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# Johnson wins race to become Britain's next prime minister

Amir sends congratulations • Iran warns Boris it will 'protect' Gulf waters

**LONDON:** Boris Johnson won the race to become Britain's next prime minister yesterday, heading straight into a confrontation over Brexit with Brussels and parliament, as well as a tense diplomatic stand-off with Iran. The former London mayor easily beat his rival, Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, in a vote of grassroots members of the governing Conservative Party. He is expected to be confirmed as prime minister today when Theresa May formally tenders her resignation to Queen Elizabeth II. US President Donald Trump was the first world leader to offer his congratulations, saying: "He will be great!"

HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to Johnson on being appointed Britain's new prime minister, wishing him every success. In the cable, HH the Amir extolled the "distinguished historic relations" between Kuwait and the United Kingdom. The Amir stressed that the two sides are looking forward to enhancing these relations and bilateral cooperation to achieve the interests of their nations.

He wished Johnson good health and Britain further success and prosperity. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables.



It is a triumph for a man who has always coveted the premiership. But Johnson, known for his jokes and bluster, is taking over at a time of immense political upheaval. Three years after the referendum vote to leave the European Union, Britain remains a member amid continued wrangling in a divided parliament on how to proceed. Johnson led the referendum "Leave" campaign and - after May delayed Brexit twice - insists the latest deadline must be met, with or without a divorce agreement with the EU. "We're going to get Brexit done on October 31," he declared in a speech to party members in London, after winning 66 percent of almost 140,000 votes cast.

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An image grab taken from a broadcast by Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) on Monday shows crewmembers of the British-flagged tanker Stena Impero, after it was seized by Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps. (Inset) New Conservative Party leader and incoming prime minister Boris Johnson arrives at the Conservative party headquarters in London yesterday. — AFP photos

## News in brief

### Kuwait receives \$270m in damages

**GENEVA:** Kuwait has received another \$270 million in compensation for Iraq's 1990 invasion, the UN said yesterday, as it aims to wrap up reparations more than a decade after Saddam Hussein's death. The United Nations Compensation Commission has been authorized to pay out \$52.4 billion to individuals, corporations, government bodies and other organizations that incurred losses directly caused by the Iraqi leader's incursion and occupation of Kuwait. The funds come from a levy on the sale of Iraqi oil and petroleum products. With the latest payment, the commission said it had paid out a total of \$48.7 billion, leaving \$3.7 billion left to be distributed. Those funds are tied to a single claim submitted by the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation losses in oil production and damage to oil field assets. — AFP

### Saudi Arabia releases Qatari national

**DOHA:** A Qatari national arrested in Yemen on suspicions of working with the Iran-aligned Houthis has been released after more than a year in detention in Saudi Arabia, Qatar's National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) said. Mohsen Al-Karbi was arrested in April 2018 by a Saudi-led coalition that is fighting in Yemen against the Houthi movement. NHRC has said that Karbi was in Yemen visiting relatives, and that he was held without charge in Saudi Arabia and prohibited from contacting his family or a lawyer. "The National Human Rights Committee calls on Saudi authorities to compensate the Qatari national Mohsen Al-Karbi for the harm inflicted on him during the period of his enforced disappearance," an NHRC statement said on Monday. — Reuters

### UAE not leaving war-torn Yemen

**DUBAI:** The United Arab Emirates, part of a Saudi-led military coalition, is not leaving war-torn Yemen despite an ongoing drawdown and redeployment of Emirati forces, a UAE minister has said. "Just to be clear, the UAE and the rest of the coalition are not leaving Yemen," minister of state for foreign affairs Anwar Gargash said in an opinion piece published Monday in The Washington Post. "While we will operate differently, our military presence will remain. In accordance with international law, we will continue to advise and assist local Yemen forces," Gargash said. Houthis should see the UAE move as a "confidence-building measure to create new momentum to end the conflict." — AFP

## MP threatens to grill minister over Olympic Council

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** Opposition MP Riyadh Al-Adasani yesterday threatened he would file to grill the finance minister if the government does not act properly over suspicion of money laundering at the Olympic Council of Asia. The lawmaker said the government has confirmed it had sent all the relevant documents to the public prosecution for a legal investigation, adding that the govern-

ment should deal swiftly and promptly if the case was shelved for any reason.

He said that the finance minister must file a petition against any decision by the public prosecution to shelve the case. Adasani warned that if it becomes evident the case was shelved because authorities have not sent all the documents like what happened in the past, he will file to grill the minister.

The lawmaker recently asked the finance minister about suspicious deposits, transfers and withdrawal of cash and cheques by companies and persons, some of who belong to the Olympic Committee and the Olympic Council of Asia. He said that he was informed by the financial intelligence unit through an official reply by the finance minister that the entire case was referred to the public prosecution with complete documents.

In another issue, Adasani said he sent a question to the finance minister about the government's decision to sell

part of its stake in a bank, estimated at around KD 490 million, at a public auction at Boursa Kuwait today. The stake was acquired by the government in 2008 when the bank faced a major crisis related to trade in derivatives during the global financial crisis. Adasani inquired if certain people or establishments have been barred from taking part in the auction and if the decision to sell was based on valid investment and economic studies.

Meanwhile, MP Mohammad Hayef yesterday praised HH the Amir for ordering a study into a fundamental solution for the problem of stateless people, but charged that certain quarters are blocking any solution. He said these were the sides that blocked the passage of the basic civil rights law for bedoons and who prevented debate on the fake passports investigation. The lawmaker called for transferring the case to a "wider circle" that shows interest in finding a solution for the decades-old problem, in which some 120,000 people are affected.



NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi gestures prior to a BJP parliamentary committee meeting at Parliament House yesterday. — AFP

## Fury in India over Kashmir; 'Pak intel led CIA to Laden'

**NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON:** India's foreign minister issued a strenuous denial to an infuriated opposition in parliament yesterday, after US President Donald Trump said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had invited him to mediate in the bloody conflict with Pakistan over Kashmir. While Pakistan has often sought third-party mediation in the decades-old dispute which has cost tens of thousands of lives, the idea is anathema to India, which has always insisted the issue can only be resolved bilaterally.

Trump set off a political storm in India by claiming during a meeting in Washington on Monday with Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan that Modi had asked him two weeks ago to mediate in the Kashmir dispute. "I'd like to categorically assure the house that no such request was made by the prime minister to the US president," Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar told the Indian parliament, barely able to make his voice heard over the opposition tumult.

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## Israel condemns attacks on Saudi guest, arrests 3

**JERUSALEM:** Israeli government officials yesterday condemned Palestinians who hurled abuse and chairs at a Saudi blogger visiting Jerusalem as a guest of the Jewish state. The Saudi visitor, named by Israeli public radio as Mohammed Saud, was one of six invitees from Arab states brought to Israel by its foreign ministry to give them fresh viewpoints on the country. Hassan Kabia, an Israeli foreign ministry spokesman, called it "barbaric" behavior. But he would not identify the visitors, describing them only as "social activists, bloggers and

media people." Such visits have been held before, but Iraq and Saudi Arabia were taking part for the first time, the foreign ministry said. Video posted online showed mainly young Palestinians spitting, cursing and throwing plastic chairs at Saud as he walked on Monday through the Old City of Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem. The spitting and abuse continued as he toured the Al-Aqsa mosque complex. "Go and pray with the Jews," one man shouted. "What are you doing here?"

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## IMF slashes Mideast growth projections

**DUBAI:** The International Monetary Fund yesterday slashed its economic growth forecast for the Middle East and North Africa to the worst level in more than a decade over Iran sanctions and regional unrest. In its World Economic Outlook update, the global lender projected economic growth for the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan this year would be 1.0 percent, its worst since the IMF put them in one

group in 2009. The downgrade, the fifth in a year, is a half percentage point lower than its April projection.

The reduction is in large part due to a change in the IMF's forecast for Iran's growth "owing to the crippling effect of tighter US sanctions," the lender said. "Civil strife across other economies, including Syria and Yemen, add to the difficult outlook for the region."

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## Local



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

# Amir, Crown Prince receive Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad at Bayan Palace

## Crown Prince receives ASOSAI meeting participants

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah separately at Bayan Palace yesterday. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Capital Governor Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, as well as Board Chairman and Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duaij Al-Ibrahim Al-Sabah. He also received Kuwait's General Consul to New York Hamad Ali Al-Hazim.

Furthermore, His Highness the Crown Prince received the new Nepalese Ambassador to State of Kuwait, Durga Prasad Bhandari, on the occasion of assuming the post. His Highness the Crown Prince also received the new Chadian Ambassador to the country, Batoul Zakaria, on the occasion of her appointment. He also hosted the

outgoing Pakistani Ambassador, Ghulam Dastgir, on the occasion of ending his tenure in the country. Sheikh Mubarak Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, the head of protocol at His Highness the Crown Prince Diwan, attended these meetings.

In the meantime, His Highness the Crown Prince received Acting State Audit Bureau Chairman Adel Abdul Aziz Al-Sarawi, accompanied by participants of the 54th meeting of the Asian Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (ASOSAI). His Highness the Crown Prince welcomed the guests to Kuwait, praising efforts done by the Audit institutions in protecting public funds. His Highness stressed the importance of cooperation and coordination between these institutions in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the supervisory work. He expressed hope for the success of the conference to come up with recommendations that will contribute to strengthening management of financial



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Acting State Audit Bureau Chairman Adel Al-Sarawi and participants of the 54th meeting of the Asian Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions.

resources, supporting economic reform programs and enhancing comprehensive development.

In other news, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah expressed his condolences in a cable to

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe over the passing of International Atomic Energy Agency chief Yukia Amano. His Highness the Amir commended the huge endeavors undertaken by the organization's director-general aimed at achieving global peace and

security, nuclear non-proliferation and the development of energy for peaceful uses. His Highnesses the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah both sent similar cables. — KUNA



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the outgoing Pakistani Ambassador to Kuwait Ghulam Dastgir.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the new Nepalese Ambassador to Kuwait Durga Prasad Bhandari.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the new Chadian Ambassador to Kuwait Batoul Zakaria

## Cooperation between audit institutes important: Officials



KUWAIT: A group photo of participants in the 54th meeting of the Asian Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (ASOSAI). — KUNA

KUWAIT: Two international officials affirmed yesterday the importance of cooperation between audit institutes ASOSAI and ARABOSAI in exchanging expertise. Secretary General of the Arab Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (ARABOSAI) Najeeb Al-Qatari said in a statement on the sidelines of the 54th meeting of the Asian Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (ASOSAI), currently held in Kuwait, that a memorandum of understanding would be signed by the two institutions to exchange expertise. The renewable memorandum, valid for three years, envisages training courses and capacity development in all

operating departments of Asian and Arabic audit bodies, Qatari explained.

In another statement, Chairman of the executive board of ARABOSAI and Chairman of the Financial Control Bureau in Iraq, Saleh Khalaf, thanked Kuwait for coordinating between the Arab and Asian audit institutions — a coordination that will lead to an agreement. One of the most important axes of the forecast accord is exchange of experience in many fields between the Asian and the Arab sides — that will be “applied on the ground,” he added. Khalaf said ensuring that future generations would achieve sustainable development is a main

axis of the agreement, stressing on importance of environmental auditing. ASOSAI's Board of Directors began its 54th meeting in Kuwait earlier yesterday to discuss strategic planning and other topics in the sector. Kuwait's State Audit Bureau is hosting the meeting for two days, with participation of 11 Asian supervisory bodies.

### Important meeting

Earlier yesterday, Kuwait State Audit Bureau's (SAB) Acting President Adel Al-Sarawi described the ASOSAI meeting as important because it would set the path for the 2022-27 strategy. Addressing directors

of ASOSAI member countries, Sarawi said they would also examine implementation of the 2016-21 strategy of the organization which contributed to social responsibility of the audit bureaus. The two-day meeting will touch upon strategic planning, said Sarawi, adding that “our organizations should follow up and assess our governments' programs related to the sustainable development goals (SDGs), a matter that required creation of a special team that makes sure these international aspirations are met.”

Part of the social responsibility, he added, was empowering youth to lead. “Kuwait Audit Bureau has been keen on

organizing a forum for the youth once every two years. This forum includes workshops and brain storming which are implemented by the next forum,” Sarawi said. Chairman of ASOSAI Ho Duc Phoc said the organization was playing a major role in addressing problems facing audit institutions. ASOSAI, he added, aimed at exploring effective means in auditing on financial and sustainability affairs. The 11-member ASOSAI was established in 1978. The organization aims at boosting cooperation and understanding among audit institutions, as well as offering training opportunities for auditors. —KUNA

## KRCS distinguished in humanitarian action: Interior Minister

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah yesterday stressed importance of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) role as a distinguished body in the field of humanitarian work. In a statement following his meeting with KRCS Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer, the Interior Minister praised the noble position of KRCS in providing humanitarian and relief assistance at both local



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah meets with KRCS Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer. — KUNA

and international levels. He also praised cooperation between the ministry and KRCS for assisting the inmates of the habitational institutions. Meanwhile, Sayer expressed thanks and appreciation to Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah for the

cooperation between the Ministry and the Red Crescent in addition to efforts exerted to improve the services provided to the inmates and to ensure psychological and social atmosphere of them. — KUNA

## Kuwait participates in high level IOM event

KUWAIT: The State of Kuwait participated in the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) side event organized by IOM for “an evidence-based path towards achieving global commitments: IOM Migration Governance Indicators for well-managed migration policies.” Kuwait was represented by Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development Dr Khaled Mahdi.

