

Friday Times

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An October 2005 handout photo released in London on July 11, 2019, shows the British Royal Navy's HMS Montrose, a Type 23 Frigate, performing turns during exercise 'Marstrike 05,' off the coast of Oman. Britain said on July 11, 2019, that Iranian military vessels tried to 'impede the passage' of UK oil tanker 'British Heritage' in the Strait of Hormuz, but were warned off by British warship HMS Montrose. — AFP



Iran tried to 'impede' UK tanker in Gulf: Britain

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Local

Wealth in Kuwait



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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The Wall Street Journal recently published a list of the world's richest countries. Kuwait ranked fifth in the world and the second in the Arab and Gulf region in terms of per capita gross national income of \$72,872 annually, while Qatar ranked first in the world. Kuwait's gross domestic product for 2017 was \$271.1 billion and was ranked 57th among 196 countries in the world.

Kuwait is one of only five countries with a per capita gross national income of more than \$70,000. Unlike most of the world's richest countries, Kuwait has no diversified economy, with oil making up more than 84 percent of exports. The report said the accurate indicator of the country's economic output is the use of gross product or income. This measure covers all economic activities within state borders as well as wealth created by national entities operating in other countries.

I agree that there is no source of income other than oil in Kuwait, so it is natural to demand to find additional alternatives. But this news was not great for some people, who compared the list with the general situation experienced by many people here, especially those demanding consumer loans be written off, and the hardship of life in Kuwait for both citizens and expats.

The paper, which reviewed gross national income per capita in about 200 countries, said the richest 25 countries tend to have complex and diversified economies to create more wealth in the world, most of it concentrated among the wealthiest people in the richest countries.

I read a comment from a reader, who wondered about the benefit of these billions, as when a Kuwaiti or expat goes to the ministries complex for example, they waste a large amount of the time in paperwork and may not complete their business the first time or if the system is down, which is very common. How sad is it to see Kuwait not using Internet technology and modern methods to facilitate the work of people to process their transactions easily without hassle or fatigue. I believe the wealth of a state must be felt and seen by all and not only a few people.

Kuwait and Saudi Arabia - two major economies in the Middle East - have shown remarkable growth on the back of improved GDP growth and strong financial market performance, the report said. This year, the French company Capgemini for financial services recorded a growth of 8 percent in the number of people whose wealth exceeded \$1 million (KD 304,500) from 2018 to 188,000 people in 2019.

I wonder what these new rich people have offered Kuwait with regards to charity and societal development. I remember the words of American financier Warren Buffett, who was the richest person in the world in 2008 and the third richest in the world in 2011. In 2012, he became one of the most influential people in the world. He gave one tip - that one must reduce debt and spending on trivial things, adding not to rely on others.

It is good advice I guess, but if you are one of those who borrowed money from the bank, you will be dependent on paying the loan for many years. I do not know what trivial things are? Is buying a house, for example, through loans a trivial matter?

I think such news is not always great because it is a fact that many people suffer from loans and high prices that have become apparent to many people, and living expenses that are no longer cheap. The wealth which the newspaper is talking about might be the richness of the state and not necessarily the wealth of all.

PHOTO OF THE DAY



View of Salmiya seafront seen in the early morning hours. — Photo by KUNA/Alhusein Ahmad

Suicide prevention needed in Kuwait

IN MY VIEW

By Sara Ahmed

local@kuwaittimes.com

Suicide is a global phenomenon. There is no modern society where it does not exist. In Kuwait, it is illegal and those who attempt it and fail can face prosecution - on top of all the problems that led them down that path in the first place.

Often suicide is viewed as an expat issue and in fact, recent statistics do show that the majority of people who commit suicide in Kuwait are foreigners. But suicide is an issue that affects us all and it can strike in any family, in any community and have devastating consequences.

That is why Kuwait needs to bring suicide prevention efforts into the 21st century with a dedicated suicide prevention hotline and more efforts to provide awareness training for doctors and nurses as well as police regarding this phenomena.

Expatriates, especially low income earners, are often targets for predatory business practices including loan sharks, illicit recruitment agencies and pyramid scams. Despite the fact that loan sharks are illegal in Kuwait, they are rampant and taking loans in this manner is easily available here. Another way low income workers can get into financial straits is with pyramid schemes or lotteries or group investing which often results in loss of life savings or other financial troubles.

Though there are no statistics available, its thought that many, if not the majority of suicides among expatriates are triggered by financial difficulties. While there are charities here that aim to help the indigent, its not always possible or open to the most vulnerable populations.

Suicide prevent efforts can be designed specifically to



target those most in need, utilizing different languages to reach the different communities in Kuwait.

Although there is no dedicated 24-hour suicide prevent hotline, there are some government resources that people in need can call for help: Therapists outreach (police community service department)

+965/ 9400-0435

+965/ 9400-0463

Therapists (social development office)

+965/ 9406-9304

+965/ 9408-2761

+965/ 2244-0904

+965/ 2240-2401

+965/ 2206-3645

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App aims to help candidates get elected in Kuwait



By Faten Omar

Kuwaiti economist Abdullah Al-Salloum has founded a political platform called Dhammin to serve electoral campaigns and make things easier for candidates. Municipal Council member Hamad Al-Medlij said: "I have witnessed dozens of exhausting election days. With Dhammin, the campaign management had live updates on everything. It could visualize a very detailed live view of the vote tallying process without a single phone call or text message."

Mohammed Mansour, Board Member of Mishref Cooperative Society, said: "I had a very close look at Dhammin's analytics. It gave me clear information before anyone else. Live tallying gave us the chance to know how electoral committees are currently performing."

Abdullah Al-Mudhaf, a political activist, noted: "Dhammin makes it easier to understand how a candidate is performing as it gives accurate analytics and reports. It saves a lot of time and effort, and the interface is easy to use by all age segments."

Kuwait Times spoke with Salloum to learn more about the Dhammin platform.

Kuwait Times: What is Dhammin?

Salloum: Dhammin in Arabic means "to guar-

antee" - is a smart political platform that manages a candidate's electoral campaign for the National Assembly, Municipal Council or cooperative society. The platform, which consists of smart device apps and backend application programming interface (API), aims to help a candidate achieve the best political outcome - winning an election - with the best and least use of resources, such as time, effort and financing.

Dhammin is the first platform of its kind to consider distributed systems methodologies in terms of political campaign management and system programming. In a smart manner, the platform takes care of five main operative components of a candidate's campaign: (1) Online presence, (2) Guarantees, (3) Social events, (4) Election Day and (5) Analytics.

As for resources, the candidate provides a CD containing spreadsheets (they get it officially from the ministry of interior), containing names, dates of birth, voter IDs, voting districts and residence addresses of all voters in the area. These spreadsheets are converted by the Dhammin team into an SQL database, and fetched by the candidate's Dhammin API. Once that happens, Dhammin apps do their job in analytics based on the campaign's user inputs. The platform's pricing ranges from KD 490 to 8,990 annually.

KT: In Dhammin, what is online presence?

Salloum: Today, it is essential for a candidate to have an online presence. Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, and

Local



Abdullah Al-Mudhaf, Political Activist

LinkedIn are mandatory for a candidate to win an election. With Dhammin, a candidate can set up a website of his brand with a click of a button. The website will show his resume, values, goals and vision, in addition to his social media links.

However, this is not the only purpose. The website has the option to enable showing the campaign's analytical information of the vot-

Members also have the privilege to create a list of electoral keys. An electoral key is a person who has an influence on one or more vote(s) within the campaign's district - however, he/she is not a campaign member but is in a good relationship with a current member. Once a member creates electoral key accounts, the electoral keys receive a direct unique website link for their personal use to add their guarantees, just like a member.

Imagine a campaign with a hundred members, each with a list of tens of guarantees and a list of tens of electoral keys, each with another list of tens of other guarantees! This will definitely create a very rich scheme that can be converted into statistical observations that are ready to be analyzed.

KT: How does the social events component work in the platform?

Salloum: One of the candidate's mandatory methods to expand their reach is to mostly attend all social events within the district. This includes weekly diwanis, weddings, funerals and other related events. The candidate's challenge is to be aware of those events, their date, time and location. Dhammin takes care of that.

The platform allows campaign members

to suggest events by filling up a form with all the information required, such as location, date and time, organizer's contact name and phone, etc. Other members - with higher privileges - verify the importance of the suggested events, and either disregard or accept them.

KT: How will candidates utilize the app?

Salloum: Every candidate knows that operative tasks on Election Day are hard and time consuming. WhatsApp messages and phone calls are nonstop. The control team, which ensures delivery of guaranteed votes, is always frustrated with manual validations, sorting and the continuous manual communication with campaign members inside the electoral committees.

Here comes Dhammin to make this process way easier. Every campaign member assigned to be present at an electoral committee uses the platform's smart device app to change the status of a voter. For example, when voter X comes to a committee to vote, the campaign member assigned to that committee sets the status of X as voted. That's it!

The platform now spreads information to everything related to voter X. For example,

the campaign member who has X as a guarantee will immediately be notified that X has voted, and will send him/her a thank you message. It is no longer the control team's job to ensure every guaranteed voter has voted. Their task now is to ensure that every campaign member is delivering what they have guaranteed. This way, stress is distributed and Dhammin integrates all efforts to achieve a single goal - winning the election.

Tallying of votes is not less important. When voting stations close, tallying begins manually on a whiteboard at every electoral committee. The control team usually receives final results of a committee's tally at the end of the sorting process. However, Dhammin makes tallying available live to the control team. A campaign member in a committee uses the platform's app to insert a candidate's vote immediately without waiting for the final tally result. Corrections are made if the final tally is different than the platform's.

Local entrepreneur creates mobile app platform to organize campaigns, rally constituents

ing district, like the percentage of people who voted, male-female ratio, ranks of candidates, etc. Moreover, the website has a sign-up form for those who would like to join the candidate's campaign as members. Once they sign up, they'll be able to use Dhammin smart device apps and contribute to the platform's guarantees and social events components.

KT: What is the guarantees component?

Salloum: Campaign administrators can create accounts - with different privileges - for campaign members, or allow potential members to sign up for accounts that are created automatically through the sign-up form on the candidate's website. Members are given the chance to search through a very large list of voters based on first name, last name, gender, age, residence area and residence block. Once a member finds voters that they have a direct relationship with - say family members or friends - and are willing to vote for the campaign's candidate, they classify them as guaranteed by adding them to their guarantees list. Every one of these guaranteed voters is given a voting error ratio, like "What is the percentage of having this person not voting for the campaign's candidate?"


Members have continuous access to their lists to update the error ratios and information of their guarantees, and to communicate with them using template messages to ensure a good candidate-voter relationship.

Accepted events are scheduled and profiled with all the required information in a way that makes it easier for the campaign's social team to arrange event visits. Events are then given a feedback rate. The rate shows if a visit has delivered the required

to suggest events by filling up a form with all the information required, such as location, date and time, organizer's contact name and phone, etc. Other members - with higher privileges - verify the importance of the suggested events, and either disregard or accept them.



Hamad Al-Medlij, Member, Municipality Council



شركة الخليج الهندسية ش.م.ك.م
Gulf Engineering Company k.s.c.c.

URGENT REQUIREMENT

MAINTENANCE DIVISION

No	Position	Experience
1	BMS Engineer	Minimum 10 Years
2	Civil Engineer	Minimum 10 Years
3	Electrical Engineer	Minimum 10 Years
4	Sr.F.M. Engineer	Minimum 15 Years
5	F.M. Engineer	Minimum 8 Years
6	HVAC Engineer	Minimum 10 Years
7	Mechanical Engineer	Minimum 10 Years
8	Residence Engineer	Minimum 15 Years
9	Civil Foreman	Minimum 10 Years
10	Control/BAS Foreman	Minimum 10 Years
11	Electrical Foreman	Minimum 10 Years
12	General Foreman	Minimum 15 Years
13	HVAC Foreman	Minimum 10 Years
14	Mechanical Foreman	Minimum 10 Years
15	Plumbing Foreman	Minimum 10 Years
16	Centrifugal Foreman	Minimum 5 Years

SPECIAL PROJECT DIVISION

No	Position	Experience
17	Planning Engineer	Minimum 10 Years
18	Commissioning Engineer	Minimum 10 Years
19	QA/QC Engineer	Minimum 7 Years
20	Sr.Engineer - HVAC	Minimum 15 Years
21	Engineer - HVAC	Minimum 10 Years
22	Sr.Engineer - PL & FF	Minimum 15 Years
23	Engineer - PL & FF	Minimum 10 Years
24	Sr.Engineer - Electrical	Minimum 15 Years
25	Engineer - Electrical	Minimum 10 Years
26	Foreman-HVAC	Minimum 10 Years
27	Foreman - PL & FF	Minimum 10 Years
28	Foreman - Electrical	Minimum 10 Years

Note:The candidate who apply for Engineering position must be a member of Kuwait Engineering Society

"Interested candidate pls send CV to hrjobs@gulfengg.com
Mention the job position as subject line while sending the Email"

Local



**Mohammed Mansour, Board Member,
Mishref Cooperative Society**

Instead of spreadsheets, phone calls and WhatsApp messages, the task of the control team now is to only watch the tallying process and enjoy it, without interfering.

KT: What about analytics?

Salloum: Aside from automation, analytics is very essential in Dhammin. The input of campaign members through the platform components has definitely made tasks easier and faster. Simultaneously, their input to the platform is automatically converted to statistical

observations to be used for analytics.

Much time was spent in modeling Dhammin's database for the purpose of maximum utilization. The sophistication of the database allows the processing of very large amount of observations using only very little resources to extract meaningful information for a candidate.

In a matter of milliseconds, the candidate has up-to-date important information. They understand the district and guaranteed voter base much better. They can answer difficult questions like: (1) What is the female-male ratio in the campaign's voting base in area Y, block Z for ages between 21 and 30? (2) Who are the most influential families - based on number of family members - in area Y, block Z that haven't voted yet? (3) What are the blocks in area Y with the highest number of voters aged between 31 and 40? (4) Which are the most influential blocks in area Y? (5) What is the candidate's ranking among female voters in area Y? (6) Who are the best/worst campaign members in delivering votes of guarantee? Etc.

The platform's analytics component gives the candidate a very clear view of the electoral district. Hence it is made easier for them to act and react to political and social incidents, or in setting up a marketing plan and/or a political strategy.

KT: What sets Dhammin apart from other competitors or platforms providing a similar service?

Salloum: In fact, this market is very niche with a very few - three to six - platforms having the same concept. However, the political outcome is what a candidate is looking for. Dhammin considers campaign managerial details and implements every single candidate's sufficient requests with modern object-oriented programming, sophisticated database modeling, rich RESTful API and trendy smart device apps. I believe the combination of all this sets Dhammin apart.

KT: Can you tell us about the process, challenges and time spent to launch the platform?

Salloum: Due to being a new concept that relied on trial and error, Dhammin followed a solo-programming progress. In other words, it was being programmed solely by me during my free time for approximately six hours daily for seven months.

Based on my expertise, there were no technical challenges but modeling ones. I had to reach more people within the field who had expertise in campaigning and electoral processes. The challenge was to programmatically satisfy every aspect of their concerns. Besides the six-hour per day programming work, there was a three-hour per day mind-mapping work too.

KT: How did you promote this platform to your target audience? How many candidates do you expect to use this platform? How can

candidates purchase this platform?

Salloum: Networking is the only sufficient promoting channel in this niche market. Due to Dhammin's involvement in politics, trust is a prerequisite to encourage candidates to use the platform. We've already established that, and we're still in the process of making Dhammin's reputation more valuable.

I don't have any expectations in terms of the number of campaigns using the platform. However, we received several requests on the launch date, and we're considering the seasonal factor, as the amount of requests increase dramatically prior to elections. So we are prepared for that.

For a candidate to purchase the platform, they have to visit Dhammin's official website to fill a contact form. A representative will reach out to them to complete the transaction and delivery.

KT: What is the next step for Dhammin?

Salloum: Aside from technical improvements of the API and apps, I am considering involving some components of Dhammin in the state electoral system in an official way. Since candidates can benefit from such a service, why can't the government? Media institutions, TV channels and newspapers are no exception, as they can also benefit from those components. Dhammin's components will definitely cut their costs while delivering even more satisfactory live news to their audiences.



What to do if your domestic helper absconds?



By Faten Omar

Many people complain about their housemaids escaping to their countries or to work on an hourly basis elsewhere. The affected citizens and expatriates may not know the legal procedures to submit necessary complaints against domestic workers. Kuwait Times interviewed lawyer Meshari Al-Rawi, who spoke about the rights of the sponsor and how to file a complaint if your housemaid escapes.

Kuwait Times: What are the legal procedures in case the maid escapes from the sponsor?

Rawi: There are some steps that must be taken in case a domestic worker escapes, such as the driver, guard, housemaid, etc. The correct legal procedures should be followed.

First: Ensure that the contracts made by the agency that brought the maid are clear. Keep copies and attach them when the maid escapes to the escape complaint filed at the department of domestic labor at the ministry of interior.

Second: File a case of absenteeism at the immigration department.

Third: After the investigation by the investigator of the department of domestic labor, take the complaint number and go to court to file a case against the maid or agency in case of failure to agree on a mutually satisfactory solution.

KT: What guarantees a sponsor must take from the agency to preserve their rights?

Rawi: Unfortunately, some sponsors lose their rights if they give the agency permission to take control of the procedures. In order to preserve their rights, the sponsor must follow these main steps:

First: When submitting an application with the agency, the contract terms and safety conditions must be reviewed, and the financial value should be agreed upon in the contract in words and numbers. Also, read the agency's obligations in case of escape. The sponsor must have a copy to keep.

Second: Upon the arrival of the maid and before receiving the domestic helper, the agency must inform the maid of these terms of the contract and what the consequences are in case of escape.

Third: The maid must sign the contract after the registration of the maid's full information, and the sponsor must keep a copy of the contract concluded between the parties.

Fourth: Receive the receipt of the payment to guarantee the financial value agreed between the sponsor and the agency.

KT: How should the sponsor act in case the maid travels to her country with his permission, but does not return on time? How can the sponsor protect themselves if she returns and works somewhere else?

Rawi: There are ways to protect the sponsor in case of a maid not returning. I will present two cases and will address them legally to preserve the rights of the sponsor.

The first case: When the maid requests to travel,

but the contract between the sponsor and the maid has not ended. In this case, the maid must submit a travel request in writing to the sponsor to explain the reasons for travel, the date of travel and return to the country, the contact numbers in her country along with the address and sign the paper.

If the maid does not return by the specified date, the sponsor must submit a complaint at the department of domestic labor. After filing a case in court, the value of the contract and the value of the remaining wages on the contract must be calculated. If the maid returns after six months have elapsed under another sponsor, she will be arrested to pay the value of the sentence handed down.

The second case: When the maid travels after the end of the contract between the maid and the sponsor, and the maid promises to return to work with the sponsor.

In this case, the sponsor must get a written contract by the maid that she will come back. It will be like a new contract, so they should mention all details, such as increasing the salary of the maid or receiving an agreed financial value upon return or before the maid's journey, the period of leave and return and means of communication as discussed in the first case.

KT: What advice can you give the sponsor to ensure their legal rights?

Rawi: My advice to all sponsors is to keep all documents safely, meet the terms of the contract and pay the salary on time to avoid any allegations by the maid.

Local

Kuwait Speaker, Prime Minister receive Audit Bureau 'final report'

Bureau's project to enhance capabilities of internal audit units

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem received yesterday Acting President of the State Audit Bureau Adel Abdul Aziz Al-Sarawi, where he presented the final report of the project to support the internal control systems to enhance the capabilities of internal audit units. During the meeting, Sarawi and State Audit Bureau senior officials discussed the main elements of the report and a plan that contains effective control mechanisms and internal auditing in the entities controlled by audit bureau.

Sarawi also presented the final report to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah during a meeting held yesterday at Seif Palace. His Highness the Prime Minister expressed his full support for the steps taken by the audit bureau to protect and safeguard public funds, as well as stressing the government's commitment to combat corruption and to achieve the highest levels of transparency to enhance development in different government sectors. The head of Prime Minister's Diwan Sheikhha Itimad Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah attended the meeting. — KUNA



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem meets with Acting President of the State Audit Bureau Adel Abdul Aziz Al-Sarawi. — KUNA

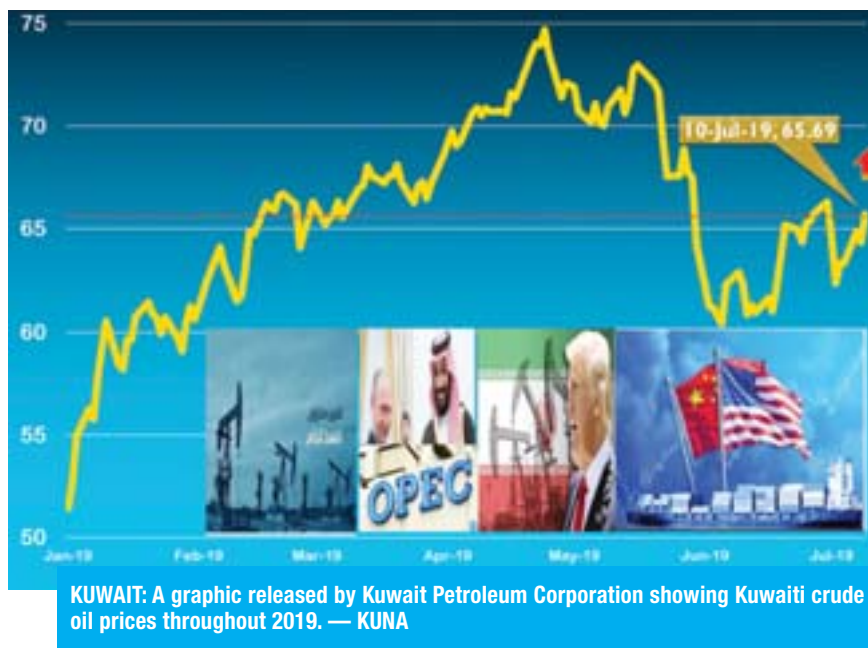


His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Acting President of the State Audit Bureau Adel Abdul Aziz Al-Sarawi and bureau members.

US reserve withdrawals, other factors behind oil price rise: Expert

KUWAIT: Record rise of oil prices on Wednesday was result of weekly withdrawal from the US crude reserves estimated at nine million barrels and other factors including geopolitical jitters, said the Kuwaiti expert Mohammad Al-Shatti. These withdrawals tripled predictions that had been put in the range of three million barrels, Shatti said in an interview. Brent Blend crude climbed \$2.85, settled at \$67.01 per barrel and the West Texas Intermediate (WTI) rose \$2.60 to \$60.43 pb.

Locally, the Kuwaiti crude oil price increased \$1.37 to \$65.69 pb, he said, expressing his belief that the Kuwaiti oil rate would range between \$60 and 70 pb in the short term period. Closure of some production terminals and key refineries in the Gulf of Mexico, ahead of a forecast tropical storm and jitters in the Arabian Gulf have also played a role in pushing the oil prices high, Shatti explains. Oil prices' bullish trend is also attributed to drop of Venezuelan crude exports from 860,000 barrels per day in June to 670,000 bpd in July, the Kuwaiti expert said, shedding further light on the upward movement of the crude rates.



Shatti believes there are other factors that have had some effects on the market and the prices, such as conclusion of the G20 convention, a US-Chinese concord on margins of the conference on resuming trade negotiations between Washington and Beijing and their consensus on necessity to abstain from any move that may impact negatively on the global economy. Sluggish universal trade, almost automatically, leads to lower demand for crude oil. There are other contributing factors such as demand rise in the second half of 2019, simultaneously with start of operating refineries on seasonal basis, global political jitters, namely in oil producing Libya and Venezuela.

As to factors that may stem price hikes, he mentions concerns of a possi-

ble global economic slump, noticed in hefty assets' selloffs across the global financial and business markets. Some indices that suppress prices include stagnant new demand, industrial output by key economic powers namely Germany, Japan and the US, in addition to the fact that the oil reserves of member states of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) remained above the average of the past five years. Any indices that show industrial sluggishness in the major economic powers; Germany, Japan and the US, fuel such fears, he says, noting that strategists are eagerly awaiting the US-China negotiations expected next week, the outcome of which will certainly impact on the oil markets. — KUNA

Two workers injured during refinery maintenance

KUWAIT: Two workers were slightly injured yesterday while conducting regular maintenance work for a unit at the Mina Abdullah refinery, Kuwait's National Petroleum Company (KNPC) spokesman Abdullah Al-Ajmi said. The accident occurred at exactly 10:50 am yesterday, as the workers were subjected to heavy smoke from the remaining oil treatment unit No 12 during

regular maintenance work and were immediately transferred to the medical clinic for treatment, Ajmi said in a statement issued by the company. The workers' condition is 'reassuring,' he said, stressing that the company has taken the necessary measures to address the causes of this incident. He noted that the maintenance process for the unit is continuing according to its planned program. — KUNA



Kuwait swelters under lingering heat wave

KUWAIT: A scorching heat wave blanketing Kuwait will continue in through the weekend, with northwesterly winds expected during the day leading to blowing dust and low visibility in some areas, national forecasters have warned. A seasonal low continues to hold across Kuwait, bringing dry and hot weather that could trigger strong winds, meteorologist Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi said yesterday. He predicted a 'sizzling weekend' with temperatures hitting 47 to 49 degrees on midday today, with northwesterly and dusty winds ranging between 20 to 50 kilometers per hour. As for tomorrow, the weather will be extremely hot at a minimum of 46 degrees, with much more active northwesterly winds at a speed of 25 to 55 kilometers per hour, Qarawi warned. — KUNA

Local

Workers' cry for help highlights visa trafficking problem in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Large numbers of domestic helpers in Kuwait experience various problems with their sponsors that may sometimes go as far as having them immediately deported without them even getting paid. The problem also transcends those who work in their employers' households, as it also affects a sizeable number of laborers who came to Kuwait on 'Article 20' visas given to domestic helpers which they had paid visa traffickers to obtain.

In this regard, a number of Asian laborers told local Arabic daily Al-Qabas that they came to Kuwait on domestic helper visas while in reality they do other jobs and live far from their sponsors' houses, noting that they struggle daily just to make enough money to pay up to KD 1,000 which each of them had borrowed to obtain a visa to work in Kuwait.

"The problem does not only lie in the fact that sponsors do not have jobs for us, but some of them do not pay our monthly salaries," said some helpers, noting that they have no protection except from the domestic helpers department, which usually investigates the matter then takes proper action to get them paid and deported. "However, we usually remain on the street until the complaint is attended to," they added.

Prime suspects

Further, the workers said that they usually come to Kuwait and are left to find jobs on their own as porters or construction workers, getting paid KD 5-7 daily while taking the risk of being arrested by inspection teams and deported for violating residency laws. "Deportation is a real problem as we always remain the prime suspect,

while sponsors refuse to answer when we call them," the workers added, pointing out the problems they face when they want to transfer their residency visas.

Visa traffickers often target laborers seeking to work in the oil-rich Gulf region, and offer to 'sell' them visas for prices that range between KD 500 and KD 1,000 for a one-year visa, which they have to pay again annually for renewal. Workers in that case are mostly uninformed about Kuwait's regulations that bans transferring a domestic helper's visa into an 'Article 18' visa for private sector employees. "Before referring the arrested ones among us for fingerprints pending deportation, Kuwaiti authorities are ought to question those who brought us to Kuwait in the first place. They should allow us to transfer to other sponsors instead of deporting us," one worker lamented.

Notably, statistics showed that 21 of those who were issued visas as domestic helpers hold PhD degrees, in addition to one with a Master's degree which they had to disregard only to come to Kuwait using the first available visas. In addition, governmental statistics also revealed that contrary to popular belief, 53 percent of domestic helper visa holders in Kuwait are actually males, hired as drivers, chefs and other works.

Labor protection

In the meantime, Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel hailed the Public Authority for Manpower's role to provide all forms of protection and support to laborers experiencing problems with their sponsors. Aqeel explained that special teams comprising 34 employees were formed to deal with domestic

helpers' affairs and follow up all related issues at the administrative support, domestic helpers disputes, inspection and license registration departments. She also noted that the teams are responsible to protect sponsors rights.

Further, Aqeel stressed that ever since establishing the domestic helpers department three months earlier, it managed, through amicable agreements with accounts and application owners, to put an end to social media ads offering domestic helpers 'for sale' or transfer, and refer violators to the criminal investigation's human trafficking division.

In addition, Aqeel said responding to a BBC report, Kuwait had recently returned a housemaid who turned out to be a minor to her country and subjecting the involved domestic labor office to legal actions and suspension. "A total of 44 domestic helper offices were suspended as of June," she underlined, noting that the financial guarantees deposited by violating offices are sometimes liquidated to pay for either laborers or employers, protect their rights and refer helpers who refuse work to labor shelters pending deportation.

Statistically, Aqeel explained that there are the total of 426 domestic helper offices in Kuwait, adding that the department had received 1,224 complaints of which 490 were so far solved, while 100 were referred to court. She also said that the total of domestic helpers in Kuwait is 717,628, according to Interior Ministry registers.

"Kuwait has always been keen on solving domestic helper problems with sponsors and providing special accommodation for female helpers," Aqeel emphasized, noting that a 5,000-square-meter piece of land has been allocated in South

Subahiya to build a female labor shelter, while the existing shelter in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh would be allocated for male laborers.

The minister further noted that 335 female laborers have been admitted to the Jleeb female laborers' shelter from April 1, 2019 to July 9, 2019, adding that 194 of them have already left the country. "The majority of those were Filipinas with 171 cases, of whom 94 have already left, followed by 80 Indians, 57 Sri Lankans and a minority of Bangladeshis," Aqeel explained.

Labor residence

In a related issue, Kuwait Municipality Director Ahmad Al-Manfouhi met with Interior Ministry and manpower authority officials to discuss putting into effect a cabinet decision made in 2016 concerning mandating contractors to provide temporary prefabricated accommodations for workers within government projects' sites. "The manpower authority will monitor contractors to make sure this resolution is put in practice, while the Interior Ministry will provide security," Manfouhi explained.

