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Govt petitions panel acquits local firms over rain damage

Lawmaker calls for doubling pension payments



KUWAIT: This combination of pictures created early yesterday shows the moon during different stages of a partial lunar eclipse. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: A Cabinet panel that reviews petitions by firms involved in disputes over government contacts yesterday acquitted several local companies that were suspended by the public works ministry over contractual flaws in rain-hit projects. The companies were suspended by the minister of public works on charges that they were responsible for damage caused by the heavy rains last November. These companies were involved in road and construction projects in several residential areas that were hit hard by flooding.

The petitions panels said the suspension of the companies was based on "general" accusations that were not substantiated by evidence, adding that some government departments should take responsibility for the extensive damage. It added that after evaluating defense arguments presented by the companies, the committee ruled that judicial investiga-

tions must be initiated before charging the companies.

Government spokesman and information ministry undersecretary said the committee also decided that no contracts will be awarded to companies that haven't executed a project or executed projects with flaws before such problems are first resolved. Head of the Anti-Corruption Authority Abdulrahman Al-Namash said that the authority will refer some officials to court over cases related to loose gravel and damage caused by rains. He provided no details.

Meanwhile, MP Saleh Ashour yesterday submitted a draft law calling to raise the minimum pension for retired people to KD 1,200 from the current KD 650 monthly. The lawmaker said the proposed pension is needed to allow retired people to cope with the rising cost of living. Earlier this week, five MPs proposed that annual increases to pension should be raised from KD 30 to KD 60 per month and should be reviewed every five years.

Expats with new IDs face problems at airports, banks

KUWAIT: Expats spending their holidays in Europe have said they have faced problems with the new civil ID residency system after the residency sticker on the passport was cancelled. They said passport officials in those countries refused to let them depart because the civil ID does not carry the words "residency ID" and does not indicate an expiry date. Others said they contacted the emergency lines of Kuwaiti embassies, who called the airports to tell them about the new system and allow the expats to board the plane.

Meanwhile, expats face another problem in Kuwait with regards to changing names on the ID, as the civil information mentions the first and last names in Latin, which banks reject and do not update their data, which is done annually. Some expats said that while at the bank to update their data, employees reject the ID because the Latin name is only of two parts, which is contrary to the updating systems which call for the agreement of the Arabic name with that of the Latin one, which must be of four parts. — Al-Qabas

Drug kingpin El Chapo jailed for life in US

NEW YORK: Once one of the world's most powerful and notorious criminals, Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman was jailed for life yesterday — the mandatory sentence for a host of crimes spanning a quarter-century. Guzman, the 62-year-old former co-leader of Mexico's mighty Sinaloa drug cartel, was convicted in February in US federal court on a spate of charges, including smuggling hundreds of tons of cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine and marijuana into the United States.

The much-anticipated hearing in New York capped a dramatic legal saga and saw Guzman deliver what will likely be his final public words before he is taken to a super-max federal prison to live out his days.

"There was no justice here," he said, wearing a gray suit, lilac shirt, purple tie and publicly sporting his trademark mustache for the first time stateside.

The charges, which also include money laundering and weapons-related offenses, carried a mandatory life sentence. US Federal Judge Brian Cogan tacked a symbolic 30 years onto the sentence and ordered Guzman to pay \$12.6 billion in forfeiture — an amount based on a conservative estimate of revenues from his cartel's drug sales in the United States. So far, US authorities have not recovered a dime.

In the Brooklyn courtroom, Guzman said prayers from his supporters had given him "strength to endure this great torture", which he said has been "one of the most inhuman that I have ever



Joaquin Guzman

Continued on Page 24



KUWAIT: A trailer carrying sand overturned on Ghazali Expressway between Farwaniya and Rehab yesterday. Police freed the injured driver, who was trapped in the wreckage, and handed him to paramedics. — Hanan Al-Saadoun

News in brief

Amnesty slams bedoon arrests

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti authorities have arrested more than a dozen people, including a leading rights activist, in a crackdown on protesters demanding greater rights for stateless Arabs. Amnesty International said yesterday. They face a number of charges including participation in unlicensed demonstrations, spreading false news and state security offences. "The Kuwaiti authorities have arbitrarily arrested more than a dozen protesters in recent days, including prominent human rights defender Abdulhakim Al-Fadhli and other activists, in a crackdown on peaceful protesters demanding greater rights for the stateless group known as bedoons," the London-based rights group said. "Twelve protesters remain in custody." Amnesty said the arrests took place between July 11 and 14 following protests by bedoons. — AFP

Saudis line up Jackson, 50 Cent

JEDDAH: Pop icon Janet Jackson and rapper 50 Cent are among musicians set to perform in Saudi Arabia, organizers said yesterday, after rapper Nicki Minaj pulled out in a show of support for women's rights. "WOW WOW WOW @50Cent is going to perform live at Jeddah World Fest!" organizers of the Jeddah Season cultural festival said on Twitter. "@JanetJackson is confirmed to perform at Jeddah World Fest! We can't wait to see this incredible icon in Jeddah!" They are to perform alongside British musician Liam Payne and American DJ Steve Aoki as the curtain falls today on the nearly month-long festival in the Red Sea city of western Saudi Arabia. Minaj was to have headlined the concert, but she cancelled in a show of solidarity for women's and gay rights in the ultraconservative kingdom. — AFP

Turkish diplomat among two killed in Iraqi Kurdistan

ARBIL: The Turkish vice consul to Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region was among at least two people shot dead yesterday in the regional capital Arbil, prompting pledges of "retaliation" from Ankara. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack so far, but Turkey is already waging a fierce offensive against Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) bases in northern Iraq. Yesterday afternoon, at least one gunman fired on Turkish consulate workers in a restaurant in Ainkawa, a northern

Arbil neighborhood that hosts numerous restaurants and the Turkish consulate.

"A shooting in front of a restaurant in Arbil left a Turkish consulate employee and a civilian dead, and wounded a third person," said the Kurdish internal security forces, known as the Asayish. The diplomat was identified by a local police source to AFP as the Turkish vice consul. The source said the attacker fled the scene. A spokesman for the Iraqi foreign ministry confirmed the incident and condemned the attack.

Turkey's foreign ministry said an "employee" at its Arbil consulate was killed in a shooting outside the consulate. "We are continuing our efforts with the Iraqi government and local authorities to find the perpetrators of this attack as quickly as possible," said Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. His spokesman Ibrahim Kalin vowed "the necessary response will be

given to those who committed this treacherous attack".

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), which now leads the regional government, enjoys good political and trade relations with Turkey. But one sticking point is the PKK, which operates rear bases across Iraq's mountainous north. The PKK is classified as a "terrorist" group by Turkey, the United States and the European Union because of the three-decade insurgency it has waged against the Turkish state. Turkey has been conducting a ground offensive and bombing campaign since May in the mountainous northern region to root out PKK pockets.

Earlier this month, the PKK announced that one of those raids killed senior PKK leader Diyar Gharib Mohammed along with two other fighters. A spokesman for the PKK's armed branch denied the group was

Continued on Page 24

Sudan junta, protesters ink political deal

KHARTOUM: Sudan's protesters and ruling generals yesterday inked a deal that aims to install a civilian administration, a key demand of demonstrators since president Omar Al-Bashir was deposed in a coup three months ago. The move loosens a deadlock that has gripped the country, following nationwide mass protests that began against Bashir in December but then continued after a military council ousted him on April 11.

The unrest has also left scores dead, with more than 100 killed in a June 3 crackdown on a protest sit-in according

to doctors close to demonstrators. The deputy chief of the military council General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo — who initialled the deal on behalf of the generals yesterday — told AFP the agreement was a "historic moment" for Sudan. It has "opened a new and promising era of partnership between the armed forces, RSF (Rapid Support Forces) and leaders of the glorious Sudanese revolution," Dagalo said in Khartoum after he had put pen to paper.

Dagalo also heads the RSF, a feared paramilitary organization that has its origins in the Janjaweed militias unleashed against African rebels during the early 2000s in Darfur. Ibrahim Al-Amin, a key protest leader, confirmed "today, we completed the political declaration". Intense talks took place through the night over details of the political declaration at a luxury hotel on the bank of

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KHARTOUM: Sudanese deputy chief of the ruling military council Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo and protest movement Alliance for Freedom and Change leader Ahmad Al-Rabiah shake hands after inking an agreement before African and Ethiopian mediators early yesterday. — AFP

Local

Amir receives letter from Djibouti's president on bilateral relations

Sheikh Sabah meets Head of the Central Agency for Remediating Status of Illegal Residents



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Djibouti Mahmoud Youssouf.



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

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, accompanied by Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Djibouti Mahmoud Youssouf. Minister Youssouf handed His Highness

Sheikh Sabah a letter from Djibouti's President Ismail Guelleh regarding bilateral ties and boosting cooperation between the two countries.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace. His Highness the Amir also received National Assembly Speaker

Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah and Head of the Central Agency for Remediating Status of Illegal Residents Saleh Al-Fadalah.

Furthermore, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as well as President of the

Supreme Judicial Council and the Constitutional Court and President of the Cassation Court, Justice Yousef Al-Mutawaa. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Parliament Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled and Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. —KUNA



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



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Chief Justice Yousef Al-Mutawaa.



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



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



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



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

Kuwait, Djibouti sign visa exemption agreement



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Djibouti Mahmoud Youssouf sign a visa exemption agreement between the two countries. —KUNA photos



Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and his Djiboutian counterpart Mahmoud Youssouf shake hands after signing the agreement.



Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah holds talks with his Djiboutian counterpart Mahmoud Youssouf.

KUWAIT: Kuwait and Djibouti signed an agreement on visa exemption for holders of diplomatic and high level passports between the two countries yesterday. The agreement was signed by Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Djibouti Mahmoud Youssouf. The two sides also signed an agreement on cooperation in culture and arts and a memorandum of

understanding on diplomatic training. They have also discussed boosting bilateral ties and the recent regional and international developments. The meeting was attended by senior officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. —KUNA

Local

NAZAHA chairman extols Amir's support to anti-corruption strategy

Amir, Crown Prince meet anti-corruption authority chief



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Chairman of Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority Counselor Abdulrahman Al-Nemash. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Chairman of Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority Counselor Abdulrahman Al-Nemash.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Chairman of Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (NAZAHA) Counselor Abdulrahman Al-Nemash at Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also received Nemash at Bayan Palace. Speaking to the press after his meeting with His Highness the Amir, Nemash said that the near future for the body is important in implementing the national anti-corruption strategy.

Nemash expressed his pride for meeting His Highness the Amir, saying he briefed His Highness the Amir on NAZAHA's upcoming plan and projects during the year 2019-2020, adding that "we received all the support and guidance from His Highness in this regard."

He added that he also briefed His Highness on

“Near future important for strategy's implementation”

NAZAHA's plan on the financial disclosure and the pol-

icy of the Authority in raising awareness and educating the community during the coming period, expressing hope that Kuwait will advance in the fight against corruption in the coming stage.

He pointed to the approval of the Kuwaiti cabinet last Monday to form a Higher Strategic Committee, pointing out that this committee will lead the ministries in the implementation of the general strategy to combat corruption. He said that this application would continue for years as NAZAHA will enter in each ministry to pinpoint corruption and work to resolve it, adding that he also briefed His Highness on all matters relating to the issues investigated by NAZAHA. He pointed out that the issues of flying gravels and the recent rains would be referred to the public prosecution. —KUNA



Counselor Abdulrahman Al-Nemash speaks to the press after his meeting with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Int'l community shares IS elimination responsibility: Kuwait

NEW YORK: Kuwait said the international community shouldered responsibility to eliminate so-called Islamic State by cracking down on IS ambitions, finances and ideologies. The international community should address root causes of terrorism and violent extremism in order to pave way for reconstruction and stability, Mansour Al-Otaibi, Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN, told a Security Council session on threats on international peace and security.

Otaibi, who praised cooperation between the Iraqi government and the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Daesh/IS (UNITAD), called for further efforts to fight IS sleeping cells, uproot mines, blending foreign fighters with their communities. Otaibi was speaking after a briefing by Karim Khan, head of a team investigating IS actions in Iraq, before the Security Council. He said

UNSC resolution 2379 (2017), which set up UNITAD, was a victory for humanity and victims of IS terrorists who have committed war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. "We realize the responsibility of eliminating all forms of terrorism is an international responsibility, and we reaffirm our support for the government of Iraq in its war against terrorism, and we value its determination and willingness in eliminating extremism, violence and terrorism," he said.

Kuwait, said Otaibi, has been assisting Iraq within the international coalition against IS. He recalled His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's hosting of an international conference for the reconstruction of Iraq in February 2018, in which donors pledged \$30 billion. "We need to establish a mechanism to follow the implementation of these pledges to guarantee sustainability of security and stability" in Iraq, said Otaibi. The Kuwaiti envoy reiterated Kuwait's support with Iraq and its people in their war against terrorism, holding court hearings for terrorists, as well as contributing to rebuilding of areas liberated from IS in order to maintain unity and territorial integrity of Iraq. —KUNA



NEW YORK: Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN Mansour Al-Otaibi speaks during a Security Council session on threats on international peace and security. —KUNA

Gulf security linked to Europe's: Mogherini

BRUSSELS: The security situation in both the Gulf region and the European Union are linked together, due to close relations between the two sides, EU High Representative Federica Mogherini said Tuesday night. Speaking before a European Parliament meeting in Strasbourg, the outgoing senior official said the current tension is very much on the minds of all the leaders, and regional cooperation among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States is beneficial to all. She referred to her recent visit to Kuwait and Iraq last Saturday and Sunday, say-

ing, "Together we discussed how we can avoid further escalation," noting that the EU is supporting Kuwait, which is trying to build bridges and open channels of communication.

Mogherini stressed that preserving the nuclear deal with Iran is in the security interest of Europe and the world. "We do not want to see a military escalation in our region nor do we want to see a nuclear-arms race. Without the nuclear deal the situation in the Gulf will be even more difficult," said the EU foreign policy chief. She warned that miscalculations can happen and called on all leaders to exercise maximum restraint. "That is why we are doing everything to save the nuclear deal after the US unilateral withdrawal," she said. She criticized Iran's decision to breach the deal by increasing its uranium enrichment beyond the limit set and urged it to go back to full compliance. "We will continue to do everything we can to save the deal," she underlined. —KUNA



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Local



KUWAIT: A view of Kuwait City from Al-Shaheed Park. — Photo by Ayman Atallah (KUNA)

Developing Safwan-Abdali crossing to boost trade ties: Kuwaiti Minister

Iraq, Kuwait form 4 committees to develop economic cooperation



BASRA: Kuwait's Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan and his Iraqi counterpart Mohammad Al-Ani visit the Safwan-Abdali border crossing to check on proposed plans to develop the facility.



Kuwait's Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan and his Iraqi counterpart Mohammad Al-Ani attend a meeting in Basra yesterday. — KUNA photos

BASRA: Kuwait's Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan said yesterday that his visit to Iraq came in line with Kuwait's leadership commands to boost commercial ties with Iraq. Minister Roudhan said in a press statement that he and his Iraqi counterpart Mohammad Al-Ani visited the Safwan-Al-Abdali crossing to check on proposed plans to develop the facility. The

development of the crossing will eventually lead to further commercial exchange between Kuwait and Iraq. Meanwhile, Ani said the two countries will hold a meeting on September 5 to look into matters that will lead to more development in economic ties.

In the meantime, Iraq and Kuwait agreed to establish four committees that will look into bolstering economic

ties and increase commercial exchange. This announcement came during a press conference between Ani and Roudhan in Basra. Roudhan said that the current status quo of the Safwan-Al-Abdali crossing would not live up to ambitions of more economic cooperation, revealing that the formation of the four committees will tackle any issues in the way of bolstering economic ties. Bringing his per-

spective to the table, governor of Basra Asad Al-Aidani stressed the importance of holding talks between Kuwait and Iraq. He affirmed that the local authorities in Basra would do its best to contribute to the development of economic ties. — KUNA

Boursa Academy garners 20,000 visitors, 1,000 members: Official

KUWAIT: The virtual-platform Boursa Academy had been visited by 20,000 users with some 1,000 registering in the site to learn about how to trade, an official at Boursa Kuwait said yesterday. Head of marketing and corporate communication at Boursa Kuwait Nasser Al-Sanousi said that the formation of the Boursa Academy in 2018 was reflective of the bourse's keenness on developing the capital market, laying it on solid and secure grounds.

Through the Academy, investors were provided with tools and adequate data to enabling them to take decisions with confidence and assurance. The Academy mainly targets university-level individuals and newly graduate types, bestowing on to them necessary and basic trading information as well as giving them the confidence in using their knowledge within the market context, said Al-Sanousi. Boursa Kuwait's decision to launch the platform is within its corporate sustainable plan, revealed the



Boursa Kuwait

official, indicating that the bourse was in the process to sign memoranda of understanding with various higher education institutes and universities to promote services of the Academy.

Sanousi added that the bourse was partaking in various activities to display the services of the Academy to specialists and the public. On how to use the platform, Sanousi indicated that individuals could register through the vtp.boursakuwait.com.kw website, adding that this would be followed by mutable tutorials explaining the purpose and function of the academy. The Boursa Academy was formed last year as a free virtual platform providing informative and practical services on the inner workings of the stock market. — KUNA

Kuwait expects even hotter weather in coming days

KUWAIT: The weather is hot during the coming days and relatively hot at nights with accumulating clouds at dawn, the Kuwaiti meteorological department said yesterday. The head of navigation forecast, Dherar Al-Ali, told KUNA that northwesterly winds have persisted with projected speed exceeding 60 km/h through the weekend.

They are whipping up dust with visibility dropping to

less than 1,000 meters particularly in the desert and uninhabited regions. Temperature is ranging between 45 and 48 degrees during the coming days and 32 to 35 degrees at nights. Winds are forecast to slow down as of Sunday amid heat rise that may hit 50 degrees. Sea goers ought to be cautious of high waves and motorists should be careful of low visibility and moving sands on the roads.

Meteorologist Abdelaziz Al-Qarawi was quoted in an Al-Jarida report yesterday saying that next week will see the highest temperatures the country will witness this summer, known as the "second Gemini" period. Qarawi said this period is called the summer Bahura or "amber of heat", during which temperatures will be in the 50s most of the time. He said temperatures will gradually drop by August as air mass will start to change. — Agencies



Nasser Al-Sanousi



KUWAIT: Strong winds lead to some dusty weather in several areas around Kuwait. — KUNA photo

Local

Zubaidi back 'in very limited supplies' after 45-day ban

Up to KD 15 per kilo for local catch compared to KD 12 for imported

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Local zubaidi returned this week to Kuwait's fish markets after an annual ban from June 1 to July 15 to allow the fish to reproduce during the 45-day period. But according to fishmongers, the local zubaidi supply is very limited, making the prices high compared to imported silver pomfret from Saudi Arabia and Iran. At the auction in the Sharq fish market, one basket of zubaidi is priced from KD 90 to KD 125. Price per kilo ranges from KD 9 to KD 15, depending on the type of local zubaidi. Meanwhile, imported zubaidi has a price tag of KD 6 to KD 12, a lot cheaper than during the ban period, where the price per kilo ranged from KD 15 to KD 20.

Meanwhile, prices of fish in the market are generally higher compared to last year, according to some fish vendors. "Most of the fishermen take a break or go on vacation to their home countries. So every summer, we see a scarcity of supply," a fishmonger told Kuwait

Times. Fishermen in Kuwait are mostly Egyptians, Iranians, Bangladeshis, Indians and Pakistanis.

The Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) announced the end of sus-

Prices higher compared to last year

pension of fishing for zubaidi, or silver pomfret, a delicacy for many locals and a mainstay of the Kuwaiti cuisine. "I love Kuwaiti zubaidi because the meat is whiter

and tenderer compared to other fish. They are fresh because it's just a few miles away from our shores. The bones are also smoother and very safe to eat even by kids," said Abdullah, a Kuwaiti who bought a basket of zubaidi for KD 125. The weight of a basket ranges from 10 to 12 kg. "This is a nice type of zubaidi, so I don't really mind spending a bit of money for the family. Who doesn't love zubaidi? I love it, my wife loves it, and my kids love it too," he said.

According to officials at PAAAFR, fish caught in Kuwaiti waters account for a 20 percent share of the Kuwaiti market, with the remaining imported from neighboring countries. Almost 80 percent of fish sold in Kuwaiti markets is imported from Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Thailand and Sri Lanka. Zubaidi, hamour, nauabi and maid are some of the variety of fish popular in Kuwait. Iranian and Pakistani zubaidi is sold at the same price, while shrimp, which is mostly imported from Saudi Arabia and Egypt, is sold for KD 3 to KD 5 per kilogram depending on the size.



KUWAIT: A photo taken at the Sharq fish market showing freshly-caught local zubaidi prepared for sale. — Photo by Ben Garcia

But during the shrimping season, the price falls by 500 fils per kilogram.

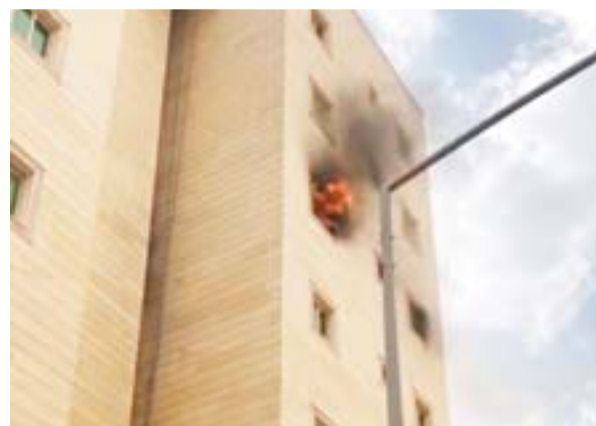
Abu Halifa building evacuated after fire report

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Mangaf and Fahaheel fire stations responded to an emergency call reporting a fire in an Abu Halifa building. Residents were evacuated and the fire put out before the flames spread to neighboring apartments. No injuries were reported. Meanwhile, an investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the fire.

In other news, Deputy Director General of Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) Major General Khalid Abdullah Fahd said the prevention sector is always ready to remove any obstacles facing requirements for fire safety and prevention in hospitals and health centers. Fahd was speaking during a meeting with health ministry assistant undersecretary for engineering affairs Ibrahim Al-Naham and other officials.

Separately, the interior ministry's relations and secu-



KUWAIT: Flames coming out of an Abu Halifa apartment's window.

rity information department said the civil defense directorate carried out a workshop on procedures by first responders in case of emergency, attended by trainers, lecturers and specialists from the civil defense and 116 uniformed individuals of various ranks from the emergency, traffic and general security departments.

Interior Ministry stops receiving Kuwaiti wives' naturalization applications

KUWAIT: The interior ministry has stopped receiving applications from wives of Kuwaitis who wish to get Kuwaiti nationality in anticipation of a National Assembly vote on a proposed law which calls for the amendment of article 8 of Amiri decree 15/1995, as the Cabinet approved it earlier this week. The proposed law has some conditions, including that a Kuwaiti's wife has to declare her wish to obtain Kuwaiti nationality, in addition to having the marriage continue till their son reaches 18 years of age. In case the husband dies or a divorce takes place during these years, the son has the right to declare his mother's wish to obtain the nation-



ality. The proposed law gave the interior minister the authority to treat a foreign woman married to a Kuwaiti as a citizen after declaring her wish and having the marriage continue for three years from the date of declaring her wish. The proposed law stopped the naturalization of Kuwaiti women's children whose fathers' nationalities are unknown, while it allowed the minister to consider naturalization of children of Kuwaiti mothers from bedoon fathers. — Al-Anbaa

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No charges against police in choking death of black man

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CULIACAN: View of Jardines del Humaya cemetery, known due to its mausoleums, where drug traffickers are buried, that count with luxuries and services such as conditioned air and Bulletproof glass in Culiacan, Sinaloa state in northwest Mexico. — AFP

Rare glimpse inside the drug world

'El Chapo' accused of flooding US with cocaine

NEW YORK: The trial of Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman provided a rare and terrifying look into the workings of one of the world's largest cartels. Over the space of nearly three months, a New York jury heard 56 government witnesses deliver dramatic evidence against Guzman.

According to the witnesses, the Sinaloa cartel, of which Guzman was a co-leader, flooded the United States with cocaine with the blessing of countless police, military officers and Mexican officials — going all the way up to the president — who turned their heads in exchange for bribes worth millions. On February 12, a jury found Guzman guilty of crimes spanning a quarter century, and a judge is expected to sentence him to life in prison. Here is a summary of some of the highlights of the trial:

Torture and killings

Isaias Valdez Rios, described as a hired killer for El Chapo, testified that he saw the drug kingpin torture and execute three rival traffickers, burying one of them alive. The two others had bones broken before being killed. Their bodies were then burned. Other witnesses said they had seen El Chapo order kidnappings and

killings of rivals or of police who refused to accept bribes. They said El Chapo had a permanent security guard of perhaps 100 men armed with pistols, automatic weapons, grenades and rocket launchers.

Bribes

Two former partners of Guzman testified that he paid millions of dollars in bribes to senior officials of the Mexican government to hunt down rivals, expand his business, and dodge the authorities and police at all levels — and even within Interpol. His attorney Jeffrey Lichtman said Guzman also bribed two Mexican presidents — Enrique Pena Nieto and Felipe Calderon — but they denied this.

'Chupeta'

With his face disfigured by repeated rounds of plastic surgery to conceal his identity, Juan Carlos "Chupeta" Ramirez, a former boss of a Colombian drug cartel, testified that with help from Guzman, he smuggled more than 400 tons of cocaine to the US from 1989 until his own arrest in 2007. Ramirez, who said he had ordered the death of some 150 people and was one of Guzman's main cocaine suppliers, said he did business with the latter —

paying him with drugs — because he managed to get the merchandise to the US "very quickly."

A steep price markup

El Chapo's accountant, Jesus Zambada, told the jury how El Chapo purchased Colombian cocaine for \$3,000 a kilo and then sold it in New York for \$35,000 a kilo. All the drugs, an average of 80 to 100 tons a year, were sent to the United States, he said.

Compromising recordings

With the help of Christian Rodriguez, a Colombian who was El Chapo's communications chief, US government agents intercepted some 200 conversations between the cartel boss and his associates, hired killers, and corrupt Mexican officials. Investigators also intercepted encrypted messages between El Chapo and others, sent on Blackberries that the trafficker used to spy on his associates and his mistresses. In one message read to the jury, El Chapo speaks with associate and a former mistress known as "la Fiera" about setting up dummy corporations in Germany and Ecuador in order to export drugs "to Europe, to Canada, to Australia and to the United States." They also discuss

the purchase in Belize of 700 kilograms of cocaine.

Airplanes full of dollars

El Chapo's former pilot and business manager, Miguel Angel "Gordo" Martinez, testified that the cartel boss would sometimes receive as many as three cash-filled airplanes from the United States in a single day. Each plane carried "eight to 10 million dollars," he said. He also told how El Chapo worked with Colombian suppliers to finance deliveries of up to 14 tons of cocaine — transported by boat to international waters off Mexico, where Colombian crews would hand over the drugs to El Chapo's employees. Martinez estimated that from 1990 to 1993, El Chapo thus imported 25 to 30 tons of cocaine into Mexico each year.

The lover

A former lover and partner of Guzman, Lucero Guadalupe Sanchez Lopez, testified in the presence of his wife, Emma Coronel, that one night in 2014, the two came close to being captured by Mexican marines and escaped through a tunnel built under a bathtub in a house in Culiacan state. She said Guzman was totally naked as he ran ahead of her and left her behind. — AFP

MS-13 gang members charged in string of grisly US killings

LOS ANGELES: Several members of the notorious MS-13 gang have been charged in Los Angeles for their role in multiple grisly murders, including the machete killing of a rival gang member who was dismembered and had his heart cut out. According to a 12-count indictment against 22 members of the gang unsealed Tuesday, most of those charged took part in seven killings carried out with machetes, knives and baseball bats over the last two years.

Most of the bodies were dumped in the Angeles National Forest, northeast of Los Angeles. The sweeping indictment focuses on a particularly violent sub-group of the gang known as the Fulton clique, which operates in the Los Angeles area and has recently been recruiting young immigrants from Central America.

Authorities said as part of their initiation, potential recruits had to kill an MS-13 rival or someone perceived as a threat in order to join the gang. In one particularly gruesome episode, in March 2017, several MS-13 members allegedly targeted a rival gang member thought to have defaced MS-13 graffiti and drove him to a remote area in Angeles National Forest. Six people attacked the victim with machetes, dismembered him and then dumped his body parts in a canyon after one of them allegedly cut his heart out.

In another instance, the gang even set upon a homeless man who was temporarily living in a park controlled by the group, the indictment said. Three of those charged in the indictment were arrested in the



This undated image shows alleged MS-13 gang members. — AFP

Los Angeles area in the past several days and a fourth was arrested in Oklahoma over the weekend. The 18 other defendants were arrested over the last year on a range of charges, including drug trafficking offenses, authorities said.

Preying on the vulnerable

"We have now taken off the streets nearly two dozen people associated with the most violent arm of MS-13 in Los Angeles, where the gang is believed to have killed 24 people over the past two years," said Nick Hanna, the US attorney in Los Angeles. He said the gang had engaged in brutality not seen in the region for over 20 years, and many of the defendants could face the death penalty. MS-13, or Mara Salvatrucha, was formed in Los Angeles in the mid-1980s and has been active ever since, with members in at least 10 states and several Central American countries including El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. President Donald Trump has often railed against the gang, describing its members as "animals," and frequently cites it when pushing for his border wall project and tougher immigration regulations. — AFP

'El Chapo': Dramatic escapes and arrests

NEW YORK: Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman was captured in 2016, for a third time, leading to his conviction by a US court over trafficking hundreds of tons of drugs. Here is a recap of the dramatic captures and escapes of the notorious crime boss ahead of his sentencing in New York:

1993: First arrest

Head of the powerful Sinaloa drugs cartel, Guzman was in his mid-30s when he was arrested for the first time in June 1993 just across the border in Guatemala. He had fled Mexico following the high-profile assassination of a Roman Catholic cardinal who had apparently been mistaken for Guzman. Cardinal Juan Jesus Posadas Ocampo died in a hail of bullets in May 1993 as he was leaving an airport in a car identical to one used by Guzman. The hit was blamed on the rival Tijuana cartel.