During the event, Dr Mahdi delivered a presentation on the Government of Kuwait's achievements consolidated in the country's first Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) review finalized earlier this year. The MGI review is also inclusive of Kuwait's first Voluntary National Review (VNR).

Kuwait's participation in IOM first side event

reflects the remarkable achievements and commitment towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 10.7 which focuses on the facilitation of orderly, safe, and regular migration and mobility of people, including thorough implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.

“IOM extends its gratitude to the government of Kuwait and all national counterparts for the continuous effort, support and cooperation to the mission in Kuwait and IOM worldwide. We are grateful for the distinguished efforts of the SG of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (GSSCPD) for his invaluable participation in this monumental event,” said Iman Ereiqaq, IOM Kuwait's Chief of Mission.

The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) is the United Nations central platform specifically for the follow-up and review of achievements towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, which paves the way for all State Members of the United Nations and specialized agencies to the opportunity for full and effective participation.

Local



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the Cabinet's weekly meeting. — KUNA

# Kuwaiti Cabinet reviews measures to quickly address bedoons situation

## Ministers review Government Performance Follow-Up Apparatus report for 2018

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah briefed his cabinet on the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to take the necessary measures to quickly address the situation of 'bedoons' or stateless residents in the best interest of the country. In this regard, the Cabinet reviewed the report of the central agency addressing the status of illegal residents, praising the efforts exerted by the head of the agency and its entire staff. This came in statement made by Deputy Prime Minister and State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh following the Cabinet's weekly meeting which took place on Monday and headed by His Highness the Prime Minister.

### Combating corruption

Meanwhile, Minister of Public Works and Minister of

State for Housing Affairs Jenan Boushehri noted that a number of leaders and officials in the Ministry of Public Works and the General Authority for Roads and Land Transport have been referred to the Public Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha). The Cabinet hailed the measures taken by Nazaha, wishing its entire employees to succeed in the performance of their duties in combating corruption. The Kuwaiti Cabinet also reviewed the annual report of the Government Performance Follow-Up Apparatus for the year 2018. In this regard, the Head of the Government Performance Follow-Up

Apparatus, Sheikh Ahmad Mishaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, presented to the Cabinet the work results of the apparatus during 2018. In the meantime, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah briefed ministers on the results of the visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Djibouti Mahmoud Ali Yusuf, which aimed at discussing the bilateral relations between the two countries.

deep concern over the seizure of a British tanker by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, calling on all sides to exercise restraint, calling on the international community to intensify efforts to reduce tension in this vital region. Meanwhile, the Cabinet strongly condemned the continued attacks by the Houthi militias on Saudi Arabia, which is a flagrant violation of international law, affirming Kuwait's stand with the kingdom and its support for all measures taken to maintain its security and stability. It also condemned the attack in Irbil, Iraq in which a Turkish diplomat and at least another victim was killed. The Kuwaiti Cabinet denounced the bombing incident in front of the University of Kabul in Afghanistan, as well as attacks that targeted a police station and hospital in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on Sunday, which resulted in the death and injury of a number of innocent victims. — KUNA



**Cabinet expresses deep concern over tanker's seizure**

**Deep concern**  
On the international level, the Cabinet expressed

## First Deputy PM heads SCPD closing meeting

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Chairman of the Supreme Council for Planning and

Development (SCPD) Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah headed yesterday the closing meeting of the council's second session for 2019. The meeting discuss matters pertaining to investment reforms and future plans for the Public Institution For Social Security (PIFSS). A SCPD statement said that the meeting hosted Minister of Finance Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf and a PIFSS delegation. Achievements by the social security institute were highlighted during the gathering as well as efforts to achieve investment reforms, concluded the statement. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs the closing meeting of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development's second session for 2019. — KUNA

## Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad meets with Chinese Ambassador



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with the Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Li Minggang. — KUNA

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah discussed mutual relations with the Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Li Minggang. During the meeting, the two sides discussed regional and international issues, Kuwait's Defense Ministry said. Sheikh Nasser praised bilateral relations and ways to boost cooperation between the two countries, the ministry added in a statement. — KUNA

## Confidence between Iraq, Kuwait greater than fears: Iraqi PM

BAGHDAD: Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi said that the growing confidence between Iraq and Kuwait is far greater than previous fears between the two countries. "The extent of the built confidence, the large joint common issues and the future prospects are far greater than the fears and obstacles between the two countries," Abdul-Mahdi said in an interview Monday evening with a number of Iraqi satellite channels.

He added that "the current joint horizons between Iraq and Kuwait did not exist at any time .. Although there are still some outstanding problems." He stressed that the policy of his government depends on the diagnosis and maximizing of the common issues rather than relying on the points of contention. He touched on his

country's relations with the rest of the neighboring countries, noting their development over time, including relations with Saudi Arabia, Iran and Turkey.

Abdul-Mahdi's statement comes at a time when the Iraqi-Kuwaiti relations are witnessing a remarkable development culminated through the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Baghdad last June 19 in a visit described as historic. Kuwaiti Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan visited Basra recently and met with his Iraqi counterpart Mohammed Al-Ani as part of the two countries' efforts to open a free trade zone and develop their border ports in order to increase the volume of trade exchange. — KUNA



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## Local

## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A man throws a fishing net from a pier on a beach in Kuwait. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Zain awards Hussam Ismail with BMW X5 mega prize

As part of 'Score with Zain' campaign, announcement made live on Marina FM



KUWAIT: Zain announces the winner of the all-new BMW X5 mega prize during the Al-Diwaniya program on Marina FM 90.4.



Zain and Marina FM 90.4 staff during the Al-Diwaniya program.

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, concluded the second edition of its promotional campaign 'Score with Zain,' where Hussam Shabaan Ismail was awarded with the all-new BMW X5 mega prize. The announcement was made live during Al-Diwaniya program on Marina FM 90.4, with many other valuable prizes offered for listeners and social media followers.

Zain launched 'Score with Zain' for the second consecutive year after the huge success the first edition of the campaign witnessed last year. The company is always

keen on offering the most unique campaigns and the latest innovative solutions in the world of Value Added Services to the largest family of subscribers in Kuwait.

The final draw was made live at Marina Mall during Al-Diwaniya program with the presence of Zain's team, Marina FM 90.4 stars, and the representative of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The mega prize winner was announced, with many other exciting competitions held and valuable prizes offered for listeners and Zain's social media followers.



### Offering latest solutions in Value Added Services

The second edition of 'Score with Zain' was launched in February and continued until July. The campaign awarded Zain customers with weekly cash prizes, smart devices, and other valuable prizes, as well as the BMW X5 Executive mega prize offered at the end of the campaign. 'Score with Zain' offered customers informative content and exclusive videos through SMS on a daily basis, including facts about sports, travel, general info, and more. The campaign also featured an SMS competition testing customers' general knowledge.

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

## KFH participates in petroleum college graduation ceremony

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in the graduation ceremony of students of Kuwait University's College of Engineering and Petroleum. This comes as part of the bank's social responsibility and its effort in supporting students and youth, along with the interest in supporting education and honoring the outstanding students. The ceremony was held at the Jumeirah Hotel in the presence of The Minister of Oil, Minister of Electricity and Water, Dr Khaled Al-Fadhel, Member of the Parliament Omar Al-Tabtabaei and several officials and dignitaries.

KFH is always keen in participating in such ceremonies believing that the youth are the future of the country and the cornerstone of the development. They are an integral part of the process of development and scientific progress in the country, consequently, KFH spares no effort in participating in such events that are aimed at motivating graduates. This reflects the bank's prestigious status locally, regionally and globally.

KFH seeks to focus on youth and education as one of its priorities by supporting students' graduation projects, various initiatives and

enabling students to apply their educational achievements into the real world, thus being an additional value to the community. KFH's vision emphasizes the importance of investing in the youth and leveraging their skills and scientific competencies as the best investment, especially that the national component is a key factor in the development process.

It is worth noting that KFH has recently participated in the 36th Engineering Design Exhibition of the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University, dedicated to showcasing the projects and designs of engineering students in their various specializations. The bank sponsored more than 50 graduate projects for students from various majors from the College of Engineering and Petroleum, including mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, civil engineering, chemical engineering, computer engineering, petroleum engineering, industrial engineering and other scientific majors. This confirms the bank's keenness to provide continuing support to the youth while encouraging them to research scientifically, creatively and with innovation.

On their behalf, the College's administrative and teaching staff praised the efforts of KFH and its continuing support of the activities of the youth and students in general, and the activities of the College of Engineering and Petroleum in particular. Moreover, they valued the bank's participation in sponsoring the graduation ceremony of students. Meanwhile, College students and their families expressed their appreciation to KFH, praising the social initiatives and keenness of the bank to motivate students and support their initiatives and activities.



KUWAIT: KFH is honored during the ceremony.

# Clean criminal record certificate required for expats working in NGOs

## Govt looks to cut expenses in staff annual bonuses

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Social Affairs plans to ask NGOs to obtain a clean criminal record certificate from expatriates who wish to work for them in order to make sure that they are not affiliated with any organizations, groups or activities that in contrary to the rules and regulations of those NGOs, which the ministry supervises. The ministry made this new condition after investigations following the arrest of Egyptians in Kuwait wanted on terrorism charges in their home country revealed that they have work visas issued by some NGOs in Kuwait, said sources familiar with the new circular.

Meanwhile, the ministry said aid payments were not stopped to those eligible to receive them; rather they were stopped for those who did not renew their documents, besides those who should be suspended because of changing their social and financial status. They said the suspension is precautionary and temporary until the required documents are submitted. It said the ministry did not and will not stop any payments until beneficiaries are contacted and asked to submit required documents.

### Employees' bonuses

Rewards for excellent work that ministries and other state departments pay to employees each year will be reduced by half, informed sources said. According to the sources, employees should next year notice that the total value of rewards will drop by 40 to 50 percent because of new conditions, most important of which is employees' compliance with attendance, as those who do not comply with the biometric access system for at least 180 days will not receive their bonus and cannot file grievances over the issue.

The sources said the biometric system will be the first condition for the reward and is the approach to other conditions that guarantee productivity and the extent of compliance with working hours. They said that the majority of rewards will be for Kuwaitis, as non-Kuwaiti employees will have another system. The reward will be according to the allocated budget and managers' input. Sources said the Civil Service Commission (CSC) and State Audit Bureau noticed many loopholes in payments of excellent work bonuses, and money was given to those who do not deserve it, so the rewards will be linked with CSC to follow their compliance.

### School preparations

Education Minister Hamed Al-Azmi told education ministry officials that any dereliction in preparations for the upcoming school year will mean they will be forced out of their jobs or sent for involuntary retirement. Official sources said Azmi asked ministry undersecretaries and education zone managers to follow preparations directly in the field and not from their offices. He asked the general education undersecretary and zone directors to complete preparations two weeks before the start of the school year. The sources said direct instructions were given to undersecretaries to provide all school needs, such as air conditioners, tables and teachers' desks before the middle of August, and directed that contracts be signed with cleaning companies to provide the necessary labor before the start of the school year. The sources said the curriculum sector received most schoolbooks for the school year from print shops, while some are still being printed. The sources added that new teachers from Tunisia, Palestine and Jordan will arrive in Kuwait after the Eid-Al-Adha holiday, adding that a special committee will receive them.

### News in brief

#### Travel agencies in trouble over insurance

**KUWAIT:** Travel agencies are going through major confusion after a Jordanian insurance company left the travel market and IATA warned nearly 300 agencies and gave them until the end of August to correct their status or they will face closure. Source said IATA asked agencies to pay KD 75,000 as a guarantee to continue issuing tickets, which is difficult for many agency owners. The sources said the exit of the Jordanian insurance company from the Kuwaiti market put the agencies in a predicament over the lack of an alternative, except for a French company that has strict conditions that many agencies cannot meet. — Al-Jarida

#### 293 work ban complaints

**KUWAIT:** The number of daily complaints about violations of the decision that bans laborers working from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm have increased by 61 percent since the beginning of the summer. Al-Qabas daily reported yesterday. Coordinator of the campaign to check violators Meshari Al-Sanad said 293 complaints were referred to the Public Authority for Manpower compared to 112 in the middle of last month. — Al-Qabas

#### Stats of Kuwaiti women

**KUWAIT:** The number of Kuwaiti women aged 50-55 years is 36,128, 10,246 of whom are unemployed or housewives, while the number of working women in that category is 12,693 and retirees 13,189. These figures were mentioned in State Minister for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel's answer to a question by MP Khalil Abdullah, which showed that the rate of unemployed women aged 50-55 years is 28 percent. As for women in this age group who do not receive social aid and do not have a fixed income, their number is 6,927. Aqeel said the number of female workers in all sectors reached 12,693, and retirees number 13,189. The number of widows (who receive pensions of their deceased husbands) is 1,040, bearing in mind that these figures do not include citizens who get an income from commercial licenses or real estate, because the government does not have such information. — Al-Jarida

## Kuwait tentatively OKs contract to maintain causeway

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Central Agency for Public Tenders has tentatively approved a direct contract with the South Korean construction conglomerate Hyundai for operating and maintaining Jaber Al-Ahmad Causeway. The causeway, which stretches for more than 30 kilometers across Kuwait Bay waters to Sabbiya, is one of the country's landmark development achievements, envisaged within the development strategy 2035. The Ministry of Public Works said in a statement yesterday that the five-year contract is of a projected value of KD 9-10 million per year (\$29-32 million). The deal envisions maritime dredging works, regular examination of all construction materials for all maritime and land causeways. Moreover, it covers sewage and rainwater networks, maintenance of buildings, power installations, air-conditioning sets, cleaning and beautification planting. Furthermore, the works include regular observation of the marine environment and effects on sea creatures. The contract will secure jobs for citizens according to the set laws, the statement said, indicating that the final phase of inking the deal would involve the State Audit Bureau, Fatwa and Legislation Department and the National Assembly. — KUNA

## String of fires reported around Kuwait

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** A fire was reported in a Salmiya building, so Bidaa and Salmiya fire stations responded. The fire was in a 9th floor apartment, so the building was evacuated and the fire was put out. Meanwhile, a fire was reported in a Fintas building, which was evacuated and the fire was put out. In the meantime, fire broke out in the basement of a complex in Ardiya. Firemen found the fire was in a restaurant located in the basement. The basement was evacuated and aired and the fire was put out. No injuries were reported. In the meantime, fire broke out in a workers' camp in Sabah Al-Ahmad residential city. Kout and Wafra stations responded and put out the fire.



