His Highness the Amir's recovery and he wished him a good health. His highness the Amir addressed a cable to Fayeze, expressing his gratitude for his kind words. — KUNA



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

Kuwait welcomes reconciliation of Somalia's parties

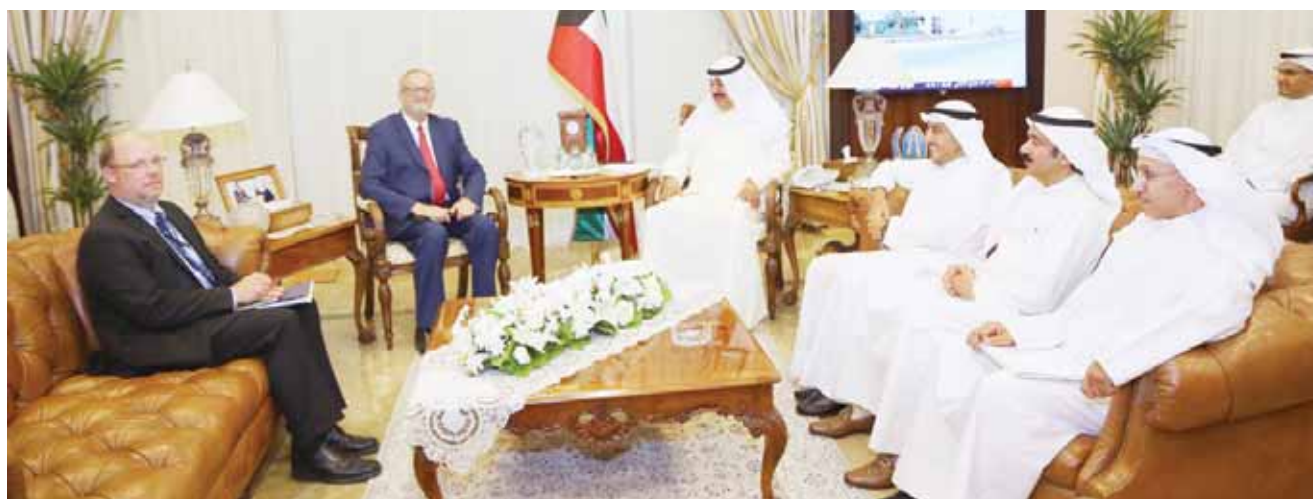


NEW YORK: Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi speaks during the session. — KUNA

NEW YORK: Kuwait welcomed the reconciliation efforts of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the Federal Member States of Somalia despite the challenges. The remarks were made by Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi, during the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) session on Somalia late Wednesday. The ambassador called on all parties to put aside their differences and focus on Somalia's future, especially with the 2020-2021 elections coming up. Achieving reconciliation will play a big role in completing the work of the constitution revision committee, the comprehensive security plan and approving the elections' draft law, Otaibi said.

Meanwhile, he expressed regret over the recent attacks in the country, as the Al-Shabaab movement and other armed groups pose a great threat to Somalia. Otaibi also strongly condemned the attacks on UN employees and rescue workers and called on the UNSC to take serious measures to deal with such incidents. Moreover, the Kuwaiti diplomat expressed his deep concern over the continuous lack of food security in the country and the growing numbers of homeless people that reached 2.6 million until now. He noted that he was pleased with the developmental steps taken by the FGS, which led the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to announce granting the country a debt relief, as part of the fund's Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. —KUNA

Deputy FM meets US ambassador



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah met yesterday with US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman. During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral ties between both countries, ways to enhance them, as well as the latest regional and international developments. The meeting was at-

tended by Assistant Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Foreign Minister's Office Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar and Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for Americas' Affairs Salah Al-Haddad. — KUNA

Kuwaiti PM congratulate Sudanese counterpart

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah addressed a congratulatory cable to the newly-appointed Sudan's Prime Minister Dr Abdullah Hamdok, on the occasion of his appointment. In the cable, His Highness stressed bilateral and mutual ties between the two countries, expressing his sincere feelings for good health and more progress for the Prime Minister. — KUNA

Ukrainian cultural week in Kuwait in Jan

KUWAIT: Ukrainian Ambassador to Kuwait Dr Oleksandr Balanuta said yesterday that a Ukrainian cultural week will take place in Kuwait next January. The Ukrainian ambassador said this festivity reflects the strong bilateral ties between the two countries. The statement came ahead of Ukraine's celebrations of Independence Day, Ukraine's largest State holiday, which commemorates the adoption in 1991 of the 'Declaration of State Sovereignty' of Ukraine. The Ambassador noted that his embassy would organize a 'Ukrainian cultural week in Kuwait' on this occasion between January 19-23. — KUNA

Lawmaker labels Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh land of outlaws

MPs press for road repairs before winter

KUWAIT: Describing Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh as a land of outlaws and total chaos, MP Majed Al-Mutairi yesterday sent a series of questions to the state minister for municipality affairs about government plans for the densely-populated areas for expatriates.

The lawmaker said that the area, which is home to tens of thousands of expatriates, a majority of whom are Asian, looks like an area from a totally different world despite its highly important strategic location near the international airport, the new university and the country's main sports stadium. With its random and chaotic markets which disrupt traffic, the area has become a slum area like the residential areas being removed from major Arab cities, he said. The area is also crowded with single expat unskilled laborers many of whom are law violators, making the area home to outlaws, said Mutairi, adding that construction organization is almost absent from the area making it extremely difficult for any future plan to develop the area.

The lawmaker asked the minister about pro-

posed government plans to resolve the problems of Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and the main difficulties facing its execution. He also asked if the ministry has any plans to remove the unlicensed random road markets and if the government has any plans to revamp the whole area. Mutairi asked the minister about the number of single men living in the area and why the ministry has not penalized landlords who lease their buildings to bachelors in violation of the law.

Meanwhile, MPs criticized the government yesterday for failing to make the necessary repairs for the roads hit by last year's flooding and for not paying compensation to people whose property was damaged. MP Yusef Al-Fadhlah said the minister of public works has said that road repairs will be completed in December this year which is a long delay, adding that many roads are not in the best shape. MP Mohammad Al-Hadiya held the ministry officials responsible for failing to develop roads in the country to the best international standards.



KUWAIT: A large pile of waste left in an open area in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh in this file photo.

56,000 invalid work permits cancelled

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Manpower has cancelled 56,000 invalid work permits. The authority said its action came after making sure about the accuracy of data from the interior ministry. The law allows the authority to cancel a work permit automatically in several cases, including if the worker spends more than six consecutive months out of Kuwait without a permit from the residency affairs department, when the residency permit expires, and if the worker is deported.

350 expat doctors

Meanwhile, the Health Ministry asked the Civil Service Commission for new job vacancies to sign contracts with 350 new expat doctors to meet the needs of new hospitals and medical centers that have opened or will open shortly. Official sources said the ministry asked the commission for a quick response to avoid any shortage in doctors needed by medical centers. They said the health ministry will start interviewing doctors from Jordan and Palestine, who are expected to be contracted before the end of the year. Meanwhile, they said the ministry will also sign con-

tracts with doctors from India, and 500 nurses and technicians from India and the Philippines. The sources said the CSC told the health ministry that expat administrative employees should be replaced by Kuwaitis, especially since there are Kuwaitis registered at the central employment department having certificates in secretarial and administrative specialties.

School catering

Assistant Undersecretary for Public Education Usama Al-Sultan said it was agreed with Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakery Company to supply pastries and biscuits for the elementary stage with high quality and specifications approved by the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition. He said six local companies will supply dairy products and refreshments. Sultan said the Education Ministry is keen on boosting positive behavior and correct nutrition habits by providing healthy foods that reduce food-related diseases.

Private nurseries

Social Affairs Minister Saad Al-Kharaz issued a decision to form a new department to supervise private nurseries at the social development sector. Acting Social Affairs Ministry Undersecretary Hanaa Al-Hajeri said the aim behind the new department is to monitor the rising number of private nurseries that are more than 600 now and are expected to increase. She said no new applications will be accepted until the new department is ready.

28 arrested in Sharq police raid

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Twenty eight people were arrested during a police crackdown in Sharq that targeted illegal residents and other law-breakers. Capital Security Department carried out the surprise inspection of Shamlan Marina Wednesday night in cooperation

with the coastguard, resulting in arresting two drunken persons, four in violation of residency law, five with expired residency permits and 19 not carrying IDs. All were sent to concerned authorities.

In other news, Acting Interior Ministry Undersecretary Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chaired a meeting yesterday that included the Acting Undersecretary for Traffic and Operations Affairs Maj Gen Abdelaziz Al-Hajeri and a number of concerned directors. The meeting discussed preparations for the new school year and the distribution of traffic patrols on main and side roads to ensure smooth traffic flow.



Hawally Municipality processes 380 transactions in July

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality's public relations department said Hawally branch inspection and engineering follow up department processed 380 transactions in July. Department Director Mubarak Al-Ajmi said the department processed

105 transactions for electronic specifications, 77 transactions to end electronic supervision, 128 transactions for shops, seven for power connections, 23 for electronic power connections, three licenses and renewals for nurseries, institutes and a bank branch, in addition to eight transactions for phone connections.



Too late for a new
 Brexit deal: France

South Korea to scrap intelligence-sharing pact with Japan



MAARET AL-NUMAN, Syria: Photo shows Turkish military vehicles passing through Maaret Al-Numan in Syria's northern province of Idlib, heading back to Turkey after a reported two day mission into Syria. — AFP

Offensive puts Turkish troops in peril

Turkish military post cut off by Syrian army advances

ISTANBUL: Syrian army advances in north-west Syria are putting Turkish troops in the firing line and threaten Ankara's hopes of preventing a new wave of refugees on its southern border. The offensive around Idlib, the last major rebel stronghold in Syria, has already forced tens of thousands of civilians to flee towards Turkey. It has also cut off a Turkish military post deep inside Syria as the deal to limit fighting in the region, which the Turkish troops were supposed to be monitoring, collapses.

The breakdown of that deal would be a significant blow to President Tayyip Erdogan, who has steered Turkey closer to Russia in recent years but appears unable to rein back Moscow's support for the Syrian army offensive. Russia, Iran and Turkey agreed in 2017 to set up four "de-escalation zones" to stem fighting between Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's forces and rebels, but the Syrian army has retaken three of those areas and is now advancing in the fourth.

It has entered the town of Khan Sheikhoun, effectively cutting off Turkish troops at a military post near the town of Morek, 70 km (45 miles) inside Syria. A Turkish convoy sent to resupply the Morek post was halted on Monday by an air strike. "The situation there is of critical sensitivity," Erdogan's spokesman Ibrahim Kalin said after a cabinet meeting on Wednesday.

Turkey, which supports some Syrian rebel

factions, has troops deployed at 12 military observation posts around the Idlib region under the 2017 deal with Moscow and Tehran, which back Assad's government. That agreement, and a Turkey-Russia accord last year aimed at reducing the power of jihadist fighters in the Idlib region, has at best had only a limited impact.

Turkey complained that Syrian and Russia air strikes in the region continued, while Moscow grew increasingly impatient over what it saw as Ankara's failure to stop jihadists from the former Nusra Front taking over much of Idlib. Russia also says the fighters in Idlib and Hama provinces threatened its Hmeymim air base, less than 40 km to the west.

Civilians flee

Turkey insists it has no plans to abandon or move any of the military posts it set up in Idlib, despite Monday's air strike and the fighting around Morek. "All observation posts will continue operations where they are located right now," Kalin said, adding that agreements to halt military operations around Idlib must be respected.

"Otherwise, both the violation of this agreement and the resulting humanitarian drama will be inevitable." The United Nations says more than 500,000 people have been uprooted since the Syrian army began its offensive in late April,

most of them escaping deeper into the rebel bastion and towards the border. Turkey, which opened its border at the start of the Syrian conflict in 2011 and now hosts 3.6 million Syrian refugees, is determined to avoid another influx of civilians - or fighters.

It has built a wall along the 800 km Syrian border and says it has identified locations inside Syria to shelter a possible wave of people fleeing the fighting in Idlib. "If there is this kind of movement to our borders we will take action and create shelters where we are going to accommodate displaced people outside our borders," Interior Minister Suleyman Soyly said this week. He did not specify whether the camps would be in Idlib province or Turkish-controlled areas of northern Syria around the towns of Azaz, Al-Bab and Jarablus.

Staying put?

Turkey's determination to stand by all 12 of its military posts in Idlib was reiterated this week by the government, and a senior security official told Reuters Ankara was standing by its troops on the ground. "Whichever observation post needs it, support is provided, the official said.

However, that will prove increasingly challenging for Turkey unless there is a change of course by Moscow or Damascus, which has repeatedly said it is committed to recapturing

every inch of Syrian territory. "The Turkish observation posts are not constituted to defend themselves and at least one of them has been encircled by Syrian regime forces," said Ozgur Unluhisarcikli from the German Marshall Fund. "When the risk of conflict rises too much, Turkey will probably retreat."

Erdogan will speak to Putin about Idlib as soon as possible, Kalin told reporters after the cabinet meeting. Just last month, Turkish ties with Russia appeared stronger than ever as Erdogan took delivery of advanced S-400 Russian missile defense equipment - despite a threat of U.S. sanctions and strong lobbying by Washington to stall the deal. Six weeks later, Moscow and Ankara's differences over northwest Syria appear irreconcilable and Turkey's Idlib strategy is in peril.

"The end state is clear," said Sinan Ulgen, a visiting scholar at Carnegie Europe and a former Turkish diplomat. Pressure on the southernmost Turkish observation posts - those which are the furthest inside Syria - would spread to other Turkish positions as the Syrian army offensive continues, and Turkey would likely pull some troops back. "It was a matter of time," Ulgen said. "To me the surprise is that it happened so soon after the S-400 episode. It proves how little leverage Turkey has gained with Russia." — Reuters

International

Ghana draws Afro-American tourists with 'Year of Return'

Cape Coast Castle - a major magnet

CAPE COAST: US preacher Roxanne Caleb blinked away the tears as she emerged from a pitch-dark dungeon where African slaves were once held before being shipped across the Atlantic to America. "I wasn't prepared for this. I'm heartbroken," she said as she toured the Cape Coast slave fort on Ghana's ocean shore.

"My mind still can't wrap around the fact that a human being can treat another worse than a rat." Caleb is among the African-American visitors flocking to Ghana as it marks the "Year of Return" to remember the 400th anniversary of the first slave ship landing in Virginia. The West African nation is banking on the commemorations to give a major boost to the number of tourist arrivals as it encourages the descendants of slaves to "come home".

Cape Coast Castle, 150 kilometers from the capital Accra, is a major magnet for those visiting. The white-washed fort lined with cannons was one of dozens of prisons studding the Atlantic coast where slaves were held before their journey to the New World. A string of prominent African-Americans have headed to the site this year to mark the anniversary since the first slave landing in 1619. Among them was a delegation of Congressional Black Caucus led by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi that toured last month.

'Can't forget history'

For those visiting it is an emotional rite of passage. "This has been understanding my history and my roots where I came from," Caleb

said. "I am very thankful I came here as part of the Year of Return." Sampson Nii Addy, a corrections officer with the Montgomery police department in Alabama, said he and his family had found the tour an "education". "I think every black person needs to come around to learn history; how people were treated," the 52-year-old told AFP. "We can't forget history but we can always learn something from it." Ghana, one of the continent's most stable democracies, has long pitched itself as a destination for African-Americans to explore their heritage and even settle permanently. In 2009 President Barack Obama visited with his family and paid homage at the Cape Coast Castle.

The "Year of Return" has added fresh impetus and the country is hoping it will increase visitor numbers from 350,000 in 2018 to 500,000 this year, including 45,000 African-Americans. Kojo Keelson has spent nine years guiding tour groups around the Cape Coast Castle and says 2019 has seen a surge in interest as Ghana looks to rake in tourism revenue of \$925 million (830 million euros). "It's like a pilgrimage. This year we've a lot more African-Americans coming through than the previous year," he told AFP. "I'm urging all of them to come home and experience and reconnect to the motherland."

'Love to come again'

Akwasi Awua Ababio, the official coordinating "Year of Return" events, pointed to high hotel occupancy rates as he said "enthusiasm is



CAPE COAST: Visitors gather on August 18, 2019, at Cape Coast Castle, outside the 'Door of No Return', through which enslaved Africans were loaded as cargo onto the ships that took them across the Atlantic to the Americas. — AFP

very high and we've got huge numbers coming from the US and Caribbean". He insisted that beyond the major economic boost, Ghana was also looking to use the new connections it is forging to convince the descendants of slaves to resettle for good and help the country develop. "Human resource is always an asset and we need to see how we can welcome them home to utilise their expertise and networks," the director for diaspora affairs at the presidency said.

The African American Association of Ghana brings together those who have moved to West Africa and offers help to integrate them into their new surroundings. President Gail Nikoi praised the "Year of Return" initiative by Ghanaian leader Nana Akufo-Addo and said the country was "setting the stage for future engagements and involvement of African-Americans and other Africans from the diaspora in the development of this country." — AFP

US marks the arrival of Angela, the 'Eve' of enslaved Africans

JAMESTOWN: Carefully raking through soil in suffocating heat at an archeological dig site in historic Jamestown, Charde Reid is working hard to retrace bits of the life of Angela, who arrived here from Africa 400 years ago. After a terrifying crossing of the Atlantic, Angela was one of the first African slaves known to reach the first permanent English settlement in North America, which would later be part of the United States. "I see a lot of connections with my own family's background, and what began here, in 1619," said Reid, a 32-year-old African-American Virginia native.

She calls the first slaves to reach the state "our foremothers and our forefathers - of not only African-American culture, but American culture in general." Reid herself says her family tree includes a white indentured servant and a black slave. As she works, bricks begin to appear - the remnants of more recent buildings erected on the site of the Jamestown estate where Angela lived. The rolling green landscape, which gently slopes towards the James River, is likely not all that different to the one that the African slaves saw upon their arrival in August 1619.

Slave ships

At the time, Portuguese and Spanish slave traders had already been selling Africans as laborers in the Americas - Brazil, for instance - for nearly a century. Originally from the kingdom of Ndongo, in what is now Angola, Angela was loaded onto a Portuguese ship in Luanda, which then headed to Veracruz, in the

Spanish colony of modern-day Mexico. Nearly a third of the 350 slaves died before the Atlantic crossing was complete because of the dire conditions on board the vessel.

And before reaching Veracruz, two privateer ships attacked the Portuguese vessel and snatched about 60 Africans, according to James Horn, president of the Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation in charge of the dig. The first of the two, the White Lion, arrived in Virginia in "the latter end of August" 1619, wrote John Rolfe, a wealthy English settler who was the husband of Pocahontas, whose father was a powerful native American tribal leader. Arriving at Point Comfort - today Fort Monroe, near Jamestown - the privateers exchanged "20 and odd" Africans for needed supplies.

The second ship, the Treasurer, arrived soon thereafter, dropping off a small group. The only woman whose name was preserved for history was Angela, "the first documented African woman in Virginia," said Bly Straube, the curator at the Jamestown Settlement, a living history museum. "To me, the story is sort of like Eve," Straube said. "She and her fellow Africans who arrived in 1619 are the founding generation of what would become our African-American community today. That's the beginning."

Their arrival marks the beginning of a dark period of US history: 250 years of slavery followed by a long period of racial segregation, the repercussions of which are still felt in American society. The enslaved Africans arrived shortly after settlers founded the first local legislature on July 30, 1619 - in what Horn calls a "paradox" of history.

Just weeks after "the first expression of our democratic experiment" came the arrival of people "stripped of their rights, and even their identity," the historian said. "That's a fundamental part of our story as Americans." For Terry Brown, the first black superintendent of the Fort Monroe National Monument, the history of slavery in the United States is "the greatest survival story written in American history." — AFP

Man arrested in Spain for 'upskirting' over 500 women

MADRID: Spanish police said Wednesday they have arrested a man suspected of secretly recording videos of the underwear of over 500 women, some of them minors, on public transit and supermarkets. The man allegedly used a mobile phone concealed inside a backpack which he placed on the ground to take pictures up women's skirts in Madrid without their consent, a practice known as "upskirting", police said in a statement.

He then uploaded at least 283 of these videos to a pornographic site where they were viewed over a million times. Police arrested the 53-year-old Colombian national while he was in the act of recording up the dress of a woman on the Madrid metro using a "strategically placed mobile phone" in his backpack, the statement said.

He "acted in a compulsive way, daily, recording all the women that he could," it added. During one five-day period he recorded 29 different women, police said. The man operated in the metro and commuter trains and "in some cases followed some of the women from the metro to supermarkets to continue recording them," Rafael Fernandez of the cyber-crime unit of Spain's national police told reporters.

Officers seized a laptop and three hard drives from his home which had videos with images of hundreds of women whom he secretly recorded. — AFP

International

Israel eases its rules on cyber weapon exports

Israeli government and industry seek more sales of spyware

TEL AVIV: Israel is easing export rules on offensive cyber weapons, despite accusations by human rights and privacy groups that its technologies are used by some governments to spy on political foes and crush dissent. A rule change by the defense ministry means companies can now obtain exemptions on marketing licenses for the sale of some products to specific countries, a source close to the cyber sector told Reuters.

Israel, like other big defense exporters, closely guards details of its weapons sales and its export rules are not widely known, but the defense ministry confirmed the change had gone into force about a year ago in response to Reuters' questions. Industry specialists say the change makes a speedier approval process possible for the sale of cyber weapons, or spyware, which are used to break into electronic devices and monitor online communications.

Israel's defense ministry said the rule change "was made to facilitate effective service to Israeli industries while maintaining and protecting international standards of export control and supervision". It said a marketing-license exemption was granted only under "certain conditions related to the security clearance of the product and assessment of the country toward which the product will be marketed" and that companies were still required to hold an export licence.

The Israeli government and the companies declined to comment on which neighboring states are among spyware customers. In a sign the government could make more changes, the economy ministry - which is responsible for promoting economic growth and exports - is setting up a division to handle exports of cyber tech-

nologies that have offensive and defensive capabilities. "This is part of a reform that is essentially allocating more resources to the economy ministry for this important issue," a ministry spokeswoman said.

Growing commercial market

Advanced cyber weapons were until recently deployed only by the most technically sophisticated government spy agencies, such as those in the United States, Israel, China and Russia. But now a robust commercial market for powerful hacking tools and services has emerged, with former government cyber experts from the United States, Israel and other countries playing a big role in the trade.

That has brought new scrutiny to how cyber weapons are bought, sold and deployed, and the actions of governments in regulating the trade. Israeli companies, including NSO Group and Verint, and defence contractor Elbit Systems, are among the world leaders in the growing global market for cyber weapons. The software tools exploit vulnerabilities in cellphones and other tech products to gain access and covertly monitor users. Some privacy and human rights groups say Israel's controls on the sale of cyber weapons are inadequate. Earlier this year, Amnesty said the government should take a tougher line against export licences that have "resulted in human rights abuses". The Israeli government declined to comment on accusations of rights abuses. Rights groups say neighboring states including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are among the Israeli firms' spyware customers.



BETUNIA: Palestinian demonstrators react from the noise of stun grenades during a protest in solidarity with Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails near Israel's Ofer Prison in the Israeli-occupied West Bank yesterday. — AFP

Diplomatic considerations can come into play and help speed sales. Tel Aviv University Professor Isaac Ben Israel, the father of Israel's cyber sector and chairman of its space agency, said there was nothing wrong with using technology to form a bond with neighbors that have shunned formal ties. "This is a legitimate tool in diplomacy," he said. Government officials in Saudi Arabia and the UAE did not respond to requests for comments regarding claims they had

purchased spyware from Israeli companies. Israeli companies say they comply with government export rules and vet customers to ensure the technology is used for legitimate purposes by foreign governments. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told a cyber conference in June there were demands to regulate the sector more as it grows. "But I think we have to take the risk, and it's a considerable risk, of regulating less in order to grow more," he said. — Reuters

Trump: 'Mentally stable' Americans should own guns

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said that all "mentally stable" Americans should be able to own firearms amid reports he retreated on plans to toughen gun purchase background checks in the wake of a string of mass shootings. "I want guns in the hands of people that are mentally stable," Trump told reporters. "Those people, I want them to be easily able to get a gun. But people who are insane, people who are sick... I don't want them to be able to get a gun." Trump denied media reports that on Tuesday he had promised National Rifle Association head Wayne LaPierre that he would not press Congress for a law tightening background checks on people seeking to purchase guns.

Several leading media outlets including the Washington Post and The Atlantic quoted White House sources as saying

Trump promised LaPierre he would not pressure Congress for a stringent, universal, pre-sale review of all gun buyers. Public safety and anti-gun groups are demanding Trump close a gaping loophole in federal laws which exempts private sellers of guns online and at gun shows from running background checks on buyers.

Doing so would make it harder for many people to purchase guns, and conceivably help reduce gun violence. Trump said he had talked to LaPierre, whose organization has a commanding influence on any legislation to do with guns, but denied making a commitment on background checks. "I didn't say anything about that," he told reporters. "We just talked about concepts," he said. "We have a lot of background checks right now. But there are certain weaknesses. We want to fix the weaknesses."

Trump pointed to the need to have licensed sellers screen buyers for reports of mental illness, and suggested so-called "red-flag" laws allowing the temporary removal of guns from people seen as a risk to themselves or others. "We also have to remember, the gun doesn't pull the trigger, a person does," he said. — AFP

Trump under fire from American Jews over 'disloyalty' remark

NEW YORK: US President Donald Trump has been hit by a wave of criticism for accusing Jewish Democratic voters of "disloyalty," but his comment also highlighted the unease of some in the community with its traditional party of choice. Trump, who has positioned himself as a staunch ally of Israel, made the remark on Tuesday night while criticizing Democratic politicians who support a boycott of the Jewish state.

"Where has the Democratic party gone?" Trump said, adding: "I think any Jewish people that vote for a Democrat, I think it shows either a total lack of knowledge or great disloyalty." Asked about the comments before flying to Kentucky the following day, Trump — in typical fashion — doubled down: "You vote for a Democrat, you're being very disloyal to Jewish people and you're being very disloyal to Israel."

Members of America's more than five million-strong Jewish community - 80 percent of whom voted Democratic in the 2018 mid-term elections, according to the Pew Research Center - have denounced his notion of loyalty and blamed the president for fuelling anti-Semitism. "It's a bit unclear what the president was trying to say in

terms of who Jews are disloyal to... While he wasn't exactly clear about that, I will be exactly clear on what that was: anti-Semitism," Jonathan Greenblatt, the CEO of the Anti-Defamation League, said on CNN. The president "has no right to tell Jewish Americans he knows what is best for us or to demand our loyalty," said Halie Soifer, executive director for the Jewish Democratic Council of America. Criticism of Trump has multiplied on Twitter under the hashtags #Disloyal-to-Trump as well as #KingofIsrael, after the president approvingly tweeted a quote in which he was referred to by that title.

But beyond the latest controversy, some New York Jews say they feel growing unease with certain positions taken by the Democratic Party. Trump "shouldn't have said it," said Ben Mizrachy, a retired 80-year-old. "I don't like the Jews to be taken into political party discussions." "But the truth of the matter is, that some Jews, even those who have always voted Democrat like myself, are being disappointed with the Democratic party" because its leadership is not reacting enough to what seems like anti-Semitism from some of its members, he said. — AFP

International

Iran unveils domestically built long-range air defense system

Tehran ready to work on French nuclear deal proposals

TEHRAN: Iran unveiled its new home-grown air defense system yesterday at a time of increased tensions with the United States. Iranian officials have previously called Bavar-373 the Islamic republic's first domestically produced long-range missile defense system. Tehran began making Bavar-which means "believe"-after the purchase of Russia's S-300 system was suspended in 2010 due to international sanctions.