2001: Laundry escape

Guzman was sentenced to 20 years in prison for murder and drug trafficking, but continued to be active from behind bars. In January 2001 he was

secreted out of his maximum security prison in a cart of dirty laundry with the help of bribed accomplices, including the prison director and guards. He was a fugitive for 13 years during which his drug empire grew to control a full quarter of the traffic of illicit narcotics headed to the United States. In 2013, the city of Chicago — a popular destination for Sinaloa drugs — named him its Public Enemy No. 1, the first since the gangster Al Capone in the 1920s.

2014: Tracked down

In February 2014, Mexican authorities tracked Guzman down to a condo in the beach town of Mazatlan, in his native state of Sinaloa, where he was with his wife and their twin daughters. Arrested in a pre-dawn raid, he was publicly hauled away in handcuffs by masked marines and bundled into a police helicopter, and later paraded in front of television cameras.

2015: Tunnel to freedom

Seventeen months later, the drug baron was free again, fleeing his cell in Mexico's high-security Altiplano prison in June 2015 via a 1.5-kilometer (one-mile) tunnel dug out by his henchmen. From a hole under the shower in his cell, the tunnel opened in an under-construction building. Lit and ventilated, it contained a modified bike mounted on rails on which Guzman zoomed to freedom. His cell had been under 24-hour video surveillance but he disappeared in a blind spot at the shower intended to

protect inmate privacy.

2016: 'We got him'

After just six months, Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto was able to announce in January 2016, "Mission accomplished: We got him." Authorities had located Guzman in a house in Los Mochis, a seaside city in Sinaloa. When security forces swooped in Guzman fled through the city's drainage system. He came out of a manhole and stole a car, but was captured by marines who had anticipated the move. Authorities said Guzman was betrayed by his desire to have a biographical film made, for which he made contact with a leading Mexican actress and producers. The previous October he had held a clandestine jungle meeting with US actor Sean Penn. Guzman was returned to the Altiplano prison, this time forced to regularly change rooms and with metal rods installed to prevent more digging.

2017: Extradition

The fallen kingpin was extradited to the United States in January 2017 and held in a windowless cell at a maximum security prison in New York. His trial opened in November 2018 with Guzman accused of co-directing the Sinaloa cartel for over 25 years and smuggling hundreds of tons of cocaine, heroin, methamphetamines and marijuana into the United States. He was found guilty in February 2019. Now 62 years old, prosecutors are calling for Guzman to spend life plus 30 years in jail. — AFP

International

Wizard cybersecurity expert charged with a record hack

Attack exposed millions of personal, financial records

SOFIA: A 20-year-old Bulgarian cybersecurity worker has been arrested on suspicion of involvement in a hacking attack that stole millions of taxpayers' personal and financial data, officials said yesterday. Bulgaria's NRA tax agency is facing a fine of up to 20 million euros (\$22.43 million) over the data breach, the biggest to affect the Balkan country, which was revealed this week.

The cyber attack is thought to have compromised the records of nearly every adult among Bulgaria's 7 million people. Yavor Kolev, head of the police's cybersecurity unit, said the unidentified man was arrested on Tuesday afternoon. Officers raided his home and office in the capital Sofia and seized computer devices containing encrypted data.

"Overnight, the relevant examination was carried out, a very initial one, which suggests that the suspect is connected to the crime," Kolev said. The investigation into the hack is still at an early stage, he added, and police are looking into the possibility that other people were involved. Sofia city prosecutors said the 20-year-

old man had been charged with a computer crime and would be held for another three days.

The attack has reignited a long-running debate about lax cybersecurity standards in Bulgaria. A person claiming to be a Russian hacker and responsible for the breach emailed local media on Monday and denounced the government's cybersecurity efforts as a "parody". Kolev said the arrested man was a researcher who tested computer networks for possible vulnerabilities to prevent cyber attacks. But he had also engaged in some criminal activity, Kolev added: "In his life, he has been on both sides."



Attack stokes debate about Bulgaria security

'Unique brains'
Speaking at a government meeting yesterday, Prime

Minister Boyko Borissov described the arrested man as a "wizard" hacker and said the country should hire similar "unique brains" to work for the state rather than against it. But some experts who have examined the stolen data said the techniques used in the attack were relatively basic and spoke more to a lack of adequate data protection measures than the hacker's ability.

"The reason for the success of the attack does not seem to be the sophistication of the hacker, but rather poor security practices at the NRA," said Bozhdar Bozhanov, chief executive at cybersecurity firm LogSentinel. Bulgaria's tax

agency now faces a fine of up to 20 million euros, or 4% of its annual turnover over the data breach, said Veselin Tselkov, a board member at the Commission for

Personal Data Protection.

"The amount of the sanction depends on the number of people affected and the volume of leaked information," he told Reuters, adding that the commission was still waiting for full report on the attack. Bulgaria's leading business organization BIA, which warned about possible flaws in the tax agency's data protection system a year ago, demanded that detailed information for the leaked documents be sent to every person and company affected.

"We need to know so that at least we can be aware of possible dangers," said BIA deputy head Stanislav Popdonchev. Bulgaria's finance minister Vladislav Goranov has apologized for the attack, which exposed the names of millions of people and companies and revealed information about incomes, tax declarations, health insurance payments and loans. The hack happened at the end of June and compromised about 3% of the tax agency's database. Officials said earlier this week initial signs suggested it was conducted from abroad.—Reuters

Children fighting on 'both sides' of Yemen war: NGO

PARIS: Children are fighting on both sides of Yemen's five-year-old war, a human rights group said yesterday as it urged Western powers to end arms sales to countries involved in the conflict. "This war is (destroying) our future and destroying our children," the president of NGO Mwatana for Human Rights, Radhya Almutawakel, told a Paris news conference. "You will see children carrying weapons: that was not the case before 2014," Almutawakel said, unveiling the group's report titled "Withering Life: The Human Rights Situation in Yemen 2018".

The report by the Sanaa-based group said more than 1,000 children including girls were "recruited or used for military purposes in 2018" including 72 percent by the Houthi rebels. "Many families can't even control their children from not going to fight," said Almutawakel. More than 2,000 schools have been destroyed, Almutawakel said. "In many, many neighborhoods you will see a lot of pictures of children who have been taken to the frontlines and come back home as dead bodies," she added.

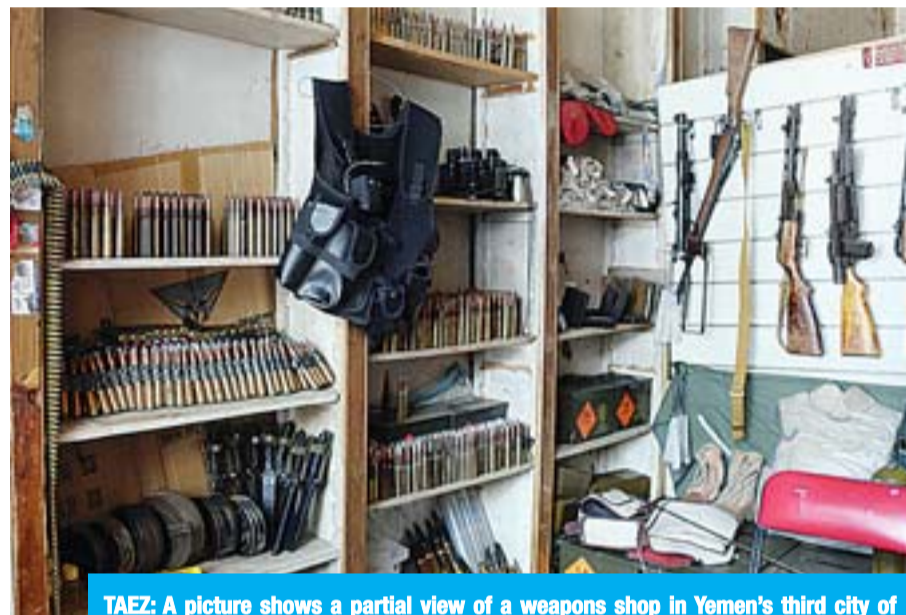
She said children are enlisted "not only because of the money but because of this emotional environment... They say

that their friends have been killed (so) the only response is to go to the front lines." Yemen was plunged into war in 2014 when the Houthis launched a military campaign, taking over swathes of territory and driving the government from the capital Sanaa. The Saudi-led coalition, which includes the United Arab Emirates, intervened the following year sparking what the UN calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Almutawakel chose the Paris venue for the release of the report to underscore the fact that France and other Western powers are selling arms to Saudi Arabia, which leads a military coalition fighting Yemen's Houthi rebels. "Many countries are supporting Saudi Arabia and the Emirates for economic reasons," said Almutawakel, named by Time magazine as among the world's 100 most influential people in 2018.

'Sexual aggression'

The United States, Britain and France "oppose a real in-depth investigation just because they are selling weapons—but they have to stop," she said. "The virtual impunity that currently reigns emboldens the warring parties to keep carrying out awful abuses, destroying Yemen in the process," she was quoted as saying in the report. "Civilians are drowning in agony while states hesitate to take urgently needed action like ending military support to warring parties," the report said.



TAEZ: A picture shows a partial view of a weapons shop in Yemen's third city of Ta'ez. —AFP

The US Senate in June voted to block a multibillion-dollar weapons deal with Saudi Arabia, the same day the UK Court of Appeal ruled that the British sale of arms to the kingdom for use in Yemen was unlawful. An upcoming UN report featuring a blacklist of child rights violators is expected to refrain from toughening criticism of the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen despite a bus bombing last year that killed scores of children, according to diplomats.

The Mwatana report spells out sever-

al specific instances of children combatants and seven cases of "sexual aggression" involving eight children. Houthi forces who seized Sanaa in December 2014 control 20 percent of the territory where most of the population is concentrated. The report said the abuses were certainly greater than those that the organization was able to catalogue through more than 2,000 interviews conducted in Arabic with victims, relatives, witnesses and medical and humanitarian personnel.—AFP

Ethiopia faces showdown over push for new region

HAWASSA: The green, blue and red flag of the Sidama people flutters defiantly above government buildings in a southern Ethiopian city where leaders are on the brink of declaring a breakaway region. The Sidama say they plan to unilaterally declare their own federal state this week - a move analysts say could inflame Ethiopia's political crisis and lead to bloodshed. In Hawassa, the would-be capital of the proposed state, motorbike riders blared their horns on Monday as young men ran through the streets waving flags and singing songs in anticipation of the announcement.

The feared showdown touches on the issue of autonomy - the bedrock of a federal system designed to provide widespread ethnic self-rule in a hugely diverse country. At present, Ethiopia is partitioned into nine semi-autonomous regions. The constitution requires the government to organize a referendum for any ethnic group that wants to form a new entity. The Sidama have agitated for years to leave the diverse Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region of which they are a part, and create their own

state. The dream gained fresh momentum after Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed came to power last year promising wide-ranging reforms. But his government has dithered on responding to the request for a referendum. Under the constitution, the vote must be held within a year - a deadline that expires Thursday. "If the government does not come back with a decision on this by Thursday, we will enforce the law by going to the zonal authorities," Dukale Lamiso, president of the opposition Sidama Liberation Movement said.

Abiy told lawmakers earlier this month that a unilateral declaration could force the central government to intervene. The International Crisis Group (ICG) has warned that the federal government has "no good option." Preventing the formation of a state could spark violence, but granting it could trigger unrest between minorities within the region, the think tank says. The breakaway bid has already led to violence between the Sidama and Wolayta ethnic groups in June 2018.

'Everybody stands for cause'

Some Sidama activists are becoming increasingly defiant as the deadline looms. "Nowadays everybody stands for this cause, and don't think anybody can mess with us," said Tessema Elias, a law professor at Hawassa University. If security forces stymie the new state's creation, the population is prepared to fight back, he added. "If somebody unlawfully attacks you, you can retaliate that unlawful attack, unconstitutional attack, by any means."



AWASSA: Youth from the Sidama ethnic group, the largest in southern Ethiopia, ride in the back of a truck at Hawassa city during celebrations over plans by local elders to declare the establishment of a breakaway region for the Sidama later this week. —AFP

The Sidama issue is the latest headache facing Abiy. He took office in April 2018 following years of anti-government protests, and won early praise for freeing political prisoners and lifting a ban on political parties. But the easing of the ruling EPRDF's iron-fisted rule has unleashed grievances in a country of more than 80 ethnic groups, sparking violence between communities that has displaced more than two million people. Last month Abiy faced his greatest challenge yet when gunmen assassinated five government and military officials,

including the army chief, in what was described as a coup bid in Amhara state.

"The Sidama movement is committed to self-declaration on July 18. The authorities are likely to reject that as unconstitutional, but that could well lead to protests that may trigger violence," said ICG senior analyst William Davison. "Yet acceding to self-declaration would be succumbing to activist pressure, and so provide an unwelcome precedent that other southern groups seeking regions could exploit." —AFP

Rio governor likens drug dealers to Hezbollah

RIO DE JANEIRO: Rio de Janeiro's far-right governor Wilson Witzel on Tuesday compared drug dealers to the Shiite movement Hezbollah and warned police would respond like Israel by showing no leniency to "terrorists." Defending his hardline security strategy that has fueled a surge in police killings this year, Witzel said criminals in Rio's poorer neighborhoods known as favelas "raped children, killed innocent people and used the areas to sell drugs." "What do they do differently to Hezbollah? Nothing," the tough-talk-

ing Witzel told foreign journalists at a rare briefing.

"Are we going to be tolerant with Hezbollah when they use missiles and bombs against the population of Israel? No. What is done in Israel will be done in Rio de Janeiro. We are not going to be lenient with anyone who has a gun." "You don't want to die? Don't go on the street with a gun." "Police are facing (criminals) without fear of killing," Witzel, a former federal judge, was elected in large part due to his support for the tough anti-crime policy of far-right President Jair Bolsonaro, who also came to power in January.

He has presided over a sharp increase in the number of police killings, with 731 people dying during "police interventions" in the first five months of this year—a 19.1 percent increase from the same period in 2018, the most recent official figures show. Witzel has previously sparked outcry among activists for advocating the use of a "missile" to blow up criminals in favelas, and applauding the

deployment of police snipers to take out suspects from long distances.

He created further controversy in May after posting a video on Twitter of himself in a police helicopter as officers fired toward a favela below. But Witzel accused the media on Tuesday of biased reporting of the incident in particular, and police operations against gangs more generally. "If we were looking at the Second World War it would be like ignoring the Nazis and only looking at Britain bombing Dresden and Berlin," Witzel said. "The media is showing the police side, but not the side of terrorism."

Reducing crime would help boost the number of visitors to the tourist hot-spot and revitalize the state's economy, he added. "We want tourists to feel good in Rio de Janeiro." Describing himself as "honest, decent," Witzel also said he was interested in becoming president one day. "It's only a question of time," he said smiling.—AFP

Iranian diplomats, families living in NY face US travel curbs

UNITED NATIONS: The United States has tightly restricted the travel of more than a dozen Iranian diplomats and their families living in New York, according to a US diplomatic note sent to the Iran mission to the United Nations and seen by Reuters on Tuesday. The diplomats are subjected to the same rules imposed by the United States on Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, who arrived on Sunday amid heightened tensions between the two countries.

They may only travel between the United Nations, the Iranian UN mission, the Iranian UN ambassador's residence and John F Kennedy airport. There is also a carve out for the six blocks surrounding Queensboro Plaza in Long Island City in the borough of Queens. It was not immediately clear why.

Longtime US-Iran strains have worsened since US President Donald Trump last year quit a 2015 international agreement to curb Iran's nuclear program in return for sanctions relief. Trump has imposed more sanctions on Iran. Washington and Tehran sent mixed signals on Tuesday about resolving their disputes as Iran's supreme leader threatened to further breach the nuclear deal while Trump cited "a lot of progress."

The July 12 diplomatic note said the travel rules, which are open-ended, apply to "all members of the permanent mission of Iran to the United Nations, their immediate family members, and representatives of the Iranian government to the United Nations." It said a waiver would be required from US State Department Office of Foreign Missions for any other travel and requests must be made at least five days in advance. The Iranian UN mission is also required to submit residential and hotel accommodations for approval.

The Iranian UN mission did not immediately respond to a request for comment. A spokesman for Iran's foreign ministry said on Monday Zarif's work in New York was unaffected. The United Nations said on Monday that it told the United States it was concerned by the new tight travel restrictions. A US State Department official said the United States had acted "in a manner that is fully consistent" with its obligations under a 1947 agreement with the United Nations.

Before the new rules, Iranian diplomats - like envoys of North Korea, Syria and Cuba - were already confined to a radius of 25 miles from Columbus Circle in Midtown Manhattan. According to the UN Blue Book, which lists diplomats of each mission to the world body, there are 13 Iranian diplomats in New York. Under the 1947 UN "headquarters agreement," the United States is generally required to allow access to the United Nations for foreign diplomats. But Washington says it can deny visas for "security, terrorism, and foreign policy" reasons.

The US diplomatic note said Zarif was "being admitted to the United States for the sole purpose of attending UN meetings" and that "he should restrict his activities to UN-related business only. Zarif is due to attend a ministerial meeting at the UN on sustainable development goals, which aim to tackle issues including conflict, hunger, equality and climate change by 2030. On Monday, he did interviews with British and US media at the residence of the Iranian UN ambassador.—Reuters



Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif

International

No charges against police in choking death of black man

Victim's family slammed decision as 'insult'

NEW YORK: A New York police officer accused of placing a 43-year-old black man in a banned choke hold just before his death in 2014 will not face federal charges, the government said, in a decision slammed by the victim's family as an "insult." The move effectively closed the five-year-old case that fueled national "Black Lives Matter" protests calling for police to be held accountable for the deaths of unarmed African-Americans in custody or facing arrest.

Richard Donoghue, the US attorney in Brooklyn, said there was "insufficient evidence" that officer Daniel Pantaleo broke the law or contributed to the death of Eric Garner during an arrest on July 17, 2014. The lawyer told reporters Pantaleo had not deliberately placed Garner in a choke hold although he effectively created one for seven seconds as both men struggled and fell.

Garner, who was being detained on suspicion of illegally selling cigarettes on a sidewalk, repeatedly said "I can't breathe" to officers holding him down and after Pantaleo pulled away from his neck. He then appeared to lose consciousness, and the father-of-six was taken to a hospital where he was pronounced dead. But Pantaleo was not engaged in the choke hold as Garner called out, Donoghue said, nor afterwards.

One medical examiner ruled that the death was a

homicide, saying he suffered "compression of neck (chokehold), compression of chest and prone positioning during physical restraint by police." But a second was unable to conclude that the accidental choke hold itself was the cause. Experts said other factors that might have contributed to Garner's cardiac arrest included being held in a prone position, damage to his neck unattributable to the choke hold and underlying ailments.

'A terrible tragedy'

Calling Garner's death "a terrible tragedy,"

Donoghue said that "having thoroughly investigated the surrounding circumstances, the department has concluded that the evidence would not support federal civil rights charges against any officer." "This is an outrage, an insult to injury," said Garner's mother Gwen Carr outside the US attorney's office. "You won't get away with it. I stood by for five years. I'm not being quiet

anymore." The decision came one day before the statute of limitations ran out on the case - and after years of pressure from Garner's mother and supporters for federal prosecution.

A New York state grand jury had decided in December 2014 that there was insufficient evidence to support homicide charges, amid claims that Garner suf-



NEW YORK: Rev Al Sharpton (2nd from left) speaks as Gwen Carr (center), mother of the late Eric Garner, looks on during a press conference outside the US Attorney's office following a meeting with federal prosecutors in the Brooklyn borough. — AFP

fered from a heart condition and asthma that could have caused his death. "The DoJ has failed us," Carr said. "Five years ago, my son said 'I can't breathe' 11 times. Today we can't breathe. Because they have let us down."

African-American rights leader Al Sharpton demanded that Pantaleo be fired, complaining that the federal government had "choked Lady Justice," while New York Mayor Bill de Blasio also voiced disappointment. — AFP

As holidays begin, UK looks out for forced marriages

LONDON: With summer holidays beginning in Britain this week, officials are redoubling efforts at the border to stop young people being dragged into forced marriages. At a Heathrow Airport arrivals gate, an AFP reporter watched as officials from a special task force comprising police, immigration agents and charity workers intercepted a family disembarking a flight from Bangalore, India.

A young woman in the group raised red flags because of bruises on her arm, while a 13-year-old girl appeared especially timid-both indicators of potential coercion. After speaking to family members individually, officials were satisfied that the family was travelling to Britain for a funeral and the bruising was due to a traffic accident. But the officials also learned that the young woman's parents had recently found her a fiancé in their home state of Kerala, and that he, too, may travel to Britain.

Trained task force officers took the woman aside to brief her on her rights and to press upon her that forced marriage is illegal in Britain. "She's (now) aware of consent, and that she can withdraw her consent at any time," Detective Sergeant Kate Bridger of the Metropolitan Police told her team after they questioned 72 of the 250 people on the Air India flight.

'No winners here'

Britain outlawed forced marriage in 2014, with a maximum jail term of seven years for offenders.

Figures from the interior ministry's forced marriage unit show 1,764 reported cases in 2018 — a 47 percent increase from the year before. The reported cases are thought to be the tip of the iceberg.



LONDON: A family is asked questions about forced marriage by officials after landing from Bangalore in India, in Terminal 2 at Heathrow Airport in London. — AFP

Most cases involve Britons being married against their will overseas, mainly in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.

So the task force targeted passengers on flights to and from the Indian sub-continent as well as Middle East hub airports.

"It's not just a South Asian problem... it cuts across lots of different cultures and communities too," task force member detective sergeant Trudy Gittins told AFP.

Men were also affected, she said, as well as members of the LGBT community—with cases of gay men forced to marry members of the opposite sex by their conservative families.

Cases in Britain have ranged from a two-year-old promised in a religious ceremony to marry into another family, to an 80-year-old Alzheimer's sufferer whose carer forced him into a marriage to inherit his estate.

A third of victims are younger than 18, and three-quarters are girls or women.

West Midlands Police last year secured the first conviction in England for forced marriage, with a woman jailed after her 13-year-old daughter was raped by her "fiancé," a relative in Pakistan. "There are no winners here—this was her mum," said Gittins. Senior officers said the emphasis of this week's operation was on

prevention rather than prosecution.

"Our focus is not to criminalise parents or members of the extended family," said the Met's acting chief superintendent Parm Sandhu.

"Our focus is to safeguard young people."

Like being 'buried alive'

The task force is targeting Britain's busiest airports, stations and ports as the school holiday season gets underway—a time when cases typically spike. As team members gathered in a windowless room in the bowels of Heathrow, Gittins told them that victims have described being forced into marriage as being "buried alive".

"I want you to feel that statement today," she urged her colleagues. Some of those greeted by the task force on arrival at Heathrow welcomed the initiative. "We were very surprised, it's not something we've come across before," said Karan Shah, 31, with his wife on a three-week visit to Britain. The couple had an arranged marriage to which both had agreed, he said, adding that in many parts of rural India forced marriages do still occur. "It's very unfortunate so I give this a big thumbs up," said Shah. — AFP

No-deal Brexit looms; UK PM race wraps up

LONDON: The battle to be Britain's next prime minister enters its final straight yesterday with both candidates hardening their positions on Brexit, putting the future government on a collision course with Brussels. Ex-London Mayor Boris Johnson, the favorite to replace Theresa May, and foreign secretary Jeremy Hunt, are now both referring to Britain's departure with no overall deal in place as a realistic prospect.

The business community and many lawmakers fear dire economic consequences from a no-deal Brexit which would lead to immediate trade tariffs for certain sectors including the automotive industry. Johnson and Hunt are taking part in a final question-and-answer session later on before the result of the vote by Conservative Party members is announced on July 23 and the new prime minister is installed on July 24.



LONDON: In this video grab taken from footage broadcast, Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May speaks during the weekly Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) question and answer session in the House of Commons. — AFP

French minister quits after lobster dinner scandal

PARIS: A senior French cabinet minister and close ally of President Emmanuel Macron has resigned after reports accused him of extravagant state-funded lobster dinners and misusing public housing in a blow to the centrist government.

Francois de Rugy, who was named environment minister in September 2018, announced his departure after a week of revelations from the leftwing website Mediapart. "The attacks and media lynching targeting my family force me to take the necessary step back," said de Rugy, who also held the post of minister of state which made him number two in the government after Prime Minister Edouard Philippe.

Transport Minister Elisabeth Borne was appointed as France's new environment minister late Tuesday, the Elysee Palace said, however she will not hold the post of minister of state. De Rugy came under public pressure after Mediapart published pictures of him and his journalist wife enjoying lavish champagne-and-lobster dinners and a Valentine's Day meal while he was speaker of parliament in 2017 and in 2018.

The website alleged the events - at the expense of taxpayers - were largely social, while de Rugy contends they were part of his work representing the National Assembly. Mediapart also revealed that de Rugy had benefited from an apartment near his hometown of Nantes in western France that was rented at a preferential rate intended for low-income workers. Other reports have referred to a 500-euro hair dryer bought by de Rugy's wife at public expense, and a renovation of their government apartment at a cost of 63,000 euros (\$70,000).

But the image of a row of plump lobsters on a platter at a function hosted by de Rugy caused the most political damage - and many social media memes - in a country still reeling from months of "yellow vest" protests. The violent anti-government demonstrations have been



PARIS: Outgoing French Environment Minister Francois de Rugy and his wife Severine Servat de Rugy applaud during the handover ceremony yesterday at the ministry in Paris. — AFP

fueled by anger over economic inequality and claims that French leaders are out-of-touch with ordinary people. De Rugy has denied any wrongdoing and even claimed in an interview last week that he was allergic to lobsters and didn't like champagne because it gave him a headache.

De Rugy joined Macron early in his successful bid for the presidency in 2017 and was rewarded with a series of plum jobs including parliament speaker and latterly environment minister. But the former Green campaigner's ability to hang on to his job took a blow on Monday evening when Macron failed to give his full backing while on a trip to Serbia. — AFP

Controversy swirls over Notre-Dame restoration

PARIS: French MPs have approved a law on the reconstruction of Notre-Dame, three months after flames ravaged the great Paris cathedral, but with the rebuilding process still mired in controversy. The cathedral, part of a UNESCO world heritage site covering the banks of the River Seine in Paris, lost its gothic spire, roof and precious artefacts in the April 15 blaze.

Tourists in Paris are still heading to Notre-Dame to take photos and selfies, with the horrific fire only increasing its global fame, although they cannot access the esplanade in front of the building let alone the edifice itself. But the passing of the reconstruction bill in the National Assembly - after months of squabbles - marked only the start of the hugely controversial and sensitive rebuilding process.

"The hardest thing is now ahead of us. We need to strengthen the cathedral for

ever and then restore it," said Culture Minister Franck Riester as the bill was passed. President Emmanuel Macron has said the reconstruction should be completed within five years, a deadline some experts see as too ambitious. And he created an even greater furor by suggesting the toppled spire could be replaced by a steeple with a contemporary touch.

'In the hearts of the French'

The "aim is to give Notre-Dame a restoration appropriate for the place it has in the hearts of the French people and in the entire world," said Riester. The bill aims to organize the 850 million euros (\$954 million) in donations which were pledged from individual, corporate and private donors after the blaze and to coordinate the painstaking restoration work. French luxury goods rivals, the billionaires Bernard Arnault and Francois-Henri Pinault, pledged 200 and 100 million euros apiece and they are likely to disburse the funds gradually to ensure they are spent well.

But the bill's passage though parliament was held up by objections from the opposition, who complained the process was being rushed simply to ensure reconstruction was finished for the 2024 Olympic Games hosted by Paris. — AFP

International

Critical media coverage may be 'treason': Pakistan ruling party

Pakistan arrests Mumbai attacks' mastermind again

ISLAMABAD: The ruling party of Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has launched another blistering attack on the press, linking critical coverage to potential "treason" in the latest broadside against the beleaguered media. The official account of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party fired off over two dozen tweets in English and Urdu late Tuesday, lambasting the press for coverage criticizing the government and Khan which it deemed "Anti-State".

"Freedom of Expression is beauty of Democracy. Expressing Enemy's Stance is Not Freedom of speech but treason against its people," read one tweet. "Media houses & journalists must take care that in their quest for criticism on State, they intentionally or unintentionally do not end up propagating enemy's stance," read another, with the hashtag: #JournalismNotAgenda.

Pakistan routinely ranks among the world's most dangerous countries for media workers, and reporters have frequently been detained, beaten and even killed for being critical of the government or powerful military. In recent years the space for dissent has shrunk further, with the government announcing a crackdown on social networks and traditional media houses decrying pressure from authorities that they say has resulted in widespread self-censorship.

Media watchdog Reporters Without Borders recently warned of "disturbing dictatorial tendencies" after three Pakistani TV stations were briefly taken off air in what it called "brazen censorship". The Committee to Protect

Journalist last year warned that the powerful Pakistani military had "quietly, but effectively, set restrictions on reporting". The government has defended its record, and last week Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi told a media freedom conference in London that there was "no question of gagging" journalists after being challenged on his country's record.

press. His government is also struggling to right the country's floundering economy, with ballooning deficits, soaring inflation, and a sinking rupee stirring discontent. Among other tweets, the PTI also warned that the media was a "powerful tool of depicting the positive image of our country. Anti-State actions not only impact the credibility of our journalism community but also sends out a wrong message to the world".

Mumbai attacks mastermind

In another development, Pakistani authorities yesterday detained the alleged mastermind of the 2008 Mumbai attacks, a security official said, as the country faces increased pressure to crack down on militants operating on its soil. Firebrand cleric Hafiz Saeed-declared a global terrorist by the US and UN, and who has a \$10 million US bounty on his head-was taken into custody following a raid by counter-terrorism forces in the eastern city of Gujranwala.

"Hafiz Saeed was going to Gujranwala to apply for bail in another case when he was arrested," said a security official with knowledge of the arrest, who requested anonymity. A spokesman for Saeed's group, Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD), a wing of the militant organization Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), confirmed the arrest to AFP, but gave no further details. Another security official said the arrest relates to terror financing charges.

Saeed has spent years rotating in and out of varying

forms of detention, sometimes under house arrest, sometimes briefly arrested then released again by authorities. But for the most part he has been free to move at will around Pakistan, enraging India which has repeatedly called for his prosecution over his alleged role in the 2008 attack that killed more than 160 people. Lashkar-e-Taiba is accused by India and Washington of masterminding the four-day assault on Mumbai. Saeed has denied involvement.