**KUWAIT:** A fireman battles a blaze reported in a workers' camp in Sabah Al-Ahmad residential city.



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International

# Venezuela limps back to normal after another major blackout

## Venezuela hits out at US 'spy plane' incursion

CARACAS: Electricity has been restored in all of Caracas and several other regions of Venezuela after a major blackout, the government said yesterday - the latest taste of misery for a country mired in economic crisis. The outage that began Monday afternoon triggered gridlock in the capital as traffic lights went dark. Sidewalks teemed with pedestrians walking home after the metro stopped running.

The government blamed sabotage, saying a hydroelectric plant that provides 80 percent of the country's power had been hit by an "electromagnetic attack." A nationwide blackout in March lasted a week, accentuating the woes of people in an oil-rich country that now has shortages of food and medicine and such basics as toilet paper and soap. This time, the lights went out in a dozen hospitals, telephone service was knocked out and faucets ran dry, according to a consumer rights group called the Public Services Observatory.

Stores closed Monday night as the lack of electricity prevented the use of credit and debit cards. They are essential because cash is scarce in inflation-plagued Venezuela. "I'm hungry, I want to eat, but there is nowhere to use my debit card," said Hernan Montalvo, complaining of not having enough cash to buy a hot dog. "I'm outraged," Eurimar Guere, 36, told AFP after leaving her office in eastern Caracas. "Necessary repairs weren't carried out and it's more of the same."

Early yesterday, the state run utility Corpolec said power had been restored in all of Caracas and parts of four other states. "We are moving toward total restoration of the service," it said on Twitter. President Nicolas Maduro denounced what he said was a "criminal attack against tranquility and peace of the homeland," adding that the country's armed forces had been deployed for relief efforts.



IN THE AIR: Photo shows an image of a Venezuela SU-30 Flanker as it 'aggressively shadowed' a US EP-3 Aries II at an unsafe distance in international airspace over the Caribbean Sea jeopardizing the crew and aircraft. — AFP



CARACAS: People are seen in the streets of Petare neighborhood after Caracas and other parts of Venezuela were hit by a massive power cut. — AFP

**'Destroyed' electricity system**  
The power outage in March affected all 23 states in Venezuela and lasted a week, paralyzing basic services such as the water

**'Electromagnetic attack' blamed**

supply and forcing the work day to be canceled and school classes to be suspended. Hospital care was also affected by that inci-

dent and another one that came days later. Opponents of Maduro said at the time that about 20 people died due to problems receiving medical treatment because of the blackout. Maduro blamed unnamed "terrorists" for that near-nationwide blackout, claiming they had attacked the Guri hydroelectric plant—the same one that was allegedly targeted this time.

Another huge outage in April left large parts of the country, including Caracas, in darkness, although it lasted hours rather than days. Blackouts are a common occurrence in Venezuela, especially in remote western regions. The government usually blames them on sabotage but experts say that a lack of investment, poor management, the emigration of qualified engineers and personnel, and corruption are the more likely culprits. "They tried to hide the tragedy by

rationing throughout the country, but the failure is clear," said opposition leader Juan Guaido on Twitter.

"They've destroyed the electricity system and they don't have any answers," Venezuela has been mired in a political impasse since January when opposition leader Juan Guaido proclaimed himself acting president, quickly receiving the support of more than 50 countries. The country has been in a deep recession for five years. Around a quarter of Venezuela's 30-million-strong population are in need of aid, according to the United Nations. Three million people have left the country since the start of 2016.

**'Spy plane' incursion**  
In another development, Venezuela claimed on Monday that a US "spy plane" had entered its airspace, just days after

Washington accused a Venezuelan fighter jet of "aggressively" shadowing an American intelligence plane over the Caribbean Sea. Venezuela's Communication Minister Jorge Rodriguez said a plane that had come from the United States flew over the Caracas airport "flight information region," without explaining its reasons for doing so.

On Sunday, US defense officials said a Russian-made Venezuelan SU-30 had followed a US EP-3 aircraft at an "unsafe distance ... jeopardizing the crew and aircraft." The US Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) blasted the maneuver as "unprofessional" and claimed the EP-3 was "flying a mission in approved international airspace." It also claimed the action demonstrated Russia's "irresponsible military support" to Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's "illegitimate regime." — Agencies

## 8 die as Nigeria Shiites protest

ABUJA: At least eight people were killed in clashes between Shiite Muslim protesters and Nigerian police in Abuja on Monday, with a journalist among those shot dead in the latest bloodshed over the detention of a religious leader. A policeman was also killed in the unrest, which broke out when hundreds of protesters from the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN), a Shia sect, marched demanding the release of cleric Ibrahim Zakzaky, who has been held since December 2015 on charges including terrorism.

Police opened fire with live ammunition as well as tear gas, while protesters threw petrol bombs at the officers, according to an AFP journalist who saw six bodies, including that of a teenager. One Shiite protester, Abdullahi Musa, said: "I am right now in front of six dead bodies, one of them is an underage boy." "Many, many people were shot." The IMN put the toll at 11.

Late Monday, the Committee to Protect Journalists said Precious Owolabi, a journalist for local broadcaster Channels TV, had died after he was shot during the protests. "Nigerian authorities should investigate and ensure those responsible for his death are held accountable." Channels TV had earlier said Owolabi was shot by a stray bullet while covering the rally. Nigerian police spokesperson Frank Mba said one police officer was killed in the violence and two officers were seriously injured.

He said the IMN "embarked on a streak of destruction" during the demonstration, adding that 54 Shiites were in police custody. A local fire station was set ablaze. Amnesty International condemned the police action as a "reckless use of force". "This new crackdown is part of a shocking pattern in which security forces have used live ammunition to disperse IMN supporters who are simply exercising their freedom of expression," the rights group said.



ABUJA: A member the Shiite Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) lies on the ground after being shot dead during clashes between IMN and the police in the streets of Abuja. The Shiites are protesting against the detention of IMN leader Ibrahim Zakzaky. — AFP

### Years of bloodshed

There have been frequent clashes between the security forces and the IMN in recent years. Zakzaky wants an Iranian-style Islamic revolution in secular Nigeria. He was detained after violence during a religious procession in Kaduna State, northern Nigeria in December 2015. Rights groups say some 350 mostly unarmed Shiite marchers were killed by the Nigerian army and buried in mass graves. The military denies the claim. In October 2018, the IMN and human rights groups said, more than 40 people were killed when the security forces opened fire on crowds on the outskirts of the capital. The official toll is six.

Northern Nigeria is majority Sunni Muslim. The IMN have held almost daily marches in the capital in recent months amid concerns Zakzaky's health is deteriorating. Zakzaky remains in government custody despite the federal high court ordering his release. The

and left tens of thousands dead.

During the stalemate that followed the end of active hostilities in 2000, Zalambessa was all but abandoned, deprived of infrastructure and other investments. "After the opening it was very obvious that everybody was happy. They want to trade, to have these connections," said Hadush Desta, Zalambessa's top municipal official. "But now, because of no reason, it's closed. People are emotional about it. They say, 'Why is this happening to us?'"

### 'Devil in the details'

The border opening was just one breakthrough in the whip-fast rapprochement between Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki that began just over a year ago. Following Abiy's initial overtures, the two sides embarked on a rapid mending of ties that caught even close observers by surprise, re-opening embassies, resuming flights and taking meetings across the region. But enthusiasm for the deal has given way to frustration - and not just near the border. On other goals too - from inking new trade deals to granting Ethiopia access to Eritrea's ports - high initial hopes have gone unmet.

The lack of communication from both governments makes it difficult to pinpoint why the peace process

government has refused and filed fresh criminal charges, including culpable homicide that is "punishable with death". The move has enraged his supporters who say Zakzaky is in urgent need of medical treatment being denied by the authorities.

### 'Assassinate my parents'

After a rare visit by medical staff, the IMN said Zakzaky was suffering from a number of conditions including lead poisoning, high blood pressure, and glaucoma which can lead to partial blindness. Zakzaky's wife, Zeenah Ibrahim, has also been detained since 2015. She had an un-treated bullet wound, medical staff said. Their son Mohammed Zakzaky earlier this month said it was a miracle they were still alive. "It appears that there is a deliberate attempt to assassinate my parents through deliberate negligence towards their health," he said. — AFP

appears stuck. Abiy paid a two-day visit to Asmara last week and pledged to "further enhance" the peace process, but no detail was given of their discussions. "As they say, the devil is in the details. We are not so clear what is going on," said Abebe Aynete, an Addis Ababa-based senior researcher with the Ethiopian Foreign Relations and Strategic Studies think tank.

Many analysts and diplomats suspect Eritrea is guilty of foot-dragging. Opening up to Ethiopia would force Isaias to surrender a measure of control, something his critics say he is unlikely to do. "I personally believe that as long as the current group in Asmara stays in power, I don't think the border will open and the two countries will not proceed to normal relations," said Mehari Tesfamichael, chairperson of the opposition Eritrean Bright Future Movement.

Isaias' notoriously iron-fisted government has long cited the standoff with Ethiopia in justifying harsh policies like compulsory national service, which forces citizens into specific jobs at low pay and bans them from travelling abroad. Last October, the UN refugee agency noted a seven-fold increase in refugees fleeing Eritrea after the borders opened, with around 10,000 refugees registered in one month. The peace deal "provided some hope that restrictions on national service would be lifted, but so far there has been little change" in Eritrea, said Human Rights Watch. — AFP

## News in brief

### Gangs kill 12, including kids

GOMA: Machete- and gun-wielding gangs killed 12 civilians, including two children, in twin overnight attacks in northeast DR Congo blamed on the Islamist-rooted ADF militia group, an official said yesterday. In the first attack, nine civilians were killed and four injured at Oicha Mabasele near the city of Beni, regional administrator Donat Kibwana said. At the same time, in Eringeti, three civilians were killed, also by suspected ADF members, he said. Dozens of militias operate in the North and South Kivu provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo, a vast country the size of western continental Europe. The ADF, a group that arose in western Uganda in 1995, has been blamed for massacring hundreds of civilians, killing UN peacekeepers and DR Congo troops, and for a number of kidnappings of medical and other staff. — AFP

### Ex-headmaster in drug case

SINGAPORE: A British former headmaster of an international school in China appeared in a Singapore court yesterday charged with consumption and possession of methamphetamine and ecstasy, reports said. Damien Michael Charnock used to be the head of Dulwich College Shanghai, a branch of the exclusive London private school, the city-state's Straits Times newspaper reported. The 60-year-old faces five charges, including consumption of methamphetamine and ecstasy in March, according to charge sheets. He is also charged with possessing packets of meth and ecstasy tablets, as well as equipment used to consume drugs, at an apartment in the city. — AFP

### Doctor 'abused' over 90 boys

VIENNA: A doctor in northern Austria faces trial for having allegedly abused at least 95 boys he was treating over more than 15 years, prosecutors said yesterday. He allegedly told his victims, many under 14 at the time, that what he was doing was a medical procedure, said the prosecutor's office in the city of Wels after several months' investigation. It was only when one of the children complained about him that police arrested the doctor in January. News of his arrest led to a flood of accusations from other former alleged victims, with 95 so far identified. The alleged offences date as far back as the early years of this century, say investigators. — AFP

### Bootleg alcohol kills 23

ANKARA: More than 20 people have died from alcohol poisoning in Turkey over the past month, according to Turkish media reports, as steep taxes on alcohol push Turks to consume bootlegged spirits. Broadcaster Haberturk reported at the weekend that a man in the southern province of Adana had died from methanol poisoning, the twelfth such death in recent weeks in Adana. At least 23 people have died from alcohol poisoning across the nation, according to media reports. The deaths come as prices have surged after a government tax hike of at least 8 percent on most alcoholic beverages in July. A litre of Turkey's traditional aniseed-flavored raki spirit now costs more than 200 lira (\$35.29). — Reuters

## Hopes dashed as Ethiopia-Eritrea peace process stagnates

ZALAMBESSA: In the heady days after longtime foes Ethiopia and Eritrea signed a peace deal a year ago, Teklit Amare's Peace and Love Cafe near the newly-opened border overflowed with customers. Now, he paces among empty tables, wondering aloud how to keep his business open as optimism fades, with borders again sealed and hopes of progress dashed.