President Hassan Rouhani attended the unveiling ceremony for the mobile surface-to-air system and ordered it to be added to Iran's missile defense network, state news agency IRNA reported. "The long-range Bavar-373 missile system is suited to Iran's geography with a range of more than 200 kilometres (124 miles) ... and competes with Russian and American systems such as S-300 and Patriot," IRNA said. The system is "better than S-300 and close to S-400", Rouhani said in televised remarks after the ceremony, held on Iran's "national defence industry day".

Pictures released by his office showed the system mounted on the back of military trucks in Tehran. Iran installed the S-300 system in March 2016 following several years of delays, after a nuclear agreement reached with world powers the previous year allowed the lifting of international sanctions. Yesterday's unveiling takes place against a backdrop of rising tensions with Washington since President Donald Trump last year

withdrew the United States from the nuclear deal and reimposed sanctions. Iran shot down a US Global Hawk drone with a surface-to-air missile in June for allegedly violating its airspace, which the United States denies.

Iran is prepared to work on French proposals to salvage the international nuclear deal that Tehran signed with world powers in 2015 but it will not tolerate US interference in the Gulf, its foreign minister said yesterday. At a time of heightened friction between Tehran and Washington, Iran also displayed what it described as a domestically built long-range, surface-to-air missile air defense system.

The United State abandoned the international nuclear deal in May last year and stepped up sanctions on the Islamic Republic. In an effort to prop up the agreement, French President Emmanuel Macron offered on Wednesday to either soften sanctions on Iran or provide a compensation mechanism "to enable the Iranian people to live better" in return for full compliance with the pact.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, speaking at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, said he was looking forward to having a serious conversation with Macron in Paris today. "There are proposals on the table, both from the French and the Iranian side, and we are going to work on those proposals tomorrow," he said. Zarif also warned against US efforts to create a se-



TEHRAN: A handout picture provided shows Iranian-made air defense missile system Bavar 373 ('believe' in farsi) during a ceremony in Tehran yesterday. — AFP

curity mission, which so far Britain, Australia and Bahrain have joined, to guard shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, a vital gateway for global oil supplies.

"It's clear that the US' intention..(of having a) naval presence in the Gulf is to counter Iran.. Don't expect us to remain quiet when somebody comes to our waters and threatens us," Zarif said. Several international merchant vessels have been attacked in the Gulf in recent months in incidents that have rocked global commodity trading. The

United States has blamed Iran, which denies the accusations.

Adding to the fraught mood, British forces seized an Iranian tanker off Gibraltar in July then Iranian Revolutionary Guards detained a British vessel in the Gulf. In his speech in Oslo, Zarif said Iran would not start a war in the Gulf but it would defend itself. "Will there be a war in the Persian Gulf? I can tell you that we will not start the war...but we will defend ourselves." —Agencies

Indonesia cuts off internet in Papua over unrest fears

JAKARTA: Indonesia has cut off internet access in unrest-hit Papua over fears that a stream of offensive and racist online posts would spark more violent protests in the region, the government said yesterday. Riots and demonstrations brought several Papuan cities to a standstill this week, as buildings were torched and street battles broke out between police and protesters in Indonesia's easternmost territory.

A rebel insurgency against Jakarta's rule has simmered for decades in the resource-rich but impoverished island, which shares a border with Papua New Guinea. The riots appear to have been triggered by the arrest of dozens of Papuan students in Java at the weekend, who were also pelted with racist abuse.

Indonesia had slowed internet service in recent days to clamp down on hoaxes and provocative comments targeting Papua's ethnic Melanesian population.

But it shut down service completely late Wednesday, although many users still managed to get around the block. "The amount of racist and provocative content was very high... and it went viral," communications ministry spokesman Ferdinandus Setu said. Calm appeared to have been mostly restored yesterday after Indonesia sent in 1,200 extra police and military to Papua. A few dozen protesters were arrested.

Several police officers had been injured, and there are unconfirmed reports of wounded demonstrators. No deaths have been reported. The unrest came after reports that authorities tear-gassed and briefly detained some 43 Papuan university students in Surabaya, Indonesia's second-biggest city, on Saturday - the country's independence day. Police in riot gear stormed a dormitory to force out students who allegedly destroyed an Indonesian flag, as a group of protesters shouted racial slurs at them, calling them "monkeys" and "dogs".

'Second-class citizens'

In Jakarta yesterday, more than 100 demonstrators scuffled with police near the presidential palace as they called for Papuan independence. Some were dressed in traditional clothing and with their faces painted in the image of Papua's banned flag. "Papuan students are treated like second-class citizens," university student Mika Dabe told AFP. "Our dignity and pride have been trampled on." In riot-hit Sorong, Indonesia's chief security minister Wiranto yesterday appealed for calm, as he referred to Papua as the nation's "golden child".

"Indonesia's unity is non-negotiable," the minister, who goes by one name, told reporters. "Don't let negativity divide us." Wiranto had flown to Papua with the head of the military and Indonesia's national police chief, while President Joko Widodo was expected to visit next week. In Bali's capital Denpasar, dozens rallied and carried placards that read "Stop Racism" and "Stop Genocide". "It was discriminatory and racist," said rally coordinator Jeeno Dogomo, referring to the Surabaya arrests. — AFP

Alternate lives: Korean orphans' quests for answers

SEOUL: On a summer's day in 1985 a seven-year-old boy sat alone at a crowded bus station in Seoul, sobbing as he waited desperately for his mother to return. Jo Youn-hwan was wearing a baseball uniform that his mother had bought him a few days before—the only gift she had ever given him. She told him to wait for her before leaving him at the terminal. So he did, increasingly terrified as day turned to dusk. "I'll be a really good kid if only she chooses to return," he promised himself, over and over again. "I'll be a really, really good kid."

She never did.

Jo was taken into South Korea's orphanage system, but even though the country was for decades one of the world's biggest exporters of children, he was already too old for most adoptive parents' preferences. Never chosen by a new family, he spent the rest of his childhood in what he describes as a vicious and rigidly hierarchical institution, before "aging out" at 20. Children died of curable illnesses and older ones abused younger ones on a daily basis, he said.

"When a new kid arrived and cried because he was scared, the ritual was to cover his body with a blanket and beat him with a bat until he stopped," he told AFP. Rooms and clothes were filthy, the food often rotten and inedible. For years, he wondered what would have happened if he had

been adopted. "My life wouldn't have been so full of 'han'," he said—a Korean word describing unresolved sadness and resentment. But many of those who were picked ask themselves similar questions.

Better life?

International adoption from South Korea began after the Korean War as a way to remove mixed-race children, born to local mothers and American GI fathers, from a country that emphasized ethnic homogeneity. More recently the main driver has been babies born to unmarried women, who still face ostracism in a patriarchal society, and according to historians, are often forced to give up their children. Most children remain institutionalized till adulthood as many South Koreans are reluctant to adopt. The country has sent some 180,000 children overseas over the years, mostly to the US. "This logic of rescue remained strong in the minds of Americans and Koreans alike: rich Americans could give a Korean child a better life than they could ever have in Korea with poor parents or a single mother," said Arissa Oh, who researches race, family and migration at Boston College in the US. Among children placed in orphanages, the youngest, "most attractive and healthiest" were selected for overseas adoption, Oh told AFP.

The idea of rescue "erased the consumerism" of international adoption, providing justification for taking children from their country of birth, she added. For many adoptees, that narrative has often led to a sense of alienation in their new lives. "My whole life I have been told-by adopters, colleagues and at school-I should be grateful, and had I not been adopted I would've had to live in the streets as a prostitute," Hanna Johansson, a Korean adoptee in Sweden, explained. —AFP

International

India health ministry proposes ban on e-cigarettes, jail terms

Up to five-year jail terms proposed for repeat offenders

NEW DELHI: India's health ministry has proposed a ban on the production and import of electronic cigarettes, documents seen by Reuters showed, potentially jeopardizing the expansion plans of big firms like Juul Labs and Philip Morris International. The ministry has proposed that the government issue an executive order banning the devices in the public interest, saying it was needed to ensure e-cigarettes don't become an "epidemic" among children and young adults. "E-cigarettes and similar technologies that encourage tobacco use or adversely impact public health are hazardous for an active as well as passive user," the health ministry said in an internal note seen by Reuters that the federal cabinet is expected to consider.

Health officials are proposing jail terms of up to three years, with a penalty of up to 500,000 rupees (\$7,000), for repeat offenders against the new rules, according to a draft of the executive order. First-time offenders would face a prison term of up to one year and a fine of 100,000 rupees. Such orders are typically issued in India as an emergency measure when parliament is not in session. It can lapse if it is not approved when lawmakers convene against in the next session, which will most likely be held around November.

It was not immediately clear whether the draft executive order will face changes, or when it will be approved. India's health ministry did not respond to a request for comment from Reuters. The ministry's plans would deal a blow to US-based Juul Labs Inc, which is hoping to launch its e-cigarette in India and

has hired several senior executives in recent months. Philip Morris also has plans to launch its heat-not-burn smoking device in India, Reuters has reported.

Advocates for the devices say e-cigarettes are far less harmful than smoking tobacco, because users do not inhale the same dangerous matter. But many tobacco-control activists are opposed to e-cigarettes, saying they could lead to nicotine addiction and push people to consume tobacco. "There is evidence that these products are a gateway to tobacco products and induce adolescents and young adults to nicotine use leading to addiction," the health ministry said in the document.

Lucrative market

India has 106 million adult smokers, second only to China in the world, making it a lucrative market for firms such as Juul and Philip Morris. More than 900,000 people die each year in the country due to tobacco-related illnesses. Sixteen state governments in India have prohibited e-cigarettes but there is as yet no federal legislation to deal with what the health ministry termed the "hazardous product". Justifying its call for a ban, the health ministry argued that e-cigarettes can also be used as delivery devices for other substances such as cannabis, and could promote dual use with conventional cigarettes. "These devices are injurious to health and proliferation of these products has a negative impact on public health," the draft said. Reuters reported in March the



ALLAHABAD: A boatman rests on his boat in the flooded Ganges river under the Shastri bridge at Daraganj Ghat. —AFP

health ministry had called for Juul's entry into India to be blocked, saying such products were "addictive and could potentially undermine our tobacco control efforts". Juul, whose sleek vaping devices that resemble

USB flash drives have become a sensation in the United States, has previously said it aims to improve the lives of smokers by offering a "satisfying alternative to combustible cigarettes". —Reuters

WHO: Microplastics in drinking water not a health risk for now

GENEVA: The World Health Organization (WHO) said yesterday the level of microplastics in drinking-water is not yet dangerous for humans but called for more research into potential future risk. In its first report into the effects of microplastics on human health, WHO looked into the specific impact of microplastics in tap and bottled water. "The headline messages to reassure drinking water consumers around the world, that based on this assessment, our assessment of the risk is that it's low," said Bruce Gordon, WHO coordinator of water and sanitation.

WHO said that data on the presence of microplastics in drinking water is currently limited, with few reliable studies, making it difficult to analyse the results. WHO has called on researchers to conduct a more in-depth evaluation into microplastics and the potential impact on human health. The organization has also urged a crackdown in plastic pollution to benefit the environment and reduce human exposure to microplastics.

The report said that irrespective of human health risks caused by microplastics in drinking-water "measures should be taken by policymakers and the public to better manage plastics and reduce the use of plastics where possible". WHO said that microplastics larger than 150 micrometres are not likely to be absorbed by the human body but said the chance of absorbing very small microplastic particles, including nano-sized plastics, could be higher, although it said data is limited. —AFP

Carrier bag spat erupts as Islamabad moves to ban plastic

ISLAMABAD: When inspectors showed up to investigate reports that a popular Islamabad take-out restaurant was flaunting the city's new plastic bag ban this week, the response was less than contrite. Video footage - which quickly appeared on social media - showed one of the inspectors being grabbed and shoved.

Islamabad's district commissioner ordered the culprits identified and arrested, and the restaurant was sealed overnight. "We had received complaints that this large restaurant in the Blue Area was continuing to use plastic bags for every item they sell," said Farzana Altaf Shah, director general of the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency. "They are a major contributor to plastic bag waste in Islamabad," she said.

But when inspectors arrived to confiscate the restaurant's plastic carry bags, "the head of the local traders association showed up with other members and they started behaving violently", Altaf Shah said. The restaurant has since reopened, after the owner apologized, saying delivery of the needed new biodegradable bags had been delayed by a holiday period. But the incident suggests that growing efforts in Pakistan - and globally - to reduce plastic waste may not go as smoothly as hoped.

Around the world, a surge of plastic bag bans have been met, at times, with equally enthusiastic efforts to get around them. Kenya, for instance, which banned plastic carrier bags in 2017, has struggled to stop smuggling of the bags over the border from Tanzania and Uganda, which do not have the same restrictions in place. In other places, frustration with the bans - sometimes because good, low-cost green alternatives are difficult to find - has led to everything from faked green compliance cer-

tificates to fake biodegradable bags.

In Islamabad, the local government banned the manufacture, sale and distribution of plastic carrier bags last week, on the country's independence day, as part of Prime Minister Imran Khan's "Clean, Green Pakistan" campaign. Authorities have said they intend to expand the ban to other types of plastic bags used in packaging, and have asked bag manufacturers to come up with recycling plans for plastic waste.

Bag threats

The new ban follows a three-month-long campaign to raise awareness about the environmental hazards of plastic bags, which can kill wildlife, block drainage systems, collect in waterways and cause other environmental and health problems. Altaf Shah, of Pakistan's EPA, said Islamabad's ban had for the most part been well accepted. "Other than this unfortunate incident our campaign to ban plastic bags was going well. The managers of most of the shopping malls we visited were cooperative and appreciative of our efforts," she said. Wasim Khan, the manager of another popular eatery near the temporarily shuttered restaurant, said his business had long used mainly paper bags to sell their bread and sandwiches.

"Since we opened in 2017 we have opted for paper bags and the 5% plastic bags we used we have now discarded" he said. "It is more expensive for us, as we use strong paper bags, but this ban is good for the environment and our health." According to Pakistan's Minister of State for Climate Change, Zartaj Gul, who is spearheading a broader countrywide anti-plastic campaign, the ban is focused on changing both attitudes and behaviors.

"We can survive without plastic bags," she said, noting that even many political opposition leaders were on board with the campaign. Bags jamming Karachi's storm drains contributed to recent flooding in that city during heavy monsoon rains, she said. Karachi is due to ban the bags in October, with restrictions already in place in parts of the Gilgit-Baltistan region and Khyber Pakhtunkwa province, and restrictions planned in Balochistan. —Reuters

International

Too late for a new Brexit deal, France's Macron tells Johnson

'No-deal' Brexit would be UK's fault

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron told Prime Minister Boris Johnson yesterday that there was not enough time to wholly rewrite Britain's Brexit divorce deal before an Oct 31 deadline. Johnson met Macron at the Elysee Palace a day after talks in Berlin with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who challenged Britain to come up with alternatives to the agreed safety net provision for the UK-Irish land border.

More than three years after the United Kingdom voted to quit the European Union, it is still unclear on what terms - or indeed whether - the bloc's second largest economy will leave the club it joined in 1973. Macron left the door open to Britain seeking a solution to the Irish "backstop", but said any alternative must respect both the integrity of the EU single market and stability on the divided island of Ireland. "I want to be very clear: in the month ahead, we will not find a new withdrawal agreement that deviates far from the original," Macron said after a warm handshake with the British premier.

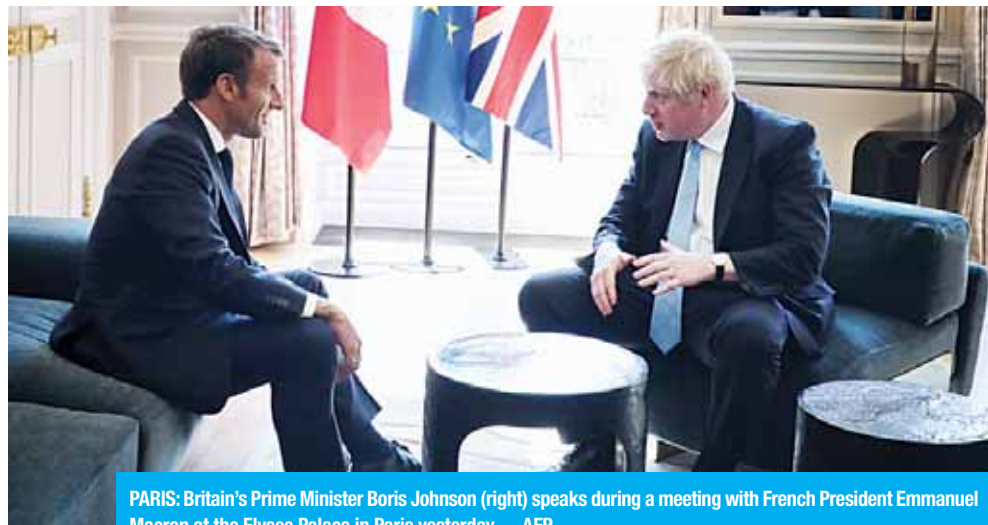
However, the British pound, sensitive to the prospect of a 'no-deal' exit, jumped more than half a cent after Merkel said she had not set Johnson a 30-day deadline to propose a solution to the border issue, and that it could be achieved by Oct 31. On his first trip abroad since entering 10 Downing Street a month ago, Johnson has warned Merkel and Macron that they face a potentially disorderly no-deal Brexit on Oct 31 unless the EU does a new deal.

'Let's get Brexit done'

Johnson told Macron that he believed it was still possible to agree one in time for the Oct. 31 deadline, and that he had been "powerfully encouraged" by what he had heard from Merkel on Wednesday. "Let's get Brexit done, let's get it done sensibly and pragmatically and in the interests of both sides and let's not wait until October 31," Johnson said. "Let's get on now in deepening and intensifying the friendship and partnership between us."

Johnson, an ardent Brexiteer, is betting that the threat of 'no-deal' Brexit turmoil will convince Merkel and Macron that the EU should do a last-minute deal to suit his demands. He has repeated promises to leave on Oct. 31 - with or without a deal. Macron insisted Britain's destiny lay in Johnson's hands alone. He said the EU did not want a 'no-deal' scenario, but would be ready if it happened. The political crisis in London over Brexit has left allies and investors puzzled by a country that for decades seemed a confident pillar of Western economic and political stability.

Many investors say a 'no-deal' Brexit would hurt the economies of Britain the EU and the wider world, roil financial markets and weaken London's position as the pre-eminent international financial centre. Macron said that any new solution to the problem of the Irish border had to be found in the next month. Signaling that the ball was in the UK's court, he said: "If we cannot find alternatives, then it will be because of a deeper problem, a political one, a British political problem. "And for that, ne-



PARIS: Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson (right) speaks during a meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron at the Elysee Palace in Paris yesterday. —AFP

gotiations can't help. It will be up to the prime minister to make that choice, it won't be up to us."

Irish border

After Brexit, the frontier between Ireland and the UK province of Northern Ireland will be the only land border between the EU and Britain. The EU wants to ensure that it does not become a back door for goods to enter the EU's single market - which guarantees free movement of goods, capital, services and labor. Ireland for its part says checks

could undermine the 1998 Good Friday agreement, which brought peace to Northern Ireland after more than 3,600 died in a three-decade conflict between unionists who wanted the province to remain British and Irish nationalists who want it to join a united Ireland ruled from Dublin. The backstop, negotiated by Johnson's predecessor Theresa May, provides for Britain to remain in a temporary customs union with the EU after Brexit, avoiding the need for any 'hard' border infrastructure, until a better solution is found. —Reuters

Immigration to Britain falls to 5-year low

LONDON: Net immigration to Britain sank to its lowest since 2013 during the year to the end of March, driven by a sustained fall in the number of immigrants from the European Union since 2016's Brexit referendum, official figures showed yesterday. Rising immigration was a major public concern when Britain voted to leave the EU, though it has since dropped down people's list of worries. Nonetheless, Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government plans to introduce restrictions on EU migration as after Britain leaves the bloc on Oct. 31.

Some 612,000 people moved to the United Kingdom during the 12 months to March, while 385,000 people emigrated, reducing net immigration to 226,000, its lowest since the 12 months to the end of December 2013, the Office for National Statistics said. The data is based on a new experimental series that aims to reduce previous flaws that led to an undercounting of EU long-term immigrants and overestimating how many non-EU students remained in Britain after their studies.

Even after these adjustments, net inflows of non-EU migrants remain close to the record high of 236,000 set in the 12 months to September 2018, at 219,000 in the year to March. However the net number of EU immigrants appears to have fallen sharply, to 59,000 in the year to March from a peak of 218,000 in 2015. This is one of the lowest figures in the past 10 years, though comparisons are approximate as the ONS

has so far only applied its latest, more accurate estimation techniques to EU migration data from before June 2016.

Debt crisis

Immigration to Britain from the rest of the European Union surged after the euro zone debt crisis in 2012, as southern Europeans sought better job opportunities in Britain, on top of east Europeans seeking higher wages.

Madeleine Sumption, director of the University of Oxford's Migration Observatory, said the data pointed to a return to the pre-financial crisis trend in net EU migration, and widespread departures of current EU residents in Britain looked unlikely. "EU emigration (is) still significant but now stable - and not the 'mass post-Brexit exodus' some talked about. Perhaps not surprising - most EU citizens (are) now resident here for a while, so are quite settled," she said.

Immigration from outside the EU, which Britain's government has much more legal control over, has steadily risen after a dip in the middle of the decade, despite a British government goal to cut total net immigration to under 100,000 a year. Johnson has said that after Brexit, future immigrants from the EU will be subject to a "skills-based" test similar to that applied by Australia, as well as criminal record checks.

MigrationWatch, a group that wants less immigration, said after yesterday's figures that inflows of immigrants were still "far too high" and that Brexit was a "golden opportunity" to impose greater controls. A June 2019 poll by market researchers ICM showed that 53% of Britons wanted to reduce immigration, while only 13% wanted an increase. However, only 21% of respondents had a strongly negative view of immigration - slightly fewer than were strongly positive - and most were fairly indifferent. —Reuters

US man arrested for castrating man he met on eunuch website

MIAMI: A man has been arrested in Florida for castrating a companion who submitted to the procedure voluntarily after they met on an internet fetish site specializing in eunuchs. "This one is a little... let's just say sensitive. You could even say it's kinda nuts," the Highland County Sheriff's Office said in a statement posted on Facebook after the arrest. Gary Van Ryswyk, 74, came to the door when sheriff's deputies knocked on Sunday and told them he had just castrated a man, who was bleeding heavily on a bed with a towel over his groin. A pink container nearby held "two body parts that had recently been much closer to the victim," the sheriff's office said.

The victim, who was not identified, was taken to hospital and later flown to a regional medical center where he was in stable condition. According to the sheriff's office, Van Ryswyk had outfitted the bedroom as an operating theater with medical equipment and a video camera to record the procedure. He told deputies he met the victim through a site for people with castration fetishes, and that it wasn't the first time he had attempted the procedure.

He said a castration attempt that he performed in a motel a few years ago "turned out pretty much like this one," with the man ending up in the hospital. Van Ryswyk told the victim he had experimented on animals and even removed one of his own testicles in 2012, according to the sheriff's office. —AFP

International

Somalia's Jubbaland president wins new term amid rift with central govt

Jubbaland critical to counter-insurgency operations

GAROWE: The president of Jubbaland, a Somali region critical to East Africa's fight against al Shabaab militants, won a fresh term yesterday, the parliamentary speaker said, amid a growing rift between the federal government and its semi-autonomous states. Ahmed Mohamed Madobe, a top security partner for neighbouring Kenya, which helps Somalia fight the militant group, won 56 of the 74 votes cast by lawmakers in the regional parliament, speaker Cabdi Maxamed Abdirahmaan said.

The bitter local contest has stoked tensions between Kenya and Ethiopia, longtime allies who both have large contingents of peacekeepers in the country and see Jubbaland as a buffer zone against Islamist attacks in their own countries. Kenya supports Madobe, while Ethiopia has grown increasingly close to the federal government in Mogadishu.

"I am ready to sit and speak with all people,

including the opposition. I will speak and work with anyone who has a complaint," Madobe told parliament after the vote. There was no immediate reaction from the central government in Mogadishu to the result. Mogadishu said on Saturday it would not recognize the result, saying the candidate selection process had violated the national constitution.

It has accused Madobe of interfering in the process and has backed opposition candidates, who were rejected by the electoral commission when they attempted to register. Not all of Somalia's stakeholders have confidence in the process and there is a risk that the vote's outcome will not be widely accepted, the United Nations mission in Somalia said last week. The barred opposition candidates said they held their own vote in Kismayo yesterday, electing Abdirashid Mohamed Hidig.

The impact of this parallel vote was not immediately clear. Ahead of the vote, the group

of barred opposition candidates said in a statement: "Our parallel government formation will continue until the other side stops the process." The re-elected leader Madobe ousted Shabaab from Jubbaland's capital in 2012 with the help of Kenyan forces, took power and was elected in 2015. Analysts say that Somalia's president Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo must exert greater control over Jubbaland and the other regions ahead of national elections next year and that he does not see Madobe as a viable partner.

Militant threat

Jubbaland is the third of the country's seven semi-autonomous regions to hold presidential elections before next year's national presidential vote. With lush farmland, good seasonal rainfall and a strategically important port in Kismayo, it is seen as the breadbasket of Somalia. Its shoreline delineates a hotly con-

tested maritime zone claimed by both Somalia and Kenya with potential oil and gas deposits. But Shabaab controls swathes of territory and towns in Jubbaland and it may exploit the spat over the election, analysts say. The militants, who want to overthrow the Somali government and impose Islamic law, have killed hundreds of civilians across East Africa and thousands of Somalis in a decade-long insurgency.

The political divisions could benefit Shabaab if Jubbaland's military is distracted by fending off "enemies" including Ethiopian troops supporting the central government, proxy groups backed by Somalia's presidency, and even federal troops, said Faisal Roble, a Horn of Africa analyst. "Jubbaland will be pressed hard by all these fronts." Somalia has been trying to claw its way out of the embers of the civil war that engulfed it in 1991, when clan warlords overthrew a dictator and then turned on each other. —Reuters

India faces defiance in 'Kashmir's Gaza'

SRINAGAR: Young men sit beside a pile of rocks and a bonfire, protecting the only entrance to a besieged neighborhood they call "Kashmir's Gaza" as a mosque loudspeaker broadcasts slogans of liberation. In an act of defiance against New Delhi's controversial decision to strip the Muslim-majority region of its autonomy, Soura neighborhood on the outskirts of Kashmir's main city of Srinagar has sealed itself off from security forces. Since early August, residents have erected ramshackle barricades of tin sheets, wooden logs, oil tanks and concrete pillars, and dug trenches to keep soldiers at bay amid daily protests against India.

"They can only enter Soura over our bodies. We won't give even an inch of land to India," Mufeed, a resident who volunteers to guard the neighborhood at night said. "Just like Gaza is resisting Israel, we will fight for our motherland with all our might," Mufeed added. Kashmir has waged a three-decade long armed rebellion against Indian rule with tens of thousands of lives, mostly civilians, lost in the conflict.

Ahead of the announcement, India rushed tens of thousands of extra troops to the restive region to join 500,000 already in the valley, and imposed a strict clampdown fearing further unrest. But protests have broken out, with the lower-middle class Soura leading the way. At least 15,000 people rallied on August 9 - the biggest demonstration in Kashmir so far. They were met by security forces firing live ammunition, tear gas and pellet guns to disperse the crowds, with more than two dozen people reportedly injured.