The move against Saeed comes as Pakistan is facing a potential blacklisting by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) - an anti-money-laundering monitor based in Paris-for failing to do enough to combat terror financing. FATF is set rule on its fate in the coming months after placing the country on a watchlist last year. In February, Pakistani authorities banned Saeed's Jamaat-ud-Dawa and Falah-e-Insaniyat Foundation-charities that have long been considered fronts for militant activity targeting India.

Washington and New Delhi have long urged Pakistan to take action against LeT, which was banned by Islamabad in 2002 but re-branded itself as JuD and FIF. And earlier this year, Pakistan arrested more than 100 suspected militants and shuttered hundreds of religious schools. The arrests came during an ongoing crackdown on extremists, following clashes with India after a Pakistan-based group killed dozens of Indian security forces in a suicide bombing in Kashmir.— Agencies



The latest broadside against media

Prime Minister Khan, a cricket hero who captained the national team to World Cup victory in 1992, was elected last summer after running a fiery campaign-vowing to crack down on corruption and build an Islamic welfare state. But, nearly one year later, his rule has been marred by a crackdown on civil rights activists, the rounding up of opposition leaders, and increased pressure on the

Hong Kong's expat police become focus of protesters' rage

HONG KONG: A peculiar legacy of Hong Kong's colonial past has emerged as a focal point of rage for anti-government protesters: a dwindling band of expat police officers now vilified for doing the bidding of the city's pro-Beijing leaders. Hong Kong's 32,000-strong police force have found themselves fighting unprecedented running battles with protesters for the past five weeks following a huge backlash to a now-suspended plan to allow extraditions to the Chinese mainland. The crisis - which has since morphed into a wider anti-government movement - has placed officers in the firing line of public anger as the city's leaders appear unable, or unwilling, to offer any political solution.

But among those singled out for specific retribution include a small group of expatriates who were some of the commanding officers on the frontlines during clashes where tear gas and rubber bullets were fired. Their personal details were published online after they appeared in the media and were also named by a British lawmaker in parliament. Wanted posters made by protesters have sprung up across the city targeting two senior officers in particular, as well as their local deputies.

"They have been through an ordeal," Chief Inspector Neil Taylor, chairman of the Overseas Inspectors' Association said. "But it's not just them. Their kids have been targeted at school by bullies, a wife was approached in a supermarket and abused. That cannot be pleasant for anybody." "Both have said, 'It's tough, but we have a job to do,'" added another colleague, who asked not to be named. "How much of that is bravado, how much they really believe it, I don't know."

Colonial legacy

In the run-up to the 1997 handover to China, there were some 900 mostly-British officers on the force. Many were encouraged to stay on to help with the transition and were required to be proficient in Cantonese. There are now just some 60 officers left. The last were recruited in 1994 when the force stopped hiring from overseas. They are expected to reach retirement age around 2028.

Steve Vickers, a former head of the colonial police's



HONG KONG: A group of elderly people prepare to march to the government headquarters in Hong Kong yesterday, in the latest protest against a controversial extradition bill. — AFP

Criminal Intelligence Bureau, left the force in 1993 ahead of the handover and has since set up a risk consultancy business. He said expat officers remaining after the handover were useful because "continuity and confidence was maintained". "To that end, their presence was valuable, and indeed desirable," he said. But he added that Hong Kong's police force has since changed considerably, especially as Beijing asserts more authority over the city's leaders.

"As the years have gone by, and China's rise has been much more pronounced, the Hong Kong government became politicized in the years following the handover," he said. "This politicization also affects the police." Many of the force's bomb disposal experts are expat officers and won glowing local headlines last year for defusing a series of World War II-era bombs that were unearthed during construction works. But some of their colleagues now find themselves facing a barrage of criticism.

Protesters and rights groups have accused police of excessive force while angry chants of "black cops" — a pun on a Cantonese phrase used to describe triads - have

now become commonplace. The ousted expat officers are now increasingly portrayed as foot soldiers for an authoritarian China that wants to clamp down on Hong Kong's unique freedoms. During one protest earlier this month, democracy activist Joshua Wong spotted one and began berating him. "You are British and you serve the interests of Beijing," he cried.

Senior officers bristle at the way they have been portrayed - and reject the idea that they have used excessive force. "Other western police forces have used far more force during crowd-control operations," one officer told AFP. "In Paris or New York we'd have seen way more injuries, fractured skulls and broken bones."

Two other officers AFP spoke to mentioned recent rallies in France where anti-government "yellow vest" protesters say at least 23 people lost an eye, primarily from plastic bullets and baton rounds. The senior officers said many had sympathies with those protesting peacefully, adding that police helped facilitate multiple mass rallies and had no say over policy.— AFP

US bans Myanmar military chief over 'ethnic cleansing'

WASHINGTON: The United States on Tuesday banned visits by Myanmar's army chief and three other top officers due to their role in the "ethnic cleansing" of the Rohingya minority, urging accountability for their brutal campaign. The State Department said it took action against army chief Min Aung Hlaing and the others after finding credible evidence they were involved in the violence two years ago that led about 740,000 Rohingya to flee across the border to Bangladesh.

"With this announcement, the United States is the first government to publicly take action with respect to the most senior leadership of the Burmese military," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said. "We remain concerned that the Burmese government has taken no actions to hold accountable those responsible for human rights violations and abuses, and there are continued reports of the Burmese military committing human rights violations and abuses throughout the country," he said in a statement. The sanctions are the most visible sign of US disappointment with Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, since it launched political reforms in 2011, with the military junta reconciling with Washington and eventually allowing an elected political leadership. Also sanctioned were Deputy Commander-in-Chief Soe Win, Brigadier General Than Oo and Brigadier General Aung Aung as well as the families of all four officers.

Strengthening civilians?

Buddhist-majority Myanmar refuses to grant the mostly Muslim Rohingya citizenship or basic rights and refers to them as "Bengalis," inferring that the Rohingya are illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. UN investigators say the violence warrants the prosecution of top generals for "genocide" and the International Criminal Court has started a preliminary probe.

Pompeo, issuing a statement during a major meeting at the State Department on religious freedom, repeated the 2017 finding of his predecessor Rex Tillerson that the



YANGON: Photo shows Myanmar's Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, commander-in-chief of the Myanmar armed forces during a ceremony in Yangon. The US said it would ban entry into the country of Myanmar's army chief and four other generals due to their role in 'ethnic cleansing' of the Rohingya minority. — AFP

killings amounted to "ethnic cleansing" while stopping short of using the term genocide. The sanctions notably do not impact Aung San Suu Kyi, the former political prisoner who has risen to be the top civilian official.

The Nobel laureate has dismayed her onetime legions of Western admirers by not speaking out about the abuses. US officials voiced hope that the sanctions would help the civilian leaders exert control over the army, which the State Department said was alone responsible for the anti-Rohingya campaign. "Our hope is that these actions will strengthen the hand of the civilian government (and) will help to further delegitimize the current military leadership," an official said on condition of anonymity.

Erin Murphy, a former State Department official closely involved in the thaw in US ties with Myanmar, said the ban would affect not so much the generals directly but their children or grandchildren who want to come to the United States as tourists or students. While saying the travel ban provided a tool to encourage change, she doubted it would change attitudes toward the Rohingya, who are "almost a universally despised population." "You're talking about changing deeply held xenophobic and racist attitudes and a travel ban alone isn't going to change that," said Murphy, founder and principal of the Inle Advisory Group, which specializes in Myanmar.— AFP

To end slavery, free 10,000 people a day

NEW YORK: Ten thousand people would need to be freed every day to eliminate modern slavery over the next decade, according to research yesterday showing countries making little or no progress in efforts to end forced labor. Less than half of countries rank forced labor as a crime and most do not regard forced marriage as a crime, said the report by the Walk Free Foundation, an Australia-based anti-slavery group.

More than 40 million people have been estimated to be captive in modern slavery, which includes forced labor and forced marriage, according to Walk Free and the International Labor Organization. Ending modern slavery by 2030 was one of the global goals adopted unanimously by members of the United Nations four years ago.

But at today's rate, achieving that goal is "impossible", the report said. It would require freeing some 10,000 people each day for the next decade, it said. "At current progress, we will not be able to eradicate modern slavery by 2030," Katharine Bryant, research manager at Walk Free said. The group assessed 183 governments on such factors as the identification of slavery survivors, criminal justice, support systems and efforts to clean up supply chains.

The worst countries for modern slavery were North Korea and Eritrea, where governments are complicit in forced labor, the report said. It singled out Libya, Iran, Equatorial Guinea, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Congo, Russia and Somalia for lack of action on ending slavery. Wealthy countries that have taken little action were Qatar, Singapore, Kuwait, Brunei, Hong Kong and Russia, it said. Some countries have slowed or slipped backward in their efforts by reducing the number of victims identified, decreasing anti-slavery funding or cutting back on support systems, the report said. While an estimated 16 million people are trapped in forced labor, only 40 countries have investigated public or business supply chains to look at such exploitation, the report said. In nearly 100 countries, forced labor is not considered a crime or is a minor offense, it said. About a third of countries ban forced marriage.— Reuters

News in brief

Mafia clan regrouping

PALERMO: Italian and US police have launched a coordinated crackdown against major crime families who were looking to rebuild their Mafia powerbase in Sicily, Italian investigators said yesterday. More than 200 police, including officers from the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), have been carrying out 19 arrest warrants since dawn targeting the Inzerillo clan in Sicily's capital Palermo and the New York-based Gambino family. Sicily's organized crime group, known as 'Cosa Nostra' (Our Thing), has been in a state of flux since the death of the feared boss of bosses Salvatore "Totò" Riina, who died in prison in 2017 after spending almost a quarter of century behind bars. Riina launched a ferocious mafia war on the Mediterranean island in the 1980s, forcing the Inzerillo family into self-imposed exile in the United States as his own clan took over their territory in the Palermo suburbs.— Reuters

Gun store sparks backlash

WELLINGTON: New Zealand retailer Gun City, which sold weapons to the man accused of shootings at two Christchurch mosques that killed 51 people and injured dozens, has aroused concern with plans for a mega store in the South Island city, media said yesterday. Radio New Zealand said some of those living near the proposed site were upset at the prospect of the store, sprawling over 300 sq m, along with warehouse, office and carpark, set to open in August. "I don't think many people will be very comfortable to have guns around their homes in a residential area," one of the residents, Harry Singh, told the broadcaster. Gun City did not immediately reply to Reuters' request for comment.— Reuters

Rains pound South Asia

NEW DELHI: Heavy monsoon rains across South Asia claimed more lives yesterday, with the death toll passing 200 as authorities tried to reach stranded villagers cut off by surging floodwaters. The annual deluge is crucial to replenishing water supplies in the impoverished region, but the rains from June to September often turn deadly. Across India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan, millions of residents have been affected and hundreds of thousands displaced, with homes and boats washed away. In flood-prone Bangladesh, which is criss-crossed by rivers, around one-third of the country is underwater and people were being killed by lightning strikes, officials said. In India, the death toll rose to at least 120 and entire communities were cut off by rising floodwaters which damaged or submerged roads.— AFP

Making English lessons fun

BANGKOK: Thai English teacher Theeraphong Meesat has a unique way of boosting his students' confidence in class and making sure they loosen up - by wearing outrageous outfits and makeup. Theeraphong, 29, struts into his classroom at the Prasartprachakit School in Ratchaburi province in a grey wig that resembles Lisa from the popular K-pop band Blackpink and eyelashes made from a feather duster. Theeraphong, also known as "Bally", said many students used to dislike learning English because they were embarrassed by making mistakes. His stunts help break down the barrier, he said. "Some students were scared... But now they are more curious and eager to learn what is going to happen in class," Theeraphong said. Many of his students said classes were less boring.— Reuters

Israel's Ehud Barak defiant

JERUSALEM: Former Israeli premier Ehud Barak, who is challenging Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in upcoming elections, vowed to fight back yesterday after criticism over his ties to disgraced US financier Jeffrey Epstein. Barak, who recently returned to politics ahead of September 17 elections as a fierce Netanyahu critic, has been the subject of reports highlighting his business ties with Epstein, who has been charged with sex trafficking of minors in the United States. A Tuesday report in Britain's Daily Mail showed pictures of Barak entering Epstein's New York residence in 2016, with the Israeli's face partially hidden by a neck gaiter. Epstein had already in 2009 been convicted as a sex felon and served a 13-month prison term.— AFP

Analysis

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New int'l moon race could define humanity's future

Fifty years after Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins blasted off for the moon, a new space race is on. It is one that may affect the future of humanity even more than its Cold War predecessor, both on earth and in the wider cosmos. As anniversary celebrations get underway, NASA finds itself in the midst of a major shake-up - the result of the Trump administration's pledge to return humans to the moon by what he hopes will be his final presidential year of 2024. That would be well in advance of China's stated intention of conducting its own manned landing in the 2030s, and it would be no surprise if the new US 2024 target prompts a similar shake-up in China's space program.

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi - like Trump another assertive nationalist - India this year aims to be the fourth nation to send an automated probe to the lunar surface. The Chandrayaan 2 should have blasted off on Monday, but was postponed at the last moment for still unexplained technical reasons. That setback serves as a reminder of just how difficult such programs can be - but also, perhaps, the political pressures on them.

That's likely to be the case in the United States if Trump wins a second term, with the president tearing up an Obama-era plan to land on an asteroid to prioritize the perhaps more easily grasped concept of the moon then Mars. NASA last week demoted two of its longest-serving senior officials who had headed up manned exploration. In their place it appointed Ken Bowersox, a former astronaut who has also worked for Elon Musk's SpaceX, to head the program.

Moon landing

Trump would clearly revel in a moon landing in his final year in office - but the moon mission appears part of a wider political agenda, not least backed by Vice President Mike Pence. His March speech argued NASA's organization should change rather than its mission to get back to the moon by 2024 - when he may well be running for the White House himself.

As in India and China - which sent a probe to the dark side of the moon in January - space exploration is intrinsically tied to the political drives of those in charge. In Russia, the memory of Sputnik and Yuri Gagarin - the one point at which the country appeared ahead of the West in science and technology during the Cold War - is still a point of major national pride. So is the fact that Russian rockets kept putting US and European astronauts into orbit after the US space shuttle program ended.

The mere fact NASA can bring in space experts from the private sector shows how things have changed. The largest rocket currently launching satellites into orbit, the Falcon Heavy, is owned, designed and operated by Musk's firm. A growing number of space projects in the United States and beyond are now heavily collaborative, if not entirely private. When and if humanity reaches Mars with people, it may well be a commercial as much as a government venture.

The stakes are very high. When the last batch of US astronauts left the lunar surface in the 1972, less than three and a half years after Apollo 11, there was a feeling NASA had exhausted all the immediately useful activities it could conduct. Apollo missions had tested a moon buggy, even hit a golf ball. The technology to take things further, however, simply wasn't there.

In the decades that followed, the US space program chose to concentrate on reusable space shuttles, deep space probes and telescopes, and lower earth orbit activities such as the International Space Station. That, together with other new technology and better survey work of the moon and Mars, make today's space race very different. Nations are heading back to the moon because they wish to ultimately stay there.

Game changer

Signs of water on the moon from recent Chinese, Indian and US probes are a game changer. That be used to support colonists, and also broken down into oxygen and hydrogen for fuel. It would give whoever gets a foothold on the moon a considerable advantage in exploiting both its resources and those of the rest of space. The most efficient way of doing that would be through cooperation - one reason the European Space Agency suggests an international "Moon Village".

Cooperation, however, does not necessarily drive speed as much as competition - and in the current febrile global climate, it's no surprise this has become another field of international rivalry. It also comes at the same time as the wider militarization of space, evidenced by Trump's planned "space force" and an apparent Indian anti-satellite weapons test earlier this year. When they left the moon, Armstrong and Aldrin left behind a plaque reading: "We came in peace for all mankind." We must hope the next men and women there feel the same way. — Reuters

All articles appearing on this page are the personal opinion of the writers. Kuwait Times takes no responsibility for views expressed therein.



(Clockwise from top left) An Atlantic white shark conservancy boat and crew work to tag a great white shark in the waters off the shore in Cape Cod, Massachusetts on July 13, 2019; Signage warning beachgoers about great white sharks is seen at the entrance to Newcomb Hollow beach in Wellfleet in Cape Cod; Seals hang out and bask in the sandbars off the shore of Cape Cod; Surfers and beachgoers swim in the waters close to seals and sharks at Newcomb beach. — AFP

Swimmers share waves with sharks off Cape Cod

At the entrance to Newcomb Hollow Beach, at the tip of the Cape Cod peninsula, the picture of a great white shark reminds swimmers that the US shores of the Atlantic must be shared with the ocean's most feared predator. The great whites swim to this region in the northeastern United States to hunt for one of their preferred foods - seals. Since the Marine Mammal Protection Act was passed in 1972 the number of seals in Cape Cod has grown to more than 50,000.

In 2005 the great whites were declared a protected species in the state of Massachusetts - where Cape Cod is located - and have since become regular visitors to the region. On July 13 and 14 five great whites were spotted off Cape Cod, forcing three beaches to be briefly evacuated, the Atlantic White Shark Conservation Society reported. The deadly sharks are a great tourist attraction, and their pictures are splashed on T-shirts, coffee mugs and caps for sale in the area. Yet despite their fearsome reputation shark attacks on humans are rare.

One victim was Arthur Medici, a 26-year-old belly board surfer killed by a great white just a few meters into the ocean at Newcomb Hollow Beach in Sept 2018.

A stone plaque was placed at the beach in his memory. But prior to Medici the last deadly Cape Cod shark attack dates back to the 1930s, according to local news media. Local authorities, however, are taking no chances. This year the state has granted funds to Cape Cod peninsula towns to help them deal with sharks, even though there is no clear plan on what to do. One tactic some towns are using is to train lifeguards and residents on ways to stop severe bleeding in case of a shark attack.

No 100-percent deterrent

"We have new 'Stop the Bleed' kits in our medical bags. We also have 'Stop the Bleed' kits up in the parking lots, so in case we are not here... anyone on the beach can access that," said Adriana Picariello, the head lifeguard at Newcomb Hollow Beach. "We have all been trained in 'Stop the Bleed,'" she said, adding that the town is also offering training for residents. But for now, apart from a warning system that announces the presence of sharks that have been tagged with special chips, there is no long-term solution.

"We are seeing more danger to the human population while swimming," said Melyssa Millett, a seal and shark environmental guide on Monomoy Island, just south of the peninsula. "This is a natural course in nature's cycle," she said. Scientists are trying to find ways to manage the seal population, which in turn would help manage the shark population, she said.

For the moment, all that swimmers and surfers can do is be cautious. "I don't think there will be anything that is a 100-percent deterrent," said surfer Christa von der Luft. "I would like to see what an examination of all the options look like to see if there is something that can be done," she said. Other beaches along the eastern US seaboard are also dealing with the dangerous sharks.

About 1,500 km to the south, off the beaches of North Carolina, three people were attacked by sharks between April and June. Researchers at the University of Florida recorded 66 shark attacks last year around the world, including four that were deadly. In the United States 32 shark attacks were recorded in 2018 with one fatality - meaning that the chances of dying from a shark attack are one in 3.7 million. — AFP

Internet a distant dream for many in oil-rich E Guinea

Equatorial Guinea is awash in oil, although little of the wealth has trickled down to the poor. Yet one of the most glaring inequalities here is access to the Internet. Other parts of the world are pushing ahead with plans for fast, free - or at least low-cost - universal online access. Equatorial Guinea, a small reclusive state on the coast of central-western Africa, seems stuck in a time warp. With rare exceptions, sluggish speeds and stratospheric bills are the daily lot of people who want to search for information on the web, use social media, email, messaging and the myriad of other internet activities that are routine elsewhere.

"The Internet in Equatorial Guinea is still a big-money business, reserved for those who can afford it," said Mborro Mba, 35, seated on the ground behind a hotel as he tried to hook into a free Wi-Fi service with his smartphone. Equatorial Guinea has the most expensive Internet in the world after Zimbabwe, according to a list published this year by Ecobank, a pan-African bank.

One gigabyte of mobile data - roughly equivalent to

watching an hour of television on Netflix - costs an eye-watering \$35. By comparison, the average monthly pay of a manual worker or restaurant waiter in Equatorial Guinea is between 100,000-150,000 CFA francs (\$170-260). "For 2,000 CFA francs, I can't even download an 80-second video," a local journalist told colleagues from central Africa who had come to Malabo to cover a regional meeting and found themselves caught out by Internet problems. "You really have to be patient to work with the Internet in this country," said a visitor from the Republic of Congo, unsuccessfully trying to send files to his editor.

The barriers to Internet access here are so high that the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), a UN agency, estimates that just a quarter - 26 percent - of Equatorial Guineans go online. The authorities have set up a "free, public Internet network" along the Paseo Maritimo, a seafront six kilometres long in Malabo that is also used for sporting activities and leisurely strolls.

"I come here almost every evening to talk on WhatsApp to my mother who is in Spain," says Filomena, 32, a clothes vendor. "I don't have the money to have an Internet connection, so I come here often with my friends to use the Wi-Fi," schoolboy Jorge Obiang says, leaning against a tree with several young companions, all glued to their screens.

A former Spanish colony, Equatorial Guinea is nominally one of the richest states in Africa thanks to oil income. By next month, its president, Teodoro Obiang Nguema, will have ruled with an iron fist for 40 years -

the longest tenure of any African leader alive today. He has long been criticized for corruption within the regime and lack of openness to the rest of the world. The slow service is especially paradoxical since "the country is situated in the Gulf of Guinea and so has access to a number of seabed cables", said Julie Owono of Internet Sans Frontiers (Internet Without Borders), an NGO.

Equatorial Guinea - consisting of an island where Malabo lies and a forested territory on the African mainland that hosts trading capital Bata - is connected to three undersea fibre optic cables supplying internet services. In neighbouring Gabon, Internet access is five times less expensive on the scale drawn up by Ecobank.

No competition

The sky-high price of the Internet "is explained by the very strong presence of the state (telecom) company on the market and lack of competition", Owono said. "Everything here is centralized, political decisions depend on one person, or a family, and it is difficult to establish a competitive market." The state telecoms agency GITGE, which sets tariffs, declined to respond to AFP's questions. Another disincentive for competition is Internet blackouts ordered by those in power, she said. In Nov 2017, on the eve of parliamentary elections, access to WhatsApp was blocked and social media became unavailable for five months. "We're living in the information era - the government is applying an enormous brake," said Owono. — AFP

Iceland tries to bring back trees razed by Vikings

Before being colonized by the Vikings, Iceland was lush with forests but the fearsome warriors razed everything to the ground and the nation is now struggling to reforest the island. The country is considered the least forested in Europe; indeed, forests in Iceland are so rare, or their trees so young, that people often joke that those lost in the woods only need to stand up to find their way. However, it wasn't always that way. When seafaring Vikings set off from Norway and conquered the uninhabited North Atlantic island at the end of the ninth century, forests, made up mostly of birch trees, covered more than a quarter of the island.

Within a century, the settlers had cut down 97 percent of the original forests to serve as building material for houses and to make way for grazing pastures. The forests' recovery has been made all the more difficult by the harsh climate and active volcanoes, which periodically cover the soil with lava and ashes. According to a report published in 2015 by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), forests now only cover 0.5 percent of the island's surface.

The lack of trees means there isn't any vegetation to protect the soil from eroding and to store water, leading to extensive desertification despite the country's far northern location. Reforestation efforts since the 1950s and especially the 1990s have helped the rocky landscape regain some of the greenery and efforts are ongoing. In Hafnarsundur, a 6,000-hectare area of basalt and black sand in Iceland's southwest, authorities have tasked the Icelandic Forest Service with turning the lunar landscape



Hreinn Oskarsson, director of coordination and head of strategy at the Icelandic Forest Service, takes part in tree planting at Lava Flide near Thorlakshofn, Iceland on May 21, 2019. — AFP

into a forest. "This is one of the worst examples of soil erosion in Iceland on low land," said Hreinn Oskarsson, the service's head of strategy.

Help from imported species

Armed with a red "potti-pulki", a Finnish designed tub-shaped tool, Oskarsson is planting lodgepole pines and Sitka spruces, two species of North American conifer trees, in an attempt to protect the nearby town of Thorlakshofn from recurring dust storms. "We are planning an afforestation project to stabilise the soil," Oskarsson added. At the foot of Mount Esja, which overlooks the capital Reykjavik, is Mogilsa, where the Icelandic Forest Service's research division is located. Next to the station is a 50 year-old planted forest where imported trees grow together with Iceland's only domestic tree, the birch. Despite the birch being native to the soil, afforestation efforts often focus on other species

of trees. The problem with birches, according to Adalsteinn Sigurgeirsson, deputy director of the forest service, is that they aren't a "productive species". "So if you are going to meet other objectives, like fast sequestering of carbon or producing timber... we need more variety than just monocultures of one native species," he said.

Watching the trees grow

Dozens of nursery gardens have been set up throughout the country to facilitate the afforestation efforts. At Kvistar, about 100 km from Reykjavik, up to 900,000 pines and poplars are produced each year. "Originally, they come from Alaska but now we have 30, 40, 50 year-old trees giving us seeds, so we collect that and we use that for forest seedlings production," Holmfridur Geirsdottir, a 56-year-old horticulturist and greenhouse owner, told AFP. The young trees are cultivated indoors for three months before being moved outside. But since Icelandic soil is low in nitrogen, the maturation process is slow and the average growth rate is only about one tenth of that observed in the Amazon rainforest.

Climate paradox

The Icelandic government has made afforestation one of its priorities in its climate action plan, published in Sept 2018. It identifies trees' carbon uptake as one of the country's ways of mitigating climate change. Paradoxically, climate change is also giving tree growth a boost. "What has mainly been hampering growth of forest here has been the low temperatures and the coolness of the summers, but we are realizing changes in that because of climate change," said forest service deputy director Sigurgeirsson. "Warming appears to be elevating tree growth in Iceland, and therefore also the carbon sequestration rate," he continued. Since 2015, between three and four million trees have been planted in Iceland, the equivalent of about 1,000 hectares. That, however, is only a drop in the ocean compared to the six to seven million hectares planted in China over the same period. — AFP

Business

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France defiant as digital tax showdown looms

Le Maire insists regulatory framework needed before Libra launch

CHANTILLY, France: France yesterday expressed defiance in a row with the United States over taxing tech giants that threatens to dominate a G7 meeting, saying an international accord was the only way to solve the dispute. French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire was set to meet Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin on the sidelines of the meeting of finance ministers from the world's seven most developed economies in Chantilly outside Paris. But there was no early sign of any compromise.

The French parliament earlier this month passed a new law that will tax digital giants on revenue accrued inside the country, even if their European headquarters are elsewhere, in a move that will affect US groups Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon. The move infuriated the United States which announced an unprecedented probe against France which could trigger the imposition of tariffs.

"It is going to be difficult, I know. The American position has hardened recently," said Le Maire ahead of his meeting with Mnuchin, which was pushed back due to the US official's delayed flight.

Le Maire said he would make clear that the French parliament had agreed the tax and this could only be withdrawn if there was an international agreement.

'Won't back down'

In comments to France Inter radio, Le Maire said France would not back down with its plans to impose a three-percent tax on revenue that tech firms earn from French sales, despite the threat of US retaliation. "The possibility of US sanctions against France exists," Le Maire said. "There is a legal instrument for that and clearly there is the political will."

Even before the final vote by French lawmakers, the US announced it was opening a so-called Section 301 investigation into the measure. A Section 301 investigation was used by the Trump administration to justify tariffs on China. But Le Maire said: "France will not back down on the introduction of its national tax. It was decided upon, it was voted upon, it will be applied from 2019."

The minister had late Tuesday expressed confidence that the G7 could

find a consensus for an international accord which would be overseen by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). "This would be the best way to solve this problem," said Le Maire.

But smaller EU states such as Ireland and Luxembourg—low-tax countries which host the European headquarters of digital giants—have prevented a consensus in the EU. While the measure does not specifically target US internet giants, the French commonly call it the GAFA tax, an acronym for Google, Amazon, Facebook and Apple.

Work has been under way for several years on a reform of the international tax system to ensure that multinationals are not able to escape paying taxes in countries where they do large amounts of their business.

Libra not liked

A number of other thorny issues await G7 ministers when they begin their meeting against a mixed global economic picture. Plans by Facebook to launch a virtual currency called Libra have stoked concerns among regulators in numerous countries




CHANTILLY: G7 Finance Ministers and other participants attend a working session during the G7 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors' meeting in Chantilly yesterday. — AFP


about regulation and market oversight of cryptocurrencies.

"We'll reiterate our intention not to allow a private company to acquire the elements of monetary sovereignty," a French official told AFP last week on condition of anonymity. Le Maire has publicly voiced his concerns about Libra, a

virtual currency to be backed with a basket of real-world currencies that Facebook says will facilitate online financial transactions. "The conditions are not yet in place today for Libra to be introduced," Le Maire said yesterday before meeting Mnuchin, adding that a regulatory framework was needed. — AFP



Kuwait's Best Bank
Based on Euromoney magazine's mechanism and standard



بيت التمويل الكويتي
Kuwait Finance House

Praise be to Allah

Financial Results for the First Half of 2019

		30/06/2019	30/06/2018	%
Net Profit for Shareholders	"KD Million"	107.67	95.22	13.1
Earnings per Share	"Fils"	15.64	13.84	13.0
Financing Income	"KD Million"	460.52	424.14	8.6
Total Operating Income	"KD Million"	392.38	389.87	0.6
Net Operating Income	"KD Million"	240.72	235.80	2.1

		30/06/2019	31/12/2018	%
Total Assets	"KD Billion"	18.747	17.770	5.5
Financing Receivables	"KD Billion"	9.237	9.189	0.5
Depositors' Accounts	"KD Billion"	12.837	11.780	9.0

kfh.com 180 3333

Business

KFH reports KD 107.7 million in net profit for first half of 2019

EPS 15.64 fils, an increase of 13%: Al-Marzouq



KUWAIT: Chairman of Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Hamad Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq said that KFH has, by the grace of Allah, reported net profits of KD 107.7 million for the first half of 2019 for KFH shareholders compared to KD 95.2 million for the same period last year i.e. an increase of 13.1 percent.