The Zalambessa border crossing closed at the end of last year without explanation as leaders have remained silent. Others crossings followed suit. "When they shut the border so soon after opening it, that was the saddest moment," said Teklit, a former teacher who now struggles to pay his rent. The feeling is widely shared in Zalambessa, a town where battered buildings highlight the damage wrought by the Ethiopia-Eritrea border war, which erupted in 1998

## International

# First Russian-Chinese air patrol draws shots from South Korea

## Seoul accuses Russian plane of entering its airspace

**MOSCOW:** Russia carried out what it said was its first long-range joint air patrol in the Asia-Pacific region with China yesterday, a mission that triggered hundreds of warning shots, according to South Korean officials, and a strong protest from Japan. The flight by two Russian Tu-95 strategic bombers and two Chinese H-6 bombers, backed up according to Korean and Japanese officials by a Russian A-50 early warning plane, marks a notable ramping-up of military cooperation between Beijing and Moscow.

That is something likely to worry politicians from Washington to Tokyo and could complicate relations and raise tension in a region that has for years been overshadowed by hostility between the United States and North Korea. While troops and naval ships from Russia and China have taken part in joint war games before, they have not, according to Russia's Ministry of Defense, conducted such air patrols in the Asia-Pacific region together until yesterday.

"The joint patrol was carried out with the aim of deepening Russian-Chinese relations within our all-encompassing partnership, of further increasing cooperation between our armed forces, and of perfecting their capabilities to carry out joint actions and of strengthening global strategic security," the ministry

said in a statement. Seoul and Tokyo, who both scrambled jets to intercept the Russo-Chinese mission, accused Russia and China of violating their airspaces, an allegation Moscow and Beijing denied. South Korean warplanes fired hundreds of warning shots towards the Russian A-50 military aircraft, defense officials in Seoul said, saying it had entered South Korean airspace. It was the first time a Russian military aircraft had violated South Korean airspace, an official at the South Korean Ministry of National Defense said in Seoul.

The Russian and Chinese bombers had entered the Korea Air Defense Identification Zone (KADIZ) together early yesterday, the South Korean defense ministry said. The separate Russian A-50 airborne early warning and control aircraft later twice violated South Korean airspace over Dokdo - an island that is controlled by Seoul and claimed by both South Korea and Japan, which calls it Takeshima - just after 9 a.m. (midnight GMT Monday), according to the South Korean military.

Russia's Defense Ministry said it did not recognize South Korea's KADIZ, while the Chinese Foreign Ministry said the area was not territorial airspace and that all countries enjoyed freedom of movement in it. South Korean fighters did not fire any warning shots toward Russia's two bombers, the Russian

defense ministry said in a statement, which made no mention of any A-50 aircraft. It accused the two South Korean F-16 fighter planes of carrying out "unprofessional maneuvers" and of crossing the path of the Russian bombers and not communicating with them.

"It was not the first time that South Korean pilots tried unsuccessfully to prevent Russian aircraft from flying over the neutral waters of the Sea of Japan," the Russian ministry said. If the Russian pilots had felt any threat to their safety, their response would have been swift, it added. A South Korean defense ministry spokesman did not directly address the Russian accusation of reckless behavior, but said that South Korea had never said the Tu-95 bombers had violated its airspace.

South Korea's top security adviser, Chung Eui-yong, lodged a strong objection with Nikolai Patrushev, secretary of Russia's Security Council, asking the council to assess the incident and take appropriate action. South Korea's presidential office said. "We take a very grave view of this situation and, if it is repeated, we will take even stronger action," Chung said, according to South Korea's presidential office.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry summoned Russian Deputy Chief of Mission Maxim Volkov and Chinese Ambassador Qiu Guohong



**SEOUL:** Acting Russian ambassador to South Korea, Maxim Volkov (left), arrives at the foreign ministry in Seoul yesterday as he was called to the ministry after a Russian military aircraft allegedly violated South Korean airspace. — AFP

to lodge a stern protest and strongly urge them to prevent a recurrence, said ministry spokesman Kim In-chul. Separately, Japan, which said it had also scrambled fighter aircraft

to intercept the Russian and Chinese planes, lodged a complaint with both South Korea and Russia over the incident, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said. — Reuters

## Carrie Symonds: UK's new 'first girlfriend'

**LONDON:** Boris Johnson will enter Downing Street as British prime minister for the first time today amid speculation over whether his far younger girlfriend, Carrie Symonds, will accompany him. Twice-married Johnson, 55 - declared the Conservative Party's new leader yesterday and now set to be confirmed as premier by Queen Elizabeth II - is dating the party's 31-year-old former director of communications.

Symonds is an avid environmental campaigner and previously worked on his re-election campaign as London mayor in 2012. The two have been a public, but largely discreet, couple since the serial philanderer split last year from his wife of 26 years. In the run-up to Johnson's takeover, British newspapers have been rife with rumors over Symonds' future role as the nation's "first girlfriend" and whether she will also live at his 10 Downing Street headquarters.

He refused to discuss the matter on several occasions during the campaign, telling party members last week: "I just don't talk about people I love." The couple are believed to have been living together in south London after Johnson and now estranged wife Marina Wheeler, 55, confirmed their separation last September.

Symonds was thrown into the spotlight in June when neighbors there called the police after they overheard her screaming at him during a late-night row. Symonds yelled "get off me" and "get out" amid the sound of things being smashed, according to a recording made by one neighbor and given to The Guardian. Officers attended the scene but took no further action. The couple have reportedly not been living at the residence since the incident.

### Attempted smear

Symonds is the daughter of Matthew Symonds, a co-founder of The Independent newspaper, and Josephine McAfee, a former lawyer there with whom he had an extra-marital affair. She grew up in southwest London, attending the exclusive Godolphin and Latymer private school before studying theatre studies and history of art at Warwick University in central England.

Symonds began working for the Conservatives in 2010 as a marketing director for MP Zac Goldsmith, and first came into contact with Johnson by working on his mayoral campaign. She went on to hold various press jobs at party headquarters, including director of communications, but left that role last year.

The Daily Mail reported earlier this month that she had quit after being accused of unauthorized expenses and leaking stories to the media that were damaging to outgoing prime minister Theresa May. Symonds and the Conservatives declined to comment to the paper, while a friend was quoted as saying by the Mail that the claims were an attempted smear by Johnson opponents. An avid campaigner against plastics, she has since joined the global marketing team at conservation charity Oceana, focusing on a Bloomberg Foundation "vibrant oceans" initiative. The new prime minister's aides are said to be divided on how to handle the relationship - and whether Johnson should pose for photos with Symonds when he first enters Downing Street. Some fear presenting them as a couple could cause protocol problems and draw undue attention to his history as a serial cheater. Johnson had four children with now-estranged wife Wheeler - his eldest daughter is just five years younger than Symonds - as well as a daughter resulting from a 2009 fling. — AFP



**Carrie Symonds**

## Europe gears up for record-breaking heatwave

**PARIS:** France and western Europe are bracing for a new record-breaking heatwave that is forcing the temporary shutdown of a French nuclear power station and will test competitors in the legendary Tour de France cycle race. Forecasters predicted new temperatures highs in a string of countries, including Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, where the mercury is set to reach 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) for the first time tomorrow.

The same day could also see the all-time record temperature for the French capital Paris - 40.4 degrees Celsius (104.7 degrees Fahrenheit) in 1947 - beaten. And as the Tour de France reached its final week in the southeast of the country, ice foot baths and extra water points were on hand to avoid dehydration. "In the third week of the Tour de France, I think heat like this could make the difference," said Davide Bramati, head of sport for team Deceuninck, whose cyclist Julian Alaphilippe is currently leading the world-famous race.

French energy company EDF said it would temporarily shut down the two reactors at its Golfech nuclear power plant this week in the southern Tarn-et-Garonne department, in a bid to limit the heating of water used to keep reactors cool. Reactor number 2 will shut down in the evening and number 1 today, with both due to stay shut until July 30. France is gearing up for a surge in electricity use this week, but the national electricity board said Monday that there will be enough supplies.

### 'Extremely hazardous'

Authorities around Europe also issued health warnings, encouraging older or vulnerable people to be particularly vigilant. In Britain - where temperatures could exceed the



**LABASTIDE-D'ANJOU:** Young men dive into the Canal du Midi at the Port du Segala in Labastide d'Anjou yesterday as a new heatwave blasted into northern Europe that could set records in several countries. — AFP

all-time record of 38.5 degrees Celsius (101 Fahrenheit) tomorrow - asthma sufferers were warned of a "toxic cocktail" of hot, humid weather and rising pollution levels. This "could be extremely hazardous for the 5.4 million people in the UK with asthma, triggering deadly asthma attacks," said Andy Whittamore, clinical leader at charity Asthma UK. In the Netherlands - where most of the country was hit by a "code orange" alert yesterday - the government activated its "national heat plan", issuing advice for hospitals, retirement homes and even obese people.

Animals were also a cause for concern. In France, the government banned animal transportation "for economic reasons" between 1:00 pm and 6:00 pm in areas affected by "orange" and "red" heat alerts. Paris and the eastern city of Lyon have also banned more heavily polluting vehicles from the city centre in a bid to keep the air clean.

The heatwave has also caused water shortages in

dozens of regions across France, with a drought raising concerns for farmers producing a host of crops from potatoes to grapes. The new heatwave in northern Europe follows a three-day temperature peak from June 26-28 in France, which was four degrees Celsius (7.2 Fahrenheit) 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 said the deadly, weeks-long heatwave across northern Europe in 2018 would have been statistically impossible without climate change. Swedish teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg, who has highlighted the problem of global warming through school strikes, spoke at the French parliament yesterday. Some right-wing MPs have said her visit is needless, with Julien Aubert of the Republicans describing her as a "prophetess in shorts, a Nobel Prize for Fear" in comments denounced by green activists. — AFP

## Johnson: Time to get serious?

**LONDON:** Playing the clown has propelled Boris Johnson to the brink of power, but he faces a serious challenge to unite his party and deliver Brexit. The 55-year-old former London mayor was yesterday elected leader of the ruling Conservative party, and will formally take over from Theresa May today. Known for his easygoing manner and willingness to laugh at himself, he cuts a vastly different figure from his diligent, reserved predecessor.

For many supporters, this is the point - they hope his optimistic vision and maverick approach will help him break the political deadlock that has delayed Britain's exit from the European Union. Johnson also presents himself as the man to unite a country still divided over the 2016 referendum vote for Brexit, and save a Conservative party driven to near collapse by current political chaos.

But the challenge he faces is huge, with a Brexit deadline in just four months, a wafer-thin majority in parliament, and entrenched opposition both among his own colleagues and in Brussels. Many voters dislike him as the figurehead of a referendum campaign marked by exaggerated claims about the EU and anti-immigrant rhetoric. And rivals condemn his plan to leave the bloc on October 31 with or without a deal, which runs the risk of economic disruption and of encouraging separatists in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Even Johnson's supporters admit choosing him as leader is a gamble.

### 'Just Boris'

Born in New York in 1964, Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson has always been ambitious. His first tilt at the Tory leadership, in 2016, failed after his closest ally betrayed him, but he laid the groundwork for this contest early. He resigned as May's foreign minister a year ago in protest at her EU strategy, cementing his position as the champion of Brexit.

He ran a disciplined campaign, only briefly derailed by headlines about a police visit to his home following a noisy row with his girlfriend. Controversy has followed Johnson throughout his career, but for many supporters, this is factored in - just "Boris being Boris". Educated at the elite Eton school and Oxford University, Johnson started his professional life as a journalist for The Times but was sacked for fabricating quotes. He later made a name for himself as Brussels correspondent for The Daily Telegraph, peddling what critics called "Euro-myths" about EU regulations. Johnson won nationwide fame as a



**LONDON:** New Conservative Party leader and incoming Prime Minister Boris Johnson arrives at the Conservative party headquarters in central London yesterday. — AFP

guest on the satirical TV talk show "Have I Got News For You", where his bumbling, aristocratic persona made him a hit. He became an MP in 2001, but was sacked as arts spokesman in 2004 for allegedly lying about an extramarital affair. In 2008 he was elected as mayor of multi-ethnic, Labor-voting London. He was re-elected in 2012 and oversaw the London Olympic Games that year, memorably getting stuck on a zip-wire while celebrating Britain's first gold medal.

Johnson returned to parliament in 2015 as MP for a London suburb, promising to oppose the expansion of Heathrow Airport. But as foreign minister, he missed a key parliamentary vote on the project after hastily arranging a trip to Afghanistan. While he often highlights how he cut crime, invested in transport and housing as mayor, Johnson is less effusive about his time at the Foreign Office.

The appointment was awkward from the start. Critics branded him racist, citing an old article he wrote about what he called the Commonwealth's "flag-waving picninnies". He was then accused of jeopardizing the case of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, a British-Iranian woman held in Tehran for sedition, by mischaracterizing her job. The Chatham House think-tank gave a damning assessment of his record, saying: "Where gravitas and grasp of detail were needed, Johnson supplied bon mots."

Johnson's trademark blonde hair, delight at upsetting convention and flexibility with the truth has prompted comparisons to US President Donald Trump. But his record is more complicated. He has drawn criticism for dog-whistle politics, notably by suggesting in an article last year that Muslim women wearing the face veil looking like "letter boxes". — AFP

## As new US law frees inmates, prosecutors seek to lock them up

**BUFFALO:** Monae Davis walked out of prison on March 7, thanks to a new law that eased some of the harshest aspects of the United States' war on drugs. Now the US Justice Department is trying to lock him back up. As Davis, 44, looks for work and re-connects with his family, US prosecutors are working to undo a federal judge's decision that shaved six years off his 20-year prison sentence under the First Step Act, a sweeping criminal-justice reform signed into law by President Donald Trump last December. "They're prosecutors - it's their job to make it hard on people," he said. "Do I think it is right? No, it's not fair."