Meanwhile, Municipal Council member Maha Al-Baghli said that many private residential areas are currently suffering from the spread of 'bachelor residents' renting apartments illegally there, noting that it has become a vital necessity to build more labor cities to absorb all workers. Municipal Council member Abdul Salam Al-Randi stressed that labor cities must be comfortable and match UN specifications. "Laborers and bachelors' reluctance to reside in labor cities proves that the current ones do not provide such services and facilities," he underlined.

Pilgrims urged to take health precautions before traveling

By Meshaal Al-Enezi and A Saleh

KUWAIT: Ministry of Health's (MOH) Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Affairs Dr Majeda Al-Qattan announced putting into effect the recommendations made by Saudi authorities for this year's pilgrimage, and distributing various directives to all health zones and prevention centers with the main guidelines.

Qattan explained that 20,000 health cards have been printed for pilgrims and distributed to 40 preventive medicine centers, in addition to distributing 20,000 shots of meningitis vaccines, 15,000 seasonal flu vaccines and 12,000 pneumococcal vaccines. Further, Qattan said that all health centers at various exit borders have been notified to finish preparations to monitor departing and arriving pilgrims through opening enough fully equipped and manned clinics to work on a 24/7 basis.

In addition, Qattan said that preventive medicine centers have already started receiving Hajj applications from 10,000 pilgrims to be medically examined and given due vaccinations. "Do not accompany children below five without giving them due vaccines," Qattan

stressed and advised pregnant women to check with their doctors before travelling.

Furthermore, Qattan said that administrative and medical staff members have also been examined and vaccinated to make sure they are free of any contagious diseases. Finally, Qattan advised all pilgrims to avoid direct sunlight, stay hydrated, avoid gatherings of camels and other animals and follow hygiene rules with regards to having food or beverages of unknown sources.

Hajj prices

In the meantime, MP Majed Al-Mutairi urged Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Fahad Al-Sholah to find a solution to the soaring prices of Hajj convoys and put an end to the 'shares' policy, noting that distribution of pilgrims to various convoys have been manipulated for 'various reasons.' Mutari suggested a maximum number of 500 pilgrims per convoy to open for competition amongst various ones according to the services and competitive prices they provide. "Competitiveness and cancelling distributions to certain convoys will create serious supply and demand," he added, noting that this principle had been neglected in previous years, and caused the increase in prices of low cost bedoon convoys from KD 900 last year to KD 1,300 this year per pilgrim.

In other news, the Public Authority for Housing Welfare announced offering six new housing projects in various areas for public bidding, adding that the project would be in East Sabah Al-Ahmad, South Saad Al-Abdullah, South Sabah Al-Ahmad, Nawaf Al-Ahmad City and completion of Al-Khairan city. The authority also noted that the projects are currently in the planning and design phase and that detailed information is available at its website.

European Union opens HQ in Kuwait Sunday

KUWAIT: The 28-state European Union (EU) will inaugurate on Sunday headquarters of a mission in Kuwait — in a ceremony to be attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, a Foreign Ministry official announced yesterday. Ambassador Walid Al-Khubaizi, the assistant foreign minister for European affairs, said in a statement that the inauguration ceremony would be attended by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security, Federica Mogherini, expected in the country tomorrow. The event will signal a crucial stage in the history of bilateral relations between the State of Kuwait and the EU. Ambassador Al-Khubaizi has stated that the Kuwait-EU relations have greatly advanced, alongside greater coordination regarding diverse bilateral and international affairs. Mogherini, during her stay in the country, will meet senior officials to discuss a host of global issues. Last year, the EU announced the plan to "open a Delegation in Kuwait," bringing total number of the union missions throughout the world to 142.

An EU press release in this respect had quoted Mogherini as praising Kuwait as an important partner the EU, for peace, security and prosperity in the country and the wider region. "Kuwait is the first country in the Gulf region with which the EEAS (European External Action Service) concluded a Cooperation Arrangement in 2016, and opening a new Delegation in Kuwait City will allow us to further step up our political, economic and sectoral engagement. Establishing a permanent presence in the country illustrates that we consider our partnership with the Kuwaiti people a priority. This decision reflects the positive development of EU-Kuwait relations as well as the potential that exists for enhanced cooperation, in particular in support of Kuwait's 'Vision 2035' as well as implementation of the EU-Kuwait Cooperation Arrangement. As the third EU Delegation to be established in the Gulf, following those in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (2004) and Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (2013), the new Delegation in Kuwait also signifies an important step to further strengthen the EU's engagement in the (Gulf) region," reads the press release. — KUNA



Thousands of schools, universities declare 'climate emergency'

New Orleans threatened by floods as big storm forms



In this file photo, the British warship HMS Montrose is docked in the Cypriot port of Limassol. —AFP

Iran 'tried to impede' UK tanker

Iran dismisses British report; Trump vows harsher sanctions

LONDON: Three Iranian vessels tried to block a BP-operated tanker passing through the Strait of Hormuz but backed off when confronted by a Royal Navy warship, the UK government said yesterday. Britain urged Iran to "de-escalate the situation in the region" after the British Heritage, a Suezmax oil tanker operated by BP under an Isle of Man flag, was approached. "HMS Montrose was forced to position herself between the Iranian vessels and British Heritage and issue verbal warnings to the Iranian vessels, which then turned away," a British government spokesman said in a statement.

The incident followed President Donald Trump's warning he would soon "substantially" increase US sanctions on Iran as part of a drive to curb Iran's nuclear program and force Tehran to change its regional behavior. The United States blames Iran for a series of attacks on shipping in the world's most important oil artery since mid-May, accusations Tehran rejects but which have raised fears the long-time foes could slip into direct military conflict.

Key shipping lane

The growing confrontation between Iran and the West took another twist last week when British Royal Marines seized an Iranian tanker, the Grace 1, off Gibraltar on suspicion that it was breaking EU sanctions by taking oil to Syria. A senior Iranian military commander yesterday said Britain and the United States would regret detaining the vessel, just days after the armed forces chief of staff said the action would not go unanswered. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif however dismissed as "worthless" yesterday UK allegations Iran it had sought to block the British Heritage, the semi-official Fars news agency said.

Tensions in the Gulf have been rising over recent weeks as Iran

began to move away from the terms of the 2015 nuclear accord it struck with world powers. The United States withdrew from the pact last year and extended sanctions against Iran, effectively driving Iran from mainstream oil markets and forcing it to find unconventional ways to sell crude, its main revenue earner. That has deprived Tehran of the economic benefits Iran was to accrue in return for curbing its nuclear program, and the Islamic Republic says it will only return to full compliance once sanctions are lifted and Washington rejoins the pact.

BP CEO Bob Dudley, asked about the situation in the Gulf at an event at London's Chatham House on Wednesday evening, said: "We've got to be super careful about our ships". A BP spokesman said the oil major was not commenting on the latest event but added: "We thank the Royal Navy for their support." An escalation in the Strait of Hormuz-linking Middle East oil producers with markets in Asia, Europe, North America and beyond could drive up crude prices. Maritime security sources said Britain to protect shipping lanes but there was no formal policy yet of escorting all UK ships through the area. The Montrose was in the area to ensure the safe passage of UK flagged ships when needed, they added. Refinitiv data shows four other UK registered tankers are currently present in the Gulf. Bob Sanguinetti, chief executive with the UK Chamber of Shipping trade association, told Reuters the situation was tense and called for a de-escalation.

"UK shipowners are in regular contact with the relevant authorities and agencies regarding the security situation in the region, and we are confident that the RN (Royal Navy) will provide the necessary support to their vessels," he said. Oman, which hosts a joint British military base and shares the Strait of Hormuz with Iran, did

not immediately comment. It has mediated between Tehran and the West and also allows the British and US navies to use its ports on the Arabian Sea.

'Clash of wills'

Heightened tension between Iran and the United States have fanned fears of increasing conflict in countries where Iran and its US-backed Gulf Arab rivals have been locked in proxy battles for predominance in the Middle East. Last month, Iran shot down a US drone near the Strait of Hormuz and Trump aborted a retaliatory military strike, saying it could have killed 150 people. He has signaled he is open to talks with Tehran without preconditions an offer rejected by Iran's clerical leadership. The United States is hoping to enlist allies in a military coalition to safeguard strategic waters off Iran and Yemen, Marine General Joseph Dunford, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said on Tuesday. Britain, France and Germany have sought to avoid being dragged into US sanctions but say Iran must return to full compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal they were instrumental in brokering.

They have so far avoided triggering a dispute resolution process contained in the deal but it could take new steps in the next two months, including restarting dismantled centrifuges and purifying uranium to a sharply higher threshold, unless it is allow to resume normal oil sales. Francois Lecointre, the French armed forces chief, described the friction between the United States and France as a "clash of wills". "I think it is under control now... I don't think it can spiral out of control but there can be escalation," he told CNews television. —Reuters

International

Russia blames US over Gulf tensions, tanker incidents

Iran Guards say 5 'terrorists' killed near western border

MOSCOW: Russia yesterday blamed Washington for the escalation in tensions with Tehran after Britain said Iranian ships had attempted to impede a British oil tanker in Gulf waters. "The situation is very concerning," said Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov, quoted by news agency RIA Novosti. "The reasons for this are clear. This is Washington's deliberate, premeditated course to exacerbate tensions." Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists he was aware that "such an incident allegedly took place" but also of Tehran's denial. "As before, we call on everyone to behave with restraint in the Persian Gulf in order not to exacerbate the situation," he

said, calling for dialogue.

Britain said the confrontation on Wednesday saw three Iranian boats attempt to "impede the passage" of a commercial vessel called British Heritage, which is owned by British energy giant BP. This led a British warship moving between the three boats and warning them off, UK defense ministry officials said. The incident followed Britain's detention off the coast of Gibraltar on July 4 of an Iranian oil tanker allegedly destined for Syria. Ryabkov yesterday called Britain's actions "outrageous" saying that they violated not only international law but also European Union internal legislation.

5 'terrorists' killed

In another development, Iran's Revolutionary Guards said yesterday they had killed five "terrorists" in clashes near the western border with Iraq. "A terrorist team that intended to infiltrate into our country from the western borders yesterday (Wednesday)... was completely destroyed," the Guards said in a statement published by their official website Sepahnews. The clashes occurred in the vicinity of the city of Javanrud, located 460 kilometers (285 miles) west of Tehran in Kermanshah Province. The statement did not say whether the dead were from Kurdish opposition or jihadist

groups, both of which have previously entered from neighboring Iraq.

The Islamic republic has been battling for most of its 40-year history with militant Kurdish opposition groups who use their bases in Iraq's Kurdistan region to stage attacks against the Guards and state institutions inside Iran. On Tuesday Sepahnews reported that three members of the Guards had been killed and another wounded in an attack on their vehicle by "terrorists affiliated to global arrogance." The Tuesday attack occurred further north of Javanrud in Piranshahr, West Azerbaijan Province. —Agencies

Timeline of escalation in the Gulf

DUBAI: Tensions in the Gulf region have escalated in recent weeks amid a deepening standoff between Iran and United States over Tehran's nuclear program. Here is a recap:

'Credible threat'

On May 5, the United States says it is sending an aircraft carrier strike group and a bomber task force to waters near Iran in response to "indications of a credible threat by Iranian regime forces." The Pentagon also sends B-52 bombers to the region and, later, an amphibious assault ship and Patriot missile defense battery. US officials do not give more details of the threats but the move comes amid heightened tensions over Iran's nuclear program. Washington reimposed sanctions on Iran last year after quitting a 2015 deal meant to control its nuclear drive. On May 8, Iran announces a halt to certain commitments under the agreement, including increasing enriched uranium and heavy water production. US President Donald Trump responds with new sanctions on Iran's steel and mining sectors.

Tanker 'sabotage'

On May 12, the United Arab Emirates says four commercial oil tankers had been targeted by "acts of sabotage" in Gulf waters off its coast. Saudi Arabia says later two of its oil tankers suffered "significant damage" but no casualties or oil spill. The other vessels were Norwegian and Emirati. Washington and Riyadh blame Tehran, which denies involvement. A UAE investigation finds later that a "state actor" was likely responsible for the attacks, probably carried out by limpet mines, but does not specifically blame Iran.

Tankers in flames

In the early hours of June 13, two fuel-loaded tankers passing through the Strait of Hormuz towards the Indian Ocean are hit by mysterious blasts that cause major fires. One is a Norwegian vessel and the other is Japanese-owned. Their crews are rescued. The strait is a vital corridor connecting the petroleum-rich states of the Middle East with markets around the world. Washington, London and Riyadh accuse Tehran of being behind the attacks, which it denies.

Rocket attacks on Iraq

On June 18, rockets strike an oil field in Iraq's Basra region, near a camp used by a company of US industrial conglomerate General Electric. It is the latest in a nearly week-long barrage of anonymous shelling attacks on American interests across Iraq. The incidents



are not claimed but largely originate from areas where Shiite-dominated armed groups loyal to Tehran have free rein.

US drone downed

On June 20, Iran's Revolutionary Guards say they shot down a US drone which violated Iranian airspace. The Pentagon says the drone was in international airspace and denounces an "unprovoked attack". Trump says he approved a retaliatory strike the next day but cancelled it at the last minute. On June 24, he announces "hard-hitting" financial sanctions on Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and senior Iranian military leaders.

Iran tanker seized

On July 4, authorities in Gibraltar, a British overseas territory in the Mediterranean, detain an Iranian tanker on suspicion that it is carrying crude to Syria in violation of EU sanctions. Iran demands its release, accusing Britain of acting at the bidding of the United States. On July 11, Britain says three Iranian military vessels had tried the previous day to "impede the passage" of a UK oil tanker in Gulf waters but were warned off by a British warship. The tanker is owned by British energy giant BP. Iran's Revolutionary Guards deny there was any confrontation but warn that United States and Britain will "strongly regret" the seizure of the tanker off Gibraltar. —AFP

As standoff deepens, US tries coalition-building

WASHINGTON: In seeking a coalition at sea to monitor Iran, the United States is hoping to present a united front at a time when its hawkish policy has aggravated tensions and key allies are at loggerheads. General Joseph Dunford, the top US military officer, said the United States would take the commanding role and provide surveillance as other countries escort vessels under their own flags.

"I think probably over the next couple weeks we'll identify which nations have the political will to support that initiative and then we'll work directly with the militaries to identify the specific capabilities that'll support that," Dunford said Tuesday. He said the coalition would operate both in the Strait of Hormuz - the chokepoint to the Gulf through which 20 percent of the world's oil flows - and the Bab el-Mandeb, the crucial shipping line into the Red Sea off war-battered Yemen.

The budding coalition comes as tensions soar with Iran, which shot down a US spy drone and has been blamed by Washington for a series of sabotage attacks on oil tankers. Many observers see Iran as trying to extract a price on President Donald Trump's administration, which imposed crippling sanctions and has tried to stop all of Tehran's oil sales in hopes of weakening the clerical regime.

Trump, who exited a nuclear accord with Iran negotiated by his predecessor Barack Obama, on Wednesday vowed to keep ramping up sanctions - but he also has indicated he does not want war, calling off a planned strike last month at the 11th hour. In a familiar priority for Trump, he has accused other nations of not paying enough for their own ships' security - a point stressed by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo as he visited allies Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates last month.

Dunford's remarks came on the day that the emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, met Trump at the White House. Qatar, which is home to some 10,000 US troops but has comparatively cordial relations with Iran, has been under a Saudi-led embargo for two years, a massive rift in the Gulf Cooperation Council of oil-rich, US-friendly Arab monarchies. Alex Vatanka, a senior fellow at the Middle East Institute in Washington, said that the coalition initiative could serve to "end the intra-GCC conflict through the backdoor," although he said that would be a longer-term calculation.

"There are good reasons why the US wants others to do a lot more to protect the flow of energy and trade from the Persian Gulf," he said. "Is it going to change the big-picture dynamics in the sense of the US-Iran standoff? That's where I'm more skeptical," he said. He said Iran was trying to impose counter-pressure against the United States and "create a bit of panic in the head of President Trump" by destabilizing the oil market. "I'm not sure that this is going to in itself deter the Iranians from being in the path they are in," he said. —AFP

International

Beaten, abused; Sudan women bear scars of fight for freedom

Women had their clothes torn off, raped

KHARTOUM: After six years abroad, Khadija Saleh returned to Sudan in March to join protesters in the streets demanding change. She was taking part in a sit-in near the Defense Ministry in Khartoum on June 3 when security forces stormed in. The area had become a centre for anti-government protests. Saleh said she was beaten with sticks, and still wears bandages on her wounds. "I came back from a safer place because I want a better future for this country," the 41-year-old said.

Women were a driving force during months of protests against President Omar al-Bashir's 30-year rule, before he was replaced by a military council in April. But the protests didn't stop as demonstrators demanded the military swiftly hand power to civilians, leading to a stand-off and then a crackdown. Nahid Gabralla, a 53-year-old activist, said she was beaten and threatened with rape during the June 3 raid. "Sudan can be better," she said. "My daughter deserves to live in a nice country ... We will fight for a democratic Sudan, real change and for our rights."

Rapes reported

Physicians for Human Rights, a US-based group that investigates rights violations, cited local medics as saying women had their clothes torn off and were raped, though the sexual violence was hard to quantify. Local women's activists, citing multiple eyewitness testimonies, said soldiers held up women's underwear on

poles to symbolize the women they had sexually assaulted. "They know that if they humiliate the women, they will humiliate the whole people," said 42-year-old activist Hadia Hasaballah. "None of the Sudanese women will officially say that they were raped because of the stigma."

It was not possible for Reuters to independently verify the reports of rape. A spokesman for the military council could not be reached for comment. The council has previously denied that rape took place. The head of Sudan's Human Rights Commission, which is appointed by the presidency, said it had launched an investigation into violations committed during and after the dispersal of the sit-in, which it condemned, without giving details.

Under Bashir's rule, women's lives were tightly controlled by men. Morality laws meant a woman could be arrested for wearing trousers. For that reason, 35-year-old Mahi Aba-Yazid wore trousers while she campaigned for change at the sit-in. She believes she was beaten more because of her choice of fashion. "There was already a bullet in my arm. I was bleeding but they continued to beat me," she said.

Duha Mohamed, a 23-year-old student who escaped the sit-in raid before returning to help the injured, said she also wanted a life in which she could make her own choices. "I don't want to wear a headscarf, but it is not my choice. I want my right to wear what I want." Amel Tajeldin, a 41-year-old mother of four, said she and her husband took turns watching their chil-

months. Many, including Al-Arabiya, have splashed official warnings from the Saudi embassy in Ankara about rising passport theft and petty crime.

The apparent scaremongering seems to be working, since the Turkish tourism ministry reported Saudi visitor arrivals dropped more than 30 percent in the first five months of 2019 compared to the same period last year. A travel agency in Riyadh reported a similar fall in bookings to AFP, although Saudi tourism authorities did not respond to a request for comment. "I care about safety," a young Riyadh resident told AFP, explaining why he was likely to avoid Turkey.

'Boycott call'

Saudis, who are also among the top property buyers and investors in Turkey, spend an average of \$500 (450 euros) a day as tourists in the country, significantly higher than European visitors, according to a 2018 study by Riyadh's King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies. Appeals for a boycott of Turkey are not limited to tourism. A video pre-dating Khashoggi's murder that showed Riyadh's influential governor Faisal bin Bandar declining an offer of Turkish coffee recently resurfaced on social media, triggering a call for a boycott of Turkish products. —AFP



KHARTOUM: Khadija Saleh, 41, political activist and blogger, poses for a photograph in Khartoum, Sudan. —Reuters

dren. "While it was his turn to look after the children, I took part in the demonstrations," she said.

She had been teaching songs to street children in a makeshift tent at the sit-in. During the June 3 raid, members of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) shouted at her and other protesters and told them to flee. "We ran. We were surrounded by soldiers and policemen," she said. Both her arms are now wrapped in bandages. "While we were running, they beat us. To protect my head, I used my hands. This is why

my two arms are broken," she said. "The ones like us beaten by police were lucky, the ones beaten by RSF members were brutally injured."

The military council has said excesses were committed as the sit-in was cleared. It said these are being investigated and that those responsible will be held accountable. Despite the violence, Sudan's military rulers and a coalition of opposition and protest groups agreed last week to share power for three years ahead of elections. —Reuters

UAE shields reputation with drawdown from Yemen 'quagmire'

DUBAI: A surprise UAE troop drawdown in war-torn Yemen aims to restore the Gulf country's reputation, but may strain ties with key ally Saudi Arabia at a time of heightened tensions with Iran, experts say. "The political, reputational and operational risks Abu Dhabi incurred in Yemen stood in no relation to the anticipated benefits," said Andreas Krieg, a professor at King's College in London. The United Arab Emirates has been a key player in the Saudi-led coalition which intervened in Yemen in March 2015 to back the internationally-recognized government against the Tehran-aligned Houthi rebels, only months after they captured the capital Sanaa.

Since then, tens of thousands of people—mostly civilians—have been killed in the conflict described by the UN as the world's worst humanitarian crisis, which has left the impoverished country on the brink of famine. The two sides have fought to a stalemate, and several rounds of UN-sponsored talks, the last held in Sweden in December, have failed to implement any deal to end the war.

Yet in a sudden move on Monday, the UAE announced it was redeploying and reducing its troops

mainly from northern Yemen. In four years of combat, it has sent in thousands of troops and helped train some 90,000 Yemeni soldiers. One factor driving the drawdown may have been hopes of limiting the damage to the UAE over its role in Yemen, with both the Saudi-led coalition and the Houthis standing accused of war crimes by rights groups. The reputation of the Emirates, a staunch US ally which aims to be seen as "a liberal US partner in the region," has "taken a severe hit as of late," said Krieg.

Amnesty International said last year that human rights violations in a string of UAE-run prisons in Yemen could amount to war crimes—a report Abu Dhabi has vehemently rejected. "Human rights abuses, torture camps, war crimes and support of Al-Qaedaesque groups in Yemen severely damaged the UAE's standing in the US," Krieg told AFP. Last week, a US Democratic senator warned Washington could cut off arms sales to the Emirates over a report the UAE shipped US missiles to Libyan rebels in violation of a UN arms embargo. The UAE denied the claims.

Increasing regional differences with Iran may also have helped seal the troop reduction, said Middle East expert James Dorsey. "If that were to erupt into a military conflict, then the Emirates alongside Saudi Arabia is going to be a battlefield," he told AFP. "I think the Emiratis want to be ready for that, even though they don't want a military conflict with Iran." Tensions between the United States and Iran spiked in June when Iran shot down a US drone over strategic Gulf waters following a series of tanker attacks off the UAE coast that Washington blamed on the Islamic republic. Tehran denied the accusation. —AFP

Khashoggi fallout: Saudi holidaymakers urged to shun Turkey

RIYADH: Diplomatic fallout over journalist Jamal Khashoggi's murder appears to be slowing the flow of high-rolling Saudis to Turkey, as calls grow within the oil-rich kingdom to boycott the holiday magnet. The two Sunni Muslim powers have a longstanding geopolitical rivalry, but relations plumed new lows after Khashoggi's killing in October in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, which tainted Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's global image. Each year hundreds of thousands of Saudi tourists visit Turkey, thanks to its milder climate, turquoise waters and status as a crossroads between East and West.

But tensions over the journalist's murder are feeding into growing calls by nationalists and pro-government media to boycott Turkey, potentially hitting its already strained economy. "Don't go to Turkey" and "Turkey is not safe" are just some of the headlines that have popped up, with multiple media outlets running hostile stories in recent

International

Assad hits a wall in Syrian war as front lines harden

Fighting brings no real gain for government

BEIRUT: President Bashar Al-Assad's assault in the northwest has been met with a painful rebel counter-punch that underlines Turkish resolve to keep the area out of his hands and shows why he will struggle to take back more of Syria by force. More than two months of Russian-backed operations in and around Idlib province have yielded little or nothing for Assad's side. It marks a rare case of a military campaign that has not gone his way since Russia intervened in 2015.

While resisting government attacks, the insurgents have managed to carve out small advances of their own, drawing on ample stocks of guided anti-tank missiles that opposition and diplomatic sources say have been supplied by Turkey. "They're even targeting personnel with these missiles ... it means they are comfortably supplied," a rebel source said, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was discussing rebel military capabilities. Turkey's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment on reports that Ankara has stepped supplies of arms to rebels. With Turkey committed to the rebels, the battle for the northwest stands in stark contrast to a campaign in the southwest a year ago, when Western and Arab states stood by as Assad and his Russian- and Iranian-backed allies took the area. Despite Russian backing in the latest fighting, questions have arisen over whether Assad and his allies are entirely on the same page when it comes to the northwest, where Turkey has deployed forces in agreement with Russia and Iran.

Moscow has appeared keen to preserve its ties with Ankara even as its air force bombs in support of

Assad: Turkey says Russia has intervened to stop attacks on Turkish forces from Syrian government-held territory. And this time there has been no sign of a major role for Iranian-backed Shiite forces that have helped Assad to victories in parts of Syria that are of greater interest to Iran, including territory near Iraq, Lebanon and Israel. The capture of the southwest a year ago remains Assad's last big gain. The prospects of further advances have been obstructed not only by Turkish interests in the northwest but also the presence of US forces in the east and northeast. American troops are still supporting Kurdish-led fighters following a reversal of President Donald Trump's decision last December to pull them all out.

After more than eight years of war, this leaves Syria carved up into areas of US, Russian, Turkish and Iranian influence that seem unlikely to be stitched back together any time soon. "We could see the front lines harden and remain like that for some time, where either the appetite or capability to fight through them is not there on the part of the regime or its allies," said a Western diplomat speaking anonymously in order to offer a candid assessment.

'Bone-breaking battle'

The Idlib area is dominated by Tahrir al-Sham, the jihadists formerly known as the Nusra Front. Proscribed as a terrorist group by the UN Security Council, the group has set aside past conflict with Turkish-backed rebels to defend the northwest. Colonel Mustafa Bakour, a commander in the Jaish al-Izza rebel group, said coordination among rebels was a major factor in foiling government attacks.

treatment in nearby hospitals, including a 72-year-old woman in critical condition, he said. Most of them are tourists, Petsas said, declining to give nationalities. The seventh body recovered Thursday is believed to belong to a missing fisherman. The freak storm only lasted about 20 minutes, according to witnesses, but it was enough to overturn cars, uproot trees and balcony railings and cause mudslides.

Road access to part of Halkidiki was still severed owing to a fallen high-voltage electricity pylon, Petsas said, adding that restoring power to the area could take another two days. "It was a miracle that there weren't more deaths," said 39-year-old Kyriakos Athanasiadis, who is vacationing in the area. "Nearly all the coastal restaurants were full, and you could see large objects flying," he told AFP.

One woman reportedly told hospital staff she was picked up by the wind and thrown in a garbage bin, which then rolled away.

'Unprecedented phenomenon'

On a beach in Sozopoli, the storm toppled and ripped open a Czech family's caravan, killing an elderly couple in their seventies and injuring their 48-year-old son and 19-year-old grandson. "The wind picked up the caravan as if it were a matchbox," said Yiannis Karabourniotis, owner of a nearby tavern. "You cannot describe it. There used to be 50 pine trees around my establishment. Most were uprooted or snapped in two," he said. —AFP



KHAN SHAYKHUN: Smoke billows after reported regime air strikes near Khan Shaykhun in Syria's Idlib province. —AFP

"I expect the battles to continue for a time because it has become a bone-breaking battle," he said in written answers to questions from Reuters. The government campaign of air strikes and barrel bombing that began in late April was followed by the capture of around 20 villages. This led to a rebel counter-attack in early June that seized ground the government has been unable to recover. The Syrian government has described its operations as a response to militant violations of ceasefire agreements.

Russia says action was needed to stop attacks

from being launched from Idlib, including drone strikes on its nearby air base. President Vladimir Putin said in April a full-scale operation in Idlib was impractical for now. Though the government has not declared the goals of the campaign, rebel sources believe it was to capture two highways that pass through rebel-held territory. Some 300,000 people fleeing bombardment have moved towards the Turkish border since April, prompting the United Nations to warn that Idlib was on the brink of a "humanitarian nightmare". —Reuters

Fierce storms tear through tourist area, killing six

THESSALONIKI: Six people died and at least 23 were injured as a fierce storm tore through a beachfront in one of Greece's top tourist areas, terrifying thousands of holidaymakers caught in the open, authorities said yesterday. Six tourists including two children were killed—two each from the Czech Republic, Russia and Romania—in the northern region of Halkidiki, near Greece's second city Thessaloniki, in the storms late Wednesday. There were reports on Thursday that a seventh body had been recovered, but they have not yet been confirmed.

"There was panic, people were howling and running to hide inside," said Haris Lazaridis, owner of a tavern where a 54-year-old woman from Romania and her son were killed when the roof caved in. "For five minutes it was hellish," Lazaridis told AFP. He added that more than 100 people were sheltering under the roof when it collapsed. In an emergency briefing, government spokesman Stelios Petsas on Thursday said the area had been hit by winds of more than 100 kilometers an hour.

Twenty-three people were still receiving

Huge fire erupts at power station outside Moscow

MOSCOW: A huge blaze broke out yesterday at a gas-fired power station just outside Moscow sending a plume of smoke and flames 50 meters into the sky, Russian television showed. The fire at Power Station No 27 broke out around 11:00 am around 20 kilometers from Moscow. The emergencies ministry said that 11 people received medical treatment including five people with minor burns but no one was hospitalized. There was no risk of the fire spreading to nearby residential areas, it said.

The energy ministry said a high-pressure gas pipe supplying fuel was burning outside the power station itself. Russian television reported that the cause of the fire "could have been an explosion". The smoke and flames were visible from the capital and the emergencies ministry said that the fire blazed over an area of 800 square meters (8,600 square feet). The plume of fire subsided after author-

ities switched off the gas supply but black smoke continued to billow as gas already released continued to burn.

The emergencies ministry said the fire would be localized shortly. One witness, Sofiya Fesenko, watching the fire from her flat in Mytishi, said on Russian television that hot water flowed from cold taps after the fire broke out. "We saw smoke covering half the sky," she said. The emergency services sent in helicopters to drop water and fire-fighting trains to tackle the blaze, with more than 150 firefighters at the scene. Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin wrote on Twitter that the city was sending 50 of its fire engines to the power station.