'Go India, go back'

Soura, a crammed lakeside community of more than 2,000 homes, is surrounded by security forces on three sides. The renowned mosque Jenab Saeb has become an assembly point for thousands of protesters in the neighborhood. Every night, residents march through its narrow lanes, carrying torches and passing graffiti with the words "Freedom for Kashmir" and "Go India, go back". Locals pass along messages if they spot any police movement on the main highway just beyond Soura. —AFP

Tiger by the tail: Pakistan's militant challenge in Kashmir

MUZAFFARABAD: Pressure is mounting on Pakistan to contain militants itching for a fight with arch-nemesis India amid growing calls for action in its escalating dispute with New Delhi over Kashmir. Just last week, hundreds rallied in Pakistani Kashmir, calling for armed retaliation over India's decision to revoke the special autonomy granted to its portion of the Muslim-majority region.

Delhi's move earlier this month upended a decades-old paradigm with nuclear-armed rival Pakistan, which also claims the former princely state, and left Islamabad scrambling for international support against the move. But in the mosques and marketplaces of Muzaffarabad in Pakistani-administered Kashmir, the calls for jihad are gaining momentum — even as analysts warn that any militant violence could backfire on Islamabad.

"If India doesn't stop the oppression then, God willing, it will find us there with guns," protester Tariq Ismail told AFP at a march organised by the US-designated terrorist group Hizb-ul-Mujahideen. Residents elsewhere in the city suggested that India's move is set to radicalise a new generation, years after the insurgency that began in the 1980s in Indian-held Kashmir claimed the first of tens of thousands of lives. "I have six children. I will send them for jihad... God willing our morale is gaining momentum," said Muhammad Amjad, a 47-year-old former militant.

Bilouri Begum, 41, lost her husband, cousin and nephew to the earlier fighting. "I brought up my sons. God willing, I will send them (for jihad) and will also go with them," she told AFP, tears rolling down her cheeks. The sentiment is not limited to the fringes. Pakistan's most high-profile news anchor, Hamid Mir, hosted three former Pakistani diplomats on his show on Geo News this week, all of whom supported violent resistance in Indian-held Kashmir. "Even if people go from Pakistan (to join) a legitimate resistance, that's legal," argued former ambassador to the US Ashraf Qazi.

Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since independence in 1947. They have fought two full-scale wars and countless skirmishes over it. Washington and New Delhi have long accused Islamabad of fanning the insurgency in Indian-held Kashmir, and of weaponising jihadist groups as proxies to attack India.



LAHORE: Religious students shout slogans during a protest against India in Lahore as they condemn India's decision to strip the disputed Kashmir region of its special autonomy and impose a lockdown two weeks ago. —AFP

The deadliest such attack came in Mumbai in 2008, when militants from Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba killed more than 160 people. Any fresh militant attack at this delicate moment "will have severe implications for Pakistan", security analyst Amir Rana said. Insurgents nearly triggered an all-out war in February after a suicide bombing claimed by Pakistan-based militants in Indian Kashmir sparked tit-for-tat air strikes — the first ever between nuclear-armed powers. —AFP

International

Friday, August 23, 2019

Italy's PD raises the bar for possible govt with 5-Star

President seeks swift end to weeks of political turmoil

ROME: Italy's centre-left Democratic Party yesterday set tough new conditions for forming a coalition with the anti-establishment 5-Star Movement, making a deal between the traditional foes look more elusive and raising the chance of snap elections. The euro zone's third-largest economy is in political turmoil after its government, riven by months of infighting, collapsed this week, forcing Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte to resign just as Rome was to begin preparing the 2020 budget.

The collapse was triggered by the right-wing League party whose leader Matteo Salvini declared the ruling coalition dead two weeks ago, saying he could no longer work with 5-Star, his coalition partner. Salvini, the interior minister, called for elections, aiming to cash in on his surging popularity to return to power as prime minister with a mandate to launch a big spending spree next year and challenge the European Union's fiscal rules.

However his move could backfire because the head of state, Sergio Mattarella, will only dissolve parliament if no other coalition can be formed, and now 5-Star and the PD are looking at a possible tie-up to sideline Salvini. Mattarella was consulting with the main parties in parliament yesterday and telling them he wants a deal within the next few days if they want to avoid snap elections, a source close to the matter told Reuters.

Markets have rallied on hopes that a deal was in the offing, dismissing stumbling blocks such as

the lack of any agreement between the parties over who should be prime minister. On Wednesday, PD leader Nicola Zingaretti laid down five conditions that should form the backbone of any accord—"loyal membership" of the European Union; giving parliament a central role; economic development based on environmental sustainability; a change in handling migrants and a change to economic policy to boost investment.

Those seemed low hurdles for 5-Star to clear, but Zingaretti then added that he would also not accept giving a fresh mandate to the outgoing Conte, a technocrat who is close to 5-Star. Yesterday he raised the stakes further with three more specific conditions: 5-Star must agree to repeal laws on security and immigration passed during its coalition with the League, revise a plan to cut the number of lawmakers to 600 from 945 and immediately commit to a framework agreement with the PD on the 2020 budget.

5-Star's support has slumped over the last year and it does not want a return to the polls but it has warned the PD that it should not push too hard. "We will not accept the PD's vetoes, they can't say we must accept their five points or it's no deal, that Conte must go or it's no deal," said Manlio Di Stefano, a junior foreign minister and one of 5-Star's most prominent lawmakers. Mattarella is due to meet 5-Star's delegation at 1500 GMT, after which its leader Luigi Di Maio is expected to set out his party's position. —Reuters



ROME: Leader of Lega party, outgoing deputy-Premier and Interior Minister, Matteo Salvini (right) blows a kiss after a meeting with Italian President on the second day of consultations of political parties at the Quirinal palace in Rome. —AFP

Things to know about the Amazon

SALVADOR: The Amazon is the largest tropical forest in the world, covering 5.5 million square kilometers, an ecological treasure threatened by escalating deforestation and forest fires.

Sanctuary of biodiversity

The Amazon basin, spanning 7.4 million square kilometers, covers nearly 40 percent of Latin America and is spread across nine countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela. About 60 percent of it is in Brazil. The Amazon forest, of which 2.1 million sq km are protected zones, is home to a biodiversity sanctuary that is unique in the world. A quarter of the Earth's species are found there, namely 30,000 types of plants, 2,500 fish, 1,500 birds, 500 mammals, 550 reptiles and 2.5 million insects, according to the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO). In the past 20 years, 2,200 new species of plants and vertebrates have been discovered there.

'Lungs of the earth'

The Amazon contains a third of the world's primary forests and, via the Amazon River and its tributaries, provides 20 percent of the Earth's unfrozen fresh water. The Amazon is the world's largest river and-by some accounts since new research was carried out in 2007 - the longest, running for up to 6,900

kilometers. The forest acts as a carbon sink, absorbing more CO₂ than it emits while releasing oxygen, and stocking 90 to 140 billion tons of CO₂, which helps regulate worldwide global warming, according to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). But deforestation is reducing this capacity for absorbing CO₂.

420 tribes

The Amazon has been inhabited for at least 11,000 years and today counts 34 million people, of whom two-thirds live in cities. Nearly three million are Indians who are members of some 420 different tribes, around 60 of which live in total isolation, according to ACTO. The Amazon's Indians speak 86 languages and 650 dialects. The largest Amazon tribe is the Tikuna, counting some 40,000 members who live in Brazil, Peru and Colombia, according to Survival International. Brazilian Indian chief from the Kayapo tribe, Raoni Metuktire, is the leading campaigner in the campaign against deforestation in the Amazon and has traveled the world for three decades calling for the preservation of the forest and its indigenous population.

Manaus, the Amazon 'capital'

Manaus is the capital of Amazonas state, the largest in Brazil and spanning 1.5 million km². Founded by the Portuguese in 1669 on the banks of the Rio Negro, near its confluence with the Amazon River, Manaus has a population of 1.8 million. After fast expansion at the end of the 19th century due to the rubber trade, the city went into major decline until the creation of a free trade zone in 1967. Manaus now lives mainly off its industrial sector, importing spare parts and exporting end products, notably electronic equipment. —AFP

Ancient monkey skull reveals secrets of primate brain evolution

WASHINGTON: The remains of a prehistoric primate that lived high in the Andes 20 million years ago and was so small it could fit in your hand is helping scientists learn more about how human brains evolved. In a study published Wednesday in the journal *Science Advances*, researchers in China and the US used high resolution imaging to examine the only known fossilized skull of the extinct *Chilecebus*, a New World monkey that scampered around ancient mountain forests, feeding on leaves and fruit. One key finding: the brain size of primates, long assumed to have increased progressively over time, now appears to have followed a more roundabout path. Primates are broadly split into two groups: Old World, from which our own species descended, and New World species of the Americas and Oceania. "We see multiple episodes of expansion of the brain in each of these major groups, and we see several episodes of actual reduction of relative brain size in certain groups," co-author John Flynn of the American Museum of Natural History told AFP.

The research, led by Xijun Ni, at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, used X-rays and CT scans of the inside of the *Chilecebus* skull to determine its internal structure. The fossilized skull has been precisely dated because it was discovered among volcanic rocks, and by placing the species within its bigger family tree, the team was able to infer that cerebral enlargement occurred repeatedly and independently in anthropoid evolution.

Though the *Chilecebus* was roughly around the size of a modern marmoset or tamarin, in contrast to those monkeys its brain had several grooves known as infolding that suggest a greater degree of cognitive complexity: in other words, brain size is not always linked to advancement. What's more, in modern primates, the size of the visual and olfactory centers of the brain are inversely related, meaning that species with a strong sense of sight usually have a weaker sense of smell and vice versa. But the researchers found that a small olfactory bulb in *Chilecebus* did not result in a stronger olfactory ability, meaning the two abilities aren't coupled as previously thought.

Flynn said the research bore testament to the secrets that could be unlocked from well-preserved ancient fossils. "We can go out into the mountains and make this remarkable discovery 10,000 feet up in the Andes and be able to make insights about the evolution of our history, be able to test previous hypotheses.. (and) be able to understand the evolution of brain complexity in primates. —AFP

International

S Korea to scrap intelligence-sharing pact with Japan amid history feud

Japan, S Korea in worsening political, economic dispute

SEOUL: South Korea said yesterday it will scrap an intelligence-sharing pact with Japan, a decision that could escalate a dispute over history and trade and undercut security cooperation on North Korea. With the decision not to extend the pact, the political and trade disputes between South Korea and Japan now extend into some of the most sensitive national security issues in the region.

The arrangement was designed to share information on the threat posed by North Korea's missile and nuclear activities. The decision to end it comes after North Korea launched a series of short-range ballistic missiles in protest against what it sees as military build-ups in South Korea and Japan.

The General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) was due to be automatically renewed tomorrow, unless either side decided to cancel it. The decision was announced after an hour-long discussion within the presidential National Security Council (NSC). South Korean President Moon Jae-in approved it. Japan created a "grave change" in the environment for bilateral security cooperation by removing South Korea's fast-track export status, said Kim You-geun, a deputy director of the NSC.

Japan cited security concerns without providing specific evidence for its decision on South Korea's trade status. "Under this situation, we have determined that it would not serve our na-

tional interest to maintain an agreement we signed with the aim of exchanging military information which is sensitive to security," Kim told a news conference. Japan protested against South Korea's decision, the Japanese national broadcaster NHK reported.

Before the announcement, Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said that the deal bolstered security cooperation between the two countries. "Although ties between Japan and South Korea are in a very tough situation, we believe we should cooperate with South Korea where cooperation is necessary," Suga told a regular news conference earlier. This week the foreign ministers of the two countries met outside Beijing and promised to keep talking, but failed to reach any substantive agreements.

Regional repercussions

The South Korean decision is likely to be met with dismay in the United States, which fears weakened security cooperation. South Korea's won currency extended losses against the dollar in offshore non-deliverable forward trade, falling by some 0.4% against the dollar in five minutes after the announcement on concern that trade disputes with Japan could be drawn out.

Intelligence sharing is key to developing a common defense policy and strategy, and all three countries are safer when they work together, Pentagon spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Dave Eastburn said. "We encourage Japan and



SEOUL: South Korean President Moon Jae-in (center) attends a meeting following a weekly meeting of the National Security Council's standing committee at the presidential Blue House in Seoul. — AFP

Korea to work together to resolve their differences," he said in a statement. "I hope they can do this quickly." South Korea's foreign minister, Kang Kyung-wha, emphasized that the decision to end the intelligence pact was because South Korea had lost trust in Japan.

"We will continue to strengthen cooperation with the United States and develop the alliance,"

she told reporters in Seoul. South Korea's defense ministry said that regardless of the end of GSOMIA, it would maintain a "stable" joint defense posture based on a robust alliance with the United States. One Western military source said the intelligence-sharing was sometimes limited, but nevertheless an important area of cooperation in the face of threats from North Korea. — Reuters

India's ex-finance minister arrested in a dramatic raid

NEW DELHI: High drama unfolded in New Delhi late Wednesday as officers from India's equivalent of the FBI scaled the walls of a former finance minister's home to arrest him on corruption charges, local media reported. Earlier in the day, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had alerted airports to prevent Palaniappan Chidambaram, finance minister from 2004-2008 and again from 2012-2014, from leaving the country.

Chidambaram, 73, earlier this week failed to secure bail and had not been seen since Tuesday, until he showed up at the headquarters of the opposition Congress party on Wednesday to proclaim his innocence. At a news conference, he called his accusers "pathological liars". Driving then to his home in the upscale Jor Bagh neighborhood, he was tailed by around 30 CBI officers who knocked at the doors before scaling the boundary walls, the Press Trust of India reported. Once three officers were inside, they opened the gates to allow team members to enter, while others rushed to the back door to secure all exit points, PTI reported. After Chidambaram was arrested, party supporters gathered outside the home to protest. Some jumped on the car in which the politician was taken away, the agency said. — AFP

From drones to social media, big data helps confront Asia disasters

BANGKOK: Technological innovations - from unique digital identities for drought-hit farmers to use of data from drones and social media - can better predict increasingly complex disasters in the Asia-Pacific region and limit their impact on vulnerable people, the United Nations said in a report yesterday.

Rising global temperatures have increased the frequency and intensity of floods, cyclones and droughts in the region, making it harder to accurately forecast and monitor them, according to the report by the UN's Asia-Pacific social agency (UNESCAP). But "big data innovations - using the large data sets from mobile phone tracking to satellite platforms - reveal patterns, trends, and associations of complex disaster risks," said Armida Alisjahbana, UNESCAP's executive secretary.

"These help us understand, monitor and predict the risk of extreme and slow-onset events, and address the key challenges of the new climate reality," she said. The Asia-Pacific region is particularly vulnerable to climate-related threats, with more fatalities and greater economic damage from disasters. Since 1970, natural disasters in the region have killed two million people - 59% of the global death toll for that period, according to UNESCAP.

Disasters also cause more damage in Asia and the Pacific, measured as a percentage of GDP, than the rest of the world, and this gap has been widening, the report showed. But technological innovations are already reducing some of that vulnerability, the report said. "Technology can help identify and locate those most

at risk, to warn them ahead of a disaster, and deliver targeted relief afterwards," said Tiziana Bonapace, director of UNESCAP's disaster risk reduction division in Bangkok.

"While extreme weather is the new normal, the number of deaths from climate-related events is decreasing due to advances in technology, including better early warning systems and measures to mitigate impact," she said. Big data refers to the analysis of very large data sets to reveal patterns, trends and associations. The data can come from a range of sources, including satellite imagery, drone videos, simulations, crowdsourcing, social media and global positioning systems.

Flood and cyclone forecasting now relies on computer simulations, with machine learning helping predict the location and severity of floods. Sensor webs and the Internet of Things have enabled efficient earthquake early-warning systems, while remote sensing via satellites and drones provide quick assessments of damage and people affected, and help prioritize relief efforts.

"The substantial reductions in mortalities and economic losses due to typhoons in north and east Asia over the last three decades can be attributed to big data applications," Alisjahbana said. "Similarly, India's digital ID system has helped deliver targeted benefits to millions of small and marginal farmers affected by drought," she said. The system assigns a unique identity number to Indian citizens, linked to their biometric data, and has been used to help reduce fraud and improve efficiency in getting government benefits to those in need, backers say.

Such technological advances are expected to become more important as warming temperatures cause a rise in the number and duration of heat waves and droughts, particularly in semi-arid and arid areas in north and central Asia, the UNESCAP report said. Cyclone intensity and flooding is also expected to increase, with serious impacts for coastal areas in southeast Asia, and extreme rainfall also a threat for south Asia. — Reuters

Lifestyle

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A model presents creations by designer Aavran Udaipur during a fashion show at Lakme Fashion Week (LFW) Winter Festive 2019 in Mumbai yesterday. — AFP

Alternate lives: Korean orphans' quests for answers

See Page 21

Sparks fly on big screen as Depardieu meets Houellebecq in (booze-free) French spa

Contrive a meeting between France's most notorious and controversial novelist Michel Houellebecq and most notorious and controversial actor Gerard Depardieu in a luxury spa. Ban them from beverages and cigarettes. And film the results. This is what French director Guillaume Nicloux has done in his new film "Thalasso", blurring the line between fiction and documentary and offering fresh insight into two of modern France's best-known but provocative figures. In the movie, which hit French cinemas on Wednesday, Depardieu, 70, celebrated for his talent as much as his love of excess, meets Houellebecq, 63, famed for his polemical and visionary novels, at a thalassotherapy seawater spa in Normandy.

Both men, who play themselves, are not in the least convinced by the spa treatment and are particularly frustrated by the ban on smoking and alcohol at the facility. Houellebecq meets Depardieu while he is smoking in secret and, clad in regulation white fluffy dressing gowns, they begin meeting in their rooms to enjoy good beverages and discuss life, death and politics.

'Being more themselves'

"I wanted both Michel and Gerard to go into a creative process that is very particular. There was a script, a written document, but also everything that happened on the sidelines," Nicloux told AFP. "What interests me is exploring areas that are ambiguous and sometimes troubled, and the advantage of this process is it gives them the chance to be even more themselves than if I had made a documentary."

Nicloux has worked with both men before and in 2014 made a film called "The Kidnapping of Michel Houellebecq" where the author is kidnapped during a promotional tour. In "Thalasso" Houellebecq again meets with his cinematic abductors. The pair become an unlikely comic duo, with the cynical, mordant humor of the wiry Houellebecq a sometimes hilarious foil to the massive Depardieu's extravagant panache. "I should have been a candidate



French director Guillaume Nicloux (left) and French actor Gerard Depardieu posing during a photocall for the film "Valley of Love" at the 68th Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southeastern France. — AFP photos

in the elections," muses Houellebecq, sitting on a lounge by the pool. "I did not know that (President Emmanuel) Macron would mess up so fast. I think I would do better." "All this politics is shit," interjects Depardieu, his dressing gown open to reveal his ample chest. "I don't want to be their stooge. They are all the same, they say the same things."

'Shame of France'

Houellebecq shot to fame with nihilistic novels depicting misogynistic men trapped in loveless existences and hooked on casual sex. His latest novel "Serotonin"—about a hard-drinking and depressed employee at the agriculture ministry in Paris who discovers the hardship of rural France—became an instant bestseller



French film director Guillaume Nicloux posing during a photo session in Paris.

after it was published earlier this year. His previous novel "Submission", published in French on the same day jihadists attacked the satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo on January 7, 2015, predicts that France will elect a Muslim president in 2022 and be subject to Sharia law.

But in a sign of his importance within the cultural establishment that he nominally scorns, Macron in April awarded Houellebecq the Legion d'honneur, France's top honor. Depardieu, the star of classic French films "The Last Metro" and "Cyrano de Bergerac", has in recent years been in the spotlight as much for his private life as for his career. Prosecutors in June closed a case into allegations Depardieu raped a young actress due to lack of evidence. He had always maintained his innocence. —AFP

Slipknot announce 2020 UK and European tour

Slipknot have announced a 2020 UK and European tour. Corey Taylor and co knocked Ed Sheeran off the number one spot with their comeback LP 'We Are Not Your Kind' - their first number one record since 2001's 'Iowa' - as it dethroned the 'Shape of You' hitmaker's 'No 6 Collaborations' last week, and now they have announced a lengthy tour for next year in support of the acclaimed album. Frontman Corey said: "It feels good to be coming back for an extensive tour of Europe and the UK. 'No matter how many times we come there, it always feels like we can never get enough, nor play ALL the cities we want to."

"But one thing's for certain: the audiences are ALWAYS some of the best in the world. (sic)" The extensive run kicks off in Dublin on January 14, and includes a stop at The O2 in London on January 25. The heavy metal legends will then tour throughout Europe, with the last schedule show currently in Helsinki on February 24. The band are currently touring their Knotfest festival across the US in support of 'We Are Not Your Kind', and percussionist Shawn 'Clown' Crahan recently revealed while the band are keen to bring the metal extravaganza to the UK, they don't want to rush and "mess things up". — Bang Showbiz



Billie Eilish: Being strong-willed has helped avoid music industry manipulation

Billie Eilish says being "strong-willed" has helped her to avoid being "used and manipulated" in the music industry. The 17-year-old singer/songwriter has opened up about her first meeting with music management when she was 13 years old, and recalls people saying she is "going to be used" in the industry and look at her as if to say she was going to have a "horrible career". She said: "There has been a whole world of young, especially female artists, and every artist (not just young) being used and manipulated by the stereotypical label or industry. "There's kind of this weird name on everything now where it's like, people expect that."

"I remember the first time I had any sort of meeting with a label or management, I was 13. I think the only people that didn't look at me like I was going to have a horrible career were the people that I ended up working with. Everyone was just like, 'Oh, you're 13, yikes, you're going to be used,' and this and that. "And I am like, 'Yo, y'all are the people that would use me in the situation you are talking about.' So, I don't know what that is supposed to mean. The only people who didn't say that s**t were the people that I felt an energy and connection with."

But Billie feels "really lucky and grate-



ful" with the support she has received from her team, because she has "never had any issues" with people attempting to "pull her in different directions". Speaking to Pharrell Williams for V Magazine, she added: "I am really, really lucky and grateful that I have had the experience that I had with my label and with my team and everyone, because I never had any issues with people trying to pull me in a different direction, one in which I would not want to be headed. "I think that might just be because I have always been the kind of person that knows what I want, and if it's not what I want, then I am not going to do it. — BangShowbiz

Lifestyle | Music & Movies

Dwayne Johnson

returns to top of Forbes
best-paid actor list

Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson has reclaimed his position as the world’s highest-paid actor, according to a Forbes rich list otherwise dominated by the cast of Marvel’s record-breaking “Avengers” films. Former professional wrestler Johnson raked in \$89.4 million over 12 months, rising back to the number-one spot he last held in 2016. He placed second in both of the last two years. The prolific actor, 47, scored a major hit with family-friendly reboot “Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle”—a sequel is on the way—and has starred in multiple “Fast and Furious” films including this month’s “Hobbs & Shaw.”

“He has just become the go-to bankable star,” said Comscore analyst Paul Dergarabedian. “And he’s always working—he’s relentless.” Using his A-list clout to secure lucrative profit-sharing movie deals on top of eight-figure fees, Johnson also appears on HBO television show “Ballers,” hosts NBC game show “Titan Games” and has his own lucrative line of fitness clothing, among other endorsements. “He’s a multi-platform, cross-promoted brand unto himself like no other,” added Dergarabedian.

Chris Hemsworth took second place with \$76.4 million—one of several actors from Marvel’s superhero universe to appear in the top 10. The list covers the period June 2018 to June 2019, during which Marvel Studios released “Avengers: Endgame,” the highest-grossing film of all time. Hemsworth, who plays fan favorite Thor, is followed by Robert Downey Jr. (Iron Man) in third, Bradley Cooper (Rocket) in sixth, Chris Evans (Captain America) in eighth and Paul Rudd (Ant-Man) in ninth.

However, most of Cooper’s \$57 million payday came from producing, directing and starring alongside Lady Gaga in musical drama “A Star is Born,” Forbes said. Perennial fixtures on the list including Jackie Chan, Will Smith, Adam Sandler and Bollywood star Akshay Kumar all returned. But last year’s number one George Clooney dropped out of the top 10, having banked his \$1 billion deal for his tequila company the previous year.

The top 10:

1. Dwayne Johnson (\$89.4 million)
2. Chris Hemsworth (\$76.4 million)
3. Robert Downey Jr. (\$66 million)
4. Akshay Kumar (\$65 million)
5. Jackie Chan (\$58 million)
6. Bradley Cooper (\$57 million)
7. Adam Sandler (\$57 million)
8. Chris Evans (\$43.5 million)
9. Paul Rudd (\$41 million)
10. Will Smith (\$35 million)—AFP



In this file photo US actor Dwayne Johnson arrives on the red carpet for the Time 100 Gala at the Lincoln Center in New York. — AFP



This pictures show visitors looking at a film project on adoption in South Korea, Side x Side, directed by Korean-American adoptee Glenn Morey at an exhibition hall in Seoul. — AFP photos



Korean-American adoptee Glenn Morey during an interview with AFP at an exhibition hall for his latest film project on adoption in South Korea, Side x Side, in Seoul.



Jo Youn-hwan, a South Korean who grew up in an orphanage and last year set up the South’s first-ever orphan rights group, posing during an interview with AFP at his office in Seoul.

Alternate lives: Korean orphans’ quests for answers

On a summer’s day in 1985 a seven-year-old boy sat alone at a crowded bus station in Seoul, sobbing as he waited desperately for his mother to return. Jo Youn-hwan was wearing a baseball uniform that his mother had bought him a few days before—the only gift she had ever given him. She told him to wait for her before leaving him at the terminal. So he did, increasingly terrified as day turned to dusk. “I’ll be a really good kid if only she chooses to return,” he promised himself, over and over again. “I’ll be a really, really good kid.”

She never did. Jo was taken into South Korea’s orphanage system, but even though the country was for decades one of the world’s biggest exporters of children, he was already too old for most adoptive parents’ preferences. Never chosen by a new family, he spent the rest of his childhood in what he describes as a vicious and rigidly hierarchical institution, before “aging out” at 20. Children died of curable illnesses and older ones abused younger ones on a daily basis, he said. “When a new kid arrived and cried because he was scared, the ritual was to cover his body with a blanket and beat him with a bat until he stopped,” he told AFP. Rooms and clothes were filthy, the food often rotten and inedible.

For years, he wondered what would have happened if he had been adopted. “My life wouldn’t have been so full of ‘han,’” he said—a Korean word describing unresolved sadness and resentment. But many of those who were picked ask themselves similar questions.

Better life?

International adoption from South Korea began after the Korean War as a way to remove mixed-race children, born to local mothers and American GI fathers, from a country that emphasized ethnic homogeneity. More recently the main driver has been babies born to unmarried women, who still face ostracism in a patriarchal society, and according to historians, are often forced to give up their children. Most children remain institutionalized till adulthood as many South Koreans are reluctant to adopt. The country has sent some 180,000 children overseas over the years, mostly to the US.

“This logic of rescue remained strong in the minds of Americans and Koreans alike: rich Americans could give a Korean child a better life than they could ever have in Korea with poor parents or a single mother,” said Arissa Oh, who researches race, family and migration at Boston College in the US. Among children placed in orphanages, the youngest, “most attractive and healthiest” were selected for overseas adoption, Oh told AFP.

The idea of rescue “erased the consumerism” of international adoption, providing justification for taking children from their country of birth, she added.

For many adoptees, that narrative has often led to a sense of alienation in their new lives. “My whole life I have been told-by adopters, colleagues and at school—I should be grateful, and had I not been adopted I would’ve had to live in the streets as a prostitute,” Hanna Johansson, a Korean adoptee in Sweden, explained.

‘That could’ve been me’

Born in Seoul in 1960, Korean-American filmmaker Glenn Morey was abandoned as a newborn, and adopted at six months by a white American couple. Growing up in Denver, Colorado, he was the only non-white student at any of his schools and struggled to fit in. “Being Asian made me different, and it made me the subject of name-calling, bullying, and social exclusion,” he said. “When you are experiencing difficulties growing up on an everyday basis, ... you begin to wonder what things would’ve been like in Korea where you would’ve looked at least like everyone else.”