Total finance income for HI this year reached KD 460.5 million an increase of 8.6 percent; and net operating income reached KD 240.7 million i.e. a growth of 2.1 percent compared to the same period last year. Cost to income ratio dropped to reach 38.7 percent for HI 2019, compared to 39.5 percent for the same period last year. Earnings per share for HI of 2019 reached 15.64 fils, compared to 13.84 fils for the same period last year i.e. an increase of 13 percent.

Total assets increased by 5.5 percent compared to the end of last year to reach KD 18.747 billion, i.e. an increase of KD 976.8 million at the end of HI this year. Finance receivables reached KD 9.237 i.e. an increase of 0.5 percent compared to end of last year.

Investment in Sukuk reached KD 2.145 billion an increase of KD 582 million i.e. a growth of 37 percent compared to end of last year and the majority of the balance represents investments in Sovereign Sukuk. Depositors' accounts reached KD 12.837 billion i.e. an increase of KD 1.057 billion or 9 percent compared to the end of last year.

Al-Marzouq said that the positive financial results stemmed from the focus on the core banking activities. They were in line with the set plans and a reflection of the stable and sustained growth of profitability, encompassing all indicators. This testifies to the success of KFH strategy and its solid financial position of the bank, despite the tough adverse economic and political developments.

Al-Marzouq pointed out that over the last five years KFH has succeeded in increasing the overall assets value, while maintaining their highest possible standard of quality and diversity to limit risks, and also explained that the continued rise in net profit attributable to shareholders of the bank is due to the increase in total operating income and continuous decrease in the operating expenses, as well as the steady growth rate of the total assets. He asserted that efforts are focused on maintaining the profit rate growth, the credit facilities return and other financial indicators as well as implementing the best banking practices, full compliance with supervisory and sharia rules and directives and the best operational parameters. This will be accompanied by continuous improvement in the cost-income ratio, taking advantage of technology and



Hamad Al-Marzouq

administrative and organizational plans. These plans include raising employee efficiency, innovation, operational quality and customer care, ensuring the interests of the shareholders and depositors and increasing the return on their investments.

Kuwait Vision 2035

Al-Marzouq confirmed that several initiatives were launched in the first half of the current year reflecting great interest in strengthening KFH's position, value and name in the local market with a view to expanding market share, enhancing the national economy and realizing the "Kuwait Vision 2035".

He called for launching more initiatives and executive plans that translate Kuwait's future vision into concrete steps and real projects leading to comprehensive development and reestablishing Kuwait as one of the best and most vital commercial regional and international hubs.

Al-Marzouq stressed the necessity of having a strong market for projects capable of absorbing banks liquidity and employing Kuwait's ideal potential and many abilities whereby the private sector has the largest part. This will expand its role and achieve comprehensive economic returns through energizing the market, solidifying the economic structure, boosting competition with the subsequent social returns of developing national strengths and expertise and creating job opportunities outside the public sector. He pointed that toward this goal, "KFH Auto" Showroom was opened in Shuwaikh. Being the largest and newest Showroom in the Middle East, it includes more than 30 brands of cars, motorcycles and boats. As an integrated city, customers can also sell and purchase new and used cars at "KFH Auto".

Car rental, valuation, traffic and insurance services are also offered at the showroom. In line with intelligent building systems, "KFH Auto" includes charging station for electric vehicles and special section for ladies. This achievement strengthens KFH's role in serving the national economy and the retail market as well as boosting traders and agents sales in a context of cooperation and partnership.

As for the customers segments, he added that KFH introduced quality services for several segments with the aim of developing relationships with them and meeting their requirements. KFH was the first Kuwaiti bank to launch the exclusive Infinite Credit Card for the private banking customers, in addition to introducing the "Car financing service outside Kuwait", making Turkey the fourth country in the service that includes Jordan, the USA and Egypt. It also introduced money transfer service in Egyptian pound to Egypt. The service is available online or through branches. KFH also offered prizes and benefits to its customers. He pointed out that the bank is striving to make its services the best and most efficient to its customers, thereby boosting its competitive edge and market leadership.

Project financing

In line with its vital role in the local economy, Al-Marzouq stressed on KFH continuing pursuit to be a leader in the major infrastructure projects in terms of finance and support. As per the regulations and instructions, KFH provided funding to several companies that implement major economic and development projects. In addition, KFH is strengthening its position as a leader in financing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Al-Marzouq said that the FinTech current trends in the banking industry are the most important and critical developments in the banks' history. These trends pose challenges that would change the traditional banking industry model. "As a strategy, KFH uses state of the art technology in the digital banking realm, considering customers' expectations as well as innovating the appropriate products and services. With Technology development, KFH is enhancing the products and services, creating new innovative dimensions while reducing expenses", He explained.

Al-Marzouq added that Blockchain helps to overcome the traditional bottlenecks and administrative requirements in the payment systems and achieve flexibility, reliability and financial inclusion. As it successfully enables people to access several banking services around the world, the accessible "smart phone" has become a key and active

HIGHLIGHTS

- Total finance income reached KD 460.5 million an increase of 8.6%
- Net operating income reached KD 240.7 million an increase of 2.1%
- Total assets reached 18.747 billion an increase of 5.5%
- Depositors' accounts reached KD 12.837 billion an increase of 9%
- Fifth consecutive year of sustainability and growth
- Operating Profits are in line with the plans and reflect the sound financial position
- KFH plays a role in "Kuwait Vision 2035" to transfer Kuwait into a financial hub
- KFH focuses on local market and serves its clients within the framework of cooperation and partnerships
- Opening of KFH Auto the largest and most modern exhibition in the Middle East
- The current trends such as FinTech are the most important and critical developments in the banking industry history
- KFH expands its services of the Blockchain, Mobile and e-branches
- KFH business strategy is to finance the development projects and support the national economy
- KFH Group achieves leading position in arranging sukuk issuances regionally and globally
- The Euromoney Award "Best Bank in Kuwait" confirms KFH's solid performance and its leadership

component in KFH banking services.

"A full package of KFH's digital services is becoming more integrated and is supported by the use of robotics and artificial intelligence in the operations for the first time in Kuwait and the launch of the smart e-branch (KFH-Go). Through KFH-Go branches in Ishbiliya and Jabriya, customers can do 90 percent of their traditional banking transactions. KFH also added new services to KFH-Online smartphone app and introduced the first ever Mobile Deposit of Cheques in Kuwait, through KFH Online app," he explained.

Global role

He noted that KFH has a regional and global leading role in Sukuk issuances and Islamic finance services. KFH Group has succeeded in consolidating its position in Sukuk market, indicating that Sukuk is one of the most important Islamic financial products. Since the beginning of the year, the bank has arranged issuances worth more than USD 5 billion for companies and governments. KFH Capital, the investment arm of KFH Group, has recently succeeded in arranging Sukuk issuances for Turkey, the Emirate of Sharjah and Saudi Telecom Company, in addition to launching a new index to follow and analyze dollar-denominated Sukuk issuances in the global markets.

By strengthening coordination at the Group level, KFH succeeded in achieving high results. Moreover, KFH focuses on human resources, especially Kuwaiti youth

and national expertise and provides them with opportunities to develop their capabilities and skills to assume responsibility and lead the Group in terms of development and growth.

Al-Marzouq noted that KFH's continuous holding of the international rating agencies positive ratings, as well as receiving eight top-level awards by renowned world entities concerned with monitoring the performance of banks and financial institutions are positive indicators of sound performance by the Group's banks.

He added that winning the Euromoney Award for Excellence 2019 - "Best Bank in Kuwait" is a confirmation of KFH's success, solid performance and its global leadership as an Islamic financial institution and reflects the customer confidence in the bank. This award is a culmination of KFH's efforts in providing the highest level of Islamic financial services locally, regionally and globally. The Euromoney award for excellence is based on several criteria including bank's achievements, innovations, performance, banking services, size, profitability, ability to demonstrate growth, relative outperformance compared with peers and the ability to adapt to changing market conditions and client needs. Al-Marzouq extended his thanks to stakeholders and customers for their support and trust in KFH's operations and activities and to the regulatory authorities. He commended the executive management and staff for their outstanding efforts.

Bank of America profit beats as healthy economy fuels loan growth

WASHINGTON: Bank of America Corp beat estimates for quarterly profit yesterday, as the loan book of the country's second-largest lender benefited from a healthy economy. Consumer banking has held up for the big Wall Street banks that have reported second-quarter results this week, cushioning a blow from weakness in trading and advisory businesses.

But warning signs also emerged with JPMorgan, Citigroup and Wells Fargo reporting a dip in margins, stoking fears

that interest rate cuts could further pressure profit by narrowing the spread between what banks charge on loans and pay on deposits. Bank of America, however, bucked that trend and reported a 3-basis-point increase on the year in its interest margin to 2.44 percent for the second quarter, though the metric fell 7 points from the first quarter.

Chief Financial Officer Paul Donofrio said on a call with reporters the sequential decline was due to lower long-term interest rates.

"When long-term interest rates fall, we see more people pay off their mortgages and that translates into more mortgage-backed securities being redeemed and that forces us to write off some premiums," he said. "I don't think you can extrapolate that into the future because long-term rates have stabilized at this point."

The lender is the most sensitive of the big US banks to interest rate changes

because of its large deposit stock and rate-sensitive mortgage securities. In the absence of higher interest rates to help pad revenue, banks can improve margins by reducing expenses. Bank of America completed a years-long cost-cutting initiative last year, and has pledged to keep expenses flat through 2020.

Expenses during the quarter were up slightly as the bank invested more in its consumer, commercial and wealth management businesses. Total loans in its consumer banking unit rose 6 percent, while deposits were up 3 percent, pushing income from the business up 13 percent to \$3.3 billion.

"We see solid consumer activity across the board, with spending by Bank of America consumers up 5 percent this quarter over the second quarter of last year," Chief Executive Brian Moynihan said in a statement. Growth in the consumer business helped offset softness in market revenue and Wall Street businesses.



WASHINGTON, DC: The Bank of America logo is seen outside a branch in Washington, DC. — AFP

The retail bank and wealth management segments each recorded double digit profit gains while its commercial and markets businesses each saw profit and revenue decline from lower investment banking and trading fees. Adjusted revenue from Bank of America's global market business, which

includes bond and equities trading, fell 5.7 percent to \$4.18 billion.

Net income applicable to common shareholders rose 10 percent to \$7.11 billion, or 74 cents per share, in the second quarter ended June 30. Excluding items, the bank earned 75 cents per share. — Reuters

Business

Ooredoo launches 5G voice rate plans with Huawei Mate 20 X 5G

Offer available in all of Ooredoo's branches

Warba Bank to hold Al-Sunbula draw today



KUWAIT: Warba Bank, "the Best investment Bank" and "Best Corporate Bank" in Kuwait, will be organizing its weekly Sunbula draw number 27 today at 11 am in presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Bank officials. Al-Sunbula both account and fixed deposits are the perfect choices for customers who wish to save money and achieve steady returns while at the same time gain the opportunity to win prizes throughout the year.

In line with the bank's mission to develop and differentiate its offerings, Warba Bank has enhanced its Sunbula campaign for 2019 with more cash and prizes reaching more than KD 1 million.

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

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

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

Reinvent global monetary order or face Chinese dominance: France

PARIS: France's finance minister said on Tuesday the post-war international monetary order needed to be reinvented or become increasingly dominated by China. The pillars of that order, the International Monetary Fund and its sister institution the World Bank, have been controlled by the United States and Europe since their inception at the Bretton Woods conference in New Hampshire in July 1944.

But globalization, the growing populist backlash against it and the rise of big new economic powers like China are increasingly putting that order to the test. "The Bretton Woods order as we know it has reached its limits," French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire told a conference at the French central bank marking the 75th anniversary of the conference. "The alternative we have is now clear - either we reinvent Bretton Woods or it risks losing relevance and eventually disappearing," he said. Le Maire said that while Bretton Woods had defined the international economic order of the second half of the 20th century, the first part of this century may be defined by China's New Silk Road project.

The Belt and Road Initiative, as it is formally called, envisions rebuilding the old Silk Road to connect China with Asia, Europe and beyond with massive infrastructure spending largely financed by China. "Unless we are able to reinvent Bretton Woods, The New Silk Roads might become the new world order," Le Maire said. "And Chinese standards - on state aid, on access to public procurements, on intellectual property - could become the new global standards." IMF Acting Managing Director David Lipton said at the conference that the fund had a duty to reflect the rising power of emerging markets. Le Maire said the reform priorities of Bretton Woods institutions should be focused on fighting climate change, curbing rising inequalities and regulating the emergence of digital giants. —Reuters

KUWAIT: In its consistent stride in providing customers with the best and most innovative products in the fast-paced telecom industry, Ooredoo launched the first smartphone device that supports 5G yesterday, the Huawei Mate 20 X 5G paired with exclusive Shamel 5G plans. The launch of the Huawei Mate 20 X 5G comes to reiterate Ooredoo's commitment to providing its customers with the newest products and the best offers. The Huawei Mate 20 X 5G delivers true innovation and breakthrough technology, which is portrayed by making it the world's first smartphone that supports the 5G network.

The Huawei Mate 20 X 5G has an array of exciting features which include a revolutionary New Leica Triple Camera system with ultra-wide angle lens, world first Balong 5000 5G chipset, Kirin 980 Chipset, the Huawei M-Pen4 and the Huawei SuperCharge with TUV Safety certification. The new Leica Triple Camera powered by AI reveals life's drama, texture, color and beauty in every photograph. Designed for different scenarios, the 40 MP main RGB camera captures great details, while the 8 MP camera with telephoto lens will focus on distant shots and the 20 MP camera with Leica Ultra Wide

Angle Lens is perfect for the landscape photos and macro shots.

The Balong 5000 is the world's first 7nm multi-mode 5G chipset that provides industry-leading 5G speeds and supports both NSA and SA (Non-Standalone and Standalone) architecture for a smooth transition of the evolving 5G network.

Worth to mention that Ooredoo made the first trial International 5G call in the region between Ooredoo Kuwait and Ooredoo Qatar, demonstrating the phenomenal capabilities of its 5G networks in Qatar and Kuwait. Prior to the 5G launch, Ooredoo hosted a special event that demonstrated the power of its new 5G network. The event was attended by media and social media influencers and was held at the company's head office in the heart of Kuwait City on Soor Street. During the event, Ooredoo demonstrated the network's ability to operate video games comparing both networks, which require fast data speed, in addition to a live feed in 4K Full HD of drone footage of the event, and a speed test corner with devices equipped to utilize the new network capacity.



Gulf Bank awarded prestigious 'Operational Excellence Award' by Deutsche Bank

KUWAIT: Deutsche Bank has awarded Gulf Bank with the annual Operational Excellence Award in recognition of nine years of exceptional performance. For the past nine years, Gulf Bank's Straight-Through Processing (STP) ranges has been in the 99 percent percentile, with the Bank consistently achieving rates of over 99.7 percent year after year. This achievement demonstrates how Gulf Bank is greatly reducing the administrative impact of payment processing, and is working continually to increase efficiency in formatting while ensuring strict compliance with globally recognized payment standards. Gulf Bank is one of only three banks in Kuwait that received the award from Deutsche Bank for 2018.

Commenting on the award, Angel Perez-Camacho, Client Manager for Institutional Cash Sales & Client Management in the Middle East & Africa at Deutsche Bank, said: "We are pleased to recognize the accomplishments of Gulf Bank in Kuwait with Deutsche Bank's Operational Excellence Award. The award recognizes Gulf Bank's successful achievement of a Straight-Through-

Processing rate of over 99 percent in clearing Euro transactions throughout 2018, thus ensuring higher accuracy and efficiency along with a seamless experience for its clients."

Commenting on the award, Mona Mansour, General Manager of Customer Service Delivery at Gulf Bank added: "Operational excellence is of the utmost importance at Gulf Bank. For the past nine years, we have been striving to ensure our customers' payments are made quicker and more efficiently year after year. We truly could not be more pleased to be recognized not only for our excellent STP rates, but for our consistency in delivering operational services that exceed our customers' expectations."

Each year, Deutsche Bank recognizes financial institutions across the globe that demonstrate outstanding efficiency in processing payments in euro and in US dollar which is measured through the Straight-Through-Processing (STP) payment rate. An STP payment is a payment that qualifies for automatic processing, and usually gets executed in a matter of seconds, without any manual intervention. Having a high STP rate consequently ensures that payments are made in a faster, more accurate and efficient manner. The award recipient deserves recognition as it reflects consistency in operational excellence, as even a temporary deviation in services or quality can affect the annual STP rate.



Mona Mansour

Zimbabwe public worker strike on the cards after pay offer rejected

HARARE: Zimbabwe's public sector workers on Tuesday night rejected the government's latest pay offer as insufficient in the face of soaring consumer prices, raising the likelihood of unofficial strike action yesterday. Official figures published on Monday showed annual inflation almost doubled to 175.66% in June, piling pressure on a population struggling with shortages and stirring memories of the economic chaos of a decade ago.

Hope that the economy would quickly rebound under President Emmerson Mnangagwa, who replaced the long-ruling Robert Mugabe after a November 2017 coup, has turned to frustration as the country struggles with shortages of dollars, fuel and medicines. Leaders of government workers' unions marched on the ministries of finance and labor in Harare on Tuesday to present their wage demands.

"Civil servants are not asking for a salary increment, but rather restoration of the value of their earnings, which fell from at least \$475 to a mere \$47 currently for the lowest paid civil servant," read part of the workers' petition. —Reuters

Lagarde resigns as IMF chief, starting race for successor

WASHINGTON: International Monetary Fund chief Christine Lagarde submitted her resignation from the global crisis lender on Tuesday, citing more clarity about her nomination to lead the European Central Bank as European legislators approved a new top bureaucrat. Lagarde said in a statement her resignation was effective Sept 12, firing the starting gun for the IMF's search for her successor, which is likely to be another European.

"With greater clarity now on the process for my nomination as ECB President and the time it will take, I have made this decision in the best interest of the Fund," Lagarde said in a statement.

She said her resignation would expedite the selection for the next head of the IMF. IMF succession is expected to be a major topic of discussion among G7 finance ministers and central bank governors meeting today in Chantilly, France, near Paris amid concerns that slowing global growth and trade conflicts will pressure vulnerable economies. Lagarde's resignation, first reported by Reuters, came two weeks after her nomination on July 2 for the ECB's top job. She did not immediately quit the IMF because of uncertainty over whether the new European Parliament would support her and other new EU leadership positions, sources told Reuters.

Her nomination was part of a package of top officials agreed by EU governments that included German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen as European Commission president, who drew Green party opposition. Later on Tuesday, von der Leyen was approved by the European Parliament in a 383-327 vote. The European parliament will hold a nonbinding vote on Lagarde's appointment, which is expected to be finalized by EU leaders at a regular summit on Oct. 17-18.

Vetting candidates

Since its creation at the end of World War Two, the IMF has been led by a European, while its sister institution, the World Bank, has been led by an

American. Analysts say the "duopoly" is likely to continue after US President Donald Trump's nominee, David Malpass, was approved in April to lead the World Bank with European support. Finance leaders of Europe's four largest economies—Germany, France, Britain and Italy—will participate in the G7 finance meeting this week in Chantilly, along with other large IMF shareholders the United States, Japan and Canada, giving weight to discussions on IMF leadership.

On the sidelines of the G7 meeting, Bank of England Governor Mark Carney, considered a leading candidate to replace Lagarde, is slated to meet with US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, who wields strong influence over the IMF's leadership. The United States holds an effective veto over major Fund decisions, with a 16.52 percent share of its voting power.

While Carney, 54, is a Canadian economist, he holds Irish and British passports and has led Britain's central bank since 2013 and chaired the Financial Stability Board, an international body, for seven years. Other names being floated include Bank of Finland Governor Olli Rehn, as well as ECB executive board member Benoit Coeure.

Kristalina Georgieva, a Bulgarian national who is currently chief executive officer of the World Bank, has been seen as having an outside chance, according to some IMF sources. Two IMF board sources said there was concern among some IMF member countries that the Fund's IMF leadership would be left in limbo due to the long ECB confirmation process, and it was better for her to resign to accelerate the succession process. The IMF's acting managing director, David Lipton, said earlier on Tuesday that the fund would adapt to Lagarde's departure as it has other developments over 75 years.

Inclusive legacy

A former French finance minister, Lagarde was the first woman to head the IMF and was known among policymakers as a tough negotiator. She was a tireless advocate for the benefits of trade, global growth that aids the poor and middle classes, and the empowerment of women. Her second five-year term as head of the IMF was not due to end until July 2021. Traditionally, the post has always been held by a European, while the head of the IMF's sister organization, the World Bank, has always been an



PARIS: US Federal Reserve Board Chairman Jerome Powell, Banque de France Governor Francois Villeroy de Galhau, Interim IMF Managing Director David Lipton, World Bank Group President David Malpass and former IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus listen French Finance and Economy Minister talking during his addresses as part of the Conference "Bretton Woods: 75 years later - Thinking about the next 75 years" at the Banque de France headquarters in Paris on Tuesday. —AFP



Christine Lagarde

American since the institutions were created at the end of World War Two.

If approved, Lagarde would take over as ECB president from Mario Draghi on Oct 31. While her confirmation could be lengthy, it is likely to be largely a formality as long as the euro zone's biggest member states - Germany, France and Italy - are in unity. Her immediate challenge at the ECB would be to overcome her shortcomings in monetary policy-making, especially as it seeks to rearm

for a potential new slump after years of using unconventional policy tools to stimulate inflation and growth.

As head of the IMF, she has had some battle-testing, bringing stability to the eurozone debt crisis of the last decade and presiding over large bailouts for Argentina, Egypt and Ukraine. She has emphasized the need for the IMF to maintain its \$1 trillion in lending firepower to deal with any future crises. —Reuters

What's On

NBK launches second session of Summer Internship Program

National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) launched the second session of Summer Internship Program 2019. A two-week course custom-made for high school and college students aged between 14 and 21 years. Ghadeer Al-Awadi, NBK's Head of Branches, participated in the opening of the second session that witnessed the attendance of 34 students. The Summer Internship Program this year is made up of four different sessions, five-hour daily over two weeks each. The third session starts on July 29, while the fourth will take place on August 12, 2019.

It is worth mentioning that 'Omnia Recycling Project Management' is participating this year in NBK's annual summer internship program. This collaboration aims to protect the environment and reduce waste to encourage the community to participate in the recycling efforts.

It has been 17 years since the establishment of the program. The Program features a mixture of theoretical and practical training dedicated to provide the interns with valuable knowledge on a variety of subjects such as: teamwork, creative thinking, the means of self-expression and modern banking, in addition to helping them have a greater exposure to daily banking work procedures. This annual program demonstrates NBK's long-standing social involvement as well as its national commitment towards providing young generations with the appropriate opportunities to experience how the actual professional banking concerns and transactions are handled and processed.



KUWAIT: Jahra Governor Nasser Falah Al-Hajraf recently received the Deputy General Manager for Corporate Communication at Central Bank of Kuwait Amani Al-Waraa. The two sides discussed preparations regarding several social, health and sports activities that the bank sponsors and that are held around the governorate.

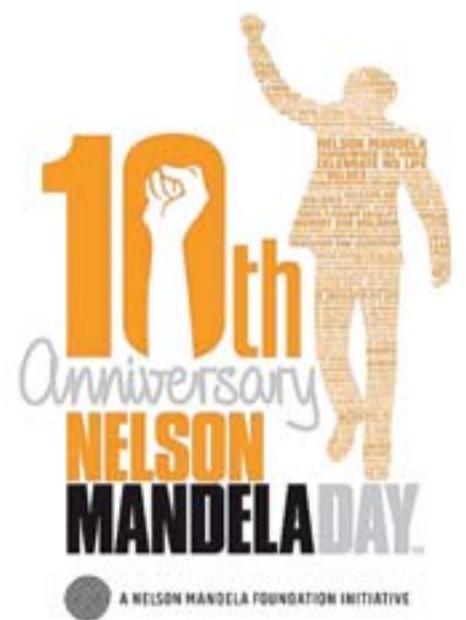
Nelson Mandela Day

The Nelson Mandela Day was launched on Nelson Mandela's birthday, 18 July, in 2009 via a decision by the UN General Assembly. This year marks the tenth anniversary of Nelson Mandela Day, commemorated under the theme: "Action against poverty" with sub themes: "Take Action. Inspire Change". "MAKE EVERY DAY A MANDELA DAY."

The event is aimed at celebrating President Mandela's life and legacy, honor his life's work and inspire individuals and communities to take action to change the world for the better. The idea is to observe the call for the 67 minutes of voluntary service initiative

by providing humanitarian support to local organisation(s) taking care of the disabled, orphans, elderly, etc. in line with the Nelson Mandela International Day initiative.

Nelson Mandela is considered one of the world's most significant moral and principled champions for freedom and democracy. He was very instrumental in the leadership collective of the liberation movement that fought for freedom and democracy in South Africa. More importantly, Nelson Mandela is internationally revered as an icon in the fight for justice, human rights, non-racialism, national reconciliation and nation building. In order to preserve his visionary legacy, South Africans and the international community celebrate Nelson Mandela Day every year in promoting his enduring values of justice and progressive internationalism.



Recipes

How to turn chickpea fritters into a delicious burger

Falafel are crispy on the outside, soft on the inside, packed with seasoning, and utterly irresistible. Here we essentially supersize these chickpea fritters to make a uniquely delicious burger. We started by soaking dried chickpeas overnight to soften before grinding them into coarse bits along with onion, herbs, garlic, and spices. Traditional falafel recipes use flour and chickpeas for a dough-like texture, but uncooked flour yielded patties that were dry and bread-like; instead, we used a microwaved flour paste to add moisture and create a soft interior.

To ensure burger-size falafel, we used a dry measuring cup and dropped scoops of the falafel mixture into a heated skillet and then used the back of a spoon to press each portion into a 3/4-inch-thick patty. To top off our burgers, we created a sauce -featuring tahini, Greek yogurt, and lemon juice and also added sliced cucumber and quick pickled red onions for a burger so flavorful you may never go back to falafel wrapped in pita bread.

Falafel Burgers with Tahini-Yogurt Sauce

Ingredients

- Servings: 4
Start to finish: 1 hour
- 8 ounces dried chickpeas, picked over and rinsed
- 1/3 cup tahini
1/3 cup plain Greek yogurt
3 tablespoons lemon juice, plus extra for seasoning
3/4 cup fresh cilantro leaves and stems
3/4 cup fresh parsley leaves
1/2 onion, chopped fine
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 1/2 teaspoons ground coriander
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon table salt
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
2 tablespoons vegetable oil, plus extra as needed
4 hamburger buns, toasted if desired
1/4 English cucumber, sliced thin
1/2 cup Quick Pickled Red Onions (recipe follows)

Preparation

Place chickpeas in large container and cover with water by 2 to 3 inches. Soak at room temperature for at least 8 hours or up to 24 hours. Drain well. Whisk tahini, yogurt, and lemon juice in medium bowl until smooth. Season with salt and extra lemon juice to taste; set aside. (Sauce can be refrigerated for up to 4 days; let come to room temperature and stir to recombine before serving.)



Process cilantro, parsley, onion, garlic, coriander, cumin, salt, and cayenne in food processor until mixture is finely ground, about 30 seconds, scraping down sides of bowl as needed. Add chickpeas and pulse 6 times. Continue to pulse until chickpeas are coarsely chopped and resemble sesame seeds, about 6 more pulses. Transfer mixture to large bowl and set aside.

Whisk flour and 1/3 cup water in bowl until no lumps remain. Microwave, whisking every 10 seconds, until mixture thickens to stiff, smooth, pudding-like consistency that forms mound when dropped from end of whisk into bowl, 40 to 80 seconds. Stir baking powder into flour paste. Add flour paste to chickpea mixture and, using rubber spatula, mix until fully incorporated. (Falafel mixture can be refrigerated for up to 2 hours.)

Heat oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Using 1 cup measure, drop 4 even portions (about 3/4 cup each) into skillet, then press each portion into 3/4-inch-thick patty with back of spoon. Cook until golden brown and crisp on first side, 4 to 6 minutes. Using 2 spatulas, gently flip patties and cook until well browned and crisp on second side, 4 to 6 minutes, adding extra oil as needed if skillet looks dry. Serve burgers on buns, topped with cucumber, pickled onions, and tahini-yogurt sauce.

Quick Pickled Red Onion

Makes about 1 cup
Pickled onions are an absolute breeze to make, just a few minutes of hands-on preparation plus a 30-minute brine bath transform simple slices of red onion into a vibrant topping for burgers. Look for a firm, dry onion with thin, shiny skin and a deep purple color.

- 1 cup vinegar
1/3 cup sugar
1/4 teaspoon table salt
1 red onion, halved and sliced thin through root end
Bring vinegar, sugar, and salt to simmer in small saucepan over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until sugar has dissolved. Off heat, stir in onion, cover, and let cool to room temperature, about 1 hour. Serve. (Pickled onions can be refrigerated in airtight container for up to 1 week.)

Give your mayo-heavy American potato salad a French twist

American-style potato salad, thickly dressed with mayonnaise and sweet pickle relish, is archetypal picnic fare and will always have a place on summer tables. But we've cooked (and eaten) piles of it over the years, and these days we yearn for something lighter and fresher to serve with grilled fish, chicken, and even meat.

In our mind, French potato salad is just the ticket. Having little in common with its American counterpart, French potato salad is served warm or at room temperature and is composed of sliced potatoes glistening with olive oil, white wine vinegar, and plenty of fresh herbs. We expected quick success with this seemingly simple recipe - how hard could it be to boil a few potatoes and toss them in vinaigrette? We sliced the hot potatoes, dressed them while they were still warm (warm potatoes are more absorbent than cool ones), and then served them up to our tasters.

The salad looked mangled, as the warm potatoes consistently broke apart upon slicing. We had chosen not to peel the potatoes for the sake of convenience and beauty, but the potato skins inevitably tore, leaving unsightly streaks. And the salad didn't taste much better than it looked. Despite an assertively seasoned vinaigrette, the potatoes themselves were uniformly bland. Another irksome point was that it was hard to tell when the potatoes were done. Unevenly sized potatoes made it difficult to avoid some over- or undercooked potatoes in the finished dish. This wasn't going to be as easy as we thought.