The authorities warned drivers not to use nearby highways as the smoke hindered traffic and one highway leading to Moscow's ring road was closed entirely. The power station was built at the end of the Soviet era and opened in 1996. Its four reactors supply part of Moscow and the Moscow region with electricity and centralized hot water and heating. The energy ministry said electricity supplies to the public would not be affected and the fire did not damage generation equipment at the station. Russia is economically dependent on its vast oil and gas reserves. —AFP

International

New Orleans threatened by floods as big storm forms

'Be prepared for the impact'

WASHINGTON: The US city of New Orleans prepared Wednesday to face the first tropical storm of the season, which could become a hurricane and led the governor of Louisiana to declare a state of emergency. "It is still too soon to tell what the impact will be, but we believe there will be an impact," New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell said at a press conference in the city which was devastated by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

"Be prepared for the impacts," she warned, reminding residents that the city had already received up to eight inches of rain in three hours that morning. There was partial flooding. New Orleans was placed under a storm-surge watch Wednesday morning along with a stretch of Louisiana coast as a tropical storm formed in the Gulf of Mexico, threatening the region with potentially life-threatening rains.

The storm-surge watches warn residents of possible flooding from rising waters and coastal inundations in the city, known worldwide for its Mardi Gras and jazz. Part of New Orleans is built below sea level. "Conditions appear favorable for this system to strengthen to a hurricane as it approaches the central Gulf Coast by the weekend," the Miami-based National Hurricane Center said. If the storm becomes a hurricane as anticipated, it would be the first of the Atlantic season and would be named Barry.

Parts of the southeastern Louisiana coast

were already experiencing heavy rains and flooding, the NHC said. Jefferson Parish, which includes parts of New Orleans, was drenched in four to six inches of rain (10-15 centimeters) and two to three more inches were expected. Louisiana governor John Bel Edwards declared the state of emergency, which allows the state to provide additional resources for storm preparation.

Power out

Residents in the risk zone are currently encouraged to stay home and "shelter in place." Wednesday morning nearly 10,000 inhabitants lost electricity in New Orleans. During Hurricane Katrina levees collapsed under the weight of the water, flooding 80 percent of the city. More than 1,800 people died during the catastrophe. At 2100 GMT Wednesday the storm system was 124 miles (200 kilometers) southeast of the mouth of the Mississippi River.

The storm packed sustained winds of 40 miles per hour (65 kilometers), still way below hurricane force of 74 miles per hour but on track to become a tropical storm by Thursday and a hurricane by Friday. It was expected to unload as much as a foot of rain over the Gulf coast through early next week, forecasters said. Local authorities also issued warnings to residents as the Mississippi River neared flood levels, rising to 16 feet (4.9 meters) in New Orleans as of 1300 GMT.



NEW ORLEANS: S Telemachus Street in New Orleans is flooded after flash floods struck the area. — AFP

The levees protecting the city are built to hold back the river to a depth of 20 feet, a level that forecasters warned could be reached by Saturday morning. During the press conference, a spokesman from Flood Protection said he was "confident" in the levees' ability to hold back the water, while one of his colleagues added that the 118 pumps spread throughout the city were operating at "optimum capacity."

The Army Corps of Engineers, which operates the flood control system, said it was "closely monitoring" the situation. New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell closed the city hall and urged non-essential employees to stay home. The city's airport reported numerous flight delays, but it "will stay open unless conditions become unsafe or infrastructure is damaged," an airport spokesman said during the press conference.—AFP

Missing teen mystery deepens as Vatican dig reveals empty graves

VATICAN CITY: The mystery surrounding the disappearance of an Italian teenager 36 years ago deepened yesterday after two graves at the Vatican thought to possibly hold her remains were discovered to be empty. Not only was Emanuela Orlandi's body not found, the tombs did not even hold the skeletons of the two princesses supposed to be buried there. "The last thing I expected was to find empty tombs," said her brother Pietro Orlandi, 60, who has never stopped hoping to find his sister alive.

The dig followed an anonymous tip-off that the Teutonic Cemetery in the tiny city state may be the last resting place of Orlandi, the daughter of a Vatican employee. She was last seen leaving a music class aged 15. Theories have circulated for decades about who took her and where her body may lie. "We're frankly astonished," said Laura Sgro, the Orlandi family lawyer. "The family has a right to know what happened. Thirty-six years have passed, there have been three different popes at the Vatican," she said.

'Someone knows'

"Someone knows, and is keeping quiet out of 'omerta' or fear. Emanuela must be found. Please contact us," Sgro added. The family had been sent a picture of an angel-topped grave in the cemetery, and a message which simply read: "Look where the angel is pointing". A second, similar grave alongside

the first was also opened to rule out any misunderstandings over which grave was meant.

The tombs belonged to two princesses, buried in 1836 and 1840. The small, leafy cemetery, located on the original site of the Emperor Nero circus, is usually the last resting place for German-speaking members of Catholic institutions. Beyond St Peter's Basilica, in an area off-limits to tourists, neat rows of tombstones lie behind a wrought-iron gate, some shaded by palm trees, others bordered by pink roses. But yesterday white gazebos had been set up over the tombs. Whitesuited and masked forensic scientists strapped on headlamps to climb down and search the underground chamber. Clinical tools set aside to measure recovered bones lay unused on a nearby table. The Vatican said it had informed the princesses' descendants that their remains were missing. It said it would look into work done on the tombs in the 19th century, and again in the 1960s and 1970s, in a bid to find out what happened to them.

Dozens of journalists and crowds of curious tourists had gathered at the entrance to the Vatican nearest the cemetery. Supporters of the Orlandi family waited outside, in T-shirts reading "The Truth Sets Us Free" and "Where Is Her Body?" "This mystery is part of this country's dark history," Sgro said, in reference to a series of decades-old cases in Italy dogged by unanswered questions and beloved by conspiracy theorists.—AFP

Merkel sits through anthems after shaking spells

BERLIN: Angela Merkel remained seated during national anthems at an official ceremony yesterday, as the German chancellor apparently sought to prevent a repeat of uncontrollable shaking with a rare change of protocol. With questions swirling about Merkel's health after she suffered three episodes of shaking in public in less than a month, the veteran leader opted to play safe.

After greeting Denmark's new Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen at the portico of the chancellery, a smiling Merkel walked her over to a podium where both leaders took their seats. The unusual move came a day after a similar ceremony when the German chancellor was seen shaking involuntarily for the third time.

On Wednesday, Merkel began trembling as national anthems were being played at the reception of Finnish Prime Minister Antti Rinne. Just over an hour later, she attended a press conference as planned and told jour-

nalists that her health was no cause for concern. She explained that she was simply still in a phase of "processing" a previous shaking spell, but that "there has been progress". "I will have to live with it for a while," added Merkel, who turns 65 next week. "Just like how it has come, one day it will go away too," she said.

More transparency?

The shaking on Wednesday was visible although less severe than during the first episode in June. On that occasion she appeared unsteady and shook as she stood in the midday sun next to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, whom she was welcoming with military honors. That first bout of shaking was blamed on dehydration. But a second episode struck a week later at the end of June, just hours before she was due to board a plane for a G20 summit in Japan.

Officials have sought to play down the repeated shaking, insisting that Merkel is well while refusing to address detailed questions about her medical condition. But several media outlets said Merkel would need to provide more transparency if she wanted the speculation to go away. The daily Sueddeutsche Zeitung said Merkel's explanation belies "her fear that the public could doubt her strength and ability, especially if she admitted that she has allowed herself to be examined. Meaning: she herself has doubts". — AFP

International

When US puts a border between migrant kids and their caretakers

Can you help me get my son back?

EL PASO: On June 12, Gerardo, a 41-year-old indigenous bricklayer from Guatemala, appeared before a US immigration judge in El Paso, Texas. Since crossing the US-Mexico border illegally two months earlier with his 14-year-old son, he had been separated from the boy and forced to wait in Mexico for his hearing. Now, he had only one question for the judge: "Can you help me get my son back?"

After they crossed into the United States, a border patrol agent declared the boy's photocopied birth certificate to be fake, casting doubt on their father-son relationship. Despite Gerardo's protestations in broken Spanish, officers took the boy, Walter, away. Gerardo was sent to Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, to wait out his immigration court proceedings, with no idea where Walter was taken and no instructions on how to find him, according to Gerardo and his attorneys, who recounted the court appearance and circumstances of his case to Reuters.

They asked that his surname be withheld because Gerardo fears for his family's safety in Guatemala. In a phone call to a cousin in Arkansas, Gerardo said, he learned that Walter was at a large migrant children's shelter near Miami. Separated from his dad, Walter later recalled, "I felt like the world was crashing down on me." As a new Trump administration policy rapidly expands, family separations increasingly are complicated by a formidable barrier: an international border.

Started in January, the policy known as "Migrant Protection Protocols" (MPP) requires some migrants to wait in Mexico for their immigration cases to be processed, while others — based largely on border authorities' discretion — are allowed to wait in the United States. Under

MPP, about 18,500 migrants have been returned to Mexico, Mexican officials say.

When children are sent north of the border and caregivers south, communication and legal coordination suffer, kids' emotional health can deteriorate and simply finding one another again can take weeks, according to about two dozen interviews with migrant families, their attorneys and advocates, case workers and researchers, as well as courtroom observations. Although a court last year halted the widespread "zero tolerance" separations of migrant parents and children at the border, US officials still separate certain family members there.

They separate children from parents if they believe documents to be fraudulent, the parent has a criminal record, they can't prove parentage, or the child appears to be at risk. Officials also routinely separate children from non-parent relatives with whom they traveled, including aunts, siblings and grandparents — an approach also followed during the Obama administration that is meant to stem child trafficking.

This year, under MPP, border officials in some locations have been given the option to send such adults to Mexico rather than detain or release them in the United States pending their court hearings. The separated children are sent to US-based children's shelters.

A US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) official said that parents are not being separated from children due to the MPP program, and did not respond when asked whether they track children separated from other family members they had traveled with. The department's Customs and Border Protection agency declined to comment on Gerardo's case, citing privacy concerns.

postponed the operation last month after the date was leaked, but last week said it would take place after July 4. "They'll be starting fairly soon, but I don't call them raids, we're removing people, all of these people who have come in over the years illegally," Trump told reporters at the White House on Friday.

Last month ICE officials said operations would target recently-arrived undocumented migrants in a bid to discourage a surge of Central American families at the southwest border. ICE said in a previous statement its focus was arresting people with criminal histories but any immigrant found in violation of US laws was subject to arrest. The threatened raids have rattled immigrant communities and come after apprehensions of migrants on the southwest border hit a 13-year high in May before easing in June as Mexico increased immigration enforcement.

Democratic lawmakers visited an El Paso, Texas, Border Patrol station on Monday and said migrants were being held in "horrifying" conditions, with women told to drink out of a toilet, a claim that has been disputed. Immigrant families arrested together will be held together, when possible, in family detention centers in Texas and Pennsylvania, the officials told the Times. But because of space limitations, some might stay in hotel rooms until travel is arranged. — Reuters



TEXAS: A Customs and Border Patrol truck drives through a local golf course in Eagle Pass, Texas. — AFP

In general, the Trump administration has said that it is cracking down on fraud at the border. "We believe (smuggling organizations) have been coaching individuals by saying if you come to the border with a child and you purport to be a family unit, you will not get detained and you will be released into the interior," said Gregory Nevano, assistant director at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency's Homeland Security Investigations. "We are trying to save and rescue children," Nevano said.

ICE officials said they interviewed 2,475 "family units" (purported parents and children) on the southwest border who "presented indicia of fraud" between mid-April and July 5. Of those,

352 were found to be falsely claiming parent-child relationships. Attorneys and children's case-workers say that when the caretaking adults are sent to Mexico, it's more difficult to contact them because they often don't have a fixed address.

It's also harder for the adults and children to connect: The 1-800 number available online to locate children in US shelters doesn't work from Mexico. Meanwhile, younger children may not know the details of their asylum case or even the location of family members who might help or sponsor them in the United States. And in cases like Gerardo's, the geographic boundary can make it harder to identify and rectify a separation apparently made in error. — Reuters

Mass immigration roundups in US to start Sunday

NEW YORK: Roundups of undocumented immigrant families will start Sunday in 10 US cities, fulfilling a hardline immigration stance from US President Donald Trump which will be a key issue in his 2020 re-election bid, the New York Times reported. The raids will be conducted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents over a number of days starting July 14, the Times reported citing unnamed sources including two current and one former homeland security officials.

Reuters could not independently confirm the pending government action early today. The officials told the Times that ICE agents were targeting at least 2,000 immigrants who have been ordered deported but remain in the country illegally.

Trump said on July 5 that the mass roundups would begin "fairly soon," even as migrant advocates vowed their communities would be "ready" when immigration officers come. He

Migrant whose daughter died slams 'cruelty'

WASHINGTON: A Guatemalan woman whose infant daughter died after being held by US immigration authorities denounced the "cruelty" of the country's migrant detention centers on Wednesday. Yazmin Juarez spoke out at "Kids in Cages: Inhumane Treatment at the Border," a congressional hearing staged amid a series of scandals over poor conditions suffered by detained migrants that has rocked Washington.

"If today I can make a change, if I can make a difference by telling you what is happening with the ICE detentions, the cruelty... it is extremely unfair," a tearful Juarez told reporters before the hearing, referring to US Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Juarez said she fled to the United States last year with her 19-month-old Mariee "because I feared for our

lives in Guatemala." She crossed the border and claimed asylum but says she and Mariee were "locked in a freezing cold cage for a few days," then moved to an ICE detention center, when her daughter became ill.

"I begged the doctors and medical staff to give her the care I knew she needed but they didn't," Juarez said. "When ICE finally released us, I took Mariee... to a doctor and then to the emergency room. But it was too late. Mariee never left the hospital," she said. Speaking before the House Civil Rights and Civil Liberties subcommittee, Juarez said that "I watched my baby girl die—slowly and painfully—a few months before her second birthday."

"The world should know what is happening to so many babies and children inside these ICE detention facilities," she said. "My bright beautiful girl is gone but I hope her story will spur America's government to act." Representative Elijah Cummings, the chairman of the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, denounced what he termed "government-sponsored child abuse on a grand scale." "There must be greater accountability," said Representative Joaquin Castro, the chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. — AFP

International

India turns to slavery survivors to uncover hidden victims, offer help

Initiatives aim at building trust between victims and state

CHENNAI: When Anjali wanders the backstreets of a city in southern India where she was once forced into prostitution in the name of religion, she does not go seeking answers, closure or revenge. The 39-year-old survivor searches Raichur for other victims of the illegal devadasi system - which sees girls "dedicated" to temples and trapped in sex slavery - trying to earn their trust and refer them to rehabilitation schemes run by the government.

Anjali is part of an initiative by the Karnataka state government that has turned to survivors and community workers in a push to find and support more trafficking victims. "The devadasi practice is illegal but continues quietly," Anjali who declined to give her real name as her children were unaware that she was sex trafficked as a teenager, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in an interview over the phone.

"Since it is illegal, people trapped in it are very scared of coming out," said the community leader and member of Taaras, a coalition of women in sex work with a presence in 12 states. "They fear they will face police action and suffer in silence. The only time they speak up is when I go to them." Several state governments in India are increasingly working with survivor networks and community groups - which include thousands of volunteers - to trace, identify and help victims.

Survivors not only know where to look for victims, but can help them overcome any stigma and shame, as well as mistrust in the authorities, according to campaigners and state officials. From community-led search-and-rescue efforts to mobile apps designed to give survivors a say, various initiatives are aiming to build trust between

victims and the state and improve support as the country uncovers a growing number of modern-day slaves.

More than 23,100 people nationwide - 60% being children - were rescued from human traffickers in 2016, up by a fifth on the previous year, the latest available government data shows. Yet charities that deal with trafficking say the true number is likely to be far higher, and state governments are trying to track more victims by working with communities and survivors.

Reaching out

India offers a rehabilitation and reintegration scheme for trafficking survivors - from counseling to giving them land and vocational training in skills such as embroidery and basket weaving - yet campaigners say few actually end up benefiting. Most survivors are unaware of their rights and unable to access them without the support of a lawyer or a charity - or are put off by the arduous process of seeking help, they said.

While state governments periodically undertake surveys to identify the number of survivors and document beneficiaries of various support schemes, officials have said they lose track of many victims who go back to their villages after being rescued. In Karnataka, survivors such as Anjali are helping the government monitor the rehabilitation process of victims. "It is a wonderful, neighborhood watch sort of system," said Vasundhara Devi, managing director of the Karnataka State Women Development Corporation, a government body.

"We leverage the connection community workers have to gain access to others and bring them under the devadasi rehabilitation program." Similarly, in neighboring Telangana, the State AIDS Control Society tracks the health of trafficking survivors with the help of a sex workers group that liaises directly with such victims. "They don't open up to government officials but confide in peers who have been through their journey," said civil servant Anna Prasanna Kumari, adding that each community worker gave the state access to larger groups of women in need of help.

Kumari said a new mobile app, launched on a trial basis in five districts of southern Telangana state this May after being proposed by community leaders, is being used to collect data on access to health for slavery survivors and follow up on cases. In eastern state of West Bengal, another mobile app - Utthan - allows trafficking victims enrolled in rehabilitation schemes to rate government officials on their sensitivity, efficiency and the time taken to respond to survivors and their needs.

The feedback is sent to senior officials and since its creation in 2018, the app has seen survivors receive care quicker and raised awareness among civil servants about the crime and the trauma facing victims, according to its users. "With this app, the relationship between the policy maker, survivor and officials on ground has become more equal," said psychologist Pompee Banerjee of anti-trafficking charity Sanjog.—Reuters

Bangladesh charges former chief justice with graft

DHAKA: Bangladesh's anti-graft office has charged the former chief justice with corruption nearly two years after he fled the country saying he was forced to resign, an official said yesterday. Surendra Kumar Sinha, who had led the South Asian nation's Supreme Court to a landmark verdict on judicial independence that went against the government, left Bangladesh in late 2017 amid widespread allegations he had been pressured to step aside.

Opposition groups raised fears that his departure was a blow to the credibility of the judiciary in the Muslim-majority country, ruled by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League party since 2009. On Wednesday, the Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) filed a lawsuit against Sinha and 10 others including a former bank chief executive on charges of graft, money laundering and abuse of power. They were charged with using fake credit papers to launder 40 million taka and transfer it to the account of Sinha, ACC secretary Dilwar Bakht told AFP.

"The case was filed at the district office of the ACC on Wednesday," he said. This is the first time in Bangladesh's history that a former chief justice has been charged with any offence. Sinha's unceremonious departure came after a rare statement from the Supreme Court in October 2017 said other judges had accused him of graft and refused to sit with him at the top bench. Just months earlier, Sinha had led the Supreme Court in scrapping parliament's power to sack top judges, a move hailed by lawyers as a crucial safeguard for a secular judiciary in the nation of 168 million.—AFP

Pakistan train collision kills 11, injures 78

ISLAMABAD: At least 11 people were killed and nearly 80 injured when two trains collided in central Pakistan early yesterday, officials said. The incident took place in Rahim Yar Khan district in Punjab province when a passenger train coming from the eastern city of Lahore rammed into a goods train that had stopped at a crossing, a senior government official said. A senior Pakistan Railways official gave AFP the toll, adding: "We fear the death toll will rise as rescue teams are still cutting (through) the wreckage."

Earlier, local police officer Omar Salamat told TV channel Geo News that dozens had been taken to nearby hospitals. "The condition

of three to four passengers is critical," he said. Train accidents are common in Pakistan, where the railways have seen decades of decline due to corruption, mismanagement and lack of investment. TV footage from the site showed the heavily damaged train engine and carriages, as emergency workers and local people used metal-cutting tools and heavy cranes.

Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed, the country's minister for railways told TV channel Aaj that an investigation had been launched to determine the causes of the incident. Prime Minister Imran Khan tweeted his condolences, adding: "Have asked Railways Minister to take emergency steps to counter decades of neglect of railway infrastructure & ensure safety standards." Also yesterday at least nine passengers were killed and 22 injured when a speeding bus overturned near the capital Islamabad, a police official said, while a landslide in the northwestern Swat valley killed six people, all from one family.—AFP



RAHIM YAR KHAN: Pakistani rescue personnel and local residents search for victims in a wreck train carriage after two trains collided in Rahim Yar Khan district in Punjab province.—AFP

International

Thousands of schools, universities declare 'climate emergency'

Schools pledge to increase sustainability curriculum

NEW YORK: More than 7,000 colleges, universities, technical schools and community colleges from around the world declared a climate emergency in a joint letter which was set to be delivered to the United Nations on Wednesday. "Declaring a climate emergency changes the nature of the urgency in higher education," Sam Barratt, chief of education and youth for UN Environment told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Networks of schools pledged to increase sustainability curriculum and campus outreach, boost climate change research and skill-building opportunities for students and reach carbon neutrality by 2050, some as soon as 2030. "This isn't a nice-to-do, it's a must do," Barratt said. The letter was coordinated by the UN Environment's Youth and Education Alliance, The Alliance for Sustainability and Leadership in Education and Second Nature, a nonprofit working with colleges and universities on climate action.

It was delivered to UN ministers at the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative ahead of the United Nations Climate Action Summit on Sept 23. UN member nations unanimously adopted 17 global development goals in 2015, setting out a wide-ranging "to-do" list tackling issues such as conflict, hunger, land degradation, gender inequality and climate change. A recent report called climate change "the greatest challenge to sustainable development."

The letter marked the first joint effort on climate change by a global network of higher and further education institutions. Six of the institutions are already carbon neutral, including Washington, DC's American University which reached the goal two years ahead of schedule. Such successes spurred some schools eyeing a 2050 date to push that up to 2030, said Tim Carter, president of Second Nature. "There's no reason to wait," Carter said. "We're already behind the eight ball."

Beyond striving for carbon neutrality and curriculum expansion, Barratt emphasized that learning institutions have a responsibility to shape students' behavior and mindset as they enter the world, both at work and as private citizens. Barratt and Carter both noted the range of learning institutions from technical training institutes to elite universities that had signed on, reflecting a wide demographic of future workers and leaders. "Higher education is the crucible through which the next generation of leaders emerge," said Barratt.

The letter remains open for online signatures from leaders of institutions and networks representing them. "We call on governments and other education institutions to join us in declaring a Climate Emergency and back this up with actions that will help create a better future for both people and our planet," the letter read. — Reuters



COLOGNE: A placard reading 'save our environment' lies on the ground during a five day protest camp of 'Fridays For Future' for climate action in the center of the city of Cologne, western Germany.—AFP

Indonesia to build country's longest bridge

JAKARTA: Indonesia plans to build a 7 km bridge to connect two islands in the Malacca Strait, close to Singapore, as part of efforts to develop industry and tourism in the area, the government said yesterday. The bridge connecting Batam and Bintan islands will cost an estimated 4 trillion rupiah, the office of the cabinet secretary said in a statement yesterday, and will be the longest in the Southeast Asian country. The bridge aims to capitalize on expansion of Singapore's Changi Airport with the development of a new Terminal 5, which will have transport connections to Bintan. President Joko Widodo, who has made building infrastructure the cornerstone of his first term in office, has pledged to continue cutting bottlenecks Southeast Asia's largest economy in his second term, which starts in October. His administration has also sought to market Batam, Indonesia's only free trade zone, to investors looking to relocate factories out of China amid a simmering trade war between Beijing and Washington. Construction of the bridge is due to start in 2020 and take three to four years to complete, the office said.—Reuters

Follow our model for 'happy' Xinjiang, China tells West

GENEVA: China said yesterday its treatment of ethnic Muslims in "happy" and "secure" Xinjiang region was a model for other nations to follow despite a bombardment of Western criticism. Nearly two dozen nations at the UN Human Rights Council this week urged China to halt persecution of ethnic Uighurs in Xinjiang, where UN experts and activists say at least 1 million are held in detention centers.

Chinese diplomat Jiang Duan told the council yesterday a few hypocritical Western nations were distorting facts to smear Beijing over what it describes as vocational training centers in Xinjiang intended to combat extremism and provide new skills. "Actually the experience in Xinjiang in this field can be introduced to other countries," Jiang added, saying the centers help reintegrate people indoctrinated by radicalism.

"Now the situation in Xinjiang is stable, and the people are united, and their rights are fully respected ... During the past three years, there has not been a single incident of a terrorist attack, and people in Xinjiang feel much better and much more happy and secure." Xinjiang, three times the size of France, is a largely desert region in

China's northwest. Hundreds of people have been killed there in the past few years in violence between Uighurs, a mostly Muslim people who speak a Turkic language, and ethnic majority Han Chinese, especially in the heavily Uighur south of Xinjiang.

China has blamed the violence on Islamist extremists and separatists, while Uighur exiles and activists point to frustration at Chinese controls on their culture and religion. The letter criticizing China was signed by the ambassadors of 22 countries, including Australia, Canada, Japan, Britain, France, Germany and Switzerland, but not the United States which quit the U.N. body a year ago. They urged China to allow international independent experts, including U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet, proper access to Xinjiang.

Bachelet, a former president of Chile, has pushed China to grant the United Nations access to investigate reports of disappearances and arbitrary detentions, particularly of Muslims in Xinjiang. China's representative said international organizations and media who visited Xinjiang had found the situation was different from its portrayal in the West, and that officials from countries behind the letter declined an invitation to visit.

He accused Western nations of failing to show concern when Xinjiang suffered terrorist attacks, then making irresponsible assessments after the population's lives had improved. "Those allegations by a small group of Western countries and NGOs cannot do away with the tremendous achievements that were made against terrorism and radicalization and cannot change the fact that Xinjiang people are leading a happy life," he said.—Reuters

International

Mainlanders among Hong Kong protesters, though many stay away

Protests portrayed as foreign-funded plot in China

HONG KONG: As Hong Kong is rocked by political chaos, Chinese mainland Briony Lin has found herself joining the mass protests, an act that would be unthinkable under the authoritarian regime back home. The huge rallies and clashes coursing through the international finance hub are the latest outburst of anger by Hong Kongers who believe Beijing is stamping down on the city's unique freedoms and culture.

But for the hundreds of thousands of Chinese mainlanders who make the city their home, the movement sparks mixed emotions. Some strongly disagree with the protests, which were set off by a now-suspended plan to allow extraditions to the Chinese mainland. Many have sympathies with the movement, but keep it to themselves-fearful of retribution by Chinese authorities, or being made to feel unwelcome by local protesters.

A small number of people, like Lin, have taken to the streets. "This is the first social movement that I've experienced," said the 27-year-old, who moved to Hong Kong four years ago from a city in northern China. "Hong Kong is the only place in China where freedom of speech can be exercised... I want to be there for my own rights and be there to see for myself what the protests are like," she told AFP. Lin said she was happy to give her name and, unlike many, eschewed wearing a mask at the rallies-although she has stayed clear of the more violent confrontations.

Mainland influx

Some one million mainlanders have migrated to Hong Kong since its 1997 handover to China, a diaspora that is itself a source of friction in a city of 7.3 million beset by sky-high property prices and a huge housing shortage. Inside Hong Kong they are afforded the same free speech protec-

tions as any other inhabitant, but they risk censure or punishment on return to the mainland should authorities deem them to be critical of Beijing. Lin said she was indifferent to politics before she moved to the city. But the disappearance of five Hong Kong booksellers into Chinese mainland custody-and discovering more about the Cultural Revolution on its 50th anniversary-changed that. "If the (extradition) bill is passed, the disappearance of booksellers would happen again within the law," she said. Not all share Lin's bravado. In China the protests have been portrayed as a violent, foreign-funded plot, not a mass movement against Beijing's increased influence over the semi-autonomous hub.

AFP approached some 20 mainland tourists in Kowloon to ask them their thoughts and only six had heard there were rallies. "It is rare to see protests on the mainland," said a 21-year-old student surnamed Zhu who said she had read about the protests on the Twitter-like Weibo platform. Another tourist, who gave her surname as Hao, said she had read in Chinese state media that Britain "participated in and provoked this incident". "I don't know whether it is correct or not," she added. Mainlanders who live in Hong Kong cannot profess such ignorance, but many "Hong Kong drifters"-the phrase adopted by young, educated mainlanders who live and work in the finance hub-are still very cautious about expressing political views.

"Protesting is quite sensitive for us... I don't want to bear any risks," said Liu, 30, who works in insurance and came to Hong Kong seven years ago. He said many of his mainland contemporaries hoped the protests would die down soon. Kay Zeng, 28, from Guangdong province, just across the border with Hong Kong, said she disapproved

yuan, with 126,100 hectares of farmland damaged and 1,600 homes collapsed, the Ministry of Emergency Management has estimated.

As many as 77,000 people had been evacuated, it added. The affected areas include the southern provinces of Hunan and Jiangxi, eastern Zhejiang, the southeastern province of Fujian, and the northern parts of the southwestern Guangxi region. The first three areas are expected to be doused again in a fresh burst of torrential rain on Friday and Saturday, weather officials said, along with the central province of Hubei, eastern Anhui and the province of Guizhou in the southwest.

The Yangtze River in Jiangxi is expected to exceed its warning level for the first time this year around Sunday, swelled by heavy rain that could last until Tuesday, state TV said. Extreme weather is becoming increasingly frequent in China, with temperatures in some parts hitting records this year. Weather officials warned on July 3 that rainfall in the south could surpass the average by 30% to 70% over a 10-day stretch.—Reuters



HONG KONG: This picture shows Minnie Li, lecturer at the social science department of the Education University of Hong Kong, posing for a photograph after an interview in Hong Kong. —AFP

of the extradition bill being rushed through, but would not take to the streets. "I've never participated in a march and I seldom publicly express my opinions," she told AFP.

Right thing to do

But small numbers are adopting the pro-democracy cause. A group of mainland Chinese migrants openly participated in recent rallies, holding banners and shouting slogans in their own dialects, not the city's Cantonese language. Minnie Li, a university lecturer who came from Shanghai to Hong Kong in 2008, helped organize the group. She said mainland migrants have always attended pro-democracy rallies, but most of the time they kept themselves hidden in the crowd.

