



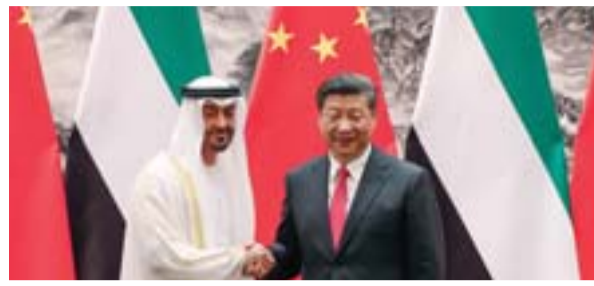
**3** Multiple-entry Kuwait visas to be issued to 400 Iraqi businessmen



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# Iran busts CIA spy ring; UK plans Europe-led Gulf force

## Kuwait calls for restraint amid regional escalations

TEHRAN: Iran arrested 17 suspects and sentenced some to death after dismantling a CIA spy ring, an official said yesterday, as tensions soar between the Islamic republic and arch-enemy the United States. US President Donald Trump dismissed the report as "totally false". Security agencies "successfully dismantled a (CIA) spy network," the head of counter-intelligence at the Iranian intelligence ministry, whose identity was not revealed, told reporters in Tehran. "Those who deliberately betrayed the country were handed to the judiciary... some were sentenced to death and some to long-term imprisonment." The suspects were arrested between March 2018 and March 2019.

"The report of Iran capturing CIA spies is totally false. Zero truth," Trump tweeted.

Meanwhile, British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt yesterday said Britain wanted to establish a European-led maritime protection force in the Gulf but emphasized that London was not seeking a confrontation with Iran. "We will now seek to put together a European-led maritime protection mission to support the safe passage of both crew and cargo in this vital region," Hunt told parliament after Iranian authorities seized a British-flagged tanker in the Gulf on Friday. "We will seek to establish this mission as quickly as possible," he said, adding: "It will not be part of the US maximum pressure policy on Iran".

Late on Sunday, Kuwait said that it "follows with extreme concern" the latest escalation in the Gulf region, KUNA reported. Kuwait also stressed that "the continuation of such acts will increase tensions, expose maritime safety to a direct threat, which requires the international community to intensify its efforts to contain the escalation". Kuwait called on all parties to exercise restraint and respect international maritime law to ensure maritime security in the region.

Tehran has been at loggerheads with Washington and its allies since May 2018, when Trump unilaterally withdrew the US from a landmark 2015 deal putting curbs on Iran's nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief. The US administration

reimposed biting sanctions on Iran, which retaliated by increasing its enrichment of uranium beyond limits set in the nuclear accord. Trump called off air strikes against Iran at the last minute in June after the Islamic republic downed a US drone, one of a string of incidents including attacks on tankers in the Gulf.

The tensions have escalated since British authorities seized an Iranian oil tanker on July 4 on suspicions it was shipping oil to Syria in breach of EU sanctions. In what was seen by Britain as a tit-for-tat move, Iran's Revolutionary Guards seized the British-flagged tanker in the strategic Strait of Hormuz, where Friday's incident happened. Hunt described Friday's incident as an

act of "state piracy". A British warship in the region, HMS Montrose, attempted to warn off Iranian forces and raced to the scene but arrived too late to be able to assist. Hunt said a second British warship, HMS Duncan, that is being dispatched to the region, would arrive by July 29. Hunt said all British-flagged ships would be asked to give the British authorities notice when they plan to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, where Friday's incident happened, "to enable us to offer the best protection we can". But he added: "It is, of course, not possible for the Royal Navy to provide escorts for every single ship or indeed eliminate all risks of piracy."

Continued on Page 24

## India launches historic bid to put rover on Moon

SRIHARIKOTA, India: India yesterday launched a low-cost rocket on a historic bid to put a landing craft on the surface of the Moon and join an elite space force. A week after an initial launch was halted just before blast-off, Chandrayaan-2 - or Moon Chariot 2 - took off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre carrying national pride and the hopes of Indian scientists. India is seeking to become just the fourth nation after Russia, the United States and China to land a spacecraft on the Moon. If the rest of the mission goes to plan, the Indian probe will land on the lunar South Pole in early September.

"Every Indian is immensely proud today!" tweeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has vowed to send a manned mission into orbit by 2022. "Special moments that will be etched in the annals of our glorious history!" There were applause, handshakes and hugs in the mission control room as the rocket blasted off from the base on an island just off the coast of Andhra Pradesh state.

President Ram Nath Kovind watched the launch alongside 7,000 dignitaries and flag-waving children, with the crowd bursting into cheers at the spectacle.

"Today is a historic day for space, science and tech in India," Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief K Sivan said as he hailed the efforts made to fix a fuel leak that forced the earlier launch to be postponed. India was also hailed by its international counterparts. The US state department said on Twitter that the launch was "an incredible achievement!" while the European Space Agency sent congratulations.

Chandrayaan-2 was launched on India's most powerful rocket, the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) MkIII. It carried an orbiter, a lander and a rover almost entirely designed and made in India. The country's love affair with the film industry saw the media dub the rocket "Baahubali" after one of India's most popular screen heroes, known for his ability to lift heavy items.

Sivan said the mission's next stage would be critical to its success, with scientists set to conduct some 15 crucial maneuvers of Chandrayaan-2 over the next month-and-a-half to position it around the moon. "After that, D-day will come - and that day we are going to experience 15 minutes of terror to ensure that the landing is safe," he said. The lander - named after Vikram A Sarabhai, the father of India's space program - will carry the rover to near the lunar South Pole. ISRO scientists will remotely control the rover named Pragyaan - "wisdom" in Sanskrit - as it carries out experiments. It will work for one lunar day, the equivalent of 14 Earth days, studying rocks and soil on the Moon's surface.

Continued on Page 24



SRIHARIKOTA, India: ISRO's Chandrayaan-2, on board the GSLV, launches at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre yesterday. — AFP

### News in brief

#### Correcting ID info made easier

KUWAIT: In response to many complaints by expats with regards to obstacles they face including requirement of a certificate from their embassies proving the information in the passport is correct, Director General of the Residency Affairs Department Brig Abdelqader Shaaban instructed all residency departments not to demand this certificate to correct the passport data of expats on ID cards. — Al-Anbaa

#### Rise in domestic helper numbers

KUWAIT: While official statistics by the interior ministry and Public Authority for Manpower reveal that 65,000 domestic helpers left the country during the past three years after their contracts expired, other official reports have revealed that more than 69,000 domestic workers entered the country since the start of this year - a rate of 383 daily. Statistics show 718,000 domestic helpers are registered in the interior ministry system, compared to 648,000 on Dec 31, 2018, which means their numbers rose by 9 percent in six months. — Al-Qabas

#### Fashionista a doc; pills safe

KUWAIT: Health sources said analysis of samples taken from the weight-loss pills which allegedly caused a young woman's death recently in Kuwait meet safety standards and do not contain any harmful chemicals. The 21-year-old woman, who was preparing for her wedding, took the pills promoted by a fashionista on social media, and later died after being rushed to hospital in critical condition. The fashionista, who has a degree in medicine, said the pills are clinically licensed contrary to what is being said on social media. — A Saleh

## Trump offers to mediate on Kashmir

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump yesterday offered to mediate the decades-long Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan, signaling a shift in long-standing US policy that the issue must be solved bilaterally. Kashmir has been divided between both countries and China since the end of British colonial rule in 1947, and remains at the root of tensions between the two nuclear-armed South Asian countries. "If I can help, I would love to be a mediator," Trump said at the White House, where he was hosting

Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan. "If I can do anything to help, let me know." Trump also said Pakistan was helping the US advance the Afghanistan peace process. "I don't think Pakistan respected the United States" in the past, Trump said, but "they are helping us a lot now."

It is far from the first time that Trump has offered to intervene in a seemingly intractable international dispute. US mediation, which has long been sought by Pakistan, is likely to be rejected outright by New Delhi. On Friday, Trump said he remained at the ready to help South Korea and Japan solve their lingering dispute over World War II-era forced labor that has blighted their trade ties. In 2017, he offered to mediate territorial disputes in the South China Sea between China, Vietnam and other Asia-Pacific

Continued on Page 24



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump meets Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan in the Oval Office of the White House yesterday. — AFP

## Israel demolishes Palestinian homes in Jerusalem area

SUR BAHER: Israel demolished a number of Palestinian homes it considers illegally constructed near its separation barrier south of Jerusalem yesterday in a move that drew international condemnation. Palestinian leaders slammed the demolitions in the Sur Baher area which straddles the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem, but Israel defended them as essential to its security and noted they had been approved by its supreme court.

UN officials and the European Union condemned the demolitions and called for an immediate halt to the policy. Before dawn, hundreds of Israeli police and soldiers sealed off buildings in the area close to the Israeli separation barrier which cuts off the West Bank, an AFP journalist said. Residents and activists were dragged out of homes, though most of the buildings under demolition orders - a total of 10 - were still under construction.



DAR SALAH: Israeli security forces tear down a Palestinian building under construction in this West Bank village yesterday. — AFP

Earthmovers then demolished at least three multi-storey buildings. They were also preparing to destroy an eight-storey building still under construction. One man yelled "I want to die here", after being forced out.

Continued on Page 24

## IAEA chief Amano dies at 72; Amir sends condolences

VIENNA: The head of the UN's nuclear watchdog, Yukiya Amano, has died after suffering poor health for some time, the International Atomic Energy Agency said yesterday, as international tensions run high over Iran's nuclear activities. The longtime Japanese diplomat, who was 72, held the IAEA's top job since Dec 2009.

"The secretariat of the International Atomic Energy Agency regrets to inform with deepest sadness of the passing away of



Yukiya Amano

Continued on Page 24

## Local

# Amir receives newly appointed Kuwaiti envoys to Shanghai, Karachi, Malta

## Sheikh Sabah meets outgoing German ambassador to Kuwait



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and the newly appointed Kuwaiti envoys. —Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the outgoing German Ambassador to Kuwait Karl Bergner.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and the newly appointed Kuwaiti envoys.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and the newly appointed Kuwaiti envoys.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah who introduced to His Highness a number of newly appointed Kuwaiti diplomatic envoys. The Kuwaiti diplomats included Mishaal Al-Shamali, Kuwait's new Consul General in Shanghai, China, Salem Al-Hamdan, Kuwait's new Consul General to Karachi, Pakistan, and Faisal Al-Mutairi, the newly appointed Kuwaiti Ambassador to Malta.

The diplomatic envoys took the oath before His Highness the Amir who provided the diplomats with his

instructions to represent their country, serve, and protect its higher interests. His Highness the Amir wished them success in their mission. In the meantime, the Foreign Minister thanked His Highness the Amir for his important instructions and candid advices, which will help the new envoys better deliver their mission to strengthen Kuwait's ties with world countries.

The oath-taking ceremony was attended by Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and Undersecretary at the Amiri Diwan and head of His Highness the Amir's office Ahmad Al-Fahad. Meanwhile, His Highness the

Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received the outgoing German Ambassador to Kuwait Karl Bergner.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also received the newly appointed Kuwaiti diplomats at Bayan Palace yesterday, in presence of Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled. His Highness the Crown Prince congratulated the diplomats on attaining their new post, calling on them to do all that was necessary to serve Kuwaiti interests and image abroad. Meanwhile, the diplomats each vowed to attend to their duties as best as they

could, expressing gratitude and honored to have met His Highness Sheikh Nawaf. Also yesterday, His Highness the Crown Prince received Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh at Bayan Palace.

Furthermore, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received the new Kuwaiti diplomats yesterday at Seif Palace, in presence of Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled. Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocol Affairs Ambassador Dhari Al-Ajran attended the reception. —KUNA

## Kuwait pioneer in humanitarian efforts: ISESCO

RABAT: The State of Kuwait is one of the pioneering countries in charity and humanitarian relief aid due to the country's prolific efforts within such domains, Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) Director General Dr Salim Al-Malik said yesterday. Speaking on ISESCO's Waqf (endowment) investment project, Dr Malik said that the 1979-establish ISESCO was grateful for Kuwait's outstanding charitable efforts. The UN recognition of Kuwait as a Global Humanitarian Center and His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as a Humanitarian Leader came through continuous efforts to help the needy around the world, affirmed Al-Malik who commended the Gulf state's contribution to both on the governmental and non-governmental levels.

Kuwait is an integral partner for the organization and ISESCO is looking for-



Dr Salim Al-Malik

ward to work with the GCC state, he indicated. In regards to the endowment investment project, the ISESCO Director General affirmed that it would be fully funded by the members of the organization. He added that the project was announced on May 9 in Makkah during ISESCO's General Conference. He indicated that an international conference was in the making to boost funding to around \$10 million by the end of the year and \$1 billion in the upcoming five years. The director revealed that the money would be used to support various ISESCO projects. —KUNA

## Kuwait, EU negotiate to exempt citizen from Schengen visa: Jarallah

KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah affirmed yesterday that Kuwait is in negotiations with European Union (EU) to exempt Kuwaiti citizens from Schengen Visa. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah is keen to meet his EU counterparts to push forth the exemption of visa, Al-Jarallah said in a press statement. Jarallah added that talks with EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Federica Mogherini, who visited Kuwait recently, highlighted the free travel to European countries by getting Schengen visa exemption. Meanwhile, Jarallah opened yesterday a government service center dedicated for Kuwaiti diplomats and Foreign Ministry administrators in the country and abroad, providing them with a wide range of services. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah opens a new government service center dedicated for Kuwaiti diplomats and Foreign Ministry administrators. —KUNA photos



Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah tours the new government service center.

## Deputy FM receives US ambassador



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

KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah yesterday received US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman as bilateral relations, in addition to the latest regional and international developments were discussed.

Present at the meeting were Deputy Foreign Minister's office director Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar and Assistant Foreign Minister for Americas' Ambassador Affairs Reem Al-Khaled. —KUNA



Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah speaks with Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lieutenant General Essam Al-Nahham on the sidelines of the opening ceremony.



Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah speaks to reporters.

Local

# Multiple entry visas to be issued to 400 Iraqi businessmen to enter Kuwait

## Amir wishes to have free markets with the Iraqis: Minister Roudhan

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Kuwait plans to issue multiple entry visas to nearly 400 Iraqi businessmen as per an agreement reached recently between the two countries, a senior government official said yesterday. Minister of Commerce and Industry and State Minister of Services Affairs Khalid Al-Roudhan explained that a special committee was formed with the Iraqi side under the name "white list", which includes issuing multiple entry visas to nearly 400 Iraqi businessmen. "We have an ambitious plan to open different markets," said Roudhan, who was speaking during an open meeting at the Kuwait Graduates Society yesterday. "His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah wishes to have free markets with the Iraqis and we have reached an advanced stage."



### Kuwait food security 'very good'

About food reserves, Roudhan said since the last Gulf crisis, "we upgrade the emergency plan every six months - Kuwait's structure is very strong and we have developed it." He said many co-op branches supplying rations have been closed, and food reserves are very good. He said the introduction of the technological aspect to the commerce ministry was a decisive element in the development of the ministry, as electronically linking ration services reduced costs to KD 34 million annually, although the system itself did not cost more than KD 10,000.

#### Bedoons in military

A batch of bedoons who were supposed to be accepted in the military this month have to wait for

the law to resolve the issue of stateless residents, which is expected by yearend according to an announcement National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem made on Sunday, informed sources said. More than 1,500 bedoons were accepted to enroll in the military, including Kuwaiti women's children, those included in the 1965 census and children of military men, the sources added.

#### Expats in public schools

A specialized committee at the education ministry prepared a technical memo on the increasing student density in public schools, which will be submitted to Education Minister Hamid Al-Azmi. The memo criticizes the increase in expat categories which allows their children to be admitted in government schools where enrollment is exclusive for Kuwaiti students. These groups are considered 'large' according to the memo, which questions the 'justifications' based on which expats in certain exempted categories are allowed to enroll their children in government schools. Some schools have a large number of expat students, like in Farwaniya, which puts pressure on school capabilities, said sources familiar with the memo, adding that the number of expats in schools can be reduced by half if some exempted categories are cancelled. The exempt categories currently include children of expat teachers, workers at the education ministry, workers at the Arab Open University, funeral workers, lawyers and diplomats as well as workers at some educational centers.



KUWAIT: Minister of Commerce and Industry and State Minister of Services Affairs Khalid Al-Roudhan (left) speaks during an open meeting at the Kuwait Graduates Society yesterday. —Photos by Fouad Al-Shalkh



A general view of the open meeting at the Kuwait Graduates Society.



KUWAIT: Kuwait Times continued its tours to check worksites' compliance with the ban on outdoor work between 11:00 am and 4:00 pm during the summer. Several violations were detected during tours yesterday in Fahaheel between 1:00 pm and 2:15 pm. The ban started on June 1st and ends on August 31st. —Photos by Ben Garcia



KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait recently hosted a team from the Dasman Diabetes Institute, who gave free medical checks and advice to the bank's staff on diabetes prevention and the importance of early diagnosis.

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## Local

## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: An aerial view showing yachts docked near a beach in Shaab. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

# Ahli United Bank organizes blood donation campaign

## In cooperation with Al-Manabr Al-Quraniya Society

**KUWAIT:** Under the slogan of 'A Drop of Blood Saves My Life,' Ahli United Bank organized a blood donation campaign on Thursday, July 18 at the Boulevard Complex in cooperation with Al-Manabr Al-Quraniya Society and Kuwait Central Blood Bank.

This campaign is an extension of AUB's notable endeavors and initiatives in the field of healthcare, in an effort to spread the culture of charitable efforts, and support the noble humanitarian goal in the field of giving. AUB launched many blood donation campaigns at its Head Office with the participation of a large number of the Bank employees who rushed to donate their blood and demonstrated great cooperation and a remarkable understanding of the importance of blood donation in saving the lives of many people whose lives depend on a few drops of blood.

Sahar Dashti, General Manager Customer Protection, who is also the Head of AUB Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Team, made the following statement in a press release: "Through this campaign, we aim to entrench the values of participation and solidarity among the community. There is no doubt that raising awareness on the importance of blood donation is a noble goal that deserves everyone to join hands to achieve it, especially that such a donation is a very simple process and beneficial at the same time for the donor's health, while it can save the lives of many patients and injured people who need blood transfusions."

Dashti commended the tremendous response to AUB's blood donation campaign, both from the bank's employees, their families and visitors of the Boulevard Park, affirming that the turnout to these campaigns reflects the growing community awareness about the importance of donating blood to save many lives. Dashti expressed gratitude to the

officials of Al-Manabr Al-Quraniya Society and Kuwait Central Blood Bank for their cooperation in making this initiative a success, calling on all members of the community to join hands to continue awareness programs on this vital issue.

On this occasion, Hussain Al-Enzi, Director of the Public Relations and Media Department of Al-Manabr Al-Quraniya Society, affirmed that this campaign comes in



### Great turnout from many segments of the society

recognition of the Holy Quran verse which translates to "And whoever saves one, it is as if he had saved mankind entirely." The blood donation drive received great turnout and participation from many segments of the society, both young and old, men and women, stressing that this interaction confirms the love of this people to give and provide charity and good will to others.

Enzi pointed out that this humanitarian initiative comes out of Al-Manabr Al-Quraniya Society's concern to establish the Quranic and Prophetic values, explaining that this type of campaigns is a manifestation of solidarity in our society whose members care about each other, in recogni-



KUWAIT: AUB General Manager Customer Protection Sahar Dashti with number of AUB and Al-Manabr Al-Quraniya employees.

tion of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) saying: "The believers in their mutual kindness, compassion and sympathy are just like one body. When one part suffers, the whole body

responds to it with wakefulness and fever." He also pointed out that this campaign aims to save the lives of others who are in dire need of blood transfusion.

## Kuwaiti artist participates in Italian-Arab exhibition

**ROME:** Among a potpourri of Italian poets and artists, Kuwait's Tariq Hamada participated in an international exhibition at the Islamic Cultural Center in Rome. Secretary General of the Islamic Center of the Great Mosque of Rome Dr Abdullah Radwan kick started the exhibition titled 'A look to the East' with the attendance of Italian and Arab media officials and diplomats.

The exhibition will carry on until July 27, featuring paintings, calligraphy, sculptures, photographs, poems and Arabic calligraphy from Italy, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Libya and Morocco. Hamada said that he was honored to participate in the exhibition with his work that showcases aesthetic scenes of Kuwait between the past and present, documenting its renaissance in various fields.

He also valued Kuwait's special care for art and artists

under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA



ROME: Kuwaiti artist Tariq Hamada participates in the Italian-Arab exhibition. — KUNA

## Increasing growth in GCC food industry, report says

**KUWAIT:** The food industry is experiencing an increasing growth in the GCC due to several demographic and financial factors, a recent report said, noting that significant changes are likely to be structural in the near future as a result of new phenomena.

These phenomena include the increasing proliferation of demand-driven web applications and their impact on the retail and restaurant sectors, said a report released by Leaders Group Consulting and Development as it prepares to organize the ninth session of HORECA Kuwait, an exhibition featuring companies in the hospitality, food industries, hotel and restaurant supplies' fields.

"There are many developments in the food sector in the world, and these developments, given the enormity of the food sector in the region, require appropriate attention from those involved in the hospitality and food sectors," Nabila Al-Anjari, General Manager of Leaders Group, said in the report which highlights the latest developments in the food industry and hospitality business.

She pointed out statistics from recent research firms studies which indicate that the food and beverage sector in the GCC region will continue to grow from \$130 billion in 2018 to \$196 billion in just two years. While



Nabila Al-Anjari

Kuwait's local food market is about \$30 billion, the third market in the region after Saudi Arabia and the UAE, it has the highest expected annual growth, she said.

"Some markets in the region are experiencing increasing competition as some companies rely on mobile applications and food delivery companies," Anjari said. "Some data indicates that sales of some restaurants and food establishments have increased as a result. But it takes more time and experience to give clear figures and results, especially in small markets. It is clear that restaurants that have started mobile applications are starting to benefit from improved consumer and customer service in an unprecedented manner, especially for large restaurants and fast food chains, as applications provide a lot of information, statistics, feedback and even suggestions, and promote loyalty to restaurants."

"Some industry data in a number of major consumer markets indicate that food deliveries have jumped within two years, rising from less than 10 percent to 30 percent of restaurant sales in major cities," Anjari noted. "On the other hand, many reports confirm that applications and courier companies are not as profitable for restaurants and food items as the large sales volume (a little profit base per unit and a lot of sales)."

Local

# Man killed, two injured in two-boat collision in Salmiya

Salwa building fire leaves two people hurt; firemen battle huge Amghara blaze

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

**KUWAIT:** A Kuwaiti man was killed and two others were injured after two boats collided near the scientific center. The accident was handled by Salmiya sea fire station. Separately, a building in Salwa caught fire, so Bidaa and Mishref fire stations responded and found parts of the building were cracked due to the blaze, which started in the basement. The building was evacuated and the fire was put out. The building's haris (janitor) sustained various burns, and an Asian helper suffered from smoke inhalation.

Meanwhile, Occupational Jahra, Sulaibikhat, Tahreer and back-up fire stations battled a blaze at the Amghara



KUWAIT: Firemen help a man who was injured in a two-boat collision in Salmiya.



Firemen move a stretcher to help one of the men injured in the two-boat collision accident.



## Friends fight over card game

scrap yard yesterday morning. The fire was in a 2,500-square-meter area containing wood, furniture and other material. In the meantime, a Kabd farm used as a store containing tents and tires caught fire. Kabd firemen contained the fire and put it out. No injuries were reported.

### Fight over card game

Two Kuwaitis traded blows during a card game, then traded charges at the police station. Al-Rai reported yesterday. The two had a heated argument while playing at the diwaniya of a friend that escalated to a physical fight. Other friends stepped in and broke up the fight, yet the two went to the police station and each accused the other of starting the fight. Police are investigating.

### Harasser at large

A harasser forcefully stopped a Kuwaiti woman on Arabian Gulf Road and gave her his phone number, begging her to call him, reported Al-Rai. She lodged a complaint against him. The woman told police that the man chased her while driving and forced her to stop, and did not leave until she took a paper with his number

on it. Police are seeking to arrest him and he will face legal action if charged.

### Car stolen

A Kuwaiti woman accused her estranged husband of stealing her car, telling police that he is the only one with a spare key for it. A source quoted in an Al-Rai report said the ex-husband is being summoned for questioning over the charges.

### Drug dealer caught

Police arrested a Kuwaiti drug pusher, and he was sent to concerned authorities. Police on a routine patrol stopped and searched the man and found 36 illicit tablets and three heroin envelopes with him. He told them he was selling them, according to an Al-Rai report.

### Swindling

An Egyptian woman was swindled by a compatriot, who convinced her to import ceramics and took KD 2,600 from her. A police source quoted by Al-Rai yesterday said the victim told police that her compatriot, who works in a ceramics shop, convinced her to partner with him to import ceramics at a cheap price, then asked her to pay him KD 2,600. The victim took a loan from a bank and gave him the money, but he started avoiding her before disappearing completely. Detectives are investigating.



A fire engine is seen outside a Salwa building where a fire was reported.



A fire at farm in Kabd.



Firemen battle the blaze in Amghara.



KUWAIT: Safety department director at Mubarak Al-Kabeer municipality branch Maisaa Bushehri said a tour at companies resulted in issuing four citations for violations of using state property for containers, equipment and workers' rest area over an area of 4,088 square meters without a license. The total fines for the violations is KD 46,614. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun



KUWAIT: A joint workshop between Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) and the Ministry of Electricity and Water was held in order to get oriented with power stations and means of reducing and confronting fires in them. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

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Britain repeats demand for Iran to release tanker, mulls response

UK leadership favorite Johnson hits more turmoil on last voting day

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MAARET AL-NUMAN, Syria: Members of the Syrian civil defense, known as the White Helmets, pull a victim out of the rubble of a building following reported air strikes by pro-regime forces on Maaret al-Numan in Syria's northwestern Idlib province. —AFP

# Airstrikes kill 43 civilians in Syria

## Moscow denies strike, calls reports 'fake'

**MAARET AL-NUMAN, Syria:** Regime and Russian air strikes killed 43 people in northwest Syria yesterday, most of them in a crowded market, a war monitor said, in the latest violence to plague the opposition bastion. In the town of Maaret al-Numan in Idlib province, men drenched in blood were carried away by residents and rescue workers, who used mattresses as makeshift stretchers, an AFP photographer said.

He saw the corpse of one man sprawled on the ground near a motorcycle, rubble surrounding his lifeless body. With his eyes closed and his face covered in dust, another man clutched the arms of two people helping him out of the bombed area, the photographer added. Thirty five civilians and two unidentified people were killed in raids that hit the vegetable market and surrounding areas in Maaret al-Numan, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which blamed the airstrikes on regime ally Russia.

Moscow, however, denied it was responsible, calling the reports "fake". "The Russian air force was not carrying out any missions in this part of Syria," said a defense ministry statement. More than 100 other peo-

ple were wounded, according to the monitor, which said many of those injured were in a critical condition and people trapped under rubble. The White Helmets rescue group said one of its volunteers was killed during the raids, raising the number of rescue workers killed since April to at least 6.

### Fragile truce

The jihadist-run Idlib region, home to some three million people, is supposed to be protected by a months-old international truce deal, but it has come under increased bombardment by the Syrian regime and its ally Russia since late April. The spike in violence has killed more than 650 civilians and damaged or knocked out of service two dozen health facilities. More than 330,000 people have fled violence in the area over the past three months, according to the United Nations.

In the Idlib town of Saraqib, another six civilians were killed in regime airstrikes yesterday, the Observatory said. Meanwhile, retaliatory rocket fire by jihadists and allied rebels killed seven civilians in

the northern countryside of Hama province, state-run SANA news agency said. Russia and rebel backer Turkey brokered an agreement in September seeking to stave off an all-out regime assault on Idlib, but the deal was never fully implemented as jihadists refused to withdraw from a planned buffer zone.

The Hayat Tahrir al-Sham group, led by ex-members of Al-Qaeda's former Syria affiliate, in January extended its control over the region, which spans most of Idlib province as well as slivers of the adjacent provinces of Latakia, Hama, and Aleppo. On Sunday, air strikes on Idlib killed 18 people, including a young citizen journalist. Anas al-Dyab, a photographer and videographer in his early 20s, was a member of the White Helmets who also contributed to AFP. He was killed in Russian air strikes in his hometown of Khan Sheikun, rescuers and the Observatory said.

### Crisis within a crisis

The Idlib region "has fast become one of most dangerous places in the world for civilians and aid workers today; a crisis within a crisis", said David Swanson

of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. "This violence must stop and it must stop now," he told AFP. In Damascus, President Bashar al-Assad yesterday received two Vatican cardinals who handed him a letter from Pope Francis expressing "deep concern for the humanitarian situation in Syria, especially the dramatic conditions of the civilian population in Idlib".

Regime forces have been locked in battle with jihadists and allied rebels on the edges of the Idlib region but have failed to secure significant advances. According to Sam Heller, an analyst at the International Crisis Group think-tank (ICG), the violence is likely to continue until "Russia and Turkey reach an agreement to calm" the frontline. In the meantime, "each side will try to put pressure on the other through their Syrian partners on the ground" or "directly, (as) with the Russian bombing of parts of Idlib", he added. Syria's war has killed a total of more than 370,000 people and displaced millions since it started in 2011 with a brutal crackdown on anti-government protests. —AFP

## Paris braces for record heat as Europe scorched

**PARIS:** Parisians were yesterday bracing for potentially the hottest ever temperature in the French capital this week as a new heatwave blasted into northern Europe that could set records in several countries. Temperatures were already set to top 30 degrees Celsius (86 degrees Fahrenheit) yesterday in Paris, but the mercury could soar beyond 40C on Thursday and topple a temperature record dating back to 1947.

The severe heat, which forecasters say will only last a few days but will be exceptionally intense, is expected to affect northern France and parts of Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. "It's likely that these three countries see temperatures at or above 40C for the first time," Francois Jobard, a forecaster from the French Meteo France weather office, told AFP. The new blast of hot air comes less than a month after a heatwave scorched Europe at the end of June, forcing new attention on the issue of climate change. "The heatwave that is too much," said the headline in the Le Parisien daily on Monday, highlighting that "Act

II" of this summer's severe weather would further hurt production of crops from potatoes to grapes.

### Historically hot

"Thursday (July 25) will be a potentially historically hot day," added Jobard from Meteo France. "We are forecasting 41 or 42 degrees in Paris on Thursday and there is the strong chance of beating the record," he added. The highest ever temperature recorded in Paris was 40.4 degrees Celsius in 1947. Since records began in 1873, this was the only time a plus-40 temperature was recorded in the French capital, he said. Other French cities could also see their all time records tumble on Thursday including Reims, Bourges, Lille and Clermont Ferrand, he said. Britain will also see high temperatures, but will still be significantly cooler than countries on the continent. Forecasters predict there is a chance the 36.7 degrees Celsius (98.1 degrees Fahrenheit) record high for July—set on July 1, 2015 at London Heathrow Airport—will be broken.

Germany was already experiencing several forest fires and drying river beds while farmers fear another bad crop after last year's low yield which was also caused by an unusually hot summer. The French government has warned that wine production will be down by between six to 13 percent over 2018, notably because of the ongoing heatwave. Huge wildfires that have ravaged the mountainous Castelo

Branco region of central Portugal and left dozens injured have been "90 percent" controlled, firefighters said yesterday, but warned that strong winds could cause the flames to spread.

### Global warming?

The new heatwave in northern Europe came as the United States also sweltered in extreme hot temperatures. The New York City Triathlon, which had been scheduled for Sunday, was cancelled for the first time since its founding in 2001. Scientists are increasingly confident that man-made climate change is driving up the length and intensity of heatwaves—the period of record-breaking temperatures in June was found to have been between five and 100 times more likely due to global warming. The three-day temperature peak from June 26-28 in France was four degrees Celsius hotter than an equally rare June heatwave would have been in 1900, the World Weather Attribution (WWA) team said this month. One study by the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology also said the deadly, weeks-long heatwave across northern Europe in 2018 would have been statistically impossible without climate change. France saw its highest ever temperature on June 28 — 46.0 degrees Celsius in Verargues in the Hérault department of southern France. With the south of the country spared the worst of the current hot blast, this new all-time record is not expected to be challenged for now. —AFP

## British MP charged with sexual assaults

**LONDON:** A British MP from the governing Conservative Party was charged yesterday after being accused of sexually assaulting two women. Charlie Elphicke, 48, was charged with three counts of sexual assault, London's Metropolitan Police said in a statement. He is accused of assaulting one woman in 2007 and a second woman twice in 2016. The MP for Dover and Deal, on the southeast tip of England, is due to appear in court in central London on September 6.