French Potato Salad with Dijon

Ingredients

- Servings: 4-6
Start to finish: 30 minutes
2 pounds small red potatoes, unpeeled, sliced 1/4 inch thick (Use small red potatoes measuring 1 to 2 inches in diameter)
2 tablespoons salt
1 garlic clove, peeled and threaded on skewer
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 1/2 tablespoons vinegar
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1 small shallot, minced
1 tablespoon minced fresh chervil (If fresh chervil isn't available, substitute an additional 1/2 tablespoon of minced parsley and an additional 1/2 teaspoon of tarragon)
1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley
1 tablespoon minced fresh chives
1 teaspoon minced fresh tarragon

Preparation

Place potatoes in large saucepan, add water to cover by 1 inch, and bring to boil over high heat. Add salt, reduce heat to simmer, and cook until potatoes are tender and paring knife can be slipped in and out of potatoes with little resistance, about 6 minutes. While potatoes are cooking, lower skewered garlic into simmering water and blanch for 45 seconds. Run garlic under cold running water, then remove from skewer and mince. Reserve 1/4 cup cooking water, then drain potatoes and arrange in tight single layer in rimmed baking sheet. Whisk oil, minced 7/8garlic, vinegar, mustard, pepper, and reserved potato cooking water together in bowl, then drizzle over potatoes. Let potatoes sit until flavors meld, about 10 minutes. (Potatoes can be refrigerated for up to 8 hours; return to room temperature before serving.) Transfer potatoes to large bowl. Combine shallot and herbs in small bowl, then sprinkle over potatoes and gently toss to coat using rubber spatula. Serve.



Lionfish invasion in Cyprus? If you can't beat 'em, eat 'em

Cyprus on EU frontline to combat lionfish invasion

LARNACA: "Wanted", says the poster of a lionfish on the quay side in Larnaca marina. Dead, or fried. Or even grilled, filleted or in a risotto. An EU-funded project has placed Cyprus on the frontline to deal with an invasion of marauding lionfish which have munched their way through the eastern Mediterranean in the past five years. So if you can't beat it, eat it, is the aim.

The lionfish's brightly coloured stripes and flowing pectoral fins may look beautiful but its dorsal fins pack a venomous punch, its sting is toxic, it spawns up to 30,000 eggs every four days and feasts on other fish and crustaceans. And it has no known predators. At least, not yet. The EU-sponsored project aims to promote lionfish as a food, among other ways to control its rapidly expanding population, which is affecting other countries in the region as well, such as Lebanon.

"We hope that humans can become the enemy of the lionfish in the Mediterranean," Periklis Kleitou, a researcher at the University of Plymouth, told Reuters during a recent expedition of divers off Larnaca in southern Cyprus. The university is engaged in the research project, known as RELIONMED, along with Cyprus's fisheries department, the University of

Cyprus and two local research centres, the Enalia Physis Environmental Research Centre and the Marine and Environmental Research (MER) Lab.

Scientists say warmer waters as a result of climate change and an enlargement of the Suez Canal have opened the floodgates to species normally native to the Indo-Pacific. "Four years ago you were lucky to see one, and everyone would take a picture, saying 'wow'. Now if you dive there, there are thousands," said Larnaca boat skipper Christos Giannidis. Since early 2019, teams of divers have been conducting regular expeditions in Cypriot waters in a campaign to cull numbers.

Chefs have also been drafted in to give public presentations offering tips on how to gut the fish - scissors and gloves are a must when handling the fins to avoid a nasty prick or rash - and suggest preparation options like deep frying or cooking it on the barbecue. And it's delicious, say its fans. "Lionfish can be prepared in many different ways. On the grill, fried ... whichever way you want," said local chef Stelios Georgiou. "As long as you remove the spine, which contains the venom, you can serve it like a normal fish." — Reuters

Menstrual cups safe, practical and cheap

PARIS: Inexpensive and reusable menstrual cups are safe and as unlikely as disposable pads or tampons to leak, according to the first major scientific review of the devices, published yesterday. Some 70 percent of women who have tried menstrual cups said they would like to continue using them, researchers reported in The Lancet Public Health, a peer-reviewed medical journal.

Sanitary protection remains unavailable and unaffordable to many women around the world, the authors noted. This means monthly bleeding keeps many girls and women out of school or work, and puts them at risk of urinary tract infections if they use inferior products or make-do substitutes. In some cultures, girls or women unable to conceal bleeding may face hostility, even violence. A safe, affordable and long-lasting alternative to pads and tampons, in other words, has the potential to change the lives of millions.

"Despite the fact that 1.9 billion women globally are of

menstruating age—spending on average 65 days a year dealing with menstrual blood flow—few good quality studies exist that compare sanitary products," said Penelope Phillips-Howard, a professor at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine. The new research—a review of 43 earlier studies gathering data on 3,300 women—is the first to evaluate menstrual cups, which remain poorly known.

Made from medical grade silicone, rubber or latex, the cups collect blood rather than absorb it, as pads and tampons do. They are inserted into the vagina and emptied every four to 12 hours. There are two types: a so-called vaginal cup which is generally bell-shaped, and a cervical cup which is placed around the cervix high in the vagina much like a diaphragm for contraception. In four of the studies reviewed, the cups were found to be as effective or better at collecting blood than sanitary pads or tampons. The research showed no increased risk of infection.

There were, however, five reported cases of toxic shock syndrome (TSS), a potentially life-threatening condition caused by bacteria getting into the body via foreign objects. Since the overall number of menstrual cup users is unknown, researchers could not determine how this compared with tampons, known to boost the risk for TSS. — AFP

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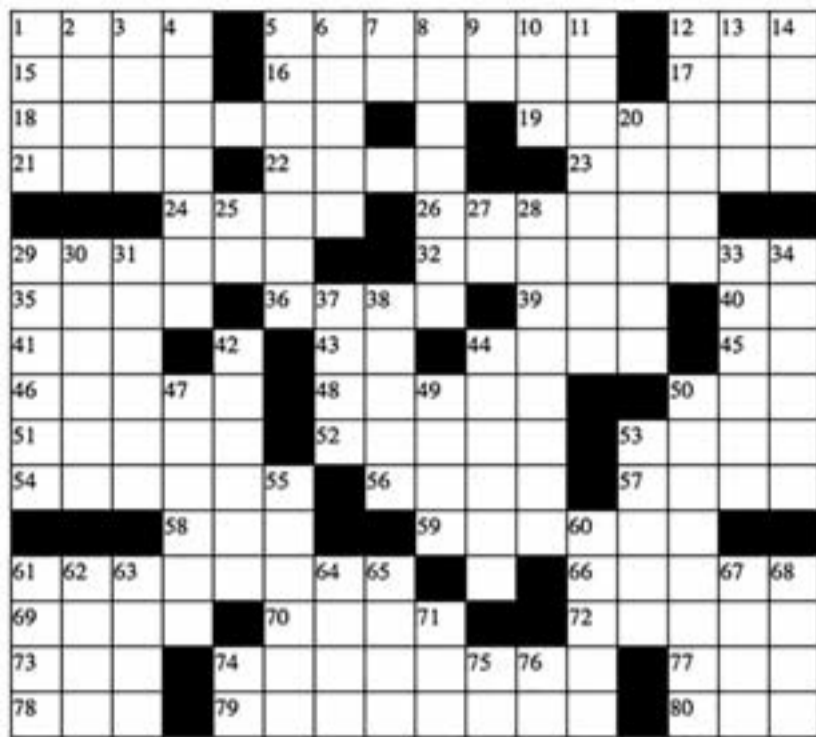
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ACROSS

1. Humble request for help.
5. Of or in or belonging to the cavity of the abdomen.
12. An accountant certified by the state.
15. An association of people to promote the welfare of senior citizens.
16. Small circular or square cases of dough with savory fillings.
17. (informal) 'johnny' was applied as a nickname for Confederate soldiers by the Federal soldiers in the American Civil War.
18. The capital of Kyrgyzstan (known as Frunze 1926-1991).
19. Have an ambitious plan or a lofty goal.
21. A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
22. Being nothing more than specified.
23. Ostentatiously lofty in style.
24. An unstable meson produced as the result of a high-energy particle collision.
26. Small dry indehiscent fruit with the seed distinct from the fruit wall.
29. Give an assignment to (a person) to a post, or assign a task to (a person).
32. A jamb for a door.
35. 100 toea equal 1 kina.
36. A French abbot.
39. A nucleic acid that transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm.
40. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
41. The widely studied plant virus that causes tobacco mosaic.
43. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
45. A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.
46. Any of several tall tropical palms native to southeastern Asia having egg-shaped nuts.
48. Ragout of game in a rich sauce.
51. (astronomy) An indistinct surface feature of Mars once thought to be a system of channels.
52. A criminal who takes property belonging to someone else with the intention of keeping it or selling it.
54. (Islamic) The will of Allah.
56. A dress worn primarily by Hindu women.
57. United States writer (born in Poland) who wrote in Yiddish (1880-1957).
58. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
59. Hidden and difficult to see.
61. (Christianity) Saved from the bondage of sin.
66. A painful and involuntary muscular contraction.
69. A woman hired to suckle a child of someone else.
70. (pathology) An elevation of the skin filled with serous fluid.
72. An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
73. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
77. The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.
78. Chiefly perennial grasses of cool temperate regions.
79. White Southerner supporting Reconstruction policies after the Civil War usually for self-interest.
80. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. A metabolic acid found in yeast and liver cells.
2. The habitation of wild animals.
3. Any of several related languages of the Celts in Ireland and Scotland.
4. Absence of the natural lens of the eye (usually resulting from the removal of cataracts).
5. A city in Lombardy on the Po River.
6. Consisting of or made of wood of the oak tree.
7. A unit of energy equal to the work done by an electron accelerated through a potential difference of 1 volt.
8. Sweetened beverage of lime juice and water.
9. (Greek mythology) A maiden seduced by Zeus.
10. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
11. A sac or cavity containing fluid especially lymph or cerebrospinal fluid.
12. A Ukrainian peninsula between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.
13. A beautiful and graceful girl.
14. In bed.
20. A historical region on northwestern India and northern Pakistan.
25. A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
27. A heavy odorless colorless gas formed during respiration and by the decomposition of organic substances.
28. Grossly offensive to decency or morality.
30. A Chadic language spoken in Chad.
31. A card game in which you play your sevens and other cards in sequence in the same suit as their sevens.
33. Wildly disordered.
34. The process of taking in and expelling air during breathing.
37. Strong woody fibers obtained especially from the phloem of from various plants.
38. (informal usage) A general feeling of boredom and dissatisfaction.
42. Agile long-tailed nocturnal African lemur with dense woolly fur and large eyes and ears.
44. Punish with an arbitrary penalty.
47. Any of several plants of the genus Camassia.
49. The dynasty that ruled much of Manchuria and northeastern China from 947 to 1125.
50. Testacean rhizopods.
53. Minute floating marine tunicate having a transparent body with an opening at each end.
55. An alloy of copper and zinc (and sometimes arsenic) used to imitate gold in cheap jewelry and for gilding.
60. A member of a Turkic people of Uzbekistan and neighboring areas.
62. A platform raised above the surrounding level to give prominence to the person on it.
63. A quantity of no importance.
64. English essayist (1775-1834).
65. A small wooded hollow.
67. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
68. God of death.
71. The cry made by sheep.
74. A bachelor's degree in science.
75. The use of bacteria or viruses of toxins to destroy men and animals or food.
76. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

It may seem you are the center of attention. Today could find you in the limelight. Your superiors at work seem to be paying close attention. Your job has become something you find great pleasure in and you actually enjoy going to work. Your peers seem to find great value in your ability to make practical decisions and admire you for your work ethic. You are able to clearly see what others want and need and seem to be in the right place at the right time to provide this for them. That brings much admiration your way. You may find you are looked at as a role model for many. You seem to have the ability to make clear decisions and will find this to be an extremely productive day.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

If you could choose a super power today it would be the ability to make yourself invisible. Enough is enough. When you are strong and independent with a kind heart, it seems like the weak and needy seem to be drawn to you. There are times when you need to learn to say no. Today is one of those days. You may find hiding in a dark movie theater would be a great escape for you today. Go to the movies, or curl up with a book. Just take some time to relax and rejuvenate.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Hungry for knowledge would be a great way to describe you today. Spending time with family and neighbors is a good way to spend some of your time this evening. A long visit on the porch with a cold beverage and long talks will bring peace your way and satisfy a craving for you. Your feelings and the feelings of those close to you become very important right now. This is a time you may find yourself extremely sensitive. You are very understanding of others. Being more involved with family is very rewarding to you now. This is a peaceful time in your world, Gemini!



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Dream on dreamer. You may find yourself lost in a dreamy mood and your mind may be far away from the day to day realities. This may catch your friends off guard and they may not appreciate this side of you. It seems as if the nature of time is starting to catch your attention now. You realize life is passing by and time is slipping away. It seems as if when you are older time seems to fly by faster with each passing year. You learn to appreciate each day and look at each day as a blessing. You are happy and thankful to be alive and plan on living it to the fullest.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

What may come easy isn't always the right thing. You may find career decisions that point in the direction of true success may go against your sense of values. This is a road to success you just are not willing to take. If making it to the top means traveling this path then you will choose to take a detour. You have a choice to continue to ignore your responsibilities at home and push on towards career success, or focus on your family and do the right thing. Ask yourself who is going to be there in the long run, Leo? Follow your heart.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Make time for a loved one today. This doesn't have to take hours of time or big-time spending. Write a note. Make a phone call. Take a single long-stem flower. Don't scoff at double consequences. You may find your thoughtfulness enriches your life as much as theirs, Virgo. Sometimes the smallest of gestures mean the most to others.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Today may find you wanting to gain control. You may have a desire to control all aspects of your life. You may find yourself in an organizing and restructuring mode. Taking care of everything from your health to your workspace. You may find that you are unable to attempt any other task today until you have everything just as you want it and have things just where you want them to be. This will be a rewarding task as you will be able to be very efficient in the days to come.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may feel as if you know what is about to happen before it does. You seem to be in touch with a highly sensitive side. Call it intuition or psychic ability, the truth is you totally can see the future. You are able to see and sense things others can not. This may cause others to take a step back from you. People seem to be uncomfortable when faced with the unexplainable. This may not be a very practical time for you. You seem to focus heavily on your home and family life now, Scorpio. This may be just where your attention needs to be.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You may be feeling a need for change. A deep desire for emotional security takes hold now and you feel your most content when surrounded by family and those closest to you. Relationships are a priority in your world now. You feel as if things in your life are monotonous and you are ready to spice things up. This may mean a shiny new car purchase, a vacation, or simply surrounding yourself with a new group of friends. Any direction you choose, this will be a time of excitement and give you a fresh start and a more focused outlook. We all need a bit of change from time to time. Keep life interesting and exciting.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You seem to be able to enjoy and value where you are at this point in your life. Great value is also placed on the person you have become. You love you. Your heart is filled with kindness. You may find yourself wanting to do something extra special for someone you love today. Do not be surprised if you receive several compliments on your style or actions throughout this day. It seems you will feel great support from your peers. Your happiness is contagious and others will be drawn towards this. Keep being you, Capricorn. Others appreciate the friend you have become.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You are determined and focused on making good impressions and putting your best foot forward. This is what is extremely important to you now. Your appearance and style have suddenly become important to you. You are successful, and you want to present yourself as such. You desire others take notice of your success and how far you have come in life. You may find pleasure in spending time out and about. Taking in a play or enjoying another form of the arts may be just where your time spent would be most enjoyed.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You are determined and focused on making good impressions and putting your best foot forward. This is what is extremely important to you now. Your appearance and style have suddenly become important to you. You are successful, and you want to present yourself as such. You desire others take notice of your success and how far you have come in life. You may find pleasure in spending time out and about. Taking in a play or enjoying another form of the arts may be just where your time spent would be most enjoyed.

Wordsearch Puzzle

A Christmas Carol

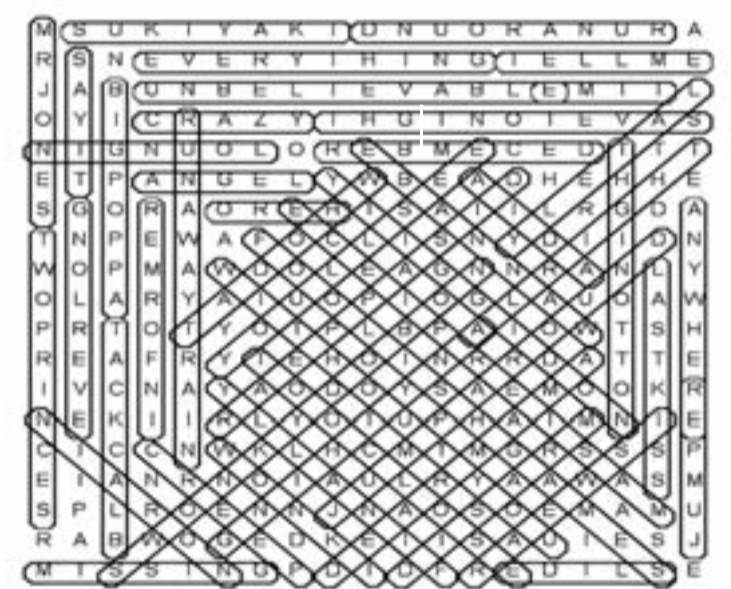
Find and circle all of the "A Christmas Carol" words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.



- | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| ANGRY | CHRISTMAS PAST | HUMBUG | NIGHTCAP |
| APPRENTICE | CHRISTMAS PRESENT | JACOB MARLEY | OFFICE |
| AVARICE | CHRISTMAS YET TO COME | KNOCKER | OLD FEZZIWIG |
| BAH | CLERK | LONDON | PETER |
| BED | COUNTING HOUSE | MARLEY'S GHOST | REDEMPTION |
| BELINDA | CRUTCH | MARTHA | SNOW |
| BELLE | CURTAINS | MERRY CHRISTMAS | SPIRITS |
| BOB CRATCHIT | DRESSING GOWN | MRS CRATCHIT | TINY TIM |
| CAUSTIC | EBENEZER SCROOGE | MRS FEZZIWIG | TURKEY |
| CHAINS | FOG | NEPHEW | WINTER |
| CHARLES DICKENS | GREEDY | | |

Yesterday's Solution

90's Songs 4



- | | | | |
|-----------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| ADIA | DISARM | LATELY | SAY IT |
| ALRIGHT | EVERLONG | LOUNGIN | SLIDE |
| ANGEL | EVERYTHING | MASTERPIECE | SUKIYAKI |
| ANYTHING | FINALLY | MISSING | TELL ME |
| ANYWHERE | FOOLISH GAMES | MR. JONES | TIME |
| BIG POPPA | HERO | NO DIGGITY | TOO CLOSE |
| BLACK CAT | I KNOW | NO RAIN | TWO PRINCES |
| CRAZY | I SWEAR | NOBODY KNOWS | UNBELIEVABLE |
| CREEP | INFOMER | NOT TONIGHT | WANNA BE |
| DEAR MAMA | JUMP AROUND | RUN-AROUND | WHO DAT |
| DECEMBER | JUMPER | RUNAWAY TRAIN | WITHOUT YOU |
| DISAPPEAR | LAST KISS | SAVE TONIGHT | YOU'LL SEE |

The hidden song title is: ANOTHER DAY IN PARADISE

Yesterday's Solution



Daily Sudoku

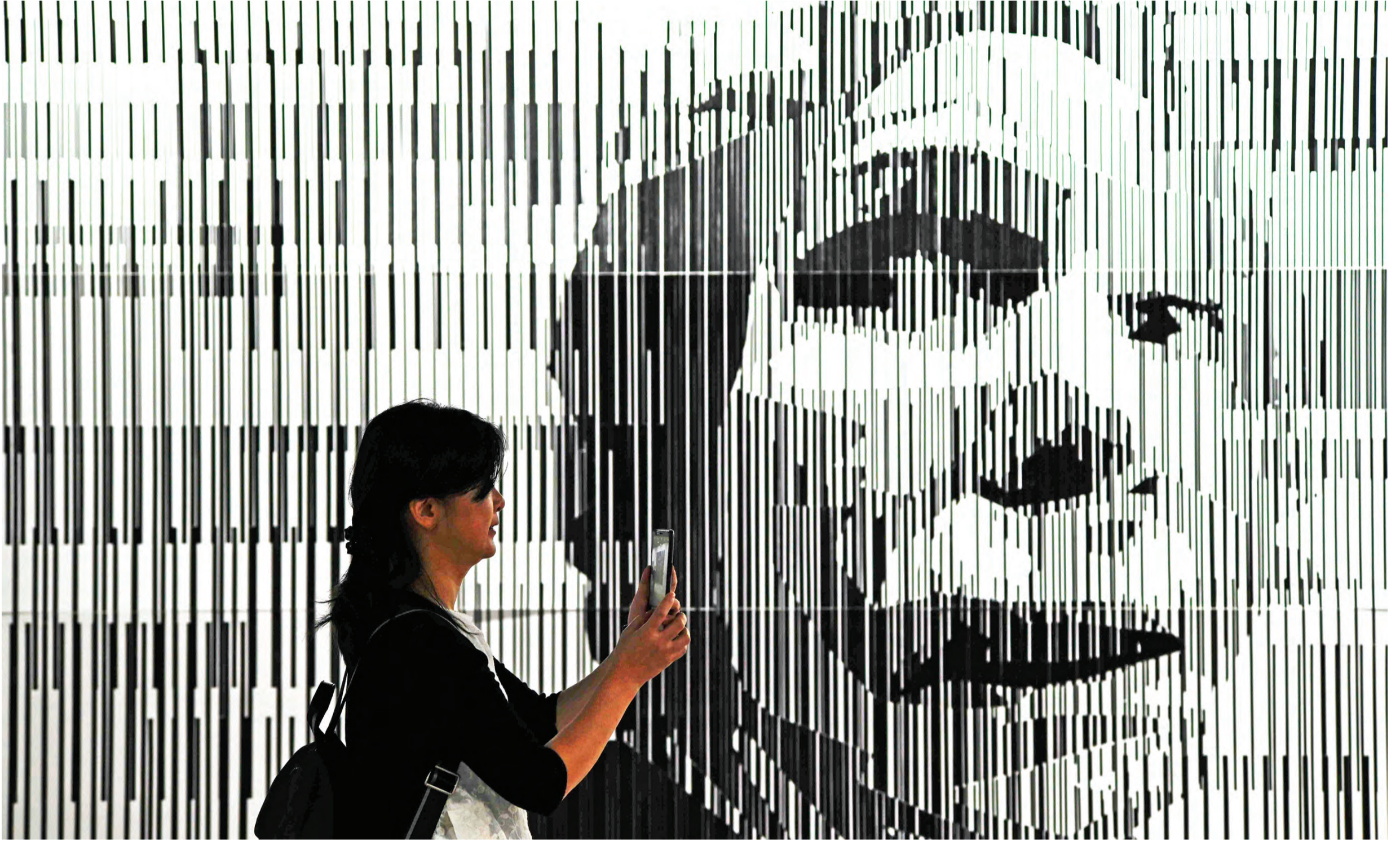


Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

THURSDAY, JULY 18, 2019



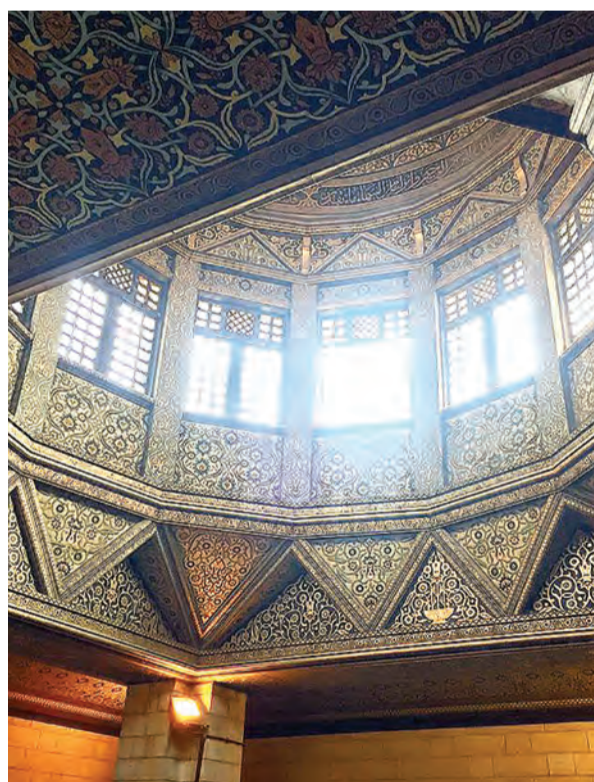
A visitor takes a photo of an art work entitled 'Anxiety' during a 'Tape Art' exhibition by Tape That, an artist collective based in Berlin, in Taipei. — AFP

Egypt's Nilometer: A classical Islamic architectural wonder

The Nilometer, located in the Egyptian capital Cairo, still stands to this day as a classical Islamic architectural wonder. Constructed by Abbasid caliph Al-Mutawakkil in the ninth century A.D., the Nilometer was used to measure water level of the River Nile. Later on, an Ottoman-style dome was erected over the three-level Nilometer in 1925. The Nilometer measures the level of the water using a 10.5-meter pillar placed in the middle of the structure. — KUNA



Dome of the Nilometer from the outside takes the form of a pencil.



Dome of the Nilometer from the inside decorated with different colors.



Roman crown with a base of wood. — KUNA photos



A Marble column for measuring water level.

Fashion for hire: Americans embrace clothing rental services

Remember when you bought an expensive evening gown for an event, only to ever wear it once or twice? Or picked up a trendy T-shirt, only to leave it gathering dust in the closet? Those days are over for more and more American women, who are embracing clothing rental services as a way to freshen up their wardrobes—but the growing sector could threaten the traditional fashion industry. "Rental is the current buzzword in retail," says Kayla Marci, a market analyst at research firm Edited. Just a decade ago, clothing rentals were for special occasions. But the business has since transformed and is raking in \$1 billion in sales worldwide, according to a study published in April by business consulting firm Grand View Research.

Cosmetics executive Jacqueline Jackson had her eureka moment when she realized that a monthly unlimited subscription for Rent The Runway, the leader in the American sector, would cost less than for her to rent one dress she wanted to wear to a wedding. "It was just nice to have the option to have this kind of unlimited closet and be able to wear things that I wouldn't be able to own necessarily because a lot of the items are pretty expensive," said Jackson, a mother of two young children. "I don't have any time to shop."

Like many of its competitors, Rent The Runway (RTR) — which has more than 11,000 monthly subscribers—offers ready-to-wear pieces from luxury labels like Victoria Beckham, Proenza Schouler and Phillip Lim. Each item would cost several hundred dollars to buy. For \$89 a month, a subscriber can get four pieces at a time from the company, now valued at \$1 billion. RTR also offers an unlimited subscription for \$159 a month.

Seattle-based start-up Armoire, which already has several thousand subscribers, offers a plan at \$149 a month. Once a Rent The Runway client has worn an item and wants to swap it for something else, they can send it back via UPS or drop it off at a bricks-and-mortar store. The company handles cleaning. Customers also have the option to buy the item at a reduced price. "When you're buying your own wardrobe, you think 'What are the chances I would have to wear this thing? Am I going to get a lot of use out of it?'" Jackson says.

"So you tend to buy things that are more basic colors, not wanting to spend money on something that might be too trendy that you might

only wear for one or two seasons. Here, you can wear the trendy things and even if you wear them one time, then it doesn't matter." The various clothing rental platforms currently on offer, which only cater to women for the time being, process the data they receive from users about preferences and measurements.

They then use artificial intelligence to propose pieces they believe subscribers would want to wear. "We'll show her items that we know she'll like but we can slowly push her outside her comfort zone and introduce items that she wouldn't normally pick for herself, that she wouldn't normally wear," says Lili Morton, who is in charge of community development at Armoire.

A move away from 'fast fashion'

The other trump card for clothing rental services is its sustainability and rejection of excessive consumption—themes that resonate for their clientele. Swedish furniture giant IKEA is moving into furniture rental, a service already provided in the United States by start-up Fernish. "I think people like the idea of buying less fast fashion, things that you buy and are good enough quality to wear for one season," says Jackson.

"It's nice to have less of that junk in your closet and spend money to wear quality clothes." According to several industry sources, most pieces are used about 15 times before they are taken out of rotation. Armoire has reached a deal with non-profit organization Dress for Success, which offers free professional attire to women in need.

For some labels, rentals are providing a gateway to new customers. But more generally, it is offering competition to traditional ready-to-wear sales. As the sector takes off, several platforms like Haverdash are launching low-cost options. Traditional brands like American Eagle, Ann Taylor and Urban Outfitters are following suit. "These platforms are disrupting the fashion industry and changing the way we shop," says Marci. Since she subscribed to RTR, Jackson says she has bought fewer items and more basics. "Renting is really like sharing. You're not just buying, buying, buying," she adds.—AFP



In this file photo Cosplayers attends Comic Con in San Diego, California. — AFP photos



In this file photo a cosplayer dressed as Pennywise from "It" poses during the Comic Con festival at the Grande Halle de la Villette in Paris.



This file photo shows the hall of the Convention Center during Comic Con in San Diego.

Comic-Con mines past for future hits on 50th edition

A smorgasbord of sequels, prequels and reunions from "Terminator" to "Game of Thrones" awaits thousands of misty-eyed comic book geeks and sci-fi nerds descending on San Diego this week for the world's largest celebration of pop culture fandom. The 50th edition of Comic-Con International will see 135,000 cosplayers, bloggers, movie executives and humble fans pile into a sweaty convention center for glimpses of their heroes, in town to promote the next mega-hit films, TV shows and comic books.

This anniversary edition promises to be more nostalgia-laden than most—among those expected to appear are Arnold Schwarzenegger and Linda Hamilton, who will soon reunite on screen for the first time since 1991's "Terminator 2" for Paramount's killer cyborg sequel "Dark Fate." Also pushing hard on sentimental buttons will be Patrick Stewart, attending a panel for the launch of CBS's new Star Trek series in which he reprises the fan-favorite role of Captain Jean-Luc Picard after almost two decades.

And lackluster reviews be damned: the cast of "Game of Thrones"—or at least a hardy few—will reassemble to dissect HBO's fantasy epic in front of an audience that has had little time to cool down since Mad Queen Daenerys and her dragons brought the franchise crashing to a conclusion. With author George R. R. Martin rumored to be attending, devotees who have kept the faith will be scouring for details of the numerous prequel series believed to be in development.