Li said it took years for her to pluck up the courage to attend-something she felt more able to do once she acquired a permanent residency card. "I believe visibility is a power. If you have a secret stance but dare not to tell others about it then you can't transform that into a power. So I hope to show our power through our presence," she told AFP. Some of the more hardline Hong Kong protesters take an openly hostile view towards mainlanders, calling them "locusts" and other insults. That animosity used to make Li hesitate, but not anymore. "Your emotions, your action and your values aren't based on where you were born, or your ethnic group," she said. "You do something because you think it is the right thing to do." —AFP

Heavy rain, floods in China force evacuation of nearly 80,000

BEIJING: The heaviest average rainfall to lash a swathe of southern and eastern China in more than half a century brought torrential rain and floods, destroying houses, damaging crops and forcing the evacuation of nearly 80,000 people, state media said. Even more rain is expected, state television said on Thursday, after average rainfall in the affected areas this week was recorded as 51% higher than in the corresponding periods of previous years, and the largest since 1961.

State television showed images of half-submerged buildings and flooded streets in some of the worst-hit areas. Trains along the Beijing-Guangzhou railway were delayed after rising waters blocked a bridge in the southern province of Hunan, it added. The latest episode has caused losses of 2.69 billion

India to receive below-average monsoon rains

MUMBAI: India may receive below-average rainfall in the next two weeks with a large deficit in the soybean and cotton growing central and western regions, a weather department official said yesterday, raising concerns over the output of summer-sown crops. Monsoon rains are crucial for farm output and economic growth, as about 55 percent of India's arable land is rain-fed, and agriculture accounts for about 15 percent of a \$2.5-trillion economy that is the third biggest in Asia.

"Weather model is showing deficiency in rainfall over central and western India in next two weeks," said an official with the India Meteorological Department (IMD), who declined to be named as he was not authorized to speak with media. "The northeast and foothills of Himalaya could get good rainfall," he said. India received 28 percent more rainfall than the 50-year average in the week to July 10, data from the IMD showed,

after getting poor rainfall for five straight weeks.

This week's heavier monsoon cut the rainfall deficit since the start of the season on June 1 to 14% from 28 percent last week. But the deficit could widen again in the next fortnight, said the official, adding "After two weeks, there are indications of good rainfall. The monsoon is seen reviving in last week of July." India is still recovering from a drought last year that ravaged crops, killed livestock, emptied reservoirs and drained water supplies to city dwellers and some industries.

Some municipalities like Chennai, Mumbai and Hyderabad were forced to cut water supplies to ensure stocks lasted until monsoon rains replenished reservoirs. This year rains arrived in the southern state of Kerala a week late on June 8. The developing Cyclone Vayu in the Arabian Sea drew moisture from the monsoon and weakened its progress. The weak start to the monsoon has delayed planting, with farmers sowing crops on 23.4 million hectares as of July 5, down 27 percent from a year earlier.

Farmers in India plant summer crops in June and July after arrival of monsoon rains. "The next two weeks are crucial. Rainfall deficiency during this period could hit productivity of summer crops," said Vandana Bharti, assistant vice president at SMC Comtrade Ltd. —Reuters

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A model presents a creation from Spanish designer Duarte's Spring/Summer 2020 collection during the Mercedes Benz Fashion Week in Madrid. —AFP

Social media rescue Morocco's last woman potters

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This picture taken yesterday on the beach of the northern France coastal village of Leffrinckoucke near Dunkirk shows a Blockhaus of the World War II "atlantic wall" covered with thousands of mirror pieces to form an art piece untitled "Reflechir" ("think" in French) signed as "Anonymous." — AFP

K-pop star who avoided draft may be allowed to return home

A K-pop singer who was deported and barred from South Korea for avoiding military service by changing nationality came a step closer to being allowed to return in a surprise ruling yesterday. South Korea's highest court said it was unlawful to deny a visa to Steve Yoo, who had huge success in the 1990s, more than 15 years after he was kicked out of the country. Every able-bodied South Korean man is required to serve nearly two years of military service, often in remote areas along the heavily militarized border with North Korea.

Just as he was about to be called up in 2002, Yoo, better known in South Korea as Yoo Seung-jun, gave up his South Korean citizenship to become a naturalized US citizen and so did not have to serve, sparking public outrage. The former star, now aged 42, filed a lawsuit four years ago challenging the decision of a South

Korean consulate in the US to deny him a visa. The case had already been dismissed twice by lower courts, which said his return would demoralize troops and provoke teenagers to evade conscription.

But in a ruling Thursday, the Supreme Court sent the case back to Seoul High Court for review, saying in a statement that "the law has no restrictions that prevent (him) from visiting South Korea". A recent survey showed that almost 70 percent of South Koreans thought his ban should be upheld. Decades after the end of the 1950-53 Korean War, for many young Korean men military service is an unwanted and deeply resented intrusion that interferes with their studies and career.

Broken bones

Some have taken extreme measures to avoid conscription, including a dozen music students who were caught last year having deliberately put on weight before their medical exam, hoping to be declared too heavy for service. Others have undergone unnecessary surgery, including extracting their own teeth, and given themselves broken bones. And like Yoo, some—including adult children of the country's powerful lawmakers—have avoided the duty by obtaining foreign passports and giving up their South Korean citizenship.

Refusing to serve the duty is a crime in the South, which is still technically at war with nuclear-armed Pyongyang. It can lead to jail terms and stigma that can affect social standing and employment prospects. To justify Yoo's re-entry ban, the South Korean government said that as a public figure Yoo violated the immigration act, which states that foreigners may be stopped from entering the country if they "pose a threat to public health and interest".

Lee Yong-suk, an activist at Seoul-based NGO World Without War, said the government has been taking the wrong approach to the issue. "Those who have served the duty are angry because there are so many problems with the country's military," Lee told AFP. "Rather than really trying to improve the situation and make things better for conscripts, they have unfairly targeted and singled out an individual." — AFP



This picture shows Korean-American singer Steve Yoo, better known in South Korea as Yoo Seung-jun, after he was denied entry into South Korea at the immigration bureau of Incheon airport, west of Seoul. — AFP

Disney star Boyce suffered from epilepsy

Disney star Cameron Boyce, who died last week in his sleep following a seizure, suffered from epilepsy, his family confirmed Wednesday. The 20-year-old actor, best known for his starring role in the "Descendants" TV movies, passed away "due to a seizure as a result of an ongoing medical condition, and that condition was epilepsy," the family told People magazine. "We are still trying to navigate our way through this extremely heart-wrenching time, and continue to ask for privacy so that the family and all who knew and loved him can grieve his loss and make arrangements for his funeral—which in and of itself, is agonizing," his family added.

The Los Angeles County Medical Examiner's office said Monday that an autopsy had been performed on Boyce, but an official cause of death has yet to be announced. The medical examiner said the actor was found unresponsive at his home on Saturday afternoon and was pronounced dead at the scene. Tributes have poured in for the actor since his death, including from former first lady Michelle Obama, who tweeted a photo with Boyce on Tuesday night.

"I was lucky enough to share a few moments with Cameron Boyce—on set, at the White House and on a service project—enough time to recognize that not only did he have incredible talent, but also an incredible heart," Obama wrote. "Sending love & hugs to his family, friends and his many, many fans." The actor's "Descendants" co-star Dove Cameron also posted a tearful six-part video on Instagram, referring to Boyce as an "earth angel." "Cameron was one of my favorite people alive in the world, though I know that's not unique to me," she said. "Cameron was magic—an earth angel." — AFP



In this file photo actor Cameron Boyce attends the World Premiere of The Emoji Movie. — AFP

Texan widow gives massive donation of art to French gallery

A Texan widow who discovered a love for French art during a trip to Paris in the 1970s is to donate another part of her vast collection of 19th-century masterpieces to France. Marlene Hays and her late husband, businessman Spencer Hays, had already given 187 artworks to the Orsay museum in Paris worth more than 173 million euros (\$195 million), the biggest donation to a French museum since World War II. Now Hays, 82, who was widowed in 2017, is giving a further donation of 106 works from mostly post-Impressionist artists including Matisse, Bonnard, Modigliani and the sculptor Camille Claudel.

The latest gift of 40 paintings, 47 works on paper and 19 sculptures brings the Hays' donation to the world's greatest collection of Impressionist art to nearly 300 pieces. The couple—who used to give each other masterworks for their birthdays—were made commanders of the Legion d'Honneur, one of France's highest honors, for their generosity by former president, Francois Hollande, in 2016.

Spencer Hays said then that their private collection of more than 600 artworks worth an estimated 350 million euros "would be gifted to the French people for the benefit of art lovers around the world" after their death. French Culture Minister Franck Riester praised Marlene Hays for her "exceptional gesture... which is a historic enrichment of France's national collection" of late 19th-century and early 20th-century art. — AFP



US actor Jamie Foxx (center), daughter Anelise (right) and friends arrive for the world premiere of Disney's "The Lion King" at the Dolby theatre. — AFP photos



Donald Glover attends the premiere of Disney's "The Lion King".

Beyonce leads red carpet stars as 'The Lion King' roars back to life



US singer/songwriter Beyonce arrives for the world premiere of Disney's "The Lion King" at the Dolby theatre in Hollywood.

Beyonce led the stars behind the voices of "The Lion King" down the red carpet on Tuesday at the world premiere of the remake of the 1994 Disney movie which uses computer-generated imagery to bring a realistic look to Pride Rock. Depicting stunning African scenery, the new movie follows the same plot as the original Oscar-winning animation about lion cub Simba, who flees his kingdom after his villainous uncle Scar connives to take his father Mufasa's place as king.

Actor Donald Glover is the voice behind the grown-up Simba, while Beyonce portrays his friend Nala. The cast also includes Chiwetel Ejiofor (Scar), Seth Rogen (Pumbaa) and James Earl Jones, who voiced Mufasa in the 1994 film. "I just listened to what (Beyonce) had to teach me," Glover said of working with the Grammy Award winner. "Only very few times do you get to work with somebody as iconic as Beyonce," Glover said. "I was like, okay, we are like blending this thing together so let me just listen to what she is doing and play off of that."

"The Lion King" was an instant hit with audiences around the world when it was originally released. A hugely successful musical theatre version still runs on New York's Broadway and in London. "It's like a recipe that will be delicious forever, it just works," Rogen said of the story. "The Lion King" remake, which begins its worldwide cinema roll-out in China on Friday before hitting other countries next week, follows new versions of "Aladdin" and "Dumbo". It is directed by Jon Favreau, who was behind the 2016 remake of "The Jungle Book". — Reuters



British actor Chiwetel Ejiofor arrives for the world premiere of Disney's "The Lion King".



Seth Rogen attends the premiere of Disney's "The Lion King" at Dolby Theatre.



Lady Gaga to launch beauty line on Amazon

Pop star Lady Gaga on Tuesday announced a line of beauty products exclusively for sale on Amazon in a boost to the online retailer's cosmetics business. The brand, Haus Laboratories, will launch in September for shoppers in nearly a dozen countries, including the United States, Germany and Japan, Amazon said. The move underscores how the world's biggest online retailer is increasing competition with traditional cosmetics sellers like Ulta Beauty and Sephora-parent LVMH, which recently launched a beauty brand by singer Rihanna.

Lady Gaga, who shared an Academy Award this year for the original song "Shallow," said Amazon was the right partner because it embraced her message of self-acceptance. "There are companies that see me and what I stand for and the way that I view the world, and if it's not perfectly in line with what they do ... they'll be like, 'Can you just change half of the equation?'" the singer told publication The Business of Fashion, which reported the news earlier Tuesday. "The answer is no. No deal." Amazon's push into cosmetics includes a private label skin care brand called Belei. — Reuters



A man riding a carriage with Kladruber horses. — AFP photos



Photo shows Kladruber horses being led from their stable in Kladruby and Labem town.



A Kladruber horse licks the tripod of an AFP video journalist.

Oldest Czech stud farm gallops onto UNESCO list

The Czech Republic's national stud farm made it onto the UNESCO world heritage list thanks to a unique landscape of flat, sandy soils, fields, pastures and forest where horses have been bred for at least five centuries, its director said on Wednesday. "It is the only landscape preserved and used for its original purpose," of horse breeding, stud farm director Jiri Machek told AFP. UNESCO announced on Saturday it was adding the farm to the World Heritage List, describing it as a "Landscape for Breeding and Training of Ceremonial Carriage Horses at Kladruby nad Labem".

Horse breeding in the town of Kladruby nad Labem around 60 kilometers (40 miles) east of the capital Prague dates back to the Middle Ages, he added. It gave rise to a stud farm founded by the ruling Habsburg dynasty in the 1560s when Czech lands were governed from Vienna. "In 1579 it was promoted to the imperial stud farm to breed horses for Rudolph II's imperial court,"



Photo shows the Kladruber horses in their enclosure.



A man harnesses a Kladruber horse in Kladruby and Labem town.

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Machek added. A UNESCO statement described the farm as “one of Europe’s leading horse-breeding institutions, developed at a time when horses played vital roles in transport, agriculture, military support and aristocratic representation.

“The site consists of flat, sandy soils and includes fields, fenced pastures, a forested area and buildings, all designed with the main objective of breeding and training Kladruber horses, a type of draft (work) horse used in ceremonies by the Habsburg imperial court.” The national stud farm comprises the Kladruby farm, breeding about 250 white horses, and another farm in the nearby town of Slatinany, which breeds roughly the same number of black horses. Local horses are used as ceremonial animals, particularly in the Swedish and Danish royal courts, and also by police in Czech cities.

The stud farm is the 14th Czech site on the UNESCO World Heritage list, alongside the centers of Prague and the picturesque southern city of Cesky Krumlov, as well as the northwestern mining Krušnohoří region also listed last week. Covering an area of 1,310 hectares (3,200 acres), the Kladruby farm attracted 65,000 visitors last year. “Given the UNESCO listing, we expect visitor numbers to increase,” said Machek. — AFP



Photo shows the Kladruber horses in their enclosure.



Photo shows a Kladruber horse being led from his stable in Kladruby and Labem town.



Photo shows a Kladruber horse in his stable in Kladruby and Labem town.

‘Oldest remains’ outside Africa reset human migration clock

A 210,000-year-old skull has been identified as the earliest modern human remains found outside Africa, putting the clock back on mankind’s arrival in Europe by more than 150,000 years, researchers said Wednesday. In a startling discovery that changes our understanding of how modern man populated Eurasia, the findings support the idea that Homo sapiens made several, sometimes unsuccessful migrations from Africa over tens of thousands of years.

Southeast Europe has long been considered a major transport corridor for modern humans from Africa. But until now the earliest evidence of Homo sapiens on the continent dated back only around 50,000 years. There has however been a number of discoveries indicating the ancient presence of Neanderthals—an early human cousin—across the continent.

Two fossilized but badly damaged skulls unearthed in a Greek cave in the 1970s were identified as Neanderthal at the time. In findings presented in the journal Nature, an international team of researchers used state-of-the-art computer modeling and uranium dating to re-examine the two skulls. One of them, named Apidima 2 after the cave in which the pair were found, proved to be 170,000 years old and did indeed belong to a Neanderthal.

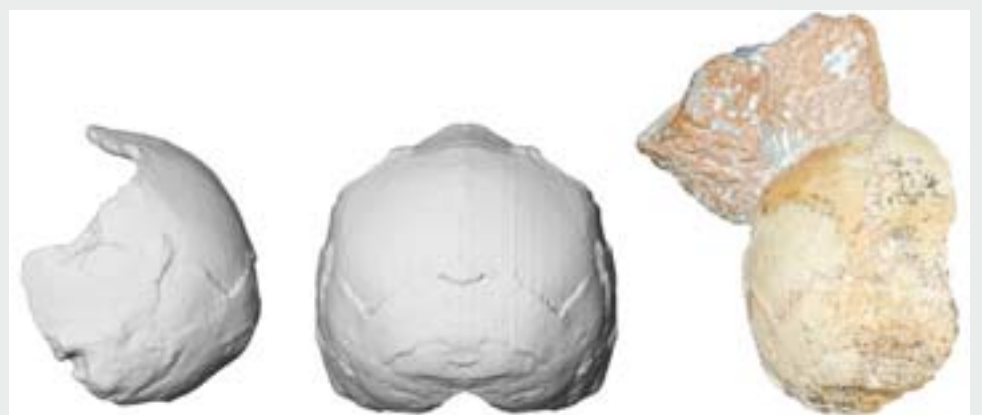
But, to the shock of scientists, the skull named Apidima 1 pre-dated Apidima 2 by as much as 40,000 years, and was determined to be that of a Homo sapiens. That makes the skull by far the oldest modern human remains ever discovered on the continent, and older than any known

Homo sapiens specimen outside of Africa. “It shows that the early dispersal of Homo sapiens out of Africa not only occurred earlier, before 200,000 years ago, but also reached further geographically, all the way to Europe,” Katerina Harvati, a palaeoanthropologist at the Eberhard Karls University of Tuebingen, Germany, told AFP. “This is something that we did not suspect before, and which has implications for the population movements of these ancient groups.” Apidima 1 lacked classic features associated with Neanderthal skulls, including the distinctive bulge at the back of the head, shaped like hair tied in a bun.

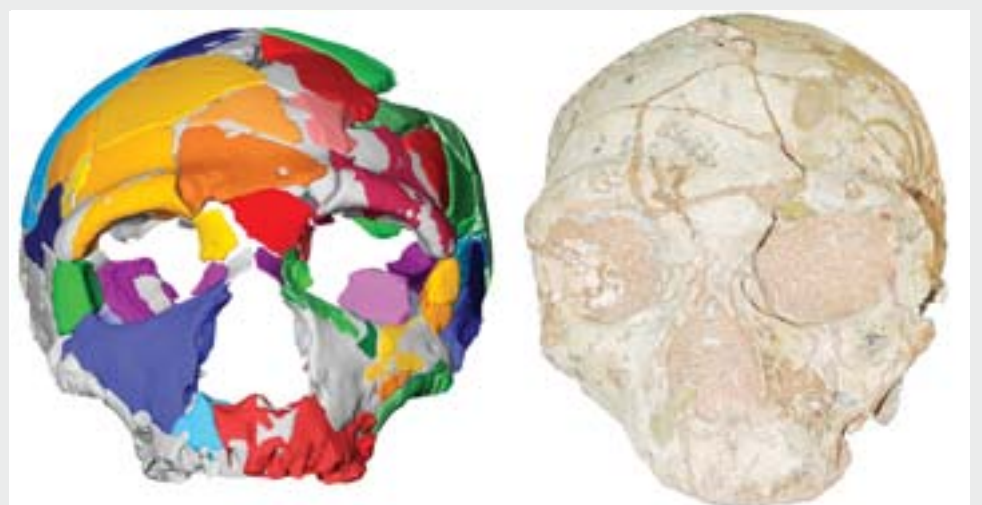
Multiple migrations?

Hominins—a subset of great apes that includes Homo sapiens and Neanderthals—are believed to have emerged in Africa more than six million years ago. They left the continent in several migration waves starting about two million years ago. The oldest known African fossil attributed to a member of the Homo family is a 2.8 million-year-old jawbone from Ethiopia.

Homo sapiens replaced Neanderthals across Europe for good around 45,000-35,000 years ago, in what was long considered a gradual takeover of the continent involving millennia of co-existence and even interbreeding. But the skull discovery in Greece suggests that Homo sapiens undertook the migration from Africa to southern Europe on “more than one occasion”, according to Eric Delson, a professor of anthropology at City University of New York. —AFP



This handout picture shows a reconstruction and computer model of part of a skull named Apidima 1, discovered in a Greek cave, which was determined to belong to a Homo Sapiens. — AFP photos



This handout picture shows a reconstruction and computer model of part of a skull named Apidima 2, discovered in a Greek cave, which was determined in a study to have the characteristics of Neanderthal man.



Moroccan potter Aicha Tabiz, also known as Mama Aicha, holds one of her works near the village of Ourtzagh in the foothills of the Rif mountains. — AFP photos



Moroccan potter Houda Oumal (right) and her mother Fatima Harama from the M'tioua tribe work on pottery near the village of Ourtzagh.



Moroccan potter Aicha Tabiz (left), also known as Mama Aicha, sits next to British apprentice Kim West (right), 33, during a pottery workshop near the village of Ourtzagh.

Social media rescue Morocco's last woman potters

Beautiful handcrafted pottery made by Mama Aicha rarely sells in Morocco anymore, but thanks to social media her ancient techniques are drawing students from around the world to the foothills of the Rif mountains. "When I heard about the workshop on Instagram, I signed up immediately because the practice is disappearing," said Mirna Banieh, a young artist who travelled to Morocco from the West Bank town of Ramallah. "Mama Aicha is old and her knowledge must be passed down,"

she added. Banieh's four fellow students sit cross-legged on mats, their hands covered in clay learning from the 82-year-old potter. They came from London and Nairobi to a remote hamlet at the end of a rocky trail for a week-long initiation.

Their goal is to learn how to shape clay pieces by hand, dry them in the sun, fire them in a large open pit filled with wood and polish them with stone before decorating them with natural pigments. Like everywhere in the Rif mountains, women potters

from the Sless tribe, to which Aicha Tabiz's family belongs, are vanishing. The tribe counted around 90 potters at the end of 1990s. Now, only a half-dozen remain. "The youth here don't want to dirty their hands with clay. They dream of being officials with fixed salaries," said the grandmother, everyone affectionately calls Mama Aicha. The ancestral knowledge that, according to some experts dates back to the Bronze Age, is being lost little by little due to a decline in the market.



Moroccan potter Houda Oumal (right) and her mother Fatima Harama from the Mitioua tribe work on pottery.

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Going plastic

“When I was young, everyone used clay pots and bowls for daily life and my mother sold them at market, but today everyone prefers plastic,” said Mohamed Tabiz, 53, Aicha’s eldest son. Researchers, collectors, enthusiasts are among the many that have warned for decades of the disappearance of this craft once passed down from generation to generation. “We wanted to establish a museum in the village,” Tabiz said, but “the local authorities weren’t interested”.

The most scholarly of those calling attention to the tradition’s decline, German anthropologist Rudiger Vossen, criss-crossed Morocco in the 1980s and 90s to catalogue the techniques and designs used by each tribe. Volunteers from the “Terre des Femmes” (Women’s Earth) association have travelled to the Rif for years, collecting pottery from isolated farms and selling it to tourists from a small boutique in the capital Rabat. But the most famous is undoubtedly the artistic director of Dior, Italian Maria Grazia Chiuri, who recently put the Rif potters in the spotlight at a haute couture fashion show in Marrakesh. But, it is thanks to Instagram that Mama Aicha’s work has gained a global reputation.



Moroccan potter Fatima Harama from the M’tioua tribe works on pottery.

New designs

With a twinkle in her eye, Mama Aicha patiently guides her students in the studio set up next to the family farm. Papers tacked to the wall list useful words in the local dialect – terms for pottery and tools, common phrases such as “can you help me?” and “what do you think of this?” The master potter teaches mainly using gestures. Like the majority of women from remote parts of Morocco, she dedicated her life to her fields, her livestock and her children. At 27, Houda Oumal, from the neighboring tribe M’tioua, is one of the few to want to “follow in the footsteps of her mother”. She lives with her parents at the top of a mountain amid the cannabis fields that make up, entirely illegally, the principal source of income of the Rif. She began to mold clay at the age of seven, but she does not read or write.

There are five mosques in the community, but not a single school. “This craft allows us to make a good living, we need to make our expertise known so that it becomes profitable”, she said with a timid smile. Recently, the young woman began to sign her creations with her initials, adding more graphic designs and new shapes to “diversify her work and stand out”. “For us, these pieces are works of art, they have real value”, Valdeon said. The Sumano association places orders with the potters, buys the works, transports them to Spain and sells them at 20 times the local price on its website, promising to redistribute the income locally “when the business becomes profitable”. — AFP



Moroccan potter Houda Oumal from the M’tioua tribe carries one of her pottery works.

“It’s used a lot by potters, everyone posts photographs of their pieces (and) exchanges tips and advice”, said Kim West, a 33-year-old British workshop participant. Through this global word-of-mouth promotion, the workshops advertised on the website of a new association, Sumano, have seen staggering success. “All the spots were filled two days after registration opened, we had a waiting list with applicants from across the globe,” said Martha Valdeon, 42, a co-founder of Sumano from Spain. Set up last year, Sumano promotes Moroccan tribal women’s handicrafts.



Moroccan potter Aicha Tabiz (left), also known as Mama Aicha, sits next to British apprentice Kim West (right), 33, during a pottery workshop near the village of Ourtzagh.



Moroccan potter Houda Oumal (left) paints with natural pigments on one of her pieces of pottery as her mother Fatima Harama looks on.



Moroccan potter Aicha Tabiz, also known as Mama Aicha, holds one of her works.

BRAISED BEETS WITH LEMON AND ALMONDS



How to maximize beets' sweet, earthy flavor without mess

We sought a streamlined stovetop recipe for beets that maximized their sweet, earthy flavor with minimal mess. Braising worked perfectly. We partially submerged the beets in just 1 1/4 cups of water so that they partially simmered and partially steamed. Halving the beets cut down our cooking time. In just 45 minutes, the beets were tender and their skins slipped off easily.

We reduced the braising liquid and added brown sugar and vinegar to make a glossy glaze. Shallot, toasted almonds, fresh mint and thyme, and a little lemon zest finished the dish. Look for beets that are 2 to 3 inches in diameter. You can use an 11-inch straight-sided saute pan in place of the Dutch oven in this recipe. The beets can be served warm or at room temperature. If serving at room temperature, add the nuts and fresh herbs right before serving.

BRAISED BEETS WITH LEMON AND ALMONDS

Ingredients:

1 1/2 pounds beets, trimmed and halved horizontally
 1 1/4 cups water
 Salt and pepper
 3 tablespoons distilled white vinegar
 1 tablespoon packed light brown sugar
 1 shallot, sliced thin
 1 teaspoon grated lemon zest
 1/2 cup whole almonds, toasted and chopped
 2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint
 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme

Preparation:

Place beets, cut side down, in single layer in Dutch oven. Add water and 1/4 teaspoon salt and bring to simmer over

high heat. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer until beets are tender and can be easily pierced with paring knife, 45 to 50 minutes.

Transfer beets to cutting board to cool slightly. Meanwhile, increase heat to medium-high and reduce cooking liquid, stirring occasionally, until pan is almost dry, 5 to 6 minutes. Add vinegar and sugar, return to boil, and cook, stirring constantly with heat-resistant spatula, until spatula leaves wide trail when dragged through glaze, 1 to 2 minutes. Remove pan from heat.

Once beets are cool enough to handle, rub off skins with paper towels and cut into 1/2 inch wedges. Add beets, shallot, lemon zest, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper to glaze and toss to coat. Transfer to serving platter, sprinkle with almonds, mint, and thyme, and serve.

Greek yogurt creates a creamy, spice-infused salad dressing

Fresh, juicy summer tomatoes make a great salad, so we set out to create one with complementary flavors and a creamy dressing. Tomatoes exude lots of liquid when cut, which can quickly turn a salad into soup. To get rid of some of the tomato juice without losing all the valuable flavor, we looked to a method that had proven successful in our other tomato salad recipes: salting the tomatoes before making the salad.

Simply cutting the tomatoes into wedges, tossing them with salt, and letting them sit for 15 minutes provided enough time for the juice to drain. This also seasoned the tomatoes and their juice at the same time. We reserved a measured amount of the flavorful juice to add to the dressing without watering down the salad. Greek yogurt laid the foundation for a creamy, spice-infused dressing, and we boosted its tang with lemon juice and the reserved tomato juice. To that we added fresh oregano, cumin, and garlic, but some tasters found the cumin and garlic too harsh.

A quick zap in the microwave was all it took to effectively bloom the spice and cook the garlic, successfully mellowing their flavors. We tossed the tomatoes with the dressing, finishing with just the right amount of briny feta to add richness and another layer of flavor. Both regular and low-fat Greek yogurt will work well here; do not use nonfat yogurt. The success of this recipe depends on ripe, in-season tomatoes.

TOMATO SALAD WITH FETA AND CUMIN-YOGURT DRESSING

Ingredients:

2 1/2 pounds ripe tomatoes, cored and cut into 1/2-inch-thick wedges
Salt and pepper
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 garlic clove, minced
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1/4 cup plain Greek yogurt
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 scallion, sliced thin
1 tablespoon minced fresh oregano
3 ounces feta cheese, crumbled

Preparation:

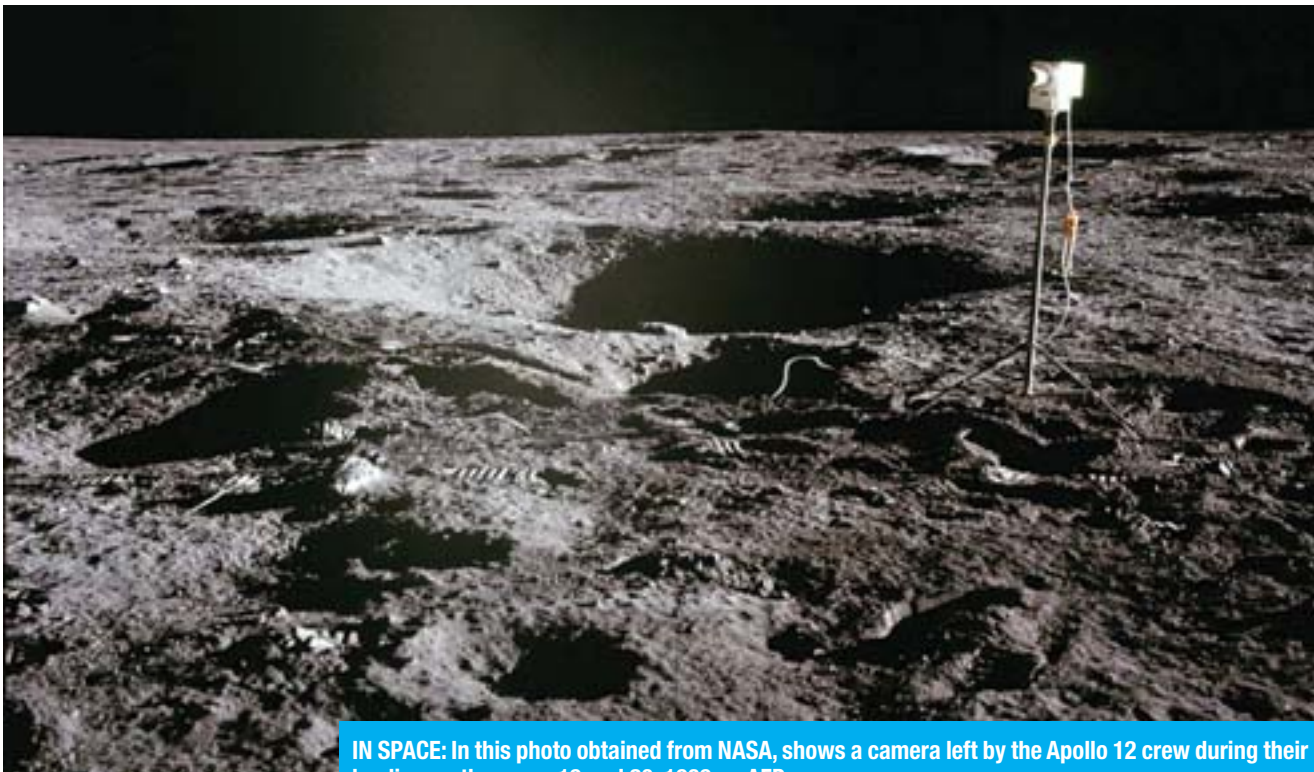
Toss tomatoes with 1/2 teaspoon salt and let drain in colander set over bowl for 15 to 20 minutes.