A part of his latest project, Side by Side, is an attempt to answer that question, interviewing 12 Koreans who “aged out”. Two of them were in the same orphanage where he stayed before being sent to the US. Both disabled, they told him of life on the streets, without a steady job, their next meal always in question and regularly encountering violence. One told him: “I just want to have a normal life.” “Every time we played it just ripped my heart,” said Morey, who hasn’t been able to track down his birth parents. “By the same token that could’ve been me, and those struggles could’ve been mine.”—AFP

Swift teams up with Stella McCartney for Lover range

Taylor Swift has teamed up with Stella McCartney to release a line of ready-to-wear and accessories. The 29-year-old pop star has joined forces with the British fashion designer - the daughter of former Beatle Sir Paul McCartney - to create a collection of pieces to mark the debut of her new album 'Lover' after they met and hit it off at one of her concerts in London. Speaking in the September issue of Vogue magazine, Taylor said: "When I started spending more time in London, Stella and I would go on walks, have cocktails, and talk about life. "So when it came time to write this album, I name checked her in one of my songs, and when I played her the album, I said, 'Should we do something?'"

And for 47-year-old Stella - who designed the Duchess of Sussex's second wedding dress for her reception - it was a no brainer as she loves how well she and Taylor "complement each other." She explained: "I couldn't believe that my name is in a Taylor Swift song (what?!?) and after Taylor played me the entire album it gave me such incredible inspiration for the collab-

oration and it really revolved around the music. When Taylor asked me, or even thought to come and do this with me, what I love is how we really complement each other in what we generate creatively together."

The collaborative collection will be revealed to the public on August 22 during Taylor's YouTube Live and fans can expect to see jackets, tops, and bags - inspired by her style - in the range. The line will also follow Stella's standards of sustainability meaning there will be no fur or leather. Stella explained: "At Stella McCartney we are so serious in how we manufacture and how responsible we are. We are always looking at sustainability and not killing animals, it means we have such a serious undertone in the everyday runnings morally of how we conduct ourselves as a brand. "So I always have to counter that with having a lightness of heart and have a sense of humor and not make people feel terrible." — Bang Showbiz



Taylor Swift



Designer Manish Malhotra (third right) greets the audience after presenting his creations at Lakme Fashion Week (LFW) Winter Festive 2019 as Bollywood actress Katrina Kaif (center) and other models applaud in Mumbai. — AFP phoptos



Lakme Fashion Week (LFW) Winter Festive 2019





Models present creations by designer Aavran Udaipur.

MILLIE BOBBY BROWN LAUNCHES CRUELTY-FREE BEAUTY BRAND

Millie Bobby Brown has launched her own cruelty-free beauty brand. The 15-year-old actress - who is best known for her role as Eleven in the hit Netflix science fiction series 'Stranger Things' - has dropped a brand new beauty line of projects inspired by her great grandmother Florence. The line - which will include products such as Light Skin Tint, Eye Gel Pads, will be PETA-certified, vegan and cruelty-free and Millie insisted she wanted her line to be based around "individuality and bravery". In an interview with WWD, she said: "I felt like a brand about individuality and bravery and being truthful should be named after somebody who was all of those things."

The 'Modern Family' star went on to explain that the range is aimed specifically at young people, using the knowledge she's

gained having started her acting career at the age of ten. She said: "I've been in a make-up chair since I was 10, 11 years old, and I have really been introduced to all types of products. "I've had special effects on my face, blood, all different types of foundation...I wanted to come into the space because there was a gap in the market for young people." The range will be available at Ulta Beauty in the US and Boots in the UK and will be budget-friendly with prices starting at \$10 up to \$34, and products will also be available online. A section of proceeds made will go to the Olivia Hope Foundation, which aims to honor Millie's late friend Olivia Hope LoRusso who died following a 15-month battle with Acute Myeloid Leukemia. — Bang Showbiz



Millie Bobby Brown



Postwoman Galina Yermolova with her husband drive their homemade off-road vehicle in a forest outside the village of Pikhtovskiy.

SIBERIAN POSTWOMAN ON DIY MONSTER TRUCK GIVES LIFELINE TO TINY VILLAGE



Only five other people live in Galina Yermolova's tiny Siberian village Pikhtovoye, isolated from the world by the dense taiga-swampy coniferous forest-and a swamp. One of the other people is her husband. Every week, she travels 16 kilometers (10 miles) through the forest to the nearest post office in a larger village to collect the post, supplies and pensions for her neighbors. "We used to go by tractor. It would take us three hours," the 56-year-old said. But recently, the couple's son gave them a life-changing gift: a huge-wheeled monster truck built by a friend that can plough through the muddy tracks much faster.

With her husband at the wheel, Yermolova can now reach the post office in an hour. It's still a bumpy ride and in the summer she holds onto the open roof, laughing, while her husband is refreshed by the breeze of a fan attached to the side of the vehicle. Once in the bigger village of Imshegal, home to around 100 people, she climbs down from the machine using a makeshift cloth step hanging from the back. Cows roam outside the post office, one of the largely wooden village's few brick buildings. There, Yermolova loads basic goods such as sugar, washing-up liquid and shampoo, which have already come from a town some 100 kilometers



Postwoman Galina Yermolova pours out milk in her home in the village of Pikhtovskiy. — AFP photos



Postwoman Galina Yermolova carries her belongings as she is followed by dogs in the village of Pikhtovskiy.



Postwoman Galina Yermolova reads a newspaper at her home in a village of Pikhtovski.

away, onto her truck. Back in Pikhtovoye, she distributes them to her neighbors.

More than a postwoman

Being a postwoman has given Yermolova the opportunity to socialize. “There are only six of us here,” she said. “For me, this job is about being able to talk to people.” But Yermolova remembers different times. In the late 1980s, around 450 people lived in Pikhtovoye. By the mid-1990s, the local school closed down and mainly elderly villagers remained. In busier times, Yermolova worked as a teacher, then as a librarian and a shop assistant. “When all those professions ceased to exist (in the village), I had to join the post office,” she said.



Vladimir Negoyev, a 58-year-old villager, phones at a post office in the village of Pikhtovski.

Yermolova and her husband, who works in forestry, are the only villagers with a job. For her neighbors, Yermolova—who they call “Galya”, the affectionate version of her name — is much more than a postwoman. In an isolated community 400 kilometers from the southern Siberian regional hub of Omsk—three time zones away from Moscow—Yermolova also brings something valuable with her: the news. “Galya finds out what’s going on in neighboring villages, if something has happened,” said 58-year-old villager Vladimir Negoyev, perched on a haystack while smoking. “Otherwise what would we do? We have TV’s with 120 channels, but how would we know what happens here?” — AFP



Postwoman Galina Yermolova gets on her homemade off-road vehicle as her husband helps her, in the village of Pikhtovski.



Postwoman Galina Yermolova gets on her homemade off-road vehicle in the village of Pikhtovski.



Postwoman Galina Yermolova with her husband drive their homemade off-road vehicle in a forest outside the village of Pikhtovski.

Healthy breakfast on a busy school morning? It's not so hard

By Melissa Rayworth

Breakfast, as you may have heard, is the most important meal of the day. That's especially true for kids returning to school, who need fuel for energy and learning. But serving a healthy breakfast can feel like one more challenge for parents trying to get themselves and their kids out the door on time.

Never fear. With a bit of planning, breakfast can be a great opportunity to get dairy, fiber, fruits and even vegetables into a child's diet. And it doesn't have to be complicated. "It's not like there's one perfect breakfast," says Jessica Jaeger, a registered dietitian at Adelphi University in Garden City, New York.

Just try to include a mix of proteins, complex carbs from whole grains and healthy fats. "This helps stabilize blood sugar and appetite," Jaeger says. Diane Dembicki, an associate professor of nutrition who works with Jaeger at Adelphi, suggests involving kids in decision-making, and even in prep work the night before. Avoid the packaged frozen breakfast sandwiches and "breakfast bars" that have names that suggest nutrition but are often high in sugar and fat, Dembicki says. A few strategies for planning good breakfasts on school mornings:

EGGS CAN BE EASY

Try make-ahead egg cups or breakfast burritos. Kirsten Clodfelter, a mom of three from Louisville, Kentucky, does meal prep on Sun-

days with the help of her oldest, who is 7. They scramble eggs with a variety of chopped add-ins (sausage with diced onion and peppers, or perhaps bacon and spinach), and then put the eggs in a tortilla with a bit of cold cheese and wrap it in foil (for reheating in the oven the next morning) or plastic wrap (for reheating in the microwave), and freeze it. You can cut the burrito in half for little kids. Choose whole-grain tortillas or flatbread.

Another make-ahead option: Fill the cups of a muffin tin with a mix of egg, veggies and meat, then bake. Once they've cooled, pop them out and freeze or refrigerate the individual egg cups. Then quickly microwave them at breakfast time, served with a piece of fresh fruit. For easy eggs prepared in the morning, Kate Wehr, a

mother of four in Montana, suggests combining some chopped veggies and perhaps meat with a well-whisked egg and a bit of butter or olive oil in a ceramic bowl. Cover with a paper towel and microwave for about 45 seconds. The eggs will be ready to scoop into a whole wheat wrap, and breakfast is ready. If you're running late, wrap it in wax paper and your child can eat it on the way to school.

GRAINS CAN BE QUICK

Try topping whole-grain toast or a whole-grain waffle with natural nut butter, sliced bananas or other fresh fruit on top, and perhaps a drizzle of honey. Use natural peanut butter or another natural spread, rather than a brand that's high in sugar. "I found that starting my kids early with natural peanut butter meant they really didn't ask for the sweeter stuff," says Sarah Shemkus, of Gloucester, Massachusetts.

This breakfast hits the macro-nutrient goals of protein, whole grain and healthy fats, and the fruit adds vitamins. A hard-boiled egg made the night before can provide extra protein. Dembicki also recommends avocado, which has healthy monounsaturated fat and is high in vitamins. Consider a quick avocado toast on whole-grain bread, served with a hard-boiled egg and piece of fruit.

Another whole-grain option: overnight oats made in a Mason jar, or oatmeal set up the night before in a slow-cooker. Let kids choose their ingredients, including fruits and nuts. By flavoring the oatmeal yourself rather than buying pre-flavored, the sugar is kept low. Shemkus sometimes cooks quick oats in a bowl in her microwave with grated carrot and raisins, then tops it with maple syrup, cinnamon and milk: "We call it 'carrot cake oat bowl,' and the 3-year-old loves it."

COLD BREAKFAST CAN BE COOL

For kids who prefer a cold breakfast, try Greek yogurt with flaxseed, granola and fresh fruit mixed in, and perhaps a bit of honey. Hard-boiled eggs also go well with this. Some families pack an entire breakfast into a blender to create smoothies. Fresh fruit, yogurt or milk, peanut butter and even greens can go in. Clodfelter got her kids to embrace spinach in smoothies by adding it to a berry blend and calling them "Christmas smoothies," since the green flecks of spinach were combined with red berries.

Or bake healthy muffins in advance. Search for recipes with plenty of fruit or nuts and whole grains. Make a large batch and freeze them. Veggies can be hidden in many muffin recipes, and are front-and-center in recipes like carrot-raisin muffins. And don't forget dinner for breakfast: Not every kid likes typical American "breakfast foods," and that's fine, Dembicki says. If they have favorite dinner meals, make extra and pack leftovers in small containers for easy reheating the next morning.



GRILLED ARGENTINE STEAKS WITH CHIMICHURRI SAUCE



Herb-packed chimichurri sauce complements grilled steaks

A fresh, herb-packed chimichurri sauce complementing rich, smoky grilled steaks is an Argentine favorite. We think it's a perfect meal for summer evenings outside with friends and family. To translate the Argentine grilling method to our smaller American steaks, we rubbed the boneless strip steaks with salt and used the freezer as a dehydrator to evaporate the surface moisture; this, along with rubbing the steaks with cornstarch, helped them develop a substantial browned exterior on the grill. Covering the grill for the initial cooking jump-started the flavoring process.

Ingredients

Servings: 6-8

Start to finish: 1 hour 30 minutes (plus 30 minutes salting time)

Chimichurri Sauce:

1/4 cup hot water

2 teaspoons dried oregano
1 teaspoon salt
1 1/3 cups fresh parsley leaves
2/3 cup fresh cilantro leaves
6 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
1/4 cup vinegar

1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil

Steaks:

1 tablespoon cornstarch

Salt and pepper

4 (1 pound) boneless strip steaks, 1 1/2 inches thick, trimmed

4 medium wood chunks, unsoaked

1 (9 inch) disposable aluminum pie plate (if using gas)

Preparation

For the chimichurri sauce: Combine water, oregano, and salt in small bowl and let sit until oregano is softened, about 15 minutes. Pulse parsley, cilantro, garlic, and pepper

flakes in food processor until coarsely chopped, about 10 pulses. Add water mixture and vinegar and pulse to combine. Transfer mixture to bowl and slowly whisk in oil until combined. Cover and let sit at room temperature for 1 hour. (Chimichurri sauce can be refrigerated for up to 3 days.)

For the steaks: Meanwhile, combine cornstarch and 1 1/2 teaspoons salt in bowl. Pat steaks dry with paper towels and place on wire rack set in rimmed baking sheet. Rub entire surface of steaks with cornstarch mixture and place steaks in freezer, uncovered, until very firm, about 30 minutes.

For a charcoal grill: Open bottom vent halfway. Light large chimney starter filled with charcoal briquettes (6 quarts). When top coals are partially covered with ash, pour evenly over grill. Using tongs, place wood chunks directly on top of coals, spacing them evenly around perimeter of grill. Set cooking grate in place, cover, and open lid vent

halfway. Heat grill until hot and wood chunks are smoking, about 5 minutes.

For a gas grill: Turn all burners to high, cover, and heat grill until hot, about 15 minutes. Leave all burners on high. Place wood chunks in disposable aluminum pie plate and set on cooking grate. Close lid and heat until wood chunks begin to smoke, about 5 minutes.

Clean and oil cooking grate. Season steaks with pepper. Place steaks on grill, cover, and cook until beginning to brown, 2 to 3 minutes per side. Flip steaks and cook, uncovered, until well browned on first side, 2 to 4 minutes. Flip steaks and continue to cook until meat registers 115-120 F (for rare) or 120-125 F (for medium-rare), 2 to 6 minutes longer. Transfer steaks to carving board, tent with aluminum foil, and let rest for 5 to 10 minutes. Slice each steak 1/4 inch thick. Serve, passing chimichurri sauce separately

Germany for first time travelers



Germany is a combination of cutting-edge cool and timeless tradition, wrapped in a package of spectacular landscapes, vibrant metropolises and idyllic half-timbered villages, architectural masterpieces and fairytale palaces.

Indeed, the toughest thing about your first-time venture into Germany may be deciding your route. Its cities are high-tech hubs with an infectious energy, happening cultural and dining scenes. The great outdoors deliver cinematic changing scenery, from wind-battered coasts to sky-scratching Alpine peaks. You can visit castles and cathedrals built before Columbus set sail or take in the latest trends in street art. Wherever you go, Germany is here to charm, enlighten and surprise you.

BERLIN

Since the fall of the Wall in 1989, Berlin has been on a breathless journey to turn itself into one of the world's most vibrant capital cities. Go ahead and snap those selfies with the Reichstag, the Brandenburg Gate, Checkpoint Charlie and other famous landmarks. And yes, do stand in awe of the monumental antiquities in the Pergamon Museum or the eternal beauty of Queen Nefertiti at the Neues Museum. But then tap more deeply into this cauldron of cultural experimentation by checking out those 'only-in-Berlin' places.

Hit the Tempelhofer Feld, a former airport turned urban frolicking zone for everyone from kite-surfers to community gardeners. Across town, get a bead on the contemporary art scene at the Boros Collection in a WWII-era bunker or treat your ears to a concert at Silent Green, a crematorium reborn as a cultural centre. On a hot summer day, there are few better places for cooling off than the Badeschiff, a cargo barge up-cycled into a beach



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club. Or scope out Berlin's vibrant street art scene on a walking tour led by an actual spray-can meister before popping into Urban Nation, the world's first street art museum. All of Berlin itself is still an unfinished canvas.

WEIMAR & DESSAU

The year was 1919. Germany was in turmoil, struggling deeply with post-WWI trauma and chaos. But order was restored in Weimar, an idyllic town in the Thuringian countryside. Not only did it give birth to the Weimar Republic, Germany's first experiment with democracy, but also to the Bauhaus, the design school whose 'less is more' credo would revolutionise 20th-century aesthetics. A new museum in Weimar will soon pay tribute to this midwife of modernism that entered its seminal phase after moving to Dessau in 1925. In this city on the Elbe, you can take a spin around the original school building, then pop into the Meisterhäuser, the private homes of some of its famous teachers – Walter Gropius, Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky among them. Wrap up a Bauhaus tour in Berlin, where the school was quashed by the Nazis in 1932. Fortunately, plenty of modernist buildings survive, including the horseshoe-shaped Hufeisensiedlung, one of half a dozen 1920s housing estates granted Unesco world heritage status.

HAMBURG

Germany's second-biggest city is poised to blow you away, and not just because of the brisk North Sea winds. A trading powerhouse since the Middle Ages, Hamburg is a captivating mosaic of contemporary culture, architecture, music and wickedly fun nightlife. Start by scanning the city skyline from the outdoor viewing platform of the wave-inspired Elbphilharmonie, the city's spectacular new concert hall and gateway to the HafenCity, a former docklands area turned futuristic waterfront quarter. Break for coffee in the canal-laced Speicherstadt, a UN-

ESCO-recognized warren of red-brick warehouses that also shelters the truly mesmerizing Miniatur Wunderland, the world's largest model railway. Grab a fish sandwich at Brücke 10 in the harbor and chase it down with a beer while counting container vessels from a beach chair in the funky StrandPauli bar.

No visit to Hamburg would be complete without a night on the Reeperbahn, Hamburg's gloriously tawdry nightlife and red-light district where the Beatles once cut their teeth. Drift away from this neon-lit mecca of mischief to party with the locals, perhaps by catching an up-and-coming band at the Golden Pudel Club or sipping a smooth martini at Chug Club.

MUNICH

The Bavarian capital is always happy to deliver on the clichés visitors to Germany expect. Yes, Munich is indeed a city of Beemers, dirndls and beer halls with oompah bands. But beneath the cutesy veneer lies a sophisticated, proud and wealthy town.

Gobble up canvas candy from Rembrandt to Richter in the trio of Pinakothek museums or in the exquisite Lenbachhaus with its new Foster-designed wing. Connect with Germany's soccer obsession by scoring tickets to a home game of the FC Bayern München, Germany's superstar team that plays in the spectacular Allianz Arena. Gear heads should make a beeline to the BMW museum, plant and showroom while royal groupies can take a spin around the rambling Munich Residenz. Daredevils can surf the Eisbach wave or take a screaming zip line ride over the Olympic Stadium.

MOSELLE VALLEY

German wines don't get nearly enough credit, but if you worship at the altar of Bacchus (the Roman god of wine), a trip down the serpentine Moselle River should quickly turn you into a convert. Incidentally it was the Romans who first





fermented grapes here some 2,000 years ago. They also founded the city of Trier (making it Germany's oldest town) where you can zoom in on their ancient amphitheatres, thermal baths and the famous Porta Nigra town gate. Trier is also perfect for kicking off a driving or cycling tour along the river. En route to Koblenz, you'll clap eyes on Europe's steepest vineyard, legend-shrouded medieval castles and historic wine warehouses. Half-timbered Bernkastel-Kues, Belle-Epoque-flavored Trarbach and romantic Beilstein are all inviting villages to pause in and sip fine Rieslings and other classic German beverages.

BAVARIAN ALPS

Like Atlas carrying the world on his shoulders, the Bavarian Alps hoist up the rest of Germany. A lyrical landscape of forests, brooks and meadows smothered in wildflowers unfolds at the foot of these broad-shouldered mountains, making it prime terrain for all sorts of outdoor pursuits.

Topping the sightseeing hit list is Schloss Neuschwanstein, the world's most famous palace whose turreted magic truly unveils itself at night after the day trippers have left. Bavaria brims with churches and even non-pious types will likely rejoice at the exuberantly rococo Wieskirche that rises serenely from an Alpine meadow. Peak baggers are drawn to Garmisch-Partenkirchen for its famous ski slopes and breathtaking cogwheel-train ride to the top of the Zugspitze, Germany's highest mountain. If you're into dark tourism, confront Germany's sinister past in Berchtesgaden, home to the Eagle's Nest, Hitler's mountaintop retreat, and the Dokumentation Obersalzberg, an exhibit about the town's stint as the Nazi party's southern headquarters.

BLACK FOREST

Steeped in timeless mystique, the Black Forest is a sylvan slice of Germany where patches of woods are indeed so dark and thick that one might expect to stumble upon the witch's house in the Hansel and Gretel fairy tale.

Unfolding east of the Rhine between the Swiss border and elegant Baden-Baden with its glorious thermal baths and casino, the region is gourmet central with more than two dozen Michelin-starred restaurants. It's also the birthplace of the black forest cake, a creamy kirsch-drenched confection; Cafe Schöfer in Triberg has some of the best. Triberg also happens to be Germany's cuckoo clock capital with two house-sized versions plus



Germany's tallest waterfalls. From here, it's just a short hop to Freiburg, a charismatic university town with a grand minster and lively, cafe-rimmed squares.

MAKE IT HAPPEN

Frankfurt and Munich are the most popular airports, but there are dozens of others, many of them served by budget airlines like easyJet, Ryanair and Eurowings. Germany has an excellent train network that links pretty much all towns, large and small. Check schedules and buy tickets at www.bahn.de.

Travelling around by car buys flexibility and makes it easier to get off the beaten track, especially in rural areas. All major inter-

national rental agencies have offices in the main cities. Plot routes, toll and fuel costs with www.michelin.com. The cheapest way to get around is by long-distance bus. Check which operator goes where, when and for how much at www.busradar.com.

It's perfectly possible to travel in Germany without speaking a word of German, but it helps to master a few simple phrases. People are more likely to speak English in big cities, in the western part of the country and in tourist hotspots. Peak season is July and August but some holiday weekends in May and June can be busy too. Check www.publicholidays.de for dates, and book ahead during busy times. Bring an umbrella, a coat and closed shoes - rain is a possibility any time of year. — (www.lonelyplanet.com)

Comic

Word Search

Mystery Christmas Carol #2

The words listed below are from a familiar Christmas Carol. What is it? Find and circle all of the words hidden in the grid. The remaining letters will spell the name of the Christmas Carol.

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

- ALL

AND

ASK

ASLEEP

AWAY

BABY

BED

BLESS

BRIGHT

BUT

CARE
- CATTLE

CHILDREN

CLOSE

CRIB

CRYING

DEAR

DOWN

FOREVER

FROM

HAY

HEAD
- HEAVEN

HIS

JESUS

LAID

LAY

LITTLE

LIVE

LOOK

LOOKED

LORD

LOVE
- LOWING

MAKES

MANGER

MORNING

NEAR

NIGH

POOR

PRAY

SIDE

SKY

STARS
- STAY

SWEET

TAKE

TENDER

THEE

THERE

THY

WAKES

WHERE

WITH

Yesterday's Solution

Christmas

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

- ANGEL

BELLS

BETHLEHEM

CANDLES

CANDY CANE

CAROLS

DECORATIONS

EGGNOG

FAMILY

FRANKINCENSE

FRIENDS
- FRUITCAKE

GABRIEL

GIFTS

GOLD

GREETING CARDS

HOLLY

ICICLES

JESUS

JOSEPH

LIGHTS
- MANGER

MARY

MISTLETOE

MYRRH

ORNAMENTS

POINSETTIA

SANTA

SHEPHERDS

SKATES

SLEIGH
- SNOWFLAKES

SNOWMAN

STABLE

STAR

STOCKING

THREE WISE MEN

TOBOGGAN

TOYS

TREE

WREATH

The hidden sentence is: TIS THE SEASON TO BE JOLLY

Crossword 2288

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15				16							17		
18				19					20	21			
22				23		24			25	26			
27				28		29			30				
			31				32				33	34	35
36	37	38			39	40			41				
42			43	44	45			46			47		
48			49		50			51	52	53			
54							55						
56				57		58							
			59	60			61		62				
63	64	65		66	67		68			69	70	71	
72					73	74	75			76			
77										80			
81				82							83		

- ACROSS

1. Male red deer.

5. English zoologist noted for her studies of chimpanzees in the wild (born in 1934).

12. One or some or every or all without specification.

15. A state of deep and often prolonged unconsciousness.

16. A visitor to whom hospitality is extended.

17. A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 10 liters.

18. Move about aimlessly or without any destination, often in search of food or employment.

19. Small genus of hairy herbs with yellow flowers.

20. Lower in esteem.

22. Typical geese.

24. A city in northern India.

26. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.

27. Talks a great deal about uninteresting topics.

29. Port city on Atlantic coast.

31. The basic unit of electric current adopted under the System International d'Unites.

32. A skeletal muscle whose contraction extends or stretches a body part.

36. North Atlantic sea poacher.

39. A Loloish language.

41. Large tropical American tree of the genus Cordia grown for its abundant creamy white flowers and valuable wood.

42. South American wood sorrel cultivated for its edible tubers.
- DOWN

1. Lean end of the neck.

2. Formerly included in genus Cedrela.

3. Collect or gather.

4. A canvas or leather bag for carrying game (especially birds) killed by a hunter.

5. Long and light rowing boat.

6. Used of a single unit or thing.

7. Trade name for an oral contraceptive containing estradiol and norgestrel.

8. A member of a North American Indian people of southern California.

9. Peace of mind.

10. A chronic inflammatory collagen disease affecting connective tissue (skin or joints).

11. A unit of length of thread or yarn.

12. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.

13. An independent agency of the United States government responsible for aviation and spaceflight.

14. (cosmology) The original matter that (according to the big bang theory) existed before the formation of the chemical elements.

21. A small skullcap.

23. A cheese dish made with bread and egg crumbs that is baked and served in individual fireproof dishes.

25. (prefix) Opposite or opposing or neutralizing.

28. A physician who is not a specialist but treats all illnesses.

30. The last (12th) month of the year.

33. Stupefied by (or as if by) some narcotic drug.

34. Deprived of parents by death or desertion.

35. Pull back or move away or backward.

37. Of a moderate orange-yellow color.

38. Ox of southeast Asia sometimes considered a domesticated breed of the gaur.

40. A federation of North American labor unions that merged with the Congress of Industrial Organizations in 1955.

43. A state in midwestern United States.

45. A mass of small bubbles formed in or on a liquid.

47. A drug combination found in some over-the-counter headache remedies (Aspirin and Phenacetin and Caffeine).

48. Involving the body as distinguished from the mind or spirit.

51. Any member of Athapaskan tribes that migrated to the southwestern desert (from Arizona to Texas and south into Mexico).

54. A genus of Mysidae.

56. A sharp high-pitched cry (especially by a dog).

57. The district occupied entirely by the city of Washington.

59. A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.

61. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.

62. An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.

63. A genus of Colubridae.

72. The quarter of many North African cities in which the citadel is located.

73. A small Asian country high in the Himalayas between India and Tibet.

76. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

77. A transuranic element.

78. Red breed of domestic rabbits.

80. A republic in central Europe.

81. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).