Netflix

Kicking things off on Wednesday evening is New Line Cinema and Warner Bros.' now-traditional "Scare Diego," which for the second year running will offer fans insights into evil clown slasher "It: Chapter Two," based on the 1986 Stephen King novel. Netflix may be newer to the game, but it too is mining the archives in search of its next big hit. A prequel series to classic 1982 fantasy film "The Dark Crystal" is generating buzz, with its combination of old-fashioned puppetry

and cutting-edge visual effects aiming to cast a spell on old and young alike.

In its search for the next "Game of Thrones" the web streaming giant is set to lift the lid on "The Witcher," starring Superman actor Henry Cavill as the monster hunter from a series of cult 1990s Polish novels which spawned a lucrative video game franchise. Another set of magical books getting the premium TV treatment is Philip Pullman's acclaimed "His Dark Materials" trilogy, which will be previewed by HBO on Thursday. Cast members James McAvoy, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Ruth Wilson will attend.

'Phase Four'

Marvel Studios returns after skipping an edition and is expected to announce which characters from its comic-book back catalog will next be mined for its hyper-successful "cinematic universe." After the recent "Avengers: Endgame" and "Spider-Man: Far From Home," it is now time for "Phase Four" of the juggernaut of interconnected superhero films. Marvel Studios president Kevin Feige is in

town, and hopes are mounting that he and billed "surprise panelists" will unveil identities of the eight untitled Marvel films on parent company Disney's release slate.

A standalone film for Scarlett Johansson's Black Widow and a fourth "Thor" movie are among those widely thought to be in the works. "Avengers: Endgame" directors the Russo brothers will also stop by to discuss the making of a film edging ever-closer to toppling Avatar's global all-time box office record.

The absence of any DC Universe movies from Warner Bros. has been coolly received by superhero fans, however, while film studio giants Sony and Universal are skipping this year entirely. And sure to stir controversy in some of the internet's darker depths is an early glimpse at The CW's new "Batwoman" series, featuring Ruby Rose as an openly lesbian, feminist superheroine. — AFP



A photo taken on March 27, 1989 shows South African singer Johnny Clegg (right) married with Jennifer Bartlett (left) in a traditional Zulu wedding on March 26, 1989 in the Natal province in South Africa. — AFP photos



In this file photo taken on February 3, 1990 French Prime Minister Michel Rocard (right) pays tribute to South African singer Johnny Clegg (center), next to French TV host Michel Drucker (left), during the 5th Victoires de la Musique, the annual French music awards ceremony, at the Zenith concert hall in Paris.

S African anti-apartheid singer Johnny Clegg dies aged 66

Legendary South African singer Johnny Clegg, who blended Zulu rhythms with Western styles and defied apartheid segregation laws, died on Tuesday after a long battle with cancer. "Johnny passed away with his family this afternoon," manager Roddy Quinn said. "We are devastated." Clegg succumbed to pancreatic cancer at the age of 66 at his home in Johannesburg, more than four years after he was diagnosed. "Johnny leaves deep footprints in the hearts of every person that considers himself or herself to be an African," Quinn said. "He showed us what it was to assimilate to and embrace other cultures without losing your identity. In many of us, he awakened awareness." Nicknamed the "White Zulu", Clegg mastered the language, culture and high kicks of Zulu dance, forming multi-racial bands in defiance of the segregationist laws of the apartheid-era government which censored his work. Among his famous tracks was "Asimbonanga", Zulu for "We have not seen him", released in 1987 following the declaration of the first state of emergency by the apartheid government. The song paid tribute to Nelson Mandela—then in jail—and was outlawed because any reference to the anti-apartheid leader was illegal. It became an international anthem for the struggle against apartheid and for modern South Africa.

'Torchbearer' of freedom struggle

Clegg was diagnosed with cancer in 2015 but continued to tour and perform around the world. He performed for the last time in October last year in Mauritius. The South African government and fellow musicians paid tribute to Clegg as a musician and an activist. "A towering giant has fallen with the passing of legendary

Singer-songwriter & Anthropologist Johnny Clegg," Arts and Culture Minister Nathi Mthethwa posted on Twitter.

"Our hearts are sore & as he famously sang in Asimbonanga 'oh the sea is cold & the sky is grey' we contend with the loss of a torchbearer of our struggle for freedom." The South African government account tweeted that Clegg "has left deep footprints in our hearts". Veteran singer and old friend Siphosiphos Mchunu told SABC that "this is probably one of the most sad days for this country to have lost someone like Johnny Clegg."

"Johnny was in the forefront of everything that was going right for this country," he said.



In this file photo Johnny Clegg performs at GrandWest Arena in Cape Town on the first live gig of his final world tour, after which he is expected to retire.

"Johnny could have been one of the most privileged people as most white people were—but he chose to take a different direction and join in highlighting the atrocities of apartheid through his music and joined with many people involved in liberation struggle. "Johnny took it upon himself to sing and write about Nelson Mandela when not many white people would have done that. "His contribution was immense in profiling South Africa as a pariah state. Today we are a different country because of what people like Johnny have done."

Apartheid arrests

The Soweto Gospel Choir said it was "devastated at the passing of Johnny Clegg. An music icon and a true South African. We shall miss him with all our hearts". Clegg was born on in 1953 in Lancashire, Britain and moved to Johannesburg with his mother when he was six years old. His exposure to Zulu migrant workers during adolescence introduced him to their culture and music, and his involvement with black musicians often saw him arrested during apartheid.

At the age of 17, together with Siphosiphos Mchunu, he formed their first band called Juluka. In 1986 at the height of apartheid he partnered with Dudu Zulu to form his second inter-racial band, Savuka. Clegg also recorded several solo albums and enjoyed huge international success selling out concerts wherever he performed. He is survived by his wife of 31 years, Jenny and their two sons Jesse and Jaron. — AFP

Johnny Clegg, the 'White Zulu' who broke apartheid taboos

South African rocker Johnny Clegg, whose best-known songs included one dedicated to the imprisoned Nelson Mandela, was beloved at home and abroad for using music as a unifying force in a nation scarred by apartheid. Nicknamed the "White Zulu", he mastered the language, culture and high kicks of Zulu dance, creating two multi-racial bands in defiance of the segregationist laws of the apartheid-era government, which censored his work.

"We had to find our way around a myriad of laws that prevented us from mixing across racial lines," he told AFP in 2017. With curly hair and an amiable demeanour, Clegg maintained his energy and passion even as pancreatic cancer took hold, embarking on a "Final Journey Tour" of several countries in 2017 after being diagnosed two years earlier. He died of cancer at his home in Johannesburg on Tuesday, aged 66.

In a career that spanned four decades, he sold more than five million albums, earned a slate of international awards and provided a soundtrack to the anti-apartheid struggle and South Africa's transition to multi-racial democracy in 1994.

Dancing with Mandela

His song "Asimbonanga" was dedicated to Mandela and released in 1987, when the future first black president of South Africa was still jailed as a threat to the apartheid state. Meaning "We have not seen him" in Zulu, the haunting hymn was one of the first songs openly to call for the release of Mandela, who spent 27 years locked away, even his photo barred from newspapers. The authorities banned the anthem but it became a national favorite.

In what Clegg said was a highlight of his career, Mandela made a surprise entrance on stage during a performance of the hit in Frankfurt in 1999. "I was in the first verse of the chorus when the audience erupted and I thought 'wow! they know my song', but it was Mandela, walking behind me on stage," he told journalists in 2017.

Zulu migrant workers

Clegg was born in 1953 in Bacup, near Manchester in England, and moved with his mother to Zimbabwe as a boy and then to South Africa. In his early teens in Johannesburg, he came across Zulu

migrant workers playing street guitar and started taking lessons. It was an introduction into Zulu language, music and dance that set the course for his life.

Clegg continued to learn from these men who had left their homes to find work in the city but kept their traditions alive, visiting their barracks-like hostels and taking part in their dancing competitions. "I felt like an immigrant," he told the New York Times in 1990. "The migrant workers were themselves immigrants, so we had a similar feeling of marginality in the city... That was emotionally something I could relate to." He took his passion to Wits University where he studied anthropology with a focus on Zulu music and dance, staying on as a lecturer.

Juluka

Clegg's reputation as a "Zulu guitarist" led to a meeting with self-taught street musician Siphosiphos Mchunu, another migrant worker, and the pair went on to found the band Juluka, which means "sweat" in Zulu. Challenging apartheid laws that prohibited mixed-race performances in public venues, they played at universities, church halls and migrant hostels. They were subject to harassment from the authorities and sometimes arrest.

In 1979 they released their first album, "Universal Men," when Clegg turned professional. Juluka's music received little airplay in South Africa but reached large international audiences through 1982-1983 tours of Europe and North America. The song "Scatterlings of Africa" topped the charts in England and France, where Clegg was particularly celebrated.

Savuka

The group disbanded when Mchunu returned to his family farm in 1985 and Clegg formed Savuka, which means "we have risen". The band took up the successful path laid by Juluka, including "Asimbonanga" on the 1987 album "Third World Child", but broke up after group member Dudu Zulu was shot dead in 1992.

The fall of apartheid in 1994 was like a rebirth for South Africans, Clegg said in a 2002 interview, and brought new challenges. "We are dealing with and trying to find workable solutions to nation-building, giving a voice to the poor and uneducated, with AIDS, with unemployment," he said.

Clegg pursued a solo career that included performances to benefit AIDS awareness. Ahead of his 2017 farewell tour, he told AFP it was a "kind of conclusion" to a journey that started when he was aged 14. "It has been a rewarding career in so many aspects... to be able to unite people through song, especially at a time where it seemed impossible," he said. He has two sons with his wife, Jennifer, one of whom is popular rock musician Jesse Clegg. — AFP

Lifestyle | Features



This photo shows students practicing Krabi Krabong, a Thai martial art, at the Thonburee Woratapeepalarak school in Thonburi, on the outskirts of Bangkok. — AFP photos



Students from the Thonburee Woratapeepalarak school practicing for a competition featuring Krabi Krabong, a Thai martial art, in Bangkok.



Students practicing Krabi Krabong, a Thai martial art, at the Thonburee Woratapeepalarak school in Thonburi, on the outskirts of Bangkok.



Students practising Krabi Krabong, a Thai martial art, at the Thonburee Woratapeepalarak school in Thonburi.



Students practicing Krabi Krabong, a Thai martial art.

WITH SWORDS AND STUNTS, THAI YOUTH EMBRACE ANCIENT MARTIAL ART

Armed with a wooden knife and shield, a teenage girl fends off four sword-wielding boys with high-flying kicks in an action-packed homage to Thailand's neglected swordfighting tradition. The fighters are part of a growing group of students at a school on Bangkok's outskirts mastering "Krabi Krabong," a martial art used in centuries-old warfare between rival kingdoms. "It is a fighting technique used in a bygone era," 16-year-old Nantakarn Duangthongyu told AFP after her "4 vs 1" drill at Thonburee Woratapeepalarak School.

"We add new tricks and routines to make it more exciting." Soldiers used to deploy the elegant Krabi Krabong, meaning "sword staff", in hand-to-hand frontline combat or from the back of war elephants. But as guns replaced swords, Krabi Krabong was reduced to a remnant of Thailand's medieval past. Experts preserved the deadly skill by turning it into an art form and practitioners now duel with mock weapons in contests or for entertainment. But it has failed to catch fire unlike Thailand's better known martial art of Muay Thai kickboxing despite campaigns to teach it in public schools.

The lack of experienced trainers and the complexity of managing an array of weaponry while engaging in hand-to-hand sparring makes it "a difficult art form", school coach Phatcharaphon Banditketmala told AFP. "But it offers the fighters... a more 'ultimate' fighting (experience) than Muay Thai," he said. In order to spice things up for a younger audience, teachers and students at the Thonburi school have added more moves and gymnast spins, giving fighters in action the appearance of blockbuster stunt doubles. "It's a very cool sport that teaches you about focus and partnership," team captain Nattapong Pulluk told AFP. While small the club has gone on to win prizes in martial arts contests in Thailand and abroad.



It has also cultivated a troop of female fighters who account for nearly half of the 22-strong team. "Some girls may love cosmetics but I like challenging activities. And I get to exercise," Nantakarn, who has trained for five years in the sport, told AFP. Others say it has armed them with self-defense skills in a country that has yet to have a #MeToo-style public reckoning with sexual assault and harassment. "If some psychopath tries to attack me or abuse me, I can grab a stick and fight them," said 14-year-old Aiyakarn Lueakha. — AFP

Students from the Thonburee Woratapeepalarak school competing in a Krabi Krabong, or Thai ancient martial arts.



Students from the Thonburee Woratapeepalarak school competing in a Krabi Krabong, or Thai ancient martial arts, competition in Bangkok.

Apollo moon rocks shed new light on Earth's volcanoes

Fifty years after humans first set foot on the moon, scientists believe rock samples collected by Apollo astronauts could help predict volcanic eruptions on Earth more accurately. The basaltic fragments, similar to most of the Earth's volcanic rock, are the remains of the moon's volcanic past, with studies showing evidence of eruptions up until 1.5 billion to 2 billion years ago. By examining samples from the moon, as well as Mars and the asteroid Vesta, scientists are comparing how rocks are formed under different gravitational conditions; specifically, how gravity affected the magma within rocky bodies billions of years ago.

"At the moment we are facing a disconnect in volcanology where we can monitor what's happening in a volcano in the present but it's very difficult to see the future because we have no reference to the past," Matt Pankhurst of the Canarian Volcanological Institute (INVOLCAN) in Tenerife, leader of the study team, told

Reuters. "We're looking at moon rocks because they have something very special in that they were formed in a lower gravity environment and that changes how the crystals and the melt behave with one another as they're forming. So studies like this give us a baseline to understand processes that happen at terrestrial gravity on earth," he said.

For the study, NASA has loaned 18 lunar samples that are normally kept under lock and key at Johnson Space Center (JSC) in Houston, Texas. Between 1969 and 1972 over 2,000 separate samples were collected by the six Apollo missions to land on the moon; amounting to 382 kilograms (842 pounds) of rocks, pebbles and dust from the lunar surface. Ryan Zeigler, NASA's Apollo sample curator, said the samples used in the study are from the Apollo 12 and 15 missions, some of which came from a wide area of the lunar surface.

"Apollo 15 was the first mission where they had the

rover (space exploration vehicle) so they were able to traverse a larger area. So they were able to visit a basaltic feature called a rille: basically an old collapsed lava tube. And so this is from a volcanic area, not unlike Hawaii," Zeigler, holding a fragment of moon rock encased in resin, told Reuters at the Diamond Light Source institute in Britain, where the research is being carried out. Scientists in Tenerife, the United States and Britain are conducting the study.

Diamond Light Source, near Oxford, is Britain's national synchrotron science facility that produces intense beams of light. Here electrons are accelerated to near light speeds until they emit light 10 billion times brighter than the sun, then directed into laboratories in 'beamlines' which allow scientists to study minute specimens using x-ray beams in extreme detail without damaging them. Pankhurst said it allows them to study "the individual histories of individual crystals" within the rocks.

"We're looking inside the sample and looking at in ways that we've never been able to see before," he said, while carefully placing a sample into the machine. "If you want to understand how the volcanoes on Earth are going to erupt and in what timescale they're going to erupt on, studying rocks from other planets will help you actually learn about that more," said Zeigler.

The study, funded by the UK government and research charity the Wellcome Trust, could also aid our understanding of lunar and planetary formation. "Understanding how volcanism works on other planets lets us understand how the whole solar system formed. So if we want to know how we went from a giant ball of dust to nine planets orbiting around the sun... this is how we're going to do it; studies like this, on rocks like this," Zeigler said.—AFP



This picture shows the hijab-wearing Malaysian wrestler known as Nor "Phoenix" Diana holding the Wrestlecon championship belt after winning a match against male opponents organized by Malaysia Pro Wrestling in Kuala Lumpur. — AFP photos



The hijab-wearing Malaysian wrestler known as Nor "Phoenix" Diana walking towards the ring for a match.

MALAYSIA'S PHOENIX: HIJAB-WEARING WRESTLER BREAKING BARRIERS

A hijab-wearing, diminutive Malaysian wrestler known as "Phoenix" cuts an unusual figure in the ring, a female Muslim fighter taking on hulking opponents in a male-dominated world. Dressed in flame-patterned trousers, a black and orange hijab and top, Nor Diana uses sophisticated moves to throw and pin down her larger rivals in front of hundreds of cheering spectators. Standing just 155 centimeters (five foot, one inch) tall and weighing 43 kilograms (six stone, 10 pounds), her speed and agility make her a match for almost any opponent.



Nor "Phoenix" Diana applying makeup backstage before a match.

Nor Diana, a pseudonym as she prefers not to reveal her true identity, seems an unlikely wrestler-outside the ring, she is shy and soft-spoken, and her day job is working in a hospital. But when she puts on her wrestling gear, she transforms into the fearsome Phoenix. "As Phoenix, I'm a totally different person. She may be small, but she can do things that people can't imagine," Nor Diana told AFP at a wrestling gym in Puchong, outside Kuala Lumpur. "When she's in the ring, she's fast and always wants to win," she explained.

Growing popularity

Nor Diana first started training as a wrestler in late 2015, following her teenage dream of becoming a fighter, and made her debut a few months later. More than 60 percent of Malaysia's 32 million people are ethnic Malay Muslims and, while the form of Islam followed is generally moderate and tolerant, society can still be conservative. Many Muslim women in the country wear the traditional headscarf and loose-fitting clothing in line with Islamic requirements for females to dress modestly.

"In the beginning it was always hard for me, because a lot of people said I can't wrestle because I'm a Muslim and I wear the hijab," she said. But she has soldiered on, with her family's full support, and enjoyed her greatest success

so far in early July, defeating four men to be crowned Malaysian wrestling champion.

Initially she competed wearing a mask, to reduce the chances people would recognize her. But after losing a match last year she removed it and has been competing without one ever since. She remembered being fearful about the reaction-but her popularity has only increased since, with thousands now following her on social media, helping to boost wrestling's profile in Malaysia.



The hijab-wearing Malaysian wrestler known as Nor "Phoenix" Diana (center) wrestling with a male opponent.



Nor "Phoenix" Diana wiping tears after winning the Wrestlecon championship belt in a match against male opponents.

And far from being criticized by conservatives for throwing herself into wrestling, the 19-year-old has become a hit on social media and spurred the interest of other headscarf-wearing women. "Even though I am Muslim, and I wear the hijab, nothing can stop me from doing what I love," she said in the ring after winning a recent fight. She takes part in local outfit Malaysia Pro Wrestling (MyPW), which has similarities with hugely popular World Wrestling Entertainment from the United States. Like WWE, the Malaysian version is as much theatre as sport, as participants compete against one another with matches ending in a pre-determined outcome.



Nor "Phoenix" Diana (left) wrestling with a male opponent.



The hijab-wearing Malaysian wrestler known as Nor "Phoenix" Diana (bottom) reacting during a match against male opponents.



Nor "Phoenix" Diana (center) wrestling with a male opponent.



Nor "Phoenix" Diana (second left) training with male wrestlers.



Nor "Phoenix" Diana (left) holding the Wrestlecon championship belt after winning a match against male opponents.

Classifieds

Thursday, July 18, 2019

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot with moderate to fresh north westerly wind, with speed of 20 - 55 km/h causing rising dust especially over open areas and some scattered clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Hot to relatively hot with light to moderate freshening at times over coastal areas north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h.

WEATHER WATCH			Fresh wind	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 17/07/2019 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	45 °C	34 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	46 °C	34 °C		
ABDALY	46 °C	30 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	47 °C	32 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	44 °C	30 °C		
SALMIYAH	41 °C	33 °C		
AHMADI	44 °C	35 °C		
NUWAISIB	47 °C	31 °C		
WAFRA	46 °C	31 °C		
SALMY	45 °C	27 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	MAX. Temp.	MIN. Temp.	Wind Direction	Wind Speed
Thursday	07/18	Very hot and rising dust	47 °C	33 °C	NW	25 - 60 km/h
Friday	07/19	Hot and rising dust	46 °C	35 °C	NW	30 - 65 km/h
Saturday	07/20	Very hot with a chance for rising dust over open areas	48 °C	35 °C	NW	20 - 45 km/h
Sunday	07/21	Very hot	50 °C	36 °C	NW-VRB	10 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:27
Sunrise	05:00
Zuhr	11:54
Asr	15:29
Sunset	18:49
Isha	20:18

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	47 °C
MIN. Temp.	34 °C
MAX. RH	21 %
MIN. RH	06 %
MAX. Wind	N 64 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

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
Khaldiya	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

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Alfeeya currently holder of Indian Passport No. Z1852112, issued at Kuwait on 04-August-2010, permanent resident of Mohammedi Pura Timba, Sagwara, District Durgapur (Pin: 314025) Rajasthan, India and presently residing at Al-Zahra, Block 8, Street 803, House 201, Kuwait, do hereby permanently change my name from Alfeeya to ALFEEYA HASHIMI HUSSAIN (New Name), with immediate effect.

I, Hashimi M. Hussain father of Zaina Manager who is holder of Indian Passport No. P9484557, issued at Kuwait on 02-February-2017, permanent resident of Mohammedi Pura Timba, Sagwara, District Durgapur (Pin: 314025) Rajasthan, India and presently residing at Al-Zahra, Block 8, Street 803, House 201, Kuwait, do hereby permanently change my daughter's name from Zaina Manager to ZAINA HASHIMI HUSSAIN (New Name), with immediate effect. (C 5559) 18-7-2019

I, Dudekula Masthan Basha, holder of Indian passport No. L7719785 and Civil ID No. 291031002941. Father Name: Dudekula Syed Basha Mother Name: Dudekula Sarthaj Bagum, have changed our names from Dudekula Masthan Basha Father Name: Dudekula Syed Basha, Mother Name: Dudekula Sarthaj Bagum, to Shaik Masthan Basha, Father Name: Shaik Syed Basha, Mother Name: Shaik Sarthaj Bagum here in after in all our dealings and documents, we will be known by

name of Shaik Masthan Basha Father Name: Shaik Syed Basha, Mother Name: Shaik Sarthaj Bagum. (C 5558)

I, ABBAS holder of INDIAN PASSPORT NO. Z2809798 hereby declare that I have changed my name from ABBAS to ABBAS SHARAF ALI PAINTER. I shall be known by name ABBAS SHARAF ALI PAINTER in future. (5662) 16-7-2019

I, Dilip Kumar S/o Jalim Prasad, holder of Indian Passport No. K7041953 issued in India has changed the given name in Passport from Dilip Kumar to Dileep Kumar resident of Newal Village, Bangarmau Post, Unnao Dist. (U.P) India. (C 5557)

FRANCINA DIAS - Old Name, FRANSQUINHA DIAS - New Name, change into my passport of my wife name P.P No. L9665868 Manuel Dias. (5661) 15-7-2019

EMERGENCY



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Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION



Arrival Flights on Thursday 18/7/2019				Departure Flights on Thursday 18/7/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
FEG	241	Alexandria	00:05	JZR	213	Jeddah	12:05
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	QTR	1075	Doha	12:10
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	JZR	611	Tbilisi	12:20
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	IAW	158	Al Najaf	13:00
KAC	102	London	00:50	AHY	120	Baku	13:05
KAC	504	Beirut	01:00	JZR	123	Dubai	13:10
RJA	642	Amman	01:20	JZR	115	Doha	13:20
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	13:25
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:50	MSR	611	Cairo	13:45
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	THY	767	Istanbul	14:00
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
PGT	828	Istanbul	02:00	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	FBS	119	Sarajevo	14:45
KAC	156	Istanbul	02:35	IRA	666	Esfahan	14:55
JZR	734	Cairo	02:35	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
JZR	722	Alexandria	02:40	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
JZR	254	Amman	02:40	JZR	103	Bahrain	15:05
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:50	UAE	878	Dubai	15:30
PGT	860	Istanbul	02:50	QTR	1079	Doha	15:30
THY	768	Istanbul	02:55	FDB	80666	Dubai	15:40
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	JZR	125	Dubai	15:50
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
JZR	262	Beirut	03:10	KAC	563	Amman	16:00
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC	775	Riyadh	16:05
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:10
JZR	406	Kochi	03:30	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:00	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
KAC	382	Delhi	04:05	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:20
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	KAC	619	Doha	16:25
MSR	0516	Cairo	04:25	SVA	501	Jeddah	16:50
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	FEG	242	Alexandria	16:55
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:50	KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
THY	1414	Trabzon	05:05	FDB	052	Dubai	17:10
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
IGA	170	Bahrain	05:05	KAC	151	Istanbul	17:35
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	KAC	343	Chennai	17:50
KAC	552	Cairo	05:50	KAC	381	Delhi	17:55
KAC	548	Alexandria	05:55	SAW	706	Damascus	18:00
KAC	362	Colombo	06:05	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
BAW	157	London	06:10	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:15
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:25	JZR	127	Dubai	18:20
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:25
KAC	106	London	06:40	JZR	733	Cairo	18:35
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50	JZR	261	Beirut	19:10
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:50	JZR	253	Amman	19:10
QTR	8511	Doha	06:55	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
JZR	408	Ahmedabad	07:05	KAC	691	Muscat	19:35
JZR	112	Doha	07:05	FDB	064	Dubai	19:45
IGO	1755	CNN	07:10	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
IRA	601	Tehran	07:10	SAW	704	Damascus	19:55
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:50	IRA	600	Tehran	20:00
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
KAC	332	Kochi	08:05	RJA	641	Amman	20:05
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	KAC	357	Kochi	20:05
KAC	384	Delhi	08:10	NIA	162	Cairo	20:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:30
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
OMA	641	Muscat	09:00	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50
GFA	209	Bahrain	09:05	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:50
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	DLH	648	Dammam	20:55
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	KAC	333	Trivandrum	21:05
IRA	675	Lar	09:55	RBG	214	Sohag	21:10
JZR	702D	Asyut	09:55	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:25
IAW	157A	Al Najaf	10:00	KAC	545	Cairo	21:30
JZR	714	Sohag	10:00	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	IGA	171	Bahrain	21:50
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	203	Lahore	22:00
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:10
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:15
OMS	223	Muscat	11:00	JZR	1737	Cairo	22:20
JZR	1736	Cairo	11:05	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
JZR	122	Dubai	11:45	THY	1401	Doha	22:25
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
AHY	119	Baku	12:05	KAC	383	Delhi	22:35
JZR	416	Delhi	12:10	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
JZR	252	Amman	12:20	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:55
JZR	746	Sharm el-Sheikh	12:25	KAC	551	Cairo	23:00
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
THY	766	Istanbul	12:30	RBG	556	Alexandria	23:10
				QTR	1083	Doha	23:20

US House votes to condemn Trump's 'racist comments'

WASHINGTON: The US House of Representatives formally condemned Donald Trump on Tuesday for xenophobic attacks on four minority Democratic lawmakers and hostile language targeting immigrants, as the president denied accusations of racism. Top Republican leaders rallied around Trump, but four members of the president's party voted with the 235 Democrats to condemn him for "racist comments that have legitimized and increased fear and hatred of new Americans and people of color."

One independent lawmaker also supported the measure, which takes aim at Trump's weekend tweets telling a group of progressive Democratic congresswomen of color to "go back" to other countries. The resolution also takes the president to task for "referring to immigrants and asylum seekers as 'invaders'." Trump has a long history of pandering to white suspicions about other ethnic groups, and the resolution criticizes him for "saying that Members of Congress who are immigrants (or those of our colleagues who are wrongly assumed to be immigrants) do not belong in Congress or in the United States of America."

Democrats hold a majority in the 435-member House but are outnumbered by Republicans in the Senate, where the resolution is unlikely to be considered. The four congresswomen - all but one of whom were born in the US - are of Hispanic, Arab, Somali and African-American descent. Trump has stuck by the provocative comments. "Our Country is Free, Beautiful and Very Successful. If you hate our Country, or if you are not happy here, you can leave!" the president tweeted Tuesday.

Democratic leaders denounced Trump's remarks, and rallied around the lawmakers -

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Rashida Tlaib, Ilhan Omar and Ayanna Pressley. Omar is the only one born outside the United States. Slamming the "so-called vote" as a "Democrat con game", Trump urged Republicans not to "show 'weakness' and fall into their trap." "Those Tweets were NOT Racist. I don't have a Racist bone in my body!" Trump said.

"This should be a vote on the filthy language, statements and lies told by the Democrat Congresswomen, who I truly believe, based on their actions, hate our Country," he wrote. "Nancy Pelosi tried to push them away, but now they are forever wedded to the Democrat Party," Trump added, in a jab at the House speaker who has had a tenuous relationship with the four left-leaning first-term congresswomen.

Speaking on the House floor prior to the vote, Pelosi said: "Every single member of this institution, Democratic and Republican, should join us in condemning the president's racist tweets. To do anything less would be a shocking rejection of our values and a shameful abdication of our oath of office to protect the American people." "I know racism when I see it. I know racism when I feel it. And at the highest level of government, there's no room for racism," Representative John Lewis, an American civil rights icon, said in remarks on the House floor.

Trump's repeated attacks appear to be aimed at galvanizing his mostly white electoral base ahead of the 2020 presidential vote. They would seem to have borne fruit, with his approval rating among Republicans rising five percentage points to 72 percent, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll conducted on Monday and Tuesday. His overall rating with the public at large remained unchanged from last week at 41 percent. "See you in 2020!" said Trump, who before



WASHINGTON: US representative Ilhan Omar walks down the steps of the Capitol on Tuesday after the House of Representatives passed a resolution condemning US President Donald Trump for his "racist comments" about four Democratic congresswomen the day before. — AFP

becoming president pushed the racist "birther" conspiracy theory that Barack Obama was not born in the United States.

Ocasio-Cortez dismissed Trump's denial that he is a racist. "You're right, Mr President - you don't have a racist bone in your body," she tweeted. "You have a racist mind in your head, and a racist heart in your chest." She also took aim at Republican

lawmakers who voted against the resolution, telling CBS News that "they could not bring themselves to have the basic human decency to vote against the statement that the president made."