Microwave oil, garlic, and cumin in bowl until fragrant, about 30 seconds; let cool slightly. Transfer 1 tablespoon tomato liquid to large bowl; discard remaining liquid. Whisk in yogurt, lemon juice, scallion, oregano, and oil mixture until combined. Add tomatoes and feta and gently toss to coat. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve.



TOMATO SALAD WITH FETA AND CUMIN-YOGURT DRESSING

Health & Science



IN SPACE: In this photo obtained from NASA, shows a camera left by the Apollo 12 crew during their landing on the moon 19 and 20, 1969.—AFP

The Moon now has hundreds of artifacts. Should they be protected?

WASHINGTON: Three rovers, six US flags, dozens of probes that either landed successfully or crashed, tools, cameras and trash: the Moon is dotted with hundreds of objects as a result of space exploration. Some experts are calling to grant them heritage status to protect them from future tourists and human activity. It all started on September 13, 1959 when Soviet probe Luna 2 smashed into Mare Imbrium, its 390 kilograms of mass vaporizing, no doubt, on impact.

It was followed in succession by more Luna probes, then it was the Americans' turn with the Ranger and Surveyor programs. And then, on July 20, 1969, the first humans, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin. The pair spent 22 hours on the Sea of Tranquility. They left behind everything that wasn't necessary to taken back: the lunar module's descent stage, cameras, lunar boots, tongs, commemorative objects, and four "defecation collection devices."

Five more successful Apollo missions left behind hundreds of additional objects. All told, the Moon has about a hundred sites where people have left their mark, according to For All Moonkind, a non-profit that seeks to preserve human heritage in space. That's about 167 tons of material. Legally, "the sites themselves aren't protected at all," said Michelle Hanlon, a law professor at the University of Mississippi who co-founded For All Moonkind in 2017 after the head of the European Space Agency Jan Wörner joked that he wanted to bring back the American flag.

"So the boot prints, the rover tracks, where items are on the site, which is so important, from an archaeological standpoint, they have no protection," she added. Hanlon fears the Apollo sites will one day attract the attention of tourists, who could kick up lunar dust that cuts like glass and can be highly damaging. "If somebody were to get too close to the LEM, there's nothing in international law right now that says you can't just drive a rover right up to it, and actually take a peek at it," she said. "We need protections against inadvertent as well as intentional acts."

Waste centers?

NASA has adopted recommendations, for example, that future expeditions should not land within two kilometers of Apollo sites. In the US Congress, senators have introduced a "One Small Step to Protect Human Heritage in Space" bill. But the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 is very explicit: "Outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, is not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty, by means of use or occupation, or by any other means."

"Once you start making exclusionary zones, and stopping other countries from their free use and exploration of space, you're running up against the basic premise of the Outer Space Treaty," Jack Beard, a space law professor from the University of Nebraska, said. To be sure, the treaty says each space object must be registered by its country, a safeguard against irresponsible behavior by private entities. These artifacts also remain the property of the entity which placed them, effectively barring theft. But its loopholes concern lawyers, space agencies and the UN, and not only over the issue of protecting heritage.

Moon traffic is likely to grow in the coming decades and the vague principles of cooperation enshrined in the treaty are not seen as sufficient to regulate it. In 2019 alone, a Chinese robot landed on the Moon, a private Israeli probe crashed, and India will send a probe. US astronauts are scheduled to visit its southern pole in 2024, where there is ice. Hundreds of space start-ups have sprung up, many of which want to exploit the water and mineral resources of the Moon and asteroids. What would happen if they quarreled with one another?

"It's clear that there is potential for conflict," Tanja Masson, a professor of space law at Leiden University in The Netherlands told AFP. "There's a need for rules so that it does not become the Wild West." She suggests the creation of an international body to distribute priority rights, without granting sovereignty, as is done to manage satellites in geostationary orbit. As for the risk of filling the celestial body up with junk, she said: "We should perhaps build waste centers on the Moon."—AFP

World's major cities to face 'unknown' climate conditions by 2050

KUALA LUMPUR: A fifth of the world's major cities will face "unknown" climate conditions by 2050, researchers warned on Wednesday, as rising temperatures heighten the risks of drought and flooding. Climate scientists at the Crowther Lab, a research group based at ETH Zurich, a science and technology university, analyzed 520 cities across the world, including all capitals and most urban centers with a population of more than 1 million.

Looking at current climate conditions in these cities - including precipitation and seasonal data - scientists projected what would happen as temperatures rise another half degree, to near the lower 1.5 degree Celsius target set in the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change. It showed that 22 percent of the cities will experience unprecedented climate conditions by 2050, such as more intense dry and monsoon seasons, said Jean Francis-Bastin, the lead author of the report.

"It is a change in climate conditions that is likely to increase the risk of flooding and extreme drought," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "It is unknown conditions." Almost 70 percent of the world's population is expected to be living in urban areas by 2050, according to the United Nations. But many cities, especially in poorer nations, face significant challenges, including large and growing slum populations that lack basic services and are increasingly at risk from climate disasters.

Under the Paris Agreement, which has been ratified by 185 countries, governments have pledged to keep global warming "well below" 2C (3.6F) above pre-industrial times and strive for a lower limit of 1.5C. Limiting global temperature rise to 1.5C would avoid economic losses of \$12 trillion by 2050, according to the United Nations. Crowther Lab scientists said their study, published in the journal PLOS ONE, was the first global analysis of the likely shifts in climate conditions in major cities as a result of global warming.

It showed that 77 percent of the cities it looked at will experience a striking change in climate conditions by 2050. Across the northern hemisphere, many cities in 30 years time could resemble places that are over 1,000 km further south towards the equator, said the study, which projected conditions if current plans to cut climate-changing emissions go ahead. In Europe, cities will warm by an average of about 2.5 degrees Celsius across the year, but summers and winters could be 3.5C and 4.7C warmer, respectively, Francis-Bastin said. Globally, temperatures are likely to be 2.4C warmer on average - enough to kill nearly every coral reef and soar past targets set out in the Paris Agreement. Under the study scenario, London's climate in 2050 could be similar to Barcelona's current climate, with Madrid feeling more like Marrakesh, Seattle more like San Francisco, and Tokyo more like Changsha in central China, it said.

Cities in tropical regions, which are likely to see the strongest impacts from climate change, will experience smaller changes in average temperature, the study said. But they will see shifts in rainfall patterns, leading to more severe flooding and droughts, researchers said. Of the 22 percent of cities that will see 'unprecedented' climate shifts, 64% are located in the tropics and include Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Rangoon and Singapore, researchers said.

The study may help cities modify their planning to combat specific climate risks, Francis-Bastin said. He said he also hoped it would help persuade people to change their lifestyles to cut planet-warming emissions and cut the risks. "We definitely and very quickly need to change the way we are living on the planet."—Reuters

Health & Science

The dark new world of leaks, rumors and deadly hybrid war

LONDON: As Britain ponders the fallout from leaked diplomatic telegrams from its ambassador to Washington, it ponders an awkward question. Was the so-called “special relationship” deliberately sabotaged by Britain’s own officials or politicians releasing the material for their own political ends, or was the United Kingdom the victim of an attack by a foreign power?

It’s a quandary that points to an awkward dynamic at the heart of politics in almost every Western country. Without doubt, several major nations - particularly Russia, but also China and Iran at the very least - have become adept at using leaks, rumor and political subterfuge to support their geopolitical ends. The problem, though, is that growing forces within Western countries have also embraced very much the same tactics. It makes getting to the bottom of what is really going on difficult, sometimes impossible.

And perhaps most dangerous of all, it means the international climate continues to deteriorate and become ever more paranoid - whether it is justified or not. The number of examples around the world is growing by the week. With Iran’s face-off with the United States and its allies, what began as a diplomatic spat swiftly escalated to attacks on oil tankers and the shootdown of a US drone, and came alarmingly close to all-out military action.

What exactly was happening behind the scenes, however, remains both unclear and the subject of intense argument. It offers a potentially alarming model for any future high-intensity confrontation with Russia, China or both, pointing to an era where ever more players embrace tearing up the rule book and risking - or at worst, even embracing - bloody mayhem.

Proxy wars

In Syria, Yemen, Ukraine, and to a lesser extent in Libya and beyond, these calculations and their resulting proxy wars have already killed hundreds of thousands. Elsewhere, particularly in the Western world, the contests have been largely bloodless. Getting to the bottom of what is really going on, however, is more difficult. Indeed, many of those involved are clearly embracing and taking advantage of that dynamic and its resulting confusion.

Recent attacks on oil tankers in the Gulf are a case in point.

While the United States unambiguously blamed Iran, specifically its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, others - including America’s European allies - are openly more skeptical. One theory doing the rounds in the Middle East is that the attacks were conducted by rogue hardline elements within Iran, keen to provoke US military action they believed would help them politically against their rivals.

In the case of the leaked diplomatic telegrams from British DC ambassador Kim Darroch, there is widespread speculation they may be linked to the battle to become prime minister. Former Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, rumor has it, wanted a change of ambassador to bring in a more pro-Brexit voice.

If someone within government circles leaked the telegrams, they are responsible for both significantly damaging the UK-US “special relationship” and a hugely serious breach of the Official Secrets Act. For now, there seems little clarity on the source. Current Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, Johnson’s sole remaining rival in the Conservative leadership race, said this week there was no particular evidence a foreign state was responsible either.

Kremlin playbook

Such action would, admittedly, fit the Kremlin playbook. Moscow’s hand has been suspected in a host of high-profile hacks and leaks in recent years, from Hillary Clinton’s emails to those of French President Emmanuel Macron. The latter’s team, it later emerged, had been expecting such activity and had laced their email servers with false information and data. Going back almost a decade, those doing business in the former Soviet Union have become used to current or former security operatives using a range of espionage techniques to extract information, undermine rivals and negotiating partners, and achieve leverage.

But it isn’t just the Russians - or at least, it almost certainly isn’t. In Austria, the political fallout is still continuing from the lurid, still largely unexplained saga of the Ibiza Affair. On May 17, two German newspapers published details of a video conversation recorded in an Ibiza villa featuring Austrian vice Chancellor and head of the far right Freedom Party Heinz-Christian Strache. It showed him talking to an unidentified woman falsely

claiming to be a leading Russian oligarch’s niece pledging funding and looking to purchase one of Austria’s leading tabloids.

While Strache ultimately became suspicious and ended the meeting, the footage was damning enough to force his resignation, ushering in new elections later this year. Who was behind the sting remains a subject of closely guarded speculation - in Austria, many will not even voice their suspicions, a sign of a wider political environment of paranoia. Last year, Austrian police apparently acting on orders of the Freedom Party government raided the country’s own intelligence agency. Exactly where loyalties truly lie is almost impossible to determine - many in Austria will not even speculate off the record on who was behind the Ibiza recording.

Conspiracy theories

More broadly this alarming rise in Machiavellian ambiguity risks being a disaster for democracies. Without doubt, it feeds into just the kind of conspiracy theories the far right, Kremlin and other spoilers thrive on, and that the international level it dramatically raises the risks of miscalculation.

With their own more ruthless traditions, autocratic states like Russia, China and Iran - and their leaders in particular - are scarcely less paranoid. All three have made it clear to varying degrees they see the hand of the West in domestic dissent at home, and as discontent such as that in Hong Kong escalates, such worries may get worse.

Honest, open diplomatic channels - both between nuclear nations and domestic political factions - offer almost the only hope of keeping such strains under control. That process has been made all the harder by leaks such as that this week, which risks deterring British diplomats from honestly speaking truth to power. Such distractions also make tackling the enormous problems of the era - inequality, technological change, climate and other threats - all but impossible. Clearly, there is no shortage of forces that believe that kind of chaos serves their interests. In the short term, they may be right. In the longer run, however, they may find that they suffer the consequences just as harshly as the rest of us.—Reuters

Consumption of sugary drinks linked with cancer risk

PARIS: Consumption of sugary drinks such as soda and fruit juice is linked to a higher risk of developing certain kinds of cancer, researchers reported yesterday. The consumption of sugary drinks has exploded worldwide in recent decades and the high-calorie beverages have already been associated with a elevated risk of obesity-itself recognized as a leading cancer risk factor. A team of researchers in France wanted to assess the associations between heightened consumption of sugar drinks and the risks of overall cancer, as well as several cancer types, including breast, prostate and bowel cancers.

They surveyed more than 100,000 adults, with an average of age of 42, 79 percent of whom were women. The participants, who were followed for a maximum of nine years, completed at least two 24-hour online validated dietary questionnaires, calculating their daily consumption of sugar and artificially sweetened beverages as well as 100 percent fruit juices. Researchers measured the daily intakes of sugary drinks against those of diet beverages and compared them to cancer cases in participants’ medical records during the follow-up period. They found that just a 100 ml increase per day of sugary drinks was associated with an 18 percent increased risk of cancer, and with a 22 percent increase in breast cancer. Both sugar-sweetened drinks and fruit juices saw a similar higher risk association.—AFP

Major shuffle at NASA to meet Trump’s moon deadline

WASHINGTON: NASA has replaced the head of its human space exploration directorate in a major shake-up, US media reported Wednesday, as the agency scrambles to meet President Donald Trump’s ambitious deadline to return astronauts to the moon by 2024. The project-named Artemis-would be the first attempt to return humans to the lunar surface since the last Apollo landing in 1972, but some experts doubt if the deadline is realistic given budgetary constraints and delays in developing the next-generation rockets and equipment needed for the journey.

To meet this “bold challenge”, NASA administrator Jim Bridenstine said in an email to employees that Bill Gerstenmaier, head of the agency’s Human Exploration and Operations (HEO) missions directorate, has been removed from his position and assigned an advisory role, the Washington Post and other US news outlets. The widely-respected Gerstenmaier is a NASA veteran who joined the agency in 1977, rising to become one of its top managers, overseeing the space shuttle program and US operations on the International Space Station before becoming head of HEO.

“We, as a nation, are thankful for his service in advancing America’s priorities and expanding the limits of science, technology and exploration,” Bridenstine wrote of Gerstenmaier in his email, according to CBS News. Former astronaut Ken Bowersox will be the



WASHINGTON: In this file photo Bill Gerstenmaier, associate administrator NASA’s Human Exploration and Operations Mission Directorate, testifies before the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee in Washington, DC. — AFP

acting head of the section, according to Bridenstine’s email. The American plan to return humans to the moon-including the first woman-is beset with delays and cost overruns, according to an official audit released last month. The cost of Boeing’s giant Space Launch System (SLS) rocket-at the core of the Artemis project-has risen by nearly 30 percent to \$8 billion, and its already-delayed first flight is unlikely to take place by June 2020 as planned. Costs for the Orion capsule being built by Lockheed Martin to transport astronauts have also grown. But Vice President Mike Pence, who announced the accelerated 2024 target in March, has criticized NASA for “bureaucratic inertia” and asked for a new mindset.—AFP

Health & Science



REIMS: A picture shows the Sebastopol hospital in Reims, eastern France, on the day Vincent Lambert, a quadriplegic man who has been in a vegetative state for the last decade has died.—AFP

Frenchman at heart of legal dispute dies after life support ends

REIMS: A Frenchman at the centre of a bitter right-to-die legal feud that has raged for a decade passed away in hospital yesterday after doctors removed his life support, his family said. The legal battle over whether Vincent Lambert, 42, should die has divided the country as well as his own family, with his parents using every legal avenue to keep him alive but his wife and nephew insisting he must be allowed to die.

Doctors removed his hydration and nutrition tubes last week, following a final ruling by France's top appeals court. "Vincent died at 8:24 am (0624 GMT) this morning," his nephew Francois Lambert told AFP, expressing his "relief after years of suffering for everyone". "We were ready to let him go," he added, saying he had been notified about his uncle's death by the doctor treating him. "It is not sad. It is rationality gaining the upper hand. This was a human being who was suffering and the various theatrical gestures did not mean much," he added.

Moment of remembrance

Lambert was involved in a near-fatal car crash in 2008 that left him a quadriplegic with severe brain damage which doctors had long said was irreversible. Left in a vegetative state, the question of whether to continue keeping him alive artificially triggered a years-long legal battle that raged in the highest courts in France and Europe. On July 2, Dr Vincent Sanchez, head of palliative care at the University Hospital in the northern French city of Reims, had begun removing the life support mechanisms in a process which was completed by Wednesday evening.

Although his feeding and hydration tubes were removed, he was kept under "deep and continuous sedation". Multiple medical assessments ordered by the courts over the years found that the former psychiatric nurse, who was poised to become a father shortly before his accident, had no chance of recovering. Jean Paillot, a lawyer for Lambert's parents, said it was "now time for a moment of remembrance". He told AFP that the parents, who had waged a high-profile campaign to keep their son alive, would respond when they felt ready.

Family divided

The case rekindled a charged debate over

France's right-to-die laws, which allow so-called "passive" euthanasia for severely ill or injured patients who are being kept alive artificially with no chance of recovery. Even Pope Francis got involved, tweeting in May that it was necessary to "always safeguard life, God's gift, from its beginning until its natural end". Yesterday, the Vatican expressed its "sorrow" over Lambert's death, expressing "solidarity with his loved ones and with all those who helped them until the end, with love and devotion".

And the Vatican's Pontifical Academy said his death and what happened in the run-up to it was "a failure of our humanity", in a posting on Twitter. France's Catholic Church also expressed sadness, with the spokesman for its Bishops' Conference Thierry Magnin telling *Le Croix* newspaper Lambert was "not at the end of his life". Over the years, Lambert's deeply Catholic parents, backed by two of his eight siblings, managed to successfully challenge five different attempts by doctors to halt his life-support.

The last time they tried to do so was in May, but it was quickly overturned by a Paris appeals court. That ruling was then taken to France's top appeals court, the *Cour de Cassation*, which on June 28 said doctors could legally end his life support in a definitive final judgment. With their cases rejected by the highest courts in France as well as by the European Court of Human Rights, Lambert's parents on Friday filed a complaint for "voluntary homicide" with prosecutors in Reims opening a preliminary inquiry.

But his wife Rachel, his doctors, six other brothers and sisters and a nephew have fought for his right to die, arguing it was the more humane option. In early May, the UN committee on disabled rights also asked France to keep Lambert alive while it conducted its own investigation into his fate, but the government said it was not legally bound to abide by its request. On July 1, his mother Viviane turned to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva in a last-ditch plea for help, warning her son was about to "be euthanized because of his mental handicap". But by Monday, just days after doctors removed his tubes, the couple had accepted that his death was now "unavoidable", saying "we have nowhere else to turn".—AFP

Mine waste, sewage threaten South Africa's worshippers

JOHANNESBURG: A group of congregants dressed in long robes waded into the water of Soweto township's Fleurhof dam, some immersing their entire bodies, while their pastors loudly sing prayers and blessings. The dam is one of many water sources across South Africa of spiritual significance for communities, although researchers and scientists warn that contamination from nearby open mine sewage and waste puts worshippers at risk of water poisoning.

"We use water for healing purposes," said Pastor Isaac Bhekumuzi Nxusa, head of the Igoba Healing Apostolic Church in Soweto's Meadowlands neighborhood, wearing a long green robe. "So many churches come here for baptisms. If there is contamination (from a mine) our health could be in danger," he said, gazing at a yellow mountain of sand in the distance - an abandoned mine dump. This is one of about 6,000 abandoned and derelict mines - mostly gold, uranium and coal - across the country, according to the South African Council for Geoscience.

Soweto residents spoke of dust particles from mine dumps - also called tailings - blowing into their homes and over water sources during the rainy and windy seasons, as well as open sewage pipes flowing into dams. The dust contains a mixture of chemicals like arsenic and cyanide, which could expose worshippers bathing in toxic water to all manner of health issues, from brain damage to skin cancers, environmental and health researchers said.

Under global development goals agreed in 2015, governments pledged to provide access to water and sanitation for all by 2030. But three in 10 people worldwide do not have a water source free from faecal and chemical contamination. "Any form of pollution is an issue for us," said Sputnik Ratau, a spokesman for South Africa's Department of Water and Sanitation. "We need to follow up with the polluter and bring people to book. We need to work with the municipality to work at cleaning this water," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in a phone interview.

Water toxicity

The mining industry directly contributes more than 7 percent to the economy which has been struggling with anemic growth over the last 10 years. Located in a basin and with an estimated population of 1.5 million people, the Soweto township is surrounded by hundreds of unclosed mines, according to the Bench Marks Foundation, a church-linked organization that monitors corporate responsibility.

Across the road from Fleurhof dam, a tractor excavates the base of a mine dump, leaving it close to collapsing into the river flowing into the dam. In June, David Van Wyk, a researcher at the Bench Marks Foundation, tested the acidity of the water being used for baptisms around the dam. "The pH is measuring at a level of around 3.39," said Van Wyk, dipping an electric metre into water running from a mine dump towards the dam. "This is highly acidic."

"Normal water should be between six and

seven," he added. Below a pH of 4, things should not be living in this water. As you can see, there are no insects." Water at other parts of the dam measured higher pH levels, "indicating possible sewage contamination", said Van Wyk. "If this tailing collapses, even more toxic chemicals could enter the water system than we are already seeing," he added. South African environmental groups confirmed that the city's water quality was of growing concern.

Precious Biyela, an environmental engineer from the University of the Witwatersrand, warned that toxic water could lead to skin and stomach problems, and in more severe cases, cancers or lead poisoning from mine drainage seeping into water. Van Wyk said his organization observed such symptoms across four communities surrounded by disused mines in Soweto, including high levels of children born with cerebral palsy - which Bench Marks attributed to dust originating from the dumps.

"Government departments need to be doing inspections here," said Van Wyk, crouching over a thin river stream running into the dam. "These (toxicity) levels are problematic, I would be very anxious to baptise here, or to drink this water." A spokesman for the Department of Water and Sanitation said in a phone interview that it was investigating solutions to cleaning the city water supply, including working with the mining industry to rehabilitate mines contributing to water toxicity.

The Department of Mineral Resources said that it had no control over mining dumps created before the promulgation of the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act in 2004, including the tailings near Fleurhof dam.

Born again in the water

At Fleurhof dam, children run along the water carrying green and blue flags representing their churches. A group of women laugh as they change into dry clothes behind tall grasses, while others slowly wade into the still water. For many worshipping groups in South Africa, such as Pentecostal churches, religious expression is closely tied to water. At the Fleurhof baptism, Pastor Nxusa paged through a weathered bible, pausing to read: "Jesus said: Truly, truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit."

"We believe that if you want to see the kingdom of God, you must be born again in the water, that is what the water means to us," Nxusa explained. But Fleurhof dam is not the only water source with religious significance for congregations. The Jukskei river, one of the largest in Johannesburg, as well as the Natal-spruit canal are also known for their spiritual meaning to traditional healers and baptist churches. Religious symbols - like crosses and the Star of David - can be seen painted on dam walls and rocks alongside rivers.

For Biyela, the engineer, both religious and environmental rights are challenged in inner-city baptisms. "My first response is to tell people to desist from baptisms as it is risky," she said. "But at the same time our Bill of Rights says everyone is entitled to a clean environment and religious freedom." Van Wyk said that further tests were needed to monitor the toxicity of water used in baptisms.

"These people have been practicing their religion for hundreds of years and their religious practices should not end because other people are irresponsible and polluting the water," he explained. Nxusa, the pastor, agreed, saying that "government must make sure to keep the water clean for us, for this is what we are sent by God to do."—Reuters

Comic

Word Search

80's Songs

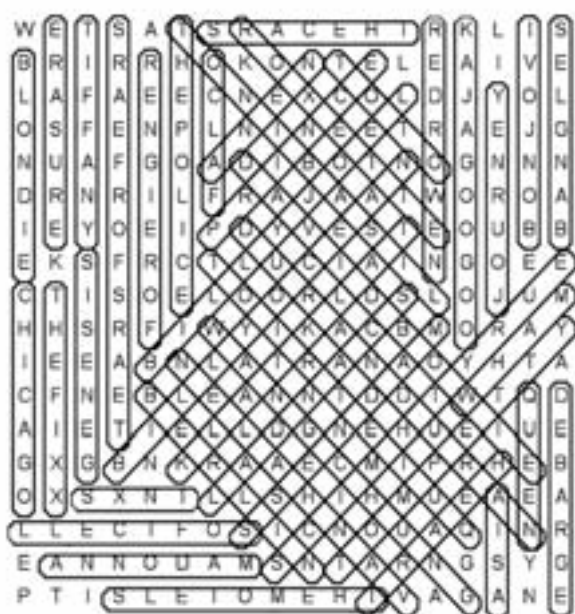
Find and circle all of the 1980's song titles that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the title of a U2 song.