82. A great raja.

83. A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.

Yesterday's Solution

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

Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

TV Listings

QAM MOVIES
ACTION

01:10 Ultimate Justice
02:50 Deja Vu
04:55 Faster
06:50 The Drowning
08:30 Faster
10:20 Jack Reacher: Never Go Back
12:20 Last Action Hero
14:30 Deja Vu
16:35 Chasing Gold
18:10 12 Rounds
20:00 Bad Boys
22:00 Child's Play 2
23:45 Saw III

ANIMAL PLANET HD

00:45 North Woods Law
01:40 Intruders
02:35 Wolves And Warriors
03:25 Lone Star Law
04:15 North Woods Law
05:02 Wildest Indochina
05:49 Pit Bulls & Parolees
06:36 Vet On The Loose
07:00 Animal Battlegrounds
07:25 Evan Goes Wild
08:15 Evan Goes Wild
09:10 The Bronx Zoo
12:50 Wolves And Warriors
13:45 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
14:40 Nature's Strangest Mysteries: Solved
15:05 Nature's Strangest Mysteries: Solved
15:35 Intruders
16:30 Flying Wild Alaska
17:25 Animal Cops Houston
18:20 Cats 101
19:15 The Vet Life
20:10 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
21:05 Wildest Indochina
22:00 Intruders
22:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees
23:50 The Vet Life

BBC FIRST

00:20 The Witness For The Prosecution
01:25 Holby City
02:20 Inside No. 9
02:50 The Detectorists
03:20 EastEnders
03:50 EastEnders
04:20 Father Brown
05:05 Death In Paradise
06:00 EastEnders
06:30 EastEnders
07:00 Last Tango In Halifax
07:55 Carters Get Rich
08:20 The Detectorists
08:50 The Detectorists
09:20 Holby City
10:15 Death In Paradise
11:10 Father Brown
11:55 Inside No. 9
12:30 Holby City
13:25 The Musketeers
14:20 The Detectorists
15:20 Casualty
17:05 Holby City
18:00 The Detectorists
18:30 Agatha Raisin
20:10 Ordeal By Innocence
21:05 Line Of Duty
22:10 Cold Feet
23:00 The Detectorists
23:30 Ordeal By Innocence

crime & investigation network

00:00 Homicide Hunter
01:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
01:55 Homicide: Hours To Kill
02:50 It Takes A Killer
03:45 Live PD: Police Patrol
04:10 Live PD: Police Patrol
04:30 The First 48
05:15 Homicide Hunter
06:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
07:00 Live PD: Police Patrol
07:20 The First 48
08:50 Homicide Hunter
10:30 Homicide: Hours To Kill
11:25 Homicide: Hours To Kill

12:20 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence
13:15 Live PD: Police Patrol
14:10 It Takes A Killer
15:05 Homicide Hunter
16:00 The First 48
17:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
18:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence
19:00 The First 48
20:00 Homicide Hunter
21:00 Live PD: Police Patrol
22:00 The Jail: 60 Days In
23:00 Live PD: Police Patrol
23:30 Live PD: Police Patrol

COMEDY CENTRAL

00:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
00:30 Broad City
00:55 Takeshis Castle Thailand
01:20 Tosh.0
01:45 Friends
02:07 Friends
02:30 Kroll Show
02:55 Takeshis Castle Thailand
03:20 Tosh.0
03:45 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
04:15 Broad City
04:40 Impractical Jokers
05:00 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
07:05 Lip Sync Battle
07:30 Lip Sync Battle
07:55 Comedy Central Presents: Menna W FINA
08:30 Takeshis Castle Thailand
08:55 Ridiculousness Arabia
09:25 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagef
09:55 Takeshis Castle Thailand
10:20 Friends
12:25 Key And Peele
14:30 Lip Sync Battle
14:55 Lip Sync Battle
15:20 Tattoo Disasters
16:15 Tattoo Disasters
17:10 Friends
19:30 Martha And Snoop Potluck Dinner Party
21:30 Teachers
22:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
22:30 Daniel Tosh: Happy Thoughts
23:30 Broad City

Discovery Family

00:05 Kids vs Film
00:30 Insane Coaster Wars: World Domination
00:55 Insane Coaster Wars: World Domination
01:20 My Cat From Hell
02:10 America's Cutest Pets
03:00 Breaking Magic
03:25 Breaking Magic
03:50 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
04:40 Kids vs Film
05:05 Kids vs Film
05:30 My Cat From Hell
06:15 America's Cutest Pets
07:00 Breaking Magic
07:25 Breaking Magic
07:50 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
08:40 Weather Top Tens
09:30 How We Invented The World
10:20 How The Earth Works
11:10 Kids vs Film
11:35 Kids vs Film
12:00 Xtreme Waterparks
12:25 Xtreme Waterparks
12:50 The Big Brain Theory
13:40 Did I Mention Invention?
14:05 Did I Mention Invention?
14:30 Strange Evidence
15:20 The Carbonaro Effect
15:45 The Carbonaro Effect
16:10 Kids vs Film
16:35 Kids vs Film
17:00 My Cat From Hell
17:50 America's Cutest Pets
18:40 Breaking Magic
19:05 Breaking Magic
19:30 Guy's Grocery Games
20:20 Sci-Jinks
20:45 Sci-Jinks

21:10 Penn & Teller Tell A Lie
22:00 Outrageous Acts Of Psych
22:25 Outrageous Acts Of Psych
22:50 Wild Africa: Rivers Of Life
23:40 Kids vs Film

ID

00:00 Home Alone
01:00 Evil Stepmothers
02:00 The Real Story With Maria Elena Salinas
03:00 Body Cam
03:45 Home Alone
04:30 Who Killed Jane Doe?
05:20 Border Control: Spain
05:45 Border Control: Spain
06:10 Blood Relatives
07:00 Murder Decoded
07:55 Murder Decoded
08:50 Reasonable Doubt
09:45 Reasonable Doubt
10:40 Border Control: Spain
11:10 Border Control: Spain
11:35 Who Killed Jane Doe?
12:30 Family Man, Family Murderer: An ID Murder Mystery
13:25 Blood Relatives
14:20 Nightmare Next Door
16:10 Border Control: Spain
17:05 The Perfect Murder
19:00 Disappeared
21:00 Obsession: Dark Desires
22:00 Forbidden: Dying For Love
23:00 Diabolical: Deadly Love

Disney HD

00:00 Alex & Co.
00:25 Alex & Co.
00:50 Evermoor Chronicles
01:15 Evermoor Chronicles
01:40 Alex & Co.
02:05 Binny And The Ghost
02:30 Binny And The Ghost
02:55 Hank Zipzer
03:20 Hank Zipzer
03:45 Alex & Co.
04:10 Alex & Co.
04:35 Violetta
05:25 Binny And The Ghost
05:45 Rolling With The Ronks
05:50 Rolling With The Ronks
06:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
06:25 Coop And Cami Ask The World
06:50 Disney Mickey Mouse
06:55 Bug Juice: My Adventures At Camp
07:20 Penny On M.A.R.S
07:45 K.C. Undercover
08:10 Bizaardvark
08:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
09:25 Rapunzel's Tangled Adventure
09:50 Rapunzel's Tangled Adventure
10:15 Bizaardvark
10:40 Bizaardvark
11:05 Liv And Maddie
11:30 Liv And Maddie
11:55 K.C. Undercover
12:15 K.C. Undercover
12:40 Rapunzel's Tangled Adventure
13:05 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
13:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
13:50 101 Dalmatian Street
14:15 Shake It Up
14:40 K.C. Undercover
15:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
15:10 Fast Layne
15:35 Penny On M.A.R.S
16:00 Bug Juice: My Adventures At Camp
16:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
16:50 Raven's Home
17:15 Coop And Cami Ask The World
17:40 Bizaardvark
18:05 K.C. Undercover
18:30 Bunk'd
18:55 Descendants Wicked World
19:00 Raven's Home
19:25 Liv And Maddie
19:50 K.C. Undercover

20:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
20:20 A.N.T. Farm
20:45 Bizaardvark
21:10 Coop And Cami Ask The World
21:35 Bug Juice: My Adventures At Camp
22:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
22:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
22:50 Lolirock
23:10 Evermoor Chronicles
23:35 Binny And The Ghost

Disney Junior

00:00 The Lion Guard
00:25 Disney Junior Music Nursery Rhymes
00:30 Trulli Tales S1
01:00 PJ Masks
01:25 PJ Masks
01:50 The Hive S2
02:00 Zou
02:15 Zou
02:30 Henry Hugglemonster
02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
03:20 The Hive
03:30 The Hive
03:40 Zou
03:55 Zou
04:10 Zou
04:25 The Hive
04:35 The Hive S2
04:45 Henry Hugglemonster
05:10 Henry Hugglemonster
05:35 The Hive
05:45 PJ Masks
06:55 Minnie's Bow-Toons S2
07:00 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse Y3
07:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers S2
08:00 PJ Masks
08:30 Vampirina
09:00 Sofia The First S1
09:30 Elena Of Avalor S2
10:00 Fancy Nancy Splits S1
10:20 Fancy Nancy Splits S1
10:40 Disney Muppet Babies S1 Splits
11:00 Connect And Protect
12:00 PJ Masks
13:30 Vampirina S1
14:30 Vampirina
15:00 Puppy Dog Pals S2 Splits
15:20 Puppy Dog Pals S2 Splits
15:40 Puppy Dog Pals S2 Splits
16:00 The Lion Guard
16:30 Elena Of Avalor S2
17:00 Gigantosaurus S1
17:25 Paprika S1 Shorts
17:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers S2
18:00 Fancy Nancy S1
18:30 Vampirina
19:00 PJ Masks
19:30 Puppy Dog Pals S2
20:00 The Lion Guard
20:25 Paprika S1 Shorts
20:30 Doc McStuffins
21:00 Gigantosaurus S1
21:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers S2
22:00 Fancy Nancy S1
22:30 Vampirina
23:00 PJ Masks
23:30 Puppy Dog Pals S2

Discovery Channel HD

00:15 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
01:05 Savage Builds
01:50 How Do They Do It?
02:15 How Do They Do It?
02:35 What On Earth?
03:20 Wheeler Dealers
04:05 Fast N' Loud
04:50 Diesel Brothers
05:35 Garage Gold
06:00 Shed And Buried
06:20 Garage Gold
06:45 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
07:35 Deadliest Catch
08:20 Garage Rehab
09:10 Kindig Customs
09:55 Salvage Hunters
10:45 Diesel Brothers
11:30 Wheeler Dealers
12:20 Fast N' Loud

13:05 Shed And Buried
13:30 Garage Gold
13:55 Salvage Hunters
14:40 Into Alaska
15:30 Wildest Indochina
16:15 American Chopper
17:05 Kindig Customs
17:50 Garage Rehab
18:40 Diesel Brothers
19:25 Wheeler Dealers
20:15 Fast N' Loud
21:00 Unique Rides
21:50 American Chopper
22:40 Shifting Gears With Aaron Kaufman
23:30 Deadliest Catch

XD

00:15 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
00:35 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
01:00 Booster
01:25 Booster
01:45 Counterfeit Cat
02:10 Counterfeit Cat
02:35 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
03:00 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
03:20 Booster
03:45 Booster
04:10 Counterfeit Cat
04:35 Counterfeit Cat
05:00 Furiki Wheels
05:29 Furiki Wheels
06:00 Marvel's Spider-Man
06:25 Space Chickens In Space
06:35 Marvel's Avengers: Black Panther's Quest
07:00 Phineas And Ferb
07:25 Phineas And Ferb
07:35 Phineas And Ferb
08:00 Big Hero 6 The Series
08:25 Mech-X4
08:50 Milo Murphy's Law
09:15 Milo Murphy's Law
09:40 Big City Greens
10:00 Big City Greens
10:25 Kick Buttowski
10:50 Phineas And Ferb
11:00 Gravity Falls
11:25 Gravity Falls
11:50 Milo Murphy's Law
12:05 Furiki Wheels
12:30 DuckTales
12:55 Big Hero 6 The Series
13:20 Lab Rats
13:45 Lab Rats
14:10 Phineas And Ferb
14:35 Phineas And Ferb
15:00 Marvel's Spider-Man
15:25 Phineas And Ferb
15:35 Space Chickens In Space
16:00 Big City Greens
16:25 Big Hero 6 The Series
16:50 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
17:15 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
17:40 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
18:05 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
18:29 Mech-X4
19:00 Marvel's Spider-Man
19:25 Marvel's Spider-Man
19:50 Marvel's Avengers: Black Panther's Quest
20:15 Gravity Falls
20:40 Gravity Falls
21:05 Kick Buttowski
21:30 Big City Greens
21:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
22:00 Milo Murphy's Law
22:29 Milo Murphy's Law
23:00 Furiki Wheels
23:25 Dude That's My Ghost
23:50 Dude That's My Ghost

EHD

00:00 Botched
01:00 Botched
02:00 E! News
03:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
04:00 WAGs LA
08:00 E! News: Daily Pop
08:55 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian

09:50 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
10:45 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
11:40 E! News
12:35 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
15:20 E! News: Daily Pop
16:15 Very Cavallari
19:00 E! News
20:00 Botched
23:00 Very Cavallari

itv HD CHOICE

00:10 The Jonathan Ross Show
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:30 The Chase
03:25 Martin Clunes: Islands Of America
04:20 Rich House Poor House
05:15 The Jonathan Ross Show
06:15 Royal Recipes
07:10 The Chase
08:05 Martin Clunes: Islands Of America
09:00 Rich House Poor House
09:55 The Jonathan Ross Show
10:55 Royal Recipes
11:50 The Chase
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Coronation Street
14:15 Royal Recipes
15:10 The Chase
16:00 This Time Next Year
17:50 The Jonathan Ross Show
18:50 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
20:10 The Chase
21:00 This Time Next Year
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Coronation Street

H2 HD

00:15 Clash Of Warriors
01:00 UFO Hunters
01:45 Ancient Impossible
02:30 The Universe
03:15 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
04:00 Ancient Aliens
04:45 Mummy Forensics
05:30 Lost Worlds
06:15 Million Dollar Genius
07:00 UFO Hunters
07:45 Ancient Impossible
08:30 The Universe
09:15 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
10:00 Ancient Aliens
10:45 Mummy Forensics
11:30 Lost Worlds
12:15 Million Dollar Genius
13:00 Ancient Impossible
13:45 The Universe
14:30 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
15:15 Ancient Aliens
16:00 Mummy Forensics
16:45 Lost Worlds
17:30 Million Dollar Genius
18:15 UFO Hunters
19:00 Ancient Impossible
19:45 The Universe
20:30 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
21:15 Ancient Aliens
22:00 MysteryQuest
22:45 Lost Worlds
23:30 Million Dollar Genius

HISTORY HD

00:20 Cities Of The Underworld
01:05 Pawn Stars UK
01:50 American Pickers
02:35 Storage Wars
03:25 Ax Men
04:15 Custer: The Final Mystery
05:05 Forged In Fire
06:00 Fifth Gear
06:45 Cities Of The Underworld
07:30 Pawn Stars UK
08:15 American Pickers
09:00 Storage Wars
09:45 Ax Men
10:30 Custer: The Final Mystery
11:15 Forged In Fire
12:00 American Pickers
15:00 Road Hawks
15:45 Detroit Steel
18:45 The Universe

Stars



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Your attitude about your work is commendable. If there is a job, you can do it. As a strong worker, you pour yourself into any task with absolute determination. You may find that your co-workers seek you out to ask for your psychological insight and understanding. Sometimes they complain and sometimes they make comments about others or their work. Your insight is helpful in turning the negative situations into a positive. This afternoon you may take a notion to paint a wall or create your own decorative art display for this time of the year. It may be that the leaves or nature's other ornaments are ripe for the picking. . . . A few pine cones here or there and a few colorful pieces of fruit or a colorful plant would work nicely. This is a great time to decorate.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You have an inner urge for order and organization and a great sense of responsibility. You are competent, ambitious and cool. This marks the coming of a good time as far as career and social life are concerned. If you have not discovered this already, it seems your time of paying dues is over; real accomplishment and focus are possible now. You are a very hard worker and are driven to accomplish whatever is set out for you. You like to manipulate a situation for its own benefit and would make a natural supervisor. You can demonstrate great understanding and sensitivity to the needs of others just now and may find yourself as a representative or possibly a politician when it comes to your community. A hobby keeps you busy and laughing tonight.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You have an inner urge for order and organization and a great sense of responsibility. You are competent, ambitious and cool. This marks the coming of a good time as far as career and social life are concerned. If you have not discovered this already, it seems your time of paying dues is over; real accomplishment and focus are possible now. You are a very hard worker and are driven to accomplish whatever is set out for you. You like to manipulate a situation for its own benefit and would make a natural supervisor. You can demonstrate great understanding and sensitivity to the needs of others just now and may find yourself as a representative or possibly a politician when it comes to your community. A hobby keeps you busy and laughing tonight.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Big changes affecting your career, status and reputation are likely at this time. Daring to be different gets you noticed and could get you ahead in ways you never expected. Today is a time of reaping the rewards for your hard work. Regardless of how differently you may have attempted to accomplish some project, the end results of your work have successful vibrations. A high tech or idealistic approach sets you apart. You are at your mental best with sharp ideas and clear thoughts. You seem to have developed a knack for being in the right place at the right time—and that can win you the admiration of others. A drive to probe and penetrate may find you examining and working through many changes. Look through a telescope tonight; it's cool.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Your ambition is strong. Things seem to fall in place and progress is good. Following the trends of business and investments in the world, you may have some interesting ideas for your own business. You are wise to save a bit of time to follow up on facts and confirm costs. You will prosper through an independent point of view. Ridding yourself of excess and what is nonessential may also be a key move to better working opportunities. Some interest in a subject that is fascinating to you may have you doing a bit of shopping at your favorite bookstore as well as study through the internet. You may even stay up for a bit this evening to read and learn about this new subject. Your work and your private life are becoming increasingly stimulating.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

The power of organization on a social scale, such as business or political affairs, seems to take on a larger-than-life feeling now. It's as if ambition and authority are answers in themselves, rather than means to an objective. This can lead to ambitious schemes that tend to become lost along the way. Real power is always hidden; finding it means delving into a few secret places, and that's where you are bound to look now. Look around and check out the people you admire that have reached the success you are looking for and ask yourself how they made it to their success. Perhaps you can use one of those people as a mentor. You can demonstrate great understanding to family members this evening. You also may find yourself dealing with community affairs.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Concentrated effort is important with your work just now—staying away from emotional issues is a very wise plan. Practice diplomacy when dealing with the public. Do not let feelings get in the way of clear judgment. Later today there will be time to do a little research, perhaps at the local library. This research will either help you in making a decision or in completing some project. You are learning that education wasn't as dull as you thought and the fun of discovery may point you in the direction of more education. . . . Or at the least, a few classes. Look beyond surface meanings for the insights you seek. Loved ones may give you support and, in some way, help you gain a focus this afternoon. Involve yourself with a relaxing activity this evening.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

This is a beneficial time that will accommodate your efforts to achieve a balance between the physical and the emotional parts of your life. If you find it too difficult to initiate the changes that are needed for this balance, find some counseling or a business advisor for yourself. Compromise is the order of the day in the workplace. Instead of deciding you are not going to do something, think it through and try to find a beneficial end result. You may find that both your personal growth and your career may depend upon how you can handle the challenges that may be coming up. The power of organization on a social scale—business, politics and such—seems to take on an importance to you in making your day run smoothly. Obstacles are short-lived.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Work, achievement and ambition are your idea of having fun—you feel productive. You may take on a leadership role at this time. You look for new opportunities to grow and to help others grow. The spirit of cooperation and sharp mental activity makes it easy for you to move forward in your career. You may find yourself serving to guide someone younger than you in matters of importance this afternoon—perhaps through tutoring school subjects or in activity such as junior achievement. This evening you give yourself time to think through some future plans. You may reason and analyze and think about the next project. Take some time out and exercise your body through some form of dancing or other type of exercise. Perhaps a friend will join you.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may find yourself working closely with someone that you always thought you would like to mirror. Your work growth seems to take on the same route that this person has set out for his or her own progress—you are happy to follow. Concentrating on pleasing this person is not your goal but learning and asking questions is bringing you forward. You may wonder if you will ever learn enough to set the example for someone else and you most certainly will. Getting down to the essential work process is most important now. Much can be accomplished now. Your thoughts are brought to a sharp focus. This evening you and a friend may decide to work on the making of a movie. Progress around this project or some similar project is good.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

This is a good day—one where much progress is gained. You do a professional job for the customer and the customer recommends you to another customer. This is a perfect time to move forward in whatever you want to accomplish. Respect is earned for your way of handling new ideas or practical solutions. Your career could assume a much more determined and solid form. Wonderful results are possible from your positive choices. The sound of children fills the air this afternoon. You may be responsible for their evening meal or for making sure they do their assignment from school. You may even decide to teach them a recipe they could cook for their snack or dessert as a reward for studying.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You may have to abandon your own ideas today but it is a commendable move that you take. Do not worry—your actions have not gone unnoticed. Your self-confidence gets a boost today. Use this cycle to get ahead professionally. Have no fear of the future challenges you see ahead. Your appreciation for hard work and discipline is natural and lifelong. Your professional standing improves. You actually love responsibility and tend to pile on the work. A positive change in financial status is possible soon. A part-time job or second job may be what you and many other people do at this time of year in order to enjoy the upcoming holidays. A cultural event involving friends and associates is quite helpful this evening. There is new information to absorb.

Country Codes

Afghanistan	0093	Jordan	00962
Albania	00355	Kazakhstan	007
Algeria	00213	Kenya	00254
Andorra	00376	Kiribati	00686
Angola	00244	Kuwait	00965
Anguilla	001264	Kyrgyzstan	00996
Antiga	001268	Laos	00856
Argentina	0054	Latvia	00371
Armenia	00374	Lebanon	00961
Australia	0061	Liberia	00231
Austria	0043	Libya	00218
Bahamas	001242	Lithuania	00370
Bahrain	00973	Luxembourg	00352
Bangladesh	00880	Macau	00853
Barbados	001246	Macedonia	00389
Belarus	00375	Madagascar	00261
Belgium	0032	Majorca	0034
Belize	00501	Malawi	00265
Benin	00229	Malaysia	0060
Bermuda	001441	Maldives	00960
Bhutan	00975	Mali	00223
Bolivia	00591	Malta	00356
Bosnia	00387	Marshall Islands	00692
Botswana	00267	Martinique	00596
Brazil	0055	Mauritania	00222
Brunei	00673	Mauritius	00230
Bulgaria	00359	Mayotte	00269
Burkina	00226	Mexico	0052
Burundi	00257	Micronesia	00691
Cambodia	00855	Moldova	00373
Cameroon	00237	Monaco	00377
Canada	001	Mongolia	00976
Cape Verde	00238	Montserrat	001664
Cayman Islands	001345	Morocco	00212
Central African Republic	00236	Mozambique	00258
Chad	00235	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Chile	0056	Namibia	00264
China	0086	Nepal	00977
Colombia	0057	Netherlands (Holland)	0031
Comoros	00269	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Congo	00242	New Caledonia	00687
Cook Islands	00682	New Zealand	0064
Costa Rica	00506	Nicaragua	00505
Croatia	00385	Nigar	00227
Cuba	0053	Nigeria	00234
Cyprus	00357	Niue	00683
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Norfolk Island	00672
Czech Republic	00420	Northern Ireland (UK)	0044
Denmark	0045	North Korea	00850
Diego Garcia	00246	Norway	0047
Djibouti	00253	Oman	00968
Dominica	001767	Pakistan	0092
Dominican Republic	001809	Palau	00680
Ecuador	00593	Panama	00507
Egypt	0020	Papua New Guinea	00675
El Salvador	00503	Paraguay	00595
England (UK)	0044	Peru	0051
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Philippines	0063
Eritrea	00291	Poland	0048
Estonia	00372	Portugal	00351
Ethiopia	00251	Puerto Rico	001787
Falkland Islands	00500	Qatar	00974
Faroe Islands	00298	Romania	0040
Fiji	00679	Russian Federation	007
Finland	00358	Rwanda	00250
France	0033	Saint Helena	00290
French Guiana	00594	Saint Kitts	001869
French Polynesia	00689	Saint Lucia	001758
Gabon	00241	Saint Pierre	00508
Gambia	00220	Saint Vincent	001784
Georgia	00995	Samoa US	00684
Germany	0049	Samoa West	00685
Ghana	00233	San Marino	00378
Gibraltar	00350	Sao Tome	00239
Greece	0030	Saudi Arabia	00966
Greenland	00299	Scotland (UK)	0044
Grenada	001473	Senegal	00221
Guadeloupe	00590	Seychelles	00284
Guam	001671	Sierra Leone	00232
Guatemala	00502	Singapore	0065
Guinea	00224	Slovakia	00421
Guyana	00592	Slovenia	00386
Haiti	00509	Solomon Islands	00677
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Somalia	00252
Honduras	00504	South Africa	0027
Hong Kong	00852	South Korea	0082
Hungary	0036	Spain	0034
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Sri Lanka	0094
Iceland	00354	Sudan	00249
India	0091	Suriname	00597
Indian Ocean	00873	Swaziland	00268
Indonesia	0062	Sweden	0046
Iran	0098	Switzerland	0041
Iraq	00964	Syria	00963
Ireland	00353	Taiwan	00886
Italy	0039	Tanzania	00255
Ivory Coast	00225	Thailand	0066
Jamaica	001876	Toga	00228
Japan	0081	Tonga	00676

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
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Friday, August 23, 2019

DR. MOHAMMAD AL HAJRY
Canadian Board of Otolaryngology
Head & Neck Surgery and Facial Plastics.
Fellow of Royal College of Surgeons-Canada
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- Diagnosis/ Treatment of General Ear, Nose, and Throat conditions in adults & pediatric
- Minimally Invasive Endoscopic sinus surgery including Balloon sinuplasty
- Minimally Invasive Microscopic Endoscopic Ear surgery
- Diagnosis & treatment of Otolaryngology and Audiology (Hearing loss, Tinnitus & balance disorders)
- Facial Plastic and reconstructive surgeries (Rhinoplasty, Otoplasty, Fillers & Botox injections)
- Diagnosis & treatment of snoring & obstructive sleep apnea in clinic without surgery
- Diagnosis & Treatment of voice and swallowing disorders.
- Diagnosis & Treatment of Head and Neck benign & malignant tumors.

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DR. FAHAD S. BUHAIMED
Consultant Cosmetic Dermatologist & Hair Transplant, NY

ACADAMIC CERTIFICATES:

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

SPECIALIZED IN:

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

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Email: drfahadmed@beautybeyond.com.kw
www.beautybeyond.com.kw

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

Specialized in:

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

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ENT Specialist

- Laryngology Fellowship - Canada
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- Member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- Member of the British Laryngological Association
- Member of the Canadian Society of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- Member of the European Laryngological Society

Specialized in:

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

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

Scope of Clinical Practice:

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

Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:

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

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Dr. Ahmad Alaeddine
Head of Cardiology departmenta
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Health & Science

Friday, August 23, 2019

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Dr. Ahmed Tmima
Orthopedic Surgeon



Dr. Ibrahim Abad
Orthopedic Surgeon



Dr. Mohab Al-Kilani
Orthopedic Surgeon



Dr. Mohammad Shaheen
Orthopedic Surgeon




Dr. Mohammad Azab
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Consultant



Dr. Rany Essam Mitwally
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Dr. Abeer Khattab
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Consultant Pediatrician-Canadian & American
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Board in Pediatric Emergency

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

DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED
Consultant of General Surgery
Laprosopic and Bariatric Surgery

Academic Certificates – Training

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

Scope of clinical Practice.