Even as thousands of prison inmates have been released by judges under the new law, federal prosecutors have fought scores of petitions for reduced sentences and are threatening to put more than a dozen inmates already released back behind bars. Reuters found in an analysis of these cases. The reason: the Justice Department says the amount of drugs they handled was too large to qualify for a reduced sentence.

Davis, for example, reached a deal in 2009 with US attorneys in western New York to plead guilty to selling 50 grams or more of crack, resulting in his 20-year sentence. Under First Step guidelines, that carries a minimum sentence of five years, less than half the time he has already served. But prosecutors say Davis should not get a break, because in his plea deal he admitted to handling between 1.5 kilograms and 4.5 kilograms, which even under current guidelines is too high to qualify for a sentence reduction.

In a statement, the Justice Department said it is trying to ensure that prisoners seeking relief under the First Step Act aren't treated more leniently than defendants now facing prosecution. The department said prosecutors now have a greater incentive than previously to bring charges that more closely reflect the total amount of drugs they believe to be involved. "This is a fairness issue," the department said. Passed by overwhelming majorities in Congress, the First Step Act stands out as a rare bipartisan achievement in an era of sharp political divisions. Trump has invited ex-offenders to the White House and his State of the Union speech. The law allows inmates who are serving time for selling crack cocaine to ask a judge to reduce their prison sentences. — Reuters

## International

# Kim inspects a new submarine, signals possible ballistic missile development

## Photos show large submarine under construction

SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspected a large newly built submarine, state news agency KCNA reported yesterday, potentially signaling continued development of a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) program. Kim inspected the operational and tactical data and combat weapon systems of the submarine that was built under "his special attention", and will be operational in the waters off the east coast, KCNA said.

KCNA said the submarine's operational deployment was near. "The operational capacity of a submarine is an important component in national defense of our country bounded on its east and west by sea," Kim said. KCNA did not describe the submarine's weapon systems or say where and when the inspection took place.

North Korea has a large submarine fleet but only one known experimental submarine capable of carrying a ballistic missile. Analysts said that based on the apparent size of the new submarine it appears designed to eventually carry missiles. "We can clearly see that it is a massive submarine - much larger than the existing one that's been well known since 2014," said Ankit Panda, senior fellow at the US-based Federation of American Scientists.

"What I find significant about the political messaging here is that this is the first time since a February 2018 military parade that he has inspected a military system clearly designed to carry and deliver nuclear weapons." "I take that as an ominous signal that we should be taking Kim Jong Un's end-of-year deadline for the implementation of a change in US policy with the utmost seriousness." A South Korean defense ministry spokesman said they were monitoring developments but could not confirm if the submarine was designed to carry missiles.

Kim Dong-yub, a military expert at Kyungnam University's Institute of Far Eastern Studies in Seoul, said Kim likely also wanted to reassure North Koreans of his commitment to national defense at a time when he is focusing more on the economy. "Announcing his inspection of the new submarine is also to build internal solidarity, to

dispel people's concerns about national security, reassure them, and boost military morale," he said.

### Submarine development

Kim has declared a moratorium on testing ICBMs and nuclear weapons while engaging in denuclearization talks with the United States and South Korea. The North's submarine report comes amid another delay in dialogue between the United States and North Korea after Kim and US President Donald Trump agreed at a meeting at the Panmunjom Korean border on June 30 to working-level nuclear talks. Trump said such talks could come in the following two to three weeks. His national security advisor, John Bolton, arrives in South Korea yesterday to meet security officials. A summit between Trump and Kim, in Vietnam in February, broke down after they failed to narrow differences between a US demand for North Korea's denuclearization and a North Korean demand for sanctions relief.

In April, Kim said he would wait until the end of the year for the United States to be more flexible. North Korea maintains one of the world's largest submarine fleets, but many vessels are aging and there are doubts over how many are operational, according to the Washington-based Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI). Most of North Korea's fleet consists of small coastal submarines, but in recent years it has made rapid progress in the SLBM program, NTI said in a report released late last year.

In 2016, after a few years of development, North Korea successfully test-fired a ballistic missile from a submarine, while pursuing an intercontinental ballistic missile program (ICBM). During the submarine inspection Kim was accompanied by Kim Jong Sik, an official who played a major role in North Korea's missile program. Another official on the tour was Jang Chang Ha, president of the Academy of the National Defense Science, which the US Treasury has said is in charge of the secretive country's research and development of its advanced weapons systems, "including missiles and probably nuclear weapons".



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un (left) inspects a newly built submarine at an undisclosed location. — AFP

Ill Sutton, a naval analyst who studies submarines, said judging by the initial photos the hull could be based on old Romeo Class submarines, which were originally acquired from China in the 1970s before North Korea began producing them domestically. North Korea is believed to have about 20 Romeo submarines in its fleet, the newest of which was built in the mid 1990s, according to NTI. Sutton told Reuters that the North Koreans appeared to have raised the deck on a Romeo-type design, possibly even modifying an existing Romeo to make a submarine larger

than previous indigenous designs. "I'd bet that this is indeed a missile submarine," he said. US-based monitoring group 38 North said in June 2018 that North Korea appeared to be continuing submarine construction at its Sinpo Shipyard of possibly another Sinpo-class ballistic missile submarine, based on commercial satellite imagery. "This, to my eye, is the submarine that the US intelligence community has been calling the Sinpo-C, a successor to North Korea's only known ballistic missile submarine," Panda said. — Reuters

## Facebook-style app launched in Vietnam amid tightening rules

HANOI: A Facebook-style social network was launched in Vietnam yesterday, following calls by the Communist-ruled government for domestic tech companies to create alternatives to US tech giants Facebook and Google. Gazo, a mobile app that lets users create personal profiles and share posts to a Facebook style "news feed", has received 500 billion dong (\$21.55 million) in funding from tech corporation G-Group, its chief executive, Ha Trung Kien, said.

"Vietnamese users and enterprises are relying too much on Facebook as there are not so many social networks for them to choose from," Kien said, adding that Gazo plans to reach 3 million users in 2019 and 20 million by January 2021. Despite eco-

nomics reforms and increasing openness to social change, the ruling Communist Party retains tight media censorship in Vietnam and does not tolerate dissent.

An increasing number of activists and dissidents have been arrested or tried over the last year for posting online content considered to be "anti state". Nearly 10% of the 128 prisoners held in the Southeast Asian country for expressing dissenting views were jailed for posting anti-state comments on social media platforms such as Facebook, Amnesty International said in May.

Vietnam has also ramped up pressure on firms such as Google and Facebook with a controversial cybersecurity law that took effect in January. Global technology firms and rights groups have pushed back against the law, which requires companies to set up offices in Vietnam and store data there. In September 2018, Information Minister Nguyen Manh Hung urged Vietnamese companies to create viable domestic alternatives to foreign social media platforms.

Last month, Vietnam asked companies not to advertise on videos hosted by Google's YouTube that contain "anti-state"



THANH HOA: People play with sand on Sam Son beach in Thanh Hoa province. — AFP

propaganda. Domestic social platforms built prior to Gazo, such as Vietnam1a and Hahalolo are also similar to Facebook, although neither has managed to build a

large user base. Gazo has teamed with Sony Music Entertainment as a strategic partner to feature music content on the app, it said in a statement. — Reuters



DHAKA: A Bangladeshi rickshaw puller makes his way under heavy rain in Dhaka. — AFP

## Plastic from burlap? Bangladesh invents a green throw-away bag

DHAKA: As countries around the world try to cut down on throw-away plastic shopping bags, Bangladesh is hoping to cash in on an alternative: plastic-like bags made from jute, the plant fibre used to produce burlap bags. Bangladesh is the world's second biggest producer of jute after India, though the so-called "golden fibre" - named for its color and its once-high price - has lost its sheen as demand has fallen.

Now, however, a Bangladeshi scientist has found a way to turn the fibre into low-cost biodegradable cellulose sheets that can be made into greener throw-away bags that look and feel much like plastic ones. "The physical properties are quite similar," said Mubarak Ahmad Khan, a scientific adviser to the state-run Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) and leader of the team that developed the new "sonali" - the Bengali word for golden - bags. He said the sacks are biodegradable after three months buried in soil, and can also be recycled. Bangladesh is now producing 2,000 of the bags a day on an experimental basis, but plans to scale up commercial production after signing an agreement last October with the British arm of a Japanese green packaging firm.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in March urged those working on the project "to help expedite the wider usage of the golden bags" for both economic and environmental gains. In April, the government approved about \$900,000 in funding from Bangladesh's own climate change trust fund to help pave the way for large-scale production of the bags. "Once the project is in full swing,

we hope to be able to produce the sonali bag commercially within six months," Mamnur Rashid, the general manager of the BJMC, said.

### Big demand

Bangladesh was one of the first countries to ban the use of plastic and polythene bags, in 2002, in an effort to stop them collecting in waterways and on land - though the ban has had little success. Today more than 60 countries - from China to France - have outlawed the bags in at least some regions or cities, Khan said.

As the bans widen, more than 100 Bangladeshi and international firms are looking into using the new jute-based shopping sacks, Khan said. "Every day I am receiving emails or phone calls from buyers from different countries," he said, including Britain, Australia, the United States, Canada, Mexico, Japan and France. The bag is likely to have "huge demand around the world," said Sabuj Hossain, director of Dhaka-based export firm Eco Bangla Jute Limited. He said his company hopes eventually to export 10 million of the bags each month.

Commercial production is expected to start near the end of the year, said Rashid of the BJMC. Khan said that if all the jute produced in Bangladesh went to make the sacks, the country was still likely to be able to meet just a third of expected demand. While Bangladesh's own plastic bag ban is now almost two decades old, million of the bags are still used each year in the South Asian country because of a lack of available alternatives and limited enforcement, officials said. About 410 million polythene bags are used in the capital Dhaka each month, the government estimates, and in some waterways such as the Buriganga River a three-meter-deep layer of discarded bags has built up. The new bags should help ease the problem, said Quazi Sarwar Intiaz Hashmi, a former deputy director general of the Department of Environment. "As jute polymer bags are totally biodegradable and decomposable, it will help check pollution," he said. — Reuters

## US mistrust on the rise; government seen as the worst

WASHINGTON: Americans distrust the news media, but see government and political leaders as even more untrustworthy, a survey showed Monday. The Pew Research Center found 69 percent of Americans say the federal government intentionally withholds important information from the public, while 61 percent say the news media intentionally ignores important stories.

Nearly two-thirds say it is hard to tell the difference between what is true and false when they hear elected officials, and almost half said the same about information they encounter on social media. The survey highlighting growing mistrust among Americans in institutions and in each other, which could make it more difficult to deal with social and political issues. Researchers found 64 percent of US adults believe trust in each other has declined, and 58 percent say it is very important to reverse that.

"Americans are worried that distrust in the government and in others is taking a toll on the nation," said Lee Rainie, head of Pew's internet and technology research. "They believe that distrust gets in the way of solving some pressing problems, that it flows from a broken political culture and that it keeps neighbors apart." "At the same time, people are full of ideas about solutions to trust problems. They range from muffling political partisanship to reorienting the news to creating community projects where people can work shoulder-to-shoulder."

Pew said at least part of reason for the lack of trust in government lies with President Donald Trump, who has repeated at least 10,000 falsehoods since taking office, according to one count, and who has repeatedly attacked mainstream media reports about him as "fake news." Asked why the level of trust in government has declined, 14 percent cited Trump and his administration, while 10 percent noted the performance of the news media.

The respondents said they believe the mistrust can be reversed: 84 percent believe the level of confidence Americans have in the federal government can be improved, and 86 percent said the same about the confidence Americans have in each other. The report was extracted from Pew's American Trends Panel conducted November 27 to December 10, 2018 of 10,618 adults, with an estimated margin of error of 1.5 percentage points. — AFP

## Li Peng, the 'Butcher of Beijing', dies at 90

BEIJING: Former Chinese premier Li Peng-known as the "Butcher of Beijing" for his role in the Tiananmen Square crackdown-has died at the age of 90, state media said yesterday. Li died of an unspecified illness in Beijing after he failed to respond to medical treatment late Monday, the official Xinhua news agency said.

Li gained notoriety worldwide as one of the key architects of the brutal breakup of mass pro-democracy demonstrations in the capital on June 4, 1989, and stayed at the top of the Communist regime for more than a decade-remaining a hated symbol of the repression until his death. Xinhua said yesterday that Li "took decisive measures to stop the turmoil... and played an important role in this major struggle concerning the future fate of the party and the country".

After vast crowds of students, workers and others had been camped for weeks in Tiananmen Square to demand change, Li proclaimed martial law on May 20, 1989. Two weeks later, on the night of June 3-4, the military put a bloody end to the protests, killing hundreds of unarmed civilians-by some estimates more than 1,000. Though the decision to send in the troops was a collective one, Li was widely held responsible for the bloody crackdown.

It trailed him to the end of his official political career in 2003, with his trips abroad generating widespread protests-such as in Paris in 1996, where more than 2,000 took to the streets to decry his welcome by president Jacques Chirac. Nevertheless, he remained a member of the elite Politburo Standing Committee for 15 years and for most of the 1990s, ranked number two behind then Chinese president Jiang Zemin.

He held the premiership for 11 years until 1998, and was chairman of China's Communist-controlled parliament until 2003. Former student leader Wu'er Kaixi, who famously confronted Li during a televised meeting and now lives in Taiwan, said his death "can't bring any comfort to the families of the victims of June 4". "I believe that even if he dies, there will come a day when his corpse will be whipped!" he wrote on his Facebook page. Chinese internet censors were swift in blocking all comments about Li as news of his death spread, but before the cleanup several people had written on the Twitter-like platform Weibo that they "dare not say what he did".