- | | | | |
|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| ABRACADABRA | DRIVE | LEGS | RAPTURE |
| ALLENTOWN | FAITH | LONGER | ROSANNA |
| ALONE | FIRE LAKE | LOVE BITES | SARA |
| AMANDA | FOOTLOOSE | LOVE SHACK | SLEDGEHAMMER |
| ANGEL | FUNKY TOWN | LUKA | SMALL TOWN |
| BATDANCE | HEARTLIGHT | MAGIC | SUDDENLY |
| BILLIE JEAN | HELLO | MANGATER | SWEET DREAMS |
| CARS | HIM | MANIAC | TAINTED LOVE |
| CELEBRATION | HOLD ON | HOCKEY | TIME |
| CHERISH | JEOPARDY | MR. ROBOTO | UPTOWN GIRL |
| COME DANCING | JESSE | NASTY | URGENT |
| COOZA | JUMP | NIGHTSHIFT | VALERIE |
| COOL NIGHT | KEY LARGO | OH SHERRAE | VENUS |
| CRYING | KISS | PHYSICAL | YOU ARE |
| DANGER ZONE | KYRIE | PRIVATE EYES | YOUNG TURKS |
| DESIRE | LADY | | |

Yesterday's Solution

80's Radio Hitmakers



- | | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|------------|
| ASSA | ERASURE | NENA | THE FIXX |
| BANGLES | EURHYTHMICS | NEW ORDER | THE MOTELS |
| BERLIN | FALCO | PRINCE | THE POLICE |
| BILLY JOEL | FOREIGNER | QUEEN | TIFFANY |
| BILLY OCEAN | GENESIS | QUIET RIOT | TOM PETTY |
| BLONDIE | HEART | ROXETTE | TONE BASIL |
| BON JOVI | INXS | SCANDAL | TOTO |
| CHICAGO | JOURNEY | SOFT CELL | VAN HALEN |
| DAVID BOWIE | KAJAGOOGOD | TALK TALK | WANG CHUNG |
| DEBARGE | MADNESS | TEARS FOR FEARS | WHAMI |
| DURAN DURAN | MADONNA | THE CARS | |

The hidden song title is: WALK LIKE AN EGYPTIAN

Crossword 2255



ACROSS

- A state of irritation or annoyance.
- Portable bulletproof shelter.
- The network in the reticular formation that serves an alerting or arousal function.
- An organic compound that contains a hydroxyl group bonded to a carbon atom which in turn is doubly bonded to another carbon atom.
- Mites and ticks.
- A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
- The United Nations agency concerned with civil aviation.
- A meeting for boat races.
- Being one more than two.
- Shrubby plant with aromatic grayish-green leaves used as a cooking herb.
- Relating to or characterized by chelation.
- A state of extreme (usually irremediable) ruin and misfortune.
- An independent agency of the United States government responsible for aviation and spaceflight.
- A collection of excerpts from a literary work.
- A Kwa language spoken by the Yoruba people in southwestern Nigeria.
- Former name for the order Crocodylia.
- Idle or foolish and irrelevant talk.
- A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
- A condensed but memorable saying

- embodying some important fact of experience that is taken as true by many people.
- To make a mistake or be incorrect.
- Waterfall in Canada is the Horseshoe Falls.
- Out of bed.
- Food prepared by cooking and straining or processed in a blender.
- A state in New England.
- A particular environment or walk of life.
- The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
- A high-crowned black cap (usually made of felt or sheepskin) worn by men in Turkey and Iran and the Caucasus.
- Troubled persistently especially with petty annoyances.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- Any of several eruptive skin diseases characterized by hard thick lesions grouped together and resembling lichens growing on rocks.
- Jordan's port.
- Flowing in drops.
- Orange liqueur with lemon juice and brandy.
- (British) Your grandmother.
- (used of count nouns) Every one considered individually.
- The body of faculty and students of a college.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

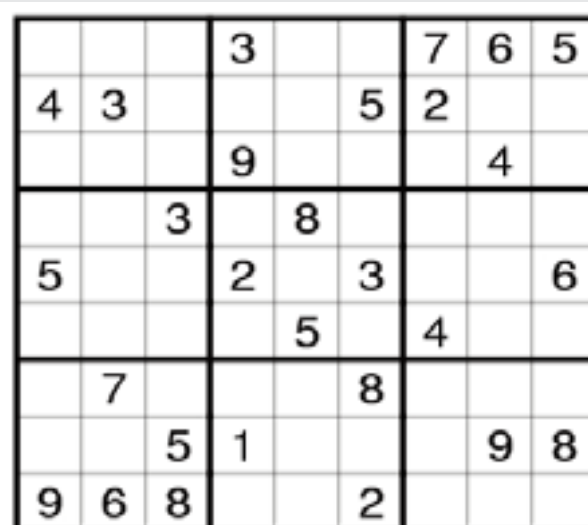
- Israeli statesman (born in Russia) (1898-1978).
- A ruler of the Inca Empire (or a member of his family).
- A mass of small bubbles formed in or on a liquid.
- Illuminated by means of floodlights.
- Small bitter fruit of the marascha cherry tree from whose juice maraschino liqueur is made.
- (informal) Of the highest quality.
- Someone (especially a woman) who annoys people by constantly finding fault.
- An extended area of land.
- Gracefully slender.
- Of or relating to the enteron.
- An official language of the Republic of South Africa.
- An Indian side dish of yogurt and chopped cucumbers and spices.
- A small zodiacal constellation in the northern hemisphere.
- The main city of ancient Phoenicia.
- A daughter of your brother or sister.
- (Babylonian) The sky god.
- A language spoken by the Atakapa people of the Gulf coast of Louisiana and Texas.
- A river that rises in central Germany and flows north to join the Elbe River.
- United States writer (1870-1902).
- The mountain peak that Noah's ark landed on as the waters of the great flood receded.
- Sluggish tailless Australian arboreal marsupial with gray furry ears and coat.
- Being nine more than ninety.
- A piece of information about circum-

- stances that exist or events that have occurred.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- French physicist noted for research on magnetism (born in 1904).
- An industrial city in the Donets Basin.
- A colorless and odorless inert gas.
- Clear to the mind.
- Disability of walking due to crippling of the legs or feet.
- Of or relating to or involving an area.
- Remorse for your past conduct.
- An ancient city of Sumer located on a former channel of the Euphrates River.
- Put a new heel on.
- (Hindu) A manner of sitting (as in the practice of Yoga).
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
- A city in northern India.
- Concerning those not members of the clergy.
- (computer science) A kind of computer architecture that has a large number of instructions hard coded into the cpu chip.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- A federation of North American industrial unions that merged with the American Federation of Labor in 1955.
- A lipoprotein that transports cholesterol in the blood.
- (chemistry) P(otential) of H(ydrogen).
- A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



TV Listings



00:00 The Devil Inside
01:35 American Bred
03:35 Chain Reaction
05:30 Carter And June
07:05 The Drowning
08:45 Enter The Warrior's Gate
10:35 Carter And June
12:05 The Drowning
13:45 Enter The Warrior's Gate
15:35 The Fast And The Fierce
17:05 Galaxy Quest
18:50 Boyka: Undisputed
20:25 Thinner
22:00 Mississippi Burning



00:45 North Woods Law
01:40 Alaska Monsters
02:35 Shark Attack File
03:25 Amba The Russian Tiger
04:15 North Woods Law
05:02 Mekong: Soul Of A River
05:49 Pit Bulls & Parolees
06:36 SSPCA: On The Wildside
07:00 SSPCA: On The Wildside
07:25 Amanda To The Rescue
12:50 Shark Attack File
13:45 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
14:40 Solved
15:08 How Do Animals Do That
15:35 Alaska Monsters
16:30 The Jeff Corwin Experience
17:25 Animal Cops Houston
18:20 Shark Attack File 2
19:15 The Vet Life
20:10 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
21:05 Mekong: Soul Of A River
22:00 Alaska Monsters
22:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees
23:50 The Vet Life



00:35 EastEnders
01:05 Press
02:00 Holby City
02:55 Holby City
03:50 Mum
04:15 Benidorm
05:05 Death In Paradise
06:00 EastEnders
06:30 EastEnders
07:00 Last Tango In Halifax
07:55 Holby City
08:50 Holby City
09:45 Casualty
10:35 The Detectivists
11:05 Death In Paradise
12:00 The Coroner
12:45 EastEnders
13:20 The Musketeers
14:15 The Detectivists
14:45 The Detectivists
15:20 Casualty
16:10 Holby City
17:05 Holby City
18:00 The Detectivists
18:30 Shakespeare & Hathaway: Private Investigators
19:20 Shakespeare & Hathaway: Private Investigators
20:10 And Then There Were None
21:10 Line Of Duty
22:10 Les Miserables
23:15 Save Me



00:00 Homicide Hunter
01:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
01:55 Homicide: Hours To Kill
02:50 It Takes A Killer
03:20 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 Cold Case Files
07:00 Live PD: Police Patrol
07:20 The First 48
08:05 The First 48
08:50 Homicide Hunter
09:35 Homicide Hunter
10:30 Cold Case Files
11:25 Homicide: Hours To Kill

12:20 Crimes That Shook Britain
13:15 Live PD: Police Patrol
13:45 Live PD: Police Patrol
14:10 It Takes A Killer
14:40 It Takes A Killer
15:05 Homicide Hunter
16:00 The First 48
17:00 Cold Case Files
18:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
19:00 The First 48
20:00 Homicide Hunter
21:00 Live PD: Police Patrol
21:30 Live PD: Police Patrol
22:00 The Jail: 60 Days In
23:00 Live PD: Police Patrol
23:30 Live PD: Police Patrol



00:25 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
08:25 Takeshis Castle Thailand
08:50 Ridiculousness Arabia
09:20 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagef
09:50 Takeshis Castle Thailand
10:15 Friends
12:20 Workaholics
14:25 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 Kyle Kinane: Loose In Chicago
23:20 Broad City
23:50 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah



00:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things
00:30 The Food Inspectors
01:20 My Cat From Hell
02:10 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
03:00 The Carbonaro Effect
03:25 The Carbonaro Effect
03:50 Mysteries At The Museum
04:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things
05:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things
05:30 My Cat From Hell
06:15 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
07:00 The Carbonaro Effect
07:25 The Carbonaro Effect
07:50 Mysteries At The Museum
08:40 Weather Top Tens
09:30 Weather Gone Viral
10:20 How The Earth Works
11:10 Kids Do The Craziest Things
11:35 Kids Do The Craziest Things
12:00 Pawn Queens
12:25 Pawn Queens
12:50 Life On The Line Australia
13:15 Life On The Line Australia
13:40 Battle Bots
14:30 Strange Evidence
15:20 The Carbonaro Effect
15:45 The Carbonaro Effect
16:10 Kids Do The Craziest Things
16:35 Kids Do The Craziest Things
17:00 My Cat From Hell
17:50 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
18:40 The Carbonaro Effect
19:05 The Carbonaro Effect
19:30 Guy's Grocery Games
20:20 Breaking Magic
20:45 Breaking Magic
21:10 Deception With Keith Barry
22:00 The Next Great Magician
22:50 Man, Cheetah, Wild
23:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things



00:00 Home Alone
01:00 In Pursuit With John Walsh
02:00 True Conviction
03:00 People Magazine Investigates: Cults
03:45 Home Alone
04:30 Hometown Homicide
05:20 Border Control: Spain
06:10 Betrayed
07:00 People Magazine Investigates: The Perfect Murder
10:40 Border Control: Spain
11:35 Hometown Homicide
13:25 Betrayed
14:20 Grave Mysteries
16:10 Border Control: Spain
17:05 Evil Lives Here
19:00 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
21:00 Twisted Sisters
22:00 Kiss Of Death
23:00 Diabolical: Deadly Love



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 Tangled: The Series
06:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
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
09:00 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
12:20 K.C. Undercover
12:45 Tangled: The Series
13:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
13:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
14:00 101 Dalmatian Street
14:15 Shake It Up
14:40 K.C. Undercover
15:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
15:10 A.N.T. Farm
15:35 Penny On M.A.R.S
16:00 101 Dalmatian Street
16:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
16:50 Raven's Home
17:15 Bug Juice: My Adventures At Camp
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 Rapunzel's Tangled Adventure
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



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



00:15 Marooned With Ed Stafford
01:05 Abandoned Engineering
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 Wheeler Dealers
04:50 How Do They Do It?
05:15 How Do They Do It?
05:35 Property Wars
06:00 Storage Wars Canada
06:20 Property Wars
06:45 Marooned With Ed Stafford
07:35 The Last Alaskans
08:20 Gold Rush
09:10 Alaska: The Last Frontier
09:55 Salvage Hunters: The Restorers
10:45 How Do They Do It?
11:10 How Do They Do It?
11:30 Wheeler Dealers
12:20 Wheeler Dealers
13:05 Storage Wars Canada
13:30 Property Wars
13:55 Salvage Hunters: The Restorers

storers
14:40 Railroad Alaska
15:30 Wildest Indochina
16:15 Street Outlaws: No Prep

Kings
17:05 Alaska: The Last Frontier
17:50 Gold Rush
18:40 How Do They Do It?
19:05 How Do They Do It?
19:25 Wheeler Dealers
20:15 Wheeler Dealers
21:00 Unique Rides
21:50 American Chopper
22:40 Shifting Gears With Aaron Kaufman
23:30 The Last Alaskans



00:15 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
01:00 Boyster
01:25 Boyster
01:45 Counterfeit Cat
02:10 Counterfeit Cat
02:35 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
03:20 Boyster
03:45 Boyster
04:10 Counterfeit Cat
04:35 Counterfeit Cat
05:00 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
05:29 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
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
08:00 Marvel's Spider-Man
08:25 Marvel's Spider-Man
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 Supa Strikas
18:29 Mech-X4
19:00 Marvel's Spider-Man
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



00:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
01:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
02:00 E! News
03:00 Second Wives Club
04:00 Botched
08:00 E! News: Daily Pop
08:55 Model Squad
11:40 E! News
12:35 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
13:30 Dating: No Filter
15:20 E! News: Daily Pop
16:15 Very Cavallari
19:00 E! News
20:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
21:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
22:00 Botched
23:00 Very Cavallari



00:10 Dinner Date
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:30 The Chase
03:25 Her Majesty's Cavalry
03:55 Gino's Italian Coastal Escape
04:20 Rich House Poor House
05:15 Dinner Date
06:15 Couples Come Dine With Me
07:10 The Chase
08:05 Her Majesty's Cavalry
08:35 Gino's Italian Coastal Escape
09:00 Rich House Poor House
09:55 Dinner Date
10:55 Couples Come Dine With Me
11:50 The Chase
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Coronation Street
14:15 Couples Come Dine With Me
15:10 The Chase
16:00 What Would Your Kid Do?
16:55 Rich House Poor House
17:50 Dinner Date
18:50 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
20:10 The Chase
21:00 What Would Your Kid Do?
21:55 Rich House Poor House
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Coronation Street
23:40 Coronation Street



00:15 Weapons At War
01:00 UFO Files
01:45 Ancient Top 10
02:30 The Universe
03:15 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
04:00 Ancient Aliens
04:45 Battles BC
05:30 Stan Lee's Superhumans
06:15 Evolve
07:00 UFO Files
07:45 Ancient Top 10
08:30 The Universe
09:15 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
10:00 Ancient Aliens
10:45 Battles BC
11:30 Ancient Aliens
12:15 Evolve
13:00 Ancient Top 10
13:45 The Universe
14:30 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
15:15 Ancient Aliens
16:00 Battles BC
16:45 Ancient Aliens
17:30 Evolve
18:15 UFO Files
19:00 Ancient Top 10
19:45 The Universe
20:30 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
21:15 Ancient Aliens
22:00 MysteryQuest
22:45 Evolve
23:30 Stan Lee's Superhumans



00:20 Mountain Men
01:05 Pawn Stars South Africa
01:50 American Pickers
02:35 Storage Wars
03:00 Storage Wars
03:25 Ax Men
04:15 Forged: Iron & Fire
05:05 Forged In Fire
06:00 Counting Cars
06:45 Mountain Men
07:30 Pawn Stars South Africa
07:50 Pawn Stars South Africa
08:15 American Pickers
09:00 Storage Wars
09:20 Storage Wars
09:45 Ax Men
10:30 Forged: Iron & Fire
11:15 Forged In Fire
12:00 American Pickers
15:00 Counting Cars
18:45 Ancient Aliens
19:30 Ancient Aliens
21:00 How The World Made America
22:40 American Pickers
23:30 American Pickers

Stars



Aries (March 21-April 19)

It seems as if your sexual needs are one of the issues you seem to place great focus on today. You desire power and control. These desires may lead to greater interest in healing and investing. The great mysteries of life and death seem to intrigue you. You may feel much support and harmony in your life now. Surrounded by friends and loved ones is the place for you. You may find yourself having a great time this evening surrounded by the children and younger people in your life. It seems these younger people look at you with much admiration and strive to be more like you. Continue to set a good example for these children, Aries. Great reward could come from investing in the lives of others.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This is a wonderful time for a quiet evening spent alone with your special someone. Keep to yourself today. This is not a great day for getting your point across to others. You may find your mind lost in your own memories. A great escape for you. This could be a very emotional day as you think back on lost love and lost loved ones. A walk down memory lane may bring your own mortality into focus. Life is short, Taurus. Live it to the fullest. Live, Laugh, and love hard. We are not promised tomorrow, so make today count.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Don't be surprised if you find someone challenging your values or your good taste. To each his own. This is why they make chocolate and vanilla. Do not take offense to this. You are unique and the only person you are responsible for pleasing is yourself. You may find you are being too strict on yourself. Loosen up and let your hair down. Life is short and you should remember to take time to relax and enjoy yourself every now and then. It seems the nature of time is something you have really had on your mind. You are starting to see just how short life is.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Your stubbornness could be an asset today. You know what you want and you are willing to work to get it. Compromise is not your strength, but you find it is a need when it comes to a romantic issue. Find a middle ground that you can learn to live with. This may restore the peace and happiness you have been longing for.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

We are not promised tomorrow. This is weighing heavy on your mind. Time is ticking. You are fully aware that time seems to be passing by at a high rate of speed. This is a day you decide to live each day to the fullest. To live, love, and laugh. From this point on you will live your life to the fullest and spread joy in every direction you can.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You have a reputation for not offering information unless you know it to be true. If you argue, which is rare, you are sure of your premise. You present your case as facts, leaving little room for disagreement. Most people trust you because they know what you say is true. Some may see this as arrogance. But, in most cases you are able to make your point without offending. You have a knack for telling people what they don't want to hear, but in most cases making them like it.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

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



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may need to loosen up a bit. You seem to be taking life extremely serious now. You are too strict with yourself. All work and no play isn't a good thing. Sure you are getting a lot accomplished but at what cost? You will burn out. You will not be the person others want to spend time with. You have to realize there is more to life than money and sometimes your health is not worth the price. Take some time for you. Sit back and learn to relax, Scorpio. This will help you more than being overworked.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

No one likes to be stood up. This may be the action you take that puts strain on your relationship with friends. Though you would love nothing more than to be out with friends socializing and have some fun, your more responsible side knows where your priorities lie and are unable to go through with plans you have made. Your mind is sharp, and you find yourself very productive which is the reward you need to make up for having to miss out and play adult today. You may find your experience leaves you with a great sense of sympathy for those close to you.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Something seems to be leading you toward a healthier lifestyle. You are ready to take life seriously. You know you are what you eat, or so they say. You are ready to feel better about your health. Today finds you getting serious about making some major lifestyle changes. You may want to join the gym, or start counting calories. You know you are ready to get up and get moving. Life will not pass you by. Your high energy and positive attitude will be determining factors in your quest for health. This is a great time for you, Capricorn. You will succeed.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

It seems as if you have a greater understanding of time and the fact life is short. Facing the day with this attitude, gives you inspiration to accomplish your goals. You are more passionate about all you do. You are making a decision to live as if each day is your last and enjoy all this world has to offer. This is a drastic change for you as you have been too strict on yourself in the past. You have no tolerance for anyone or anything that doesn't contribute to your long-term goals. You are full of ambition and will not allow anyone to stand in your way.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You are loving and sensitive when it comes to others. Even though you tend to give from your heart with no expectations, you may be longing to feel some sense of appreciation for what you do for others. Taking a chance now could bring great rewards in the future.

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
Antigua	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 Faso	00226	Mexico	0052
Burundi	00257	Micronesia	00691
Cambodia	00855	Moldova	00373
Cameroon	00237	Monaco	00377
Canada	001	Mongolia	00976
Cape Verde	00238	Montserrat	001664
Cayman Islands	001345	Morocco	00212
Central African Republic	00236	Mozambique	00258
Chad	00235	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Chile	0056	Namibia	00264
China	0086	Nepal	00977
Colombia	0057	Netherlands (Holland)	0031
Comoros	00269	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Congo	00242	New Caledonia	00687
Cook Islands	00682	New Zealand	0064
Costa Rica	00506	Nicaragua	00505
Croatia	00385	Niger	00227
Cuba	0053	Nigeria	00234
Cyprus	00357	Niue	00683
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Norfolk Island	00672
Czech Republic	00420	Northern Ireland (UK)	0044
Denmark	0045	North Korea	00850
Diego Garcia	00246	Norway	0047
Djibouti	00253	Oman	00968
Dominica	001767	Pakistan	0092
Dominican Republic	001809	Palau	00680
Ecuador	00593	Panama	00507
Egypt	0020	Papua New Guinea	00675
El Salvador	00503	Paraguay	00595
England (UK)	0044	Peru	0051
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Philippines	0063
Eritrea	00291	Poland	0048
Estonia	00372	Portugal	00351
Ethiopia	00251	Puerto Rico	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

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Friday, July 12, 2019

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- Diagnosis/Treatment of General Ear, Nose, and Throat conditions in adults & pediatrics
- Minimally Invasive Endoscopic sinus surgery including Balloon sinuplasty
- Minimally Invasive Microscopic & Endoscopic Ear surgery
- Diagnosis & treatment of Otology and Audiology (Hearing loss, Tinnitus & balance disorders)
- Facial Plastics 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

ACADEMIC 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:

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

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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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Otorhinolaryngology (E.N.T)
Dr Hamoud Abdullah Alarouj
ENT Specialist

- Laryngology Fellowship - Canada
- Fellow of the European Board Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery
- 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.
- Vocal cord augmentation.
- Treatment of spasmodic dysphonia.
- 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 Disease
- Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (cryptoglandular)
- SMART Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Stethoscope)
- Treatment of Intractable Bowel Symptoms
- Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- Stomach Bullectomy Inversion & removal
- Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- Gallstones & Abdominal Hernia Surgery
- Colonoscopy, Hydrotherapy & Fecal Incontinence Treatment
- Laparoscopic mini laparoscopy
- Transanal internally inveterate 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

daralshifa
Email: aahaddad@daralshifa.com

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

- Consultant Interventional and conventional cardiologist.
- Specialized in the Diagnosis and treatment of all adult cardiac diseases, including those cases that need urgent intervention in Cath lab (primary angioplasty).

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Dr. Hani Haider
General Surgery Consultant

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- Surgery for morbid obesity (sleeve, gastric bypass)
- Thyroid & adrenal surgeries
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Dr. Abdullah Hadi
Cardiology Department
Consultant - Internal Medicine
Interventional Cardiology & Adult Cardiology

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Friday, July 12, 2019

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

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DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED
 Consultant of General Surgery Laproscopic 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 - Over Center Mazya Building

Dr. Husain Alenezi

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Kuwait Times
Established 1961

Friday, July 12, 2019

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CHANGE OF NAME

Old name - MANUEL ROSARIO DIAS, new name - MANUEL DIAS. (C 5555)

Old name - REGINA DIAS, new name - LUISA GOIS. (C 5556) 11-7-2019

EMERGENCY

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METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 42 km/h with a chance for rising dust over open areas.

BY NIGHT: Hot to relatively hot with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 32 km/h.

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	48 °C	35 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	48 °C	29 °C
ABDALY	47 °C	31 °C
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C
JAHRA	48 °C	32 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	45 °C	30 °C
SALMIYAH	43 °C	34 °C
AHMADI	44 °C	35 °C
NUWAISIB	45 °C	31 °C
WAFRA	46 °C	28 °C
SALMY	45 °C	28 °C

SFC. CHART 11/07/2019 0000 UTC

MIL Analysis (RPA)
Valid 0000 UTC 11 Jul 2019

4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	07/12	Very hot with a chance for rising dust over open areas	47 °C	30 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h
Saturday	07/13	Hot and rising dust	46 °C	33 °C	NW	20 - 55 km/h
Sunday	07/14	Very hot with a chance for rising dust over open areas	47 °C	31 °C	NW	12 - 45 km/h
Monday	07/15	Very hot	47 °C	32 °C	NW	12 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES

Fajr	03:23
Sunrise	04:56
Zuhr	11:53
Asr	15:28
Sunset	18:50
Isha	20:21

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

MAX. Temp.	47 °C
MIN. Temp.	30 °C
MAX. RH	20 %
MIN. RH	07 %
MAX. Wind	NW 53 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
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306

Business

FRIDAY, JULY 12, 2019

39 Japan-South Korea trade spat threatens global tech market



40 Trump's team sees China trade stance as strength in 2020



41 Last ever VW Beetle model rolls off Mexican production line



PARIS: French Economy and Finance Minister, Bruno Le Maire, right, and French Junior Minister for Environment, Brune Poirson, speak to the press after a meeting about climate action investments with heads of sovereign wealth funds and French President Emmanuel Macron, at the Elysee Palace, in Paris.—AFP

France imposes tax on digital giants

US opens probe into French tax

PARIS: France yesterday became the first major economy to impose a tax on digital giants, with parliament passing the legislation in defiance of a probe ordered by President Donald Trump that could trigger reprisal tariffs. The new law aims at plugging a taxation gap that has seen some internet heavyweights paying next to nothing in countries where they make huge profits.

The legislation—dubbed the GAFA tax—an acronym for Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon—was passed by a simple show of hands in the Senate upper house after previously being passed by the National Assembly lower chamber. But the French move drew an angry response from Trump even before the legislation was passed, with the president ordering an investigation that the French economy minister said was unprecedented in the history of French-US relations.

The law will levy a 3.0 percent tax on total annual revenues of the largest tech firms providing services to French consumers. “The United States is very concerned that the digital services tax which is expected to pass the French Senate tomorrow unfairly targets American companies,” US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said in a statement.

But French Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire France

rejected the US reaction yesterday, saying “threats” were not the way to resolve such disputes. “Between allies, I believe we can and must resolve our differences in another way than through threats,” he told the French Senate ahead of the vote. “France is a sovereign state and it alone decides on its taxation mechanisms and it will continue to do so,” he said.

Unfair trade practices?

Le Maire said he was warned about the so-called Section 301 investigation during a “long conversation” with US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin on Wednesday, saying it was the first time such a step had been taken in the history of French-US relations. This type of investigation is the primary tool the Trump administration has used in the trade war with China to justify tariffs against what the United States says are unfair trade practices.

The measure was initially adopted by the lower house on July 4. Last month, top G20 finance chiefs meeting in Japan agreed there was an urgent need to find a global system to tax internet giants like Google and Facebook but clashed over how to do it. But they welcomed a set of proposed measures laid out by the Organization for Economic

Co-operation and Development (OECD), a forum for advanced economies. “We will redouble our efforts for a consensus-based solution with a final report by 2020,” they said in a statement.

Washington has been pushing through the G20 for an overarching agreement on taxation. Such a move is supported by Google which believes it would mean Silicon Valley tech giants would pay less tax in the US and more in other jurisdictions, in a departure from the longstanding practice of paying most taxes in a company’s home country. The section 301 investigation, which is being run by the US Trade Representative’s office, has said it will hold hearings to allow for public comment on the French tax issue for several weeks before issuing a final report.

The move was applauded by the Computer & Communications Industry Association which said the French law would retroactively require US internet giants to turn over a percentage of their revenues from the start of 2019. “This is a critical step toward preventing protectionist taxes on global trade,” CCIA official Matt Schruers said in a statement, calling on France “to lead the effort toward more ambitious global tax reform, instead of the discriminatory national tax measures that harm global trade.”—AFP

Business

Stocks gain, dollar sags as Fed chief shores up rate cut prospects

European stocks snap four-day losing streak

LONDON: World stocks rose, global bond yields fell and the dollar weakened after Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell bolstered expectations the Fed would cut US interest rates soon. The pan-European STOXX 600 climbed 0.2 percent after losing 1.4 percent over the past four sessions. Germany's DAX futures rose and Britain's FTSE futures gained 0.3 percent. The oil and gas sector as well as defensive stocks led the gains.

In his first day of testimony before Congress on Wednesday, Powell confirmed the US economy was still under threat from disappointing factory activity, tame inflation and a simmering trade war, and said the Fed stood ready to "act as appropriate". "Powell's statement confirmed we are going in the direction of a cutting cycle," said Charles Zerah, a fund manager at Carmignac. "The main question now is, are investors pricing too much in terms of rate cuts by year end? The way you see equity markets behaving, risk is that what markets are pricing could lead to disappointment."

The Europe gains follow healthy rises in Asia, where MSCI's broadest

index of Asia-Pacific shares ex-Japan rose 1 percent. Japan's Nikkei added 0.5 percent. US futures pointed to a stronger opening for Wall Street as well with E-Minis for the S&P500 at 0.2 percent. US stocks ended higher on Wednesday and the S&P 500 briefly crossed 3,000 points for the first time following Powell's remarks. Some questioned how much momentum there was behind the latest rally.

"We are in the camp and have been all year, and arguably wrongly, that the Fed becoming more dovish and cutting rates is not good for risk assets," said Neil Dwane, global strategist and portfolio manager at Allianz Global Investors. Nine of 12 Fed rate cutting cycles had not stopped a recession, he noted. "Given we are in the longest expansion and have only had rates lifted to 2.5 percent, for me it begs the question, is a soft landing possible?"

A strong June US jobs report earlier this month heightened expectations the Fed was more likely to cut by 25 basis points than by 50. But Powell's cautious stance helped fuel bets on heftier easing at its next policy meeting on July 30-31.

The chance of a 50 bps cut rose to



NEW YORK: Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in New York City. — AFP

27.6 percent from 3.3 percent on Tuesday, according to CME Group's FedWatch tool. Minutes from the Fed's last meeting, in mid-June, however, showed some policymakers felt there was not yet a strong case for easing.

The rate cut prospects also weighed on the dollar. The dollar index against a basket of six major currencies slipped 0.2 percent to 96.929, extending losses for a second straight session after reaching a three-

week peak on Tuesday. The dollar was down 0.4 percent at 108.03 yen, forced off a six-week high of 108.990 the previous day. It was still some distance from a six-month trough of 106.780 set on June 25. —Reuters

Zain unveils BMW X5 as mega prize for 'Score with Zain' campaign

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, unveiled the all-new BMW X5 as the mega prize for the second edition of its promotional campaign 'Score with Zain', which the company will offer at the end of the campaign that continues to offer customers a chance to win exciting prizes including a weekly cash prizes, smart devices, and other valuable prizes. Zain launched 'Score with Zain' campaign for the second consecutive year as part of its continuous efforts to offer its customers the latest innovative solutions in the world of Value Added Services.

The company is always keen on offering the best and most advanced services to the largest family of subscribers in Kuwait. As soon as a customer subscribes to the Score with Zain service, they will automatically enter the draw for a chance to win one of the exciting

prizes offered as part of the campaign. The prizes include a weekly cash prizes, smart devices, and other valuable prizes, as well as the BMW X5 Executive mega prize at the end of the campaign.

Score with Zain offers customers informative content and exclusive videos through SMS on a daily basis, including facts about the best athletes, the most exciting tournaments, and the most important sporting events around the world. Customers can subscribe to the service by sending "Yes" to 99915 for 150 fils daily only, giving them the chance to enter the draw on one of the exciting valuable prizes offered by the campaign.

Zain strives to offer customers the latest services and solutions in the world of Value Added Services, all with the aim of surpassing customers' expectations. The company will continue leading the market by launching unprecedented services, products, and solutions in addition to value added services geared at maintaining its leading position in Kuwait. Zain launched this exciting promotional campaign to reinforce its leadership position and its pledge in offering the best products and services to meet its customers' personal and professional telecommunications needs.

zain

Score With Zain

To subscribe, send "Yes" to 99915

Business

Japan-South Korea trade spat threatens global tech market

Moon calls on business leaders to prepare for drawn-out crisis

SEOUL: A simmering diplomatic row with Japan is threatening South Korea's output of components that drive smartphones and computer displays, which analysts say could batter the global tech market and hike prices for consumers. Tokyo last week said it would restrict exports of three chemicals vital to South Korea's world-leading chip and smartphone industry in an escalation of a decades-long dispute over Japanese forced labor during World War II.

And with the issue showing no sign of ending any time soon, there are worries it could also delay the rollout of 5G technology and futuristic folding screens. "If this situation persists, there may be reductions in production, which will drive up memory (chip) prices and certainly drive up end-product prices in turn," said Avril Wu, senior research director at Taipei-based market intelligence firm TrendForce. While South Korea holds stockpiles, shortages could set in after three months, she told AFP.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in has called the situation an "unprecedented emergency" and told business leaders to prepare for a drawn-out crisis. Yesterday, the country's ruling party called for an extra budget of 300 billion won to help local firms survive the upheaval, more than double what the prime minister had asked for a day earlier. With Japan so far refusing

to negotiate, the news is bleak for top market players Samsung Electronics and SK Hynix. The two firms supply tech titans Apple, Huawei and Amazon, and together account for almost two-thirds of the world chip market, according to the Hana Institute of Finance in Seoul.

"South Korea is the world leader when it comes to chip-making, and Japan is the world leader in the manufacturing of the key materials for chip-making," said Ahn Ki-hyun, vice-president of the Korea Semiconductor Industry Association. "With this trade row, Japan and South Korea are both losing the best partners. And neither of them will find good alternatives for a very long time," he added. "Ultimately, this will bring a stagnation or regression of the world's most cutting-edge technology. The price of gadgets may rise, as chips will likely be in short supply."