"Charlie Elphicke has said from the outset that he denies any wrongdoing," said his lawyer Ellen Peart. "He will defend himself vigorously and is confident that he will clear his name." Elphicke was suspended from the Conservatives in November 2017 after allegations against him were referred to police. Prime

Minister Theresa May controversially restored him to the Conservative ranks in December 2018, shortly before she faced a vote of no confidence.

The party said yesterday he had now been suspended from the Conservatives again, meaning the government's majority in parliament's lower House of Commons is now just two: 320 to 318. The majority formed by the Conservatives and their Democratic Unionist backers—has dwindled from 13 after the June 2017 general election. The new suspension means Britain's incoming prime minister—either former London mayor Boris Johnson or Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt will take over from May on Wednesday—has even tighter leeway as they attempt to deliver Brexit.

Britain is due to leave the European Union on October 31. Elphicke backed Britain remaining in the EU in the 2016 referendum. A former tax lawyer, Elphicke was first elected to parliament in 2010 and was a government whip from 2015 to 2016, tasked with enforcing voting discipline among Conservative MPs. —AFP

## International

# Britain repeats demand for Iran to release tanker, mulls response

## May chairs emergency meeting with ministers, officials

**LONDON:** Britain repeated its demand yesterday for Iran to release a UK-flagged tanker seized in the Gulf, as Prime Minister Theresa May's government held crisis talks on how to respond. In a dramatic escalation of tensions, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps seized the Stena Impero on Friday in the strategic Strait of Hormuz. The move came two weeks after British authorities seized an Iranian tanker off Gibraltar on suspicion of breaching sanctions against Syria, and against a backdrop of brinkmanship between Washington and Tehran.

"The ship was seized under false and illegal pretences and the Iranians should release it and its crew immediately," May's spokesman said as she chaired an emergency meeting with ministers and officials. "We do not seek confrontation with Iran but it is unacceptable and highly escalatory to seize a ship going about legitimate business through internationally recognized shipping lanes." Iran impounded the tanker after claiming it failed to respond to distress calls and turned off its transponder after hitting a fishing boat.

"Seizing the British tanker was a legal measure by Iran," a spokesman for the Iranian government, Ali Rabiee, told a news conference in Tehran yesterday. However, Britain has said there was no evidence of a collision and said the vessel was in Omani waters, with its transponder switched on. Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, who is expected to update parliament on the situation after the crisis talks, spoke to his French and German counterparts on Sunday. The EU has already expressed its "deep concern" at the move, and yesterday, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said: "We don't want any further escalation." There have been a number of attacks on tankers in the Strait of Hormuz since May, when the US boosted its military presence in response to what it called indications of a "credible threat" from Iran.

### Shipping fears

Oil prices jumped yesterday on fresh concerns about supplies and a possible conflict in the crude-rich Middle East. The British government had warned its ships to avoid the shipping channel, a chokepoint for about a third of the world's sea-borne oil. But questions are being asked in London about why it was

not more proactive in protecting ships after the Gibraltar incident, which provoked fury in Tehran.

The stand-off comes at a sensitive time for Britain, with May stepping down on Wednesday over her failure to deliver Brexit. Former foreign minister Boris Johnson is the overwhelming favorite to replace her. May's spokesman said the high volume of ships moving through the Strait of Hormuz "makes it impossible to escort vessels individually". However, he said Monday's talks will look at how to reassure commercial vessels in the region, as well as Britain's response to Iran's action.

Finance Minister Philip Hammond said on Sunday: "We've already got a wide raft of sanctions against Iran, particularly financial sanctions, so it's not clear that there are immediate things we can do. "But we are of course looking at all the options."

### Release Gibraltar ship

Iranian authorities have said the crew — 18 Indians, including the captain, three Russians, a Latvian and a Filipino—are all in good health. Tehran said at the weekend that the fate of the Stena Impero depends on an investigation into its alleged breach of international maritime rules. The incident on Friday began hours after a court in the tiny British territory of Gibraltar extended by 30 days the detention of the Iranian tanker, Grace 1, which was seized on July 4.

"To all the countries that are calling on Iran to release the tanker, we ask them to tell Britain the same thing," the Iranian spokesman said yesterday. The incidents come amid escalating tensions between Tehran and Washington, which have left European nations caught in the middle. In May 2018, President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the US from a landmark 2015 deal that put curbs on Iran's nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief.

Britain, France and Germany were also signatories and have been trying to keep the deal alive. But the US administration reimposed tough sanctions on Iran, which retaliated by increasing its enrichment of uranium beyond limits set in the nuclear accord. Last month, Trump called off air strikes against Iran at the last minute after Tehran downed a US drone. —AFP



**AT SEA:** This combination of file pictures shows Iranian soldiers taking part in the 'National Persian Day' in the Strait of Hormuz (up) and the amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LHD 4) receiving a vertical replenishment-at-sea in the Arabian Sea. —AFP

## Anger soars over vicious mob attack on Hong Kong protesters

**HONG KONG:** Anger soared in Hong Kong yesterday over a vicious assault on pro-democracy protesters by suspected triad gangsters that left dozens wounded, a dramatic escalation of the political turmoil plaguing the Chinese city. The financial hub's roiling unrest took a dark turn late Sunday when gangs of men-most wearing white T-shirts and carrying bats, sticks and metal poles-set upon anti-government demonstrators as they returned from another huge march earlier that day.

Footage broadcast live on Facebook showed people screaming as the men beat multiple protesters and journalists in Yuen Long station and inside subway trains, leaving pools of blood on the floor. Hospital authorities said 45 people were wounded in the attack, with one man in critical condition and five others with serious injuries.

Critics rounded on the city's embattled police force, accusing officers of taking more than an hour to reach the site and failing to arrest the armed assailants who stayed in the streets around the station into Monday morning. Some men in white shirts were later filmed leaving the scene in cars with Chinese mainland number plates.

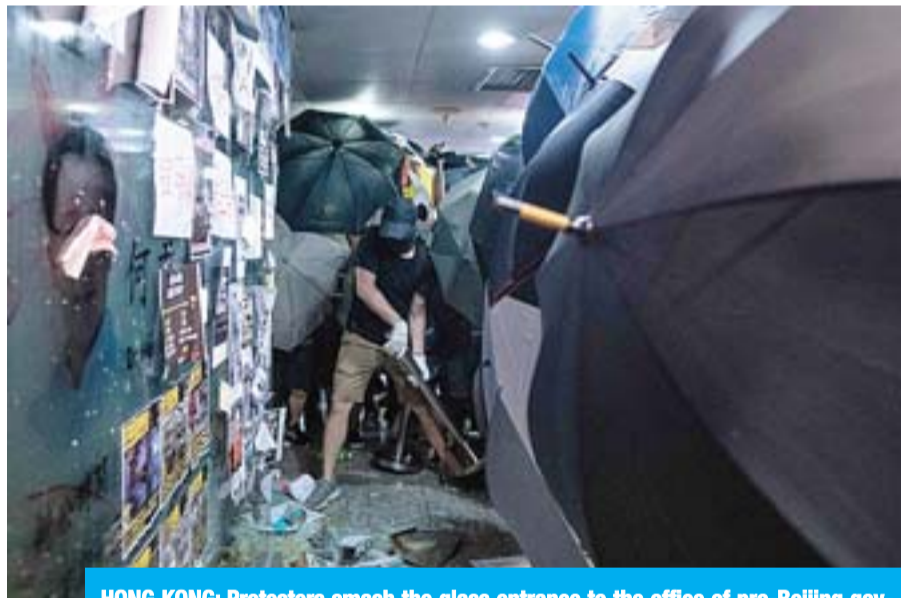
### 'Shame on the government'

Lam Cheuk-ting, a pro-democracy lawmaker, was one of those wounded in the melee, sustaining lacerations to his face and arms. He criticized police for their response and accused "triad members" of being behind the attacks. "Their very barbaric and violent acts have already completely violated the bottom line of Hong Kong's civilized society," he told reporters early Monday.

Furious fellow pro-democracy lawmakers held a press conference on Monday where they accused the city's pro-Beijing leaders of turning a blind eye to the attacks. "This is triad gangs beating up Hong Kong people," fumed legislator Alvin Yeung. "Yet you pretend nothing had happened?" City police chief Stephen Lo defended his force, saying his officers were busy dealing with violent anti-government protests elsewhere.

"Definitely our manpower is stretched," he told reporters, describing any suggestion police colluded with triads as a "smear" and adding his officers would pursue the attackers. The clashes have ratcheted up concern that the city's feared triad gangs are wading into the political conflict. Yuen Long lies in the New Territories near the Chinese border where the criminal gangs and staunchly pro-Beijing rural committees remain influential.

Similar assaults by pro-government vigilantes against demonstrators during the 2014 "Umbrella Movement" protests were blamed on triads. Yesterday afternoon, masked protesters trashed the office of staunch pro-Beijing lawmaker



**HONG KONG:** Protesters smash the glass entrance to the office of pro-Beijing government lawmaker Junius Ho in Hong Kong's Tsuen Wan district. —AFP

Junius Ho, who was filmed shaking hands with white-shirted men in Yuen Long shortly before Sunday's violence.

### China office targeted

Hong Kong has been plunged into its worst crisis in recent history by weeks of marches and sporadic violent confrontations between police and pockets of hardcore protesters. The initial protests were sparked by a now-suspended bill that would have allowed extraditions to mainland China, but they have since evolved into a wider movement calling for democratic reforms, universal suffrage and a halt to

sliding freedoms in the semi-autonomous territory.

The city's parliament was trashed by protesters earlier this month, as Beijing's authority faces its most serious challenge since Hong Kong was handed back to China in 1997. As the mob rampage unfolded in Yuen Long police were simultaneously battling hardcore pro-democracy protesters in the middle of the city's commercial district. Riot officers fired tear gas and rubber bullets at protesters, hours after China's Hong Kong Liaison Office was daubed with eggs and graffiti in a vivid rebuke to Beijing's rule. —AFP

## Monsoon toll tops 650 as rains unleash flood fury in S Asia

**NEW DELHI:** Severe floods and lightning have claimed the lives of more than 650 people across India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan, officials said yesterday as the annual monsoon took its toll on the rainfed region. More than 10 million people in the South Asian countries have been affected by the deluge, which has also forced tens of thousands to flee their homes. In India, heavy rains since the start of July have killed at least 467 people with many districts in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Assam states cut off because of flooding.

In Uttar Pradesh on Sunday, lightning strikes killed 37 people in separate incidents, a disaster management official told AFP. The latest fatalities took the northern state's toll to 228 dead. Eight children playing in the open in Bihar's Nawada district were also killed

by lightning on Friday, taking the toll in the eastern state to more than 100 as rivers overflowed their banks and swept away people, houses and cattle.

In Assam, 67 people have perished but the situation was likely to improve with no heavy rains predicted in the coming days. But the prospects were grim for southern India's coastal state of Kerala where authorities Monday warned of "extremely heavy falls" in isolated places. India's coastal Karnataka, West Bengal and Himalayan Sikkim states were also bracing for heavy downpours. More than 70 people have also died in building collapses in Maharashtra and Himachal Pradesh states following substantial rainfalls.

In neighboring Nepal, 90 people have died and another 29 are missing, although the worst seems to be over in the Himalayan country. "Rains have been predicted this week and we are on alert, but we don't expect it to have a severe impact," home ministry official Bedh Nidhi Khanal said. Torrential rains in flood-prone Bangladesh have killed more than 97 people-most by drowning and lightning strikes-in the last two weeks, with swathes of agricultural fields lying inundated.



**KATHMANDU:** In this file photo a Nepal resident walks through floodwaters after the Balkhu River overflowed following monsoon rains at the Kalanki area of Kathmandu. —AFP

A third of the country has been submerged as major rivers including the Brahmaputra-which broke a 44-year water-level record last week-and the Ganges burst their banks from heavy rains and from water from India and Nepal. At least 30 people have also lost

their lives in Pakistan. While the annual rains are crucial to replenishing water supplies in the impoverished region, they often turn deadly. Experts blame poor planning, the lack of drainage facilities and tardy relief operations for the casualties. —AFP

## More Basra water crises unless Iraq govt fixes 'failures'

**BAGHDAD:** Human Rights Watch yesterday warned of a repeat of last year's deadly water crisis in Iraq's oil-rich southern province of Basra unless authorities correct decades of management failures. Nearly 120,000 people were hospitalized last summer after drinking polluted water, in a mass health crisis that sparked deadly protests against the dire state of public services. In a damning report, HRW found the generally poor state of water quality was likely compounded by algae that rapidly spread last year in the Shatt al-Arab waterway that runs through Basra and provides it with its primary water source.

It indicated that the algae, pollution and high salination could together have sparked the mass health crisis. "These combined failures violate Basra residents' rights to water, sanitation, health, information, and property guaranteed under international and national law," it said. HRW slammed Iraqi officials as "short-sighted", saying they had not properly communicated with citizens about the emergency at the time, nor released the results of probes in the year since or dealt with underlying causes.

"While solving Basra's water crisis will take serious planning, time, and money, it is possible to address so long as authorities take their responsibilities seriously," said Lama Fakih, HRW's acting Middle East director. "The alternative is deadly." The report relies on dozens of interviews with residents of Basra, experts and government officials as well as analysis of satellite imagery. —AFP

## Turkey to expel Syrians living illegally in Istanbul

**ISTANBUL:** Syrians living illegally in Istanbul have until August 20 to leave the city or face expulsion, authorities warned yesterday, as hostility mounts towards the millions of refugees in Turkey. Turkey has 3.5 million Syrian refugees-more than any other country-but they are only under "temporary protection" because the government does not offer them formal refugee status. Under the system, they must stay in the province to which they are assigned, and can only visit other cities with short-term passes.

In a statement published in Turkish and Arabic, the Istanbul governor's office said it would no longer tolerate Syrians who are assigned to other provinces. "Foreigners of Syrian nationality who are not registered under the system of temporary protection or who do not have a residency permit will be expelled to their designated provinces by the Ministry of the Interior," it said. Those without any registration papers at all would be sent back to Syria, it added. —AFP

## International

## UK leadership favorite Johnson hits more turmoil on last voting day

## Johnson doubles-down on pledge to take Britain out of EU

LONDON: Britain's leadership contest entered its final yesterday with the favorite Boris Johnson facing more defections from ministers over his Brexit plan. The month-long contest between former London mayor Johnson and Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt is being decided by fewer than 200,000 grassroots members of the governing Conservative Party. The winner will have three months to resolve a three-year Brexit crisis that could damage economies on both sides of the Channel and determine the fate of generations of Britons. The voting window shuts at 5 pm. The new party leader will be announced on Tuesday and take over as prime minister on Wednesday.

## Rocky road

Both candidates have had a rocky end to a campaign whose closing stages are being waged against a backdrop of a high-stakes standoff with Iran in the Gulf. Finance Secretary Philip Hammond announced Sunday that he would make a point of resigning before Johnson becomes prime minister because of his threat to take Britain out of the EU by an October 31 deadline without a deal. Pro-EU Foreign Office minister Alan Duncan announced Monday that he was also quitting "in anticipation of the change on Wednesday".

"It is tragic that just when we could have been the dominant intellectual and political force throughout Europe, and beyond, we have to spend every day working beneath the dark cloud of Brexit," he wrote in his resignation letter to outgoing Prime Minister Theresa May. London newspapers were filled with speculation that at least a half-dozen lower-ranking ministers may also jump ship over the coming days. But Johnson doubled-down on his pledge to take Britain safely out of the EU with the help of a new technological fix for avoiding a hard border with EU member Ireland.

"They went to the Moon 50 years ago. Surely today we can solve the logistical issues of the Irish border," Johnson wrote in his weekly column for The Daily Telegraph. Hunt has also faced criticism over his handling of Iran's seizure of a British-flagged tanker in the Gulf on Friday. Several ministers accused him Sunday of devoting too much time to his leadership challenge and not enough on his diplomatic duties. May was due to chair a meeting of Britain's COBRA emergencies committee to prepare a response to the standoff in what will be one of her final acts in office. Hunt is expected to update parliament on the situation in the Gulf at around 1430 GMT.

## Commanding lead

An online poll of 1,199 Conservative Party members conducted Friday and Saturday by the Conservative Home website put Johnson on 73 percent. Bookmakers give Hunt around a one in 20 chance of winning. The Conservatives command a razor-thin majority in parliament's lower House of Commons and Johnson's opponents—both within and outside the party—are keen to scupper his leadership. Johnson's pledge to take Britain out of the EU with our without a deal has upset pro-EU government ministers and frightened the markets.

The pound is trading near a two-year low against the dollar and the euro, and parliamentarians are plotting for ways to stop Johnson from taking Britain out of the EU without a strategy for unwinding 46 years of intricate ties. Conservatives MPs like Hammond have hinted they are prepared to bring down their own government rather than accept leaving the EU without an agreement. "I cannot accept the idea of leaving with no deal on October 31," Hammond said on Sunday.

Justice Secretary David Gauke also said Sunday he would quit the government if Johnson became prime minister. May's tumultuous three years in office will end once she appears in parliament on Wednesday for



LONDON: Conservative Party leadership candidate Boris Johnson, center, leaves his campaign offices in Westminster in Central London on the eve of the announcement of the winner of the Conservative Party leadership contest. — AFP

her weekly question-and-answer sessions. Elizabeth II. The head of state will then invite She will head from there to Buckingham Palace to tender her resignation to Queen the new Conservative leader to form an administration. — AFP

## Puerto Rico governor to not seek reelection

SAN JUAN: Puerto Rico's Governor Ricardo Rossello announced Sunday that he will not seek reelection next year after more than a week of protests demanding his resignation following the release of compromising chats. "I have listened, and I am listening to you today," Rossello said in a video posted on Facebook. "I have made mistakes and I have apologized."

"I admit that apologizing is not enough. In this case, I announce that I will not seek reelection as governor next year," he said, adding that he will also leave the presidency of the New Progressive Party. The politician, who advocates statehood for the US territory of Puerto Rico, had said in March that he would seek reelection in polls scheduled for November 2020. Rossello also said that he would face impeachment proceedings being studied by the legislature "with all the truth, force and in a responsible manner."

Former governor Alejandro Garcia Padilla told Telemundo that Rossello "is buying time to see if the protests die down." On Sunday, hundreds of people gathered in front of the governor's residence, chanting slogans such as "They will not stop us" and holding signs that said "Ricky resign." Protests erupted in Puerto Rico last week after the leak of hundreds of pages of text chats on the encrypted messaging app Telegram in which Rossello and 11 other male administration members criticize officials, politicians and journalists.

In one exchange, chief financial officer Christian Sobrino makes homophobic references to Latin superstar Ricky Martin. In another, a mocking comment is made about bodies piled up in the morgue after Hurricane Maria, which left nearly 3,000 dead. Rossello is also under pressure after US federal agents arrested contractors and government officials—including former education secretary Julia Keleher—on corruption charges.

Police fired tear gas at the crowd on Monday after a fire broke out near the government headquarters. Five protesters were arrested. Local celebrity performers such as rapper Benito Martinez ("Bad Bunny"), pop icon Martin and Rene Perez ("Residente") urged their fellow Puerto Ricans to turn out on Wednesday for a demonstration that drew thousands of people. — AFP

## End in sight for US heat wave that set temperature records

WASHINGTON: The United States sweltered in dangerously hot weather on Sunday, with major cities including New York, Philadelphia and Washington broiling in temperatures that rose into triple digits. An oppressive heat wave stretching from the Midwestern plains to the Atlantic coast had nearly 150 million people struggling to stay cool in stifling heat that set records in a handful of states.

By Sunday afternoon, the National Weather Service (NWS) said the high temperatures would soon be over, but the severe weather would continue. "The dangerous heat wave which enveloped much of the Midwest to the East Coast this weekend should finally break by Monday as a cold front drops southward," the agency said. However it warned that "showers and thunderstorms... with heavy to excessive rainfall and severe weather possible" were expected across a swath of the east coast, and flash floods were a risk.

Around 95 million people were under a heat warning or advisory for Sunday, down from Saturday's 157 million. Earlier in the day the NWS said "numerous stations" stretching from Massachusetts in the north to North Carolina in the south "were reporting heat index values between 100-110" degrees, with the highest values found in the southeast of the state of Virginia. Authorities urged people on Sunday to stay hydrated, watch out for the sick and elderly, stay inside as much as possible and not leave children or animals in cars.

"We're almost near the end of the heat emergency. Temperatures will start to go back down tonight," New York Mayor Bill de Blasio tweeted, asking the city's residents to "keep hydrated and keep cool." The NWS said it had recorded all-time high temperatures on Saturday in seven places in the US including Manchester, New Hampshire, Atlantic City, New Jersey and New York's JFK airport. US media has blamed the heat wave for at least six deaths, including a hiker who had been found unconscious on a trail outside Washington on Saturday and two people who died earlier in the week in the eastern state of Maryland.

In Arkansas, 32-year-old former NFL player Mitch Petrus died of heatstroke Thursday after working outside his family's shop. The New York City Triathlon, which had



NEW YORK: People cool off on a hot afternoon in Flushing Meadows Park, in New York City. — AFP

been scheduled for Sunday, was canceled for the first time since its founding in 2001. Life Time, which produces the race, donated more than 12 tons of water and Gatorade Endurance drink meant for competitors to be distributed to New Yorkers in need, CBS reported. Meanwhile, the two-day OZY Fest—a food, comedy and music festival set for Central Park—was also called off. In Washington, a popular weekly outdoor summer jazz concert at the National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden was canceled.

## Deadly conditions

"Sunday has been canceled. Stay indoors, nothing to see here. Really, we got this," The New York City Police Department wrote on Twitter. The city had opened 500 cooling centers for residents. At least three public defenders said on Twitter that inmates in New York's notorious Rikers Island jail complex were suffering with no air conditioning, and that some guards had turned off fans as punishment, resulting in "deadly conditions."

The Brooklyn Defender Services legal aid group

said some inmates didn't have summer clothing, only long underwear provided by the group last winter. Top officials from the city's Department of Corrections were at the facility monitoring the response to the heat wave to "protect health and safety of everyone in the facility," de Blasio wrote on Twitter. The department said in a statement to AFP that extra staff were on hand to distribute summer clothing, and clinics were open around the clock to treat heat-related symptoms.

Those in units without air conditioning were given access to fans, ice, water and "multiple cool showers." Earlier in the week, the National Weather Service office in the Midwestern city of Omaha baked a tray of biscuits—savory breakfast bread similar to scones—on the dashboard of a parked car. After nearly eight hours and with temperatures on the pan reaching 185 degrees, the pastries were almost fully cooked. Climate data showed June was the hottest month on record worldwide, with a heat wave across Europe smashing national records. — AFP

## Zelensky party heads for absolute majority in Ukraine

KIEV: Ukraine's comedian-turned-president Volodymyr Zelensky is set to control an absolute majority in parliament, ushering in a generational shift in the ex-Soviet country's political arena. The 41-year-old became Ukraine's youngest ever post-Soviet leader when he took office two months ago and has promised to stamp out corruption and end a separatist war. His newly created Servant of the People party—named after a sitcom in which he played a president—took around 42 percent of the weekend vote, with 50 percent of votes counted.

Media projections yesterday showed this puts the party on track to pick up more than half of the parliament's 450 seats, the best showing by any party in Ukraine's post-1991 history. The result is the culmination of a stunning turnaround in Ukrainian politics and will bring a host of newcomers into parliament and government. One of the many young and politically inexperienced future lawmakers that will enter parliament is Zhan Beleniuk, a 28-year-old Olympic wrestler with Rwandan roots.

Four other parties—including one openly supported by the Kremlin—passed the five percent threshold to enter the assembly, the results showed. At 49.8 percent, the turnout was the lowest of any election in Ukraine's post-independence history. It was initially thought Zelensky would have to form a coalition. The president had indicated a preference for another



KIEV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky gives a speech at his Servant of the People party's election headquarters in Kiev. — AFP

new political force, the Golos (Voice) party of rock star Svyatoslav Vakarchuk.

The singer's party, also packed with young professionals like Zelensky's, made it to parliament with six percent of the vote, according to the latest results. Servant of the People party chief Dmitry Razumkov said yesterday that the party was "open for dialogue" with forces that share a similar "basic vision for our country." Speaking shortly after exit polls were released Sunday, Zelensky said his primary goals were to bring peace and tackle corruption.

"Our main priorities—and I repeat this for every Ukrainian—are to end the war, return our prisoners and defeat the corruption that persists in Ukraine," he said at his party's election headquarters. He also said he was looking for a "new face and a specialist in the economy" to become the next prime minister.

## Pro-Russia party second

Ukraine's new government will face a long list

of challenges in a country heavily dependent on foreign aid and scarred by years of war with Russia-backed separatists. The conflict has killed 13,000 in five years. After more than a decade's absence, an ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin, Viktor Medvedchuk, will return to the Ukrainian parliament. His pro-Moscow party Opposition Platform—For Life came second in the vote with 12.8 percent. The Russian leader is godfather to Medvedchuk's daughter.

Medvedchuk told AFP that peace in eastern Ukraine can only happen "with Russia's help" and that restoring relations with Moscow is "vital" for Kiev. Former president Petro Poroshenko's European Solidarity party and former prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko's party Batkivshyna (Fatherland) also entered parliament with 8.6 and 8 percent of the vote respectively, results showed. Analyst Anatoly Oktyssyuk said that while it may appear that all power is in Zelensky's hands, he faces a tough opposition from both Poroshenko and Medvedchuk. "He will be in a difficult situation. They will create serious problems for him," he said.

The comedian's victory in April was seen as a rejection of the country's traditional elite for failing to end the separatist conflict, revive the economy or tackle widespread corruption. Faced with a hostile parliament after his win, Zelensky quickly called a snap election and vowed to bring in a new generation of politicians to lead the country.

Twenty-six seats in Ukraine's parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, will be left empty as they represent Crimea, annexed by Russia, or territories controlled by separatists. Sporadic fighting continues along the frontlines, with four Ukrainian soldiers killed by sniper fire and mine blasts since Friday. — AFP

## Lost French submarine located in Mediterranean

PARIS: A private search vessel has located a French submarine that went missing in the western Mediterranean more than 50 years ago, officials said yesterday, raising hopes the mystery over the disappearance can finally be solved. "It's a success, a relief and a technical feat," Defense Minister Florence Parly wrote on Twitter, after the wreck was discovered off the southern French port of Toulon. "I am thinking of the families who have waited for this moment for so long."

The Minerve submarine was lost off France's southern coast with 52 sailors on board on January 17, 1968. Despite multiple search efforts over the years, it had never been found. Parly announced a new search mission at the beginning of 2019, backed by the latest technology and naval vessels, following fresh demands from the families of deceased sailors to find the remains of their loved ones. Tides and currents in the western Mediterranean were modeled by the team, while data from the time of the accident was also re-analyzed, including seismic reports indicating the likely

implosion of the vessel as it dropped to the seabed. But the discovery was ultimately made by a boat belonging to private US company Ocean Infinity, which found the Minerve 45 kilometers from Toulon at a depth of 2,370 meters, a senior French naval officer told AFP. The boat, the Seabed Constructor, arrived on the scene last Tuesday, the officer said on condition of anonymity. The Seabed Constructor was also successful in locating Argentina's lost San Juan submarine in November 2018 which had disappeared in the Atlantic Ocean a year earlier.

## Naval mystery

The cause of the accident involving the Minerve has never been announced. Experts have speculated that it could have been due to a problem with its rudder, a collision with another boat, the explosion of a missile or torpedo, or a fault with its oxygen supply systems. The 1960s were deadly times for submarine crews, with a host of accidents reported around the world. In April 1963, the nuclear-powered USS Thresher sank with 129 people aboard off Cape Cod, while 99 lives were lost in the USS Scorpion when it sank in the Atlantic five years later.

Also in 1968, the Soviet K-129 submarine armed with three nuclear missiles was lost in the North Pacific. It was found by the US in a covert operation in 1974. The year 1968 was also marked by the disappearance of The Dakar, an Israeli vessel carrying out its maiden voyage with 69 men on board. It disappeared and was only found off the Greek island of Crete in 1999. — AFP



## International

# Philippines' President Duterte urges lawmakers to restore death penalty

## Duterte allies back capital punishment for drug related crimes

**MANILA:** Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte urged lawmakers yesterday to bring back the death penalty as part of his internationally-condemned crackdown on narcotics in which police have already killed thousands. Buoyed by exceptionally high approval ratings and a legislature dominated by his allies, Duterte used his annual State of the Nation address to urge action on a key unrelaxed plank of his tough-on-crime stance.

"I respectfully request congress to reinstate the death penalty for heinous crimes related to drugs as well as plunder," he said referring also to the nation's deep rooted corruption problem. "My countrymen, it is a sad commentary that we cannot distinguish our need from our greed, our principles from prejudices," he told hundreds of assembled lawmakers, diplomats and celebrities in Manila.

Though his campaign is the subject of a recently launched review by the United Nations' rights body and preliminary inquiry from International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutors, he was defiant in his address. "Duterte-extrajudicial killing-report to the ICC," he said. "If you can provide me with a good comfortable cell, heated during winter time... unlimited conjugal visits, we can understand each other."

In May's mid-term elections Duterte allies won control of the Senate, which had stopped cold some of his most controversial proposals, including bringing back capital punishment. However, his allies, including the daughter of

deceased former dictator Ferdinand Marcos and the first head of Duterte's drug war, have said they would back the death penalty. Just as he began his 90-minute address he pointed to the popular support that underpins his brash rule, which faces censure for locking up detractors and attacking critical journalists.

"The latest survey results shows that my disapproval rating is 3 percent," he said to applause. It "inspires me with determination to pursue relentlessly what we have started." Yet, Duterte's embrace of China is a weak spot among segments of the Philippine public and he devoted a long section of his speech to defending his stance. The sinking last month of a Philippine fishing vessel by a Chinese boat in the disputed South China Sea stoked simmering anger over the issue.

Duterte set aside the once tense standoff over Beijing's extensive claims to the resource-rich waterway to court investment, but he faces accusations of trading away Philippine sovereignty. "China also claims the property and he is in possession. That is the problem," the president said. "We are claiming the same but we are not in possession." "I will send my marines there and drive away Chinese fishermen, I guarantee you not one of them will come alive," he added. His comments drew immediate rebukes from opposition lawmaker Risa Hontiveros. "It appeared like it was not a Philippine president speaking but a representative of China," she wrote on Twitter. —AFP



**MANILA:** Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte gestures as he delivers his state of the nation address at Congress in Manila. — AFP

## PNG leader presses Australia on stranded asylum seekers

**CANBERRA:** Visiting Papua New Guinea Prime Minister James Marape pressed Australian officials yesterday for a timeline to resettle asylum seekers stranded on PNG's Manus Island, but appeared to come away empty-handed. Marape, on his first overseas trip since taking office two months ago, met with Prime Minister Scott Morrison just days after calling on Canberra to establish a schedule for relocating several hundred would-be refugees sent to Manus under Australia's tough offshore detention policy.

But at a joint press conference in Canberra, Marape acknowledged he had not obtained any commitment. "It's a work in progress for us," he said. "We will ensure that we have a mutually workable timetable and closing program that is healthy for all of us, but more importantly, healthy for those people who have been part of us in Manus and PNG." Canberra introduced its policy of sending everyone caught trying to reach its shores by boat to processing centers in Manus and the Pacific island of Nauru six years ago on Friday, an occasion marked by weekend protests across Australia.

While many of the asylum seekers were eventually resettled, about 450 increasingly desperate men remain in Papua New Guinea, where there has been a spate of suicide attempts in recent weeks. Another 350 are still in Nauru. Morrison's conservative government has steadfastly refused to take in the asylum seekers from PNG—a former colony—or Nauru, insisting this would encourage more people to attempt the perilous sea journey to reach Australia.

### Rebalancing ties

Marape is the first foreign leader that Morrison has hosted on a state visit since his government was re-elected in May. The trip comes in the context of a push by Morrison to "step up" Australia's role in the Pacific to counter efforts by China to expand its economic and



**CANBERRA:** Papua New Guinea Prime Minister James Marape, center, inspect the Wall of Remembrance at the Australian War Memorial with director of the War Memorial Brendan Nelson, left, in Canberra. — AFP

diplomatic influence in the region. Morrison has announced a series of aid initiatives aimed at boosting electricity production and healthcare in PNG, one of the world's poorest nations despite being rich in natural resources.