Trump meanwhile took to Twitter on Tuesday night to hail "how unified the Republican Party was on today's vote". While some Republican members of

Congress have condemned Trump's remarks, House Republican leaders closed ranks behind the president. "This is all about politics," said House Republican minority leader Representative Kevin McCarthy of California. Senator Mitch McConnell, the leader of the Republican majority in the Senate, said "the president is not a racist". — AFP

India aims to expel all illegal migrants

NEW DELHI: India will identify and deport illegal immigrants from across the country, the interior minister said yesterday, stepping up a campaign that critics say could stoke religious tension and further alienate minority Muslims. An exercise to identify alien immigrants from Muslim-majority Bangladesh has been going on in the northeastern state of Assam for years, but Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist-led government has taken it up in earnest. The campaign was a key issue in this year's general election, won by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu-nationalist party.

Home Minister Amit Shah told parliament the government would not limit its efforts to Assam, but would come down hard on illegal immigrants anywhere. "Illegal immigrants living on every inch of this country will be deported according to the law," Shah told the upper house of parliament. Shah, seen as a Hindu nationalist hardliner and a possible future replacement for Modi in the top job, called illegal migrants "termites" eating into Assam's resources during the election campaign.

Critics accuse Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of a deep-seated bias against minority Muslims and say the campaign against illegal migrants is aimed at Muslims, and threatens to further marginalize the community. The BJP denies the accusation and says it is opposed to the appeasement of any group. While reinforcing measures against migrants slipping into the country, the government is trying to bring in a law that would simplify the process of getting Indian citizenship for immigrants from religious minorities persecuted in neighboring Muslim countries, including Pakistan.

People in Assam are scrambling to prove their citizenship as part of an exercise to prepare a Supreme Court-ordered registry of citizens in the state. The list is due to be released on July 31. A draft of the list released in July last year identified four million of the state's



CHIRANG, India: Madhubala Mandal, 59, one of many to fall foul of a citizenship process in Assam, poses for a picture with relatives at her house in Bishnupur village. — AFP

roughly 31 million people as illegal residents, including many Hindus. But rights groups have warned that many residents, largely poor Muslims, are at risk of becoming stateless under the process. Other states in the northeast have launched similar exercises to identify people without Indian citizenship. Mizoram state passed legislation in March to create separate registers for "residents" and "non-residents", and the neighboring state of Nagaland is working on a similar register. — Reuters

Sudan junta, protesters ink...

Continued from Page 1

the Nile river, an AFP correspondent reported. As the generals stepped out of the hall after signing the deal, a small crowd - including women waving the national flag - chanted "civilian rule, civilian rule".

Scores of university students in Khartoum celebrated the deal. "As citizens we are satisfied with this agreement, but we also want to avenge the deaths of our martyrs," said student Iman Tayfor, as behind her others flashed victory signs and chanted "revolution". "We will not be silent until the government is fully civilian," said another student Ahmed Abdelhalib. The landmark power sharing deal, which was agreed in principle on July 5, has been brokered by African Union and Ethiopian mediators after weeks of stop-start negotiations between the protest umbrella group and ruling generals.

The agreement was described as "a crucial step towards a comprehensive reconciliation" by African Union mediator Mohamed El Hacem Lebat. The US embassy in Khartoum congratulated "the Sudanese people" and urged both sides to continue their talks. Tibor Nagy, the US assistant secretary of state for Africa, tweeted: "We look forward to welcoming new civilian leaders and working with the new institutions to address the pressing challenges facing Sudan."

The accord stipulates that a new transitional ruling body be established, comprised of six civilians and five military representatives. The civilian representation will

include five from the Alliance for Freedom and Change, according to the declaration. A general will head the ruling body during the first 21 months of a transition, followed by a civilian for the remaining 18 months, according to the framework agreement. The governing council is to oversee the formation of a transitional civilian administration that will operate for just over three years, after which elections would be held.

Amin said yesterday that wider power sharing details would be fleshed out in a "constitutional document" and that talks would resume Friday. These talks are expected to address whether to grant "absolute immunity" to generals for violence against protesters. Prior to entering the latest talks on Tuesday evening, protest leader Ahmed Al-Rabie told AFP the movement "totally reject" offering immunity. But military council spokesman General Shamseddine Kabbashi said yesterday there was "no dispute" over the issue.

Other areas still to be ironed out include the creation of a transitional parliament and a potential RSF withdrawal from Khartoum - the latter an increasingly vocal demand of citizens on the streets. Tensions climaxed on June 3 when armed men in military fatigues stormed a longstanding protest camp in Khartoum, shooting and beating crowds of demonstrators in a predawn raid. Dozens were killed and hundreds wounded, triggering international outrage - and allegations that the RSF was behind the killings - although the generals insisted they did not order the crackdown.

The RSF has faced further fury after the protest movement accused its members of being responsible for the deaths of six civilians since Saturday, including one allegedly shot dead and another who was reportedly tortured. Dagalo has insisted that accusations against his paramilitary force represent an attempt to distort its image. — AFP

Ships deploying unarmed guards in Gulf waters

LONDON: Shipping companies are hiring unarmed security guards for voyages through the Middle East Gulf as an extra safeguard after a wave of attacks in the region, security companies involved said. Relations between Iran and the West are increasingly strained after Britain seized an Iranian tanker in Gibraltar this month. Britain also said last week that one of its warships had to fend off Iranian vessels seeking to block a UK-owned tanker from passing through the Strait of Hormuz.

As the risk of escalation grows, shipping associations are urging merchant shipping companies to avoid using private armed security personnel in critical areas including the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of global oil supply passes.

Some shipping companies are turning to experienced security firms to help with a range of issues, from advising ship captains to closely monitoring a vessel above the waterline where explosives such as limpet mines may be placed.

British maritime security company Ambrey typically has 600 guards on ships sailing through the Red Sea

and Indian Ocean, who are primarily armed, the firm's operations director Gavin Lock said. In the past three weeks, however, an additional 80 to 120 unarmed advisers have been deployed on ships transiting through the Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. "It's an assurance for the master as not all of the crews are tested as our MSOs (maritime security operators) have been in real-time operational situations," Lock said. "We have certainly seen Middle East-flagged ships come to us to provide teams of advisers," he said, declining to provide further details.

Gerry Northwood, chairman of security company MAST, said his firm was also providing unarmed teams going into the Gulf. "It's important that vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz identify potential Iranian craft early and report sightings to the authorities and make it clear to approaching craft that they have seen them," Northwood said.

The most recent incidents follow a spate of attacks on tankers since May around the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman, which the United States has blamed on Iran. Tehran denies involvement. Private security companies providing armed teams operate in the region although they are licensed only for counter-piracy operations. Unarmed specialists do not face the same restrictions. Jim Hilton, managing director with maritime security company PVI, said while a ship's crew were able to carry out functions including increased watches and regular walk-rounds of the vessel, external support could provide "psychological comfort". — Reuters

Turkish diplomat among two killed...

Continued from Page 1

involved in yesterday's shooting. According to Turkish state media, the attacker was dressed in plain clothes and carried two guns when he stormed the restaurant in Ainkawa, a bustling northern district of Arbil. Witnesses in the city said checkpoints had been quickly set up inside and around the neighborhood.

Drug kingpin El Chapo sentenced...

Continued from Page 1

experienced... a lack of respect for my human dignity". When entering and before leaving the room, he touched his heart and blew a kiss to his wife Emma Coronel, who wore a black and white suit and potentially saw her husband for the last time. Complaining bitterly that he was unable to hug his twin daughters, who did not attend the hearing, Guzman said "the United States is no better than any other corrupt country that you do not respect".

Guzman - whose moniker "El Chapo" translates to "Shorty" - is considered to be the most influential drug lord since Colombia's Pablo Escobar, who was killed in a police shootout in 1993. During the three-month trial in New York, jurors heard evidence from 56 government witnesses, who described the cartel boss beating, shooting and even burying alive those who got in his way, including informants and rival gang members. Prosecutors won their request to tack on a symbolic extra 30 years in prison for the use of firearms in his business, portraying Guzman as "ruthless and bloodthirsty".

Cogan said he imposed the additional sentence

The US embassy slammed the attack as "heinous" and offered its condolences to the Turkish mission, calling for "the defense and safety of foreign diplomats and diplomatic missions in Iraq". Several rocket attacks have targeted diplomatic missions in Iraq in recent months, including near the US and UK embassies in Baghdad's "Green Zone". The US in May ordered all non-essential personnel of its Baghdad embassy and Arbil consulate to leave the country. And in June, protesters gathered outside the Bahraini embassy in Baghdad. Authorities in Iraq, which is witnessing a period of relative calm since declaring victory against the Islamic State group in 2017, have pledged to protect embassies. — AFP

because the "overwhelming evil is so severe". A Colombian woman who prosecutors say survived a hit ordered by the kingpin tearfully read a statement in court Wednesday, saying Guzman had caused her psychological damage. "I paid a high price - I lost my family, my friends, I became a shadow without a name."

Guzman launched his career working in the cannabis fields of his home state of Sinaloa. He will likely spend his remaining years at the "Alcatraz of the Rockies" - the supermax federal prison in Florence, Colorado. Current inmates include convicted "Unabomber" Ted Kaczynski, Oklahoma City bomber Terry Nichols, the British "shoe bomber" Richard Reid and the Boston marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, who is awaiting execution.

Since his extradition from Mexico in 2017, Guzman has been in solitary confinement at a Manhattan high-security prison. He repeatedly lamented the conditions of his detention via his attorneys - notably that his windowless cell is constantly lit. Speaking to AFP prior to the proceedings, Guzman's lawyer William Purpura said: "I think he is in a good state of mind right now," adding his client was "looking forward to his appeal." But following the sentencing Richard Donoghue, the US attorney for the Eastern District of New York, vowed Guzman would spend "every minute of every day of his life in a prison here in the United States". "Never again will Guzman pour poison over our borders making billions while innocent lives are lost to drug violence and drug addiction." — AFP

Sports

Harper dramatically rescues Phillies winning 9-8 in the 9th vs Dodgers

Harper also hit a three-run home run and finished with five RBIs

PHILADELPHIA: Bryce Harper capped a dramatic rally by doubling home two runs in the bottom of the ninth inning off Kenley Jansen to lift the host Philadelphia Phillies past the Los Angeles Dodgers 9-8 on Tuesday. Harper also hit a three-run home run and finished with five RBIs, his season high in his first campaign with the Phillies. Scott Kingery and Brad Miller also homered for the Phillies, who blew an early 6-1 lead. Kingery also drove in a run with a ninth-inning single ahead of Harper's double.

After a 22-minute rain delay before the start of the ninth inning, Phillies closer Hector Neris failed to secure his 18th save as pinch hitter Matt Beaty delivered a go-ahead, three-run home run for an 8-6 lead. Neris was then ejected after hitting the next batter, David Freese, with Phillies manager Gabe Kapler also tossed. Max Muncy, Cody Bellinger, AJ Pollock and Joc Pederson also went deep for the Dodgers, who had their three-game winning streak snapped. Jansen (3-3) took the loss after allowing four straight hits to end the game following the first out.

Cubs 4, Reds 3 (10 innings)

Kyle Schwarber hit his first career walk-off home run in the bottom of the 10th inning to lift Chicago over visiting Cincinnati. Schwarber's blast off Reds reliever Raisel Iglesias (2-8) landed in the basket atop the ivy-covered wall in left-center field. It was his 21st homer of the season and his third in as many games. Robel Garcia and Kris Bryant also homered for Chicago, which rallied from a 3-0, first-inning deficit. Eugenio Suarez homered in a losing effort for Cincinnati, which dropped to 3-6 in extra-inning games this season.

Giants 8, Rockies 4 (10 innings)

Alex Dickerson and Brandon Crawford stroked RBI singles off Colorado closer Wade Davis to ignite a four-run 10th inning as San Francisco rebounded from Will Smith's blown save in the ninth to win in Denver. Dickerson smacked his go-ahead liner in extra innings, capping a night on which he had three singles and a double, scored twice and drove in two runs. Crawford followed with a run-scoring hit, giving the shortstop 10 RBIs in the first three games of the series. The Rockies had rallied for three runs in the bottom of the ninth on home runs by Trevor Story and Ian Desmond, but Colorado ultimately fell for the 10th time in 12 games.

Brewers 13, Braves 1

Brandon Woodruff allowed only one run over 6 2/3 innings and was supported by three homers, including a grand slam from Christian Yelich, as Milwaukee blew out visiting Atlanta. It was the third straight game in which Woodruff (11-3) allowed only one run, a stretch of 20 1/3 innings. On Tuesday, Woodruff gave up five hits and two walks while striking out seven. The Milwaukee offense produced 13 hits and was sparked by solo home runs from Keston Hiura and Lorenzo Cain. A towering bases-loaded shot from Yelich in the seventh inning, his 33rd, completed a six-run outburst that put the game away. Hiura had three hits and three runs, and Mike Moustakas had two hits, including the 1,000th of his career.

Yankees 8, Rays 3

Aaron Judge slugged a go-ahead, two-run homer in the eighth inning, and Didi Gregorius hit a grand slam four batters later as New York beat visiting Tampa Bay. The late homers occurred two innings after benches briefly emptied after New York left-hander CC Sabathia fanned

Avisaíl García with two on and two outs. After the strike-out, García and Sabathia began jawing at each other before order was eventually restored. Edwin Encarnación homered in the second inning and DJ LeMahieu went deep in the sixth for the Yankees, who are 19-6 in their past 25 games. Yandy Díaz homered in the fourth inning and delivered an RBI double in the sixth for the Rays, who are 5-10 in the season series.

A's 9, Mariners 2

Matt Chapman went 3-for-4 with a double, a home run and five RBIs as host Oakland won its fifth consecutive game, defeating Seattle. Matt Olson also homered for the A's, and Daniel Mengden (5-1) pitched seven strong innings, allowing one run on four hits with no walks and three strikeouts. Oakland improved to 8-2 this month. The Mariners, who have lost five in a row, got their only runs on a pair of Omar Narvaez solo homers, in the second and ninth innings.

Diamondbacks 9, Rangers 2

Ildemaro Vargas homered on his birthday, rookie Alex Young allowed one run in 5 1/3 innings, and visiting Arizona won in Arlington, Texas. Vargas, 28, hit a two-run homer in the sixth inning off Lance Lynn (12-5) to give the Diamondbacks a 5-1 lead. Lynn had been 6-0 in his career against Arizona. Young (3-0) retired the first batter in the bottom of the sixth before being replaced after 79 pitches. The left-hander gave up three hits, struck out four and walked one in his third career start.

Mets 3, Twins 2

Michael Conforto went 4-for-4 with a run and an RBI, and six relievers combined to pitch five shutout innings as New York defeated Minnesota in Minneapolis. Edwin Díaz escaped the ninth inning unscathed when he got Nelson Cruz to pop out with the bases loaded to finish off his 21st save. Luis Avilan (2-0) picked up the win by pitching one inning of hitless relief. The Mets have won three straight games after an ugly 3-11 stretch that included several bullpen meltdowns. Jonathan Schoop homered, C.J. Cron had two doubles and Eddie Rosario and Marwin Gonzalez also had two hits apiece for Minnesota.

Blue Jays 10, Red Sox 4

Justin Smoak responded to a Boston rally with a tiebreaking home run in the sixth inning as visiting Toronto roughed up the Red Sox. Smoak's towering blast to right-center on the first pitch of the frame immediately followed a three-run Red Sox fifth that made it 4-4. Teoscar Hernandez earlier hit a three-run shot, and Lourdes Gurriel Jr had three hits and a run as the Blue Jays won for the third time in their past nine games. Justin Shafer (1-1) earned his first major league victory with one inning of scoreless relief. Xander Bogaerts homered among three hits, and Mookie Betts also had three hits for Boston, which fell for the third time in four games.

Indians 8, Tigers 0

Rookie Oscar Mercado belted a two-run homer to highlight a five-run second inning as host Cleveland recorded an easy shutout over Detroit. Tyler Naquin launched a solo homer to cap his fourth straight multi-hit performance for the Indians, who have won 14 of their past 19 contests. Francisco Lindor ripped a two-run double to help Cleveland post its 10th win in 11 meetings against Detroit this season, with four coming via shutout. Nicholas



PHILADELPHIA: Rhys Hoskins #17 and the rest of the Philadelphia Phillies celebrate after Bryce Harper #33 hit a walk-off two run double in the ninth inning to defeat the Los Angeles Dodgers 9-8 in a baseball game at Citizens Bank Park. — AFP

Castellanos' leadoff single in the fifth inning was the lone hit for Detroit, which fell for the 10th time in 12 games.

Pirates 3, Cardinals 1

Colin Moran's RBI infield single snapped a tie in the top of the ninth inning and lifted visiting Pittsburgh over St. Louis. The Pirates snapped a four-game losing streak while the Cardinals had their three-game winning streak snapped. Francisco Liriano (4-1) earned the win with a perfect eighth. Felipe Vazquez earned his 21st save by striking out two in a 1-2-3 ninth. Cardinals left fielder Tyler O'Neill was the only player on either team with two hits. O'Neill is batting .389 (14-for-36) with three homers and nine RBIs in 10 games this month. St. Louis starter Jack Flaherty allowed one run on three hits and three walks while striking out eight over seven innings.

Nationals 8, Orioles 1

Matt Adams and Juan Soto homered, and rookie Austin Voith threw six strong innings as visiting Washington cruised over Baltimore in the opener of a two-game series. Adams, Soto and Anthony Rendon all finished with two hits and two RBIs. Washington recalled Voith from Double-A Harrisburg earlier Tuesday. Voith (1-0), pitching in his eighth major league game, earned his second major league victory, allowing one run on four hits. Asher Wojciechowski (0-3) gave the Orioles 5 1/3 innings, yielding three runs on six hits. He struck out seven without a walk.

Royals 11, White Sox 0

Glenn Sparkman pitched the first shutout of his career as host Kansas City crushed Chicago. The 27-year-old became the first Royals right-hander to throw a shutout

since Johnny Cueto did so in his Kansas City home debut in 2015. Sparkman (3-5) previously went seven innings twice this season before his career-longest start on Tuesday. He also struck out a career-high eight. Whit Merrifield led the offense with his first career inside-the-park home run, the 100th in Royals history. He finished a triple short of a cycle. Both teams sustained injuries, with Kansas City's Adalberto Mondesi hurting his left shoulder and Chicago's Eloy Jimenez departing due to left elbow soreness.

Marlins 12, Padres 7

Garrett Cooper and Brian Anderson homered to lead host Miami over San Diego. Rookie Jordan Yamamoto overcame a difficult second inning and remained unbeaten in six major league starts. Yamamoto (4-0) allowed three runs (two earned) and four hits in five innings. Harold Ramirez doubled twice, and Cesar Puello and Yadiel Rivera had two hits apiece for Miami. The loss extended San Diego's post-All Star break skid to four. Manny Machado, in his first game with the Padres in his hometown, went 1-for-4 with an RBI.

Angels 7, Astros 2

Albert Pujols' three-run double highlighted a six-run first inning, propelling Los Angeles over Houston in Anaheim, Calif. The first six Angels batters reached base in the opening frame, and Los Angeles wound up with five hits in the inning, including two doubles and a triple, as well as a walk and a hit batter. The Angels improved to 5-0 since the All-Star break, while the Astros fell to 2-4 since the break. Both Houston runs scored on RBI singles by Tyler White, who joined Yuli Gurriel with three hits apiece for the Astros. — Reuters



SANTA MONICA: (L-R) Rob Gronkowski and Ben Simmons participate in a challenge onstage during Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Sports 2019 at Barker Hangar. — AFP

Simmons opts out of World Cup in blow for Australia

MELBOURNE: Australia's hopes of claiming a maiden basketball World Cup have been dealt a blow, with Ben Simmons opting out of the tournament to focus on his NBA preparations. Simmons, who confirmed a lucrative contract extension with the Philadelphia 76ers on Tuesday, said he had made the "difficult" decision to skip the Aug 31-Sept. 15 tournament in China after consulting his representation.

"I'm really excited about the talent we have on the Boomers squad, especially moving closer to 2020 where I will be honored and humbled to represent my country on the world's biggest sporting stage at the Olympics in Tokyo," the 22-year-old said in a statement. "Ultimately, we decided it was best that I use the time in September to return to Philadelphia to

acquaint myself with my new team mates and prepare for the upcoming NBA season."

Melbourne native Simmons's statement came hours after Philadelphia confirmed he had signed through to the 2024/25 season, a deal media reported at \$170 million, the highest ever for an Australian athlete. Selected with the number one overall pick in the 2016 NBA Draft, the guard-forward improved in points (16.9), rebounds (8.8) and assists (7.7) to earn All-Star selection in his second season.

Hall of Famer Oscar Robertson is the only other player in NBA history to total as many points, rebounds and assists as Simmons through his first two seasons. Even without Simmons, Australia's 'Boomers' team are likely to be a force in China, with current and former NBA players including Andrew Bogut, Joe Ingles, Patty Mills, Aron Baynes and Matthew Dellavedova set to be included in their squad. Simmons said he would play Australia's home World Cup warmups against the United States and Canada in Perth and Melbourne next month. Australia have been drawn in Group H in China along with Canada, Senegal and Lithuania. The Boomers play their opener against Canada on Sept. 1 in Dongguan. — Reuters

Record-breaker Peaty leads British charge in Korea

LONDON: Virtually untouchable when on song, breaststroke king Adam Peaty spearheads a potent British team when the world swimming championships begin on Sunday in Gwangju, South Korea. The world record holder over 50 and 100 meters, Peaty will be the red-hot favorite to retain his world titles but Britain's supporting cast also contains plenty of quality.

Duncan Scott is a sure-fire medal contender after backing up his gold in the 100m free at last year's Commonwealth Games by bagging the 200m freestyle title at the 2018 European championships. European champion Ben Proud should be in the mix in the 50m free, while James Wilby looks to hang on to Peaty's shirt tails in the 100m breaststroke after silver medals at the Commonwealth and Europeans. But Peaty remains the Britain's biggest draw after leading them to second place in the medals table at the last world championships in Budapest two years ago. The Brits won four gold medals, a silver and two bronze to finish behind the United States, albeit by a huge margin. Peaty has romped to 50m and 100m breaststroke gold at each of the last two world championships and in between captured a maiden Olympic gold in the 100m in Rio. But fuelled by his

first defeat in the 50m in nearly four years at the Commonwealth Games, the 24-year-old wants to set new heights by taking down his own world records. "Even if you are the best in the world, you can still be beaten. I think that's the most valuable lesson," said Peaty of that shock defeat on Australia's Gold Coast.

Poster boy

He responded by lowering his own 100m world best record to 57.10 seconds at the European championships. His 50m record of 25.95 seconds could also go, Peaty believes. "I definitely think it is humanly possible," he told the BBC. "I want to put on a show." According to reports from his training camp at Loughborough University, world records are routinely being broken when no one is watching.

As the first British male swimmer to win Olympic gold since 1988, Peaty is the poster boy for the sport in his home country. But he is also aware that his star power means there is a target on his back for others to catch. "Once you're at the top you've got to keep that spot," Peaty told magazine Men's Health. "I've been at the top now for five years. It's a long time to stay on top without getting beaten." In the women's events, Britain will look to the likes of Siobhan-Marie O'Connor to step up in the individual medleys and Commonwealth champion Alys Thomas in the 200m butterfly. Peaty, though, will be the man the others look to provide the spark for the British team in Gwangju. "I don't just want to win — I want to dominate," he said after his latest world record. "That's not an arrogant side, it's just the competitive side in me." — AFP

'Pawn Stars' helped May recover Super Bowl rings

ARIZONA: Former NFL offensive lineman Mark May will recover his two Super Bowl rings after a hotel employee was arrested trying to sell them at the shop featured on cable's "Pawn Stars." May last wore the rings at a charity event in Scottsdale, Ariz., in February, when he stayed at a Phoenix hotel. After they were reported to be missing, the hotel's lead engineer, 43-year-old Marcel Behnert, later took the rings to the Gold & Silver Pawn Shop in Las Vegas, according to a story from ABC15 in Phoenix.

The shop, which uses a sports memorabilia collector named Diamond Don, called May about the potential transaction on May 2, and the shop alerted Mesa police a day later. Mesa police said Behnert was asking to sell the rings — engraved with May's name and his jersey number from title teams with the Washington Redskins in the 1982 and 1987 seasons — for a combined \$12,000. "When someone comes in like that, they

smell a rat if you don't have a receipt or if you don't have a story or proof of ownership," May told ABC15. "Once (the pawn shop owners) smelled a rat, they turned it over to Diamond Don, and he's like, 'No, I know Mark May. I know that he's not pawning his rings to give them to some guy.'" The bottom line of the story is the integrity of the guys on Pawn Stars for what they do and their due diligence. When you watch their show, they say, "If you don't have proof, we don't want it."

Authorities in Mesa and Las Vegas worked with the shop to get Behnert to return to the store, where he was arrested by undercover officers, charged with theft and trafficking in stolen property. Police said watches belonging to May were also found in a safe in Behnert's home, according to ABC15. May, a former ESPN analyst who lives in the Phoenix area, told the TV station that he will reclaim his rings from the Las Vegas police next week.

"I thought they were gone forever," May said. "I attribute (their recovery) to probably four or five things. One is luck. I'm lucky to get them back. Two, good police work by the Las Vegas Police Department. Three, the integrity of the Pawn Star guys and Diamond Don. And four, probably greed and stupidity by the guy who was trying to sell them — one, to a pawn shop, because nationwide, they're all connected when something like that comes up. And two, to do it on television when they tell you point blank: If you don't have a receipt or you don't have a proof of ownership, and it's something that's high-priced, we're not interested." — Reuters

Sports

Dung and Dragons: Myanmar kids dodge cows to play rugby

An incongruous sight in a country where the sport is barely known

YANGON: Sidestepping cowpats and garbage, Myanmar's only home-grown junior rugby side train on the outskirts of Yangon, preparing to take on children from the city's well-heeled international schools. When the Little Dragons aren't running barefoot on the litter-strewn dirt, the makeshift field on the outskirts of Yangon is sometimes used as a cockfighting ring or a fairground.

But every Sunday, boys and girls aged five to 18 from Yangon's North Dagon township can be seen playing touch rugby, an incongruous sight in a country where the sport is barely known. As novice monks file past collecting alms, the players shoo away cantankerous cattle to begin warm-up drills under the tutelage of their coaches, a mix of locals and expatriates.

In the monsoon the training ground is shin-deep in mud, but during the hot season the surface is baked into an unyielding, crusty mosaic. Yet many of the Little Dragons play in bare feet. Youth worker-turned-coach Aung Kyaw Lin, 24, helped set up the team four years ago to run alongside English and math lessons, and workshops on fire safety and health. "Children here used to spend their free time in gaming shops," he says. "When they started playing rugby, they stopped arguing and worked together."

Although the organizers ran out of funding to keep their education centre going, the rugby continued. Few women play sport in conservative Myanmar, yet half of the 40 or so Little Dragons are girls. Nann Shar Larr He's older sister used to scold her for wanting to play with the boys, but now most of her family come to watch the training sessions. "There's no difference between girls and boys when we play rugby," the 15-year-old smiles.

Second-hand trainers

As the only homegrown junior team in the country, the Little Dragons look to Yangon's international schools for matches. In May, they took part in Myanmar's first junior tournament — partly played on a full-sized, artificial grass pitch at one of the schools. Out of 10 teams in each age group, Little Dragons sides finished second and third in the Under-14s, and second in the Under-11s. "These kids ran rings round them," says coach Bradley Edwards.

One baffled team even tried removing their trainers to see if that was the key to the Little Dragons' agility — an experiment that lasted only a couple of minutes on the hot, rough surface. "We felt like crying when they scored, but we just tried even harder," says 12-year-old Dragon Kyaw Kyaw Lin. The schools are helping out the team, donating second-hand trainers and sharing transport.

But the Dragons are looking for sustained funding to support them and resurrect the now-closed education centre. An interested international sponsor backed away last year, concerned about Myanmar's "political climate" — a reference to the global outcry triggered by the mass expulsion of Rohingya Muslims in 2017. Edwards sees this as counter-productive, arguing that sport can be a unifying force. "There are so many things separating communities now in Myanmar and in rugby one of the key values is respect," he says. The next step is to introduce the players to rugby sevens — but fellow coach Josh Peck says they are eager for more. "These kids are fired-up and ready. They want to play (full) contact." — AFP



YANGON: This picture taken on May 19, 2019 shows players from the Little Dragons rugby team taking part in a training session in the North Dagon township, located on the outskirts of Yangon. — AFP

World Cup hero Roy given first Test call

LONDON: England have give Jason Roy his first Test call-up to face Ireland after the Surrey opener played a key role in his country's historic World Cup triumph, but pace bowler Mark Wood will be sidelined for between four and six weeks.

Roy was a crucial part of England's first World Cup-winning campaign, with his return after missing three matches with a torn hamstring coinciding with the winning streak that carried them to the title. South African-born Roy scored 443 runs in the World Cup, but England's selectors were keen to get him red-ball practice ahead of the Ashes series against old rivals Australia, which starts on August 1 at Edgbaston.

However, Durham's Wood, who has a side strain, and Sussex paceman Jofra Archer, suffering from the same injury, were not selected for the Ireland clash. Wood is expected to be out of action for four to six weeks following the injury he sustained in Sunday's final, leaving him certain to miss the start of the five-Test Ashes.

Roy's aggressive approach set the tone for England's World Cup run, which culminated in Sunday's thrilling final victory over New Zealand. With England meeting Ireland at Lord's in a Test match next week — scheduled for four days instead of the standard five — Roy will be handed the chance to underline his ability to thrive in the longer form of the sport as well as in limited overs.

Fine form

It will be the 28-year-old's first first-class match since last November when he batted at number three for the England Lions against Pakistan A in Abu Dhabi, making 59 off 73 balls. England chairman of selectors Ed Smith confirmed Roy would make his debut against Ireland, telling Sky Sports: "We have total confidence he will be able to adapt to red ball cricket."

On James Anderson's chances of being involved against Ireland as he returns from a calf tear, Smith added: "It's not clear. He's making good progress and, if he's fit to play without risk against Ireland, that's a possibility." After Eoin Morgan captained England's World Cup team, it is Joe Root who resumed his role as Test skipper against Ireland. Root's squad includes Somerset bowling all-rounder Lewis Gregory, who



LONDON: England's Jason Roy plays a shot during the 2019 Cricket World Cup final between England and New Zealand at Lord's Cricket Ground. — AFP

earned his first call-up after impressing for Somerset and the England Lions. The 27-year-old has been in fine form this campaign taking 44 wickets at an average of 13.88.