Tech companies are already under pressure from a weakening global outlook, while the chip sector is particularly suffering from weak demand. Japan's new restrictions also apply to the transfer of manufacturing technologies as well as the three chemicals, removing them from a list that effectively allowed expedited shipments. It means exporters will now have to apply for permission for every batch they send to South Korea—a process that can take up to 90 days each time.

Len Jelinek, executive director of semicon-



IZUMISANO: South Korea's President Moon Jae-in and his wife Kim Jung-sook arrive at Kansai airport in Izumisano city, Osaka prefecture, ahead of the G20 Osaka Summit. — AFP

ductor research at IHS Markit, warned any reduction or elimination in the availability of the materials would "significantly impede" production. "Because of the volume of chemicals required within the semiconductor manufacturing process, it is unlikely that the major chip suppliers will be able to find suitable quantities from sup-

pliers outside of Japan," he said. Two of the chemicals targeted, hydrogen fluoride gas and photoresists, are essential to making memory chips, while the third chemical, fluorinated polyimide, is used for high-spec TV screens and smartphone displays, including in hotly anticipated folding models. — AFP

India-US trade talks to restart amid signs of compromise

NEW DELHI: India and US trade negotiators will meet today, with few signs of a compromise on a series of protectionist measures taken by the two governments in recent months that have strained ties between the strategic partners. US President Donald Trump has been putting pressure on India to do more to open its markets, saying this week again on Twitter its high tariffs were "unacceptable".

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, re-elected in May, has been pushing nationalist policies with higher tariffs on everything from electronic goods to tighter controls on foreign firms in the fast growing e-commerce market to help foster domestic companies and create jobs for millions of youth. A delegation led by Assistant US Trade Representative (AUSTR) for South and Central Asia, Christopher Wilson, will meet Indian officials to try and re-start negotiations on tit-for-tat tariffs that were put on hold because of India's election.

"Since India's election period has now passed, USTR officials are visiting India for relationship-building with Indian government counterparts," a USTR spokesperson said. The USTR delegation is likely to meet Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal along with key trade officials on Friday. The delegation is also likely to meet top officials at the IT ministry.

Trump and Modi met in Osaka on the sidelines of a G20 summit in June where they agreed to build ties between the two countries and sort out thorny trade issues. — Reuters

Bolsonaro pension reform passes first vote in Congress

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's ambitious pension reform bill passed an initial vote in Congress Wednesday, a major step for his efforts to boost confidence in the country's lagging economy. In the first of two votes, the lower house of Brazil's Congress approved the reform measure, a boon for Bolsonaro whose signature economic policy has faced stiff resistance from trade unions and a hostile Congress.

Social activists and union members protested the proposed measure in Sao Paulo on Wednesday evening. "I don't want to work until I die," said one demonstrator's sign. But the measure received support from 379 deputies, above the required 308, while 131 voted against. The proposal to introduce a minimum retirement age and increase contributions over a longer period of time is seen as crucial to Bolsonaro's ability to deliver on other promised measures to shake up Latin America's biggest economy, which is on the brink of recession.

The reform is expected to generate savings of around one trillion reais (\$266 billion) over 10 years. Bolsonaro took to Twitter to praise the vote result. "Brazil is getting closer and closer to the path to jobs and prosperity," he wrote. The lower house will hold a second vote before the bill can move to the Senate for two votes, most likely ahead of a two-week recess that starts on July 18. Changing the pension system requires three-fifths of Congress to support a constitutional amendment. Bolsonaro has warned that Brazil's generous pension system would bankrupt the country if the changes were not adopted.

Cruel, unjust

In 2018, Brazil's pension deficit—including public, private,



SAO PAULO: Trade union members and social activists demonstrate against Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's proposal to reform the social security system in Sao Paulo, Brazil. — AFP

state, municipal and military—reached 362 billion reais, which is the equivalent of 5.5 percent of GDP. In 2011 it was 2.1 percent. The deterioration is largely due to the 2015-2016 recession, from which the country is still struggling to recover. There has been growing consensus in Congress that pension reform is necessary, particularly as the population ages.

The opposition, led by the Workers Party (PT), acknowledged the need for reform but attempted to postpone the vote, saying the law would increase inequality by affecting pensions for the poorest citizens, in particular black women, rural workers and teachers. "It's a cruel, unjust, inept and useless reform," said PT deputy Margarida Salomao. "It's not a problem of expenses, it's a problem of collection, and this reform protects the rich."

The protesters outside Congress shared her sentiment. Protester Maria Silva Vasconcellos said the working class was living in "misery." "Before they mess with the pockets of the poor, they have to reach inside their own pockets, because there are many people there (in Congress) retiring at 40, 50 years (old), and we have to die to retire," the 54-year-old domestic worker said. —AFP

Business

Wall Street banks bailing on troubled US farm sector

CHICAGO: In the wake of the US housing meltdown of the late 2000s, JPMorgan Chase & Co hunted for new ways to expand its loan business beyond the troubled mortgage sector. The nation's largest bank found enticing new opportunities in the rural Midwest - lending to US farmers who had plenty of income and collateral as prices for grain and farmland surged. JPMorgan grew its farm-loan portfolio by 76 percent, to \$1.1 billion, between 2008 and 2015, according to year-end figures, as other Wall Street players piled into the sector.

Total US farm debt is on track to rise to \$427 billion this year, up from an inflation-adjusted \$317 billion a decade earlier and approaching levels seen in the 1980s farm crisis, according to the US Department of Agriculture. But now - after years of falling farm income and an intensifying US-China trade war - JPMorgan and other Wall Street banks are heading for the exits, according to a Reuters analysis of the farm-loan holdings they reported to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC).

The agricultural loan portfolios of the nation's top 30 banks fell by \$3.9 billion, to \$18.3 billion, between their peak in December 2015 and March 2019, the analysis showed. That's a

17.5 percent decline. Reuters identified the largest banks by their quarterly filings of loan performance metrics with the FDIC and grouped together banks owned by the same holding company. The banks were ranked by total assets in the first quarter of this year.

The retreat from agricultural lending by the nation's biggest banks, which has not been previously reported, comes as shrinking cash flow is pushing some farmers to retire early and others to declare bankruptcy, according to farm economists, legal experts, and a review of hundreds of lawsuits filed in federal and state courts. Sales of many US farm products - including soybeans, the nation's most valuable agricultural export - have fallen sharply since China and Mexico last year imposed tariffs in retaliation for US duties on their goods.

The trade-war losses further strained an agricultural economy already reeling from years over global oversupply and low commodity prices. Chapter 12 federal court filings, a type of bankruptcy protection largely for small farmers, increased from 361 filings in 2014 to 498 in 2018, according to federal court records. "My phone is ringing constantly. It's all farmers," said

Minneapolis-St. Paul area bankruptcy attorney Barbara May. "Their banks are calling in the loans and cutting them off."

Surveys show demand for farm credit continues to grow, particularly among Midwest grain and soybean producers, said regulators at the Federal Reserve Banks of Chicago, St. Louis, Minneapolis and Kansas City. US farmers rely on loans to buy or refinance land and to pay for operational expenses such as equipment, seeds and pesticides. Fewer loan options can threaten a farm's survival, particularly in an era when farm incomes have been cut nearly in half since 2013.

Gordon Giese, a 66-year-old dairy and corn farmer in Mayville, Wisconsin, last year was forced to sell most of his cows, his farmhouse and about one-third of his land to clear his farm's debt. Now, his wife works 16-hour shifts at a local nursing home to help pay bills. Giese and two of his sons tried and failed to get a line of credit for the farm. "If you have any signs of trouble, the banks don't want to work with you," said Giese, whose experience echoes dozens of other farmers interviewed by Reuters. "I don't want to get out of farming, but we might be forced to." — Reuters

Trump's team sees China trade stance as strength in 2020

Osaka agreement kick-start talks stalled since May

WASHINGTON: As trade talks resume between China and the United States, President Donald Trump's advisers are confident he can portray his stance against Beijing as a strength in the 2020 election, despite making concessions and having no deal in sight. Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed in Japan last month to another truce in the year-long trade war between the world's two largest economies, thanks largely to Trump's promise not to impose new tariffs on Chinese goods and to ease restrictions on technology company Huawei Technologies Co Ltd.

The agreement in Osaka kick-started talks that had been stalled since May. Chinese and US negotiators spoke by phone on Tuesday and are discussing a face-to-face meeting in the future. But no deadline has been set for the process to conclude, leaving the possibility of a protracted negotiation that lasts well into next year and Trump's re-election fight. "I think you're into 2020 before there's any resolution to this," said Steve Bannon, Trump's former chief White House strategist, who has advocated for a tough stance against Beijing.

He applauded Trump's decision to take new tariffs off the table and be flexible on Huawei because it got the talks between the two countries going again. "I think it will help him politically because it's the reality of the world that we live in," Bannon said. The United States wants China to change what it considers unfair trade practices including intellectual property theft, forced technology transfer by US companies to their Chinese counterparts, support for state-owned enterprises and currency manipulation.

Trump has imposed 25 percent tariffs on \$250 billion of Chinese goods and has pledged only to accept a deal with Beijing that includes structural reforms to the way China does business. Beijing's retaliatory tariffs last year on imports of US agricultural goods have struck a blow at US farmers,

a constituency that helped propel Trump to victory in 2016. But Trump's bashing of China as a presidential candidate in 2016 delighted his crowds, and he is likely to highlight his tariff policy as a sign of toughness in 2020.

Washington and Beijing were close to completing a deal in May when Chinese officials balked at requirements that it change its laws to implement reforms, US officials have said. While other US leaders have pressured China to change its business practices, Trump's negotiating team arguably brought Beijing closer than it had ever come to an agreement to change.

Vulnerability

Still, Democrats, many of whom also favor a tough approach to China, see potential vulnerability for Trump in his approach. The president insists the tariffs are not hurting U.S. consumers and has offered tens of billions of dollars in relief to farmers affected by them. With no deal by 2020 and tariffs still in place, political swing states such as Iowa and Pennsylvania, which supported Trump in 2016, could swing to the Democratic candidate next year.

"From farmers in Iowa to an array of manufacturing jobs across the Midwest, swing state after swing state supported him based on the promise that he would win the trade war with China and bring their jobs back. So far he's done neither," said Scott Mulhauser, a China expert and former aide to Vice President Joe Biden, the current front-runner for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination. Those dynamics worry some in Trump's circle.

Stephen Moore, an outside economic adviser to the president, said a quick deal would be helpful. The de-escalation agreed to in Japan was positive, he said, but truces do not last forever. "Perhaps this could get us through the election," said Moore, who withdrew from consideration



BEIJING: This file photo shows the US, left, and Chinese flags displayed outside a hotel in Beijing.— AFP

for a seat on the Federal Reserve earlier this year after criticism of his sexist comments on women and shifts on interest rate policy.

"My personal advice to Trump ... when he's asked me about it, is get a deal that you've got now and pick up a much harder line with China after you get re-elected," he said. Trump has not done everything he pledged to do with regard to China as a candidate in 2016. He did not declare the country a currency manipulator, and his tariff policies are balanced by frequent and glowing praise of Xi.

Famous for considering himself a skilled dealmaker, Trump did not appear to have nudged his Chinese counterpart to restore the promises Beijing reneged on in May. "The biggest accomplishment on the trade talks is getting them (China) back to the table, but there's no date set

and there was no public mention ... that they have taken back any of the 'reneging,'" said Michael Pillsbury, an outside trade adviser to Trump, adding the concessions were worth it to get talks started. "It's a bold decision because if he hadn't done it, we might be having no talks at all."

Moving in the right direction?

Democrats have criticized Trump's tactics on China, while seeking to walk a careful line. Toughness against Beijing has significant bipartisan support. Biden has had to walk back comments that China was not a threat, but he has criticized Trump's tariffs tactics. Senator Bernie Sanders, who identifies as a democratic socialist and is also high in the polls in the crowded Democratic presidential field, considers China a currency manipulator. — Reuters

Business

Last ever VW Beetle model rolls off Mexican production line

Loss of Beetle after seven decades provokes emotions

PUEBLA, Mexico: German auto giant Volkswagen launched the final edition of its iconic “Beetle” car from its Mexican factory on Wednesday at a ceremony accompanied by a Mariachi band. The bug-shaped sedan rolled off the production line to rapturous applause, the last iteration of a model first manufactured in the late 1930s in Germany and 1954 in Puebla, central Mexico. “The loss of the Beetle after three generations and almost seven decades should provoke a wide variety of emotions,” said Steffen Reiche, the CEO of Volkswagen Mexico.

The limited, 65-unit run of the “Beetle Final Edition” will be sold in Mexico on the internet for a base price of \$21,000 per vehicle, and can be reserved with a \$1,000 payment. Each car includes a commemorative plaque on its left side, numbered from one to 65. It will be available in metallic blue, black, white and beige. Dozens of factory workers had turned up from early morning to put the final touches on the car, which was unveiled after seven hours of work.

The employees wore bright yellow tops bearing the words: Thanks Beetle, as the unveiling proceeded in a festive atmosphere tinged with

nostalgia for a car that has generated a loyal following like almost no other. “Who couldn’t want a car like this, made with Mexican hands?” said Roberto Benitez, a 40-year-old production technician. “It’s always sad, you feel like part of one. That’s the daily work, full shifts to get the best results, it makes me proud,” added Francisco Bueno, a 25-year-old employee.

Movie stardom

The production of the final Beetle model was announced last September by Volkswagen, still trying to turn the page after the costly 2015 “dieselgate” scandal in which it paid out huge government settlements after rigging 11 million cars to cheat regulatory emissions tests. The vehicle’s history goes back to the Nazi era, having first been developed by Ferdinand Porsche with support from Adolf Hitler, who in 1937 formed the state-run Volkswagenwerk, or “The People’s Car Company.”

After the war, the Allied countries made Volkswagen a priority in an effort to revive the German auto industry. The advertising agency Doyle Dane Bernbach in 1959 rechristened the car the “Beetle,” and began touting its small size as



PUEBLA, Mexico: Volkswagen employees pose with a ‘Beetle,’ the final edition of the iconic car, at a factory in Puebla, Puebla State, Mexico. — AFP

an advantage to consumers, according to the History Channel. The car attained further popularity with the 1968 Disney movie “The Love Bug,” the story of a racing Volkswagen with a mind of its own.

Andy Warhol did prints featuring the car while a Beetle featured prominently on the cover of “Abbey

Road,” the final studio album by the Beatles. The current “New Beetle” model, first launched in 1997, is a far cry from the original that ceased production in 2003, but it retains the distinctive bug-shape and large headlights that appear like eyes on a smiling face.

Robust, easy to maintain and

high-performance, it reached its apogee in the 1960s and 70s before its popularity waned and Volkswagen ceased European production in 1978. Eventually its high fuel usage, weak brakes and poor handling led to it being overtaken by the competition, not least VW’s own “Golf” model.—AFP

Nintendo announces smaller, cheaper new Switch console

TOKYO: Game giant Nintendo has announced the release of a scaled back, cheaper version of its runaway success “Switch” game console, expected out in September ahead of the key holiday shopping season. Switch Lite, which will sell for \$199.99, will be a strictly handheld device that can’t be used with television sets. It will hit shelves on September 20, the Japan-based company said in a statement released overnight. Unlike the existing console—a hybrid that can be used for handheld play or hooked up to a screen at home—the new edition’s controllers will be permanently fixed on either side of the screen. It will be small enough to fit in the pocket of an adult’s jacket. “Adding Nintendo Switch Lite to the lineup gives gamers more color and price point options,” said Nintendo of America President Doug Bowser in a statement. “Now consumers can choose the system that best suits how they like to play their favorite Nintendo Switch games.”

The new device will be able to play many Switch games but with fewer features, Nintendo added. The original Switch has enjoyed huge popularity, helped by innovative, family-friendly software titles. Nintendo, the creator of Super Mario and Pokemon, is aiming to roll out the flagship model to China via Tencent to further boost its global reach.—AFP

Health giant Reckitt settles opioid treatment spat

LONDON: British consumer health giant Reckitt Benckiser announced yesterday it will pay up to \$1.4 billion to settle a dispute with US authorities over the sale and marketing of an opioid addiction treatment. The case concerns the pharmaceutical company Indivior, which was an RB subsidiary before demerging in 2014. The US authorities criticized Indivior for having sought to take advantage of the opioid addiction crisis in the United States by exaggerating the safety of its drug Suboxone.

RB said it had reached agreements with the US Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission to resolve the long-running investigation. “RB will pay a total of up to \$1.4 billion to fully resolve all federal investigations into RB in connection with the subject matter,” the firm said in a statement. The agreements cover the Indivior indict-

ment and claims relating to state Medicaid programs for those states choosing to participate in the settlement, said the group.

“While RB has acted lawfully at all times and expressly denies all allegations that it engaged in any wrongful conduct, after careful consideration, the board of RB determined that the agreement is in the best interests of the company and its shareholders,” a statement said. “It avoids the costs, uncertainty and distraction associated with continued investigations, litigation and the potential for an indictment.”

Indivior was indicted in April over an alleged scheme to push its treatment for opioid addicts and reap billions of dollars from it. A grand jury in the federal court in Abingdon, Virginia said that Indivior marketed Suboxone Film, an opioid-based drug, as a safe and

controllable treatment for opioid and heroin addiction. But the indictment said that Indivior sought to boost sales by exaggerating the safety of Suboxone Film and connecting patients with doctors who were known to over-prescribe it and other opioids, taking advantage of the country’s huge opioid addiction crisis.

Beginning in 2010, the indictment claimed, Indivior told health care providers and programs that Suboxone Film, which contains the opioid buprenorphine, was better and safer than similar drugs, when in fact it was not. Indivior left the RB group in 2014. The pharmaceutical company is based in Richmond, Virginia, and is listed on the London Stock Exchange. In a statement at the time, Indivior called the indictment “wholly unsupported by either the facts or the law.”—AFP

Sports

Silverstone to host British Grand Prix till at least 2024

British Grand Prix secured with five-year deal

LONDON: Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton's home British Grand Prix will stay at Silverstone for at least the next five years under a new deal announced yesterday. The race's future had been in doubt since 2017, when a break clause was activated to terminate the contract after this weekend's grand prix.

Circuit owners the British Racing Drivers' Club (BRDC) had argued that the previous contract negotiated with former supremo Bernie Ecclestone was no longer financially viable due to escalating fees. Formula One said in a statement the new deal ensured the circuit, which hosted the first world championship grand prix in 1950, would remain on the calendar until at least the end of 2024.

"We have always said that, if it is to have a long-term future, our sport must preserve its

historic venues and Silverstone and Great Britain represent the cradle of this sport," said Formula One chairman Chase Carey. "Formula One is a global sport, held on five continents, watched by an audience of over 500 million fans around the world and our aim is to grow this number by bringing the sport we love to new countries, while also maintaining its roots," he added. "Silverstone and the British Grand Prix are an integral part of that vision." No financial details were immediately available.

Big boost

Britain and Italy are the only two countries that have always featured on the Formula One calendar since the debut championship. A new contract will be a big boost to British motor racing, with seven of the 10 F1 teams based in the country and

the motorsport industry providing tens of thousands of jobs. Mercedes' five times world champion Hamilton has won five times at Silverstone and last year's race at the former World War Two airfield was the best attended of any grand prix with a 140,500 crowd on race day.

"This deal has met all of the tests that we set ourselves at the beginning of this exercise," Silverstone managing director Stuart Pringle told Reuters when asked how the new contract differed from the old one. He added that it was now financially viable. "It will be different, this deal, because it places an emphasis on both parties working in a far more collaborative fashion to try and develop the British Grand Prix to our mutual benefit," he added.

Pringle stressed, however, that it would be misleading to suggest there was any sharing of

the risk with Formula One management. "We're still absolutely on the hook," he said. Pringle said last month that contract negotiations had been complicated by Formula One's desire to also hold a street race in London, but he sounded more relaxed on Wednesday. "We have had our concerns satisfactorily addressed in this agreement," he said.

The deal switches the focus to Spain, Germany and Mexico—all races without contracts for 2020 and at risk of dropping off the calendar. Italy has also yet to confirm a new deal, although there is an agreement in principle, but the race at Monza is expected to continue given the history surrounding it. A street race in Vietnam and a Dutch Grand Prix at Zandvoort are due to debut next year on what is set to remain a 21-race championship. —Reuters

Hamilton aiming to bounce back with a record 6th home win

SILVERSTONE: Lewis Hamilton is aiming to bounce back from a rare weekend of disappointment by winning his home British Grand Prix for a record sixth time this weekend - and in front of the biggest crowd at the historic Silverstone circuit in nearly three decades. After suffering in the heat and rarefied atmosphere of Austria's Styrian Alps, where he finished a hot-and-bothered fifth two weeks ago, the defending world champion and his Mercedes team are expected to revel in the gentler undulations and wider mix of corners in cooler conditions in central England.

A sixth victory overall and fifth in six years at a track he loves would also be his seventh in 10 races this year and extend his 31-point lead ahead of team-mate Valtteri Bottas in the drivers' championship. "This is the race that has become the most anticipated event of the season for me and it is the weekend I always enjoy the most," said Hamilton, who was quick to celebrate Wednesday's confirmation of a new five-year contract that will keep the British Grand Prix on the Formula One calendar until 2024.

"Having the support of your country concentrated into one weekend really makes for the most incredible few days. It is difficult to count what you gain from all that positivity - everyone's energy is priceless." If he wins, Hamilton will move clear of fellow Briton Jim Clark and Frenchman Alain Prost, with whom he shares the current record of five wins. After suffering their first defeat after an unprecedented run of eight victories, Mercedes are keen to restore their supremacy in the team's home event - both the car and engine factories are based close to Silverstone.

"The high temperatures in Austria exposed our vulnerability and meant we could not challenge to win," said team boss Toto Wolff. "But, fortunately, the English summer is known for more moderate temperatures so cooling should not be such a major issue. "We've had some of our best performances this year on tracks with a wide range of corner speeds so, on paper, we should be in relatively good form." His Ferrari counterpart Mattia Binotto played down their chances of a repeat of Sebastian Vettel's triumph last year, despite their stronger showing in Austria where Charles Leclerc finished second from pole behind the triumphant Max Verstappen of Red Bull. —AFP



Kuwait set to host handball tourney

KUWAIT: Kuwait is set to host the Asian Men's Handball Championship next January 19, which will be the starting point for hosting similar events after lifting the ban on the country's sports by the International Olympic Committee. In remarks to KUNA yesterday, Kuwait Handball Associ-

ation's Trustee Qayed Al-Adwani said that training has started for the team; taking part in the Arab juniors' tournament in Tunisia next October as part of the overall preparation.

However, the national team will go on a training camp outside Kuwait in September to prepare for upcoming events, including a tournament held in Qatar in October to qualify for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. Moreover, Kuwait's handball youth team will prepare for the Asia and the world youth tournaments in 2021, Al-Adwani said. —KUNA



Qayed Al-Adwani

Sports

NBA Clippers sign Kawhi, finalize deal for George

Details of Leonard's contract were not revealed

LOS ANGELES: Kawhi Leonard and Paul George made their move to the Los Angeles Clippers official on Wednesday, with the NBA team announcing Leonard's signing and George's trade deal with Oklahoma City. Details of Leonard's contract were not revealed by the Clippers, but ESPN and The Athletic website said Leonard's deal was for three years and not four as originally thought when the decisions were unveiled last week.

The reported three-year deal worth \$103.1 million, rather than a four-year contract for \$142 million, and times with George's 2018 deal for four years at \$136.9 million to give each player an opt out clause ahead of the 2021-22 season, according to unnamed sources in the reports. If true, the Clippers could offer Leonard four years at \$196 million in 2021 and

pitch George a five-year deal worth \$254 million at the same time. "This is a historic moment for our organization and our fans," Clippers president of basketball operations Lawrence Frank said.

Leonard, who is from Los Angeles, departed the Toronto Raptors after leading them to the NBA title in his one season with the Canadian club after a trade from San Antonio. "We are grateful and honored that Kawhi Leonard has decided to come home and join the L.A. Clippers. Kawhi is a peerless two-way player, a relentless worker and a natural fit for the serious, professional culture our group has established," Frank said.

"Having him on our side is a tremendous privilege and a massive responsibility, one we will take very seriously. His expectation, and

ours, is to contend for championships." Leonard reportedly would not agree to the deal unless the Clippers obtained George and they did by dealing Canadian guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, Italian forward Danilo Gallinari and five future first-round NBA Draft picks to the Thunder for George.

"Paul George is one of the greatest two-way players in our game," Frank said. "He's both an elite scorer and a relentless defender whose versatility elevates any team. "When you have the opportunity to acquire a contributor of his caliber, you do what it takes to bring him home. Paul is a native of the Los Angeles area and an ideal fit for the Clippers, thanks to his selflessness and drive. "We've plotted an aggressive course to build a championship contender and acquiring Paul is a critical step."

Defensive stalwarts

Leonard, 28, won the NBA Finals Most Valuable Player award in 2014 with San Antonio and last month with the Raptors. He was also the 2015 and 2016 NBA Defensive Player of the Year. Leonard averaged 30.5 points, 9.1 rebounds and 3.9 assists for Toronto in the playoffs after producing 26.6 points, 7.3 rebounds and 3.3 assists during the regular season. For his career, the 2011 NBA Draft's 15th pick has averaged 17.7 points, 6.3 rebounds and 2.4 assists. George, 29, averaged career highs of 28.0 points, 8.2 rebounds, 4.1 assists and 2.2 steals with the Thunder last season. He was among the NBA's top defensive talents with four deflections and 2.7 loose ball recoveries a game. —AFP



Sports Authority seeks to improve health care

By Abdullatef Al-Sharaa

KUWAIT: The Acting director of the Public Authority for Sports and deputy director for competitive sports Dr Sager Al-Mulla has stressed that sports medicine has become a basic element in revolutionizing and developing sports. Speaking on the sidelines of opening the physiological tests department at the Sports medicine and health awareness center, Al-Mulla emphasized that the Sports Authority is keen on directing much of its effort and support to improve the level of health care provided to sportsmen at the center and cope with

the latest international developments.

Al-Mulla also said that the new lab forms a substantial shift in sports medicine in Kuwait, adding that the center has a role in determining sportsmen health and fitness using standard scientific medical and physical tests. "Mandating all coaches to undergo special first aid training courses is a top priority to protect all players. It has become a necessity that all sports clubs and unions player procure their medical fitness certificates from the lab after undergoing advanced tests for hearts, chest and veins in addition to other tests to determine their body mass and analyze their bodies' physical stamina and capacities in a most professional and developed manner," Al-Mulla said.

He added that the lab will examine professional players and classify their professional quality as well as issue health fitness certificates to make sure it is safe for them to join various sports clubs.

NHL: Penguins' Cullen retires after 21 years

PITTSBURGH: Matt Cullen, who was the oldest player in the NHL last season, retired Wednesday at the age of 42. The forward played 21 seasons in the NHL, including last season with the Pittsburgh Penguins, when he had 20 points (seven goals, 13 assists) in 71 regular-season games. "It was an emotional time, but I knew it was coming," Cullen told NHL.com. "It just felt right, and I was really at peace with everything when it was over. I felt like it was only right to retire in Pittsburgh with everything that the organization had given me and done for me." Cullen's first stint with the Penguins was from 2015 to 2017, when he helped Pittsburgh to back-to-back Stanley Cup titles. Cullen also hoisted the Stanley Cup with the Carolina Hurricanes in 2006, when he scored a career-high 25 goals.

Micheal Ferland

The Vancouver Canucks signed free agent left winger Micheal Ferland to a four-year contract worth \$14 million. "Micheal is an energetic player that drives the play and can contribute in all three zones," general manager Jim Benning said in a statement. "He'll make our team harder to play against on a nightly basis and we're excited that he'll call Vancouver home." Ferland, 27, is coming off his second straight 40-point campaign, collecting 17 goals and a career-high 23 assists in 71 games with the Carolina Hurricanes last year. He ranked fourth on the team in plus/minus (plus-13) and third in hits (182).

Alex Iafallo

The Los Angeles Kings re-signed restricted free agent forward Alex Iafallo to a two-year, \$4.85 million deal. The agreement means the sides will avoid an arbitration hearing, which was set for July 20. Iafallo was the Kings' only player to elect for arbitration. Iafallo, 25, collected 15 goals and 18 assists while playing in all 82 games last season, finishing fourth on the team in goals and sixth in points. According to the team, he was named the Kings' player of the year based on fan voting.

Aliaksei Protas

The Washington Capitals signed forward Aliaksei Protas, their third-round pick in the 2019 NHL Draft, to a three-year, entry-level contract worth \$716,666 per year. Protas, 18, posted 40 points (11 goals, 29 assists) in 61 games last season to rank seventh in points among rookies in the Western Hockey League. —Reuters

Sports

'The sun will still rise' - India mourns World Cup shocker

Indian fans hurt by World Cup exit but proud of team

NEW DELHI: Cricket-mad Indians tried yesterday to come to terms with their shock World Cup exit, with the Times of India telling readers "The Sun will still rise tomorrow" and Ravindra Jadeja emerging as a new national hero. The unexpected defeat to New Zealand in Wednesday's semi-final came after a top-order batting collapse had left them teetering at 24-4.

Indian fans were feeling pain rather than anger as they tried to come to terms with their team's shocking World Cup semi-final defeat to New Zealand. Cricket is like a religion in India, where players can enjoy godlike status when they win but see their effigies burnt and houses pelted with stones when they lose.

While Virat Kohli's men had been favorites to go all the way at the World Cup, their exit did not spark a furious response for fans back home who had been captivated by their run to the last four as the tournament's top team. Their efforts lauded on social media, the team were also congratulated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who said he was proud of the way they played during their run at the World Cup, which also saw them wrest the world No. 1 ranking from England.

"A disappointing result, but good to see #TeamIndia's fighting spirit till the very end," Modi tweeted after India's 18-run loss in Manchester. "India batted, bowled, fielded well throughout the tournament, of which we are very proud. "Wins and losses are a part of life. Best wishes to the team for their future endeavours." In his post-match news conference, a glum cap-

tain Kohli said it was heart-breaking that his team, also the bookies' favourites to lift the trophy on Sunday, had to exit the showpiece due to some ordinary cricket in a 45 minute spell.