Australia and the United States are also partnering with PNG to redevelop a naval base on Manus as a counterweight to Chinese power in the region. Since becoming prime minister, Marape has vowed to combat endemic corruption at home and rebalance the country's relationships with allies and multinational companies exploiting PNG's

mineral resources. Asked yesterday about increased Chinese activities in PNG, Marape said his government would provide an "equal playing field" for all investors, provided they adhere to "the rules and regulations" of the country. "Every businessman and woman is welcome in our country, and the Chinese investors will not receive any special treatment and preference, just like Australian investors will not receive any special favor or treatment," he told reporters. Marape is spending a week in Australia, where he will also meet with local officials and the large expatriate PNG community. — AFP

## Five dozen rescued from building fire in India's financial capital

**MUMBAI:** Five dozen people were rescued from a nine-storey government building that caught fire yesterday in India's financial capital of Mumbai, authorities said. "The rescue operation is nearly done. We are searching every floor of the building to find out whether anybody is left behind," a fire department official said. Fire broke out on the third and fourth floor of the building, which houses the office of state-owned telecoms company MTNL, prompting employees to go to the rooftop of the building. The rescue was carried out by a team of 175 firemen and 14 fire engines. Municipal authorities initially estimated 100 people could have been trapped in the building. — Reuters



**MUMBAI:** Firefighters rescue a man using a crane as he is trapped after a fire broke out in a building in Mumbai. — AFP

## New Zealand tightens gun laws again after mosque attack

**WELLINGTON:** New Zealand announced plans for a national firearms register yesterday in its second round of gun law reforms following the Christchurch mosque attacks which killed 51 Muslim worshippers. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said regulations around who could hold firearm licenses would also be tightened to "stop weapons falling into the wrong hands". Ardern said the March 15 killings, when a gunman opened fire at two Christchurch mosques as worshippers gathered for Friday prayers, had changed attitudes towards gun ownership in New Zealand.

"There is a new normal around firearms, it is a change of mindset," she told reporters. "The most dangerous weapons are being taken out of circulation." The government's initial response to the attack was an immediate ban on the military style semi-automatic rifles (MSSAs) used in

the worst massacre in modern New Zealand history. Police Minister Stuart Nash said the latest changes were needed to keep track of firearms in the community.

"Under the current law, we do not know exactly how many guns are in circulation, who owns them, who is selling them, who is buying them or how securely they are stored," he said. The register, which is expected to take five years to complete, will contain details of the estimated 1.2 million firearms in New Zealand, for a population of around five million. The second round of gun law reform also includes a ban on foreign nationals purchasing firearms—the accused Christchurch gunman Brenton Tarrant is an Australian who allegedly bought an arsenal of rifles while living on the South Island.

It also bars people with convictions for violence, gang activity, drug or firearm offences from holding a license. A nationwide buyback scheme including 250 "collection events" run by police, was launched this month, allowing members of the public to hand in weapons before a six-month amnesty expires. Nash said there had been a strong response during the first week of the buyback, with more than 11,000 prohibited firearms and parts handed in. "Firearms owners want to do the right thing. Many events have seen people queuing before the doors open, ready to hand in firearms, parts and ammunition," he said. — AFP

## Japan's Abe vows to reform constitution

**TOKYO:** Prime Minister Shinzo Abe yesterday pledged to keep alive his plans to amend the country's pacifist constitution, despite failing to secure a "supermajority" in upper house elections. His ruling coalition retained its majority in the upper house in Sunday's vote for around the half the seats in the chamber, but fell short of securing a two-thirds majority in favor of revising the constitution.

"The hurdle of two thirds in both the lower and upper houses is extremely high," Abe told a news conference at his party headquarters. "I want to produce a reform proposal that can be agreed upon by two thirds beyond the borders of the ruling and opposition camps," he said. Abe has long harbored dreams of revising the constitution, which prohibits the country from waging war and maintaining a military.

But public support for revising the document is low and there is discomfort with the idea even among the ruling coalition. Experts said that since many within Abe's coalition were already uneasy about the plans, the failure to secure a supermajority was unlikely to change the prime minister's calculations significantly. "Losing the supermajority is not necessarily a major setback for Abe," wrote analyst Tobias Harris of the Teneo consultancy group in a note.

"Instead, by leading the ruling coalition to another national election victory—his sixth in his nearly seven years as LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) leader—Abe has cemented his status atop Japan's political system," Harris added. Abe's LDP and its coalition partner Komeito took 71 of the 124 seats up for grabs in Sunday's vote, accounting for about half of the upper chamber. The two parties already control 70 seats in the other half of the 245-seat chamber that was not being contested.

Analysts said Abe's coalition benefitted from a weak opposition, and voter turnout underscored apathy among the electorate, falling below 50 percent for the first time since a 1995 upper house election. Abe's win is likely however to shore up his support ahead of a controversial hike of the consumption tax to 10 percent later this year, as well as trade negotiations with Washington. The outcome of Sunday's election means Abe remains on track to become the country's longest-serving prime minister later this year. — AFP



**Shinzo Abe**

## India monsoons below 'normal' baseline amid water crisis

**NEW DELHI:** India's weather agency said yesterday it was set to cut estimates for average monsoon rainfall after decades of below-normal downpours, with climate change causing greater variations. The South Asian nation is grappling with a severe water crisis, with emergency supplies sent to Chennai after the drought-hit southern city saw only a fraction of the rain it usually receives during June and July.

The India Meteorological Department climate research chief Sivananda Pai said the country was in the middle of a multi-decadal epoch of low rainfall. "If you take an average of 30 to 40 years, compared to say a 100 years of normal rainfall, we are passing through a below-normal rainfall," he told AFP. The current average of 89 centimeters, he said, was based on the agency's observation from 1951-2000. The government agency revises the "normal" rain baseline every decade.

With India in a "low epoch" since the 1990s, meaning average rainfall has been below normal, a lower average rainfall forecast was likely, Pai said. "It was around 88 centimeters during the period 1961 to 2010. When the new normal is extended to 2020, a further decrease is possible," he added. Rainfall for June in India was 112.1 millimeters compared to the average of 166.9 millimeters, a deficit of 33 percent according to the weather agency.

Pai said while average rainfall levels can change over the decades due to natural variability, "we can't ignore the linkages to climate change". "Heavy rainfall and long dry periods can be linked to climate change. This has been the case across the world," he said. In contrast to the crisis in Chennai, other parts of the country's north and east have been grappling with heavy flooding which has killed hundreds of people. — AFP

## N Korea leader votes in elections with 99.98% turnout

**SEOUL:** North Korean leader Kim Jong Un voted in nationwide local elections on Sunday that registered the near 100 percent turnout claimed for every ballot held in the nuclear-armed state. Given the absence of any competition among candidates, elections in the North are essentially a political ritual which, observers say, allows the authorities to claim a popular mandate while reinforcing loyalty to Kim's regime.

The 99.98 percent turnout this year was a 0.01 percent improvement on the figures registered in 2015. Only those overseas "on foreign tour or working in oceans" were unable to vote, the North's state-run agency KCNA reported Sunday, adding that even "voters troubled with aging or illness cast their ballots into mobile ballot boxes". The isolated nation holds local elections every four years to elect representatives to provincial, city and county assemblies. Typically, 99 percent of voters in the de facto single-party state take part in the polls and 99 percent of them cast "yes" votes for uncontested candidates.

The regime touts the high turnout as an example of its "single-minded unity" to glorify the "Korean-style people-centered socialism". Kim visited a polling station in North Hamgyong province and voted for two candidates—named Ju Song Ho and Jong Song Sik—running for county assemblies in the area, KCNA reported. He "warmly encouraged them to become the faithful servants of the people by fulfilling their duties so as to live up to the anticipation of the people, being aware of being the representatives of the people", KCNA said. — AFP

## Analysis

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(Clockwise from top left) In this photo taken on May 21, 2019, a minor being held at a juvenile detention centre peers from one of the quarters in Malolos town, Bulacan province, north of Manila; A minor being held at the juvenile detention centre collects his laundry; minors being held at the centre gather for roll call; a minor being held at the detention centre has his hair cut by a mate. — AFP photos

## How China's US tariff jab choked a cherry import boom

For public relations officer Rachel Li, paying top dollar for "beautiful" cherries imported from the United States was a no-brainer. "I heard they are full of iron," said the Guangzhou-based 33-year-old, "eating them makes me feel healthy, luxurious." Or it did, until Beijing imposed sky-high tariffs on US cherries and importers took fright, leaving store shelves bereft and consumers like Li needing a different fruit fix.

Across China's metropolises, the appetite of a burgeoning middle class for expensively fresh US cherries has become a symbolic casualty of China's festering, tit-for-tat trade battle with the United States. A business that grew to nearly \$200 million in 2017 from zero in 2000 has now withered to little more than a tenth of its volume peak, customs data show.

With import tariffs for US cherries set at 50 percent, Beijing has relaxed regulations allowing imports from Central Asia - a region that just happens to be central to President Xi Jinping's epic 'Belt and Road' infrastructure project, an intercontinental initiative worth hundreds of billions of dollars. "It's an opportune time for China to fiddle with the knobs and to do so in a way that builds economic ties and offers a new market for 'Belt and Road' partners," said Even Pay, senior agriculture analyst at Beijing-based advisory firm China Policy.

China's Ministry of Commerce didn't immediately respond to a fax requesting comment. May was the last month for which figures were available at the time of writing, typically the first big month in China's cherry import season. Supplies from Uzbekistan leapt to nearly half of the May total, Reuters' calculations show, from zero a year earlier, while the US share of the cherry import pie shrank to 38 percent from nearly 80 percent in May 2018 - and a near monopoly in May 2017.

But total cherry imports into China by volume have plummeted because of the collapse of US shipments: 187 tons in May 2019, versus 337 tons in May 2018 and 1,505 tons in May 2017. Uzbek cherries sell at about 70-80 yuan per kilogram at retail level, according to four fruit traders, no more than half the 160 yuan (\$23.28) per kg that Rachel Li said she happily remembers stumping up for her sweet US cherries. No matter the price, though, the volumes now being shipped in are so small that Li said she hasn't seen imported cherries for weeks. A search by Reuters for US cherries at a supermarket and smaller groceries in downtown Shanghai on a recent weekday came up empty-handed.

### 'Impossible to develop'

For Victor Wang, the China representative of US Northwest Cherry Growers, it's now a case of trying keep head above water. Wang said it took 17 years of marketing and government lobbying to help make US cherries some of the most coveted fruits in China - at one stage his suppliers were even exporting more to China than across the border to Canada. But that all changed in 2018, when two rounds of Chinese tariff hikes added 40 percentage points to import charges. "With such exorbitant costs after the tariff hikes, and impact of a strengthening dollar, it's impossible to develop the market - we are at best maintaining it for now," said Wang.

Making life harder, Wang said, is the fact that the association has also struggled to advertise the US fruit this year. He said many Chinese media and business partners, including Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba, have declined to provide coverage or to run promotions. Alibaba confirmed that US cherry promotions were halted but rejected any suggestion that was related to US-China tensions. It said the move was due to "market-related factors", including seasons, holidays and unspecified business opportunities. "Any speculation tied to the current geopolitical climate is groundless," the retailer said in a statement sent to Reuters.

### 'Belt and Road' rules relaxed

Just as US supplies shrivelled, Beijing has relaxed a requirement for cherries from 'Belt and Road' partners Uzbekistan and Turkey to undergo up to 21 days of pre-shipment cold treatment, making exports easier by allowing fumigation as a pest control measure. That's opened a trade window not lost on businessmen like Zhu Jianfeng, general manager of Zhejiang Fishing E-Commerce Co, who said he has been investing in unspecified projects in Uzbekistan for years and has "very close ties" with the domestic government.

For the first time this year, Zhu's company imported 300 tons of cherries from Uzbekistan, with plans to boost the volume to 5,000-10,000 tons in 2020. Zhu acknowledged a lack of processing technology in Uzbekistan, saying the cherries are sent by air and have a shelf life of up to five days; US cherries, in contrast, last for up to two weeks when transported by air. Zhu said he planned to help the Uzbek industry upgrade by increasing investment in production lines. Back in Guangzhou, Rachel Li said she's switched her quest for health and luxury through fruit from cherries to avocados. — Reuters

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

## Worse than prison: Abuses in Philippine youth homes

Eleven-year-old Jerry's crime was breaking curfew laws after fleeing violence at home. His punishment? Being sent to a youth detention centre, where he says he endured sexual abuse. Officially called "Houses of Hope", proponents in the Philippines say such facilities are places for reformation and education, but critics slam many of them as "hellholes" where children are treated like caged animals.

Rights' groups say Jerry should never have been detained under current laws, but warn a proposed bill to lower the age of criminal responsibility from 15 to 12, will mean thousands more children will be sent to overcrowded and underfunded centres - leaving them vulnerable to mistreatment. "I felt so dirty. That was the first time it happened to me," Jerry told AFP as he recalled the night he was pulled from his bed, forced to the bathroom and attacked by older boys also held at a decaying centre in Manila. "I cannot forget the sexual abuse," he explained, adding that he left home to escape beatings from his father and ended up sleeping on the streets. His mother works in Kuwait.

Under existing law, Houses of Hope are primarily to hold young offenders aged 15 to 18. But charities say younger vulnerable children from troubled homes, like Jerry, are sometimes swept up in the dragnet even for minor misdemeanors and struggle to recover from the experience. Watchdogs and former wards warn planned legislation to criminalize children as young as 12 and then detain them with older teens and in some cases adults will put those least able to defend themselves at risk.

"There is a higher potential for abuse because the government is not prepared," said Melanie Ramos-Llana of Child Rights Network Philippines. "You put more children into Houses of Hope which are not equipped, lack personnel and programs, you will have problems. Jails or detention centres are not places for children," she added. Youth advocate Louise Suamen warns mixing youngsters who have committed minor infringements with older criminals could create a "school of crime". "If you are a child subjected to this environment, you can learn violence or abusive behavior. If they want to change something... treat detention

as the last resort," explained Suamen of Bahay Tuluyan Foundation.

### 'Hellholes of subhuman conditions'

A bill to give authorities the power to prosecute younger children stalled in the session of the legislature that wrapped up last month. But it is a key plank of President Rodrigo Duterte's tough-on-crime stance, which includes restoring the death penalty and his internationally condemned drug crackdown that has killed thousands since 2016. After sweeping May's midterm polls, Duterte allies dominate congress and have vowed to advance his agenda when the session opens on Monday. But critics insist conditions in many of the facilities are identical to or worse than the jails adults are sent to.

"Children are detained in these so-called House of Hope like animals in cages," said Father Shay Cullen, president of PREDA Foundation which helps boys like Jerry. "These are really hellholes of subhuman conditions," he added. Five children previously held in the system, including Jerry, told AFP they suffered abuse in youth centres.

All the boys are identified using a pseudonym because they are minors or were when held. Justin, who was 17 when he was brought to a youth centre in the capital in 2017, said other boys beat him on the pretext he had broken house rules. "They would punch us in the chest, stomach and sometimes the chin. It was so painful. I learned to be callous there because of what they did to me and I wanted revenge," he said.

There are 55 government-run Houses of Hope nationwide, but this is well short of the 114 the Philippines has estimated it needs to properly house troubled juveniles. According to official data only eight comply with social welfare rules. These guidelines include having one social worker for every 25 children, providing one bed per resident along with nutritious meals, clothing, toiletries and rehabilitation programs. "Some of the Houses of Hope we saw were worse than prisons. They have no programs," Tricia Oco, executive director of the government's Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council, told a senate inquiry in January.

### 'We are like flowers'

Tristan, 15, was relieved when he was transferred to a House of Hope in Manila after being held in an adult jail on a drug trafficking charge he said police fabricated. "I thought it would be a lovely home. But it was also a prison, a prison for children," he told AFP. The facilities where Jerry, Justin and Tristan stayed denied AFP's requests for a visit. The Department of Social Welfare and Development said it did not monitor peer abuse in centres, but institutions that failed to meet standards should be "held responsible".

The Philippines raised the age of criminal responsibility from 9 to 15 in 2006, a move hailed as a step toward humane treatment. However Duterte has repeatedly attacked the change as hampering police efforts to crack down on underage couriers for drug syndicates. The gaps in the system stem from insufficient funding, weak congressional oversight and authorities' preference for detention over community-based programs, advocates say. "In reality detention becomes the first resort," said Rowena Legaspi, executive director of the Children's Legal Rights and Development Center.

The current law tasks provinces and cities with building and operating the centres but the national government monitors compliance. Many Houses of Hope struggle with inadequate resources, said Jay Mark Chico, centre head in northern Bulacan province. His facility was built to accommodate 60 children but now houses 144 - squashed into rooms behind metal bars where some must sleep on the floor.

Chico told AFP the province had a daily food budget of 33 pesos (0.65 US cents) per child but was pushing to increase this while building a bigger centre to address overcrowding. Still, there are some that say their time in the centres helped them. "I am so grateful because I never imagined I could still pursue my studies," said 21-year-old Nathan Andres, who was detained as a juvenile for rape but has been allowed to serve out his sentence in the Bulacan youth facility. However Andres, who wants to become a teacher, says targeting 12-year-olds is not the answer. He mused: "We are like the flowers we craft from old papers. People think we are garbage, useless. But actually we still have value." — AFP

## A year on, deadly Greek wildfire haunts survivors

Twelve months on, you can still see it in the faces of the survivors: The deadly wildfires that killed 102 people in the Greek coastal town of Mati has left its mark on local people. They have not forgotten the panic as the fire, fed by strong winds, swept through their community, catching people in their homes and vehicles and leaving only charred remains. The July 23 disaster, at the coastal resort some 40 km from Athens, made headlines around the world. "We think a lot of that day," said Maria, a local resident. "Before and after the 23rd."

She and other local people attended one of the local churches on Sunday for a memorial service to mark the approaching anniversary. Joining them were many of the people who regularly took their holidays in the town. Many dressed in black, they lit candles and threw white roses into the sea. A year earlier, several people fled into the sea with just the clothes on their backs to escape the inferno.

"We grew up here, we spent the summers of our childhood here," said Emmie, who hid her tears behind her sunglasses.

"We associated this place with joy and with holidays and now it's come to mean pain," she added. Also at the service was Civil Protection Minister Michalis Chrysochoidis, who said he would work hard to ensure such a tragedy would not happen again. "A certain number of problems have not been resolved, from urbanism plans to questions of health," he acknowledged, promising to tackle these issues. The vegetation in and around Mati still has not grown back - nearly 120,000 trees were destroyed in the fire - and the burnt-out houses still have not been rebuilt.

### Criminal prosecutions

The owners of the houses destroyed in the fire have so far received up to A6,000 (\$6,700) in government compensation but the permits to rebuild have been slower in coming. Caritas Hellas, the Greek charity, gave A1,500 to 110 of the most vulnerable households. Medecins du Monde (Doctors of the World) has arranged free consultations with psychologists for the 1,679 affected by the fires.

But between 70 and 80 people are still lodged in an army centre, deprived of their home - and anger is growing among the locals who accuse the previous Tsipras government of having mismanaged the crisis. At the time, the government stressed the difficulty of organizing the evacuation on the day of the fire with winds blowing at nearly 120 km an hour.

But in the aftermath of the disaster, the police and fire services gave conflicting accounts of what had gone wrong. The minister responsible for the police



This picture shows a burnt house in the Greek seaside town of Mati on Sunday, during a memorial ceremony in memory of the victims of the July 2018 wildfire that killed 102 people. — AFP

resigned within weeks, following accusations that police had not secured the area quickly enough nor alerted the fire service to the scale of the fire. Then in March, Athens prosecutors filed criminal charges including manslaughter against 16 people for their negligence over the fire.

Those facing prosecution include senior officials in the fire service, the port police and in civil protection. The officials include the governor of the Attica region and the mayors of two towns, Marathonas and Rafina, hit by the fire. And a 65-year-old man is accused of

having started a fire on the neighboring Mount Penteli which the winds blew down towards Mati. But the trial has not started, leaving those hit by the disaster in suspense.

Residents of Mati wrote to the new conservative Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis after he was elected earlier this month, alerting him to the "serious problems" they were experiencing a year on. "We are going to need your help and that of your government to overcome obstacles and rapidly find a normal life again," they wrote. — AFP

## Business

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# Oil prices rise on Gulf tensions

## Wall Street jumps as heavy earnings week kicks off

**LONDON:** Oil prices rose yesterday after Iran seized a British tanker in the Gulf, fuelling concern about supplies and a possible conflict in the crude-rich Middle East. The news provided support for the oil market but gains were capped by stubborn demand jitters linked to the weak global economic outlook.

Britain repeated its demand that Iran release the Stena Impero, which the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps seized on Friday in the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

"Traders are clearly a little on edge due to the importance of the passage for global oil supplies," remarked Craig Erlam at the Oanda brokerage. "Oil prices haven't risen too much yet but if the situation deteriorates further, we should possibly brace for higher prices," he added. In Libya meanwhile, authorities said that output at the Al-Sharara oil field had resumed, ending a three-day suspension owing to "sabotage" of a pipeline. The suspension had added to upward pressure on crude prices. In afternoon deals, London Brent oil had gained 1.1 percent and New York crude was up by 0.9 percent. Higher oil prices underpinned the share prices of energy companies, which in turn, helped guide most European stocks indices to higher ground.



Meanwhile, Wall Street stocks rose early yesterday at the start of a heavy week of earnings that includes major technology and industrial companies. This week's earnings calendar Amazon, Google parent Alphabet, Boeing, McDonald's and American Airlines. This is the second of three weeks during which most of the S&P 500 report second-quarter results.

Last week's earnings reports, dominated by banks, were better than expected, said CFRA Research's Sam Stovall. Analysts have lifted their estimates for the second quarter but cut their outlook for the third quarter. "Yet to be determined is whether the (earnings) recession has been postponed or cancelled," said Stovall. About 10 minutes into trading, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up less than 0.1 percent at 27,159.04. The broad-based S&P 500 rose 0.2 percent to 2,982.20, while the tech-rich Nasdaq Composite Index jumped 0.5 percent to 8,183.89.

However, Asian equities retreated earlier in the day on dimming hopes for a deep interest rate cut by the Federal Reserve, though all the firms on a new tech-focused board in China rallied on its opening day. Traders took a step back after last week's gains as the New York Federal Reserve tempered comments from its president, John Williams, who had suggested the central bank could cut borrowing costs by 50 basis points at its policy meeting this month.—AFP

## Burgan Bank Turkey remains resilient, continues to deliver good results

**KUWAIT:** Burgan Bank Group (Group) is closely monitoring the market developments in Turkey and it remains committed to support Burgan Bank Turkey (BBT) if needed. Our Turkish operation has good fundamentals with prudent approach in managing risk. Its loan book is well diversified across various sectors and multiple segments, while maintaining a stable funding base.

The Group's strategic decision to hedge its investment in BBT since 2015 has protected it from Turkish Lira volatility. Also, its decision to proactively build additional provision buffers since Q1'18 has helped BBT to be stronger in Turkey's current macro-economic environment.

Faisal Al-Radwan, Chairman of the Board of Burgan Bank Turkey said, "BBT is well-prepared to face current economic situation in Turkey due to its focus on prudent risk management and its cost-efficient operations, thereby generating positive results for the Group."

Furthermore, Masaud Hayat, Burgan Bank Group CEO

## Trump demands rate cut, seizing on Fed official's own words

**WASHINGTON:** US President Donald Trump yesterday used a Federal Reserve official's own words to amplify his continual demands for lower interest rates. The latest in Trump's daily attacks on the Fed, turns up the temperature for the central bank a week before its latest policy meeting, when it expected to cut rates for the first time in a decade. "It is far more costly for the Federal Reserve to cut deeper if the economy actually does, in the future, turn down!" Trump said on Twitter. "Very inexpensive, in fact productive, to move now."

Without naming him, Trump's tweet repeated a central claim made last week by New York Federal Reserve President John Williams made last week. In a speech to economic researchers on Thursday, Williams said decades of research suggested that when interest rates are already low, policymakers should cut them at the first signs of "economic distress" rather than waiting for more input.

Markets welcomed the news, which some investors took to mean the Fed could cut benchmark lending rates by as much as 50 basis points, something it has not done since the worst moments of the 2008 global financial crisis. A large move would be unusual for the central bank which prefers to move in 25 bps increments, since a bigger rate cut would signal real concern about the economy, which policymakers continue to expect to grow. A New York Fed spokesperson last week told reporters that Williams' remarks were a comment on years of research, not a forecast of what the Fed will do later this month. As president of the New York Fed's branch, Williams' serves as the influential vice chair of the Fed's rate-setting Federal Open Market Committee.—AFP

commented, "Burgan Bank Group remains committed to support BBT as the Turkish operation continues to generate healthy margins and improved efficiencies backed by a strong management team. The bank is well-positioned to weather the current macro-economic situation in Turkey. As consolidated under the Group, in Q1'19, BBT's NPL ratio reached 3.8 percent with adequate NPL coverage ratio of 116.8 percent and strong Capital Adequacy Ratio at 18.0 percent."

Burgan Bank Turkey has been part of the Group since December 2012, where the Group acquired majority stake. As well, BBT has an optimal branch network of 39 branches operating across 15 cities in Turkey.



Faisal Al-Radwan



Masaud Hayat

## Kuwait Ports Authority invites companies to participate in its developmental projects

**KUWAIT:** Under the spirit of participation in the Kuwait Ports Authority development plan, KPA is organizing an event on the evening of Wednesday, July 24th, 2019 at the Kuwait National Library. Invitations went out to local, GCC and global corporations in various fields of consulting, marine engineering, contracting, construction, technology, etc. to showcase its upcoming construction projects.

The Director General of KPA Sheikh Yousef Abdullah Sabah Al-Naser Al-Sabah stated that this event constitutes a preliminary announcement of Kuwait Ports Authority projects with the aim of introducing these projects prior to the formal publication of tenders in the official national gazette "Kuwait Alyoum".

Al-Abdullah assured KPA's commitment and adherence to the principles of transparency, equal opportunity and equality while still encouraging an ecosystem of com-

petitiveness among companies to identify the elite, most qualified corporations to execute projects for its three national ports.

On the subject of the nationwide development plan (NEW KUWAIT 2035), he said that KPA has worked diligently for the past 4 years on seven projects - now part of the developmental plan - that came into light based upon the vision and directive of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait to transform the country into an influential financial and economic center.

In conclusion, Al-Abdullah extended the invitation to local small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) to attend the showcase, stressing that opportunities are available to entrepreneurs and Kuwaiti operated establishments that have been on the rise in recent years to take part in the implementation of Kuwait Ports Authority's upcoming projects, wishing that they soon have a global reach.



KPA Director General Sheikh Yousef Abdullah Sabah Al-Naser Al-Sabah

**شارك في خطة مؤسسة الموانئ الكويتية للتطوير (كويت جديدة 2035)**

تشرف مؤسسة الموانئ الكويتية بدعوة الشركات المحلية والعالمية بكافة أنواعها والمهتمة بتطوير الموانئ البحرية للتعرف والاطلاع على المشاريع المستقبلية السريعة الخاصة بالمؤسسة المدرجة تحت خطة التنمية «كويت جديدة 2035»

وذلك في يوم الأربعاء الموافق 2019/7/24 على مسرح مكتبة الكويت الوطنية من الساعة 7 حتى الساعة 9 مساءً

**Participate in the Kuwait Port Authority Development Plan (New Kuwait 2035)**

The KPA cordially invites local & international companies to attend the presentation of the future projects that are part of the Kuwait Development Plan (New Kuwait 2035).

The event will occur on Wednesday 24/7/2019 at the Kuwait National Library from 7 until 9 PM.

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Business

NBK Macroeconomic outlook for Oman

# Oman's economic reforms forecast to propel growth to 3.9% by 2021

## Oil and non-oil sectors to remain buoyant

**KUWAIT:** Economic growth in Oman is expected to steadily edge higher over 2019-2021, led by pro-growth reforms aimed at diversifying the economic base. As such, we see growth rising to around 3.9 percent in 2021, on the back of continued gains in both oil and non-oil sector activity.

While Oman's oil production will remain capped by the OPEC+ production cut agreement, the ongoing expansion in gas production capacity should more than compensate, especially following recent non-associated natural gas discoveries and new project partnerships with international energy firms. As a result, we see real oil growth averaging 3-4 percent over the forecast period.

Non-oil activity is also likely to accelerate, averaging 3.6 percent y/y to 2021, as the government pushes ahead with developing its key sectors—manufacturing, transport, logistics and tourism, in line with its Vision 2020 plan.

### Inflation to gather pace on excise tax and VAT

Consumer price inflation is expected to pick up speed in 2019 to 1.5 percent, following the excise tax levy on selected goods in June. The upward momentum is likely to continue into 2020 with the planned VAT coming into effect; this is expected to add some 1 percent to inflation for one year. We should see inflationary pressures subside somewhat in 2021 as the initial impact of the VAT fades.

### Concerns over fiscal and external positions to persist

The fiscal deficit is projected to remain high

*Economic growth is expected to hold firm and average 3.6% over 2019-2021, supported by the government's diversification and infrastructure spending plans in both the oil and non-oil sectors. Elevated spending, however, will keep the fiscal deficit at high levels—averaging 6% over the forecast period—and raise public debt to around 50% of GDP over the next two years. These, declining reserves and sensitivity to oil price are risks to the medium-term outlook.*



amid ongoing fiscal stimulus measures and a softer oil price environment. Non-oil revenues should increase due to the implementation of the excise tax this year and VAT next year, which will temper some of the projected increases in spending. But in the absence of further significant fiscal reform, the budget deficit will likely remain high at around 6 percent of GDP on average over 2019-21.

This will ultimately push public debt levels higher to around 50 percent of GDP. Oman's current account deficit is expected to decline over the forecast period to average about 6 percent of GDP to 2021. Large fiscal and external current account deficits are likely to put foreign reserves under pressure.

As of April, official foreign reserves at the central bank stood at \$16.5bn, down 4.8 percent year-to-date, covering around eight months of imports. However, indications are that reserves in the sovereign wealth fund are on decline.

### Deficit to be financed by debt issuances and privatization

Oman is currently rated below investment grade by all three major rating agencies, which may make it more difficult for the kingdom to lower currently high cost premiums on any further debt issuances. Nonetheless, the government is reportedly in talks with foreign banks for a sovereign bond issue of up to \$2 billion. This would be its first international debt issue of 2019, part of the government's plan to finance about 85 percent of this year's fiscal deficit through local and foreign borrowing.

In addition, the government is also furthering its privatization agenda and plans to attract foreign direct investments (FDI) to help relieve its financial constraints. It plans to privatize two electricity companies, Oman Electricity Transmission and Muscat Electricity Distribution (\$3.2 billion in total assets).

### Liquidity conditions to remain tight

Liquidity conditions in Oman are projected to

remain constrained over the medium term, as private credit growth and government borrowing outweigh deposit growth. Latest data showed growth in private credit averaging 2.1 percent in the first four months of this year, deposit growth in contrast logged an average of 1 percent during the same period. Private credit growth is set to be supported by healthy business and housing demand. Deposit growth will be limited by weaker government deposit growth (due to lower oil receipts).

### Downside risks could impact the growth outlook

The economy is projected to register solid growth rates over the forecast period, as the government remains committed to its diversification plans. However, higher budget deficits and public debt as well as a weaker external position are a source of concerns for investors. Plans to boost non-oil revenues and foreign investment inflows should help alleviate some of these concerns and improve Oman's credit ratings.

## Funds managing \$2tn urge cement makers to act on climate impact

**LONDON:** European funds managing \$2 trillion in assets called on cement companies to slash their greenhouse gas emissions yesterday, warning that a failure to do so could put their business models at risk. With the extreme weather and natural disasters associated with climate change intensifying around the world, some asset managers are ramping up engagement with heavy polluters to demand a faster transition to a cleaner economy. "The cement sector needs to dramatically reduce the contribution it makes to climate change," said Stephanie Pfeifer, chief executive of the Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change, which has more than 170 members, mainly European pension funds and asset managers.