He is currently captaining the England Lions against Australia XI in a tour match at Canterbury. Warwickshire seamer Ollie Stone, who made his England's one-day international debut last winter in Sri Lanka, earns his second call up to the Test squad. Stone, 25, has fully recovered from a back injury, which had kept him out for most of this season. Lancashire wicketkeeper-batsman Jos Buttler and Durham all-rounder Ben Stokes — man of the match in the World Cup final — were both rested after their exploits in the 50-over tournament.

Archer, who has yet to make his England debut in

Test cricket, will have a period of rest before being considered for selection for the Ashes. He will have a short break in Barbados before returning to the UK later this month. After playing a pivotal role in the World Cup triumph, Archer has been awarded an increment contract by the ECB for the next 12 months. Meanwhile, a squad of 16 players will attend a pre-Ashes training camp this weekend at St George's Park, the Football Association's national football centre in Burton.

That group includes World Cup winners Roy, Root, Buttler, Stokes, Wood, Chris Woakes, Jonny Bairstow and Moeen Ali. England squad to face Ireland in Test match at Lord's, starting on July 24: Joe Root (capt), Moeen Ali, Jimmy Anderson, Jonny Bairstow, Stuart Broad, Rory Burns, Sam Curran, Joe Denly, Lewis Gregory, Jack Leach, Jason Roy, Ollie Stone, Chris Woakes. — AFP

British Open's return offers sporting relief to Northern Ireland

PORTRUSH: The British Open's return to Northern Irish soil for the first time in 68 years this week brings some blessed sporting relief for a region in uncertain political times. Not since 1951 has golf's oldest tournament been held outside Scotland or England. But the eyes of the world will be on the small seaside town of Portrush, with a population of just over 7,000, from Thursday as the likes of Tiger Woods and local hero Rory McIlroy battle for the Claret Jug.

A return to Northern Ireland was ruled out for many years by "The Troubles" — a 30-year period of politically and religiously motivated violence. However, The Good Friday agreement, a peace deal reached in 1998, paved the way for a brighter future for the region. "As a kid, I started playing golf in Dungannon and Dungannon was probably the most bombed clubhouse in Northern Ireland," 2011 British Open champion Darren Clarke, who will hit the first shot of this year's championship, told the Daily Mail.

"That was growing up in Northern Ireland. I had friends and relatives who were murdered, all sorts of bits and pieces. It just happened." As the peace process flourished, the possibility for Portrush to return to the Open Championship rotation was also aided by a golden generation for Irish golf that followed. Pdraig Harrington led the way with British Open wins in 2007 and 2008.

Portrush native Graeme McDowell won the US Open in 2010. A year later, McIlroy succeeded his countryman as US Open champion with the first of his four major triumphs. The next month, Clarke capped a fine career with his only major. Portrush's chance to prove itself as a venue came on the wave of that success, by hosting the Irish Open for the first time since 1947 in 2012.

Despite inclement weather, record crowds turned out in numbers normally reserved for the Open Championship itself. That enthusiasm has been surpassed this week as for the first time tickets have been completely sold out before a ball is struck. "It says a lot about the country and a lot about the times that we are able to hold such a big event here," McIlroy told the BBC. Work still needed to be done to fully convince tournament organizers the R&A.

Two new holes, the sixth and seventh, have been constructed using an adjoining course and opening up the space required for the capacity needed to host spectators, sponsors and the world's media. Government support was also needed to ensure the necessary infrastructure improvement would be funded. Royal Portrush's club secretary Wilma Erskine made her case to Democratic Unionist Leader Arlene Foster.

"We managed to get a meeting with her and explain how positive this would be for Northern Ireland in economic terms," said Erskine. "This is not for the week of the Open it is the legacy it is going to leave. The legacy is house prices go up, more hotels will want to come to this area." The economic benefit of golf tourism is welcome as the region braces itself from another political cloud. Northern Ireland has been without a devolved government for over two years since talks between the two major parties collapsed in January 2017.

There are also fears for the peace process should the United Kingdom leave the European Union without an agreement on how to avoid the return of a hard border between the north and Republic of Ireland. The next few days offer some respite as Northern Ireland showcases one of its premier courses and its passion for golf to the world. — AFP



TOULOUSE: Stage winner Australia's Caleb Ewan (C) celebrates his victory on the podium of the eleventh stage of the 106th edition of the Tour de France cycling race between Albi and Toulouse. — AFP

Australian rookie Ewan wins bunch sprint in Toulouse

TOULOUSE: Australian Caleb Ewan picked up his first Tour de France stage win in a mass sprint at Toulouse yesterday as Frenchman Julian Alaphilippe kept the overall lead. With defending champion Geraint Thomas and his Ineos teammate Egan Bernal also finishing in the pack, there was no change in the overall top three after a 167km run from Albi to Toulouse, marked by a fall that forced Nairo Quintana into a successful race to catch up.

Ewan timed his explosive burst to perfection, catching and overtaking Dutch sprinter Dylan Groenewegen right on the line after a long home straight. Elia Viviani was third on a finish designed for the pure sprinters. "It took me half the Tour de France to get my win, but I got it in the end,"

said Ewan. "I let him go, caught his wheel and just had him on the line," explained, the stocky 25-year-old. In his first season with the Lotto-Soudal team, Ewan has now won stages on all three Grand Tours after three wins on the Giro and one on the Vuelta.

It was a narrow win with the photo-finish, which takes thousands of shots a second from both sides at the finish line, showing a marginal victory. Sprint points leader Peter sagan of Slovakia kept his green jersey after finishing fourth behind Ewan. "I congratulate him, he's too fast for me on that kind of course, said the 30-year-old Sagan. Colombian Bernal kept hold of the under-25's white jersey and said Ineos would remain calm in their quest for the yellow jersey.

"We won't be attacking just yet, but I feel good going into the mountains" said Bernal, on his second Tour. There are two major mountains on the menu on stage 12 with yellow jersey Alaphilippe vowing to defend his lead. "It won't be easy tomorrow, there will be attacks, and it will be a big day on the Tour, but I'm up for it," said the 27-year-old former soldier ahead of the first day in the Pyrenees. — AFP

Sister acts spice up inaugural LPGA team event

LOS ANGELES: The LPGA's first official team event tees off with a pair of sister acts and a veteran Solheim Cup duo spicing up the field for the Dow Great Lakes Bay Invitational. The 72 two-woman teams will compete for a \$2 million purse at Midland Country Club in Midland, Michigan, where Wednesday's first round and Friday's third round will feature an alternate-shot format and the second and fourth rounds will be best-ball.

The teams won't go head-to-head in match-play style, instead they will play out each hole for a stroke-play score. "I think just the anticipation of this event has been all year," said Canadian Brooke Henderson, who will team with compatriot Alena Sharp. "I think stepping on the first tee tomorrow there's going to be a lot of adrenaline." Thai sisters Ariya and Moriya Jutanugarn will play together and are grouped in the first and second round with US sisters Nelly and Jessica Korda.

"I've always wanted to play some sort of team event with my sister and what a great opportunity to be able to do that," Jessica Korda said, adding that it's great preparation for the Solheim Cup match play showdown with Europe for which both Kordas are already qualified. Team Europe's Solheim Captain Catriona Mathew and vice-captain Suzann Pettersen will play together, Pettersen returning from maternity leave for her first LPGA appearance since the Tour Championship in 2017. They'll be playing alongside the Swedish duo of Caroline Hedwall and Anna Nordqvist.

Some of the world's top players, including world number one Park Sung-hyun, are skipping the event as they prepare for next week's Evian Championship in France, which will be quickly followed by the Women's British Open. South Korea's Ko Jin-young and Australian Minjee Lee — at number two and three in the world — are the highest-ranked team. — AFP

Sports

Senegal star Mane sets out to press his case for Ballon d'Or

He holds the key to Senegal erasing 60 years of hurt in African football

CAIRO: After a Champions League title with Liverpool, Sadio Mane is out to conquer a second continent in as many months as Senegal attempt to capture a first Africa Cup of Nations title against Algeria in Friday's final in Cairo. A calf injury ruined Mane's 2015 Cup of Nations, while his missed penalty knocked the team out in a quarter-final shootout two years ago, and he has already twice failed from the spot in Egypt.

Mirroring the fortunes of the Teranga Lions, often favorites but never champions, the 27-year-old has sometimes disappointed, although he likely holds the key to Senegal erasing 60 years of hurt in African football. Coming off his most prolific Premier League season, finishing in a three-way tie for the golden boot with 22 goals, and a European crown in June, Mane is the face of a new, successful generation and deserves recognition in the battle for the revered Ballon d'Or.

'Wildest dream'

As the spearhead of a team that returned to the World Cup in 2018 after a 16-year absence, Mane has guided his side to the Cup of Nations final, the country's second after 2002, with three goals and an assist at this tournament. "He has something unique, nothing is predictable with him. There is no plan he can be held to. He can make the difference at any moment, with a dribble, a pass or a sudden attack," said Senegal coach Aliou Cisse. He has made Mane the focal point of a fearsome, yet ever-changing attack amid the shuffling of Ismaila Sarr, Keita Balde and Krepin Diatta around the consistent presence of Mbaye Niang and Mane.

In the absence of the suspended Kalidou Koulibaly, the forward will be forced to assume added responsibilities to get his hands on the trophy, an obsession for Senegal and their coach, who was the captain of the runners-up 17 years ago. "I'm even ready to swap a Champions League for a Cup of Nations. Going to Dakar with the trophy would be extraordinary. It would be my wildest dream," Mane told France Football ahead of the competition.

Victory in two days' time would put Mane in esteemed company as one of just a handful of players with both Champions League and Cup of Nations honours, joining the likes of Cameroon's Samuel Eto'o, Ivorian pair Salomon Kalou and Yaya Toure, Nigerians Finidi George and John Obi Mikel, Ghana's Abedi Pele and Rabah Madjer of Algeria.

It would also make a compelling argument for Mane's Ballon d'Or prospects, with Liberia's George Weah, in 1995, the only African to have claimed the prestigious prize. In front of him though stand the irreplaceable duo of Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo, as well as club team-mate Alisson, Brazil's Copa America-winning goalkeeper.

"You can't think about the Ballon d'Or. What's important for Sadio is that he continues to fight for the team and delivers performances. He's in that mindset. My talks with him are clear: give everything for the team, and the team will give you it back," said Cisse. "He's a boy whose head is screwed on right, who understands the team will always come before individuals." —AFP



CAIRO: Tunisia's midfielder Elyes Skhiri (L) fights for the ball with Senegal's forward Sadio Mane during the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations (CAN) Semi-final football match between Senegal and Tunisia. —AFP

Sterling hits brace as City hammer West Ham in China

NANJING: Record Manchester City signing Rodri made his debut and Raheem Sterling scored twice as the Premier League champions came from behind to beat West Ham United 4-1 yesterday in China. West Ham took the lead with a Mark Noble penalty before City leveled through David Silva, then Lukas Nmecha scored from the spot to give Pep Guardiola's side the half-time lead.

England international Sterling, who enjoyed his best season last year for club and country, scored a brace in the second half as West Ham's defense went AWOL in Nanjing. Guardiola fielded a mixture of first-team regulars and reserves with Silva leading the side and Kevin De Bruyne, who missed most of last season injured, a second-half substitute. He was joined after the break by German winger Leroy Sane, who has been linked with a big-money move to Bayern Munich.

Spanish international midfielder Rodri joined City earlier this month on a five-year deal from Atletico Madrid. The 23-year-old officially became a City player a day after the La Liga club revealed the 70-million-euro (\$78.5 million) release clause in his contract had been triggered. City's arrival in China for the Premier League Asia

Trophy had been delayed by two days because of an "administrative issue".

But if it bothered the English champions it did not show, Sterling sealing a handsome City win with composed finishes on the hour and then again soon after. In the other match in the exhibition tournament, the scale of the task facing new head coach Steve Bruce was laid bare as Newcastle United were thrashed 4-0 by Wolverhampton Wanderers. Bruce, whose appointment was confirmed just hours before kick-off, will jet over to take charge of Newcastle's next friendly, against West Ham, in Shanghai on Saturday. It was only a low-key friendly, but the heavy defeat to Nuno Espirito Santo's Wolves in Nanjing was more evidence that Newcastle are likely to be battling relegation this season. City will face Wolves in the final.

Barton charged with bodily harm

In other news, Fleetwood manager Joey Barton was charged with actual bodily harm on Wednesday following an alleged incident during a third tier match at Barnsley in April. Former Manchester City and Marseille midfielder Barton has "emphatically denied" accusations that he confronted Barnsley manager Daniel Stendel in the Oakwell tunnel.

In a statement, South Yorkshire Police said: "A man has been charged following an incident at Barnsley Football Club in April 2019. Joseph Barton, 36, of Fox Bank Close, Widnes, has been charged with actual bodily harm contrary to sec-



NANJING: Manchester City's Raheem Sterling runs with the ball during the match against West Ham United at the 2019 Premier League Asia Trophy football tournament. —AFP

tion 47 assault and has been bailed to appear before Barnsley Magistrates Court on Wednesday 9 October 2019. "On Saturday 13 April 2019, a man was left with facial injuries after an incident in the club tunnel around 5pm, following the conclusion of Barnsley's match against Fleetwood Town."

The force launched an investigation into the alleged incident in which the controversial Barton is said to have confronted Stendel. Barton, who has a history of clashes on and off the field, was

subsequently arrested on suspicion of racially aggravated offences. Barnsley striker Cauley Woodrow claimed in a tweet, which was subsequently deleted, that the incident had left Stendel with "blood pouring from his face". Stendel suffered damage to his two front teeth which required emergency dental treatment. Barnsley lodged formal complaints with both the Football Association and the Football League regarding the conduct of former Newcastle and Burnley star Barton. —AFP

Pogba shines again as United thrash Leeds

PERTH: Paul Pogba shined as an under-pressure Manchester United stepped up their pre-season campaign with a 4-0 thrashing of old rivals Leeds on Wednesday. United had faced criticism after an unconvincing 2-0 victory over a depleted Perth Glory on the weekend. In a much-needed tonic, the Red Devils clinically dismantled Leeds, who have high hopes of returning to the English Premier League for the first time since 2004.

Pogba, who has been linked with a move to Juventus and Real Madrid, starred in United's dominant first-half and was part of a pretty chain of passing to set up 17-year-old Mason Greenwood's first senior goal in the seventh minute. Greenwood's energetic performance has the teenager in the frame for the Premier League opener against Chelsea on August 11, manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said.

"He's got a chance. He's more than capable and he'll always be there in and around the box creating chances," he told reporters after the match. Moments later, a powerful strike from Pogba was well saved by goalkeeper Kiko Casilla. But it was only a matter of time before

United broke through with a moment of magic in the 27th minute from Marcus Rashford, a livewire in the first half.

After a wondrous dribble past the lead-foot defense, the 21-year-old expertly tapped it past Casilla. Solskjaer changed his entire lineup at half-time in a repeat of Saturday's match against Perth. United continued to dictate, with Phil Jones scoring a thumping header from a corner kick in the 51st minute. Anthony Martial rounded out a spectacular performance in the 68th minute by converting a penalty after Tahith Chong was taken down in the box.

The first clash in eight years between the one-time bitter enemies fizzled out, but a near capacity Perth Stadium crowd of 55,000 underlined the rivalry's stature. Romelu Lukaku was once again absent fuelling speculation he had been dropped from the squad amid reports he was close to securing a move to Inter Milan. United said the Belgian suffered a knock at training. "He's missed two chances to play 45 minutes and at this stage of the season it's important to get everyone fit, so hopefully he'll be available soon," Solskjaer said.

Illness kept out goalkeeper David de Gea, who is reportedly close to signing a new five-year deal with United in excess of £350,000 (\$435,000) a week. United will have further pre-season games against Inter Milan in Singapore on July 20 and Tottenham in Shanghai on July 25, while Leeds will head to Sydney to face Western Sydney Wanderers. —AFP



PERTH: Manchester United's Paul Pogba (L) fights for the ball with Leeds United's Adam Forshaw (R) during their pre-season friendly football match at Optus Stadium. —AFP

Fans bemoan Bruce as Wolves wallop Newcastle

NANJING: The scale of the task facing new head coach Steve Bruce was brutally laid bare as Newcastle United were thrashed 4-0 by Premier League rivals Wolverhampton Wanderers in China on yesterday. Former Manchester United defender Bruce, whose appointment was confirmed just hours before kick-off, will jet over to take charge of Newcastle's next friendly, in Shanghai on Saturday.

It was only a low-key exhibition match, but the heavy defeat to Nuno Espirito Santo's Wolves in Nanjing was more evidence that Newcastle are likely to be battling relegation this season. Newcastle have risked stoking the anger of their frustrated fans by hiring former Sunderland boss Bruce, who has sealed a three-year contract to succeed the hugely popular Rafael Benitez.

There were even isolated chants against hated club owner Mike Ashley during the Wolves loss. Federico Fernandez, the Newcastle defender, called on fans angry with Bruce's arrival to get behind the new man. "We are looking forward to working with him, he is a man of great experience, we are thinking positive," said the Argentine. "I understand the fans' situation," he said, addressing supporters' negative reaction to the 58-year-old Bruce, a lifelong Newcastle fan.

"For us, we want to work, we want to do better as a team... to show the fans and everyone that we can compete." In a statement, Bruce, who resigned from Championship side Sheffield Wednesday to join Newcastle, called it "a very special moment for me and my family". "This is my boyhood club and it was my dad's club."

Bruce might be a local boy, but his two-year spell as coach of Newcastle's fierce rivals Sunderland and a mediocre record as a Premier League manager are major black marks for an already infuriated fan base. Bruce, who has won four promotions from the second tier of English football, has suffered relegation from the Premier League twice. His highest finish was 10th with Birmingham in 2003-04 and Sunderland in 2010-11.

Bruce has his work cut out at Newcastle, who have lost their leading forwards from last season — Salomon Rondon and Ayoze Perez — and are the only Premier League club yet to make a summer signing. The transfer window closes in less than a month, adding to the pressure on Bruce and Ashley as they try to win over disillusioned fans. There have been calls for a boycott of St James' Park until Ashley sells the crisis club.

If Bruce was watching on television, he would have been exasperated by what he saw from his side in China, who were under the interim stewardship of academy coach Ben Dawson. Diogo Jota struck twice in the first half for Chinese-owned Wolves as demoralized Newcastle wilted alarmingly in the Nanjing heat. Champions Manchester City were to play West Ham United in the next match in the Premier League Asia Trophy. —AFP

Cameroon sack Seedorf after Nations Cup failure

YAOUNDE: Cameroon have sacked Dutch coach Clarence Seedorf after their disappointing performance at the Africa Cup of Nations, with his departure coming

after the country's sports minister had demanded his exit. Seedorf's assistant, former Netherlands striker Patrick Kluivert, has also been axed after the defending champions were dumped out in the last 16 after losing 3-2 to Nigeria earlier this month.

The Indomitable Lions won just one of their four matches at the tournament in Egypt, which led to calls from the country's sports minister, Narcisse Mouelle

Kombi, for the pair to be released from their contracts. He got his wish within hours on Tuesday as Cameroon's football federation announced it had terminated the four-year deal Seedorf had signed in August 2018.

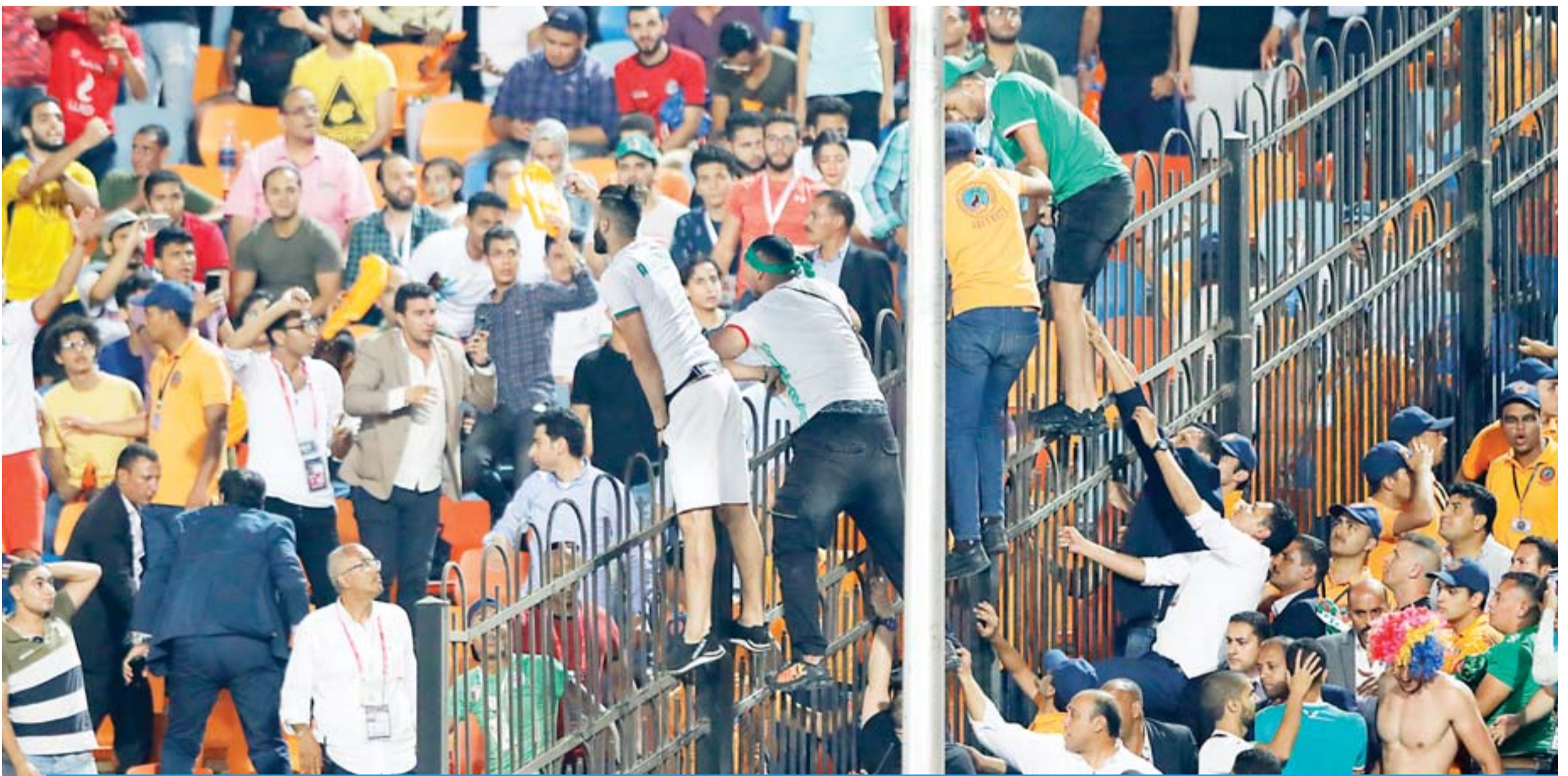
The body said in a statement on that it had brought an end to the respective contracts of Seedorf and Kluivert "following the premature exit of Cameroon's men's flagship squad". Former AC Milan and

Netherlands midfielder Seedorf was in charge for 12 matches, but won only four against Malawi, Comoros Islands, Zambia and Guinea-Bissau. The job was his first in international football after previous brief spells in charge of AC Milan and Deportivo La Coruna in Spain. Cameroon will host the next Nations Cup finals in June 2021, but must take part in the 2022 World Cup qualifiers that are likely to start later this year. —Reuters

25 Harper dramatically rescues Phillies winning 9-8 in the 9th vs Dodgers

26 Dung and Dragons: Myanmar kids dodge cows to play rugby

27 Senegal star Mane sets out to press his case for Ballon d'Or



CAIRO: Fans confront each other during the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations (CAN) Semi-final football match between Algeria and Nigeria at the Cairo International stadium. — AFP

Egypt fans divided on supporting Algeria

Grudges borne out of a historic rivalry has festered in the last decade

CAIRO: After Egypt's humiliating exit from the Africa Cup of Nations, their loyal fan base's loyalties are divided between supporting their 'Arab brothers' embodied in Algeria for this Friday's final - or not. The Desert Foxes or Desert Fighters, as they are affectionately known, must beat Senegal to clinch a second continental title on the freshly manicured Cairo International Stadium field.

Ten years ago, the same pitch became a lethal site of violent clashes between Algerian and Egyptian fans. Old grudges borne out of a historic soccer rivalry that has festered in the last decade have opened up again with Algeria showing excellent form throughout the tournament. "In terms of performance, they deserve to be in the final and to win it all," says Mohamed, 32, an accountant who has attended some of Algeria's games. "But I hope they don't win the tournament...because of the bickering".

Egypt was eliminated in the round of 16 losing to South Africa, too much dismay from its fans prompting a wholesale resignation from the country's football association. During the semi-finals, wounds were pricked again after Algerians and Egyptians traded a

war of words and shoved each other after Egyptian fans enthusiastically supported Nigeria in the loss.

With decades of taunts and close World Cup qualifiers pitting the North African footballing heavyweights against each other, Cairo Stadium hosted a tense match that descended into chaos. Dozens of Egyptian and Algerian fans violently clashed in a crucial World Cup qualifier. It triggered a diplomatic crisis between both countries. Calls for calm on both sides were not heeded as the respective countries' press and politicians continued to muddy the waters.

'No security issues'

Since the start of the regional competition, Egypt's security presence has been stepped up especially around stadiums. Safety has been a major challenge and priority for the hosts. "So far, there hasn't been any problems, quarrels or security issues," said an Interior Ministry official who requested anonymity. "The celebrations of Algerian fans in the streets took place alongside Egyptians without any visible anger or disturbance," he told AFP.

Despite the generational strains that stretch back

decades between the two countries, many Egyptians have also lent their support to Algeria and its soccer stars in the name of Arab unity. "I'll support them because we are all Arabs but in the main I don't really show them love after what happened," said Ali, a 23-year-old student, with little enthusiasm. "I was 13 at the time so I hardly remember - a lot of things happened afterwards," said the Al-Ahly fan, the local powerhouse which has won multiple African club titles.

Ali remembers the deadly violence in Egyptian stadiums in domestic league matches which killed over a hundred fans in 2012 and 2015 respectively. Authorities, which have been accused of instigating the violence when they clashed with fans, have re-instated a total ban on attending domestic games which is still in effect. It has been relaxed recently but authorities must approve fan attendance using their national ID.

'New and positive debate'

"After what happened in the 2009 match, people started cheering for anyone playing against Algeria," sports journalist Hatem Maher recounts. But, he sees the question of whether to cheer for Algeria in the

upcoming match shows signs of "a new and positive debate" emerging. "Tensions have markedly fizzled out," Maher explains attributing it to the ascent of a new generation of fans but also the "political changes" in Egypt.

"After the January 2011 revolution, a lot of people started to take a step back and to re-assess the 2009 days saying that Hosni Mubarak and his sons and their loyalist media were really the ones fanning the flames between both countries and their fans". "At the time, there was also a political rivalry between Egypt and Algeria to determine who historically was the leader of the Arab world," said Pascal Boniface, director of the Paris-based Institute of International and Strategic Relations and author of "The Geopolitics of sport".

"Both regimes were in trouble and were counting on their national teams to improve their reputation," he explained to AFP. For many excited Egyptians such as football trainer Mohamed, the Algerians winning would not be so bad. "Algerian fans are here and are happy so why wouldn't we be happy for them?" he said. He dismissed any talk of heated rivalry noting "that's really normal in football". — AFP

Pacquiao camp denies Khan claims over bout

MANILA: Manny Pacquiao has not signed a contract to take on Amir Khan in Saudi Arabia later this year despite claims that a deal has been agreed for the bout, the Filipino's publicist has said. Khan, who beat Australia's Billy Dib in Jeddah on July 13 to win the WBC international welterweight title, said on Tuesday that he had agreed a deal to fight Pacquiao in Riyadh on Nov 8.

The Briton told British media the clash with Pacquiao would happen even if the 40-year-old were to lose to American Keith Thurman in Las Vegas on Saturday. "Manny has not signed any contract. As far as I know it has not even been discussed," Pacquiao's publicist Fred Sternberg told the BBC. "He has been in training camp for the past eight weeks, four in the Philippines and four in the United States, and he hasn't met with Amir Khan during that time." Sternberg said he did not know what prompted Khan to make the claims. "That's a question you need to ask Amir Khan," he said.

Khan had been slated to fight eight-division world champion Pacquiao two years ago in the United Arab Emirates but no agreement could be reached. Pacquiao, one of the sport's most



HOLLYWOOD: In this file photo eight-division world champion boxer Manny Pacquiao (L) spars with coach Freddy Roach. — AFP

decorated fighters, has a record of 61 victories, seven defeats and two draws in a career spanning 24 years. Khan has 34 wins and five defeats. — Reuters

North, South Korea to face off in qualifiers

KUALA LUMPUR: North and South Korea will face off in politically-charged World Cup qualifiers after being drawn in the same group yesterday, while arch-rivals Iran and Iraq will also meet. Heavyweights Iran, Japan, South Korea, Australia and Saudi Arabia — who all played in the 2018 World Cup in Russia — were drawn in different groups for the Asian qualifiers of the 2022 edition of the tournament in Qatar.

China, who are seeking to qualify for the World Cup for only the second time, look to have a promising fixture against lower-ranked opponents including war-torn Syria and tiny Guam. The country and its 73rd-ranked team have grand ambitions to host and win a World Cup under football-fan President Xi Jinping. South Korea is one of Asia's best sides and

should easily beat the North, but the matches between the neighbors on the divided Korean peninsula promise to be bitter.

Sides play each other twice during the qualifiers, which run from September to June. After the draw at the Asian football body's headquarters in Kuala Lumpur, South Korea coach Paulo Bento insisted that facing the North was "nothing special". "For us it is a sport — the goal is to qualify," he said. "The message I will share with the players when we play against North Korea is to give them the same respect we will have for any other teams we will play against."

Sporting ties played a role in a diplomatic thaw on and around the peninsula last year, when the two Koreas formed their first-ever unified Olympic team for the 2018 Winter Games. But those endeavors stagnated with the wider deadlock in negotiations over the North's nuclear arsenal. Iran and Iraq will renew one of football's great rivalries after being drawn in the same group. The teams will compete in a round-robin format, with the winners of the eight groups and four runners-up progressing to a final round of qualifying. — AFP