### Adopted son

Li spent his childhood in the shadow of Zhou Enlai, China's premier for nearly three decades and possibly the Communist Party's most skilled politician. Born in 1928 in the southwestern province of Sichuan, Li was adopted at the age of three by Zhou after his Communist father became a "martyr of the Revolution", killed by the Kuomintang in 1931. He joined the Communist Party at the age of 17 and was dispatched to Moscow in 1948 for seven years of hydropower engineering study. After returning to China, his high-level family contacts allowed him to escape the political turmoil of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) and rise through the energy ministry. He became premier in 1987. — AFP



BEIJING: File shows Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng as he tries to hear a question during a press conference after the closing of the National People's Congress. — AFP



## Analysis

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## On hard road to reform, Lebanon needs old friends

Heavily indebted Lebanon has passed a budget seen as a "first step" towards fixing its public finances but still has much to do to steer the country away from crisis. Investors are waiting to see if Gulf Arabs will offer a lifeline that may provide some breathing space. Lebanon has one of the world's heaviest public debt burdens, after years of big budget deficits rooted in waste, corruption, and sectarian politics. The government is now trying to put the public finances on a more sustainable footing with a budget to cut the deficit and a plan to fix the state-run power sector, which bleeds funds while inflicting daily power cuts on Lebanese.

After years of backsliding, the impetus to reform has grown due to economic stagnation and a virtual halt in the flow of dollars into Lebanon's banks from abroad. Lebanon has depended on such flows from its diaspora to finance the current account and the state budget deficits. The government hopes the state budget approved by parliament last week will help confidence by slashing the deficit. An international support group for Lebanon, including donor states, welcomed it as "an urgently needed first step" and urged further reforms.

But many doubt the government can meet its goals. The IMF says this year's deficit is likely to be well above a targeted 7.6 percent of national output - and donors are still waiting to see important parts of the power plan implemented. Foreign reserves, while still large relative to the size of the economy, have been falling. This has led banks to launch a new bid to attract dollars by offering 14 percent a year to depositors willing to lock up large sums for three years - funds which the banks redeposit at the central bank for yet higher returns.

Lebanon's risks are reflected in the cost of insuring its debt, which surged back to the highest of any government in the world after briefly easing in the wake of parliament approving the budget on Friday, signalling an elevated risk of default. "We believe investor malaise towards Lebanon is unlikely to dissipate soon," said Yacov Arnopolin, senior portfolio manager at Pimco, one of the world's biggest asset managers. "While the significantly delayed budget passage is a step in the right direction, much remains to be done before the country is on a sustainable trajectory," he said. "Foreign investors have been spooked by deposit flight."

Bank deposits, which have grown consistently on annual basis since the end of Lebanon's 1975-90 civil war, have dipped by about 1.7 percent in the first five months of 2019. Such outflows are typically seen at times of major shocks, such as the 2005 assassination of former prime minister Rafik al-Hariri, economists say.

### 'Small steps for a big crisis'

The budget included some politically tricky measures, such as a three-year freeze on state hiring. More difficult ideas were torpedoed, such as a public sector pay cut, and critics say the government also avoided the main problem: corruption. The major deficit reduction measures include hiking tax on the interest paid on bank deposits and government bonds, a new import duty, and a plan to cut debt servicing, though it is not yet clear how that will be achieved.

"It is small steps for a big crisis. We have a very difficult situation that needs drastic steps, drastic measures, and none of them are being taken," said Sami Gemayel, head of the Christian Kataeb Party, one of the few parties not represented in Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri's unity government. Deputy Prime Minister Ghassan Hasbani told Reuters the budget was a good step but fell short of what is needed. "I expect the sense of urgency to rise over the next few months and trigger a series of major reform activities," he said. The impact of these would be seen in the 2020 budget.

Hariri hopes reforms will unlock about \$11 billion pledged at a Paris conference last year to finance investment. "We think this budget is a decent start. The deficit will show a contraction," a Western diplomat said, adding: "They need to crack on with implementation of reforms but also with the 2020 budget." A recent IMF mission said this was "an important moment for Lebanon" and the budget and power sector reform plan were "very welcome first steps on a long road". It also noted that deposit inflows had virtually stopped and the central bank's foreign reserves had dropped by around \$6 billion since early 2018 despite continued central bank operations to support them.

Investors now hope that Gulf Arab states, notably Saudi Arabia, may offer financial backing after a delegation of former Lebanese prime ministers met King Salman. One of them, Najib Mikati, said Riyadh would "extend a hand of support". The Saudi ambassador to Lebanon said the visit heralded a promising future for ties which have been strained with the growing power of the Iranian-backed Shi'ite Hezbollah. Saudi Arabia has yet to spell out what it might do. — Reuters

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



Conservative MP and leadership contender Boris Johnson holds up kipper fish in plastic packaging as he speaks at the final Conservative Party leadership election hustings in London on July 17, 2019. — AFP

## Boris' magniloquent tongue reaps political gold

Britain's incoming prime minister once boasted he could recite from heart the first hundred lines of Homer's Iliad in ancient Greek. Boris Johnson has long spun political gold from his magniloquent tongue, using what some linguists and observers describe as bombastic language, esoteric vocabulary, occasional crudity and episodes of bumbling bluster. He confects what appears to be his unrehearsed speech with references ranging from classical antiquity to popular British culture, and courts popularity-enhancing controversy with the occasional use of what are now considered British imperial anachronisms.

"Johnson's use of language is often a mixture of unexpected metaphors or turns of phrase, hyperbole, and nostalgia, very often with a particularly British twist," said Philip Seargeant, senior lecturer in applied linguistics at the Open University. His delivery is important, too, said Seargeant, "because this complements the mock-heroic turn of phrase with a sense of knowing bluster, which imbues a slight sense of comedy into things."

The sheer chutzpah of Johnson's verbal flamboyance has long been one of his hallmarks - from the debating societies of his exclusive boarding school Eton College and later Oxford University to his time as a young newspaper correspondent lampooning the European project from Brussels. As a politician, he honed his alluring oratory as a television show celebrity and as London mayor. He routinely upstaged leaders of the Conservative Party with speeches at its annual conference that enraptured many grass roots members.

A published author, his books include a biography of his hero and British war leader Winston Churchill. He has received £22,917 (\$28,524.79) a month for a weekly column in the Telegraph newspaper. Behind the verbal acrobatics, though, linguists sense a much more calculating use of language. "In the public arena he exploits at least the following masks: the rousing orator, the affable conversa-

ationalist, and the bumbling amateur," said Paul Chilton, professor emeritus of Linguistics at Lancaster University. "He knows what works an audience is to make them laugh, and that this also masks lack of policy, unwillingness to commit, half-truths, untruths and ignorance of facts. They are simply irrelevant in showmanship," said Chilton.

Johnson, 55, will become Britain's next prime minister after winning the leadership of the Conservative Party yesterday. He has said his experience as London mayor and later as foreign secretary show he has good grasp of policy and that accusations of untruthfulness are due to quotes being taken out of context. His use of exaggerated analogies can trigger powerful feelings. He cast Prime Minister Theresa May's failed deal as giving Britain the "status of a colony". And, during the UK's 2016 Brexit referendum campaign he warned that the European Union was following the path of Adolf Hitler and Napoleon by trying to create a European superstate.

Johnson proposed a "full British Brexit" rather than a "bog roll Brexit", in a reference to toilet paper. He also once suggested that then US President Barack Obama, whom he described as "part-Kenyan", as nurturing an ancestral dislike for the British empire. And, he wrote an obscene limerick about President Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey. In 2016, during his time as Britain's foreign secretary, Johnson said that it would take far too long for him to apologize for the "rich thesaurus" of disobliging remarks he'd made about world leaders over the years that were "somehow misconstrued".

### Athens and Rome

Few modern politicians display their admiration for ancient Greece so much as Britain's next prime minister - full name Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson, but commonly referred to as simply 'Boris'. Having studied classics at university, Johnson knows Latin and Ancient Greek. In a recent interview with talkRADIO, he moved, in minutes, from an

### Cruise ships

Nowhere epitomizes the problems as much as Venice, which attracts 30 million tourists a year to its magnificent canals and bridges. As visitor numbers soar, the "Queen of the Adriatic" has seen its own population plummet from about 175,000 after World War Two to just over 50,000. "We used to have a low season when Venetians had time to recuperate. Now it's all year round and Venetians don't get the city for themselves anymore," Cesarato told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Stores like bakeries and greengrocers and community services are vanishing as residents bail out. "I can only just see this getting worse and worse," she added.

UNESCO has threatened to add Venice to its list of endangered heritage sites, partly because of problems with tourism. Calls to ban cruise ships from the centre of Venice intensified this summer after one hulking liner crashed and a second had a narrow miss. Travel experts say cruise ships - along with other day-trippers - exacerbate "overtourism" because passengers increase congestion while spending little locally. Several European destinations including Dubrovnik, Bruges and the Greek island of Santorini, have slapped restrictions on cruise ships. Barcelona's mayor has also promised action.

### Rental apps

Another phenomenon fuelling anti-tourism protests is the rise of short-stay letting platforms such as Airbnb, which are blamed for hiking rents and changing neighborhoods. With landlords able to make far more on holiday lets than traditional leases, housing supply has shrunk and residents have been squeezed out. Paris has about 60,000 homes listed on Airbnb, Amsterdam 19,600, Barcelona 18,300 and Venice 8,500, according to Inside Airbnb, a website highlighting the company's impact on neighborhoods.

Cities including Palma de Mallorca, Paris, Amsterdam and London have introduced or are discussing measures to mitigate the impact. While overtourism is most apparent in Europe's historic cities, the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) warned last month that certain cities in Asia, Latin America and Africa could be at risk if they do not plan ahead.

Nor are problems confined to cities. Thailand closed a beach made famous by the Leonardo DiCaprio movie "The Beach" indefinitely last year to give its ecosystem time to recover. The Philippines' top holiday island of Boracay also shut for a clean-up last year after the president raged it had become a "cesspool" and warned of an environmental disaster. The Indonesian island of Bali and Italian island of Capri both banned single-use plastics this year, the latter threatening hefty fines for violations.

Rochelle Turner, research director at the WTTC, which represents the travel and tourism private sector, said there was a need for more lateral thinking to disperse tourists away from congested spots. She cited an innovative example of a travel company that took Asian tourists to an English farm when the canola fields were ablaze with yellow flowers, creating dramatic vistas. — Reuters

admission of making models of London buses out of cardboard boxes to being a fan of Pericles of Athens, a famous Greek statesman and orator who lived in the 5th century BC.

"His occasional use of classical languages serves several purposes - it's a way of claiming some sort of authority," said Chilton, who also noted Johnson's penchant for classical oratorical techniques. In a speech last week to party members during his party leadership campaign, Johnson brandished a kipper fish and pointed to its freezer packaging to ridicule the absurdity of European Union regulation. EU law does not require such packaging. Johnson supporters have said he was using the fish as an illustration. "The kipper turn at the Conservative leadership hustings is in fact an ancient trick of political rhetoric. Cato the Elder is reported to have brought a bunch of fresh Carthaginian grapes to the Roman Senate to make a political point," said Chilton.

### 'Piccaninnies' and 'letterboxes'

The Johnsonian word-hoard includes phrases that have caused offense, including referring to "piccaninnies" in the Commonwealth, which he later apologized for. He also has described Muslim women in burkas as looking "like letterboxes". When recently asked about the comment during a televised debate, Johnson said he was sorry for any offence caused. As a journalist, his car reviews were drenched in crude sexual metaphors about gearsticks, "chicks" and even an English county "lying back and opening her well-bred legs to be ravished by the Italian stallion" of a Ferrari F430. Such is Johnson's unconventional success that he has been compared to US President Donald Trump. Both have praised each other, though New York-born Johnson uses Twitter much more modestly. "Johnson shares some rhetorical tricks with Trump," attributing comments that might cause offense to other people, said Seargeant. "This builds in a level of, albeit very specious, deniability," he added. — Reuters

## Trump running out of options on Iran

US strategy on Iran is confused and Washington seems increasingly short of options to avoid escalation, with President Donald Trump saying that the choice between war and diplomacy "could go either way". "The Trump administration is facing a fork in the road with respect to its own policy," said Suzanne Maloney, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. The US has "deployed an enormous amount of pressure on Iran" and is "well prepared to keep that in place for as long as they deem it necessary," as long as Washington "can avoid escalation and an eruption of a military conflict," Maloney told AFP.

Asked Monday if the US was leaning towards negotiation or conflict, Trump did little to reassure those who prefer the former in resolving one of the most explosive international crises of the day. "I'm okay either way it goes," said the president, who has imposed punishing sanctions on Tehran while also repeatedly calling for dialogue. Iran has publicly refused to take part in any talks held under pressure and meanwhile, tensions have mounted with drones shot down, oil tankers mysteriously attacked and ships seized by both Tehran and US ally Britain. According to Maloney, Iran is "trying to get a sense of where the red lines for the administration are."

### 'Maximum risks, minimal results'

But so far, despite tough talk - "We are ready for the absolute worst," Trump said Monday - the president has repeatedly emphasized his desire to avoid a new US military intervention, and spoke publicly about having called off strikes on Iran at the last minute in June. "It makes the United States look really feeble," said Barbara Slavin of the Atlantic Council, another think tank in Washington. And this creates a dangerous situation, as incidents could continue in the Gulf, increasing the risk of a slide toward conflict that both sides say they want to avoid.