"This is ultimately a business-critical issue for the sector," Pfeifer said in a statement. The group said investors had written to cement or construction materials companies including Ireland's CRH, Franco-Swiss group LafargeHolcim and France's St Gobain to demand they achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. They also noted that Germany's HeidelbergCement had already adopted the target. The funds urged all cement companies to align themselves with the 2015 Paris agreement to combat global warming, engage with policy-makers to ensure an orderly transition to a low carbon economy, and increase their reporting of climate risk. "Construction materials companies may ultimately risk divestment and lack of access to capital as an increasing number of investors seek to exclude highly carbon-intensive sectors from their portfolios," said Vincent Kaufmann, chief executive of the Ethos Foundation, a group of Swiss pension funds, which signed the letters. Signatories collectively manage assets worth \$2 trillion and include Aberdeen Standard Investments, BNP Paribas Asset Management, Sarasin & Partners and Hermes EOS. Although funds are increasingly engaging with companies from airlines to carmakers on emissions, few are calling for the systemic transformation of the global economic system that scientists increasingly argue is needed to prevent runaway climate breakdown. —Reuters

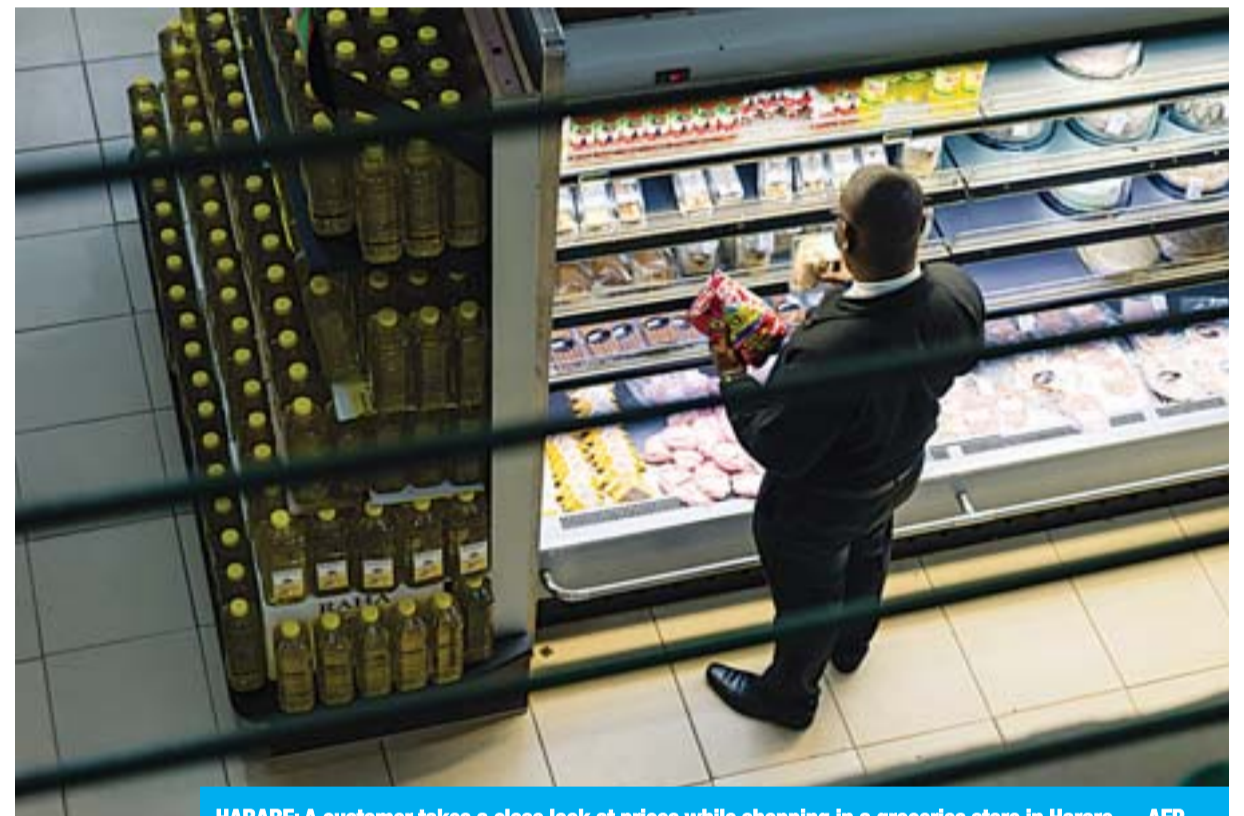
## Zimbabwe increases fuel prices again, but pumps remain dry

**HARARE:** Zimbabwe hiked fuel prices yesterday for the second time in a week but most pumps remained dry, with no end in sight to shortages that are helping drive inflation rapidly higher and which have led to protests about the cost of living. The Zimbabwe Energy Regulatory Authority said a liter of petrol would now cost 7.45 Zimbabwe dollars, up 22 percent from 6.10 dollars. Diesel now costs 7.19 a liter, a 23 percent rise.

With inflation soaring, economic analysts say increases in fuel prices are adding to price pressures, especially as rolling electricity cuts are forcing businesses to use expensive diesel generators to power their operations. Diesel and petrol prices have gone up by 456 percent this year, in line with a slide in the value of the local RTGS currency, renamed the Zimbabwe dollar last month.

The biggest fuel price hike in January, a 150 percent increase, triggered violent protests by Zimbabweans. More than a dozen people were killed when the army clamped down on the unrest.

On July 13, fuel prices were hiked by up to 16 percent after finance minister Mthuli Ncube said fuel was considerably cheaper than in neighboring countries. Ncube has said he would like to see the price increase to the equivalent of \$1 a liter. The Zimbabwe dollar



HARARE: A customer takes a close look at prices while shopping in a groceries store in Harare. —AFP

was trading yesterday at 8.88 against the greenback on the official interbank market, little changed from last week. On the black market, \$1 fetched 10.5 Zimbabwe dollars. —Reuters

## Pakistan needs to mobilize tax revenue, cut debt: IMF

**WASHINGTON:** Pakistan needs to mobilize domestic tax revenue to ensure funds for social and development programs, while reducing debt, the acting director of the International Monetary Fund said on Sunday after a meeting with

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan.

The two officials discussed recent economic developments and implementation of Pakistan's IMF-supported economic reforms, which are aimed at stabilizing the economy, strengthening institutions and paving the way for sustainable and balanced growth, David Lipton said in a statement.

Khan's government faces mounting pressure as rising prices and tough austerity policies under Pakistan's latest bailout from the IMF are squeezing the middle class that helped carry it to power. Lipton said the IMF and other international partners were working closely with the Pakistani government to support

implementation of the reforms.

"I highlighted the need to mobilize domestic tax revenue now and on into the future to provide reliably for needed social and development spending, while placing debt on a firm downward trend," Lipton said in a statement after the meeting. Khan, who arrived in Washington on Sunday, was due to meet with US President Donald Trump at the White House later in the day. Trump is likely to press Khan for help on ending the war in Afghanistan and fighting militants.

Last year, Trump cut off hundreds of millions of dollars in security assistance to Pakistan, accusing Islamabad of offering "nothing but lies and deceit" while

giving safe haven to terrorists, a charge angrily rejected by Islamabad. In recent years, import-led consumption has propped up growth in Pakistan and helped hide the problems of an economy riddled with inefficiency and without a strong export base.

But Khan's government, like many of its predecessors, has been forced to turn to the IMF to prevent a balance-of-payments crisis. Economic growth, which reached 5.5 percent in the fiscal year to June 2018, is expected to slow to 2.4 percent this financial year, according to IMF estimates, barely enough to keep pace with the growth in a population that now numbers 208 million. —Reuters

## EXCHANGE RATES

### Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.

#### EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	304.450
Euro	344.720
Sterling Pound	383.000
Canadian dollar	234.370
Turkish lira	55.350
Swiss Franc	312.260
US Dollar Buying	297.100

#### ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.821
Indian Rupees	4.413
Pakistani Rupees	1.966
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.727
Nepali Rupees	2.762
Singapore Dollar	225.020
Hongkong Dollar	39.018
Bangladesh Taka	3.589
Philippine Peso	5.955
Thai Baht	9.928
Malaysian ringgit	77.864

#### GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.241
Qatari Riyal	83.675
Omani Riyal	791.293
Bahraini Dinar	808.950
UAE Dirham	82.945

#### ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.650
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	18.345

Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.223
Tunisian Dinar	109.910
Jordanian Dinar	430.170
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.203
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.388

### Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	304.090
Canadian Dollar	233.660
Sterling Pound	379.715
Euro	343.290
Swiss Frank	301.230
Bahrain Dinar	808.690
UAE Dirhams	83.195
Qatari Riyals	84.435
Saudi Riyals	81.985
Jordanian Dinar	430.185
Egyptian Pound	18.348
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.731
Indian Rupees	4.420
Pakistani Rupees	1.905
Bangladesh Taka	3.601
Philippines Peso	5.968
Cyprus pound	18.090
Japanese Yen	3.822
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.770
Malaysian Ringgit	74.895
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.645
Thai Bhat	10.845

### Turkish Lira

Turkish Lira	53.970
Singapore dollars	223.301

### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
<b>Europe</b>		
British Pound	0.373339	0.387239
Czech Korune	0.005344	0.014644
Danish Krone	0.046637	0.046637
Euro	0.333747	0.347447
Georgian Lari	0.132065	0.132065
Hungarian 0.000958	0.001148	0.001148
Norwegian Krone	0.031433	0.036633
Romanian Leu	0.065244	0.072094
Russian ruble	0.004820	0.004820
Slovakia	0.009102	0.019102
Slovenia	0.028359	0.033359
Swedish Krona	0.302862	0.313862
Swiss Franc		
<b>Australasia</b>		
Australian Dollar	0.205901	0.217901
New Zealand Dollar	0.199821	0.209321
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.227563	0.236563
US Dollars	0.300350	0.305650
US Dollars Mint	0.300850	0.305650
<b>Asia</b>		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003000	0.003801
Chinese Yuan	0.042746	0.046246

Hong Kong Dollar	0.036904	0.039654
Indian Rupee	0.003888	0.004660
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002733	0.002913
Korean Won	0.000248	0.000263
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070176	0.076176
Nepalese Rupee	0.002678	0.003018
Pakistani Rupee	0.001340	0.002110
Philippine Peso	0.006103	0.006403
Singapore Dollar	0.218181	0.228181
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001352	0.001932
Taiwan	0.009673	0.009853
Thai Baht	0.009533	0.010083
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.00013
<b>Arab</b>		
Bahraini Dinar	0.801411	0.809465
Egyptian Pound	0.018639	0.022999
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000210	0.000270
Jordanian Dinar	0.424503	0.433503
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000151	0.000261
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021379	0.045379
Omani Riyal	0.785650	0.793546
Qatar Riyal	0.082969	0.083803
Saudi Riyal	0.080100	0.083400
Syrian Pound	0.001291	0.001511
Tunisian Dinar	0.102332	0.110332
Turkish Lira	0.046761	0.056606
UAE Dirhams	0.082258	0.083084
Yemeni Riyal	0.000990	0.001070

## Business

## Kenya's finance minister, top officials arrested for graft

## Police charge officials with large-scale corruption in building two mega dams

**NAIROBI:** Kenya's Finance Minister Henry Rotich and other treasury officials were arrested yesterday on corruption and fraud charges over a multi-million dollar project to build two mega dams, police said. Director of Public Prosecutions Noordin Haji had ordered the arrest and prosecution of Rotich and 27 other top officials on charges of fraud, abuse of office and financial misconduct in the latest scandal to rock graft-wracked Kenya.

Rotich, his principal secretary and the chief executive of Kenya's environmental authority then presented themselves to the police. "They are in custody now awaiting to be taken to court," police chief George Kinoti told AFP.

"We are looking for (the) others and they will all go to court," Haji said the conception, procurement and payment processes for the dam project-part of a bid to improve water supply in the drought-prone country-was "riddled with irregularities". "Investigations established that government officials flouted all procurement rules and abused their oath of office to ensure the scheme went through," said Haji.

He pointed to the awarding of the contract to Italian firm CMC di Ravenna in a manner that he said flouted proper procurement procedures, and despite financial woes that forced the company into liquidation and had led to it failing complete three other mega-dam projects.

According to the contract, the project was to cost a total of \$450 million (401 million euros), but the treasury had increased this amount by \$164 million "without regard to performance or works," said Haji. Some \$180 million has

already been paid out, with little construction to show for it. Another \$6 million was paid out for the resettlement of people living in areas that would be affected by the project, but there is no evidence of land being acquired for this, the chief prosecutor said. "I am satisfied that economic crimes were committed and I have therefore approved their arrests and prosecutions," said Haji.

## 'Well-choreographed scheme'

"The persons we are charging today were mandated with safeguarding our public interest and deliberately breached this trust. "Under the guise of carrying out legitimate commercial transactions, colossal amounts were unjustifiably and illegally paid out through a well-choreographed scheme by government officers in collusion with private individuals and institutions."

Rotich has previously denied any wrongdoing in the scandal. The dams scandal is one of several in the poverty-plagued country that has seen hundreds of millions of dollars of public money disappear due to fraud. In 2017 Kenya fell to 143rd out of 180 countries in Transparency International's annual corruption index.

In March 2018, a damning report from the auditor general showed the government could not account for \$400 million in public funds. A string of top officials have been charged since last year as President Uhuru Kenyatta vows to combat corruption-a refrain weary Kenyans have heard from multiple presidents. — AFP



**NAIROBI:** Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for National Treasury Henry Rotich poses with the budget briefcase before leaving for Parliament to read the budget speech for 2018-2019 in Nairobi, Kenya. Rotich and other treasury officials were arrested yesterday on corruption and fraud charges related to a multi-million dollar project to build two massive dams, police said. — AFP



**ISTANBUL:** A man sells cheese at the historical spice bazaar at Eminonu district in Istanbul. — AFP

## Turkey CB seen making deeper rate cut on July 25

**ISTANBUL:** The Turkish central bank is expected to cut its key interest rate by 250 bps from its current 24 percent on July 25, a Reuters poll showed, with dovish comments from the new governor encouraging expectations of a significant reduction.

President Tayyip Erdogan sacked Central Bank Governor Murat Cetinkaya on July 6, reigniting concerns over political interference in monetary policy and boosting expectations of rate cuts to revive the recession-hit economy. The median forecast compiled from 23 institutions showed economists expected a 250 basis point rate cut in the policy rate at this month's meeting, with forecasts ranging between cuts of 100 bps and 500 bps in the one-week repo rate.

A previous Reuters poll last week had already showed that economists expected deeper rate cuts this year after Cetinkaya's dismissal. The median forecast then was for a 200 bps cut on July 25.

Turkey's benchmark interest rate was hiked to 24 percent last September to stem a sharp fall in the lira. The Central Bank has since left it unchanged as the economy tumbled into recession, to prevent renewed losses in the

currency. Murat Uysal, Cetinkaya's deputy, replaced him as governor.

Uysal hinted at rate cuts in his first remarks after taking office, saying he expected disinflation to continue in 2019 on the back of declining cost pressures.

The consumer price index fell to 15.72 percent year-on-year in June, off a 15-year-high above 25 percent in October. It was fuelled by a currency crisis which resulted in the lira losing nearly 30 percent of its value against the dollar last year. The dovish comments from the new governor, the improvement in inflation data and the lira's stabilization were the main drivers of Morgan Stanley's revision of its forecast to a 250 bps cut at the July meeting from a previous 100 bps.

"We expect a 200bp cut at the September meeting to 19.5 percent and another 200bp cut in October to 17.5 percent," Morgan Stanley said in a note. Erdogan said that Cetinkaya, who was due to serve until 2020, had made decisions for which a high price was paid and was dismissed as he did not follow instructions on monetary policy.

Investors have long been concerned over Erdogan's influence over monetary policy, given his opposition to high interest rates. They also accuse the central bank of acting slowly to defend the lira at the time of the currency crisis. The median estimate in the Reuters poll for the central bank's year-end policy rate was 18 percent, down from a forecast of 20 percent in last week's poll. The latest forecasts ranged between 15 percent and 20 percent. — Reuters



Elizabeth Warren

## Warren sees US economic downturn; urges quick steps

**WASHINGTON:** Democratic presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren yesterday warned of "serious" signs that the US economy could skid into a downturn either this year or next, as she proposed a series of steps to minimize the risk.

Warren, 70, who serves in the US Senate and is considered a top-tier candidate in a crowded field of Democrats hoping to challenge President Donald Trump in the Nov 3, 2020 election, called on federal regulators and Congress to act "before another crisis costs America's families their homes, jobs and savings."

In a statement, Warren said "warning lights are flashing" and the chances of a downturn are "high and growing." The US economy has been expanding for 10 years, the longest on record, with low unemployment and inflation, and a strong stock market.

Nevertheless, Warren labeled the US economy "precarious" amid high household and student debt. She warned that an increase in interest rates could "plunge families over a cliff." The Massachusetts lawmaker noted that corporations are holding a growing number of high-risk loans and the country is experience a downturn in

manufacturing. As an antidote, Warren called for a \$2 trillion investment in environmental research, manufacturing and exports over the next decade to revitalize the industrial base. She estimated such investment would create more than 1 million jobs while also addressing climate change issues. To help insulate the US economy from potential shocks, Warren called on federal regulators to abide by steps to stop banks from issuing risky corporate loans. She also urged the Trump administration to stop encouraging the UK to leave the European Union unless a firm Brexit strategy is in place. Several public opinion polls show former Vice President Joe Biden leading a pack of two-dozen candidates seeking the Democratic Party nomination. Warren is thought to be positioned among the top four candidates in the early days of campaigning, along with Biden and Senators Bernie Sanders and Kamala Harris. Warren's standing among potential Democratic voters has been bolstered by the sheer number of policy proposals she has unveiled compared with her competitors. — Reuters

## Euro eases towards \$1.12 as investors await central bank moves

**LONDON:** Foreign exchange markets paused yesterday as investors wait to see by how much and how fast policymakers might ease policy, beginning with the European Central Bank on Thursday.

The euro edged down towards \$1.12 as the dollar gained the upper hand, thanks mostly to safe-haven demand amid rising tensions in the Middle East. The Swiss franc hit a new two-year high against the euro, touching 1.1010 francs per euro. The Swiss currency has benefited from investors looking for a refuge from worries about the eurozone economy.

Data published last week indicated that investors remain net long of dollars, unchanged from the previous week, with the US currency having weathered rising expectations for interest rate cuts from the Federal Reserve relatively well.

Currency markets have been stuck in narrow trading ranges in recent weeks, with expectations for easing by both the Federal Reserve and the ECB more or less cancelling out the impact on the euro and the dollar. Pricing for a 50-basis-point Fed cut soared last week after a dovish speech by New York Fed President John Williams. Those expectations later dwindled after a Fed spokesman clarified that the remarks did not refer to "potential policy actions".

Priced-in forecasts for a 50-basis-point cut have dropped from as high as 71% last week to 18.5% on Monday, with a 25 bps cut now seen as more likely. "FX markets don't tend to get too excited about monetary policy when it's all nuance and forward guidance, but when central banks are making actual rate moves and QE adjustments, monetary policy becomes the driving theme," BMO Capital Markets strategist Stephen Gallo said. The Fed holds its monetary policy meeting next week, as does the Bank of Japan. The euro nudged lower to \$1.1217 after earlier reaching \$1.1208. The dollar index rose 0.1 percent to 97.203.

Analysts said the dollar was benefiting from geopolitical tensions surrounding a confrontation in the Strait of Hormuz, the oil trade's most important waterway. The dollar rose 0.1 percent against the yen to 107.89 after earlier breaching the 108 level. Despite the dollar's recent resilience, some analysts think the US currency is set for a fall. "The USD looks to have peaked. We see medium-term downside on narrowing interest rate differentials and relative growth prospects that could be accelerated by US intervention to weaken the currency," Citi analysts wrote in a research note. "We anticipate a modest appreciation of the EUR over the longer term, but considerable risks exist if QE (quantitative easing) is accelerated."

Sterling weakened again, falling 0.3 percent to \$1.2469 after Alan Duncan, a British minister and long-standing critic of Boris Johnson quit, decrying the "dark cloud" of Brexit. Johnson is expected to win a Conservative party leadership contest and be appointed prime minister this week. — Reuters

## IEA ready to act quickly to keep oil market supplied

**PARIS:** The International Energy Agency (IEA) is closely monitoring developments in the Strait of Hormuz and ready to take swift action if needed to keep the global oil market supplied, it said yesterday. The Paris-based agency said the right of free energy transit through the strait was critical to the global economy and must be maintained.

Iranian Revolutionary Guards seized British-flagged oil tanker Stena Impero at the Strait of Hormuz on Friday in apparent retaliation for the British capture of an Iranian tanker two weeks earlier.

Oil prices rose yesterday on concerns that Iran's

## Britain to give inflation-busting pay rise to public sector

**LONDON:** Britain said yesterday that it will award small pay rises to almost one million public-sector staff, in a parting gesture from Prime Minister Theresa May's government. Staff including doctors, teachers and soldiers will see their annual salaries climb by more than the rate of inflation, which currently stands at about 2.0 percent.

At the party conference last year, May promised to end a decade of austerity since the Conservatives came to power in 2010 but her pledge was greeted with skepticism by the opposition after years of cuts. The raises, which will be backdated for the current 2019/2020 financial year, will include an increase of 2.75 percent for teachers, 2.5 percent for doctors and dentists, 2.5 percent for police officers and 2.9 percent for armed forces personnel, the Treasury said in a statement.

There will also be a rise of at least 2.2 percent for prison officers, and 2.0 percent for senior civil servants and senior military staff. "Whether it's keeping us safe, saving lives or educating the next generation, our public sector workers deserve this pay rise in recognition of the brilliant job they do on a daily basis," said May in one of her final policy announcements before stepping down on Wednesday.

"In 2017 we ended the public sector pay cap and I'm pleased that we can build on this today by giving almost a million of our dedicated public servants an above inflation salary increase."

However, trade unions blasted the move, which was first reported by The Times newspaper on Friday, because it will be funded from existing budgets. After taking office in 2010, the Conservatives imposed a two-year public sector pay freeze and then imposed a pay cap of one percent from 2013, in a bid to balance the books after the financial crisis.

However, May's government announced in July 2018 that it would ditch the pay cap, which was enacted under her predecessor David Cameron. May is to step down this week after failing to get her Brexit deal through parliament and being forced to twice delay Britain's departure from the European Union. — AFP

seizure the tanker could lead to supply disruptions in the energy-rich Gulf. The Strait of Hormuz is a vital maritime transit route for world energy trade. About 20 million barrels of oil, or about 20 percent of global supply, are transported through the strait each day, the IEA said. "The IEA is ready to act quickly and decisively in the event of a disruption to ensure that global markets remain adequately supplied," it said, adding that executive director Fatih Birol has been in talks with IEA member and associate governments as well as other nations that are major oil consumers or producers. "Consumers can be reassured that the oil market is currently well supplied, with oil production exceeding demand in the first half of 2019, pushing up global stocks by 900,000 barrels per day," the IEA said in a statement.

IEA countries hold 1.55 billion barrels of public emergency oil stocks. In addition, 650 million barrels are held by industry under government obligations and can be released as needed, it said. The stocks are enough to cover any supply disruptions from the strait for an extended period, it added without saying how long that might be. — Reuters

## Business

## KAMCO GCC Economic Update

# GCC fiscal expansion continues in 2019; lower budget deficits forecast for 2020

## Kuwait's trade surplus grows 2.2% y-o-y in Q1 2019 to reach KD 2.37bn

**KUWAIT:** Fiscal expansion is forecasted to continue in the GCC in 2019, as fiscal spending in the region is expected to increase by almost 5.5 percent to reach \$605.6 billion, based on the analysis of IMF's general government fiscal balance estimates. Saudi Arabia is expected to incur around 76 percent of the additional increase in fiscal spending for the region, at almost \$24 billion. Budget deficit for the region is forecast to increase from \$28 billion in 2018 (-1.7 percent of GDP) to \$50 billion (-3.1 percent of GDP) in 2019, as per IMF data. The lower deficit in 2018 was mainly ascribed to increased oil revenues from higher oil prices. GCC countries continue to focus on their structural reforms, aimed at diversification of their economies via their strategic Vision Plans, revenue optimization roadmaps, along with large spending plans and mega investments, that could improve growth going forward. In 2020, budget revenues are forecast to improve faster than budget expenses incurred, and contribute to fiscal deficits narrowing y-o-y to \$37 billion (-2.2 percent of GDP). Current account surpluses are also expected for the GCC over 2019 and 2020, as the region's surplus is expected to average over 3 percent of GDP over the period.

### Q1-19 starts on a cautious note

The Q1-19 real GDP releases of GCC countries signals stabilizing real GDP growth and non-oil GDP growth, with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia leading the way, and witnessing y-o-y real GDP growth rates of 2.6 percent and 1.7 percent respectively. Credit and monetary indicators across the GCC remained largely mixed, while inflation trends remained subdued in the region. While we expect fiscal expansion to continue by GCC governments, we expect GCC macros to remain broadly accommodative in 2019. The move by the OPEC+ countries to rollover the ongoing production cut agreement for another nine months, should keep oil prices relatively stable in our view. This should aid GCC budget finances and their ongoing transformation plans and diversification efforts, aimed at bolstering non-oil GDP growth. Further an interest rate cut by the Fed during the July FOMC meeting or thereafter would translate into lower interest rates for the GCC region as well, as GCC currencies are either pegged or loosely pegged to the USD. This would reduce borrowing costs in general for GCC economies, as and when they take the bond market route for future debt issues. Further, the ongoing inclusion of GCC sovereign and quasi-sovereign debt issuers in JP Morgan's EMBI index and relative attractiveness of GCC credit should keep debt markets active. Having said that, we do see a possibility of lower fiscal balances and current account balances for the region in 2019 and 2020 than estimated by the IMF, due to the lower oil production resolution from OPEC+ countries.

### Kuwait

Real GDP in Q1-19 grew 2.6 percent y-o-y from KD 9.79 billion in Q1-18 to KD 10.05 billion, driven by growth in both non-oil and oil sectors. The real oil GDP grew 1.3 percent y-o-y over the same period from KD 5.26 billion to KD 5.33 billion, while non-oil GDP grew by 4.1 percent y-o-y from KD 4.53 billion in Q1-18 to KD 4.72 billion in Q1-19. In nominal terms however, GDP grew by 2.1 percent y-o-y in Q1-19 to KD 10.23 billion. Non-oil GDP was the main contributor of growth, as it increased by 3.9 percent y-o-y in Q1-19, while oil-GDP remained

growth remained flat over the same period.

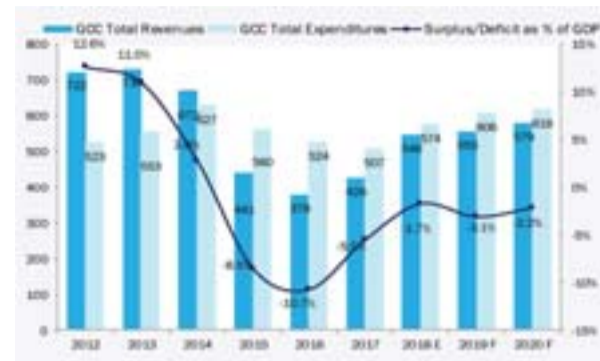
Kuwait's trade balance surplus over Q1-19 posted a growth of 2.2 percent y-o-y to reach KD 2.37 billion, from KD 2.32 billion during the same period in 2018. Exports however were down marginally by 1.2 percent y-o-y, from KD 5.0 billion during Q1-18 to KD 4.9 billion during Q1-19, while imports decreased by 4.2 percent to KD 2.6 billion over the same period. Credit facilities extended by Kuwaiti banks by the end of May-19 remained broadly stable, and increased by 0.4 percent from the end of Q1-19 to KD 37.6 billion. On a y-o-y basis, credit extended improved by 6.0 percent, driven by the growth in Personal Installment Loans, which grew by 5.8 percent over the period and accounted for over 42 percent of the credit disbursed by May-19. Credit to the Real Estate sector also increased on a y-o-y basis by 7.5 percent, while Construction sector credit was marginally down by 0.5 percent over the same period. Credit to the Crude Oil and Gas sector grew the fastest on a y-o-y basis, as credit disbursed increased by 18.4 percent y-o-y to reach KD 1.6 billion. Kuwait's broad measure of money supply (M2) declined marginally by 1.8 percent to KD 38.24 billion in May-19 from Mar-19 (KD 38.94 billion), mainly due to a 6 percent drop in Quasi-Money supply. M1 supply components on the other hand such as Currency in Circulation (+14 percent) and Sight Deposits (+8 percent) gained during the period.

### Saudi Arabia

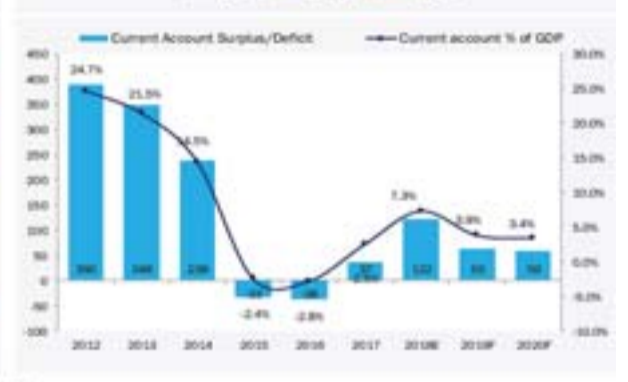
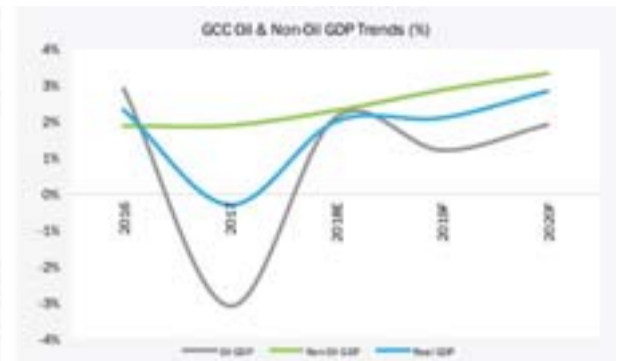
Data released by the General Authority of Statistics shows that Saudi Arabia's real GDP in Q1-19 grew by 1.7 percent y-o-y from Q1-18, led by a 2.1 percent y-o-y growth in non-oil GDP and 1.0 percent y-o-y growth in oil GDP. Growth in non-oil GDP during Q1-19 was mainly driven by the Private sector, as it grew by 2.3 percent y-o-y from Q1-18, while the Government sector grew by 1.7 percent over the same period. In nominal terms GDP increased by 3 percent y-o-y, with non-oil GDP posting a growth of 4 percent y-o-y, while oil-GDP grew by 1 percent over the same period. Higher oil and non-oil revenues helped ensure that Saudi Arabia's budget swung to a surplus of SAR 27.8 billion in Q1-19, from deficits recorded both in Q1-18 and Q4-18. The surplus was achieved despite expenses being higher by 8.5 percent y-o-y at SAR 217.6 billion, but was more than offset by increases in both oil and non-oil revenues. Oil revenues increased by 48.4 percent y-o-y to reach SAR 169.1 billion in Q1-19, from SAR 113.9 billion in Q1-18. Non-oil revenues also grew by 45.9 percent y-o-y to reach SAR 76.3 billion.

### United Arab Emirates

For the UAE, the Central Bank of UAE estimates Q1-19 real GDP growth to have come in at 2.2 percent y-o-y, similar to the y-o-y growth registered in Q4-18, based on their Augmented Economic Composite Indicator (AECI). Real GDP growth registered for Q1-19 was faster than the 1.0 percent y-o-y registered in Q1-18. The AECI indicator also estimates the y-o-y non-oil GDP growth to have recorded marginally from 1.7 percent in Q1-18 to 1.6 percent in Q1-19. For 2019, the Central Bank of UAE forecasts real GDP for the UAE to grow by 2.0 percent y-o-y, with oil-GDP growth of 2.7 percent, and non-oil GDP growth of 1.8 percent over the same period. Further, they mentioned that a stronger Purchasing



Source for the above charts: International Monetary Fund (IMF), KAMCO Research



Managers' Index (PMI), a significant increase in Dubai Economic Tracker (DET), and a y-o-y increase in private sector employment were all visible in Q1-19. On the capital front, total credit facilities disbursed increased to AED 1.53 trillion at the end of the Q1-19, an increase of 1.3 percent q-o-q, and an improvement of 3.8 percent y-o-y.