Jadeja and veteran Mahendra Singh Dhoni, renowned as one of the game's great finishers, rekindled the hopes of the cricket-crazy nation with a fighting seventh-wicket century partnership but it wasn't enough as India, chasing 240 to win, lost by 18 runs. "For a while it looked like he (Dhoni) would turn back the clock and script another great escape, but that was not to be," wrote the Indian Express under the headline "The un-finisher".

Batting legend Sachin Tendulkar said the target was "not big" but India had been too reliant on the top three in the batting order-Rohit Sharma, KL Rahul and captain Virat Kohli-who each only scored one run. "It's not fair all the time to expect Dhoni to come and finish the game. He has done it time and again," Tendulkar said, while also praising Kane Williamson's "incredible" captaincy for the Black Caps.

Dhoni 'blunder'

Former spin bowler Harbhajan Singh tweeted that the result was "heart breaking". And former greats Sourav Ganguly and VVS Laxman said that Dhoni's experience meant he should have batted higher in the order. "It was a tactical blunder... The stage was set for Dhoni," Laxman said. Former captain Ganguly said that the "composure" of Dhoni would have

being raped she and other young women took refuge up on the mountain," Andre Bancala, coordinator of the regional departments organization team said.

"But the leader of the mercenaries was unable to control his troops and when the worst came to the worst a group of young ladies committed suicide in the lake. "They killed themselves by jumping into the lake from a 'planche' (plank) on the banks so there you have the Planche des Belles Filles." "That's the first version," says Bancala. "The second version, because there are two, is equally heart-wrenching. "In this version, the girls also drowned themselves in the lake.

"But in this version the mercenary commander was overcome with grief. In the depth of his despair he carved the names of the girls concerned into a plank and placed it beside the lake as a memorial plaque. "The beautiful girl that he loved was called Ines and that is why the most recent of the skiing piste, the new green piste at the ski resort has been named Ines, in her memory." Food for thought for defending champion Geraint Thomas and the rest of the peloton as they battle up the mountain in a bid for Tour glory. —AFP



MANCHESTER: India's fans react at the end of play during the 2019 Cricket World Cup first semi-final between New Zealand and India at Old Trafford in Manchester, northwest England. —AFP

had a calming effect had he come in sooner.

"India needed experience at that stage. If Dhoni was there when (Rishabh) Pant was batting, he would not have allowed Pant to play that shot against the breeze," Ganguly said after the youngster holed out on the boundary to put India in further strife at 71-5. On the streets of Delhi, fans were disappointed but philosophical. "Well I thought we should have won. But well I suppose cricket is cricket," said Gorinder Wallia. "We have to accept it."

"I think they could have done a lot better, because all over the series they have been playing outstanding," said Aastha Sharma. Kohli's last three scores in World Cup semi-finals have now been nine, one, one—the US emergency number—a coincidence not lost on some Twitter users. "For sure that calls for an emergency," tweeted one, Rohit Thakur. Many focused on the heroics of top-scorer Jadeja, whose sword-twirling bat celebration after reaching 50 was as a rare moment of cheer. —Agencies

Red-faced NZ eat 'humble pie' after shock semi win

WELLINGTON: Red-faced New Zealanders who had written off the Black Caps' chances in the World Cup were forced to eat their words yesterday after their shock semi-final win over India. "Humble pie tasting good as Black Caps defy the odds," sports columnist Duncan Johnstone wrote on the Stuff website after the nation had largely written off struggling New Zealand's chances against a red-hot India.

Radio Sport declared it "eat your words Thursday" after the sensational 18-run win at Old Trafford which finished in the early hours of yesterday morning, New Zealand time, while Stuff senior writer Mark Geenty called it "one of New Zealand's best and most significant victories". Ahead of the critical knockout match, New Zealanders had largely consigned Kane Williamson and the Black Caps to the scrap heap.

They only qualified for the final four by having a better run-rate than Pakistan, although Pakistan had beaten New Zealand by six wickets and were seen by many critics and callers to talkback radio as more worthy semi-finalists. Even former New Zealand great Daniel Vettori said before the toss at Old Trafford: "India remain my favorites to win it all." Instead it will be New Zealand who go into

Sunday's final against the winner of the second semi-final between hosts England and Australia.

Former New Zealand Test batsman Craig Cumming, a co-host on Radio Sport, said he too believed New Zealand "would struggle to make the semi-finals, but sometimes when you're playing poorly like they have you are dangerous." There had been calls to axe long-serving, but sadly out-of-form opener Martin Gupthill.

Once again he did not star with the bat but his match-turning, pinpoint runout of MS Dhoni made him an instant hero, joined by Jimmy Neesham for a sizzling catch and bowling spearheads Matt Henry and Trent Boult who destroyed India's star-studded top-order batting line up. Johnstone, who had labeled the Black Caps' batting "boring" before the India clash, said there was "a need to acknowledge their brighter qualities—brilliant bowling, fabulous fielding and unquestionable character."

The New Zealand Herald hailed the victory as "the Manchester miracle" after heading their match preview earlier in the week: "Damp squib exit looms for Black Caps at Cricket World Cup". James Nokise noted on Radio New Zealand that New Zealand were "incapable of simply winning or losing. They insist on nail-biting, nerve-destroying, adrenalin-exhausting, rollercoasters that are edge-of-the-seat thrillers." The constant theme of calls to talk radio stations was an apology for even doubting New Zealand in the first place. A man called Steve summed up the national feeling when he told Radio Sport: "What an absolute dickhead I was. I was wrong. Yay." —AFP

What is the legend behind cycling's La Planche des Belles Filles?

MULHOUSE: The Tour de France tackles its first major mountain stage yesterday with a final ascent to a summit as famous for its difficulty as its catchy name: La Planche des Belles Filles, which literally translated means the Plank of Beautiful Girls. It is the summit where four-time Tour de France winner Chris Froome broke free for a thrilling breakout victory in 2012, proving he was equally adept in the mountains as he was at time-trialling. Since then two Italians, Vincenzo Nibali in 2014 and Fabio Aru in 2017, have taken emotional wins on the Vosges peak.

But were any of them wondering about the origins of that name? According to the locals, the story goes back to the Thirty Year War (1618-1648) when the lower part of the mountain was occupied by a band of Swedish mercenaries. "Their leader fell in love with one of the local girls and to avoid

Sports

Thai Thidapa defends LPGA title; Lincicome has a baby

Social media critics no problem but not granny, says Kuchar

WASHINGTON: Thailand's Thidapa Suwannapura defends the biggest title of her career this week at the LPGA Marathon Classic while the rival she beat in a 2018 playoff, Brittany Lincicome, celebrates a new baby. The 26-year-old from Bangkok, who goes by her nickname "Jasmine", defeated Lincicome last year at par-71 Highland Meadows in suburban Toledo, Ohio, with a birdie on the first extra hole after finishing eagle-birdie to force the playoff. "It's a really good feeling coming back here," Jasmine said. "Winning, it's like telling me just don't give up on things. You have to believe you're good enough to be out here and you're good at what you're doing."

The confidence from that victory has bolstered 106th-ranked Jasmine, who overcame a broken back in 2016 that forced a swing change upon her. "It definitely took a lot of pressure off me," Jasmine said. "I feel like I don't need to concentrate on keeping my tour card. I'm actually concentrating on grow the game. "Like my emo-

tion, I feel way happier to play golf. I have more confidence and believe there will be a good day for me and I'll probably win again sometime."

Lincicome, meanwhile, has taken a break from the tour to have a baby and she gave birth to daughter Emery on Monday afternoon in Chicago, exactly eight weeks earlier than expected. "Our little bundle of joy decided she didn't want to wait anymore to make her grand entrance," Lincicome posted on social media. Lincicome, still ranked 47th despite her absence, posted that the baby was taken off oxygen support on Tuesday. Jasmine's best finish this season was a share of seventh at the Kia Classic in March, but since then she has cracked the top 45 only once in 11 starts, missing six cuts.

"I'm definitely working on my mental," Jasmine said. "When a thing doesn't go right for you, when you hit a good shot and somehow kick right, kick left, doesn't go well on your day, you can't just look down and say, 'Oh, I had a bad day'. "Your energy is going down and it affects

your mood and everything. So I try to get better on that and see more positive things. It doesn't matter if you hit a good shot. Doesn't mean the result will come out good. "Just tell myself I'm good enough to play from any shot in the golf course. You know, even though I hit it bad, I will be able to get up and down, make par from anywhere. I just work on believing that."

Matt Kuchar

Matt Kuchar might have been able to shrug off withering social media criticism after paying less than the going rate to his stand-in caddie, but disappointing his grandmother was a whole different matter. Kuchar's reputation as one of pro golf's nice guys took a big hit earlier this year when word leaked out that he had paid David Ortiz \$5000 from prize money of almost \$1.3 million upon winning the PGA Tour's Mayakoba Classic in Mexico last November. Three months later Kuchar upped the payment to Ortiz to \$50,000, but only after being pillo-

ried on social media for his perceived stinginess.

Full-time tour bagmen usually receive 10% of a winner's prize money. Ortiz, a caddie at the course where the event was held, stepped in because Kuchar's regular had been unavailable that week. "I don't do the social media, so I think that helped to not see much (of the criticism)," the American told reporters on Wednesday on the eve of the Scottish Open in North Berwick. "However, hearing from my grandmother, the things that she was hearing and talking to me about was really tough."

Kuchar had initially defended his payment to Ortiz, saying that \$5000 was more than the arrangement between the pair for the week. Describing the caddie payment as a "tricky situation", Kuchar on Wednesday recalled the conversation with his grandmother. "Just the fact that she had called me to say, 'I can't believe what they are saying' is hard," he said. "You do so much just to make (your family) proud and for it to go the other way is difficult."—Agencies

Federer, Nadal gear for Wimbledon epic

LONDON: Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal battle for a place in the Wimbledon final today, 11 years after they mesmerized Centre Court in a Grand Slam championship match widely regarded as the greatest ever played. Nadal emerged triumphant that day, winning in five sets in a four-hour 48-minute epic of fluctuating fortunes that stretched out over seven hours because of constant, momentum-shifting rain interruptions.

The Spaniard won 6-4, 6-4, 6-7 (5/7), 6-7 (8/10), 9-7 as the clock ticked past 9pm and with the famous stadium in near-darkness. Over a decade later, the sport's two most successful players now have 38 Grand Slam titles between them and more than \$100 million in prize money each. Nadal, the 2008 and 2010 champion at Wimbledon, has the edge overall, leading his great rival and friend 24-15 and 10-3 at the Slams.

However, it is eight-time champion Federer who just edges their Wimbledon head-to-head 2-1 after winning the 2006 and 2007 finals before Nadal famously broke the spell in 2008. Nadal, who demolished Federer in straight sets in the semi-finals at Roland Garros last month on his way to a 12th title in Paris, admits his game has developed since 2008.

Mostly, that's due to his age as well as the desperate need to protect his creaking knees which so often conspired against him on the low-bouncing lawns of the All England Club. "I am running less so I need to serve better. I probably cannot play 20 weeks a year any more," said 33-year-old Nadal. "I am serving better. I am hitting the backhand better. Maybe volleying better, slicing better." In terms of the bare statistics, there is little to choose between them. Nadal has served up 47 aces so far and been broken just four times; Federer has 42 aces, dropping serve on only three occasions.

The Spanish third seed has yet to face a seeded player and has only been truly tested once, in his four-set second round victory over Nick Kyrgios in what was comfortably the tournament's most bad-tempered match. Federer, 37, is the oldest man in the semi-finals of a Slam since 39-year-old Jimmy Connors at the 1991 US Open. He is in his 13th semi-final at the tournament and 45th at the majors. In a career illuminated by landmarks, he became the first man to register 100 match wins at a single Slam when he came back from a set down to beat Kei Nishikori in the quarter-finals.



LONDON: Switzerland's Roger Federer serves against Japan's Kei Nishikori during their men's singles quarter-final match on day nine of the 2019 Wimbledon Championships on July 10, 2019. —AFP

'Rafa can hurt you'

Federer is wary of the dangers presented by Nadal. His loss in Paris, which took place in what he described as "insane" windy conditions, was his heaviest at the Slams in 11 years. "Rafa really can hurt anybody on any surface," said Federer. "He's serving way different. I remember back in the day how he used to serve, and now how much bigger he's serving, how much faster he finishes points."

The eager anticipation of their 40th clash has relegated defending champion Novak Djokovic's push for a fifth title to second billing. The top seed and world number one reached the semi-finals for the ninth time, racking up his 70th career win at the All England Club by sweeping past David Goffin in straight sets, reeling off 15 of the last 17 games. In his 36th Grand Slam semi-final, the 15-time major winner faces Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut who is in his maiden last-four at the majors at the 27th attempt.

Djokovic leads the 31-year-old 7-3 in career meetings, including 3-0 at the majors. However, the unheralded Spaniard, who had to cancel plans for his stag party in Ibiza as a consequence of his run to the semi-finals, has defeated Djokovic twice in 2019, in Doha and Miami. "He's got amazing consistency," said Djokovic. "Very flat from both forehand and backhand. He has improved his backhand. I think he's got more depth on his backhand. "The ball bounces lower on the grass, which is I think more suitable to his style of game." —AFP

NFL notebook: Rams' Gurley unsure how knee will hold up

NEW YORK: Todd Gurley, the Los Angeles Rams' primary ball-carrier, said he isn't certain how his arthritic knee will hold up over the long haul. An "arthritic component" in his knee became problematic in the playoffs last season, when the team attempted to manage his workload on the fly. "I'm just like, hey, we're going to find out in training camp, you know? Once training camp comes, you've got the preseason, but you don't have a lot in preseason," Gurley told NFL Network.

Gurley said the lingering issue won't cause him to change his playing style. However, NFL Network's Terrell Davis, who retired in his prime because of knee issues, said the joint will eventually wear out. The Rams drafted Darrell Henderson in the third round and matched an offer sheet to retain restricted free agent Malcolm Brown. Both will get more use as Gurley eases into the season.

Houston Texans

The Houston Texans will not hire a general manager for the 2019 season, instead opting to divide responsibilities among current front-office members, ESPN reported. Going without a GM was reported as a possibility in mid-June, after the team stopped pursuing New England Patriots director of player personnel Nick Caserio. The Texans are widely expected to renew their pursuit of Caserio when his contract expires next off-season, an endeavor that would be more difficult if the team hired a GM in the interim.

According to ESPN, Houston will divide the duties of fired GM Brian Gaine among several people for the 2019 season, including director of player personnel Matt Bazirgan, director of college scouting James Liipfert, senior vice president of football administration Chris Olsen and newly hired executive vice president of team development Jack Easterby. —Reuters

Sports

‘Lazy pothead’ skateboarders get serious with their Olympic dream

Skateboarders to compete in the ‘street’ and ‘park’ categories

BARCELONA: Hamburgers are out, going to the gym is in. With skateboarding set to make its Olympic debut at the Tokyo 2020 Games, top skateboarders are settling down and preparing as athletes in the bid to qualify. “Now we are athletes, within quotation marks, urban athletes,” joked 24-year-old Spaniard Danny Leon, who sports surfer style hair, at a skateboarding competition in Barcelona.

Decked out in jeans, a loose dark shirt and the almost obligatory baseball cap, Leon is well positioned to fly the flag for Spain in Tokyo—and he is taking it seriously. “Before it would be just hitting the streets with your skateboard and skating. Now we train,” says Leon. “We exercise and stretch after and before, we take care of our bodies more, eat better, no hamburgers and pizzas.” Leon is one of several top skateboarders currently in Barcelona to take part in the World Roller Games, the world’s largest event comprising all championship roller sports disciplines. “Right now I go to the gym a lot to improve my resistance and then I train every day four hours a day, repeating tricks all the time,” said Portugal’s Gustavo Ribeiro.

The 18-year-old is ranked number two in the world in the “street” skateboarding category and has a good chance of finishing on the podium at the Olympics. In Tokyo, skateboarders will have the chance to compete in the “street” and “park” categories. Street skateboarding features stairs or

benches, intended to mirror a natural street. Park boarding takes place in a hollowed-out course, usually involving bowls that give boarders great height, allowing for more complex tricks. “It sounds crazy that I can get a gold medal representing my country at the Olympics,” said Ribeiro.

‘Lazy and potheads’

His excitement contrasts with the misgivings many in the skateboarding community displayed when Olympic chiefs in 2016 supported a proposal to allow the sport in the Tokyo 2020 Games. They feared it could curb skateboarding’s street culture roots. “If you want to do it for fun, you can go to the street, do your tricks, have fun and have some beers. But I want to take it seriously,” said Argentina’s Matias Dell Olio. “I get up early, I work out at the gym, I stretch, I eat better. I have been skating since I was six, that’s my lifestyle. But it’s also my job.”

Peru’s Angelo Caro, 19, said the inclusion of skateboarding in the Tokyo Games opened the doors to him of his country’s top training centre for athletes. He hopes it will also shatter stereotypes about skateboarders. “People who see us as lazy and potheads will see that it is really a beautiful sport, that involves a lot of talent and effort. Every day we fall, we hurt ourselves, it’s a real sacrifice,” added Caro, whose body is covered in scars and bruises.



TOKYO: This picture shows the competition course (left) and the warming-up course (right) at the Kasai Canoe Slalom Centre, which will host canoe (slalom) competitions during the upcoming Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. — AFP

Wardrobe woes

World Skate president Sabatino Aracu told AFP that skateboarding will bring “fresh air” and “young blood” to the Olympics. A total of 80 skateboarders will compete in Tokyo 2020 — 40 in the “street” category and 40 in the “park” category. An equal number of men and women will compete in each category. A country can send a maximum of three representatives per category.

Qualification depends on points obtained during major international competitions, a system which discourages them from attempting spectacular tricks. “We work with a calculator. There are tricks that are worth eight or nine points, but if you only need seven, you do an easier one to secure a spot on the podium,” said Dell Olio. Aside from preparing tricks, Leon is worried about one other thing ahead of the Olympics. — AFP

MLB notebook: ‘Right deal’ could reportedly net Mets’ Syndergaard

NEW YORK: Right-hander Noah Syndergaard could be traded if the New York Mets are approached with the “right deal,” MLB Network reported. Syndergaard and Zack Wheeler are reportedly available, but the Mets are not soliciting offers, according to the report. Last week, MLB Network linked Wheeler to American League East rivals. The New York Yankees have scouted multiple right-handed starters, including Trevor Bauer of the Indians, and the Boston Red Sox are also said to be looking for starting pitchers.

Syndergaard, 6-4 this season with a 4.68 ERA in 17 starts, is under team control through the 2021 season and is earning only \$6 million this season. He’s eligible for arbitration this offseason. The San Diego Padres, the Houston Astros and the Milwaukee Brewers have all inquired about Syndergaard, according to Jon Morosi of the MLB Network.

Jake Arrieta

The Philadelphia Phillies will continue to use right-hander Jake Arrieta despite a bone spur in his right arm, manager Gabe Kapler said in a local radio interview, and the Phillies’ medical staff will continue to evaluate Arrieta. He is currently scheduled to start Friday’s game against the Washington Nationals. Arrieta last pitched on Saturday in a 6-5 loss to the New York Mets, giving up six runs (five earned) on 11 hits in 4 1/3 innings. He took the loss, sending his record to 4-7 with a 4.67 ERA.

Chicago White Sox

The Chicago White Sox have started installing extended protective netting at Guaranteed Rate Field, the team announced, and will have it ready for the season’s second half. Crews began working Monday on the extension, which will run to each foul pole, something no other MLB stadium currently features. Most of the work was expected to be completed Wednesday, with the netting fully ready for next week’s Double Duty Classic, a high school baseball event held at the ballpark. Chicago returns home from a post-All-Star break road trip on July 22 to play the Miami Marlins.

Corey Seager

The Los Angeles Dodgers activated shortstop Corey Seager from the 10-day injured list, clearing the way for him to return from a month-long absence. Seager strained his left hamstring on June 11 and went on the IL two days later, though the severity of the injury was initially feared to be worse. He is expected to be in the lineup Friday when the Dodgers open the second half of the season at the Boston Red Sox. According to the Orange County Register, center fielder A.J. Pollock is also expected to return from the IL for Friday’s game, having been out since April 28 due to right elbow surgery.

Tyler Thornburg

The Red Sox released relief pitcher Tyler Thornburg a day after he refused a minor league assignment. Thornburg, 30, had a 7.71 ERA in 16 appearances, spanning 18 2/3 innings, for Boston this season. He struggled in a rehab stint at Triple-A Pawtucket after a hip injury, with a 12.66 ERA in 11 games.

When the rehab assignment ended Monday, Boston needed to put him on the major league roster or have him accept a minor league assignment, which he had the right to refuse due to his service time in the majors. Thornburg is now a free agent, with the Red Sox owing him the balance of his \$1.75 million salary for this season. — Reuters

Robot umpire aid debuts in minors as MLB watches closely

NEW YORK: Robots in baseball? That was the case Wednesday night in the Atlantic League All-Star Game, putting them one step closer to the big time. The plate umpire in the game at York, Pa., wore an earpiece that would relay whether a pitch was a ball or strike based on computer evaluation. The umpire then relays the call to the players and fans in attendance, just as always. The umpire can also override the call. “I think once people actually see this happening, they’re going to realize it’s not that big a deal,” Atlantic League president Rick White told the Washington Post.

White said the system will be deployed across his league in the coming weeks. The independent Atlantic League and Major League Baseball have an official partnership as the lower league rolls out new rules, innovations and equipment for MLB to study. The strike zone system, provided by MLB, was created by Trackman, a sports data firm. Software in the press box relays the call to a smart phone, which relays to the bluetooth earpiece the umpire wears. A square array well behind home plate monitors the strike zone. MLB’s executive vice president of economics and operations Morgan Sword told ESPN it was “an exciting night for MLB.” “One of our focuses is not to replace the umpire,” Sword said. “In fact, we’re trying empower the umpire with technology. The home plate umpire has a lot more to do than call balls and strikes, and he’s going to be asked to do all of that. We’re in touch with our umpires’ union, and this is the first step of the process.” — Reuters

Sports

Nigeria grab late winner against South Africa to reach semi-finals

Troost-Ekong lifts Nigeria past South Africa in quarter-finals

CAIRO: William Troost-Ekong's late winner sent Nigeria through to the semi-finals of the Africa Cup of Nations on Wednesday after a tense 2-1 victory over South Africa in Cairo. Samuel Chukwueze fired the Super Eagles ahead in the first half in front of a healthy, largely pro-Nigerian crowd at the 75,000-capacity Cairo International Stadium. But Bongani Zungu's looping header brought South Africa level on 70 minutes, the goal awarded with the aid of VAR-introduced for the first time at the tournament from the quarter-final stage onwards—after it was initially ruled out for offside.

Centre-back Troost-Ekong then turned home at a corner a minute from time to set three-time champions Nigeria up with a clash against Algeria or Ivory Coast for a spot in the July 19 final. "We were lucky in the end to score

this second goal because in the second half South Africa played much better," said Nigeria coach Gernot Rohr. "We're happy, we have to recover well because the next game, either Algeria or Ivory Coast will be very difficult also." South Africa boss Stuart Baxter admitted the nature of the defeat was tough to digest.

"It's difficult when you've lost a game in the dying minutes, it's difficult to find positives. I'm sure in one week's time I will find some positives, but at this moment I'm finding it very difficult," he said. Left-back Jamilu Collins made his first appearance in Egypt after shaking off a pre-tournament injury while Villarreal forward Chukwueze came in for Moses Simon in the Nigerian attack. Baxter stuck with the same side that shocked hosts Egypt in the last round, as match-winner Themba Zwane's return from suspension.

his place despite Themba Zwane's return from suspension.

VAR makes its mark

Rohr had suggested South Africa were favorites in the build-up following their defeat of the record seven-time champions, a tag Baxter promptly rejected with Bafana Bafana's lone competitive win over Nigeria coming in qualifying for these finals. Odion Ighalo's goals have been the driving force behind Nigeria's run here but it was emerging young forward Chukwueze, coming off a solid debut season in Spain's top flight, who struck just before the half-hour to end the impasse.

Alex Iwobi skipped past a couple of defenders down the left before pulling back for Chukwueze, who swept into the corner as the ball

trickled back his way after a first shot was blocked. Following a stodgy first half Nigeria appeared the far sharper after the break, Peter Elebo rattling the crossbar with a superb 25-yard free-kick destined for the top corner but for the fingertips of Ronwen Williams.

A number of promising attacks fizzled out for Nigeria and their lack of precision came back to haunt them when Zungu hauled South Africa level, nodding back across goal after a Percy Tau set-piece was shown upon a video review to have been flicked on by Ighalo. But after their stunning elimination of Mohamed Salah's Egypt there was to be no follow-up act from South Africa as Williams flapped at an in-swinging corner and Troost-Ekong forced over the line with his knee to clinch victory for Nigeria.—AFP

Gueye takes Senegal to first Cup of Nations semi-final in 13 years

CAIRO: Senegal reached the Africa Cup of Nations semi-finals for the first time since 2006 when Idrissa Gueye scored to deliver a 1-0 last-eight win over Benin in Cairo on Wednesday. Everton midfielder Gueye struck on 70 minutes, side-footing the ball into the net from close range after being set up by Liverpool star Sadio Mane. This was the first Cup of Nations match to use the VAR (video assistant referee) system and there were no controversial incidents. Benin were reduced to 10 men in the closing stages when Olivier Verdon was given a straight red card for a last-defender foul.

On Sunday, 2002 runners-up Senegal will face giantkillers Madagascar or under-performing Tunisia in a semi-final in the Egyptian capital. "We were expecting a complicated match and my players did not give up because they have a good mentality, were patient and respected instructions," said Senegal coach Aliou Cisse.

"At this stage of the tournament, anyone can beat anyone. We came here with the ambition of playing seven matches, and we will play them. We want to play in the final." Benin coach Michel Dussuyer said: "I want to congratulate my players for the way they handle difficult challenges. "The boys must be proud. They made the people of Benin proud. With this squad, we have advanced. Of course, there is disappointment, but the players can hold their heads high."

Cisse made one change to the team that defeated Uganda to reach the last-eight stage with Keita Balde replacing fellow forward Ismaila Sarr. France-born Dussuyer changed three of the team that shocked Morocco after a penalty shootout to reach the quarter-finals for the first time. Khaled Adenon missed out due to a suspension and Seibou Mama and Jodel Dossou were benched with Seidou Baraze, Sessi D'Almeida and Steve Mounie taking their places.

First scare for Benin

This was only the third time the countries met with Senegal winning 1-0 at home and drawing 1-1 away in 2002 World Cup qualifying. Senegal applied most of the early pressure with Benin content to sit back and soak it up before a small crowd



CAIRO: Senegal's forward Sadio Mane (center) knocks the ball past Benin's goalkeeper Saturnin Allagbe (left) during the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations (CAN) quarter final football match between Senegal and Benin at the 30 June stadium in Cairo on July 9, 2019. —AFP

at the 30,000-capacity 30 June Stadium.

The first scare for Benin was self-inflicted as goalkeeper Owolabi Kassifa fumbled a weak shot and had to swiftly regain possession as Mane darted forward. Mickael Pote, the veteran Benin forward who bagged a brace in a group draw with Ghana, came agonisingly close to putting the Squirrels ahead midway through the opening half. He cleverly backheeled a free-kick driven low into the box and the ball flew just wide with goalkeeper Alfred Gomis beaten.

There was intense Senegal pressure as the opening half drew to a close with Verdon coming to the rescue by clearing a Henri Saivet cross. Verdon and his fellow defenders then blocked three close-range attempts by the Teranga Lions to break the stalemate before the break. Senegal did get the ball in the net nine minutes after half-time, but the Algerian referee blew for offside and VAR confirmed that his decision was correct.

A howler from Gomis nearly gifted Benin the lead as he mis-cued his clearance of a back-pass and the ball trickled just wide of the goal. Soon after, Senegal were rewarded for their dominance of possession and territory when Gueye burst into the box and fired over Kassifa. Benin were lucky not to fall further behind in the following few minutes as Senegal had a shot cleared off the line and Mane was denied a goal by a marginal offside call.—AFP

Lampard's Chelsea reign begins with 1-1 draw

LONDON: New Chelsea manager Frank Lampard said he was pleased with the team's response to his "taxing" pre-season program following a 1-1 draw at Irish side Bohemians in his first match in charge. Striker Michy Batshuayi put Europa League winners Chelsea ahead in the eighth minute before trialist Eric Molloy leveled late on to snatch a draw at Dalymount Park in Dublin. Lampard, who replaced Maurizio Sarri this month after a season in charge of Championship side Derby County, said the squad's fitness was his main priority ahead of the new season.

"I have a way of working that can be taxing on the players and we wanted to get straight into it ... I want to stretch them because that's what pre-season is all about," the 41-year-old told Chelsea's website. "We have to because we want fitness and intensity in our game. I'm happy not just with how they've practically done things but with their attitude in taking everything on. "We haven't been back for long and this was our first game after just a few days so there was a bit of pressure on the lads to work ... we've been working them hard." —Reuters

Football Australia boss to step down; clubs take control

SYDNEY: Football Federation of Australia chief executive David Gallop announced yesterday he will retire at the end of the year as the governing body restructures to give clubs more say in running the game. Gallop, who has held the top job in Australian football for seven years, linked his decision to the planned shake-up which will see the chief executive's role diminished. A working group charged with reviewing the structure of Australia's professional leagues announced a host of recommendations last week that will see clubs take greater control of the elite competitions.

Under the proposal a new organization, made up largely of representation from each of the clubs, will govern the A-League, women's league and youth leagues as they transition away from FFA control. Gallop said in a statement that the recommendations would bring about "fundamental changes" to the way the way professional competitions are managed, making the FFA chief executive's role "narrower". —AFP

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This combination of file pictures shows Spain's Rafael Nadal and Switzerland's Roger Federer (inset) during the 2019 Wimbledon Championships. —AFP

Federer, Nadal face off

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