The problem, according to Slavin, is that Trump painted himself into a corner last year when he pulled the United States out of a 2015 deal with Iran aimed at curbing its nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief. Iranian escalation "was predictable, especially when the decision was made not to issue any new waivers for Iran to export oil. It was predictable that Iran would escalate in response," Slavin said. Many experts and diplomats agree: on the Iranian side, the current tensions aim, above all, to get a little breathing room on the economic front, because US sanctions are pummeling the country's economy. Reinstating some exemptions on oil sales, or at least easing implementation of the ban, would help defuse the crisis. — AFP

### Soaring numbers

Mass tourism took off after World War Two. Last year there were 1.4 billion tourist arrivals, up from 25 million in 1950, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization, with Europe absorbing half of them. The nation generating the most tourists is China - 143 million trips abroad in 2017, while France and Spain receive the most visits - more than 80 million a year. The boom is down to a fast-expanding global middle class combined with a proliferation of budget airlines and online travel agents which have made travel cheap and easy. A Londoner can fly to the south of France for less than 20 pounds (\$25).

"The perception of going on holiday has shifted from being pretty much a privilege to becoming very much a right," said Marina Novelli, professor of tourism and international development at the University of Brighton. She said for decades tourism authorities and ministries have only measured success in terms of increased visitor numbers. "This model no longer works and that's probably the most important message to get out there," she said, warning that overcrowding and "Disneyfication" in some places could destroy the charms that draw tourists in the first place. "If we look at numbers only, and we don't look in more detail at the impact - economic, social, environmental - we risk killing the goose that lays the golden egg."

# Business

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**12** ECB set to start countdown on new eurozone stimulus

**13** Al-Tijari declares a net profit of KD 9.8m for first half of 2019

**14** Fraudsters exploit interest in Libra digital currency



**KUWAIT:** (Left to right), Mohammad Amine, Louis Fourteen Concierge representative, Valerio Murta, Mastercard representative, Ahmad Al-Amir, Assistant General Manager of External Communication at Gulf Bank, and Vikram Issar, General Manager of Consumer Banking.

## Gulf Bank launches Kuwait's first World Elite metal credit card

World Elite offering launched in collaboration with Mastercard

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank in collaboration with Mastercard launched Kuwait's First Metal World Elite Credit Card offering contactless payments. The Invitation-only World Elite metal card allows cardholders to avail of a variety of luxury services both locally and abroad and is now available exclusively to Gulf Bank private banking customers.

The metal card also offers cardholders faster and more convenient shopping experiences. The World Elite card, which is enabled with NFC technology, allows cardholders to make contactless transactions for purchases, removing the hassle of inserting or swiping their cards at check-out.

Commenting on the announcement, Ahmad Al-Amir, Assistant General Manager of External Communications at Gulf Bank, said: "We are pleased to continue working with our partners in the banking industry to offer innovative and creative services, exclusively for Gulf Bank clients. With today's release of the Metal World Elite Mastercard Credit Card, our clients can enjoy access to Gulf Bank Concierge by Louis Fourteen, a tailored concierge service available to clients. Louis Fourteen Concierge would provide its services to our customers domestically and internationally as well. Our Metal World Elite

Mastercard cardholders can also avail other exclusive offers, including access to over 1,200 airport lounges, hotel discounts, car rental offers, travel insurance, and so much more."

He added: "Invited Gulf Bank Private Banking customers can pick up their World Elite Mastercard cards starting today, just in time for travel season. We are very proud to



Ahmad Al-Amir

be able to launch this card, the first of its kind in Kuwait, and to have our valued clients be the first to enjoy all the exclusive benefits it has to offer."

Somu Roy, General Manager for Kuwait and Qatar, Mastercard commented, "The Gulf Bank Metal World Elite card is the first of its kind in Kuwait and provides a range of premium benefits and services to the bank's private customers. The invitation-only metal card is among the most exclusive payment solutions in the market, and we are delighted to partner with Gulf Bank to bring the World Elite offering to their customers. The cardholder experience is further augmented by the addition of contactless payment capabilities, ensuring fast and convenient payments for cardholders on their everyday purchases."

With World Elite Mastercard, cardholders can enjoy a multitude of benefits at home and abroad. Cardholders can enhance their travel experiences with Gulf Bank Concierge by Louis Fourteen lifestyle management services, including global airport concierge service with VIP meet and greet services at over 470 airports. Cardholders can also enjoy a stress-free travel experience, with discounts at hotels that are part of the Marriott Bonvoy Hotels Collection and the Global Hotel



Alliance. While traveling, clients can also enjoy airport lounge access at over 1,200 lounges globally, travel insurance of up to USD 500,000 for themselves and their families, and discounts on car rentals, in addition to discounts on Careem Chauffeur Service.

World Elite Mastercard cardholders can also take advantage of the Gulf Points program, the fastest rewarding program in Kuwait, which gives cardholders valuable points to use for free airline travel, hotel accommodation, and exclusive seasonal travel packages. Locally, clients can avail discounts

at over 150 shopping outlets and over 300 restaurants and coffee shops. For every KD 1 spent with World Elite Mastercard, clients earn three points for local transactions, and 6 points when they spend internationally.

The card also has other features like worldwide acceptance at more than two million ATMs and 33 million point-of-sale terminals, in addition to contactless capabilities which guarantee faster payments on service-enabled POS terminals, as well as cash withdrawal for up to 100 percent of the cardholder's credit limit.

### Mastercard World Elite FAQs

- What is the new product being launched by Gulf Bank?**  
Gulf Bank introduces Kuwait's first contactless Metal World Elite Mastercard Credit Card.
- What makes this card so innovative and different?**  
The Gulf Bank Mastercard World Elite is the first Metal contactless payment card in Kuwait that allows cardholders to avail of a variety of luxury services both locally and abroad. Our clients can enjoy access to Gulf Bank Concierge by Louis Fourteen, a tailored concierge service exclusive for Gulf Bank customers.
- Whom is this card for?**  
This credit card is by invitation-only for exclusive Gulf Bank Private Banking customers.
- What makes the Gulf Bank Mastercard World Elite Special?**  
Gulf Bank's new Mastercard World Elite allows cardholders to unlock luxuries and tailor-made features through the exclusive Louis Fourteen Concierge services.
- What is Louis Fourteen Concierge?**  
Gulf Bank is the first bank in Kuwait to provide concierge service by Louis Fourteen. Our customers can now experience the finest amenities in life both domestically and internationally. This service will be available 24/7/365 to provide cardholders the highest luxuries locally and while traveling. Cardholders can contact Louis Fourteen on a dedicated phone number exclusive for Gulf Bank on +965 2208 5640 locally or +1 312 479 9131 internationally.
- What makes Louis Fourteen concierge stand out from other concierge services?**  
Gulf Bank Concierge by Louis Fourteen goes above and

beyond for cardholders with services such as locating, sourcing, and delivering inaccessible luxury items, whether it's bags, jewels, shoes, automobiles, timepieces or art. Louis Fourteen also can arrange full travel and leisure assistance, including accommodation, commercial and private aviation, yacht charters, chauffeur services and tailor-made itineraries for specific travel requirements. Louis Fourteen can even expedite waitlists at world-renowned restaurants, coordinating private dining experiences by world-class Michelin-Star Chefs, and gain cardholders access to an array of events in sports, fashion, automotive, art, and more.

**7. What hotel benefits can I expect from Mastercard World Elite?**

- Cardholders can enjoy a stress-free travel experience, with exclusive offers and upgrades at hotels all around the world.
- Marriott Bonvoy Hotels Collection is now offering World Elite cardholders a promotion of buy 2 get 1 or buy 4 and get 2 free hotel nights at participating hotels and resorts.
- With Global Hotel Alliance, Mastercard World Elite cardholders are instantly upgraded to DISCOVERY Black-level membership.



**8. What travel benefits can I expect from Mastercard World Elite?**

- Our World Elite Mastercard cardholders can also avail a wide selection of exclusive travel offers, including access to over 1,200 airport lounges, car rental offers, travel insurance, and so much more.
- Our cardholders will receive a complimentary upgrade to Gold tier in Qatar Airways Privilege Club.
- World Elite cardholders can enjoy complimentary worldwide lounge access at over 1200 airport lounges for you and one guest.
- World Elite cardholders will receive savings of 15 percent off on a VIP meet & greet service at over 470 airports globally with Global Airport Concierge.
- This credit card offers travel insurance coverage of up to \$500,000 for the cardholder and their family.
- World Elite cardholders will also receive discounts with both Avis and Hertz.
- Through Avis, cardholders will get up to 25 percent discount and a complimentary upgrade with every rental worldwide. Cardholders will also get a 10 percent discount on premium chauffeur drive services.
- Through Hertz, cardholders will get up to 15 percent discount and a Guaranteed one car class upgrade.

**9. Is this card eligible for Gulf Points?**

World Elite Mastercard cardholders can also take advantage of the Gulf Points program, the fastest rewarding program in Kuwait, which gives cardholders valuable points to use for free airline travel, hotel accommodation, and exclusive seasonal travel packages. For every KD 1 spent with World Elite Mastercard, clients earn 3 points for local transactions, and 6 points when they spend internationally.

**10. Does this card offer local benefits?**

World Elite Mastercard cardholders can avail discounts at over 150 different local merchants and over 300 different local cafes and restaurants around Kuwait.

### IMF downgrades world growth, warns of 'precarious' 2020

**WASHINGTON:** Global trade tensions and continued uncertainty are sapping the strength of the world economy, which faces a "precarious" 2020, the International Monetary Fund warned yesterday. Trade conflicts are undercutting investment, and the IMF urged countries not to use tariffs in place of negotiations. In its quarterly update of its World Economic Outlook the IMF trimmed the global forecast issued in April by 0.1 this year and next, with growth expected to hit 3.2 percent in 2019 and 3.5 percent in 2020.

But the report sounded the alarm, saying things could easily go wrong. "The projected growth pickup in 2020 is precarious" and presumes there will be "stabilization in currently stressed emerging market and developing economies and progress toward resolving trade policy differences," the IMF said. However, the United States, which is at the center of most of the trade tensions, saw one of the rare upgrades in the report, as it got a short-term boost from growth in the early part of the year. The IMF raised the US GDP forecast by three-tenths to 2.6 percent for 2019, but weakening demand, in part due to the trade conflicts and tariffs, points to "slowing momentum over the rest of the year."

The US economy is then expected to slow to 1.9 percent in 2020. China, which is the main target of US trade actions, was already experiencing a slowdown. But "the negative effects of escalating tariffs and weakening external demand have added pressure," the report said. The report downgraded Chinese growth by a tenth this year and next, to 6.2 percent and 6.0 percent. The latest forecast was once again full of downgrades, with small downward revisions for Germany and Japan, but much larger cuts for Brazil, Mexico, Russia, India and South Africa—countries that were the engine for global growth in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis.—AFP

## Business

# ECB set to start countdown on new eurozone stimulus

## Draghi may hint at a September rate cut tomorrow

**FRANKFURT MAIN:** The European Central Bank is likely to point tomorrow to an interest rate cut in September, analysts say, although recent hints towards bucking up sluggish growth and inflation could even mean a move this week.

Rare high expectations for the summer gathering follow weeks in which the ECB itself has talked up the possibility of action. With the US Federal Reserve expected to slash rates, Frankfurt had to "break the perception on markets that the ECB was cornered and had no more instruments", a source familiar with monetary policy discussions told AFP.

In June, ECB president Mario Draghi made clear that the threshold for new action was an "absence of improvement" in the inflation outlook, rather than worsening economic conditions.

While highlighting a resilient domestic economy, members at the ECB governing council table in Frankfurt will continue eyeing threats from abroad. They include US-led protectionism, the danger of a no-deal Brexit, weakness in emerging markets and geopolitical risks—such as growing tensions with Iran around key Gulf shipping routes. Surveys have for months pointed to a slowdown in the second and

third quarters from the 0.4 percent growth booked in January-March.

Weaker economic expansion in turn threatens the central bank's inflation target of just below 2.0 percent. Inflation came in at 1.3 percent in June.

This week, "it seems as if the ECB will try to talk a very final talk before walking the walk" of rate cuts or even more drastic measures at its September meeting, ING economist Carsten Brzeski said.

### Further below zero

Pictet Wealth Management strategist Frederik Ducrozet said "the most natural path" for central bankers would be opening their "forward guidance" policy statement to the possibility of lower rates.

In June, the ECB said rates will "remain at their present levels at least through the first half of 2020". If and when it comes, most observers expect a cut of 0.1 percentage points, taking the amount lenders must pay on their deposits with the central bank to 0.5 percent. Negative rates are designed to prod the financial system into lending and investing cash in the real economy, rather than parking it safely with the central bank or in government debt.

Banks have long complained of the neg-

ative rate burden, saying it undermines their business model.

Such harm could be salvaged with a "tiering" system to exempt some deposits from the harshest negative rate, as central banks in Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark and Japan have introduced, Ducrozet said. Some analysts argue that the ECB could again unsheathe its other principal crisis-fighting weapon, mass "quantitative easing" (QE) purchases of government and corporate bonds, as early as September.

Net bond purchases under the scheme were brought to an end in December, although the central bank continues to reinvest the proceeds of its bond holdings.