### Qatar

Qatar's real GDP in Q1-19 improved by 0.9 percent y-o-y and reached QAR 202.3 billion, as per the Ministry of Development Planning and statistics. The non-oil sector which accounts for over 52 percent of the real economy improved by 1.6 percent y-o-y from Q1-18. Mining and Quarrying sector growth remained stable broadly to reach QAR 96.4 billion. Qatar's current account surplus grew in GDP terms from 9.1 percent of GDP in Q3-18 to 8.6 percent of GDP in Q4-18, as per the Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics. Qatar reported a fiscal surplus of QAR 6.20 billion in Q4-18 after posting fiscal surplus of QAR 1.7 billion in Q3-18. The surplus in Q4-18 came despite a 16.2 percent q-o-q drop in revenues, and was aided by lower expenditure, as expenses went down by 25 percent q-o-q over the same period. Q4-18 fiscal surplus came in at 3.4 percent of GDP in Q1-18.

### Bahrain

Real GDP in Bahrain improved by 2.7 percent y-o-y in Q1-19 and

reached BHD 3.15 billion from BHD 3.07 billion in Q1-18. The Mining sector was the key driver for the increase, as the sector grew by 9.2 percent y-o-y in real terms. The Manufacturing sector which accounts for 14 percent of Bahrain's total GDP however declined by 3.1 percent y-o-y, while the Construction and Real Estate sectors, that combine together for 11.7 percent of the total GDP grew by 2.9 percent and 0.5 percent respectively on average y-o-y during Q1-19. In the Services sector, Financial Services grew by 3.2 percent y-o-y in the first quarter of 2019. However on a q-o-q basis, real GDP declined by 2.5 percent in Q1-19 from Q4-19, while nominal GDP declined by 2.4 percent over the same period.

### Oman

Oman continued to report quarterly budget deficits in 2018, but the OMR 1.87 billion deficit from Jan'18-Nov'18 was sequentially lower than the OMR 3.29 billion reported during the same period in 2017. Budget revenues over Jan'18-Nov'18 jumped by 34 percent y-o-y to reach OMR 9.69 billion, driven by a 45 percent y-o-y increase in oil revenues that reached OMR 5.88 billion, and a 34 percent leap in Gas Revenues that reached OMR 1.77 billion. Budget expenses also moved up 10 percent y-o-y over Jan'18-Nov'18 and reached OMR 11.57 billion as both current expenditure grew by 6 percent over the period. Oman registered a y-o-y nominal GDP growth of 12 percent in 2018, as nominal GDP reached OMR 30.50 billion from OMR 27.21 billion in 2017.

## Gulf Bank announces winners of Al-Danah weekly draw

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank held its weekly draw on 21st July 2019 announcing the names of the winners for the week of 14th until 18th July 2019. The weekly draw consists of five winners who receive KD 1,000 each, every week.

### The winners this week are:

Silvi Michael  
Bandar Taleb Saadi Aldhafeeri (minor)  
Abdullah Hamdan Saqer Sdairan  
Ruqaiyah Shaker Ali Turab (minor)  
Fatmah Mohammad Hissain Alnaser (minor)

Gulf Bank's third Al-Danah quarterly draw for the prize of KD 500,000 will be held on 25 September 2019. The final Al-Danah draw for KD 1,000,000, will be held on 16 January 2020, where the Al-Danah millionaire will be announced at a live event.

Gulf Bank encourages customers to increase their chances of winning with Al-Danah by depositing more into their Gulf Bank accounts using the new ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking services.

Al-Danah offers a number of unique services to customers, including the Al-Danah Deposit Only ATM card, which allows account holders to deposit money into their accounts at their convenience. Account holders can also calculate their chances of winning the draws through the 'Al-Danah Chances' calculator available on the Gulf Bank website and app.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD 200 to open an account and the same amount should be maintained for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al-Danah draws. If the customer's account balance falls below KD 200 at any given time, a KD 2 fee will be charged to their account monthly until the minimum balance is met.

Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the weekly draw within two days. To take part in the Al-Danah 2019 upcoming quarterly and yearly draws, customers must meet the required hold period for each draw. Furthermore, loyal Al-Danah customers are rewarded with loyalty chances. Loyalty chances are the total chances accumulated from the previous year which are added to the customer's chances the following year.

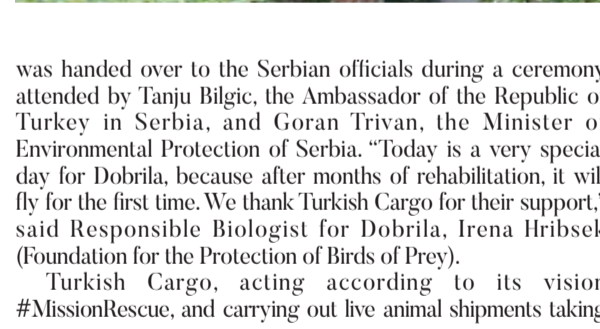
## The homecoming story of an endangered vulture with Turkish Cargo

**KUWAIT:** Carrying animals under the most real-like conditions in the skies, Turkish Cargo performed another life-saving transportation operation. An endangered griffon vulture, which started flying in Serbia and became exhausted in Sanliurfa (Turkey) after flying 1600 kilometers long on its seasonal migration route, was carried to Belgrade by Turkish Cargo.

The 1.5-year old rare griffon vulture named Dobrila, the last chain of the ecological system and living in the Uvac canyon of Serbia only in Europe, became exhausted while flying towards the east on its seasonal migration route, and landed in Sanliurfa. After having been found by the farmers in Sanliurfa, it was taken to the Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Center in this city.

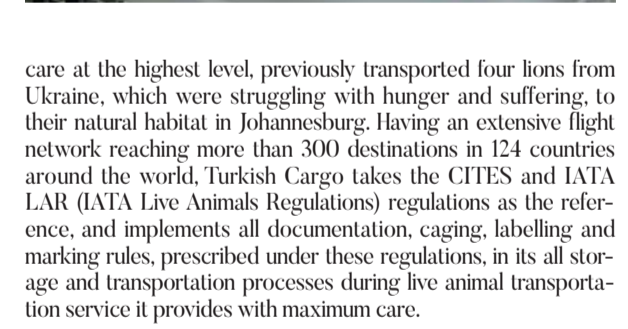
The griffon vulture underwent some checks and reached its proper and healthy weight again at this center in Sanliurfa, and then, it was released to the nature to continue flying on its migration route. When it was noticed that Dobrila, a member of the fowler family, couldn't continue flying, the officials of Republic of Turkey Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry contacted with the Serbian authorities using the tag and tracking number, available in Dobrila's foot. Following the discussions between the officials of the two countries, it was decided to send Dobrila to the Biological Research Institute (Sinisa Stankovic) in Belgrade.

After having been carried to Serbia from Sanliurfa via Istanbul under the sponsorship of Turkish Cargo, which acts in line with its mission of respect towards animals' lives and nature in all its transportation operations, the griffon vulture



was handed over to the Serbian officials during a ceremony attended by Tanju Bilgic, the Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey in Serbia, and Goran Trivan, the Minister of Environmental Protection of Serbia. "Today is a very special day for Dobrila, because after months of rehabilitation, it will fly for the first time. We thank Turkish Cargo for their support," said Responsible Biologist for Dobrila, Irena Hribsek (Foundation for the Protection of Birds of Prey).

Turkish Cargo, acting according to its vision #MissionRescue, and carrying out live animal shipments taking



care at the highest level, previously transported four lions from Ukraine, which were struggling with hunger and suffering, to their natural habitat in Johannesburg. Having an extensive flight network reaching more than 300 destinations in 124 countries around the world, Turkish Cargo takes the CITES and IATA LAR (IATA Live Animals Regulations) regulations as the reference, and implements all documentation, caging, labelling and marking rules, prescribed under these regulations, in its all storage and transportation processes during live animal transportation service it provides with maximum care.

## 5G smartphones: Everything you need to know about next gen connectivity

**KUWAIT:** The era of 5G connectivity is upon us and 5G powered smartphones are starting to make their entry in the market. Setting the benchmark in this market is the Huawei Mate 20 X (5G), Huawei's first commercial 5G smartphone. A brand reputed with putting customer requirements first, Huawei has perfected its 5G technologies in the Huawei Mate 20 X (5G). 5G smartphones do promise better connectivity and faster Internet speeds. However, if you are interested in pioneering the 5G, there are a few things that you need to look for in your choice of 5G smartphone. Make sure your phone supports both NSA and SA architecture 5G networks

Today, the 5G industry has rapidly grown to its commercial phase, with telecom operators in various countries and regions adopting two mainstream network architecture, Non-standalone (NSA) and Standalone (SA). The NSA network, which is the first wave of 5G networks roll-outs, will be supported by existing 4G infrastructure but, a shift to SA 5G networks, the ultimate true 5G solution, is set to happen soon. While the SA network has the added advantage of being simplified and more effi-

cient, the migration from NSA to SA should be unnoticeable to users. The Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) is the world's first 5G smartphone that works on both SA and NSA network architectures. This feature adds to the device's longevity and connectivity, because 5G devices that don't support both NSA and SA networks will not work in regions with either one of the network methods. Thanks to this feature, Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) users can rest assured that their devices will work in different countries and at the different stages of the 5G networks development.

Additionally, the Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) also comes packed with two chipsets. First, the Balong 5000, the world's first 7nm 5G multi-mode chipset capable of connecting a wide range of network protocols including 4G, 3G and 2G. Secondly, the Kirin 980, Huawei's fastest chipset yet and the brand's 7nm top-of-the-line SoC chip. Together, the HUAWEI Mate 20 X (5G) is capable of providing users with Ultra-fast download speeds and download rates up to 4.6 Gbps creating a 5G experience like no other.

### Look out for Dual-SIM features

While other smartphone manufacturers have moved back to single SIM designs for the 5G smartphones, the Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) is the world's first 5G smartphone to provide users with support for Dual-SIM features (5G SIM + 4G SIM) making it easier to stay connected to 5G networks while traveling or accessing roaming services.

### Make sure your phone can handle it all

5G connectivity is a power-demanding feature, which means you will need a smartphone that can run all the features all day, while also keeping safe from overheating. On the Huawei Mate 20 X (5G), users can benefit from a large amount of battery power to keep the device running for extended periods of intensive use. The phone packs a massive 4200mAh high-density battery, which is supported by the 40W Huawei SuperCharge that can charge from 0 percent to 70 percent in just 30 minutes. Safety is also assured, as this end-to-end charging solution is recognized and certified by TÜV Rheinland standards.

Running 5G hardware is a demanding task, which in addition to demanding battery power, can also result in the phone overheating. Keeping this in mind, the Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) comes with the Huawei SuperCool, a groundbreaking cooling solution that utilizes graphene film and vapor chamber to keep the phone cool and responsive during extended intensive use. These are a few key points you need to keep in mind when switching to a 5G powered smartphone. However, by opting for the Huawei Mate 20 X (5G), you get premium features, uninterrupted connectivity and solid performance thanks to its powerful hardware all of which lets it do what other 5G smartphones can't. In addition to meeting all the requirements for a stellar 5G connection, the Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) comes with an impressive 7.2-inch AMOLED Ultra Large Screen for streaming and gaming, which is also boosted by GPU Turbo 3.0 for a better visuals. The



Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) also includes a Leica Triple Camera setup complete with a 40MP wide angle camera, 20MP ultra-wide camera and the 8MP telephoto camera for a stunning photography from macro to Ultra-Wide.



# FIRST THINGS FIRST: EUROPE'S BEST JUST-ARRIVED EXPERIENCES

**A**fter arriving in one of Europe's cultural capitals, you could check into your hotel and take time to rest and reset. Or you could hit the ground running - what jet lag? - and make the most of your trip. From hiking to Prague Castle to people watching in Paris to soaking in thermal waters in Budapest, here are the best ways to spend your first hours in town.

on the sand. It's easy to do in Barcelona, though it's worth noting that the city bikeshare stands are only for residents. No problem: outfitters all over town rent bicycles starting at around €5 an hour. An hour or two is the perfect amount of time to explore the seaside neighborhood of Barceloneta and the Passeig Maritim de Barcelona, or waterfront promenade, on two wheels. It's also a great opportunity to scope out the ideal sunset spot or tapas bar to come back to later: Barceloneta is home to a number of low-key seafood restaurants.



#### Hike to Prague Castle for a beer overlooking the city

Don't let your non-existent Czech skills stop you from jumping immediately into the fairy-tale scenery of Prague. To get started on an adventure in this city, you won't need much time to get oriented. Prague Castle looms high above the city: just locate it on the skyline and start walking toward it. If you're coming from Stare Mesto, where many travelers base themselves, the walk toward the castle will take you across the incredibly picturesque Charles Bridge and through the winding streets of Mala Strana until you reach the steep uphill climb to the castle. You'll be rewarded at the top with sweeping views over the city's red roofs and romantic spires.

#### People-watch at an outdoor cafe in Paris

First-time visitors to Paris often make a beeline for the Eiffel Tower. But there's a better way to ease into the Parisian lifestyle that doesn't involve battling crowds of tourists. Simply take a seat in an outdoor cafe - Le Marais is the perfect neighborhood for this, but any arrondissement will do - and watch the world go by over a cafe or cafe creme.

#### Go for a ride on tram #28E in Lisbon

If you're feeling too jet-lagged to brave the hilly streets of Lisbon on foot, your next best option is to see the city on the historic tramway. Climb aboard tram #28E, a vintage yellow tram that travels through some of the city's liveliest neighborhoods, including Graca, Baixa, Alfama, and Estrela.

A 24-hour pass, available in metro stations, costs around €6, and you can hop on and off at key stops along the way, like sweeping views over the city at the Alfama miradouro and Chiado, Lisbon's arts district. Don't be deterred by the long lines at the tram stops: most travelers in line are just waiting for a tram with available seats, but you can climb right on if you don't mind standing.

#### Stroll around Rome with a gelato in hand

The quickest way to start your Roman holiday is to find the nearest gelateria and order a cone to go. Traditionally prepared in small batches using natural ingredients, gelato has less sugar and fat than regular ice cream. In spring or summer, choose a flavor made from seasonal fruit, like limone or fragola, or opt for local favorites like nocciola and pistachio. Traveling with kids? Ask for stracciatella - it's the Italian version of chocolate chip. Then take a passeggiata around Rome's beautiful fountains and squares. Staring at the Trevi Fountain or walking through Piazza Navona while gelato drips down the side of your hand is a rite of passage for first-time visitors to Rome, and you'll see plenty of locals doing exactly the same thing. For the best gelato experience, look for signs indicating that the gelato is made in-house: key phrases are fatto en casa and artigianale.

#### Pedal along the beach in Barcelona

There's no better way to shake off travel fatigue than to hop on a bicycle and pedal along the beach, watching waves crash in the distance as locals play volleyball

#### Wander through the flower market in Amsterdam

There's so much to see and do in Amsterdam. A great way to get into the swing of things during your



first hours in town is to visit the Bloemenmarkt (Flower Market). At the city's iconic marketplace, which dates back to 1862 and is located on the UNESCO-honored Canal Ring, glass-encased barges house countless varieties of tulips, peonies, violets and orchids. Especially after a long trip, a wander here is a fragrant and colorful way start to your exploration of the city. Rain or shine, it's open every day except Sunday.

— www.lonelyplanet.com



Health & Science

# Gray fingers: Ageing Singapore uses gardening to fight loneliness

Singapore a test-bed on how to help graying citizens live well

**SINGAPORE:** Since her mother died last year, 74-year-old Lim Yeo Hong has been living alone in a flat on the outskirts of Singapore, scavenging for cardboard scraps which she sells for a living. The only time she meets anyone is once a month when she collects food from a charity. "There's nothing else I can do at home, I watch TV," the frail woman told the Thomson Reuters Foundation, taking a break from pushing her cart full of cardboard around an industrial estate on the 5.6 million-strong island nation.

Asked if she felt lonely, she said, "Yes of course I do, but what choice do I have?" In a rapidly ageing and urbanizing world, Lim is among a growing number of elderly people who are grappling with loneliness, which research has linked to poor mental health, including dementia and early mortality. As people live longer, the World Health Organization predicts that one in five - 2 billion people - will be aged 60 or older by 2050, double that of 2015.

Singapore, the world's second-fastest ageing society after South Korea, according to the United Nations, is being seen as a test-bed on how to help graying citizens live well. It has hit on the idea of getting more elderly people out of the house and into gardens to reduce time spent alone, as the number of suicides by those aged 60 and above hit a high

of 129 in 2017, according to the charity Samaritans of Singapore (SOS).

Mental health disorders are on the rise worldwide and could cost the global economy up to \$16 trillion between 2010 and 2030, causing lasting harm to people and communities, according to The Lancet medical journal. Better urban design and friendlier public spaces could rekindle a sense of community and boost mental health, town planners say, as the UN projects more than two-thirds of the world will live in cities by 2050.

**New friends**

Elderly suicides in Singapore have been driven by a lack of social connection and a growing fear of being a burden on one's family, said the SOS, a leading suicide prevention group. "It's not good coming together and becoming denser ... if that density doesn't allow you to be more social and to have meaningful bonds," said architect Itai Palti, based in Britain where the government says loneliness is a major health issue. Urban planners need to rethink how they design cities by making mental and social wellbeing a priority, said Palti, who founded The Centre for Conscious Design, a think-tank. "We've built so much of the world around us with very little consideration of how it has affected us," he added. Since 2017, Singapore has rolled out an allotment

garden scheme - a shared plot of land where people can farm - which it hopes will foster a love of gardening and closer social bonds.

It has proven popular. More than 1,000 allotment gardens have been leased out to residents at S\$57 annually in national parks across the island, which is dominated by densely packed high rises. Retired taxi driver Roger Loh said he has been spending at least an hour every day at his allotment, tending to his papaya, chilli and spinach plants. His wife passed away four years ago. Although he lives with his son and daughter-in-law, they are out working during the day, leaving Loh at home with the dog. "A lot of old friends are gone already. I need to add some new friends, so here is very good," said the 78-year-old. "We talk and we exchange food," he laughed.

**Therapeutic**

Another project, known as the "therapeutic" gardens, uses fragrant plants and herbs to stimulate the senses in areas near nursing homes, in a bid to reduce conditions associated with ageing such as dementia and Alzheimer's. One in four Singaporeans will be above 65 years old by 2030, double that of 2016, the government estimates. Such communal spaces help to rekindle the spirit of the "kampung", a Malay word referring to close-knit traditional villages, said Kay Pungkothai,



SINGAPORE: Singapore, the world's second-fastest ageing society after South Korea, according to the United Nations, is being seen as a test-bed on how to help graying citizens live well.

head of community gardening at the government's National Parks Board. "When people come together and grow things, the passion of greening brings out a spirit of togetherness," said Pungkothai. "This is what we call a modern 'kampung' where people come together, they have a communal space they can go

and look forward to coming to ... It really tackles the issue of isolation and depression." City dwellers are 21% more likely to develop anxiety, and 39 percent more likely to have a mood disorder like depression than country folk, according to the Arkin Institute for Mental Health in Amsterdam. — Reuters

## Teenage climate campaigner Thunberg honored in France

**CAEN, France:** Greta Thunberg, the Swedish teenage activist whose Friday school strikes protesting government inaction over climate change helped sparked a worldwide movement, received the Freedom Prize in France on Sunday. Flanked by two WWII veterans who sponsor the prize, she accepted the award at a ceremony in the

northwestern city of Caen, Normandy.

"This prize is not only for me," Thunberg said. "This is for the whole Fridays for Future movement, because this we have achieved together." She said she would donate the 25,000 euro (\$28,000) prize money to four organizations working for climate justice and helping areas already affected by climate change.

The prize was awarded before an audience of several hundred people and in the presence of several WWII veterans, including France's Leon Gautier and US native American Charles Norman Shay. Both are sponsors of the prize. Thunberg said she had spent an unforgettable day with Shay on Omaha Beach, one of the sites of the 1944 Normandy landings that launched the Allied offensive that helped end World War

II. Paying tribute to their sacrifice, she said: "The least we can do to honour them is to stop destroying that same world that Charles, Leon and their friends and colleagues fought so hard to save for us."

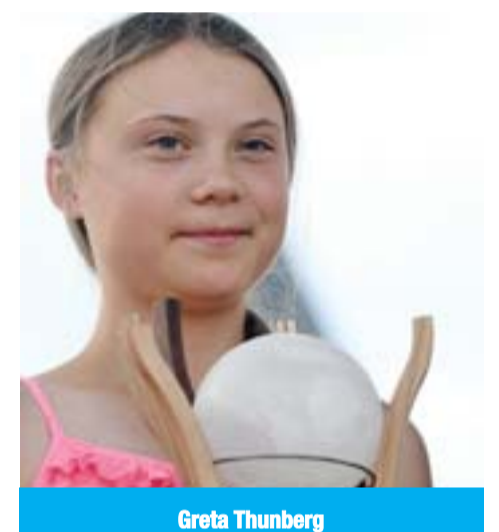
Shay said that young people "should be prepared to defend what they believe in and how they want to live in their life and their country. "As a soldier, I fought for freedom and to liberate Europe and the world from Nazism 75 years ago," he added. "But this is a nonsense if Mother Nature is deeply wounded and if our civilization collapses due to inappropriate human behavior."

"I'm deeply happy that you and the young generation fight for this noble cause," he told Thunberg.

Describing the challenges posed by climate change, Thunberg said: "Seven million

people die from illness related to toxic air pollution every year. "This is a silent war going on. We are currently on track for a world that could displace billions of people from their homes, taking away even the most basic living conditions from countless people, making areas of the world uninhabitable from some part of the year. "The fact that this will create huge conflicts and unspoken suffering is far from secret."

"And yet the link between climate and ecological emergency and mass migration, famine and war is still not clear to many people. This must change." The Freedom Prize was set up to honor the values embodied by the Normandy landings. Its winner is chosen by a worldwide online poll of respondents aged between 15 and 25. — AFP



Greta Thunberg

# CLINIC

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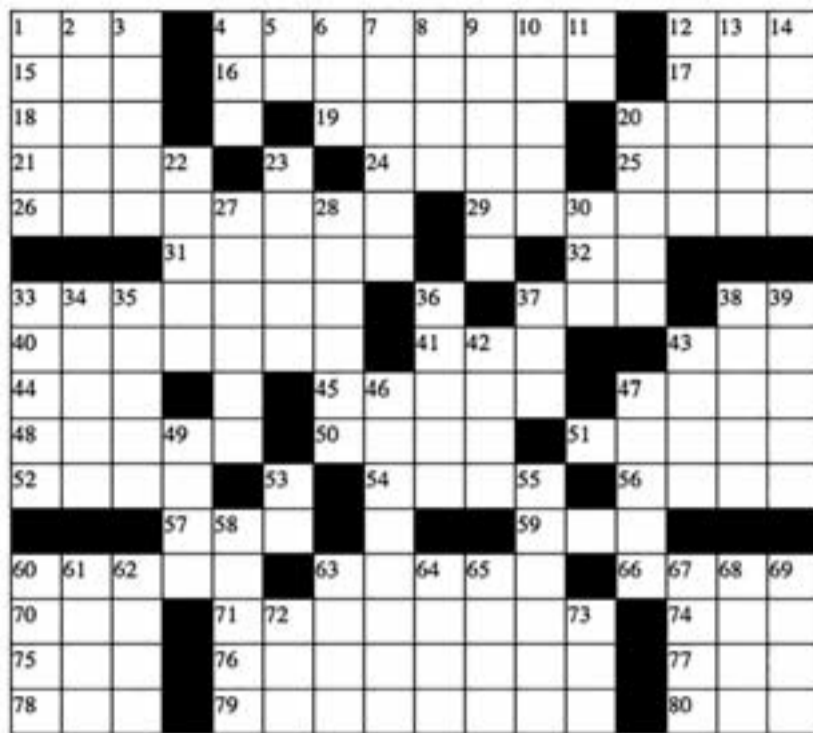
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2264



ACROSS

- 1. (informal) Roused to anger.
- 4. Impossible to use.
- 12. A drug combination found in some over-the-counter headache remedies (Aspirin and Phenacetin and Caffeine).
- 15. A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
- 16. Common name for an edible agaric (contrasting with the inedible toadstool).
- 17. An inflammatory disease of connective tissue with variable features including fever and weakness and fatigability and joint pains and skin lesions on the face or neck or arms.
- 18. The airforce of Great Britain.
- 19. An anti-TNF compound (trade name Arava) that is given orally.
- 21. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
- 24. Wading birds of warm regions having long slender down-curved bills.
- 25. Predatory black-and-white toothed whale with large dorsal fin.
- 26. Hard outer covering or case of certain organisms such as arthropods and turtles.
- 29. Small arctic whale the male having a long spiral ivory tusk.
- 31. Indian religious leader who founded Sikhism (1469-1538).
- 32. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
- 33. Of or relating to the atmospheric phenomenon auroras.
- 40. A small flat triangular bone in front of the knee that protects the knee joint.
- 41. A religious belief of African origin involving witchcraft and sorcery.
- 44. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
- 45. (of complexion) Blemished by imperfections of the skin.
- 48. Asian pepper plant whose dried leaves are chewed with betel nut (seed of the betel palm) by southeast Asians.
- 50. Of or relating to characteristic of the Republic of Chad or its people or language.
- 51. The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
- 52. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- 54. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
- 56. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
- 57. Acute delirium caused by alcohol poisoning.
- 59. (informal) Of the highest quality.
- 60. An imaginary elephant that appears in a series of French books for children.
- 66. A Tibetan or Mongolian priest of Lamaism.
- 70. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- 71. A mountain peak in the Andes in Peru (21,709 feet high).
- 74. Someone who is morally reprehensible.
- 75. The 22nd letter of the Greek alphabet.
- 76. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
- 77. A master's degree in fine arts.
- 78. Headress that protects the head from bad weather.

DOWN

- 1. Of or relating to or characteristic of Morocco or its people.
- 2. (Babylonian) A demigod or first man.
- 3. Hold back to a later time.
- 4. An official at a baseball game.
- 5. The 13th letter of the Greek alphabet.
- 6. North American republic containing 50 states - 48 conterminous states in North America plus Alaska in northwest North America and the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific Ocean.
- 7. Sharp piercing cry.
- 8. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
- 9. Term not used technically.
- 10. Any of various perennial South American plants of the genus Loasa having stinging hairs and showy white or yellow or reddish-orange flowers.
- 11. The square of a body of any size of type.
- 12. The fourth month of the Hindu calendar.
- 13. A folded part (as a fold of skin or muscle).
- 14. Of or like a cecum.
- 20. American pioneer and hero of the Texas Revolution (1796-1836).
- 22. Small and light boat.
- 23. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
- 27. A wrapped container.
- 28. A high-crowned black cap (usually made of felt or sheepskin) worn by men in Turkey and Iran and the Caucasus.
- 30. A small piece of cloth.
- 34. Lacking leadership.
- 35. A long noosed rope used to catch animals.
- 36. A gland in which gametes (sex cells) are produced.
- 37. A resource.
- 38. An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
- 39. Conforming to an ultimate standard of perfection or excellence.
- 42. English monk and scholar (672-735).
- 43. Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
- 46. A genus of Apocidae.
- 47. A brief description given for purposes of identification.
- 49. Tropical starchy tuberous root.
- 53. A bachelor's degree in science.
- 55. A Muslim place of worship.
- 58. A date.
- 61. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- 62. Anything that serves as an enticement.
- 63. A small nail.
- 64. Someone who copies the words or behavior of another.
- 65. An Iranian language spoken in Afghanistan.
- 67. The highest level or degree attainable.
- 68. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- 69. The sixth month of the civil year.
- 72. A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
- 73. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You may find this to be one of those days you are in true admiration of the beauty that surrounds you. You may see beauty in everything and everyone you encounter today. This brings a sense of peace and harmony into your world and you may find this to be a delightful day. Be careful not to overspend today because this mood tends to make you want to bring home every beautiful treasure you find. Not the best day for a trip to the mall. You will want everything you see! Take a stroll in the park and enjoy the beauty of the nature that surrounds you. This will keep your money in your wallet and a sense of peace in your heart.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may find that anything unusual and different catches your eye today. Your wild side is rearing its head. A new outfit, a new hairstyle, or an outing to somewhere you have never been will help satisfy what you are craving. Live a little. Others may be caught off guard by your high energy and the way you seem to express yourself today. You be you! This day will be spent with a smile on your face and an usually high amount of confidence. Live out loud.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You are so independent you tend to forget this sometimes everyone needs a friend to lean all or shoulder to cry on. You seem to try to take on the world all alone. This is a time you may find yourself needing support and the security of knowing someone is there for you. This causes your relationships to take on a deeper meaning for you. Today finds you serious with an awareness of time. You are very ambitious and have zero tolerance for anything that does not contribute to your success. You find yourself with a non-nonsense attitude and very dedicated and devoted to the task at hand. You have great appreciation for those who are supporting you at this time.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Dreams illusions and all that is mysterious draws you in today. You are curious about other lifestyles and other cultures. You long for new experiences. The desires of your heart are great and you are ready to step out of your comfort zone and experience all this life has to offer. Take a leap, Cancer. Live out loud. New experiences may bring a new outlook and a new attitude about life your way.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

This is a great time for a bit of soul-searching. Analyzing what brought you to this point in life and how you feel about where you are. You may have found that not only are you very in touch with your own emotions but also with the emotions of those close to you. Today finds you very empathic and understanding to all who cross your path. You may tend to become too emotionally invested in the lives of those around you. Sometimes you need to sit back and keep your focus on you and yours. Taking on the weight of the world may be too much for you to handle and keep your focus far from where it needs to be. You may discover this causes tension in your home life.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

When it comes to speaking your mind, today seems to find you an expert at that. You are opinionated and your thoughts and words are forceful. While this is a great quality, you may find others are easily offended if you are not careful with your approach. You are high energy and you will have the strength and determination to accomplish every goal you set your mind to. You crave organization in your world. Not only do things have a place but you also have a talent when it comes to putting people in the place they belong. This is very beneficial in the workplace as you are able to manage people efficiently.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Today may bring an opportunity to have a special time with a love one. This may you lead to emotion on a deeper level with this person. Feelings and emotions, you have been craving will be met and satisfied by this interaction. You have been feeling a need for an emotional connection and strong support from someone near to you. As independent as you are there is a desire to know someone has your back and will be there to support you for the long haul. Your timing is perfect, and others are drawn to your mood as today you are spontaneous and full of life.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You are clever and creative. This is a combination that will leave you as the center of attention in your world. You may find the best way of self expression for you is through your art. Not only expressing yourself, but expressing yourself with flair seems to excite you. Your creations may lead to a profitable business venture. This is a win-win situation in your world. You may find someone close to you, perhaps a lover or a child, play a big role in this venture.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

This day may find you longing for change. A new style, new friends, new experiences may be calling out to you. You want to break out and break away from the mundane life you have been leading. A major change is on the horizon. You may be led to really change things up in your life. Don't run out and get a tattoo or make any changes that can be reversed because this phase could fade as fast as it appeared. This change in attitude is very evident to those around you and you may find you are being met with much opposition. The new you is not the highly respected hard-working role model that so many close to you have grown to admire.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You don't care how... you want it now! This pretty much sums up the attitude of the day. You have your eye on a prize and are more determined than ever to obtain your goal. You will do whatever it takes today to make sure that happens. You may be guilty of being called hard headed in the past. Today will be no exception. You are admired for your strong will and dedication to making things happen. Your best quality is the ability to stop and make sure you do not step on any toes along the way. Take a step back and evaluate the situation you are in. The path to the prize is right under your nose. Do not make things more difficult than they are by thinking too hard on this one. Go for it.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Things may seem too good to be true. In an almost magical sense it seems that all of your dreams are coming true. Goals seem attainable now. Everything seems to be falling in your lap. You are being smiled upon and you have a new love for life. This is the result of your hard work and dedication. You may find that karma has a way of repaying your good deeds and there seems to be no other explanation for this vast array of good fortune. This is a great time to get all of your affairs in order and continue to dream big.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You are feeling some financial stress. That's because you have trouble distinguishing between "Needs" and "Wants." Solve the problem by listing your expenditures in the two categories. To assure objectivity, you may want to enlist the help of a friend to verify the lists. (Utilities are Needs, that new purse is a Want.) Set aside money for Needs, including payments on current debts. Allow yourself the balance to spend on wants. Resisting the temptation to spend more than you have will be difficult at first, but it will soon become habit. And you will be surprised at how quickly you will feel freer, less stressed.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Animals 2

Find and circle all of the animals that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of an additional animal.