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

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

Classifieds

Friday, August 23, 2019

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CHANGE OF NAME

Faiza Abdul Karim holder of Passport No. K7914117. I am changing my name to **Faiza Abdul Karim Rajiwate** with immediate effect. (C 5668) 23-08-2019

I, Kiran Kandathil Radhakrishnan holder of Indian Passport No: J7085559, issued on 30/05/2011 at Bangalore and permanent address being, No. 207, Parway Apts, Tarang near WOC road, Shivanagar, Bangalore - 560010, Karnataka, India hereby correct my given name as **Kiran** and surname as **Kandathil Radhakrishnan**, P.O.Box - 8766, Salmiya - 22058, block 10, lane 18, flat no. 1, floor no. 1, Kuwait. (C 5580) 22-8-2019

I, Mookan Kumar Kannan S/O Mookan holder of Indian Passport No. J0976988 having permanent address 173-68 A, Melapidavoor, Manamadurai, Sivagangai-Dist, Tamilnadu - 630606, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name: **KUMAR KANNAN**, surname: **MOOKKAN**, S/O: **MOOKKAN**. (C 5573)

I, JOSEPH MEPURATHU VARUGH-ESE holder of Indian Passport No: N1869225, issued on 20-01-2016 at Kuwait and permanent address being, Mepurathu House, Kottathoor P.O., Ayroor, Pathanamthitta, Kerala hereby correct my given name as **JOSEPH MEPURATHU** and surname as **VARUGH-ESE**. Jleeb Al Shouyouk block 4, building no. 144 flat no. 86. (C 5579)

I, RITA PHILIP, holder of Indian Passport No. K7924609, issued on 11-11-2012 at Kuwait and permanent address being, Mepurathu House, Kottathoor P.O., Ayroor, Pathanamthitta, Kerala hereby correct my given name as **RITA** and surname as **PHILIP**. Jleeb Al Shouyouk block 4, building no. 144 flat no. 86. (C 5579)

I, JOSEPH MEPURATHU VARUGH-ESE, holder of Indian Passport No. N1869225, issued on 20-01-2016 at Kuwait and permanent address being, Mepurathu House, Kottathoor P.O., Ayroor, Pathanamthitta, Kerala hereby correct my son's given name as **REUBEN VARUGH-ESE** and surname as **JOSEPH** in his Passport No. N9724089 issued on 19-05-2016 at Kuwait. Jleeb Al Shouyouk block 4, building no. 144 flat no. 86. (C 5579)

I, JOSEPH MEPURATHU VARUGH-ESE, holder of Indian Passport No. N1869225, issued on 20-01-2016 at Kuwait and permanent address being, Mepurathu House, Kottathoor P.O., Ayroor, Pathanamthitta, Kerala hereby correct my son's given name as **REJOY VARUGH-ESE** and surname as **JOSEPH** in his Passport No. R8273659 issued on 27-08-2017 at Kuwait. Jleeb Al Shouyouk block 4, building no. 144 flat no. 86. (C 5579) 20-8-2019

I, Hanif (Given Name) **Salman Mohammed** (Surname) holder of Indian Passport No. J5396300 having permanent address: OFF Mira Bhayander Road, Shanti Park, Mira Road (East), Dist Thane-401107, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: Given name: **Salman Mohammed** and Surname: **Hanif** for all purposes. (C 5667) 19-8-2019

SITUATION WANTED

Finance auditor (Internal - External) with 10 years experience looking for a suitable job. Email: ahm_slis@yahoo.com Mob: 60025033 (C 5575)

HR-Admin Executive 10 years + experience in GCC with accounting background looking for a suitable job. Email: mazen_bh@yahoo.com Mob: +965 50687025 (C 5576) 18-8-2019

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times over some areas north westerly wind to variable wind, with speed of 10 - 45 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Hot to relatively hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 38 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 22/08/2019 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	48 °C	34 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	48 °C	32 °C		
ABDALY	48 °C	31 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	49 °C	35 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C		
SALMIYAH	44 °C	33 °C		
AHMADI	41 °C	37 °C		
NUWAISIB	46 °C	31 °C		
WAFRA	48 °C	27 °C		
SALMY	47 °C	32 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	08/23	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	45 °C	29 °C	NW-SE	10 - 32 km/h
Saturday	08/24	Hot and Humid specially over coastal areas	43 °C	27 °C	NW-SE	10 - 30 km/h
Sunday	08/25	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas	46 °C	28 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 28 km/h
Monday	08/26	Very hot	48 °C	29 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 28 km/h

PRAYER TIMES

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:57
Sunrise	05:20
Zuhr	11:51
Asr	15:26
Sunset	18:23
Isha	19:43

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	49 °C
MIN. Temp.	27 °C
MAX. RH	32 %
MIN. RH	06 %
MAX. Wind	SW 36 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
	22087426
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224

FRIDAY, AUGUST 23, 2019

Business

39 As economic warning signs flash, Trump, Democratic rivals recalibrate messages



40 Boeing spacecraft astronauts see new frontier for commercial space



41 Russia sends its first humanoid robot into space



HYDERABAD, India: This picture shows Amazon's newly inaugurated largest campus building in Hyderabad. —AFP

Gig economy deepens cities' divides

Govts struggle to keep pace with industry's rapid growth

BANGKOK: When an Indian customer of online food delivery service Zomato tweeted that he had cancelled his order because it had been assigned to a non-Hindu worker, and his request for a Hindu denied, thousands weighed in. "Food doesn't have a religion. It is a religion," Zomato responded in a tweet that garnered about 95,000 likes and thousands of comments that supported and criticized the company's stance.

Last month's incident was among a long series of allegations of discrimination related to religion, race, gender or sexual orientation in the so-called gig economy that also includes ride hailing apps Uber and Ola, and home-sharing platform Airbnb. The platforms are credited with creating millions of jobs, giving homeowners an additional income, and providing mobility in underserved areas and for women who fear harassment on public transport. Yet they are also responsible for entrenching biases and deepening socio-economic divides in cities, and increasing the vulnerability of minority communities, according to analysts. "There is now ample evidence of racial discrimination on gig economy platforms, and I would not be at all surprised to see religious discrimination also," said Don MacKenzie, an assistant professor at the University of Washington in Seattle.

"The consequences of this discrimination fall hardest on those who are discriminated against, but may also have social consequences for cities in general," said MacKenzie, who has studied racial discrimination at ride-hailing apps. More than a third of the global workforce will be in the gig economy by 2023 - according to Australian recruitment agency Robert

Half, and other industry experts - with independent workers contracted for short-term jobs such as food delivery and car rides.

Governments are struggling to keep pace with the industry's rapid growth, and its informal nature means that it is harder to enforce anti-discriminatory regulations or social protections. Uber and Ola did not respond to requests for comment. "Zomato's core values have no place for prejudice and intolerance," the company said in a statement.

Implicit segregation

MacKenzie's study in Seattle and Boston found "significant evidence" of racial discrimination, with black riders and those with "black-sounding" names facing longer wait times and more cancellations than white riders or those with white-sounding names. Drivers discriminated by not going to certain neighborhoods; by declining bookings from certain types of passengers or cancelling bookings; and by leaving low ratings based on race, gender, or socio-economic status, it showed.

"If discrimination deters certain classes of individuals from using a platform, then that platform will support fewer transactions," MacKenzie told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "The thinner market that results could mean fewer options for remaining users, leading to longer wait times for a ride, for example." Workers also suffer: the "Uberisation" of India's domestic-work market has entrenched informality, insecurity and discrimination, and excluded those without smartphones, the London-based Over-

seas Development Institute said in a report.

There is also a lack of transparency around algorithms used to assess and rank workers, and allocate work, said Alysia Blackham, an associate professor at Melbourne Law School. "Discrimination is potentially rife in the gig economy," she said in a recent paper. Examples of discrimination abound from New York to Mumbai. An Indian user of Ola said he cancelled a ride because the driver was Muslim. In another incident last year, an Ola driver refused to take a customer to his destination because it was in a Muslim neighborhood.

Ola said at the time it did not condone choosing drivers based on their religious background, or discrimination by its drivers. In another incident that went viral on social media last year, an Uber driver in New York was kicked off the app after he asked a lesbian couple to leave the car. Uber said its guidelines did not allow drivers to discriminate or refuse to provide services based on a person's race, color, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity. Airbnb has faced complaints and lawsuits over racial bias, and even a social media protest, #AirbnbWhileBlack. A 2016 study by Harvard University professors found requests from guests with distinctively African-American names were 16% less likely to be accepted than those from identical guests with white names. "In cities, there is already implicit segregation in housing and in labour markets along the lines of race, religion and caste," said Aditi Surie, a senior associate with the Indian Institute for Human Settlements. "These platforms entrench the biases and divides."

Behavior change

Cities have found ways to work around some biases. In San Francisco, long before ride-hailing apps, "homobiles" offered a safe option to LGBT+ members frustrated with being denied rides or fearful of being attacked. In several Indian cities, minority religious groups that were denied homes, set up their own housing enclaves. But with more transactions moving online, the on-demand economy exerts enormous influence on how residents in cities live, work, eat and interact with each other, said Surie.

While the companies have fairly strong non-discrimination policies, enforcement is difficult, said MacKenzie. "Legislation and regulation may have a role to play. Another option is to implement stronger penalties for parties who cancel a transaction," he said. Other suggestions to eliminate bias include limiting the data available - such as numbers rather than names, no profile photographs - and prioritizing minority communities and underserved areas.

Airbnb partnered with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to add more black hosts. Zomato added an LGBTQIA-friendly tag for restaurants on its app. As governments struggle to keep pace with the fast evolving industry, the platforms themselves may be best positioned to force change, said Surie. "They have changed consumer behavior so quickly, and they have the power to change it further. Perhaps that's the better way to battle bias," she said.—Reuters

Business

Stocks edge down as investors crave clarity on Fed stance

German private sector struggles in August

LONDON: Share markets slipped yesterday as uncertainty over the outlook for US interest rate cuts left investors on edge, with the release of minutes from the Federal Reserve's last policy meeting exposing rifts over its recent easing. The Chinese yuan's slump to an 11-year low also sapped their appetite for risk, with dealers saying state-owned banks were seen selling dollars to support the yuan.

The MSCI world equity index, which tracks shares in 47 countries, edged down 0.1 percent. In Europe, the Euro STOXX 600 fell 0.2 percent in choppy trade, following a 0.6 percent drop in MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan. Wall Street futures gauges were down between 0.2 percent and 0.3 percent. Minutes of the Fed's July meeting showed deep splits among policymakers over whether to cut interest rates last month, though there was some unity in wanting to signal it was not on a preset path to looser policy.

The Fed cut rates by 0.25 percent in July. While a "couple" of Fed members supported a deeper cut of half a percentage point, the minutes showed, a larger number favored no change at all. That reluctance to loosen policy seems at odds with the expectations for a cut of over 100 basis points by the end of 2020 that are already priced into markets. Market players said that the minutes reflected a dissonance between the predictions of easing - fuelled by geopolitical concerns and economic weakness in major economies such as Germany - and the apparently solid fundamentals of the US economy.

"The update last night was a bit of a reality check - maybe don't get ahead of yourself on what the Fed is going to do," said David Madden, market analyst at CMC Markets. "If you forget about the geopolitical headlines, forget about what the bond markets are doing, and look at the underlying indicators of the US people are in jobs, earning decent money, and more importantly spending money."

Indeed, the apparent strength of the world's biggest economy was on display on Wednesday, where Wall Street basked in surprisingly upbeat results from retailers that sent Target surging 20 percent and Lowe's Cos up 10 percent. But beyond the United States, worries about the fragility of the global economy were evident in data from Europe yesterday. Germany's private sector continued to struggle in August, suggesting further that Europe's largest economy is heading for a recession after its economy shrunk between April-June. Euro zone business growth expectations also fell to their weakest in more than six years on trade war fears, even as the expansion picked up a touch in August.

Yuan at lowest since 2008

The Fed minutes raised the stakes for Chairman Jerome Powell's remarks on Friday at the Fed's annual policy retreat in Jackson Hole, Wyoming - an event investors are waiting for with bated breath. "Jackson Hole is big," said Markus Schomer, chief economist at PineBridge Investments. "The Powell speech will be hugely important - there is a lot of pressure on him to



NEW YORK: Traders and financial professionals work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) at the opening bell in New York City. — AFP

deliver something for everyone." US President Donald Trump has been urging larger rate reductions, with proponents of looser policy pointing to the need to lift inflation toward the Fed's target and thwart fallout from global trade tensions.

And those trade worries played out again in currency markets, where the fall in China's yuan to 7.0752 per dollar, its lowest since March 2008, promoted a rush to perceived safe-haven

assets such as the Japanese yen. Against the dollar, the yen advanced by 0.2 percent to 106.44 yen, nearing last week's eight-month low of 105.05 yen. Currency traders said that while the Chinese economy's slowing growth meant pressure had been building on the renminbi from long before, the new fall suggested Beijing was prepared to use the currency as leverage as trade tensions simmer. — Reuters

OPEC's market share sinks

LONDON: OPEC's share of the global oil market has sunk to 30 percent, the lowest in years, as a result of supply restraint and involuntary losses in Iran and Venezuela, and there is little sign yet producers are wavering on their output-cut strategy. Crude oil from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries made up 30 percent of world oil supply in July 2019, down from more than 34 percent a decade ago and a peak of 35 percent in 2012, according to OPEC data.

Despite OPEC-led supply cuts, oil has tumbled from April's 2019 peak above \$75 a barrel to \$60, pressured by slowing economic activity amid concerns about the US-China trade dispute and Brexit. The decline in prices, should it persist, and erosion of market share could raise the question of whether continued supply restraint is serving producers' best interests. OPEC and its allies have a deal to limit supply until March 2020.

The group tried to defend its market share under the previous Saudi oil minister, Ali al Naimi, who sharply ramped up production in a pump war campaign in 2014. Naimi was hoping to win the battle, arguing that OPEC's output was the world's cheapest and would allow the group to outdo other producers such as the United States. As a result of his strategy OPEC's market share rose, while oil prices crashed to below \$30 a barrel, triggering many bankruptcies of U.S. oil firms and over-stretching the Saudi budget.

Riyadh and OPEC were forced to return to output cuts in 2017 to support prices, and sources within OPEC say there is no sign

of any willingness to return to a pump war at the moment. "Saudi Arabia is committed to do whatever it takes to keep the market balanced next year," a Saudi official said on Aug 8. "We believe, based on close communication with key OPEC+ countries, that they will do the same."

OPEC, Russia and other producers have been restraining supply for most of the period since Jan. 1, 2017. The alliance, known as OPEC+, in July renewed the pact until March 2020. While helping to boost prices, OPEC's market share has fallen steeply in the last two years. World supply has expanded by 2.7 percent to 98.7 million barrels per day, while OPEC crude output has fallen 8.4 percent to 29.6 million bpd.

While OPEC agreements apply to production, OPEC's exports are also falling as a percentage of world shipments, according to data from Kpler, which tracks oil flows. Iran has led the decrease in recent months. Nonetheless, Swedish bank SEB said that for now OPEC+ still has room to act, as the countries making most of the voluntary curbs - Russia, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE and Iraq - are still pumping at relatively high rates.

Venezuela and Iran, under US sanctions and being forced to curb shipments, have delivered the bulk of the cuts. Venezuelan supply was already in long-term decline before Washington tightened sanctions this year. "The active cutters are not very stretched at all," SEB analyst Bjarne Schieldrop wrote in the report. "They have not lost market share to US shale. Venezuela and Iran are the big losers."

While Saudi Arabia holds the biggest sway in OPEC as its largest producer, some in the group are not convinced further OPEC+ action to support prices will happen or would work. "I really doubt there will be further action," an OPEC delegate said. "If it did happen, it will have a temporary impact because the driver is trade and the economy." — Reuters

Indonesia announces surprise rate to offset tepid global growth

JAKARTA: Indonesia's central bank announced a surprise interest rate cut yesterday as it looks to offset tepid global growth, after Southeast Asia's biggest economy posted its slowest quarterly expansion in two years. Bank Indonesia (BI) trimmed its key lending rate by 25 basis points to 5.5 percent - the second rate reduction in as many months - and signaled more cuts could be in store. "This is a pre-emptive measure to boost momentum," said bank governor Perry Warjiyo.

"Indonesia is fortunate that its economy continues to expand, but we must anticipate the risks of a slowdown in the global economy." Indonesia has been grappling with weaker prices for key commodities like coal and palm oil, as the world economy falters on the back of the US-China trade war. Some analysts had expected the bank to hold off cutting borrowing costs again over concerns about weakening in the rupiah currency. "Today's rate cut came as a surprise," Franziska Palmas of research house Capital Economics said in a report. "The slowing economy and subdued inflation mean BI would certainly like to cut rates again in the coming months." But "further loosening is likely to be gradual", Palmas added. — AFP

Business

As economic warning signs flash, Trump, Democratic rivals recalibrate messages

Economic fears focus spotlight on Fed's Powell speech

WASHINGTON: After two years touting a booming economy as his own doing, US President Donald Trump is test driving a new message on the economy: Any chance of a recession is not his fault. But Democrats, who are shifting their message too, seem to be saying "not so fast." Trump has moved from touting positive economic indicators since his 2016 election to now trying to blame someone else for a possible economic slowdown, while his advisers and officials are scrambling to insist there is nothing to worry about.

From the moment he was elected, Trump took credit for the strong economy. Until early 2019, advisers saw it as the biggest selling point for his campaign to be reelected president in November 2020. But softening economic data of late is raising concern his economic message could lose its punch. Some of his Democratic rivals for the White House were quick to smell blood, although other candidates and party strategists warned they should be careful so as not appear to be rooting for economic disaster.

Most of the nearly two dozen Democrats running for the White House have been largely reluctant to talk about the broader economy this election cycle, viewing it as a losing battle given strong economic data. Instead, they spent the past six months arguing that Trump's economy left behind the working class. But in recent days, several Democrats, including front-runner Joe Biden, have changed tack.

"Donald Trump inherited a growing economy from the Obama-Biden administration, just like he inherited everything in his life," Biden, a former vice president, said on Tuesday while campaigning in Iowa, adding that he is not hoping for a recession. "And now he's squandering it, just like he squandered everything he inherited in his life."

Beto O'Rourke said Trump "has made a complete mess of the American economy," by entering a trade war with China. "It is devastating

farmers and ranchers and producers around this country," O'Rourke, a former US congressman, told reporters on Tuesday. "Do not allow him to escape the accountability that he deserves for what he is doing to this economy - to working Americans - the peril in which he has placed us. He'll try to blame every other person. The blame rests with Donald Trump."

Others have been more circumspect, suggesting talking down Trump's economy is a political tightrope for his rivals given still largely strong fundamentals such as low unemployment. Asked by reporters after his speech in Iowa on Wednesday whether the country was headed for a recession, US Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont pivoted to a discussion of workers who lived paycheck to paycheck even in a strong economy.

Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, who did not address recession fears like most other candidates at the same Iowa forum, said: "You beat this president by having an optimistic economic agenda." Former US Representative John Delaney, another Democratic candidate, was more blunt about it. "It feels like some Democrats are cheering on a recession because they want to stick it to Trump," he told reporters on Wednesday.

Desperate spinning

When the leader of the Federal Reserve speaks, the world listens. But the relentless attacks by US President Donald Trump ensure Fed Chair Jerome Powell's speech today will be subjected to an even more intense spotlight. Powell is walking a very narrow path as he tries to defend the Fed's independence from political interference, do the right thing for the economy with limited ammunition, and manage divisions within the central bank itself over the correct course for interest rates.



WASHINGTON: In this file photo US President Donald Trump walks with Jerome Powell, Federal Reserve chairman, at the White House in Washington, DC. —AFP

And as warning signs about a possible recession flash red, any misstep threatens to roil financial markets—which are expecting, even demanding, more rate cuts—and that would be sure to stoke Trump's anger anew. After some communication misfires, the Fed chief will have another opportunity to send a clear message in a highly-anticipated speech Friday at an annual gathering of central bankers and economists in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

But even there, against the backdrop of the majestic Grand Teton mountains, Powell won't be safe from the Twitter screeds by Trump. "The only problem we have is Jay Powell and the Fed," Trump tweeted on Wednesday. Trump appointed Powell to his position, but has excoriated him almost daily for raising the key interest rate too quickly last year. He has called on the Fed to cut rates drastically to help the economy and weaken the US dollar. "Big US growth if he does

the right thing, BIG CUT - but don't count on him! So far he has called it wrong, and only let us down," he tweeted.

On Wednesday, Trump flipped his positions on whether to cut the payroll tax, saying he is no longer looking at that option, a sharp reversal from just a day earlier. "The challenge is that inconsistent messaging on the economy projects weakness, and if we know one thing about Donald Trump, it is his aversion to any perceived weakness," said Doug Heye, a Republican strategist who formerly worked in Congress. "There is still a lot of good news this White House can emphasize about the economy. Focus on that."

Unemployment remains at historic lows, the economy continues to grow and so far, there has been no actual contraction. But there is some sign of weakening in the manufacturing sector, including in states important to his reelection like Michigan and Pennsylvania.—Agencies

Macron's quest for an international tax on digital services

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron is pressing ahead with a digital tax in France, a move U.S. President Donald Trump described as "foolishness", and the French leader is keen to reach an international agreement on taxing big tech companies. Late on Wednesday, Macron urged the Trump administration to help reform global corporate taxes. Macron will seek common ground with Trump and other G7 leaders at a summit in Biarritz this weekend. Washington has expressed concern that U.S. Internet companies are being unfairly targeted. Here is a guide to the digital tax debate.

What is a digital tax?

The governments of large European countries have been vexed by their inability to tax the profits of multinational tech companies that they believe are derived in their jurisdictions. Internet giants such as Facebook, Google and

Amazon are currently able to book profits in low-tax countries like Ireland and Luxembourg, no matter where the revenue originates. Macron says taxing big tech more is a matter of social justice. The French leader pushed hard for a digital tax to cover European Union member states, but ran up against resistance from Ireland, Denmark, Sweden and Finland.

What has France done?

After talks on an EU digital tax foundered, Macron's government imposed its own unilateral tax. The 3 percent levy applies to revenue from digital services earned by firms with more than 25 million euros in French revenue and 750 million euros worldwide. Paris is not alone among European capitals in proposing a tax on big tech. Britain, Spain, Italy and Austria have also announced plans for their own digital levies.

What does Macron want to accomplish at the G7?

The goal now is to secure a broader agreement under the auspices of the G20 and the OECD. Macron wants G7 leaders to agree on the principle of a universal tax to provide impetus to this effort. G20 finance ministers agreed in June to compile common rules to close tax loopholes and promised to "redouble efforts" for a consensus-based solution to

be found by 2020. G7 finance ministers agreed the following month that there should be a minimum level of tax to discourage countries from competing in a "race to the bottom". "Now the G20 is set to discuss this issue further, there's not much left for the G7 to do," a Japanese government official said. "We (Japan) are hoping to keep in step with France. But that doesn't mean the G7 will decide anything new at this summit."

What obstacles lie in the way?

Trump. The US president has already lambasted Macron's "foolishness" for pursuing a French digital levy and has threatened to tax French wines in retaliation. The row illustrates how digital taxation could open up a new front in the trade spat between Washington and the EU as economic relations between the two appear to sour. Trump's threat to punish France should not be taken lightly. It followed US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer's office announcing an investigation into the French tax, which it called an unfair trade practice that penalized US tech companies for their commercial success. Low-tax jurisdictions also have misgivings about Macron's tax plan because it would make it harder for them to attract foreign direct investment with the promise of ultra-low corporate taxes. —Reuters

Business

Boeing spacecraft astronauts see new frontier for commercial space

NASA pays SpaceX, Boeing \$7bn to build launch systems

HOUSTON: A crew of veteran US astronauts and aviators are training in Houston for a manned mission to the International Space Station aboard Boeing's new Starliner spacecraft, which could also be used to take tourists into space on future missions. The Boeing Starliner mission was originally scheduled for this month, but that has been delayed to at least the end of the year or into 2020 due to technical issues and amid a shakeup in the top echelons of the space agency.

Boeing and rival Elon Musk's SpaceX are competing with each other to become the first private company to resume human space flight from US soil after the space shuttle program ended in 2011. The companies, with cutting-edge technology, are among those poised to benefit most from the enormous growth opportunities many see in the world's burgeoning commercial space industry. NASA has been relying for years on Russian rockets and spacecraft to transport personnel to the space station.

The \$100 billion science and engineering laboratory, orbiting 250 miles above Earth, has been permanently staffed by rotating crews of astronauts and cosmonauts since November 2000. NASA is paying SpaceX and Boeing nearly \$7 billion combined to build rocket-and-capsule launch systems for ferrying astronauts to the space station. Reuters was given rare access at Houston's Johnson Space Center to NASA astronauts Nicole Mann and Mike Fincke, and Boeing astronaut and test pilot Christopher Ferguson, who will crew the ISS mission, along with other astronauts training for future missions.

The exercises included training underwater to simulate space walks, responding to emer-

gencies aboard the space station, and practicing docking maneuvers on a flight simulator. Here's a closer look at the three astronauts training for the ISS flight.

Ferguson leads mission

Ferguson, a former NASA astronaut and retired US Navy captain, who helped design the way the crew interacts with the automated Boeing CST-100 Starliner, will lead its maiden voyage. "They (Boeing) knew how big it was going to be, how it was going to be powered, but they really hadn't thought a whole lot about what the inside would be and how does the crew interface with the vehicle that's designed to operate automatically," said Ferguson.

The design "is a great compromise between keeping it minimalistic yet at the same time giving the pilot the ability to understand where am I, where do I need to be, how am I going to get there, if things go wrong how do I fix them." "It comes down to watching (the spacecraft's) behavior," said Ferguson, who led NASA's final space shuttle mission in 2011 and spent more than 40 days in space over his career. "We just want to make sure it doesn't throw us a curve ball."

First trip for navy combat pilot

It will be the first trip into space for Mann, 42, a former Navy combat pilot, who said she was looking forward to the excitement a fresh American-based crewed mission to space would create among a young generation that did not grow up watching Apollo and shuttle missions as their parents and grandparents did.

"And so I think it's going to be huge for Americans. It's going to be huge for the younger generation to see us launching from



WASHINGTON: Boeing 737 MAX airplanes are seen parked on Boeing property near Boeing Field in Seattle, Washington. —AFP

American soil, that we're bringing work and industry back to the United States. "I think it'll open up a lot more jobs. It'll open a lot more innovation for that young generation. And there's a big future of spaceflight in front of us."

Fincke - laying the groundwork

The Starliner mission will lay the groundwork for Boeing's commercial flight program, which includes carrying passenger and cargoes to the space station, and taking tourists into space, said Fincke, a veteran NASA astronaut who has completed three space flights. "So far, we've only had about 500 people go to space. Hopefully, in the next 10 years, we'll go from 500 to 5,000. And in the next 20 years, maybe 50,000 or more," said the former US Air Force colonel who served as science officer and flight

engineer on a six-month space station mission.

Capture the flag

Eight years ago, when Ferguson led NASA's last space shuttle mission, he left an American flag aboard the space station for the next crew of US astronauts to collect and bring home. He likes the idea of getting it back himself, traveling on the first manned commercial US spacecraft. "Sort of like a grown-up version of capture the flag," Ferguson said. And if SpaceX got there first? "I would be very happy for them. Who brings it home is most important, but the fact that it gets home is most important. And I would be very proud of Doug (Hurley, a NASA astronaut training to fly aboard SpaceX's Crew Dragon space craft), although he's going to lose." —Reuters

Auto companies in India cut more jobs

NEW DELHI: With India's auto sales declining for the ninth straight month in July, more automotive manufacturers are laying off workers and temporarily halting production to keep costs in check, according to sources and documents seen by Reuters. Japanese carmaker Toyota Motor and South Korea's Hyundai Motor are the latest in a string of companies to halt production at plants to combat slumping sales, according to company memos to employees, reviewed by Reuters.

Passenger vehicle sales in July fell at the fastest pace in nearly two decades. The sales declines have triggered major job cuts in India's auto sector, with many companies forced to shut down factories for days and axe shifts. Sources have told Reuters that even more companies have now begun to lay off temporary workers as the slowdown worsens. Denso Corp's India unit, which makes powertrain and air-conditioning systems for cars, has laid off about 350 temporary workers at its Manesar plant in north India, a source familiar with the matter told Reuters. —Reuters

US jobless claims fall in sign of labor market strength

WASHINGTON: The number of Americans filing applications for unemployment benefits fell sharply last week, suggesting the labor market was holding firm despite a manufacturing slowdown and concerns the economy is on a path toward recession. Initial claims for state unemployment benefits dropped 12,000 to a seasonally adjusted 209,000 for the week ended Aug 17, the Labor Department said yesterday.