Grid for Animals 2 word search puzzle. Includes list of animals: ANTELOPE, ELEPHANT, JAGUAR, ORCA, SHREW, BAT, EMU, KANGAROO, PANTHER, STORK, BABOON, EAGLE, KOALA, PARAKEET, WALLABY, BARRACUDA, ELK, KIWI, PARTRIDGE, WALLABY, BEAR, FERRET, LEOPARD, PENGUIN, WALRUS, BISON, FOX, LION, POIPOSE, WEASEL, CAMEL, GECKO, LLAMA, WHALE, CHIMPANZEE, GOAT, MACAW, GOPHER, MEADOWLARK, CHINCILLA, HAMSTER, MINK, COUGAR, HAWK, MOOSE, RABBIT, YAK, DEER, HORSE, MONKEY, RATTLESNAKE, ZEBRA, DOLPHIN, HUMMINGBIRD, MOUSE, RHINOCEROS, DUCK, IMPALA, OCTOPUS, ROBIN, SHEEP, ORANGUTAN.

Yesterday's Solution

Animals 1

Grid for Animals 1 word search puzzle. Includes list of animals: AARDVARK, ALLIGATOR, JACKAL, OTTER, SALMON, BARRACUDA, BASKETBALL, JELLYFISH, PANTHER, SLOTH, BEAR, ELK, KIWI, PARROT, SWAN, BISON, FOX, LEOPARD, PEACOCK, SWORDFISH, CAMEL, GECKO, LLAMA, PIG, TORTOISE, CHIMPANZEE, GOAT, MACAW, PORCUPINE, TROUT, CHINCILLA, GOPHER, MEADOWLARK, RACCOON, QUAIL, TURKEY, COUGAR, HAWK, MOOSE, RABBIT, YAK, WOLVERINE, DEER, HORSE, MONKEY, RATTLESNAKE, ZEBRA, DUCK, IMPALA, OCTOPUS, ROBIN, SHEEP, ORANGUTAN.

The hidden animal is: AMERICAN CROCODILE

Yesterday's Solution

Completed crossword puzzle solution grid.

Daily Sudoku

5x5 Daily Sudoku grid with numbers 1-5.

Yesterday's Solution

5x5 grid for Yesterday's Solution with numbers 1-9.

# Lifestyle

TUESDAY, JULY 23, 2019



A couple pose in front of the Louvre Pyramid and the Louvre museum in Paris. — AFP

## CUBANS SEEK TO REVIVE LITTLE-KNOWN **TANGO LEGACY**



People dance tango in a hotel in Havana.



People dance tango during a weekly Sunday milonga on Havana's Paseo del Prado promenade, Cuba.



People dance tango during a weekly Sunday milonga.

Cuba may be known now for upbeat salsa, but long before that genre even emerged its Afro beats fed into the melancholic Argentine tango which was widely popular on the Caribbean's largest island. Now a small yet dedicated following of several dozen Cuban dance enthusiasts are seeking to expand its appeal once more, claiming it as their cultural legacy. Two years ago, they launched an annual Havana tango marathon and festival, in addition to staging regular classes and milongas, or tango dance events. Last month, they hosted the first ever Caribbean qualifying round for the Tango World Championship in Buenos Aires.

"Tango runs through Cubans' veins because of its rhythm," said Agustin Garcia, 34, who runs a weekly Sunday milonga on a central, tree-lined Havana promenade, and is helping create an academy called Cuba Tango. "Sometimes when I'm teaching, it's incredible how quickly students grasp the steps." The word tango, of African origin, was used throughout Latin America around the turn of the 19th century to describe the social gatherings where slaves and free blacks would dance to the sound of drums, historians say.

What is now known as Argentine Tango - as a music with lyrics and partnered dance - emerged later that century in the working class port areas between Argentina and Uruguay as a fusion of genres carried there by sailors and immigrants. That included the Habanera - the dance of Havana - a mix of African rhythms and European musical elements, which explains perhaps why the tango ended up being so beloved in Havana. "Havana was the second top spot for tango in the world in the 1950s," said Felix Contreras, 79, a Cuban academic writing a book about the



Participants take part in the Caribbean qualifying round for the tango World Championship in Buenos Aires.

phenomenon. "There were as many orchestras, clubs and cabarets as in Buenos Aires."

"All Argentine tango artists came to sing in Havana," said Contreras, who met several including Osvaldo Pugliese and Astor Piazzolla. "In fact when (singer Carlos) Gardel died in a plane crash, he was en route to Havana." Tango even found its way up into the Sierra Maestra, with

Argentine-born rebel leader "Che" Guevara singing his favorite tunes to his fellow revolutionaries, Contreras said. "Sometimes we would take a break to forget the war with a bit of culture," said former guerilla Julio Lopez, 79. "The Che liked to sing a few tangos, and we loved it. He sang well."

Tango suffered a decline worldwide in the 1960s, staging a comeback as more of a niche interest in the 1980s. In Communist-run Cuba though, it was all but wiped out by the emigration of its top musicians and dancers in the economic crisis following the collapse of benefactor the Soviet Union in 1991. The cash-strapped bastion of Cuban tango remaining is now centered in Havana around the academy and the art studio, Ojo del Ciclón (Eye of the Hurricane), which hosts milongas several times a week amid its eclectic artworks.

The gallery also organizes for Argentine teachers to come teach for free and distributes foreign donations of second hand tango clothes and shoes that are not retailed in Cuba.

"The community has grown a lot in the last two years," said owner Leo de Lazaro, 54. "Dance is part of who the Cuban people are." — Reuters



People dance tango in a hotel in Havana, Cuba.— Reuters photos



This picture shows cinema goodies and leaflets at the Ministry of education and culture.



Dimitri Logotheitis, producer of "Jiu Jitsu" a multi-million-dollar sci-fi martial arts movie, speaks during an interview with AFP in the village of Mammari.



A partial view shows the set during the filming of the multi-million-dollar sci-fi martial arts movie "Jiu Jitsu" in the village of Mammari.

# Move over Hollywood, tourist island Cyprus is ready to roll

Watch out Hollywood and Bollywood, the eastern Mediterranean island of Cyprus that has built a reputation as a tourist magnet thanks to its pristine beaches wants a piece of the action: enter "Olivewood" and Nicolas Cage. The American actor is starring in a multimillion dollar sci-fi martial arts movie

and is endowed with white sandy beaches, rolling hills planted with olive trees, archeological sites and traditional mountain resorts-plus year-long sunny skies. Academy Award winner Cage, who got the 1996 Oscar for best actor in "Leaving Las Vegas", told reporters in Cyprus that the island "has been a good spirit for me". He spoke

Promotion Agency to showcase the island.

"Jiu Jitsu" producer Dimitri Logotheitis and Martins Rozitis, who heads the production company for "S.O.S: Survive or Sacrifice", were won over, but both agree that the "lack of infrastructure" remains a problem. "Definitely we suffer from a lack of equipment and studios," Rozitis told AFP, on the set of his movie at the Moni fishing shelter, near the southern port of Limassol.

"But still there are very good enthusiastic people here and companies who are starting to provide rentals of studio, cars, equipment," he added. Logotheitis, a Greek-American who also directs "Jiu Jitsu", said he had to bring in the equipment needed to shoot the movie. "They (Cyprus) don't have the infrastructure yet but we brought that in. We create our own studio wherever we show up," he said, on the set of the movie in the village of Mammari near the capital, Nicosia.

The village is located near the green line that has divided Cyprus along ethnic lines since 1974, when Turkish troops invaded and occupied its northern third in response to a coup sponsored by the military junta then ruling Greece.

## 'Difficult to pull off in Hollywood'

Logotheitis has high hopes for Cyprus developing into a low-cost destination for filmmakers, like Bulgaria and Romania. "You know Bulgaria had nothing, and it's got a huge studio now, Romania had nothing and now it's got a huge studio and a lot of infrastructures," he said. The filmmaker said Hollywood had become too costly for filmmakers with limited budgets, so he had canvassed several European countries that offer financial benefits before settling on Cyprus. And he is already thinking of filming a second movie next year in Cyprus.

"The government's already approved a movie that I've got called 'Men of War', which was written by Gary Scott Thompson who wrote the 'Fast and Furious' (franchise)... So I'm thinking about bringing that in February." "It'd be very difficult to pull off an action film like this in Hollywood, it just wouldn't be enough money," Logotheitis said of "Jiu Jitsu", which has a budget of 24 million euros (\$27 million).

## 'Film school needed'

Invest Cyprus has an annual budget of 25 million euros and hopes it will be enough to attract 70 million euros' worth of investments from foreign film production houses, as well as create dozens of jobs on the island. Around 65 percent of the team working on "Jiu Jitsu" are Cypriots. But experts and industry folk agree that a lot



Cypriot cultural officer for the Cinema Section of the Ministry of education and culture Diomidis Nikita gives an interview in his office in Nicosia. — AFP photos



Crew members pose with the light during the filming of the multi-million-dollar sci-fi martial arts movie "Jiu Jitsu" in the village of Mammari.

being filmed in its entirety on the island thanks to a government initiative giving filmmakers cash rebates, tax breaks and other benefits.

Cage's action packer "Jiu Jitsu" is, along with adventure flick "S.O.S: Survive or Sacrifice" featuring US actor William Baldwin, the first foreign film to take advantage of the incentive plan dubbed "Olivewood". The scheme was launched by the government, which tasked Invest Cyprus to implement it in cooperation with the tourism and finance ministries, in a bid to attract foreign investment to the European Union member.

"Cyprus is considered by a lot of people as a studio, a physical, natural (film) studio," says Invest Cyprus chairman Michalis Michael. The island offers deep blue seas

of "the luxury" of visiting Mount Olympus, the highest point in Cyprus, and feasting on a "traditional Greek lunch with a clay pot cooked lamb, it was absolutely divine, the yoghurt was great".

## 'Lack of infrastructure'

Last year, Cyprus hosted its first ever promotional film conference, attended by dozens of delegates from the foreign film industry. Authorities also unveiled "Olivewood", offering foreign and Cypriot producers tax credits and cash rebates of up to 35 percent of money spent on filming in the island, as well as tax discounts on equipment and infrastructure. A dedicated website, Film in Cyprus, was also set up by the Cyprus Investment



Yam was stabbed by a man wielding a fruit knife on Saturday during a promotional event in southern Guangdong province. — AFP

## Stabbed Hong Kong actor recovering in hospital

Hong Kong film star Simon Yam is recovering in hospital after being stabbed in the stomach while on stage for a promotional event in southern China, state media said yesterday. Yam, 64, is currently in an intensive care unit in Hong Kong after undergoing surgery and "remains in critical condition", said state-run Global Times. The veteran actor was stabbed by a man wielding a fruit knife on Saturday during a promotional event in Zhongshan, southern Guangdong province. The attacker ran onto the stage and stabbed and slashed at Yam while he was on stage, video broadcast on local media showed.

The suspect—a 53-year-old surnamed Chen—suffers from schizophrenia, they added, citing a mental health assessment conducted after he was taken into police custody. Yam has cancelled all work appointments following the knife attack, according to the state-run China Daily. "We are extremely shocked by this incident," Yam's management company said in a Weibo statement on Saturday. The Hong Kong actor has over 200 film and TV credits to his name, according to IMDB, including an appearance as a crime lord in the 2003 adventure movie "Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life". — AFP

## Vakarchuk: The rock star shaking up Ukrainian politics

As if a comedian-turned-president wasn't enough, Ukraine now has a rock star as a potential political kingmaker. Svyatoslav Vakarchuk, the 44-year-old lead singer of rock band Okean Elzy, is set to enter Ukraine's parliament after exit polls showed his newly created Golos (Voice) party taking six percent in Sunday's parliamentary vote. Volodymyr Zelensky, the sitcom star who shocked his nation by winning the presidency in April, immediately said he was ready to start talks with Vakarchuk on forming a government coalition.

The rocker packed his party's election list with young professionals, many of them Western-educated, and banned current and former lawmakers from entering the party. "People voted for changes and we are happy to be part of these changes," Vakarchuk told cheering supporters at Golos party headquarters after the exit polls were released. "We are ready to take responsibility." The singer did not stop performing during the campaign, making concert gigs an essential part of party tours across the country. And while he only set up Golos two months before the vote, Vakarchuk has long eyed a career in politics.

The singer was a supporter of Kiev's pro-Western Orange Revolution in 2004 and joined the bloc of then-president Viktor Yushchenko. He won a seat in parliament in 2007, but was quickly disillusioned with politics and gave up his seat after barely a year. In 2014 he passionately supported the Maidan revolution that eventually ousted a pro-Moscow leader, with one of his concerts in support of the protesters attended by more than 100,000 people. He has said that he wants Ukraine to join the European Union and NATO. Vakarchuk was born in the town of Mukachevo close to the Hungarian border. He followed in the footsteps of his father, a former education minister, and trained as a physicist in Lviv close to the Polish border. While pursuing an impressive music career during which he produced nine albums, Vakarchuk also studied for a doctorate in physics. In 2015, he took part in an international fellowship program at Yale University and in 2018 he joined Stanford University as a visiting scholar. — AFP

## Why 'Gone With the Wind' eclipses both 'Avengers' and 'Avatar'

Even as Disney confirmed Sunday that "Avengers: Endgame" had become the top-grossing movie ever, film historians noted that "Gone With the Wind" still has a strong case for being the most successful film of all time. The \$402 million taken in by "Gone with the Wind" after its 1939 release places it in a paltry 285th position in raw dollar terms. But that ignores the huge role of price inflation over time.

The epic historic romance, set during and after the US Civil War, sold the enormous 215 million tickets in the United States, far and away the record in that category, according to the Internet Movie Database. Its box office was boosted by seven national releases between 1939 and 1974. "Gone with the Wind" would have sold \$1.958 billion worth of tickets today in the US market alone, based on what the National Association of Theatre Owners says was an average US ticket price in 2018 of \$9.11.

Worldwide, and with inflation taken into account, the film would have taken in a stunning \$3.44 billion, the Guinness Book of World Records has estimated. That compares to \$2.7902 billion for "Avengers: Endgame," which this weekend just squeaked past the "Avatar" total of \$2.7897. Consider also that the US population in 1939 was a mere 130 million, roughly 200 million less than today.



'Gone with the Wind' showing on Dec 31, 1939 in New York's Times Square. — AFP

## A recasting of history

For some, however, the success of the epic film—it runs three hours and 58 minutes—is troubling. With a story line based on the novel by Margaret Mitchell, some historians see it as one of the most ambitious and successful examples of Southern revisionism. Immediately after the Civil War (1861-1865), there was a broad push in the US South to cast the formerly slave-holding region in a softer light. Those purveying the so-called "Lost Cause" ideology insisted that the Southern states had fought not to preserve slavery, but because the North was infringing on their political independence.

Yet in their declarations of secession from the Union, the Southern states were clear about their primary motive: the Northern states' refusal to extradite escaped slaves and their "increasing hostility... to the institution of slavery," as South Carolina's declaration stated. "Slavery is not even a critical issue in the movie," said Kathryn Stockett, author of "The Help," about black maids in the South in the early 1960s.

"You have these African-Americans that are working for these white families, and it's as if it's just their job... something they chose to do," Stockett says in the documentary "Old South, New South." For Randy Sparks, a Tulane University history professor, "Gone With the Wind" exemplifies the way Southerners were able to impose their version of events.

"There aren't many cases in history," Sparks said, "where the losers write the history." It was thanks to "Gone With the Wind" that in 1940 Hattie McDaniel, who plays Scarlett O'Hara's faithful slave "Mammy," won the first Oscar awarded to a black actress.

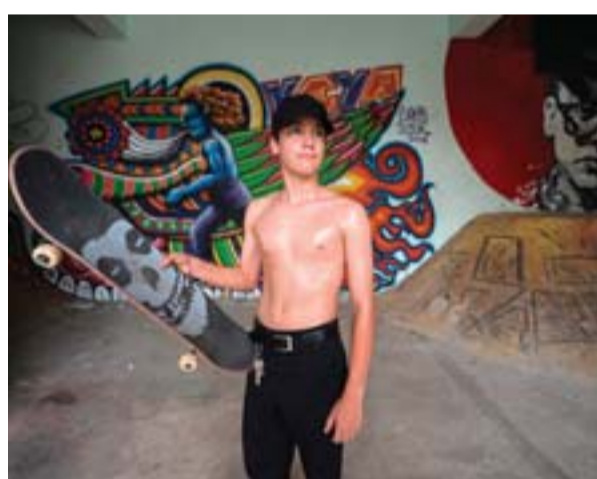
But racial segregation was still deeply rooted in Hollywood, as in many parts of American society, and on Oscar night McDaniel had to sit at a small table in the rear of the famed Cocomo nightclub in the Ambassador Hotel, far from the film's big stars, Vivian Leigh and Clark Gable. Producer David O. Selznick had to intervene personally to secure her a room in the Ambassador, which refused to admit black customers until 1959. — AFP

Lifestyle | Features



Skateboarder practice in Havana. — AFP photos

# Cuban skateboarders pivot for official recognition



After years in the shadows, with neither means nor official recognition, Cuban skateboarders are hoping that their sport will finally be accepted at home when it becomes an Olympic event in Tokyo next year. "In 2020, skateboard is going to the Olympics in Japan and that is motivating us to find ways to improve and perhaps it will encourage the government to take a little more interest in us," says 28-year-old Ariel Gomez, who trains in the homemade skatepark of Ciudad Libertad, in the west of Havana.

It is here that Gomez regularly helps learner skateboarders with the objective that "this sport grows in Cuba". There are hundreds of skateboard devotees in Cuba but officially the sport doesn't exist on the island—there is no federation, no trainers, no dedicated spaces to practice. That makes it impossible for Cuban skateboarders to take part in qualifying events for Tokyo 2020, some of which will be in Los Angeles from July 23 to 28. "We have tried many times to talk with the government, to include us in INDER (the National Institute of Sport, Physical Education and Recreation) to see if they will give us a space but they never wanted to," says Gomez.

### Gifts from abroad

This non-recognition brings other obstacles, notably the cost. In a country where the average monthly salary is around US\$50, there is no shop to buy skateboard material while prices can be high on the black market—a skateboard costs between 50 and 100 dollars. Che Alejandro Pando remembers when things were even more difficult. A pioneer of skateboarding in Cuba, Pando began at the start of the 1980s, a decade after the sport hit the streets of California and at a time when the United States were seen as an "imperialist



enemy" by the regime of Fidel Castro. "We had to make our own skateboards," says Pando, a 46-year-old tattoo artist. "For the wheels we had to be a bit inventive, work out how you could fashion them from, say, the blades of a Russian food mixer."

Desperate over the lack of equipment, Gomez opted for a new tactic in 2010. "We started to film ourselves and post the videos on the internet. We said we needed help and asked if anyone might be able to bring us some things," he says. His message got through to the global skateboarding community and skateboarders began to arrive from South America, Europe and the US. Since then everything has worked on donations. "We even received financial aid," says Gomez.

### Olympic dream

That money has paid for the construction of a skatepark in an abandoned building in Ciudad Libertad, a former military garrison converted into a school after the Castro revolution of 1959. "We found this area abandoned, filled with rubbish," says Ariel. "We cleaned it up and started to build our own skateboard park." On the smooth granite floor, skaters ride at high speed, using ramps, ledges and concrete obstacles to practice jumps and tricks. It is a homemade park which for the moment is tolerated by the authorities. But it is a different story elsewhere.

A tag on one of the walls of the skatepark illustrates the mood: "Fuck police," it reads in big red letters. "We aren't allowed to skate in the road," says 19-year-old Paul Ortega. "They arrest us, take us to the police station and fine us." Meanwhile, skateboard devotees in Cuba are hoping that the Tokyo Olympic will change a few minds, that the authorities in Cuba will recognize it as a sport and that one day they will be able to compete for their country. — AFP

## Dharma Dogs: Buddhist chants calm stray Myanmar mutts

Pumped out over speakers, Buddhist chants play for packs of stray dogs at a Yangon shelter in an unusual effort to calm them down as Myanmar struggles to control a ballooning canine population and a deadly rabies scourge. "We find that the dogs don't mate... when we play Dharma preaching," says Maung Maung Oo, the manager of the Thabarwa Animal Shelter. An estimated 1,000 people die from rabies each year in Myanmar, one of the highest rates in the world and a conservative estimate according to experts.

Stray dogs are the main source of the problem but culling through poison has stirred debate through the Buddhist-majority country. Some adhere to the belief that neutering will result in karmic retribution that might render the person infertile in the next life. Vaccination can be expensive and many rescue centers lack the resources to do it. But the Thabarwa Animal Shelter, located 45 kilometers (28 miles) northeast of Yangon, is home to 2,000 strays, and says it has found a surprising solution for population control.

It puts on pre-recorded, melodic chanting twice a day to make the dogs "less aggressive", Maung Maung Oo explains. "What else can we do?" he adds. Between 10 to 80 new canines arrive daily, and Maung Maung Oo and his 40-strong team—who also take care of monkeys and Asian black bears—have been overwhelmed.

The number of dogs in the shelter has surged from 800 to 2,000 in recent weeks as Yangon authorities have stepped up canine control measures. Some 7,000 dogs have been transferred from the streets to various shelters. The crackdown comes as public frustration mounts over what to do about the creatures. A 2016 sterilization program appears to have not had a long term impact—there are some 200,000 strays in Yangon. Many regard them as a menace because of the rabies risk, and because animals foul and block the streets.

### Controversial strategy

The situation deteriorates in the evening when they form howling packs, leaving some streets inaccessible and residents terrified of being bitten. Shopkeeper Theingi Win says many in the city feel under siege by the sheer numbers of the animals and there is real risk of being attacked. "Stray dogs often bite people when they are angry. Me and my granddaughter were bitten. We went to the clinic to take medicine," the 55-year-old recalls. Different townships opt for different responses.

Some tranquilize the animals to bring them to shelters. But in a more controversial strategy up to 10 percent of the dogs are being poisoned, according to the Myanmar Veterinary Association. But neither culling nor removing dogs is a very effective way of tackling rabies—the World Health Organisation (WHO) advocates for mass vaccination. Vaccinated dogs act "like a firewall", says Dr Marina Ivanova of Four Paws, an NGO headquartered in Vienna that aims to vaccinate one million dogs against rabies in Myanmar over the next three years. "Once the animals



Photo shows dogs resting in the Thabarwa Animal Shelter in Mawbe, on the outskirts of Yangon. — AFP photos

are vaccinated in one territory, they will not get rabies and they will not spread the virus of rabies to the human population," she adds.

Lacking resources, authorities rely often on private donations from companies and citizens to fund rabies vaccination. Meanwhile, the Bahan township has decided

to go with a more "gentle" route—netting and muzzling the mutts, and then trucking them to a dog shelter. Chairman Win Bo explains: "We don't want Myanmar to be seen as a dog-killing country." — AFP



A stray dog caught before it is sent to the Thabarwa Animal Shelter in Yangon.



A member of the Yangon City Development Committee carrying a stray dog before sending it to the Thabarwa Animal Shelter in Yangon.



Members of the Yangon City Development Committee vaccinating a stray dog before sending it to the Thabarwa Animal Shelter in Yangon.



A Cuban flag is seen hanging at Bacuranao beach in Havana. — AFP photos



A Cuban family arrives at Bacuranao beach in Havana.

## For Cubans, *a day at the beach* is no easy task

Cuba's constitution guarantees its people access to its beaches, but many locals are unable to enjoy the island's pristine white sands and crystal clear blue waters. While foreign tourists flock to such paradisiacal Havana sites as Varadero, which was this year named the second most-beautiful beach in the world by American travel website TripAdvisor, Cubans are typically found elsewhere. "Not many tourists come here," said 43-year-old Rey Gonzalez, who was enjoying a day at Guanabo, a beach east of the capital.

Guanabo's sand isn't as white and the water not quite as clear as Varadero's, but that mattered little to Gonzalez, who was there with his family. "For me, all the beaches are the same: sand, the sea ... you don't see the difference when you're swimming," said Gonzalez. Sitting on a stretch of beach where numerous stray beer cans were visible, 34-year-old Lazaro Palomino added: "We like the beach, whether it's clean or dirty." Even so, Palomino recognizes that Varadero is on a different level. "All Cubans would love to go. I went once and I came back in shock" at its beauty, Palomino said with a chuckle.

### Beach politics

Like everything else in communist Cuba, beaches are a political issue. "In Cuba, there are only Cuban beaches, which are part of the nation's heritage," insists Jose Luis Perello, a tourism expert. He quotes article 23 of the constitution, which asserts that the country's 271 beaches are "socialist property belonging to everyone." It's been that way since the communist revolution led by Fidel Castro in 1959. Before that, the coast was covered by private beaches reserved for members who were mostly whites.

Even the former dictator Fulgencio Batista, who reigned twice, first from 1940 to 1944 then from 1955 to 1959, was unable to get a membership card because he was mixed race. But while the revolution established universal beach access, the shoreline remains a place viewed



Children arrive at Guanabo beach in Havana.

with suspicion. "It was linked to the illegal exodus" of people trying to flee the island's communist rulers "and was the entry point to the country of little groups with certain interests," Perello said, alluding to the failed United States-backed Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961.

Despite the official party line, dissidents like the late writer Reinaldo Arenas complained that they couldn't go to certain beaches that were reserved for members of trade unions. Likewise, for many years, Cubans were banned from hotels, and today they're still not allowed to board boats.

### Much-needed cash

Another reason Cubans are kept off their island's beaches is tourism. Last year's 4.75 million visitors brought in \$3.3 billion—money the Cuban government sorely needs as it struggles under crippling United States sanctions. At least one hotel in Varadero advertises an exclusive beach, and locals say over-zealous security guards kick them off hotel beaches. The law prohibits such practices, but Perello acknowledged that, "undoubtedly, the hotels represent a business

that's trying to put pressure on" the government. For locals, just getting to the beach can often be a challenge.

Most don't own a car, and can't afford the bus fare to take them to the shore. Laura Yanis, 21, has been to Varadero only once in her life. "It's very beautiful, the water is very blue, the sand is amazing," she said. "But it's really very far for me and I don't have any transport." Sitting on the tiny Bacuranao beach, around 30 kilometers from Havana, she insists that "all Cubans really do have access to all beaches, they're not private or reserved for certain people." "That's important because it's us, the people, who are taking the country forward," she added. Caridad Vidangel, 48, managed to get to Bacuranao but only after taking a bus and then a horse-drawn carriage. "If we could, we'd go somewhere else," she said of the beach, the closest one to her home. "I've never been to Varadero. I'd like to ... but it's impossible." — AFP



A Cuban family plays with a ball at Guanabo beach in Havana.



## Statues come to life at street art festival in Belgium

A stone gargoyle, a gilded fairy, a cast-bronze king and other fantastical statues came alive in Belgium as street artists showed off their creations at Europe's biggest "living statue" festival. The performers are usually found frozen still on street corners across Europe - fascinating passersby with their discipline in holding a pose for painfully long periods. Caked in rust, gold and plaster white, only their eyes gave away the illusion at the annual event in Marche-en-Famenne.

A bullfighter, Valkyrie, baroque dancers and the sea god Poseidon were among the sights on parade. Two artists, dripping in mock blood, came headless to the festival. Antonio Morerra came from Portugal and dressed as bullfighter. "I am a torero," said the man, his costume and face painted in blue and gold. "To dress, (it takes me) one hour, the dress and the painting." — Reuters



# China thanks UAE for backing Beijing's Xinjiang policies

BEIJING: China yesterday thanked the United Arab Emirates for backing its security crackdown in Xinjiang, state media said, as President Xi Jinping played host to Abu Dhabi's crown prince. Beijing has come under growing international scrutiny for placing an estimated one million mostly Muslim ethnic minorities in internment camps in the name of counter-terrorism, but Muslim countries have largely refrained from criticising China.

During his meeting with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan in Beijing, Xi thanked the UAE for its "valuable support" on Xinjiang and urged the two countries to strengthen cooperation on anti-terrorism, said state-broadcaster CCTV. In return, Abu Dhabi's crown prince said the UAE "highly appreciates China's efforts to protect the rights and interests of ethnic minorities", according to CCTV's readout.

He also said the UAE would be willing to "jointly strike against terrorist extremist forces" with China, including the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, a militant group Beijing has accused of attempting to

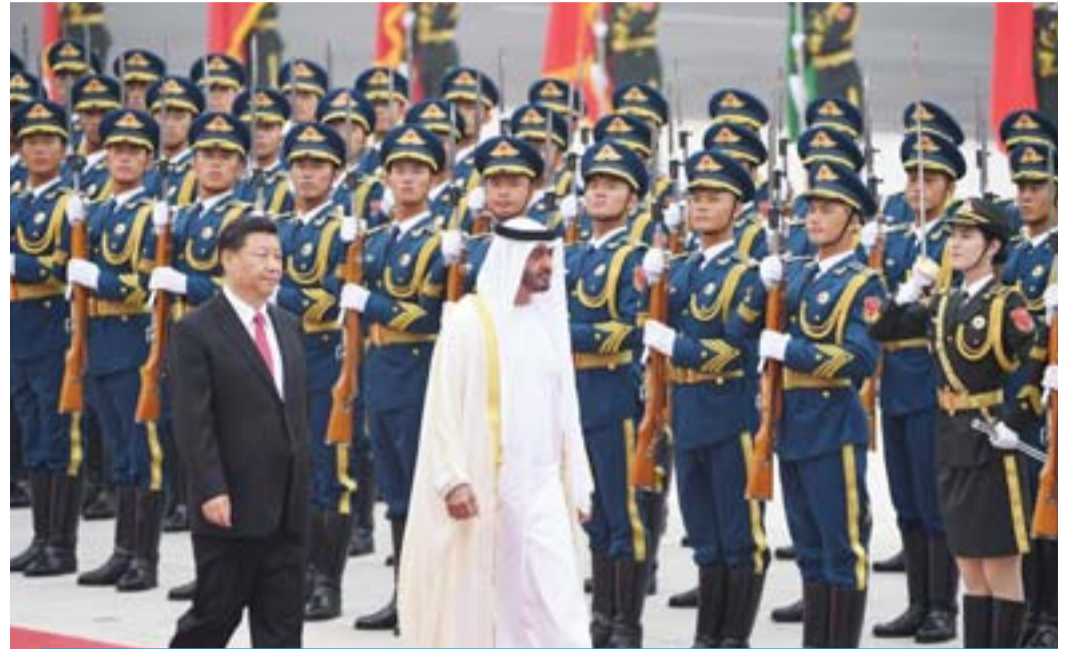
foment Uighur separatism. The crown prince's remarks come as Beijing seeks to corral more international support for its controversial policies in the country's northwest region. After initially denying the existence of re-education camps, China has been on a public relations blitz to counter the global outcry against what Beijing calls "vocational education centres".

So far, Beijing has scored multiple successes, with UN ambassadors from 37 countries - including majority Muslim nations Saudi Arabia and Algeria - releasing a letter earlier this month in defense of China's treatment of Uighurs and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang. The letter came after 21 Western nations and Japan co-signed a text denouncing China's conduct in Xinjiang.

Currently, Turkey is one of the only Muslim-majority countries to have criticized China over its network of camps in the region. In February, Turkey's foreign ministry lambasted China's treatment of Uighurs as "a great embarrassment for humanity" and said those in the centres and prisons were "subjected to torture

and political brainwashing". Ankara has, however, adopted a softer stance since Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited China in July. "I believe we can find a solution to the issue taking into account the sensitivities of both sides," Erdogan told Turkish journalists in Beijing before flying back to Turkey, according to Hurriyet daily.

Xi and the Abu Dhabi crown prince also discussed trade and China's Belt and Road Initiative, an ambitious \$1 trillion program that includes maritime, rail and road projects in Asia, Africa and Europe. According to CCTV's readout, Xi said the two countries should aim to reach their goal of \$200 billion in bilateral trade by 2030. In 2018, two-way trade between the two countries hit \$45.9 billion, according to China's commerce ministry. Xi also called for the "good development" of the second phase of the Khalifa Port Container Terminal, as well as the China-UAE Industrial Capacity Cooperation Demonstration Zone, a joint Belt and Road project between the two countries. — AFP



BEIJING: Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan reviews a military honor guard with Chinese President Xi Jinping during a welcome ceremony outside the Great Hall of the People yesterday. — AFP

## Israel demolishes Palestinian homes...

Continued from Page 1

The owner of one demolished building, Akram Zawahra, said "they are destroying our dreams and the dreams of our children". "They won't destroy our determination," he said.

Israel says the buildings were constructed too close to the separation barrier and posed a security risk. It has established a buffer zone around the barrier in the area of between 100 and 300 m, according to UN humanitarian agency OCHA. OCHA says demolishing all 10 of the buildings would see three households of 17 people displaced and another 350 people affected. The buildings were to include a total of 70 apartments, it said.

Palestinians accuse Israel of using security as a pretext to force them out of the area as part of long-term efforts to expand settlements and roads linking them. They also point out that most of the buildings are located in areas meant to be under Palestinian Authority civilian control according to the Oslo Accords of the 1990s. "What is painfully happening here is the biggest and most dangerous demolition operation outside of war operations," Walid Assaf, the Palestinian minister in charge of monitoring Israeli settlements, said in a video from the site.

In a statement Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas called on the "international community to intervene immediately to stop this aggression against our people". Israeli Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan accused the Palestinians of "lies", stressing the demo-

lition was validated by the country's top court after a lengthy process. "The structures were built illegally next to the security fence and constitute a risk to the lives of the civilians and security forces," Erdan said in a tweet, noting the demolitions were due to be completed within the day.

Ofir Gendelman, a spokesman for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, also stressed security concerns. "During the last year there were hundreds of security incidents and thousands of attempts by Palestinians to infiltrate our territory, some of them to carry out terrorist operations," he tweeted.

The European Union however urged Israel to immediately halt the demolitions and said "this policy undermines the viability of the two-state solution". A group of diplomats, mostly from Europe, recently toured the area. Nikolay Mladenov, UN envoy for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, said "Israel must stop this policy" and "no amount of humanitarian aid can compensate" the displaced.

Israel occupied the West Bank and east Jerusalem in the 1967 Six-Day War. It later annexed east Jerusalem in a move never recognized by the international community. It began construction of the barrier during the bloody second Palestinian intifada, or uprising, in the early 2000s and says it is necessary to protect against attacks. Palestinians see it as an "apartheid wall" and a potent symbol of the Israeli occupation.

On June 18, a 30-day notice was given by Israeli authorities informing of their intent to demolish the Sur Baher homes. Residents fear another 100 buildings in the area in a similar situation could be at risk in the near future. It is extremely difficult for Palestinians to receive construction permits from Israeli authorities in areas under their control, and Palestinians and rights activists say a housing shortage has resulted. — AFP

Chandrayaan-2 stands out because of its low cost, with some \$140 million spent on preparations for the mission - a much smaller price tag compared with similar missions by other countries. The United States - which is marking the 50th anniversary of Neil Armstrong becoming the first human on the Moon - spent the equivalent of more than \$100 billion on its Apollo missions. India also hopes to seek out lucrative commercial satellite and orbiting deals. The new mission comes almost 11 years after the launch of India's first lunar mission - Chandrayaan-1 - which orbited the Moon and searched for water. — AFP

travel to the United States. "Some were approached when they were applying for a visa, while others had visas from before and were pressured by the CIA in order to renew them." Others were "lured" by promises of cash, high-paying jobs and even medical services for seriously ill family members. Their mission was to collect classified information and carry out "technical and intelligence operations at important and sensitive centers using advanced equipment," he said.

The top security official alleged the CIA used special stone-like containers to send communications tools and identity documents to its network. "The forgery was clumsy, showing that it was done by the CIA itself," he said, adding that this "proves" it was government-sanctioned. "After they were discovered, CIA officers ordered the spies to destroy all the documents," he added. The official said the CIA had informed the suspects to go to "emergency exits" in cities near the border in case they felt they were in danger. "Of course, they instead met the intelligence ministry's agents and were arrested."

He hailed the operation as a "second major defeat of the CIA" following a similar one five years earlier. "They will naturally try to restore and rebuild themselves, and of course we are always vigilant." On June 22 Iran announced it had executed a "defense ministry contractor" convicted of spying for the CIA.

Concern over foreign interference is nearly as old as the Islamic republic. The US embassy in Tehran was stormed by students in November 1979 and called the "spy nest". State television recently aired a 30-episode series called "Gando" (an Iranian crocodile species) dramatizing with Hollywood flair the Iranian counter-espionage operations. Its first season is inspired in part by the case of Jason Rezaian, the Iranian-American correspondent for the Washington Post in Tehran jailed for 544 days over charges of espionage. Gando portrays him as a spy master. Rezaian was released in 2016 as part of a prisoner exchange with Washington. — Agencies

## IAEA chief Amano dies at 72...

Continued from Page 1

Director General Yukiya Amano," the IAEA said in a statement. It said that Amano died on July 18. But his family had only informed the IAEA late Sunday, "with the specific request not to disclose it until the family funeral had taken place on 22 July in a quiet atmosphere". No details were given about the cause of death, but Amano had been ill for some months.

HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to the IAEA over the passing away of Amano. In the cable, he expressed deepest condolences, praising Amano's considerable efforts and significant contribution to the development of IAEA in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons in order to promote international peace and security. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables.

During his 10 years at the helm, Amano oversaw the signing of a landmark deal in 2015 between Iran and six major powers - Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States - under which the Islamic republic agreed to curb its nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of sanctions.

But international tensions with Iran have been rising since US President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled out of the deal in May 2018. Amano took over from Egypt's Mohamed ElBaradei in 2009. His third term as IAEA chief had originally been due to expire in November 2021, but he had been expected to announce his intention to step down early because of undisclosed health reasons.

The IAEA said its flag over its headquarters in Vienna had been lowered to half-mast. Iran and the US quickly paid tribute to the Japanese diplomat. Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi expressed his "deep condolences" in a tweet, saying: "I commend his skillful & professional performance as DG of IAEA..."

## Trump offers to mediate...

Continued from Page 1

countries - a proposal that did not move forward. India and Pakistan have been fighting over the Himalayan former kingdom for decades. In February, a suicide bombing claimed by a Pakistan-based militant group killed 41 Indian troops in Indian-controlled Kashmir, prompting tit-for-tat air strikes between the two countries. Some 70,000 people, mostly civilians, have died over the past 30 years in Indian-administered Kashmir, monitoring groups say. The fighting is between Indian soldiers - who number around 500,000 on the ground - and rebels wanting either independence or union with Pakistan.

The goal of Khan's visit, said a senior Trump administration official, is "to press for concrete cooperation from Pakistan to advance the Afghanistan peace process". The Trump administration also wants to encourage Pakistan to "deepen and sustain its recent effort to crack down on militants and terrorists within its territory," the official said on condition of anonymity. The United States is pressing for a political agreement with the Taliban before presidential voting in Afghanistan in late September. This would clear the way for most US troops to withdraw from Afghanistan and bring an end to America's longest war.

Washington and Kabul accuse Pakistan of supporting armed extremist groups such as the Haqqani network, which is an ally of the Taliban, by giving it refuge in Pakistani regions along the border with Afghanistan. Pakistan denies providing such support and argues that, in fact, it has sustained huge losses in terms of lives and money as it fights extremism. "We are concerned about the links between these groups and Pakistan's intelligence services and military," the administration official said, referring to Jaish-e-Mohammed, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and the Haqqani network.

Days before Khan's visit, Pakistani authorities detained Hafiz Saeed, the founder of LeT and the alleged mastermind of the 2008 Mumbai attacks, in a move

May the Almighty bless his soul."

Washington's ambassador to the international organizations in Vienna, Jackie Wolcott, said the United States "and all nuclear non-proliferation advocates have lost a great friend, and the United Nations family has lost an exceptional public servant". White House National Security Advisor John Bolton said Amano's "commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and his championing of peaceful nuclear energy have been unparalleled". In Moscow, Russian President Vladimir Putin said he "always admired his wisdom and foresight - his ability to make informed decisions in the most difficult circumstances."

The IAEA, which is tasked with monitoring Iran's nuclear activities to ensure they abide by the terms of the 2015 deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, will now have to find Amano's successor as tensions between Washington and Tehran escalate ever higher. In retaliation to Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA, Iran announced earlier this month that it no longer felt bound by some of the terms of the pact.

Tehran said it would breach one of the limits on stockpiles of nuclear material and also start to enrich uranium at a higher level than agreed - both of which has since been confirmed by the IAEA. Against this backdrop of brinkmanship, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps confiscated a UK-flagged tanker in the Strait of Hormuz on Friday, two weeks after British authorities seized an Iranian tanker off Gibraltar. The IAEA's director general is chosen by the 35 member states that sit on its board of governors.

The agency has 171 member states in all and plays a key role in the fight against nuclear proliferation, by verifying that signatories to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons abide by their commitments. Among those mooted as his possible successor are the IAEA's chief coordinator, Cornel Feruta, a Romanian, as well as Argentina's envoy to the agency, Rafael Grossi.

Experts suggest that the appointment process could become deeply politicized given the current international climate. Mark Hibbs, a research fellow at Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said the IAEA would "want to limit the extent to which the election ventures into political areas that are remote from the business of the agency". — Agencies

hailed by Trump as a result of the pressure applied by his administration. But Saeed - declared a global terrorist by the United States and the United Nations - has for years rotated in and out of detention, and Democratic lawmakers later hit back at the president, tweeting: "Let's hold the (applause) until he's convicted."

Islamabad want to shore up relations with Washington after years of discord following the discovery of 9/11 architect Osama Bin Laden on Pakistani soil, where he was killed in a US raid in 2011. "One of the big storylines going into the Trump-Khan meeting is the sharp disconnect in expectations," said Michael Kugelman, deputy director of the Asia Program at The Wilson Center. "Pakistan wants to use the meeting as an opportunity to reset and broaden the relationship. The US has a more narrowly defined goal of securing more assistance from Pakistan for the Afghanistan peace process," said Kugelman.

The IMF has just approved a \$6 billion loan to help right Pakistan's faltering economy, and keeping the US onside is crucial in maintaining the flow of Western assistance, added Raza Rumi, a Pakistan expert at Ithaca College. In particular, Pakistan would like US support at the next meeting of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) - an anti-money-laundering monitor based in Paris that has threatened to blacklist the country for failing to do enough to combat terror financing, said Rumi.

The interaction between the two leaders - both celebrities-turned-politicians whose love lives once made regular tabloid fare - will also be watched closely. Before taking power, Khan once described the idea of meeting with Trump as a "bitter pill" to swallow. But the fact that Khan has brought with him his army chief, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, will be welcomed by Washington since Pakistan's military is widely believed to be the ultimate decision maker in matters of foreign policy, said Shuja Nawaz, a South Asia expert at the Atlantic Council.

"I think it gives a little more credibility to whatever message the Pakistanis are bringing," he said. "In the past, we've always had instances where civilian prime ministers come and make some public statements and then privately they complain about the military to their American hosts, with the hope of getting them on their side." — AFP

## India launches historic bid to put...

Continued from Page 1

The 2.4-ton orbiter is expected to circle the Moon for about a year, taking images of the surface, looking for signs of water, and studying the atmosphere.

## Iran busts CIA spy ring; UK plans...

Continued from Page 1

Iran impounded the tanker after claiming it failed to respond to distress calls and turned off its transponder after hitting a fishing boat. "Seizing the British tanker was a legal measure by Iran," a spokesman for the Iranian government, Ali Rabiee, told a news conference in Tehran yesterday. However, Britain has said there was no evidence of a collision and said the vessel was in Omani waters, with its transponder switched on. "To all the countries that are calling on Iran to release the tanker, we ask them to tell Britain the same thing," the Iranian spokesman said yesterday.

Iran said last month it dismantled a network linked to the US Central Intelligence Agency, state news agency IRNA said at the time, saying it was conducted in cooperation with "foreign allies". Yesterday, the counter-intelligence chief said 17 people suspected of espionage had been identified, all of them Iranians. The suspects had been "employed at sensitive and crucial centers and also the private sector related to them, working as contractors or consultants," said the official.

The intelligence ministry released a CD with images of what it said were CIA operatives abroad as well as business cards of US diplomats in Austria, Finland, India, Turkey and Zimbabwe allegedly involved in the network. The announcement came as state television started broadcasting a "documentary" titled "The Mole Hunt", a trailer of which was on the disc. It shows re-enactments of spy meetings with an action movie edit plus interviews with officials like intelligence minister Mahmoud Alavi.

Some of the spies had been recruited by falling into a "visa trap" set by the CIA for Iranians seeking to



## Sports

# Mascots, javelin carriers: Tokyo adds robots to Olympic roster

## Fearing Olympic chaos, Tokyo tells workers - stay home

**TOKYO:** A roster of Olympic robots that will do everything from welcoming visitors to transporting javelins has been unveiled as Tokyo works to showcase Japanese technology at next year's Summer Games. Japan hopes the 2020 Olympics will be a chance to put its tech sector back on the map after years in which the country's reputation as an industry leader has flagged. Auto giant Toyota has a roster of five robots with different roles to play, from cutesy renditions of the Olympic mascots to a staid transport bot.

Undoubtedly the most appealing are the toddler-sized versions of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic mascots, the futuristic Miraitowa and Someity. Blue- or pink-checked, with huge eyes and pointy ears, the mascot robots have multiple joints and arms which can be remotely controlled. And while the pint-sized pair can't move or talk, a camera inside their heads helps them interact with spectators and athletes, said Tomohisa Moiradaira, an official responsible for Tokyo 2020 robot development at Toyota.

"Thanks to the camera, the robots can recognize people's expressions and respond back," he told reporters. "If a person moves away it will look sad." The mascot's "feelings" are reflected in its eyes: they can display hearts or stars depending on emotions. Toyota has suggested the mascot robots could welcome athletes and spectators, and possibly help engage children with the Games. Significantly less cute-but slightly more practical-is the company's Field Support Robot, a suitcase-sized automaton on wheels that will help Olympic staff.

It is capable of following staff, while avoiding obstacles, and can be loaded with items like javelins or discuses, helping "reduce the amount of time needed to retrieve items as well as reduce the amount of staff labour for events", Toyota said. Other offerings include robots designed to support people in wheelchairs or deliver food to spectators. For those who can't attend the Games, there's the T-TRI, effectively a human-sized narrow screen on wheels equipped with a camera.

### Stay at home

Japan's famously diligent workers spend more hours at the office than employees in almost any other country. But to avoid traffic chaos at next year's Olympics, authorities have a message: stay home. Hundreds of thousands of people are expected to attend Olympic and Paralympic events in Tokyo during the 2020 Games, putting additional strain on the city's already notoriously crowded commuter routes. Officials also hope that promoting working from

home during the Games will encourage a more easy-going approach in a country known for its cases of 'karoshi', or death from overwork. "We are expecting... up to 920,000 spectators and Olympic staff members a day," said Kasumi Yamasaki, who oversees transport issues for the Games at the Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

Experts expect a 10 percent rise in passengers on trains, and a 20 percent increase in express highway users, which could result in lengthy delays and even dangerous crowding. Railway operators are planning to put more trains into service but "railway transportation is already at full capacity during the rush hours from 7 to 9am", Yamasaki told AFP.

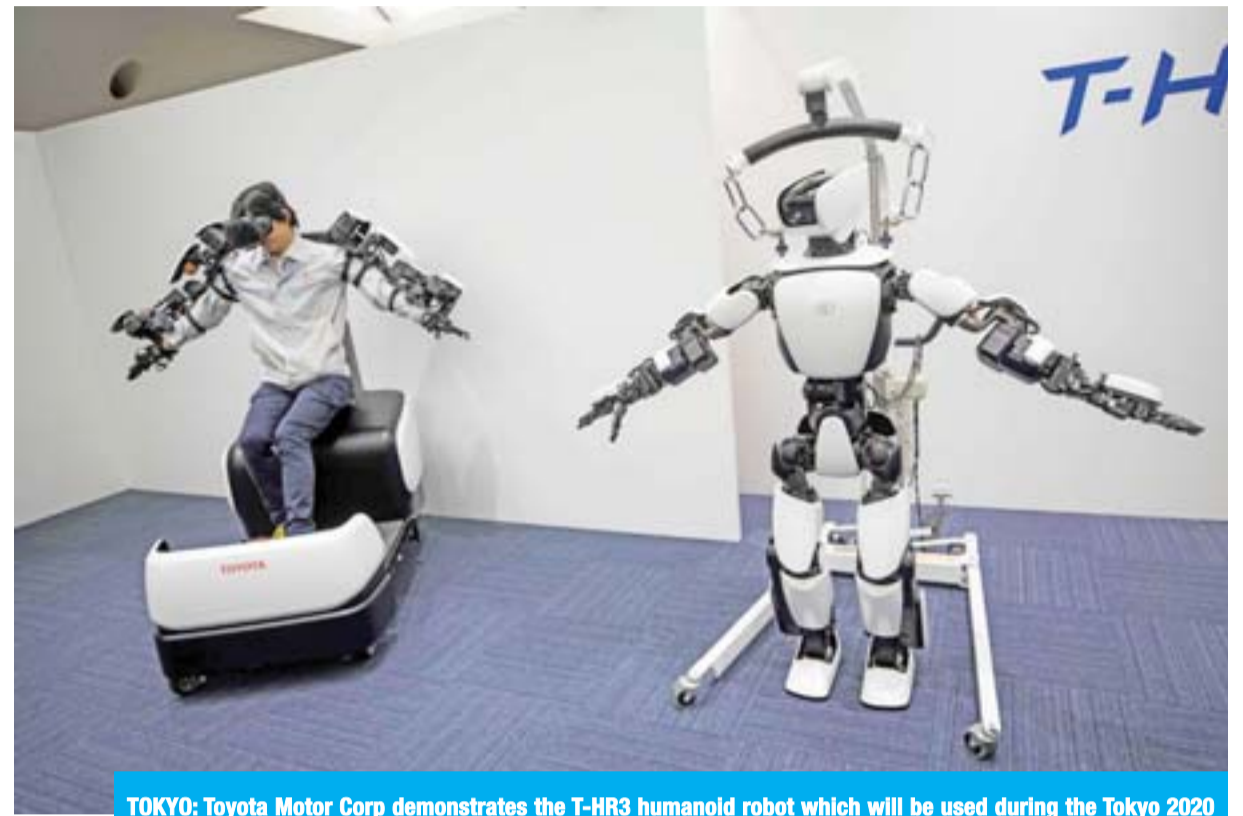
On July 22, one year before the Games, Tokyo rolled out a month-long "Telework Days" campaign, with government offices and private business committing to avoiding peak commuting hours. Nearly 3,000 companies including auto giant Toyota and trading house Sumitomo Corp. are taking part. The concept isn't entirely unfamiliar in Japan, where the government has been urging employers to be more flexible, hoping to help parents and others caring for elderly relatives to better balance their work and home responsibilities.

### 'Stress-free lifestyle'

The efforts have run up against various obstacles, said Kanako Nakayama, an internal affairs ministry official in charge of telework. "Concerns over the security of sensitive information, the difficulty of controlling working conditions, and the fact that corporate culture stresses the importance of face-to-face communications have deterred" some firms, she told AFP. Officials hope the campaign will show firms that employees can actually "work even more effectively" when they stay home, she added. That has been Yoshie Midorikawa's experience.

She starts her day by opening her laptop at home and sending her colleagues a message on a smartphone app, letting them know she is online after dropping her daughter at a nearby nursery. "You can save lots of time and energy that would have been used for commuting, especially when trains are delayed or carriages are crowded," said Midorikawa, 42, a sales manager at technology firm Kunai, Inc. "I can work effectively since you don't have to pick up telemarketer calls here," she said in her quiet, neat living room.

Experts and government officials hope that Olympic efforts to expand telework might serve as something of a



**TOKYO:** Toyota Motor Corp demonstrates the T-HR3 humanoid robot which will be used during the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo. — AFP

legacy for the Games. Tokyo 2020 "is a chance to actively introduce telework, which can create a stress-free lifestyle," said Azuma Taguchi, a professor of engineering at Chuo University. He is among the loudest voices urging authorities to take serious measures to tackle Olympic traffic, warning of potentially "fatal congestion" in railway stations if action is not taken.

### Take a 'workation'

Others also see the Olympics as a chance to break existing work habits. "This is a chance to make telework a legacy of the Games that will take root" in Japanese society, Industry Minister Hiroshige Seko said in a recent forum

to promote flexible work. And some officials are hoping that a more open-minded approach to work could encourage people to take "workations" - working remotely from far-flung locations with attractive leisure options.

Several towns have already used government subsidies to build offices intended to attract people for temporary "workations" or encourage companies to set up satellite hubs. Shirahama, a small town in western Japan, now has two business office buildings packed with workers. "We made sales pitches to companies that we have beaches, hot springs, and good access to an airport that connects with Tokyo's Haneda airport," local official Masakatsu Ogawa said. — Agencies

## Isner beats Bublik for 4th Newport ATP title

**NEW YORK:** American John Isner captured his fourth title at the ATP grass court tournament at Newport, Rhode Island, on Sunday, beating Alexander Bublik 7-6 (7/2), 6-3. Isner, who was sidelined by a stress fracture in his left foot for three months after reaching the Miami final in March, was the top seed in the tournament that he also won in 2011, 2012 and 2017.

Bublik, the seventh-seeded 22-year-old from Kazakhstan who was playing in his first ATP final, double-faulted on break point to fall behind 3-2 in the second set, and that was the only opening the big-serving Isner needed. The 34-year-old American - who produced only a modest five aces but put 79 percent of his first serves in play - finished off the match with a forehand winner even as he slipped on the grass and sprawled forward.

He converted all three of his break points in the game, including on match point when the Kazakh failed in his bid to catch Isner out with an underarm serve on the final point. While that didn't pan out, Isner urged Bublik to continue to pursue his "quirky" game. "It was a lot of fun to play against you today," Isner told him. "You're very quirky, but I mean that in a very sincere way. You're fantastic for the game and we all hope you continue to have great results in the future because guys like you are important to keep tennis exciting."

The towering American also had words of thanks for his team, especially his physical therapist. "It's not easy keeping a guy like myself healthy," said Isner, who is slated to appear next week in Atlanta, Georgia, in search of a sixth title in the BB&T Open. Bublik, who has toiled largely on the ATP Challenger Tour, is assured of reaching a career-high ATP ranking on Monday, when he will break into the top 75 for the first time. — AFP

## Solo swim: Italian does 3 heats after start malfunction

**GWANGJU:** An Italian swimmer was forced to make three attempts to complete a world championship backstroke heat after a string of malfunctions with the starting equipment. Simone Sabbioni, a national record-holder, slipped at the start when his wedge, the angled block swimmers use to push off, gave way, causing him to come to an abrupt halt as his rivals splashed down the pool.

Sabbioni, 22, was told he could race again - this time alone - but the device failed for a second time, submerging him again. "It's just unbelievable this kind of thing can happen at the world championships," he told AFP. Sabbioni - who eventually got away cleanly at the third attempt - squeezed into one of the last qualifying spots with a time of 53.85 seconds, spurred on by a roaring crowd.

"I'm happy because I got through to the semi-finals but it really wasn't easy in these kind of conditions," he said. Sabbioni wasn't the only athlete to encounter problems at the starting line. Minutes earlier Dylan Carter of Trinidad and Tobago also suffered issues with his block and, after a protest by his coach, was granted the same opportunity for a second lonely swim. "The first time the wedge slipped out the notch so it was a mechanical fault," he said. "But we knew that I had the capability to be in the semi so my coach protested because it's happened to a lot of athletes." — AFP



## GAZOO Racing's Lexus LC triumphs in SP-PRO class

**NURBURGRING:** Demonstrating its racing prowess on one of the world's most demanding circuits, the No 56GR Lexus LC claimed first position in the SP-PRO1 class at the 24 Hours of Nurburgring endurance race recently in Germany. The result marks the second year in which the Lexus LC has triumphed in its class at Nurburgring, following its impressive debut performance in 2018. Driven by Takeshi Tsuchiya, Takamitsu Matsui, Naoya Gamo, and Yuichi Nakayama, the No 56GR Lexus LC emerged in the top qualifying group, and started from 35th place overall on the grid among a line-up of 158 cars.

The weather had cleared following a sudden thunderstorm during the first qualifying session, yet high temperatures brought on severe conditions for both the cars and their drivers. After a solid start, the No 56GR Lexus LC continued running well despite challenging conditions, and

maintained a position of 30th overall. While a prolonged pit stop after around eight hours resulted in the vehicle losing ground in the overall standings, the team held their ground to finish the race in first place in the SP-PRO class.

Toshiyuki Sekiya, Lexus LC Chief Mechanic, GAZOO Racing, said: "We took measures to improve reliability this year since we stayed in the pit for a long-time last year. Nurburgring is always a tough race for us. I am happy that we spent a lot of time with the mechanics and I witnessed a lot of growth and teamwork. Thank you." Commenting on the race, Yugo Miyamoto, Chief Representative of Middle East & Central Asia Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation, said: "We are proud of our team's achievement in this challenging event for a second consecutive year."

The Lexus LC gave an outstanding performance at this year's 24 Hours of Nurburgring, a place that tests the strength and capabilities of the GAZOO Racing team and its vehicles. We will continue to build upon everything we have learned through our participation in motorsport to develop vehicles with brave design and exhilarating performance. I would like to thank our fans for continuously inspiring us to push the boundaries in our drive to create Amazing Experiences."

The 24 Hours of Nurburgring event is known as one of

the world's most demanding races, and is considered the ultimate test for cars and their drivers. The circuit features 170 corners of varying lengths and an uneven driving surface, and resembles a winding mountain road. As a day-long endurance race, the 24 Hours of Nurburgring gives manufacturers the chance to push vehicles to their limits for an extended period and gain valuable insights on their performance under challenging real-world conditions.

Over the years, Lexus has been participating in many different forms of motorsport, including the World Endurance Championship (WEC), FIA GT3 Championship, Super GT Series, and Nurburgring 24 Hours endurance race. Lexus' participation in these events was overseen by separate entities within the company until April 2015, when the parent company established GAZOO Racing, to consolidate all of its motorsport activities under one in-house brand.

Representing the company's belief that 'the roads build the people, and the people build the cars,' GR highlights the role of motorsport as a fundamental pillar of Toyota's commitment to making 'ever-better' cars. Harnessing years of experience gained under the extreme conditions of various motorsport events, GR aims to forge new technologies and solutions that bring the freedom, adventure, and joy of driving to everyone.



## Sports

# Portrush passes British Open test and awaits swift return

## Irishman Lowry wins British Open at Royal Portrush

**PORTRUSH:** It took 68 years for the British Open to return to Royal Portrush and after a memorable week of golf, with Irishman Shane Lowry triumphing amid emotional scenes, it is hard to imagine anything but a swift return to the Northern Irish links course. From the huge crowds for the first day of practice, through to the joyous celebrations on Sunday, Portrush embraced the Open with a bear hug as tight as Lowry's with his father on the 18th. "It has obviously been a long time coming back to Royal Portrush and I think the crowds have shown that there's an appetite to have it back a bit sooner than in 70 years," said England's Lee Westwood, with characteristic under-statement.

The venue ticked every box for a successful Open—a challenging links course loved by the players, a local population that lives and breathes golf, good organisation and just enough infrastructure to cope with the biggest crowds seen outside of St Andrews. Indeed there are suggestions that the beautiful coastal course could host again as early as 2024. Not surprisingly, Graeme McDowell, a Portrush native, is championing such a quick return.

"This has been a special week. I hope we are coming back soon, the whispers are that we could be back here as soon as five years from now," said McDowell. "I think with the financial commitment that Portrush have made for this, for it to get the recognition and then get back here soon, to keep that Portrush train rolling, it would be huge," he said. "If we have to wait another 10 years, the

icing might rub off between now and then. People might forget a little bit."

Royal St. George's in England will host next year's competition before the Old Course at St. Andrews will be the stage for the tournament's 150th edition in 2021. Royal Liverpool will host the 2022 competition and when the next batch of venues are announced, Portrush will hope to feature again. The appreciation for the course and the atmosphere was by no means limited to Irish and British golfers with Jordan Spieth, the 2017 Open winner, one of a number of Americans to give their backing to a return.

"It was amazing. I hope it's on the rotation. I enjoyed the golf course. It played tough and fair. In the town itself, the people were topnotch," he said. "Here and Augusta are my two favourite events in the entire world, and it never disappoints. And it didn't here. It was awesome." Spieth's Ryder Cup team mate Rickie Fowler agreed: "I'd love to be back. I think this golf course is a great test. It's very different from what I've seen from a lot of ... traditional links golf courses."

But beyond what the eye can see at Portrush, with the stunning ocean and coastal views and the undulating course, one of the most striking aspects of this week's event was the genuine love for the game across the region matched with a clear desire to welcome visitors. "The hospitality I think is fantastic up here," said England's Justin Rose. "Everyone has been really welcoming. Because it has been so long, people have been very excited about it. That feels different." — Reuters



**PORTRUSH:** Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy chips onto the green at the first hole during the first round of the British Open golf Championships at Royal Portrush golf club in Northern Ireland. — AFP

### News in brief

#### Flamengo draw at Corinthians

**SAO PAULO:** Corinthians drew 1-1 at home with Flamengo on Sunday in another Brazilian league game in which the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) played a key role. Flamengo took the lead on the hour when Clayton converted a penalty awarded after a long consultation with the VAR. The home side equalized through Gabriel late on but only after a six-minute pause while officials reviewed the goal on the pitch-side monitor. The result means that Flamengo remain third in Serie A five points behind joint leaders Palmeiras and Santos, while Corinthians, who have a game in hand, are eighth, a further five points distant. — Reuters

#### Atlanta blank DC United 2-0

**LOS ANGELES:** Pity Martinez scored the eventual winner and Brad Guzan earned his 10th shutout as Atlanta United FC beat the Wayne Rooney-less DC United 2-0 on Sunday. Pity Martinez scored in the 89th minute and Josef Martinez added the insurance goal in stoppage time as second place Atlanta improved to 11-8-3 on the MLS season. Guzan stopped three shots for the shutout over D.C. United, who missed Rooney as they rely heavily on him for much of their scoring. Guzan now has a league-leading 10 shutouts. DC's loss dropped them to third place in the Eastern Conference with a 9-6-8 record, one point back from Atlanta. Rooney was left off the roster of the key regular season contest after coach Ben Olsen allowed him to take some time off due to some "niggling" injuries, about which he refused to go into detail. — AFP

#### Santos beat Botafogo 1-0

**RIO DE JANEIRO:** Marinho's stunning 25-metre strike gave Santos a 1-0 win away at Botafogo on Sunday and took his side into joint top spot in Brazil's Serie A. The goal came 29 minutes into the second half of Santos' fifth consecutive win. The victory lifted Jorge Sampaoli's side on to 26 points, equal with reigning champions Palmeiras, who lost for the first time this season away to Ceara on Saturday. Both Botafogo and Santos had a man sent off in the game in Rio, with Santos defender Lucas Verissimo seeing red shortly after halftime and Gilson following him 22 minutes later. — Reuters

#### Rybakina seals maiden title

**BUCHAREST:** Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina became the 10th player to collect a maiden WTA Tour title this year as she strolled past Patricia Maria Tig 6-2 6-0 in the Bucharest Open final on Sunday. The 20-year-old, who is ranked 106 in the world, was in complete control in the final against Romanian home hope Tig as she fired 30 winners against only 14 unforced errors. The unseeded Rybakina did not drop a set throughout the claycourt tournament, becoming the fourth player to achieve that feat this season following Sofia Kenin in Hobart, Ash Barty in Birmingham and Karolina Pliskova in Eastbourne. Unranked qualifier Tig, who was out of the game for the last two years due to injuries and maternity leave, had produced the upset of the tournament by beating top seed and world number 11 Anastasija Sevastova in the round of 16. — Reuters

#### Herman wins Barbasol title

**KENTUCKY:** Jim Herman won the Barbasol Championship in Kentucky by a stroke on Sunday, crediting his second US Tour victory to a new putter and some timely advice from President Donald Trump. A former assistant pro at Trump National golf course in New Jersey, Herman carded a final round of two-under 70 to finish at 26-under-par, edging fellow American Kelly Kraft at Keene Trace in Nicholasville. After tearing up the course with a 62 on Saturday to take a one-stroke lead over Kraft, Herman revealed he had taken a congratulatory phone call from Trump the night before. After closing out his win, Herman said he had taken Trump's advice to use a new putter. "He motivates me and puts me in a good spot," said Herman, who has known Trump for years. "I don't know what it is about him, but he gets me going in the right direction with golf. I took his advice and put a new putter in play. — Reuters

## Vintage Tour de France heading for thrilling finale

**NIMES:** With only five days of actual racing left, there is still no clear front runner in this year's Tour de France, making it the most open and exciting competition in 30 years. In 1989, Laurent Fignon was left distraught as he missed out on the title by eight seconds, with American Greg Lemond pulling off the narrowest margin of victory in the Tour's history.