The decline was sharper than expected. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast claims would drop to 216,000 in the latest week. US stock index futures held onto gains following the data's publication. The four-week moving average of initial claims, considered a better measure of labor market trends as it irons out week-to-week volatility, edged up 500 to 214,500 last week. Last week's claims data falls during the same week the Labor Department conducts surveys used to estimate national employment during the month of August.

The four-week average for new unemployment benefits claims was lower than the corresponding week in July, a positive signal for employment during the month. There are few signs a bitter trade war was spilling over to the national labor market, although growth in manufacturing jobs has slowed this year. While hiring has cooled, the pace of job gains remains well above the roughly 100,000 needed per month to keep up with growth in the working-age population.

The trade war has fueled concerns among investors that a recession looms over the US economy. Some yields on shorter-term Treasury debt have risen above longer-term yields, a development viewed as a classic recession signal. Concerns over the impact of the trade tensions between Washington and Beijing on the US economic expansion, the longest on record, prompted the Federal Reserve to cut interest rates last month for the first time since 2008.

At the same time, minutes for last month's Fed policy meeting released on Wednesday suggested policymakers were divided over the cut and did not want to give the appearance that they were planning further rate reductions. Yesterday's claims report also showed the number of people receiving benefits after an initial week of aid fell 54,000 to 1.67 million for the week ended Aug. 10. The four-week moving average of the so-called continuing claims fell 750 to 1.70 million. —Reuters

Business

Amazon, Microsoft, 'putting world at risk of killer AI'

Panel debates policy options regarding lethal autonomous weapons

WASHINGTON: Amazon, Microsoft and Intel are among leading tech companies putting the world at risk through killer robot development, according to a report that surveyed major players from the sector about their stance on lethal autonomous weapons. Dutch NGO Pax ranked 50 companies by three criteria: whether they were developing technology that could be relevant to deadly AI, whether they were working on related military projects, and if they had committed to abstaining from contributing in the future.

"Why are companies like Microsoft and Amazon not denying that they're currently developing these highly controversial weapons, which could decide to kill people without direct human involvement?" said Frank Slijper, lead author of the report published this week. The use of AI to allow weapon systems to autonomously select and attack targets has sparked ethical debates in recent years, with critics warning they would jeopardize international security and herald a third revolution in warfare after gunpowder and the atomic bomb.

A panel of government experts debated policy options regarding lethal autonomous

weapons at a meeting of the United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in Geneva on Wednesday. Google, which last year published guiding principles eschewing AI for use in weapons systems, was among seven companies found to be engaging in "best practice" in the analysis that spanned 12 countries, as was Japan's Softbank, best known for its humanoid Pepper robot. Twenty-two companies were of "medium concern," while 21 fell into a "high concern" category, notably Amazon and Microsoft who are both bidding for a \$10 billion Pentagon contract to provide the cloud infrastructure for the US military. Others in the "high concern" group include Palantir, a company with roots in a CIA-backed venture capital organization that was awarded an \$800 million contract to develop an AI system "that can help soldiers analyse a combat zone in real time."

"Autonomous weapons will inevitably become scalable weapons of mass destruction, because if the human is not in the loop, then a single person can launch a million weapons or a hundred million weapons," Stuart Russell, a computer science professor at the University of

California, Berkeley told AFP on Wednesday. "The fact is that autonomous weapons are going to be developed by corporations, and in terms of a campaign to prevent autonomous weapons from becoming widespread, they can play a very big role," he added.

The development of AI for military purposes has triggered debates and protest within the industry: last year Google declined to renew a Pentagon contract called Project Maven, which used machine learning to distinguish people and objects in drone videos. It also dropped out of the running for Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure (JEDI), the cloud contract that Amazon and Microsoft are hoping to bag. The report noted that Microsoft employees had also voiced their opposition to a US Army contract for an augmented reality headset, HoloLens, that aims at "increasing lethality" on the battlefield.

What they might look like

According to Russell, "anything that's currently a weapon, people are working on autonomous versions, whether it's tanks, fighter aircraft, or submarines." Israel's Harpy is an au-

tonomous drone that already exists, "loitering" in a target area and selecting sites to hit. More worrying still are new categories of autonomous weapons that don't yet exist—these could include armed mini-drones like those featured in the 2017 short film "Slaughterbots."

"With that type of weapon, you could send a million of them in a container or cargo aircraft—so they have destructive capacity of a nuclear bomb but leave all the buildings behind," said Russell. Using facial recognition technology, the drones could "wipe out one ethnic group or one gender, or using social media information you could wipe out all people with a political view."

The European Union in April published guidelines for how companies and governments should develop AI, including the need for human oversight, working towards societal and environmental wellbeing in a non-discriminatory way, and respecting privacy. Russell argued it was essential to take the next step in the form of an international ban on lethal AI, that could be summarized as "machines that can decide to kill humans shall not be developed, deployed, or used."—AFP

Russia sends its first humanoid robot into space

MOSCOW: Russia yesterday launched an unmanned rocket carrying a life-size humanoid robot that will spend 10 days learning to assist astronauts on the International Space Station. Named Fedor, short for Final Experimental Demonstration Object Research, the robot is the first ever sent up by Russia. Fedor blasted off in a Soyuz MS-14 spacecraft at 6:38 am Moscow time from Russia's Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. The Soyuz is set to dock with the space station tomorrow and stay till September 7.

Soyuz ships are normally manned on such trips, but yesterday no humans are travelling in order to test a new emergency rescue system. Instead of cosmonauts, Fedor, also known as Skybot F850, was strapped into a specially adapted pilot's seat, with a small Russian flag in hand. "Let's go. Let's go," the robot was heard saying during launch, repeating the famous phrase used by first man in space Yuri Gagarin.

The silvery anthropomorphic robot stands 1.80 meters tall and weighs 160 kilograms. Fedor has Instagram and Twitter accounts with posts saying it is learning new skills such as opening a bottle of water. In the station, it will trial those manual skills in very low gravity. "That's connecting and disconnecting electric cables (and) using standard items, from a screwdriver and a spanner to a fire extinguisher," the Russian space agency's direc-



KAZAKHSTAN: This handout picture shows Russian humanoid robot Skybot F-850 (Fedor) being tested ahead of its flight on board Soyuz MS-14 spacecraft at the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. —AFP

tor for prospective programmes and science, Alexander Bloshenko, said in televised comments ahead of the launch.

"The first stage of in-flight experiments went according to the flight plan," the robot tweeted after reaching orbit. Fedor copies human movements, a key skill that allows it to remotely help astronauts or even people on Earth to carry out tasks while the humans are strapped into an exoskeleton. Such robots will eventually carry out dangerous operations such as space walks, Bloshenko told the state news agency RIA Novosti.

On the website of one of the state backers of the project, the Foundation of Advanced Research Projects, Fedor is described as po-

tentially useful on Earth for working in high radiation environments, demining and tricky rescue missions. Though initially developed for the emergencies ministry, Fedor can also be seen shooting at targets from two handguns in a video posted by Russian space agency chief Dmitry Rogozin.

On board, the robot will perform tasks supervised by Russian cosmonaut Alexander Skvortsov, who joined the ISS in July and will wear an exoskeleton and augmented reality glasses in a series of experiments later this month. Since Fedor is not trained to grab space station handles to move about in microgravity conditions, its legs will be immobilized on the space station, Bloshenko said. —AFP

What does Facebook's plan to hire journalists mean for media industry?

NEW YORK: Facebook's plan to hire professional journalists instead of relying solely on algorithms to deliver news is a positive step but is unlikely to shake up an embattled media industry, analysts say. The social media giant said Tuesday it would build a small team of journalists to select the top national news of the day "to ensure we're highlighting the right stories." It comes as the US media landscape is plagued by job losses and newspaper closures, with organizations trying to figure out how to record profits in the age of free news.

Stories will appear in a section called the "news tab," which will be separate from the traditional news feed that displays updates and content from users' friends and relatives. "In theory I see this as a really positive development. It is something quite promising," Danna Young, a communications professor at the University of Delaware, told AFP. Facebook's journalists will be curating stories from news sites and won't be editing headlines or writing content. The California-based company has consistently said it does not want to be considered a media organization that makes major editorial decisions, and this announcement does little to change that, experts add. —AFP

Sports

Tigers overcome former ace Verlander's two-hitter game

HOUSTON: John Hicks cranked a leadoff home run in the ninth inning, and the visiting Detroit Tigers overcame former ace Justin Verlander's two-hit complete game with a 2-1 win over the Houston Astros on Wednesday. Hicks' blast, his ninth on the season, enabled the Tigers to snap an eight-game losing skid against Houston and a four-game losing streak overall. Verlander had pitched brilliantly, allowing just one baserunner through eight innings before Hicks drilled a 1-0 fastball out to left field, snapping a 1-1 tie with his 412-foot shot.

The only other hit Verlander (15-5) allowed was Ronny Rodriguez's solo homer with two outs in the fifth. Verlander struck out 11, extending his club record for double-digit strikeout games to seven. Detroit capitalized on poor baserunning by Jose Altuve in the eighth inning and by Robinson Chirinos in the ninth, gunning both down at third. Chirinos, who had tied the game with a solo homer in the seventh, made the game's final out trying to stretch a double into a triple.

CUBS 12, GIANTS 11

Chicago overcame a trio of deficits, clubbed three home runs and tallied 14 hits in a wild win over visiting San Francisco. Nicholas Castellanos, Kyle Schwarber and Kris Bryant each homered for the Cubs, who won their fourth game in a row. Bryant provided the final turning point with a go-ahead, two-run blast in the eighth inning. Evan Longoria, Mike Yastrzemski, Stephen Vogt and Kevin Pillar went deep for the Giants, who have dropped three games in a row. San Francisco erased deficits of 6-2, 7-4 and 10-9, while the Cubs overcame 2-0, 9-7 and 11-10 deficits. At least two runs were scored in every inning except the fourth and ninth.

METS 4, INDIANS 3 (10 INNINGS)

JD Davis laced the game-winning hit to cap a 10th-inning comeback by New York, which edged visiting Cleveland. The Mets have won four in a row and are 20-5 since July 25. The Indians have lost six of eight. Carlos Santana gave the Indians the lead with a two-out homer in the top of the 10th against Luis Avilan (4-0). But the Mets rallied in the bottom of the inning against Brad Hand (6-4). After a fielder's choice by Michael Conforto tied it, Davis fell into an 0-2 hole, worked the count full and fouled off three pitches before hitting the winning single to left.

DODGERS 2, BLUE JAYS 1 (10 INNINGS)

Max Muncy hit a game-ending home run deep into the seats in right-center field as Los Angeles defeated visiting Toronto. It was the Dodgers' 11th walk-off victory of the season and improved the club to a baseball-best 50-16 at home this season. Muncy's game-ending shot came off Tim Lincecum (1-3) and was his 33rd of the season. Muncy also tied a Dodgers record by hitting a home run in his fifth consecutive game. The Dodgers were two outs away from victory in the ninth inning before Toronto's Rowdy Tellez hit a game-tying home run, his 15th of the season, off struggling Dodgers closer Kenley Jansen. Pedro Baez (7-2) pitched a scoreless 10th inning to earn the victory.

A'S 6, YANKEES 4

Mike Fiers ran his streak of consecutive starts without a loss to 19, and Liam Hendriks struck out Aaron Judge representing the potential go-ahead run to end the eighth inning, lifting Oakland past visiting New York. Khris Davis, Marcus Semien and Stephen Piscotty homered for the A's, who improved to 5-1 on their nine-game homestand by beating the Yankees for the second straight night. The Yankees out-hit the A's 11-6 but left 10 runners on base, including two in the eighth when trailing 6-4. Fiers (12-3), who hasn't lost since May 1, held New York to two runs and six hits in 5 1/3 innings.

RANGERS 8, ANGELS 7

Hunter Pence singled home the game-winning run in the ninth, and Texas beat Los Angeles for its third walk-off win in the four-game series in Arlington, Texas. Elvis Andrus singled off Trevor Cahill (3-8) to start the ninth. He took second and third on wild pitches before scoring on Pence's single through the left side. Only one Rangers starter failed to get a hit. Andrus had three hits and scored two runs, Pence had two hits and three RBIs, Nick Solak had two doubles and scored three times, Delino DeShields had two hits and two RBIs, and Willie Calhoun added two hits — including a solo home run — and two runs.

RAYS 7, MARINERS 6

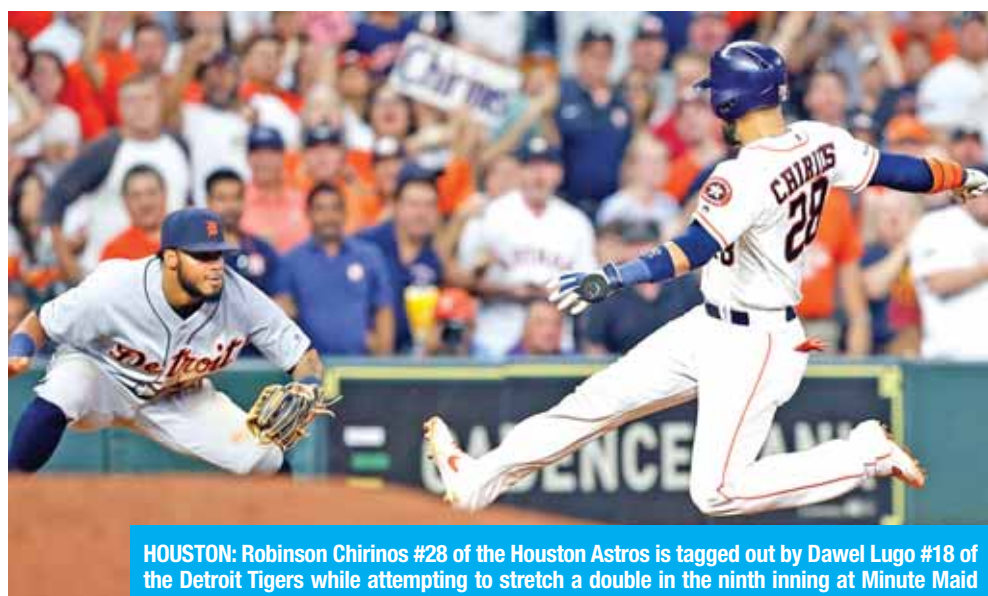
Kevin Kiermaier homered to lead off the ninth inning to tie the score, and the winning run came across on a bases-loaded wild pitch as Tampa Bay salvaged the finale of a three-game series against Seattle in St Petersburg, Florida. Following Kiermaier's homer, to straightaway center field off Mariners right-hander Matt Magill (3-1), a single, a double and an intentional walk to load the bases, Magill threw a curveball in the dirt to Tommy Pham. The ball bounced off catcher Omar Narvaez and toward the third base dugout, allowing Adames to score the winning run. The Mariners, who saw their four-game winning streak halted, scored three runs off Rays closer Emilio Pagan (3-2) in the top of the ninth to take a 6-5 lead.

WHITE SOX 4, TWINS 0

Lucas Giolito allowed just three hits and struck out 12 while pitching his second complete-game shutout of the season as Chicago blanked Minnesota in the rubber game of a three-game series in Minneapolis. Giolito (14-6) threw a season-high 115 pitches in cooling off the hot-hitting Twins, who were shut out for just the third time this season. He didn't walk a batter while registering double figures in strikeouts for the third consecutive game. Minnesota had rolled up 29 hits in the first two games of the series and had scored double-digit runs in three of its previous six games, winning five of them.

ROCKIES 7, DIAMONDBACKS 2

Tim Lincecum had the game of his life while making an emergency start, earning his first major league victory while leading Colorado to a victory over Arizona in Phoenix. The Rockies



HOUSTON: Robinson Chirinos #28 of the Houston Astros is tagged out by Dawel Lugo #18 of the Detroit Tigers while attempting to stretch a double in the ninth inning at Minute Maid Park on August 21. — AFP

summoned the 29-year-old right-hander from Triple-A Albuquerque to take the place of scheduled starter Jon Gray, who was placed on the 60-day injured list Wednesday because of a season-ending stress fracture in his left foot. Melville pitched seven innings, allowing one run and two hits — including a line-drive homer by Ketel Marte in the sixth. He struck out four and walked two. Melville also had his first major league hit and drove in two runs while making his first appearance in the majors in almost two years.

NATIONALS 11, PIRATES 1

Patrick Corbin pitched eight scoreless innings, and Asdrubal Cabrera hit a three-run homer as visiting Washington stomped Pittsburgh. Corbin (10-5) gave up three hits, all singles and none after the fifth inning. He struck out four and walked two. Tanner Rainey gave up an RBI double to Pittsburgh's Josh Bell in the ninth to blow the shutout. Yan Gomes had a two-run double, Anthony Rendon a two-run single, and Adam Eaton and Corbin each had an RBI double for Washington. Every member of the Nationals' starting lineup scored at least one run.

PHILLIES 5, RED SOX 2

Bryce Harper hit a go-ahead, two-run home run in the fifth inning as Philadelphia completed a two-game sweep at Boston. Harper's blast the opposite way over the Green Monster in left field helped the Phillies to their first full-series sweep of the Red Sox since 2000. Boston had owned a 36-18 edge in their matchups since then prior to losing 3-2 Tuesday. Reliever Jared Hughes (4-5) escaped a bases-loaded jam in the bottom of the fourth and earned the win. Hector Neris converted his second save in two days and 23rd of the season with a perfect ninth.

BRAVES 5, MARLINS 0

Julio Teheran continued his season-long mastery of Miami, throwing seven scoreless innings in Atlanta's home win. Teheran (8-8) gave up five hits, walked three and struck out a sea-

son-high nine. He improved to 3-0 with a 0.28 ERA in 32 innings against the Marlins this year. The Braves finished with just three hits, but all drove in runs: Tyler Flowers' second-inning triple plus two-run homers from Adeiny Hechavarria in the second inning and Ronald Acuna Jr. in the fifth.

ORIOLES 8, ROYALS 1

Jonathan Villar, Anthony Santander, Renato Nunez and Hanser Alberto homered as Baltimore defeated visiting Kansas City in the rubber game of a three-game series. Baltimore has won two straight games after dropping eight in a row. Kansas City lost for the fourth time in five games. The four home runs gave the Orioles seven of their eight runs on the night. Baltimore took an early 3-0 lead and never trailed despite allowing its 258th homer of the season, tying a major league record set by the 2016 Cincinnati Reds.

REDS 4, PADRES 2

Luis Castillo allowed one run over six innings, and Cincinnati's offense took advantage of an outfield error and three walks to score three runs in the third to beat visiting San Diego. Jose Iglesias hit a fourth-inning homer off Padres reliever Luis Perdomo to give the Reds their final run in the rubber match of a three-game series. Castillo (12-5) permitted five hits and struck out four. Raisel Iglesias pitched a perfect ninth inning for his 26th save.

BREWERS 5, CARDINALS 3 (7 1/2 INNINGS)

Mike Moustakas blasted a three-run homer to lead Milwaukee to a rain-shortened victory at St. Louis. The game, which was halted in the middle of the eighth inning, brought Brewers manager Craig Counsell relief on his 49th birthday. His team had lost six of its last eight games overall and six straight to the Cardinals. Keston Hiura contributed a RBI single and a run-scoring double to support Brewers starter Adrian Houser (6-5), who allowed three runs (one earned) in 5 1/3 innings. — Reuters

Sports

Too hot for lifejackets: Rules loosened at sizzling Olympic sailing test in Japan

ENOSHIMA: Sailing authorities have loosened the rules on lifejackets at their Tokyo 2020 Olympic test event to help athletes cool down, the latest sport to take measures to beat sweltering heat in the Japanese capital. Fears over intense heat and humidity in the Tokyo summer have crystallized at several test events in recent weeks, with some competitors and spectators taken ill and other events curtailed.

Competitors in the windsurfing final on Wednesday were permitted to remove their lifejackets, revealed Rio Olympics gold medalist Charline Picon. "The doctors realised that (the heat) was too fierce, that (the jackets) were increasing our heat levels and that it could be dangerous. We took them off. Everyone is feeling their way," said Picon. French team doctor Fanny Mevellec said the heat "requires additional physical effort to achieve equal performance. It also creates significantly more fatigue".

"This year, we are able to wear cooling jackets (with ice packs), and the international federation is changing the lycra we wear, which is too tight and not ventilated and which can provoke heat-stroke," said Mevellec. Despite these changes, not everything is "in perfect working order", said the medical expert, who added however that the heat and humidity had not come as a surprise. "We knew exactly where we were going."

The World Sailing federation said it was closely monitoring the situation and could further tweak the rules depending on conditions. "We have to be very careful with the heat, clearly. It's much hotter than the last two

Olympics venues and many of the venues that we are used to," acknowledged Alastair Fox, director of events at World Sailing. "We're looking at potential rules to put in place next year to keep the athletes safe and not get too hot and unable to compete," added Fox.

Some of the regulations under consideration are a compulsory break for athletes to cool down or an upper limit for water temperature. Marathon swimming — whose water-temperature limit of 31 degrees Celsius (88 Fahrenheit) was nearly breached at a test event earlier this month — has been brought forward to earlier in the morning to avoid the heat. But sailing needs to take other conditions into account, said Fox. "Of course, starting racing earlier in the day is a nice idea but if there is no wind we can't race."

'You need to accept it'

Many athletes said they simply had to come to terms with the heat. "The first thing that you need to do is to accept it," said double Olympic champion Dorian van Rijsselberghe from the Netherlands. "They had a lot of trouble with this year's Tour de France with the heat and they said: 'We shouldn't be cycling.' You can't stop the Tour de France!" said the Dutchman. "The Tour goes on and it's the same with the Olympics. The Olympics doesn't stop for one day of heat, it goes on. So you have to be better prepared for it." Japanese Finn sailor Hajime Kokumai said there was no need to wear cooling jackets and that he kept well hydrated and protected from the direct sun. "Two or three years

officials would work with the International Olympic Committee and International Paralympic Committee and athletes to "more clearly define for Team USA athletes what a breach of these rules will mean in the future."

'Fundamental freedom'

Trump has clashed repeatedly with professional athletes who have protested against racial injustice in the United States, accusing NFL players who knelt during the national anthem of being unpatriotic. Several championship-winning sports teams meanwhile have refused to attend White House receptions since Trump's election.

During the recent FIFA Women's World Cup, Trump clashed with star US forward Megan Rapinoe, who had said she would boycott any White House event. The prospect of US athletes protesting against Trump at next year's Olympics could potentially lead to sanctions by the IOC, whose charter forbids any "demonstration or political, religious or racial propaganda" in Olympic arenas. Hirshland said while she supported the athletes' right to protest, she disagreed with the timing and venue of their activism.

"I applaud your decision to be an active citizen," Hirshland said. "It is admirable. Regardless of one's viewpoint, it is a fundamental freedom and important obligation that we each hold to participate actively in the pursuit of a better country and a better world. "While I respect your perspective — and that of every athlete for whom I'm lucky enough to serve — I disagree with the moment and manner in which you chose to express your views. The rules we operate under as members of Team USA exist for important reasons. "A prohibition on political protest is not intended to silence important voices. In fact, I am genuinely committed to helping identify better avenues for athletes to make their voices heard." — AFP

However, while Hirshland said she admired each athlete's decision "to be an active citizen", she warned that they could face serious sanctions if there was any repeat in the next 12 months — a period covering next year's 2020 Olympics in Tokyo. Notifying the athletes that they faced "a probationary period for the next 12 months," Hirshland said: "This means you could face more serious sanctions for any additional breach of our code of conduct than might otherwise be levied for an athlete in good standing." Hirshland said US Olympic



ENOSHIMA: Poland's Jolanta Ogar (L) and Agnieszka Skrzypulec compete in the women's two person dinghy 470 class competition in a sailing test event for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, off the coast of Enoshima. — AFP

ago, it was 45 degrees. This year, it's not that hot," he said. Meanwhile, the sailing federation appeared to tone down its earlier criticism of the venue that revolved around a potential clash with fishermen. "We're very happy with the competi-

tion and the way that has gone," said Fox. "I think there're still a lot that's needs to be done onshore. We need a lot more work around the venue and athlete services, but I think we are on track to have a great Olympic Games." — AFP

US athletes warned over Pan Am podium protests

LOS ANGELES: Two US athletes who staged podium protests at the recent Pan American Games have been reprimanded but will not face further punishment by United States Olympic chiefs, USA Today reported on Wednesday. Fencer Race Imboden and hammer thrower Gwen Berry both came under fire after protesting the policies of President Donald Trump as they collected medals in Lima.

Imboden took a knee during the playing of the US national anthem while Berry raised a clenched fist before later calling out social injustice "and a president who's making it worse." The United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee later issued a statement expressing "disappointment" at the athlete protests, warning it was reviewing what action to take. USA Today reported on Wednesday that USOPC chief Sarah Hirshland had taken a conciliatory tone in letters sent to Imboden and Berry.

However, while Hirshland said she admired each athlete's decision "to be an active citizen", she warned that they could face serious sanctions if there was any repeat in the next 12 months — a period covering next year's 2020 Olympics in Tokyo. Notifying the athletes that they faced "a probationary period for the next 12 months," Hirshland said: "This means you could face more serious sanctions for any additional breach of our code of conduct than might otherwise be levied for an athlete in good standing." Hirshland said US Olympic

Australia can win basketball World Cup: USA coach

MELBOURNE: United States coach Gregg Popovich has tipped Australia as a key contender at the upcoming basketball World Cup in China, saying they have the ability to win the tournament. The veteran San Antonio Spurs mastermind offered the praise ahead of two warm-up games between the nations in Melbourne this week. "They are one of the teams that can win the whole thing, without a doubt," Popovich said. "I'm not saying that because I'm here (in Melbourne). It's just a fact."

The world number one Americans will try to win a third consecutive World Cup next month with a line-up that lacks many of their NBA superstars, with the likes of James Harden, Anthony Davis and Kawhi Leonard among notable absentees. But they boast top young talent and will use the games in Australia to refine their identity. They arrived in Melbourne on the back of a 90-81 victory over second-ranked Spain in Anaheim, California, and will play the Boomers later Thursday, then again Saturday before a final warm-up against Canada in Sydney on August 26.

In contrast to the five-time World Cup winners, Australia have never won a medal. But Popovich thinks this could be their year. "They've been close for several years, and they are hungry. They are talented. Coach (Andrej) Lemanis does a good job, and they are a team," he said on the USA basketball website. "They are together. They know what they are doing. They execute really well, so that's what it takes. They have the toughness and physicality to go with it. "I think they are one of the top contenders without a doubt."

While Australia boasts a handful of NBA stars, including Utah Jazz's Joe Ingles and Patty Mills of the San Antonio Spurs, they suffered a setback on Monday when Jonah Bolden joined his teammate Ben Simmons in pulling out of the World Cup. Other Australian NBA standouts not playing include Thon Maker (NBA commitments), Ryan Broekhoff (birth of his child) and Dante Exum (injury). — AFP

Karunaratne helps Sri Lanka to 85-2 on rain-hit first day

COLOMBO: Skipper Dimuth Karunaratne helped Sri Lanka to 85 for two at stumps on a rain-hit day one of the second Test against New Zealand in Colombo yesterday. Only 36.3 overs were possible after rain washed out the first session and bad light ended play for the day with Karunaratne unbeaten on 49.

Karunaratne, fresh from a match-winning century in the first Test in Galle last week last week, hit six boundaries during his 100-ball stay in overcast conditions. Former captain Angelo Mathews was giving Karunaratne company in the middle to remain unbeaten on nought after facing 14 deliveries. New Zealand all-rounder Colin de Grandhomme, who made the XI in place of Mitchell Santner, said the match was "evenly poised".