Julian Alaphilippe holds a 1:35 minute lead going into the final week but with the Frenchman fading, the yellow jersey appears to be slipping off his back as the finishing line gets closer. With the riders placed between second and sixth separated by just 39 seconds, Alaphilippe knows that the chasing pack led by defending champion Geraint Thomas will be a constant threat to his hopes of ending France's 34-year wait for a home-grown champion.

It has been a frustrating race for Team Ineos as they have not been able to take control in the absence of Chris Froome, the four-time champion who is missing the race following a horror crash last month. Apart from Thomas, the main challengers are his Ineos team mate Egan Bernal, Dutchman Steven Kruijswijk, German Emanuel Buchmann and Thibaut Pinot, who is also carrying the hopes of the home nation.

### Eye of the tiger

While Alaphilippe outclassed his rivals during the first two weeks on short, punchy climbs, hanging on in the



**FOIX:** France's Julian Alaphilippe (center) celebrates his overall leader's yellow jersey on the podium of the fifteenth stage of the 106th edition of the Tour de France cycling race between Limoux and Foix Prat d'Albis, in Foix Prat d'Albis. — AFP

Pyrenees and by upsetting Thomas in the time trial, Pinot is closing in on the lead fast. It took the 29-year-old two stages to write off the 1:40 minutes he lost due to a positioning error in the crosswinds on a flat stage last week. Following that, he emerged as the best climber as he won stage 14 and also gained time over all his rivals on Sunday.

With three grueling stages in the Alps likely to decide the race, Pinot is the bookmakers' favourite as he trails Thomas by 15 seconds. "It's the first time I've seen a tiger

on his bike. The look in his eyes says he wants to eat everyone." Cyrille Guimard, who was the sports director of Bernard Hinault's La Vie Claire team when he was the last French winner of the Tour in 1985, said.

"I'm in the game but I'm clear-headed and I keep my feet on the ground. The momentum can switch at every stage," Pinot, who has stage wins on all three grand tours and won the 'Monument' classic Giro di Lombardia last October, said. In Sunday's final climb up to the Prat d'Albis, Pinot first dropped Kruijswijk and Thomas, then Buchmann and Bernal, showing his superiority for the second day in a row.

### Tactical advantage

Without Froome, Ineos have not been able to suffocate the competition as they did to win six of the last seven editions when they were known as Team Sky. The British outfit, however, may have a tactical advantage as they have two riders in position to win the race, although it could also play against them as they have not yet named a clear leader.

They are confident the race will go their way, with Thomas banking on his consistency. "Alaphilippe still has a nice lead and he has a few days now to recover and obviously Pinot is climbing very well but the main thing about grand tours is being consistent and strong all the way through it and how you deal with any sort of bad day you get," the Welshman said.

Asked what he thought about potentially facing two Frenchmen on their home soil for the overall win, he replied: "I'd love it. I'd relish it. Bring it on." With a new heatwave expected to sweep across France this week, riders can expect extremely challenging conditions before they enter Friday's 19th stage. During their 2,770 meters climb to Col de l'Iseran, thunderstorms are forecast, which just happens to be Pinot's favorite weather. — Reuters



**PORTRUSH:** US golfer Brooks Koepka tees off from the 16th hole during the first round of the British Open golf Championships at Royal Portrush golf club in Northern Ireland. — AFP

## Koepka shows he is human after all with mediocre final round

**PORTRUSH:** Brooks Koepka showed he is fallible after all, four straight bogeys to start the final round costing the American any chance of winning the British Open on Sunday. Koepka has rightly earned a reputation as a machine in the majors over the past two years, winning back-to-back US Opens and PGA Championships and becoming, unarguably, the world number one in the process.

Victory at Royal Portrush would have capped off one of the great major seasons, after he finished equal second (Masters), first (PGA Championship) and second (US Open). But after struggling to hole putts over the first three rounds, he needed something of a minor miracle on Sunday, starting the day seven shots adrift of overnight leader Shane Lowry, who went on to record an outstanding triumph.

"I probably hit four of the worst shots I've hit all week,"

Koepka said of his bogey, bogey, bogey, bogey start. He battled on gamely, eagling the par-four fifth and shooting a most respectable three-over-par 74 in the difficult conditions. "Played good this week, so obviously disappointing, not the finish I was looking for," said Koepka, who finished joint-fourth at six-under 278, nine strokes behind runaway winner Lowry.

"It becomes, I guess, a battle to try and figure it out and try to improve on it next year. It was a great run for three (majors) and then this one, nothing you could do. "Props to Shane, he played unbelievable golf. How cool is that to win in Ireland?" As much as Koepka wanted to lift the Claret Jug, once it became obvious that it was not going to happen he re-set his sights on runner-up, but it was not to be. "I would have liked to have just made a few more (birdies) and finished it off with a bunch of second places," he said.

If Koepka was disappointed, his playing companion J.B. Holmes must have been positively mortified. Holmes teed off in third place, six strokes behind Lowry, yet it was to prove anything but elementary for the man from Kentucky. He shot 87, the worst score of the day by seven strokes. His card revealed one birdie, six bogeys, four doubles and one triple. Had Koepka, or Holmes for that matter, won the tournament, it would have been the first time since 1982 that Americans had swept the majors. — Reuters

## Haas going back to the basics for German GP

**LONDON:** Haas will again run different aerodynamic configurations on their Formula One cars at this weekend's German Grand Prix as they try to turn around a season that has stalled after a strong start. The US-owned Formula One team have failed to score a point since Monaco in May, a run of four blanks in a row, and have plunged to ninth out of 10 in the standings at the midway point in the season.

Haas took sixth place with Danish driver Kevin Magnussen in Australia in March when they were best of the rest after Mercedes, Ferrari and Red Bull. They have since failed to turn qualifying speed into race pace, and struggled to get performance out of the tyres. Magnussen's car at Hockenheim will have fresh upgrades designed to improve downforce and drivability while French team mate Romain Grosjean's car will be as it was in Melbourne.

Haas, whose livery remains unchanged despite uncertainty over title sponsor Rich Energy, ran a similar aero split at Silverstone this month. "We decided on this exercise to get data and understand better what the difference between the two cars is, good or bad, then we can see where we can make improvements," said team principal Guenther Steiner.

"We weren't sure if the update we introduced in Barcelona was better or not. "We're running this again in Hockenheim, which is a different type of track with different temperatures—they'll be a lot higher—and, as we all know, we couldn't get a lot of data from the race at Silverstone from either of the cars." The Haas cars collided on the first lap of the British Grand Prix, suffering punctures and retiring soon after. "We need to get the understanding of where we are and where we didn't work in the right direction. That's the thing we have to do," said Steiner.

Grosjean said the upgrade introduced in Barcelona in May had felt wrong from the start, and he had wanted to revert back even then to the launch package which had less downforce but more stability. The Frenchman was sixth last year in Germany. "For me, the feeling was not so good from the rear end, especially through medium- and high-speed corners. The feeling hasn't been good in those corners since then," he said. "Going back to the Melbourne package, the car felt a lot better in those regions. It shows that something was not working as expected." — Reuters

## Sports

# FIFA's African football takeover plan to face possible roadblock

## CAF executive committee member vows to challenge the decision in court

CAPE TOWN: FIFA's plan to take over the running of African football is set to face a possible roadblock with an executive committee member of the Confederation of African Football (CAF) saying he will challenge the decision in court. Hasan Bility, who is from Liberia and a CAF executive committee member for last two years, said he will ask the Swiss-based Court of Arbitration for Sport to declare invalid the agreement by which FIFA secretary general Fatma Samoura will be sent on a secondment to overhaul the African governing body.

Bility said he also wants to ask the court to compel CAF to start a forensic audit of its finances, which he said the executive committee had previously agreed to but CAF president Ahmad Ahmad then stalled. CAF is in crisis following corruption allegations against Ahmad which he has denied. Ahmad was reported in March to FIFA's ethics committee for alleged corruption and harassment by CAF general secretary Amr Fahmy.

Fahmy was then fired. He was detained in June by French police in Paris where he was questioned over a sportswear deal between CAF and a French company in which the African body is said to have paid exorbitant prices for equipment it could have got much cheaper directly from the manufacturers.

In a statement released to the media yesterday, former Liberian Football Association president Bility said Ahmad must resign and the proposed FIFA takeover

be cancelled. "In an attempt to salvage CAF from imminent implosion and irreversible reputational damage, FIFA proposed a poorly conceptualised and worse executed agreement," Bility said. "Logically, and in a sane world, the acquiescence by the CAF leadership that they have been unable to manage their own affairs ought to have been followed by quick resignation of its top leaders.

"It is clear to me and many others that the agreement as currently structured has the sole purpose of shielding and cleansing CAF President Ahmad from the crimes he has committed - financial impropriety, sexual harassment and nepotism." FIFA has confirmed there is an ethics investigation into Ahmad, although he was yet to be sanctioned. Ahmad has not responded to Reuters' requests for comment on the specific allegations against him. Bility also claimed FIFA President Gianni Infantino has seized on the opportunity to get rid of his secretary general.

"Infantino has thus seized this opportunity to offer Fatma a 'golden parachute' into a confederation job to pave the way for her eventual replacement at the helm of FIFA," he said. FIFA yesterday told Reuters it had no further comment to add to last week's release of an 11-point road map to help African football. Infantino claimed last week that the unprecedented move to step in and administer African football would "significantly improve" the sport in the continent. —Reuters



CAIRO: Fifa president Gianni Infantino (right) greets Senegal's coach Aliou Cisse after the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations (CAN) Final football match between Senegal and Algeria at the Cairo International Stadium in Cairo. —AFP

## Ajax face awkward Champions League qualifier vs PAOK

PARIS: Last season's Champions League semi-finalists Ajax were yesterday drawn to face Greek champions PAOK Thessaloniki in the third qualifying round for this year's group

stages. The Dutch side do not get automatic entry into the group stages despite winning the Eredivisie for the 34th time and coming within seconds of reaching the Champions League final.

If they beat PAOK, Erik ten Hag's team will still need to win a play-off to join the likes of Liverpool, Real Madrid and Juventus in the main competition. It is not the easiest of ties for Ajax who have already lost several

players from their exciting young squad. Central defender Matthijs de Ligt has left for Juventus while midfielder Frenkie de Jong has joined Barcelona. PAOK went unbeaten on their way to winning the Greek Super League, finishing five points ahead of Olympiakos as they conquered their first league title in over three decades.

The first leg will be played at PAOK's Toumba Stadium on August 6 or 7 with the return in Amsterdam a

week later. Two-time European champions Porto, who finished two points behind champions Benfica in Portugal, will face Krasnodar, who finished third in Russia while Belgian runners-up Club Brugge will meet their Ukrainian counterparts Dynamo Kiev. If Scottish champions Celtic beat Estonia's Nomme Kalju in the second round of qualifying, they will face either Romanian side Cluj or Maccabi Tel-Aviv of Israel. —AFP

## Liverpool fall 2-1 to Sevilla in Fenway friendly

NEW YORK: Alejandro Pozo delivered the late dagger in 10-man Sevilla's 2-1 friendly win over Liverpool in Boston Sunday, a defeat made worse for the European champions when they saw Yasser Larouci stretchered off. Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp was furious at Joris Gagnon's outrageous kick at an on-rushing Larouci in the 76th minute. Gagnon was shown a straight red card after sweeping one of the Frenchman's legs out from underneath him, toppling him to the pitch where his head bounced hard on the ground.

"(It's) much too early in the season to create headlines with saying the things I think about the situation," Klopp said at his post-match press conference, where he added that it appeared that the 18-year-old Larouci was "lucky" in terms of avoiding serious injury. "But of course, how it always is with these things we have to wait a little bit. I don't know 100 percent. It looks like he was lucky but I only spoke quickly to the Doc and that's what he said, but we have to see."

Even with the La Liga outfit reduced to 10 men, Liverpool were unable find a way ahead, and Pozo sealed it in the 90th minute as he smoothly collected a pass from Munir El Haddadi, rounded Liverpool keeper Simon Mignolet and knocked the winner into an unguarded net. Sevilla had enjoyed by far the majority of scoring chances on a sweltering evening at Fenway Park-home of the World Series Champion Boston Red Sox. Both Liverpool and the Red Sox are owned by groups led by John W. Henry.

Players were granted water breaks in the hot, humid conditions, and even the

pitch created on the baseball diamond received extra water during the match.

The pro-Liverpool crowd weren't treated to many of the club's stars as Brazilian internationals Roberto Firmino and Alisson were both absent for the Reds following their Copa America campaign along with Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane, both missing due to the African Cup of Nations.

As in a 3-2 defeat to Borussia Dortmund on Friday in Indiana, there was some shaky defending from Liverpool. Nolito's powerful shot in the 37th minute past Liverpool starting goalkeeper Andy Lonergan—who was at Middlesbrough last season—was Sevilla's reward after a half-hour of pressure. It needed a sprawling save from Lonergan in the 13th minute to deny Luuk de Jong after Liverpool lost possession in their own territory and de Jong was just wide with a header in the 23rd.

### 'Not too cool'

Liverpool's equalizer came off a scrappy set piece as Trent Alexander-Arnold's corner was kept alive by Nat Phillips, the ball falling to an unmarked Divock Origi who swept in from close range in the 44th. Both teams made wholesale changes at halftime, but even a match that was just one more step in both team's pre-season preparations there was nothing laid back about Sevilla.

A foul was called on Ever Banega for a hard tackle in the 12th minute and when he slammed the ball to the ground in protest he was shown a yellow card. Liverpool midfielder Harry Wilson took a smack to the face just before halftime—an infraction that paled in comparison to that of Gagnon—who was arguing with the referee as Larouci received treatment. "Harry got a knock on his jaw and a finger in his eye, so not too cool," Klopp said. "He should be OK as well but couldn't carry on as well." —AFP



BOSTON: Yasser Larouci #65 of Liverpool is fouled by Joris Gagnon #24 during the second half of a pre-season friendly at Fenway Park in Boston, Massachusetts. —AFP photos



BOSTON: Fans attend a pre-season friendly match between Liverpool FC and Sevilla FC at a packed Fenway Park in Boston on July 21, 2019. Around 34,500 fans attended the match.

finishing second behind Sun in the 400m freestyle final in Gwangju, South Korea.

"We don't know if there's going to be penalties or sanctions against him (Horton) but I think he knew there were risks and felt strongly enough to still do it," said the American backstroker. "It's obviously something he feels passionate about. I don't feel like it really hurt Sun Yang. It's just to let him know that it was a weird incident and until it gets uncovered, we don't really trust you."

Australian Mitch Larkin also backed the stand of his teammate Horton, who called Sun a "drug cheat" before beating him at the 2016 Rio Olympics—two years after his Chinese rival tested positive for the banned stimulant. "I'm super-proud of Mack," said Larkin after the morning's 100m backstroke heats. "The whole Aussie team backs him 100 percent," added the former world champion. "I think 99 percent of athletes around the pool deck back him, so he's not really standing alone. What he did was certainly brave and gutsy and I have a lot of respect for him for doing that."

### 'Pretty baller'

Asked if he felt confident he would be competing in clean races in South Korea this week, Larkin shrugged: "You can never be confident—I know I'm a clean athlete and do everything I can, so I just have to trust that's enough." Olympic breaststroke champion King, one of swimming's most outspoken athletes, told reporters that swimmers at the village had

applauded Horton's protest after the medal ceremony, which triggered boos from Chinese fans.

"Pretty baller, honestly," the American said of Horton's actions. "It was awesome. Actually when he walked into the dining hall after us, the whole dining hall erupted in applause so it was pretty good to see the athletes united on his stance as well."

Only last week, King hit out at swimming's governing body over its doping protocols, describing the details of Sun's alleged doping violation as "sketchy" and calling for more to be done to beat the drug cheats. "I don't think anyone in FINA is going to stand up for the athletes," fumed King, who let rip at rival Yulia Efimova at the Rio Olympics over the Russian's previous 16-month doping ban.

"The athletes have to stand up for themselves, so I think it's definitely a start if these guys are taking a stand against doping," Olympic champion Ryan Murphy added his support. "Good for Mack," said the American backstroke king. "He's got strong beliefs and it's good he feels comfortable to stand up for those in this case—not necessarily standing against Sun, but more against FINA and WADA (and) their responsibilities."

On Sunday, Sun hit out at Horton over his podium protest, saying the Australian should have shown more respect. "Not everyone likes me—I don't care," said Sun, when asked about Horton's snub. "I'm aware of the rumors and it's okay if you don't respect me personally. But at the victory ceremony—which is a sincere occasion—you should show respect to my country." —AFP

## Arnautovic scores on debut; Shanghai held

HONG KONG: Marko Arnautovic headed home on his Chinese Super League debut on Sunday as defending champions Shanghai SIPG were held to a 2-2 draw by Chongqing Lifan on a day when Beijing Guoan finally relinquished top spot. Arnautovic, who joined SIPG from West Ham United earlier in the month, came off the bench to give Shanghai a 2-1 lead in the 63rd minute, only for Alan Kardec to equalise nine minutes later.

That meant Vitor Pereira's Shanghai missed the opportunity to join Guangzhou Evergrande at the summit after Beijing Guoan, who had been top since the fourth round of matches, were beaten 1-0 by Jiangsu Suning. Beijing led the standings by two points going into this week's 19th round, but Eder's successful 38th minute penalty for Jiangsu condemned Roger Schmidt's side to a third defeat of the season. As a result, seven-time champions Guangzhou Evergrande ended the weekend one point ahead of Beijing, having handed cross-city rivals Guangzhou R&F a 5-0 thrashing on Saturday, with new Brazilian signing Elkeson claiming a hat-trick. That win saw Fabio Cannavaro's side extend their winning run in the league to 10 straight games and put themselves in pole position for the first time this season. "We have won 16 games and it is incredible when we review it now," said Schmidt after Beijing's loss in Nanjing.

"Today we lost and now another team is ranked first in the standings, but we still have 11 games to go and we will continue to fight and fight." SIPG are third, two points behind Evergrande on 47 points, as Pereira's side battled back from Ferdinandinho's opener in first-half injury time, with Yuan Mincheng's own goal levelling for the champions after 51 minutes. Arnautovic then put SIPG in front with a fierce downward header from Oscar's curling cross from the left, only for Kardec to secure a point for Jordi Cruyff's side.

Shandong Luneng consolidated their hold on fourth place with a 3-0 win over Shenzhen FC as Marouane Fellaini and Graziano Pelle both hit the target while Hebei CFFC and Tianjin Tianhai drew 2-2. Rafa Benitez saw his Dalian Yifang side share a 3-3 draw with Tianjin Teda. The former Newcastle United manager, linking up again with striker Salomon Rondon, watched the Venezuelan international score an 84th minute equaliser on his debut. —Reuters

## NZ dethrone Australia for first netball WCup

LIVERPOOL: New Zealand stunned Australia 52-51 in an exhilarating final on Sunday to dethrone the champions and claim their first netball World Cup title in 16 years. The Silver Ferns were runners-up in the last three editions that Australia won but were determined not to let history repeat itself at Liverpool's M&S Bank Arena, soaking up the pressure in a tense final quarter to prevail.

"It's been hard work as the Diamonds have been the benchmark in netball, but Liverpool has been amazing," Kiwi Maria Folau, who top-scored for her team in the final with 28, said in a courtside interview. New Zealand coach Noeline Taurua said victory was a boost for netball in the country after they missed out on the Commonwealth Games final last year.

"I'm quite speechless... for us to come out and win this, it's huge for our netball community and for New Zealand," she said. Earlier, England beat South Africa 58-42 for their sixth World Cup bronze medal and the third in a row as coach Tracey Neville took charge of the Roses for the final time. "This bronze medal isn't a consolation. World netball is as tight as it's ever been and we knew we'd get what we deserved, and it was bronze," England captain Serena Guthrie said.

Guthrie said victory ensured a fitting farewell for Neville, the sister of the England women's soccer team coach Phil. "When Tracey first came into his job it was a whirlwind, but to see her grow as a world-class international coach has been a pleasure. Today was about sending her off as best we could and we did that," Guthrie added. "It's hard to keep it together when we have got everybody crying. This has been the best experience. We almost feel like we have won a gold medal." —Reuters

## Swimmers 'don't trust' Sun; doping row boils over

GWANGJU: World championship swimmers slammed China's Sun Yang over lurid doping allegations and said competitors were firmly behind Australia's Mack Horton, who snubbed the Olympic star on the podium. America's Matt Grevers claimed many competitors "don't trust" Sun, while world record-holder Lilly King revealed athletes "erupted in applause" after Horton refused to join his rival on the podium for photos after the 400 meters freestyle medals ceremony.

Triple Olympic champion Sun is facing allegations, outlined in a leaked FINA doping panel report, that he smashed vials of blood with a hammer when testers visited him last year. FINA cleared Sun to compete but the World Anti-Doping Agency has appealed the decision at the Lausanne-based Court of Arbitration for Sport, putting the swimmer's career on the line.

If Sun is found guilty of a doping violation, he could face a lifetime ban after serving a three-month suspension in 2014 for taking a banned stimulant he claimed was for a heart problem. Grevers, along with King and several other swimmers, praised Australian Mack Horton for his "risky" protest on Sunday after

**25** Mascots, javelin carriers: Tokyo adds robots to Olympic roster



**25** GAZOO Racing's Lexus LC triumphs in SP-PRO class



**27** Liverpool fall to Sevilla in the Fenway friendly



BALTIMORE: Mookie Betts #50 of the Boston Red Sox steals second base as Richie Martin #1 of the Baltimore Orioles cannot make the tag during the ninth inning at Oriole Park at Camden Yards. —AFP

## Yastrzemski, Giants walk off in 12th

### Orioles overpower Red Sox 5-0

**SAN FRANCISCO:** The San Francisco Giants worked their extra-inning magic on the visiting New York Mets once again Sunday afternoon, getting a walk-off, opposite-field home run from Mike Yastrzemski in the bottom of the 12th for a 3-2 victory. The win was the Giants' third in the four-game series, all in extra innings. They prevailed 3-2 in 16 innings on Thursday and 1-0 in 10 on Friday before getting overpowered 11-4 on Saturday.

Yastrzemski's homer, his ninth in just 48 games with the Giants, came off the sixth Mets' pitcher, Robert Gsellman (1-2), on a full-count pitch with one out. The left-handed hitter sent a high fly just a row or two deep into the left field bleachers. Trevor Gott (6-0) got the win after pitching a scoreless top of the 12th, capping a run of six relievers who held the Mets to two hits over the final seven innings.

#### Twins 7, A's 6

Max Kepler went 3-for-6 with four RBIs and drove in the winning run with a two-out single in the bottom of the ninth, as Minnesota rallied for a victory over Oakland in Minneapolis. Kepler also homered and doubled as the Twins won for just the second time in seven games. Ehire Adrianza had tied the game earlier in the ninth off Liam Hendriks (4-1), who was pitching in his third consecutive game, when he tripled off the top of the wall in right field, driving in Luis Arraez. Josh Phegley homered and drove in three runs, and Matt Chapman had two hits for Oakland, which lost for just the second time in 10 games despite garnering nine walks off five Minnesota pitchers.

#### Tigers 4, Blue Jays 3 (10 innings)

Nicholas Castellanos led off the bottom of the 10th inning with his 11th home run of the season on the first pitch from Tim Lincecum, and Detroit defeated the visiting Toronto. JaCoby Jones also homered for the Tigers, who avoided being swept in the three-game series to end a six-game losing streak. Nick Ramirez (5-3) pitched around a double in the 10th to pick up the win. Mayza (0-1) took the loss. Lourdes Gurriel Jr tied the game at 3 with a two-run homer in the top of the ninth against Shane Bieber and had three RBIs for the Blue Jays. The Blue Jays completed a 4-6 road trip.

#### Phillies 2, Pirates 1 (11 innings)

Rhys Hoskins' solo home run in the 11th inning lifted visiting Philadelphia to a win over Pittsburgh. With a 1-1 tie and the Phillies facing Pirates reliever Chris Stratton (1-3) in the 11th, Bryce Harper struck out before Hoskins just cleared the fence in left field on a 1-2 pitch for his 21st homer. Philadelphia reliever Ranger Suarez (3-0) pitched scoreless 10th and 11th innings. Cesar Hernandez had an RBI single for the Phillies, who took two of three in the series.

#### Dodgers 9, Marlins 0

Max Muncy, Joc Pederson and AJ Pollock hit home runs, while Walker Buehler struck out 11, as Los Angeles completed a three-game sweep of visiting Miami. Buehler (9-1) recorded his first six outs via strikeout and gave up five hits and no walks in seven scoreless innings. He won at home for the first time since June 21, when he struck out a career-best 16 Colorado Rockies batters.

Jordan Yamamoto (4-1) gave up five runs on four hits over four innings with two walks and four strikeouts, in his first career loss in his seventh career start. He matched his career high of four runs allowed by the third inning. The loss ended the third-longest winning streak to open a career for a Marlins pitcher.

#### Brewers 7, Diamondbacks 4

Mike Moustakas, Yasmani Grandal and Ben Gamel drove in eighth-inning runs as Milwaukee broke a 4-4 tie, and five relievers shut out Arizona over six innings in a win in Phoenix. Milwaukee trailed 4-0 after three innings, but light-hitting Tyler Saladino tied the game with a grand slam in the fourth inning. In the eighth inning, Moustakas followed a leadoff triple by Keston Hiura with a hard single up the middle off Yoan Lopez (1-4) to give the Brewers a 5-4 lead. Grandal launched a shot off the wall in center field for a pinch-hit RBI double, and Gamel's single completed the scoring.

#### Rockies 8, Yankees 4

German Marquez pitched seven sharp innings, Charlie Blackmon with 4-for-5 with a leadoff home run and Colorado broke a six-game losing streak with a victory at New York. Marquez (9-5) allowed only three hits, including solo homers to former teammate DJ LeMahieu and Mike Tauchman. Marquez gave up two runs, struck out five and walked two in a 95-pitch outing six days after allowing 11 runs in 1 1/3 innings in a 19-2 loss to San Francisco. Colorado won for just the third time in its last 16 games.

#### Astros 5, Rangers 3

Michael Brantley homered twice, while Rogelio Armenteros pitched five solid innings to earn his first major league win as Houston downed visiting Texas, completing a sweep of the three-game series. In his first MLB start, the 25-year-old Armenteros (1-0) permitted just two hits and a run, walking two and fanning six. Four relievers obtained the last 12 outs, with Roberto Osuna pitching the ninth to garner his 22nd save despite allowing a one-out solo homer to Logan Forsythe, his sixth of the year. Lance Lynn (12-6) pitched well but suffered his second straight loss for Texas despite striking out a season-high 12 batters over seven innings.

#### Orioles 5, Red Sox 0

Trey Mancini hit two home runs, and starter Asher Wojciechowski carried a no-hitter into the seventh inning as Baltimore defeated visiting Boston in the series finale. Mancini recorded his second multi-homer game of the week, touching up former teammate Andrew Cashner for a solo shot plus a two-run blast off him later. Jonathan Villar also added a solo homer as the Orioles won two of three in this series. Wojciechowski (1-3) earned his first victory in the major leagues since 2017 when the right-hander pitched with Cincinnati. Overall, he gave up just one hit in 7 1/3 innings, struck out 10 with two walks and received a big ovation when manager Brandon Hyde removed him in the eighth.

#### Rays 4, White Sox 2

Travis d'Arnaud smacked his first career grand slam, Blake Snell pitched six shutout innings and Tampa Bay beat visiting

Chicago to snap a five-game losing streak. The struggling Tampa Bay offense managed just three hits and was unable to add runs after d'Arnaud's second-inning homer, but Snell and three relievers made the lead stand up. Snell (6-7) turned in his fourth straight solid outing, allowing three hits and walking two while striking out 10.

#### Padres 5, Cubs 1

Catcher Francisco Mejia homered to lead off the seventh inning to break a 1-1 tie and had a key bunt single as San Diego added three runs in the ninth for a victory over host Chicago. Cal Quantrill (3-2) threw 5 2/3 scoreless innings in relief for the Padres, giving up two hits without issuing a walk. He struck out six, four of which came as he ended his outing by retiring 10 straight Cubs. Kirby Yates struck out three in the ninth in a non-save situation. Quantrill followed Adrian Morejon, who allowed a run on three hits and a strikeout in 2 1/3 innings while making his major league debut as an opener at the age of 20 years and 144 days.

#### Braves 7, Nationals 1

Kevin Gausman came off the injured list to throw seven-plus strong innings and pace Atlanta over visiting Washington. Gausman (3-5) left the game after allowing two leadoff hits in the eighth, one of which led to a run. He gave up five hits and struck out eight. The veteran right-hander had been idle with right foot plantar fasciitis since June 11 and began his rehab assignments on July 5. He earned his first win since May 11. The win gave the Braves a split of the four-game series.

#### Cardinals 3, Reds 1

Yairo Munoz singled, tripled and homered to lift St. Louis to a win over host Cincinnati in the finale of their four-game series. Munoz drove in two runs and scored two for the Cardinals, who won three of four in the series. Cardinals starter Jack Flaherty blanked the Reds over 4 1/3 innings, but remains winless over his past 11 starts. Flaherty scattered six hits, struck out seven and walked two.

#### Indians 5, Royals 4

Jose Ramirez belted the go-ahead homer to ignite a three-run sixth inning as host Cleveland posted a victory over Kansas City. Francisco Lindor launched a two-run homer, and Kevin Plawcki and rookie Oscar Mercado each added an RBI single for the Indians, who won the rubber match of the series to improve to 13-3 in their past 16 games. Rookie Zach Plesac (4-3) overcame a rocky start to allow two runs on four hits with six strikeouts in six innings to pick up the win.

#### Angels 9, Mariners 3

Dillon Peters, recalled from Triple-A prior to the game, pitched five shutout innings as Los Angeles defeated host Seattle. Albert Pujols, Brian Goodwin, Mike Trout and Dustin Garneau homered for the Angels, who took two of three games in the series and are 7-3 since the All-Star break. Dee Gordon went 3-for-4 for the Mariners, who dropped to 1-8 in their past nine games. —Reuters

### Adam Peaty completes world treble in men's 100m breaststroke

**GWANGJU:** Adam Peaty collected his third straight 100 meters breaststroke world title yesterday but such is the Briton's dominance in the event that he had to remind himself to enjoy the moment despite not breaking the world record. A night earlier Peaty had become the first swimmer to go under the 'Magic 57' mark by posting a world record 56.88 in the semi-finals and while the Briton was on course to set another new mark at the halfway point, he faded on the home stretch.

Peaty, unbeaten in the event at major championships over the last five years, finished in a time of 57.14 - more than a second ahead of compatriot James Wilby (58.46) and bronze medalist Yan Zibei (58.63) of China. "That constant expectation I put upon myself is a little bit disappointed in me, but I think that will fuel me for next year because I know how bad I want to go low 56, even faster now, and I know exactly how to do it," said the 24-year-old. "Obviously run out of opportunities here but yeah, just enjoy it - enjoy the moment."

Peaty, who still has the 50 breaststroke to come in Gwangju, said he would learn a lot from the performance going into next year's Tokyo Olympics, where he will defend his Rio title. "This is still very special to me, winning a world championship title and faster than I've ever done it before," he added. "It's obviously a little bit slower than last night as I made a tiny little error with speed on the first 50, but I think the most important thing going into next year is that I'm still learning about myself. "It's not like I've gone 56 and I've got no more learning to do."

#### Caeleb Dressel

American Caeleb Dressel said yesterday that he has been channeling his inner Bruce Lee to keep himself focused as he chases history at the swimming world championships. The 22-year-old, who captured seven gold medals in 2017 to match the achievement of countryman Michael Phelps 10 years earlier, credited a book on martial arts for restoring his inner calm before winning the 50 meters butterfly title. "I woke up with a heart rate of 150 - I don't know why, maybe a bad dream or something," said Dressel after bagging his second gold medal of the week in South Korea. —Agencies