"There's a bit of more bounce on this track than what we encountered in Galle and that's nice," he said after play ended. "If we can get a couple of early wickets tomorrow morning that will be nice." Karunaratne batted with positive intent despite losing opening partner Lahiru Thirimanne and Kusal Mendis either side of tea. Thirimanne never looked comfortable and his 59-minute stay at the wicket produced just two runs.

His misery ended when he pushed a William Somerville delivery and was caught at extra cover by skipper Kane Williamson. He had been earlier dropped by wicketkeeper BJ Watling off Somerville. Mendis looked good as he reached 32 with four fours and put on 50 runs with Karunaratne to steady the batting. De Grandhomme got Mendis caught behind on a seaming delivery outside the off stump and Watling gloved the catch.

"I was just trying to be patient and stay for a longer period operating in the same line until he made a mistake and he did that, and we were glad to claim that wicket just before close of play," de Grandhomme said. The hosts only need a draw to clinch the two-match series. Both teams made one change from the first match.

Sri Lanka included veteran spinner Dillurwan Perera in place of Akila Dananjaya, who was reported for a suspect bowling action after the first Test. The entire opening session and another hour was lost due to persistent rain and the toss took place at 1:10 pm (0740 GMT). The afternoon session went uninterrupted but play was again delayed by 28 minutes after tea due to rain. After 7.3 overs



COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's cricketer Kusal Mendis (R) is watched by New Zealand wicketkeeper BJ Watling (C) as he plays a shot during the first day of the final Test cricket match between Sri Lanka and New Zealand at the P. Sara Oval cricket stadium. — AFP

in the evening session, play was called off 15 minutes before schedule at 9:45 am (0415 GMT) due to bad light. Play will resume on day two — AFP

India's Chand confident of making Olympic cut

MUMBAI: Dutee Chand, India's first openly gay sports star, has fought many battles off the track in recent years but for the next 12 months the sprinter is hoping to focus entirely on her running as she builds towards the Tokyo Olympics. From her battle against the IAAF gender testing rules to coming out as a lesbian in what is still a highly conservative country, Chand is used to making headlines but she hopes over the next year they will mainly be about her sporting prowess.

India's fastest woman, Chand holds the national record for the 100 meters with a time of 11.24 seconds and is a former Asian junior champion as well as Asian Games silver medalist in the blue riband event. The jump from national or continental success to global contender is a big one, however, and her season's best time of 11.26 ranks her only joint 78th in the world. Still, with a year to go until Tokyo, the 23-year-old from Jaipur is confident she will make the qualifying mark of 11.15.

"I believe that hard work always pays off and I am working diligently to win more laurels for my country in the upcoming competitions," Chand told Reuters in an interview. "My training schedule is pretty tough at the moment ... but I have seen that my timing has improved a lot compared to before. I am working really hard and am sure it will pay off. I feel I will qualify for the Olympics this year."

Given the events ahead of her maiden appearance at the Olympics in Rio in 2016, Chand could be forgiven for a little relief that qualifying times are all she has to worry about. Her hyperandrogenism - a medical condition that naturally produces high testosterone levels in women - thrust her to the forefront of the debate over gender in athletics and she was barred from competition for a year in 2014. It was Chand's appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport that saw contentious International Association of Athletics Federations rules struck down in 2015,

paving the way for hyperandrogenic athletes to compete in sprints.

Coming out

Chand went on to become the first Indian woman since 1980 to compete in the 100m at the Olympics, although she was unable to progress beyond the heats in Brazil. Comments aimed at her about a perceived lack of femininity by some in her homeland continued unabated, however, and in May she laid herself open to more abuse from social conservatives.

Chand caused a shockwave when she revealed she was dating a woman from her village in eastern Odisha state. She was praised for her courage but the revelation soured ties with her family. Last year India's Supreme Court scrapped a colonial-era ban on gay sex but while it no longer carries a punishment of up to 10 years in prison, same-sex relationships are still considered taboo by many in the country. The revelation did not discourage sponsors - she signed a two-year deal with German sportswear company Puma this month - and Chand said her overwhelming feeling after coming out was one of relief. "I don't feel there has been any pressure on me since I have discussed my personal life openly," she added. "In fact, I have received a lot of support and encouragement for speaking up about my choices. 'I felt pressured when I was in the hiding. Not anymore. 'I am sure my achievements have made things easier for me but I also feel that people in our country have a greater acceptance level now and appreciate honesty over false identities."

In July, Chand clinched gold in the 100m sprint at a global meet when she clocked 11.32 seconds at the World University Games in Naples. "The World University Games Gold medal was a great confidence booster for me. It highlighted my talents, my performance and dedication," she said. "I received a lot of appreciation and support after this win and I look forward to winning more competitions such as these in the future and making my country proud. "Gold medal always feels great. In fact, any appreciation or acknowledgement is a great morale booster. The more medals I win, the more my ambitions and confidence levels increase." — Reuters

Dovizioso confident ahead of Silverstone

LONDON: After claiming victory in Austria, Andrea Dovizioso and Ducati will try to further close the gap on runaway championship leader Marc Marquez at the British MotoGP at Silverstone on Sunday. Last year's race was cancelled due to standing water on the track but the weekend forecast looks to be fine for an event that has been dominated by Ducati and Yamaha in recent years.

Five-time world champion Marquez and Honda will be looking to exact revenge after Dovizioso denied him a win in the close-run Austrian Grand Prix on August 11. Dovizioso is now 58 points behind Marquez with eight races left. Marquez won at Silverstone in 2014 and Dovizioso took the chequered flag there in 2017. Dovizioso said: "Even though the characteristics of the British track are not as favourable to us as Brno and Spielberg, we have already shown that we can also be quick at Silverstone, like in 2017 when we won the race."

But Marquez's hot form in 2019 makes him the favourite, having finished second or better in 10 of the 11 races so far, including six victories. The other big news for Honda is the return of Marquez's teammate Jorge Lorenzo. The three-time MotoGP world champion has been sidelined since breaking his back at round eight in the Netherlands. "It's very good to be back, it has been a long time since Assen. I would have liked to have been back sooner, but the nature of the injury meant I had to take my time," said Lorenzo who has won at the circuit in 2010, 2012 and 2013, and was on pole position last year before the race was cancelled.

Another man to watch is Yamaha's Maverick Vinales, who recorded the first victory of his career at Silverstone in 2016. He is confident that the new Silverstone surface, laid this year, will benefit his team. "In Silverstone I got my first victory in MotoGP, so I have good memories there. I think it's a track that can be very favorable to our bike, and we can be competitive also because of the new asphalt," Vinales said on the Yamaha website. — AFP

Sports

Finished at 23, eSports players peer nervously into retirement

SHANGHAI: As the first generation of professional gamers enters retirement, eSports is forced to confront a vexed question: after years spent killing rivals in a virtual world, what next? It is a quandary that comes far earlier than in most sports — in the most frenzied eSports games, players can be finished by 23 because reactions supposedly slow after that.

Milliseconds can be fatal in the online battlegrounds of eSports, a fast-emerging world where the financial rewards are rocketing. There is a record prize pot of \$33.7 million — and still growing — this week in Shanghai at The International, a world championship where players compete in Dota 2. In Dota 2, a multiplayer game featuring a “Phantom Lancer” and a “Chaos Knight”, players often talk about a comparatively late cut-off point of age 30.

“People think that at that age you’re slow, you’re not good enough, but I think it’s a mythical number,” Jingjun “Sneyking” Wu, 24, of the Newbee team, told AFP. Michael “Ninjaboogie” Ross, of Dota 2 rivals Mineski, hopes to defy the age barrier. He has spent more than half his life gaming, but at 27, retirement is already looming. “Hmm, now that’s the one thing I’ve never really thought about,” he said, when asked what he plans to do next.

Burnout

According to those with knowledge of the scene, the “What next?” question is a hot topic among pro gamers. Coaching an eSports team or becoming a commentator or analyst are prime among the options after hanging up their keyboards. But a few say that after spending up

to 12 hours a day practicing, and in some cases with their eyes and wrists suffering, they are looking forward to escaping the sport.

Duncan “Thorin” Shields, a self-styled eSports historian, said that burnout is a major reason why gamers tend to retire so early. But he also told his YouTube channel on a segment about retirement that teams have been too quick to dispose of older players and experience has been undervalued. The good news for the likes of Wu and Ross is that this seems to be changing and retirement ages are creeping up. “Most people’s peak probably was when they were 21 or 22,” said Shields. “But from an objective sense, it’s absolutely not true. ‘The idea that in your late 20s you’re just completely done... it doesn’t seem to fit with sport.’”

Social skills

Kurtis “Aui_2000” Ling said that growing riches in eSports — the best players are multimillionaires — are keeping gamers playing longer than ever. The 26-year-old has earned close to \$2 million, according to esportsearnings.com, and is now coach of Newbee having retired as a player after injury. “Five or 10 years ago you retired because you wanted to settle down and you couldn’t support yourself in eSports,” said the Canadian.

“Now we’ve clearly reached the point where you can begin to do that (support yourself).” Sports players can play into their 40s so I don’t see why you can’t in eSports.” As the scene matures and money tumbles in, there will be growing opportunities for retired gamers in the business, management and media of eS-



SHANGHAI: In this file photo taken on August 20, 2019 members of team Alliance (behind glass) compete against team RNG during the International Dota 2 Championships. — AFP

ports, said Roman Dvoryankin, general manager of Virtus.pro.

Dvoryankin wants to employ a sporting director but there simply is not a candidate out there because many of the first generation of gamers are still playing. He dismissed accusations that many eSports players lack the social

skills to thrive after they stop pro gaming. “They are totally fine at communicating with other people, just not face to face,” he said. “But it’s not a unique eSports thing, it’s a generational thing. People think they are just sitting at their computers, but the fact is they are talking a lot — but they are just chatting (online).” — AFP

Is Andreescu the next big thing? Not so fast

TORONTO: When Bianca Andreescu became the first homegrown winner of the Canadian Open in 50 years, the tennis world declared the teenager as the sport’s next big thing. Even the fact that Andreescu was gifted the Rogers Cup title when a tearful Serena Williams was forced to retire with back spasm just 19 minutes into the final could not keep the hype machine from spinning into overdrive.

The 19-year-old Canadian is suddenly one of the hot tips to win the US Open; never mind that Andreescu has never been beyond the second round of any slam. In the search for a successor to Serena Williams, fans of women’s tennis have witnessed more changing of the guard moments than a tourist at Buckingham Palace but all have proven to be false dawns.

Five years ago, the same glowing predictions were being made about Eugenie Bouchard, another young Canadian who was turning tennis heads. Bouchard came to the Rogers Cup that year having reached at least the semi-finals of all three slams, finishing runner-up at Wimbledon. The then WTA chief Stacey Allaster and Williams both tipped Bouchard to be a future grand slam champion. “I think Genie is a great player,” gushed Williams, who was ranked number one at the time. “I think she for sure is the future face of tennis.”

After her mercurial run up the rankings, Bouchard arrived at the 2014 U.S. Open as the seventh seed but her star had already begun to dim. Since 2015, when she

reached the Australian Open quarter-finals and the last 16 in Flushing Meadows, Bouchard has never again made it past third round of a slam as her upward arc turned into a dizzying downward spiral.

Although one of tennis’s most recognizable players, thanks mostly to social media and Sports Illustrated swimsuit spreads, Bouchard owns only one WTA title. “Well, I think she’s doing a good job so far, so I don’t know if she needs my advice,” Bouchard said after losing to Andreescu in the first round of the Rogers Cup. In a sign that maybe this time things are different, Andreescu has already won two of the WTA’s flagship events.

She announced her arrival in spectacular style by winning the Indian Wells title in March and then followed it up with her triumph at the Rogers Cup. “The future and what is quickly becoming the past were colliding in the present,” wrote Cathal Kelly, sport columnist for Canada’s national newspaper the Globe and Mail about the Andreescu’s victory over 37-year-old Williams, winner of 23 Grand Slam titles.

Williams has proven no better at identifying her potential successor than anyone else and while she stopped short of anointing Andreescu, she had nothing but praise for the Canadian. “I’m officially a fan,” declared Williams. A big hitter with all the weapons and a fearless mentality, Andreescu appears to have the necessary skills and qualities to become the dominant figure in the women’s game. But there are red warning lights flashing. Not yet out of her teens, Andreescu has already spent a good chunk of her young career battling back, leg and shoulder issues. Following her win at Indian Wells, Andreescu advanced to the last 16 in Miami before retiring with a shoulder injury. — Reuters

Vito expecting ‘tough’ Top 14 start with scheduling clash

PARIS: Former New Zealand back-rower Victor Vito said it will be tough to begin the new French Top 14 season without four of his La Rochelle teammates who will be away on Rugby World Cup duty. This year’s top-flight competition will play eight rounds before the World Cup in Japan ends on November 2.

England’s Premiership as well as the Pro14 league have decided to delay the start of their campaigns unlike France’s two professional competitions, the Top 14 and the ProD2. Vito’s club team-mates in Fiji’s Kini Murimurivalu and Levani Botia as well as France forwards Gregory Alldritt and Dany Priso are among more than 100 players from France’s two professional leagues who will feature at the World Cup.

“It’s going to be tough but I feel all the teams are in the same boat but we haven’t been affected too much,” 32-year-old Vito, a two-time World Cup winner said. “We have Kini, Levani with the Fijians, we have Greg and Dany with the French boys. They are great players. “We have the depth at the moment. I think by the time they’re available again we’ll be looking forward to them joining us again.”

Morgan Parra, whose Clermont side host Vito’s La Rochelle in their opening game of the campaign on Sunday, complained about the scheduling. Last year’s losing finalists could be without as many as 10 squad members for the opening two months of the season. “It’s annoying to begin the championship with guys away and not to have the squad together at the start of the championship. It’s not good,” the scrum-half said. “Now we have to deal with it, the club knows too. — The club has had to sign some players as cover, they knew we’d be without some players during the World Cup. But, for me, it’s not normal,” he added. — AFP

Messi back in training, in contention to face Betis

MADRID: Lionel Messi gave Barcelona a timely boost on Wednesday by returning to training with the rest of the squad after a calf injury. Messi trained alone in the morning before joining his team-mates in the afternoon, increasing hopes that Barca's captain could play a role against Real Betis in La Liga on Sunday.

He strained his calf on August 5 in his first training session back following the Copa America and subsequently missed the club's pre-season. It would be a surprise if Messi started at Camp Nou, but Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde will be eager to have his star available again, particularly after his team suffered a surprise 1-0 defeat by Athletic Bilbao in their opening league game last weekend. Messi's absence has been compounded by injuries to other strikers.

Luis Suarez is expected to be out for around a month after hobbling off with a calf problem against Bilbao. Ousmane Dembele injured his hamstring and will need five weeks to recover. Antoine Griezmann, the 120 million summer signing from Atletico Madrid, is the only fully-fit forward, with Rafinha and 21-year-old Carles Perez possible options to play behind him.

The shortage up front has intensified speculation that Paris Saint-Germain's Ney-

mar could return to Barcelona before the transfer window closes in Spain on September 2. PSG sporting director Leonardo admitted earlier this month that the club were in "advanced negotiations" to sell Neymar but a deal is yet to be agreed with Barca, who have already spent around 250 million euros this summer.

Messi 'made me better player'

Meanwhile, Cristiano Ronaldo admitted on Wednesday his long-time rivalry with Lionel Messi has made him "a better player" and that he enjoys a "healthy" rivalry with the Argentine great. However, Portuguese star Ronaldo, whose influence at Real Madrid mirrored that of Messi at Barcelona before he left for Juventus, admitted that the pair have never socialised together.

"I really admire the career he has had and from his side, he has already talked of the disappointment when I left Spain because it was a rivalry that he appreciated," Ronaldo told TVI in Portugal. "It's a good rivalry but it's not unique — Michael Jordan had rivalries in basketball, there was Ayrton Senna and Alain Prost in Formula 1. The thing they all had in common is that they were healthy rivalries."

Ronaldo and Messi have won the coveted Ballon d'Or five times each, a factor that



BILBAO: (L to R) Barcelona's Spanish defender Gerard Pique, Dutch midfielder Frenkie de Jong and French defender Clement Lenglet react to Athletic's goal during the Spanish league football match between Athletic Club Bilbao and FC Barcelona at the San Mames stadium. —AFP

helps each player flourish. "I have no doubt that Messi has made me a better player and vice-versa. When I am winning trophies it must sting him and it's the same for me when he wins," he said. "I have an excellent pro-

fessional relationship because we have been sharing the same moments for 15 years. He added: "We've never had dinner together but I don't see why we can't in the future. I don't see a problem with that." —AFP

On-loan Nketiah fires Leeds back to top of Championship

LONDON: On-loan striker Eddie Nketiah came off the bench to score a 81st-minute winner as Leeds beat Brentford 1-0 on Wednesday to go back to the top of the English Championship. The 20-year-old, on loan at Elland Road from Arsenal, had only been on the pitch four minutes when he scored from a close range cross from Helder Costa as Leeds went to 10 points after four games in the race for a Premier League place. "We deserved to win the game because we dominated. We didn't create a lot of chances but we created enough chances to make a difference," Leeds coach Marcelo Bielsa told the BBC. "It was a physical, demanding game and we took control in the best moment of the game. "Helder Costa is a balanced player who can play on both sides, and Eddie Nketiah can make an impact in the middle. We defended well and our opponents did not have enough clear chances."

Swansea are second, also with 10 points, after a 3-1 win at QPR. Borja Baston's 70th-minute penalty put them back in front after Jordan Hugill's equaliser and Sam Surridge sealed the victory by nodding in Andre Ayew's cross 10 minutes later. Ivan Cavaleiro struck twice as Fulham went third with nine points after a 4-0 victory over London rivals Millwall at Craven Cottage. Anthony Knockaert and Aleksandar Mitrovic were also on target as the Cottagers registered a third successive win. In a duel between two of last season's relegated sides, Cardiff edged Huddersfield 2-1 with Junior Hoilett snatching a late winner for the Welsh side. Joe Ralls put the Bluebirds into the lead in the 42nd minute before Trevoh Chalobah leveled early in the second half for a Huddersfield team who sacked coach Jan Siewert last week. —AFP

Coutinho will not start for Bayern tomorrow: Kovac

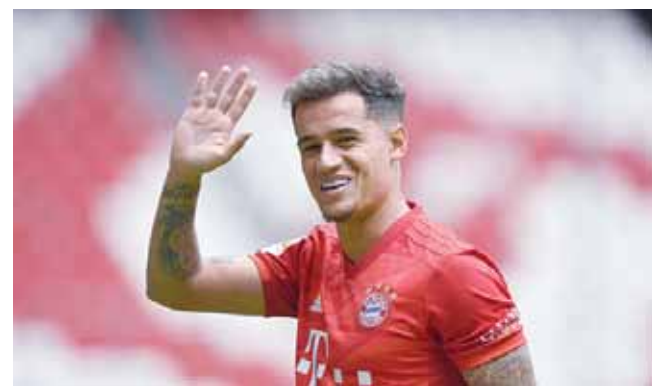
BERLIN: Brazilian star midfielder Philippe Coutinho will not make his first Bundesliga start when Bayern Munich travel to Schalke tomorrow, said coach Niko Kovac yesterday. Coutinho, 27, has been the talk of Germany since joining Bayern on a one-year loan deal from Barcelona earlier this week. Yet at a press conference on Thursday, Kovac confirmed the Brazilian would begin his first game as a Bayern player on the bench.

"He is not quite at the level of fitness he needs to play for 90 minutes," said Kovac. "He has said that himself, and we don't want to take any risks. He has only been training for the last two weeks, so he needs to catch up," he added, but confirmed Coutinho would be in the matchday squad. "I know a lot of people want us to play him straight away, but everything has to be right." Kovac said Bayern's other new attacking signing, Croatia winger Ivan Perisic, could make the starting eleven against Schalke. "Ivan is much further along, he started training at the same time as we did, and played several games for Inter Milan in pre-season," he said. Bayern are under pressure to pick up three points against David Wagner's Schalke side, having been held to a draw in their opening Bundesliga game against Hertha Berlin last week.

Neymar future up in air

In other news, Neymar remains no closer to getting his desired move away from Paris Saint-Germain amid reports Thursday the French club have rejected an offer from Real Madrid of 100 million euros (\$111 million) plus players.

French sports daily L'Equipe said Real had offered cash plus Gareth Bale, James Rodriguez and goalkeeper Keylor Navas, but PSG turned it down because "the overall value of the offer did not match their expectations". Paris paid 222 million euros to sign



MUNICH: Brazilian midfielder Philippe Coutinho (R), the new recruit of German first division Bundesliga football club FC Bayern Munich, waves during his presentation in the stadium. —AFP

Neymar from Barcelona two years ago and their sporting director Leonardo is understood to be determined to only sell the forward for a deal considered to be of the same value.

Real have spent the summer trying to offload Bale, while James is unwanted after returning from a loan at Bayern Munich and Navas is no longer the club's first-choice goalkeeper. Meanwhile, Barcelona remain hopeful of bringing Neymar back to the Camp Nou, but Catalan daily Sport claims an attempt to sign the player on loan with an obligation to buy for 160 million euros at the end of the season has been firmly rejected in Paris.

Sport claims Barcelona feel "it is very clear that PSG are trying to prevent the Brazilian from returning to the Camp Nou in any scenario". PSG had previously reportedly turned down an offer from Barcelona of 40 million euros plus Philippe Coutinho and Ivan Rakitic. Juventus are also believed to have stated an interest in signing the 27-year-old, who has not featured in any of PSG's matches so far this season having been frozen out amid the uncertainty over his future. The transfer window closes in France, Spain and Italy on September 2, meaning time is fast running out for a deal to be done. —AFP

Sports

Henry's desire to succeed remains undimmed after Monaco misery

LONDON: France football legend Thierry Henry is keen for another chance to prove he can be a successful manager despite his unhappy brief tenure at Ligue 1 side Monaco. The 42-year-old-Arsenal's record goalscorer-told the Daily Telegraph that although his phone did not ring for four months following his sacking, things have picked up since then and he has received five offers.

Henry's dream return last October to manage Monaco, the club where he established his reputation as a top class striker, turned into a nightmare. Having been part of Belgium manager Roberto Martinez's backroom team at the World Cup-where they reached the semi-finals-he lasted just over 100 days after only four league wins.

"Call me crazy if you want, but I love football and I believe I can be a successful coach," he said. "I'm not thinking about the pain, I'm not thinking about failure. I don't like easy. I like to lead and it's on me to make it happen. The same when I joined Arsenal as a player, the same when I went to Belgium with Roberto. It's an evolution."

'Communication and honesty'

Henry, who was a member of the France squads that won both the 1998 World Cup and the Euro 2000 title, said although he has been contacted over jobs, he has yet to find the right fit. "My phone didn't ring for four months after I left Monaco and then all of a sudden I got five calls," he said. "Some were not what I was looking for and some were as a number two." "I won't do a number two job because I want to be a number one."

Henry, who has spoken with basketball and athletics coaches since being fired to gain extra insight into coaching top level athletes, says it is frustrating having to wait around for another opportunity but he is convinced football coaching is where his future lies. "I came out of it fully reassured that's what I want to do, zero doubt about it," he said. All Henry asks is for transparency from his employers.

"Communication and honesty from the start is key," he said. "What's the job? Is the job to stay up, is the job to win the League or be in the Champions League? "But how



Thierry Henry

and what is success? Is success improving players? Ultimately, results are the most important thing, but I want to improve players as well." — AFP

Brazilian Elkeson earns landmark China call-up

SHANGHAI: China named Elkeson in their squad Wednesday for their opening World Cup qualifier with the Brazilian poised to become the first without Chinese ancestry to play for the country. The move has divided Chinese football fans and experts, however, as coach Marcello Lippi attempts to guide the nation to only their second World Cup.

Lippi has long complained about a dearth of attacking options and has moved to plug the gap with the 30-year-old striker, who will use the Chinese name Aikesen. The move to naturalize the Brazilian comes after China similarly gave a passport to London-born midfielder Nico Yennaris. The Beijing Guoan player has taken the Chinese name Li Ke and made his debut for Lippi's side in June this year.

The former Arsenal man, however, is half-Chinese, whereas Guangzhou Evergrande striker Elkeson qualifies for China having played in the country since 2013. Elkeson has scored more than 100 goals in about 150 games in the Chinese Super League. Along with Espanyol forward Wu Lei and Yennaris, Elkeson is part of a 35-

man squad named by Italian World Cup winner Lippi for China's game in the Maldives on September 10.

Elkeson appears likely to be the start of a growing trend for perennial under-achievers China, who languish 71st in the FIFA rankings and made the World Cup just once, in 2002. Fellow Brazilians Ricardo Goulart and Fernando are both reportedly set to be naturalized, along with English defender Tyias Browning, also of Evergrande.

Although many other nations, notably 2022 World Cup hosts Qatar, call up players born in other countries, China had resisted doing so until now. Some fans and pundits, desperate to see China play at a World Cup again, have backed the naturalization policy. Others brand it short-sighted and question why a country with a population of 1.4 billion cannot find homegrown players that are good enough. Reacting to Elkeson's inclusion in the China squad, one sports think tank was unimpressed.

"It's not in line with the original intention of football and the long-term development of the industry in China," wrote an opinion piece by Vning on social media. The organization also questioned how effectively the likes of Elkeson and Yennaris—who is having intensive Chinese lessons—will be able to communicate with their teammates. "Whether they can be integrated into the team and whether they can fight with honor in face of difficulties are hard to say," Vning added. — AFP

Sudan plans for a women's football league

KHARTOUM: Sudan's first ever women's club football league will start next month, a federation official told AFP Wednesday. The championship, which will involve 18 clubs separated in three regions, would have seemed unlikely only a year ago when Islamist general Omar al-Bashir was still in power. "The women's football league will start in the first week of September," Mirvat Hussein, the top federation official in charge of women's football, told AFP.

She said a national team was also in the works to represent Sudan in international events. The Confederation of African Football (CAF) has no continental cup for women's club football yet. The announcement came on the same day as the swearing in of a joint military-civilian Sovereign Council in Sudan. The body replaces a military council that took over in April when Bashir was forced from power by months of relentless protests.

In what was seen as a significant advance, the 11-member ruling council, two of the six civilians on the council are women. Many Sudanese have voiced the hope that the three-year transition will see more liberal policies implemented across the country, including measures to advance freedom of speech and women's rights and promote sport and arts.

Speaking during a training session with her club Tahadi, 22-year-old Rayan Ibrahim Rajab said a women's league would have been unlikely just a year ago. "In the past, it was difficult for women to play football, there were many complications that prevented women from participating," she said. "Now everybody is looking for a new reality and has new ambitions," Rajab added. Sudan joined FIFA in 1948 and established the CAF along with Egypt, Ethiopia and South Africa. But women's football has faced an uphill fight since the country adopted Islamic sharia law in 1983, six years after which Bashir seized power in an Islamist-backed coup. — AFP



KHARTOUM: Rayan Ibrahim Rajab, a 22-year-old footballer, rests on an astro-turf pitch during a training with her Tahadi women's football club in the Sudanese capital. — AFP



MATCHES ON TV LOCAL TIMING

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Aston Villa v Everton FC 22:00
beIN SPORTS HD 2

SPANISH LEAGUE

Granada CF v Sevilla FC 21:00
beIN SPORTS HD 3
Levante v Villarreal CF 23:00
beIN SPORTS HD 3

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

FC Koln v BV Borussia Dortmund 21:30
beIN SPORTS HD 5

Sport Times

FRIDAY, AUGUST 23, 2019



SHANGHAI: A screen shows a live image of the Dota 2 eSports match between team Alliance and team RNG during the International Dota 2 Championships. — AFP

eSports players are peering nervously into retirement

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