### 'Proactively responding'

Comments from some senior ECB policymakers could even hint at sooner action. "It is essential that a central bank shows consistency in its monetary policy decisions by proactively responding to shocks" that could distance it from its inflation target, recently-installed chief economist Philip Lane said in early July. Pictet's Ducrozet highlighted that "there is no obvious justification for waiting until September"—apart from an ECB track record of action founded on the economic forecasts its staff issues



**FRANKFURT AM:** Indications that the flow of lending could be ebbing will be closely studied by ECB policymakers ahead of their monetary policy meeting tomorrow. — AFP

each quarter.

While the US-EU trade confrontation remains on ice for now, knock-on effects from Washington's battle with China in particular continue to weigh on eurozone industry.

Along with other factors, that has prompted the ECB to repeat that "risks sur-

rounding the euro area growth outlook remain tilted to the downside". With the Italian economist set to hand the keys to the ECB to Christine Lagarde on October 31, "the risk... remains that Mario Draghi will try to surprise financial markets" before his departure, ING's Brzeski said. "It would not be the first time." — Reuters

## Debate rages over recession in Mexico

**MEXICO CITY:** Mexico's economy, the 2nd largest in Latin America, has hit a rough patch, weighed down by dwindling business confidence and an industrial slump. But ahead of GDP data for the second quarter due on July 31, a debate has raged over whether all that gloom adds up to a recession.

Several banks say definitely yes - an assessment that could call into question the ability of President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's eight-month-old government to deliver on his promises of development and improved fortunes for the country's poor. "We estimate GDP will also contract in the second quarter, putting Mexico in a technical recession, two consecutive quarters of negative growth," Bank of America Merrill Lynch said in a client note in late June.

### The government strongly disagrees.

"There has been a slowdown on a global level," said Finance Minister Arturo Herrera in his first press conference earlier this month, after his predecessor abruptly resigned. "But we are very, very far from thinking that we are close to a recession." In theory, defining whether there is a recession in Mexico could decide whether policymakers need to take action.

"If the government thinks there is a danger of recession, it could implement countercyclical measures to boost the economy a bit, or the Bank of Mexico could cut the interest rate, said Marco Ovejedo, head of Latin America economics research at Barclays. While Lopez Obrador has raised eyebrows by saying "I've got other numbers" when presented with negative economic news, even he does not pretend Mexico is enjoying strong growth.

The split between the government and private sector economists over the "R word" appears to focus more on how to define that highly charged term than any disagreement over substantive data.

Those who are predicting recession cite the benchmark of two consecutive quarters of eco-



**A woman buys vegetables at a market stall in Mexico City. Mexico's economy, the 2nd largest in Latin America, has hit a rough patch, weighed down by dwindling business confidence and an industrial slump. — Reuters**

nomic contraction - and say the preliminary GDP figures for April-June will most likely confirm that. However, despite being commonly used by private economists around the world, not all governments use that measure. The highly respected Cambridge, Massachusetts-based US National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) for example, looks at a more open-ended "significant decline in economic activity spread across the economy, lasting more than a few months."

Likewise, a senior official at Mexico's Finance Ministry, who asked not to be named, said for the ministry two quarters of successive contraction do not necessarily signal a recession. The ministry takes more factors into account, the official said, although it has not stated what those factors are.

Jonathan Heath, a former HSBC chief economist appointed to the central bank board by Lopez Obrador's government has also pushed back against the "two quarters" definition, which he recently called a "rule of thumb for defining a recession" but "no guarantee." In a move that could make the debate less political in the future, Mexico's statistics agency INEGI last month announced the creation of a group of experts, including Heath, who will look at the way other countries measure economic cycles.

The agency said the group would decide by next year whether Mexico should create a Business Cycle Dating Committee, after studying the experience of similar committees used by the NBER, the Euro Zone, Brazil and Canada to help identify recessions.

### Worst since 2009 crisis

Regardless of what constitutes a recession, the government's own numbers make sobering reading. The economy shrank 0.2 percent in the first quarter versus the previous three month period, in seasonally-adjusted terms, and was flat in the fourth quarter of 2018.

Pollyanna De Lima, economist and author of the IHS Markit Mexico Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index report, said that in the first quarter Mexico's manufacturing sector was at its weakest since the series began in 2011. Business sentiment faded "to one of the lowest levels seen in the survey history," said De Lima. The slowdown has matched a broader, global trend, that has caused several other Latin American economies to slash growth forecasts. The region's largest economy, Brazil, has also been teetering on the edge of a recession. It contracted in the first quarter of the year and figures suggest it barely recovered at all in the second. — Reuters

## Rise in India govt borrowing can squeeze corporate sector: RBI's Acharya

**MUMBAI/BENGALURU:** An increase in government borrowing runs the risk of flooding the debt market, and puts upward pressure on interest rates, making it more expensive for companies to borrow, said outgoing Reserve Bank of India Deputy Governor Viral Acharya.

In a lecture published on the Federal Bank website late on Monday, Acharya said India's borrowing relative to its output has ranged from 67 percent to 85 percent since 2000 and has outpaced many emerging markets including China. "As more government debt floods markets, the relative safety and liquidity premium attached by investors to high-rated corporate bonds diminishes, raising the cost of borrowing especially for AAA-rated borrowers and making it relatively less sensitive to policy rate cuts," Acharya said.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) cut the repo rate to 5.75 percent on June 6, its third cut in 2019, while also changing its policy stance to "accommodative," after data showed the economy growing at its slowest in over four years.

Acharya is set to leave the central bank, six months before the scheduled end of his term in office. Acharya, who is a professor with the New York University's Stern School of Business, cited personal reasons for the departure. India should cut back on subsidies and programs that are not delivering long-term growth and divest more of its public sector holdings, Acharya said.

"The much-needed land, labor and agricultural reforms could be undertaken, all of which can help crowd-in private sector growth," Acharya said. There could be efficiency gains if there are more private investors playing an effective role in the governance of public sector enterprises, he added.

### NBFC liquidity crunch

Acharya also noted that high, long-term government borrowing also impacts India's non-banking finance companies (NBFCs), which are currently facing a severe liquidity crunch following the collapse of the Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services (IL&FS) last year.

Regulators identified a surge in asset liability mismatches as one of the main drivers behind NBFCs' liquidity woes. NBFCs have been forced to raise short-term debt to fund long-term loans to home buyers or developers as there is relatively less appetite for longer-term debt in the Indian market.

"The ability and willingness of NBFCs to borrow long-term comes down when government borrowing increases: not only does their total debt come down in response, but they rely more and more on short-term paper," Acharya said, adding that it risks making the financial sector more fragile. — Reuters

## EXCHANGE RATES

### AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

#### EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar/Transfer	304.600
Euro	342.680
Sterling Pound	381.050
Canadian dollar	232.960
Turkish Lira	54.010
Swiss Franc	311.130
US Dollar Buying	297.250

#### ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.817
Indian Rupees	4.410
Pakistani Rupees	1.930
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.728
Nepali Rupees	2.755
Singapore Dollar	224.300
Hongkong Dollar	38.994
Bangladesh Taka	3.591
Philippine Peso	5.950
Thai Bhat	9.933
Malaysian Ringgit	77.903

#### GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.281
Qatari Riyal	83.716
Omani Riyal	791.683
Bahraini Dinar	809.350
UAE Dirham	82.986

#### ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.650
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Egyptian Pound - Transfer	18.354
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.223
Tunisian Dinar	109.960
Jordanian Dinar	430.380
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.203
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.404

### DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	304.240
Canadian Dollar	232.290
Sterling Pound	380.530
Euro	342.105
Swiss Frank	301.030
Bahrain Dinar	809.085
UAE Dirhams	83.235
Qatari Riyals	84.475
Saudi Riyals	82.025
Jordanian Dinar	430.395
Egyptian Pound	18.335
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.728
Indian Rupees	4.412
Pakistani Rupees	1.894
Bangladesh Taka	3.603
Philippines Peso	5.948
Cyprus pound	18.100
Japanese Yen	3.810
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.763
Malaysian Ringgit	74.750
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.665

Thai Bhat	10.825
Turkish Lira	53.900
Singapore dollars	223.412

### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
British Pound	0.372007	0.385907
Czech Korune	0.005313	0.014613
Danish Krone	0.041549	0.046549
Euro	0.333125	0.346825
Georgian Lari	0.104902	0.104902
Hungarian	0.000955	0.001145
Norwegian Krone	0.031152	0.036352
Romanian Leu	0.065154	0.072004
Russian ruble	0.004810	0.004810
Slovakia	0.009109	0.019109
Slovenia	0.028202	0.033202
Swedish Krona	0.302920	0.313920
Swiss Franc		
Australian Dollar	0.205338	0.217338
New Zealand Dollar	0.198616	0.208116
Canadian Dollar		0.235287
US Dollars	0.300500	0.305800
US Dollars Mint	0.301000	0.305800
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003002	0.003803

Chinese Yuan	0.042736	0.046236
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036918	0.039668
Indian Rupee	0.003890	0.004662
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002729	0.002909
Korean Won	0.000248	0.000263
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070122	0.076122
Nepalese Rupee	0.002680	0.003020
Pakistani Rupee	0.001341	0.002111
Philippine Peso	0.006106	0.006406
Singapore Dollar	0.217825	0.227825
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001363	0.001933
Taiwan	0.009672	0.009852
Thai Bhat	0.009522	0.010072
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.00013

Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.801809	0.809863
Egyptian Pound	0.018649	0.022009
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000210	0.000270
Jordanian Dinar	0.424715	0.433715
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000161	0.000251
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021396	0.045396
Omani Riyal	0.786040	0.793936
Qatar Riyal	0.083010	0.083440
Saudi Riyal	0.080140	0.081440
Syrian Pound	0.001291	0.001511
Tunisian Dinar	0.102196	0.110196
Turkish Lira	0.046598	0.056443
UAE Dirhams	0.082299	0.083126
Yemeni Riyal	0.000990	0.001070

Business

# Al-Tijari declares a net profit of KD 9.8m for first half of 2019

## Commercial Bank witnesses a healthy growth in key areas of business and revenue

**KUWAIT:** Commercial Bank of Kuwait announced a net profit of KD 9.8 million for the first half of 2019 compared to KD 6.4 million for the same period of last year. The operating profit before provision was KD 58.3 million compared to KD 54.1 million for the 1st half of 2018, recorded a growth of 7.8 percent. The bank witnessed a healthy growth in the key areas of business and revenue. Loans increased by 9 percent to reach KD 2,455.0 million and investment securities increased by 2.0 percent to reach KD 560.0 million. Operating income at KD 84.0 million grew by 8 percent, interest income by 4.7 percent, fee income by 4.0 percent and foreign exchange income by 33.0 percent.

Sheikh Ahmad Duaij Al-Sabah, the Bank's Chairman, commented that the bank continues to focus on asset quality, digitalization, operational

efficiency and customer service. The operating profit for the 1st half of 2019 was KD 58.3 million and the bank prudently allocated a portion of it to strengthen its pool of available provision. The total provisions held with the Bank against its credit portfolio as at the end of the 30th June 2019 were KD 179.5 million.

Sheikh Ahmad added that during the last one year the net growth in loans was more than KD 300 million, the momentum will continue and the Bank will keep on providing funding to mega projects of national importance as well as to local business groups. Furthermore, the bank will continue its prudent policy of maintaining a quality assets portfolio during 2019 and beyond, in order to meet the challenges of the volatile economic and geopolitical situation in the region.

Sheikh Ahmad further added that the bank's

capital adequacy ratio at the end of June 2019 was 18.1 percent, the leverage ratio at 11.4 percent, net stable funding ratio at 107.2 percent and liquidity coverage ratio at 182.0 percent comfortably exceeded the regulatory requirement set by the Central Bank of Kuwait. He pointed that the bank's strong financial indicators are due to its prudent policy of cleaning its loan portfolio by writing off irregular loans but taking all the necessary steps to protect the interests of the Bank. The NPL ratio at zero is a clear demonstration of this strategy.

Sheikh Ahmad went on to add that the digitalization of processes to enhance customer experience at various touch points and investment in technology and human capital to exceed customer expectations is continuing at a rapid pace. New initiatives were taken during second

quarter of the year and new features like, but not limited to, change transfers limit via mobile and online banking, change security questions/answers via mobile and online banking, KNET mobile (OTP) amendment via mobile and online banking, user ID retrieval via CBK mobile and online banking, user ID unlock on CBK mobile and online banking and enabled T-Pay service for business accounts. Moreover, in a continuous effort towards Kuwaitization, the bank has increased the Kuwaitization ratio to 75.7 percent by June 2019.

Sheikh Ahmad took the opportunity to thank the bank's shareholders, valued customers, staff and regulatory authorities, emphasizing that the bank's management continues to implement all the required policies for safeguarding the interest of all stakeholders.



Sheikh Ahmad Duaij Al-Sabah



SHANGHAI: People take pictures during an opening ceremony of the Shanghai Stock Exchange's Sci-Tech Innovation Board in Shanghai on Monday. Trading began on Monday on a new Nasdaq-style technology board in Shanghai that represents one of China's most significant market reforms, and a potential weapon in its growing tech rivalry with the United States. — AFP

## Huawei unit cuts more than 600 jobs following US sanctions

**SHANGHAI:** Chinese telecom giant Huawei said yesterday that more than 600 jobs would be lost at a US unit as a result of "curtailment of business operations" caused by Washington's sanctions on the firm and 68 of its subsidiaries. The layoffs will come at the Chinese company's US-based research and development arm, Futurewei Technologies, which is incorporated in Texas, an email statement from Huawei said.

Futurewei employs more than 750 people, according to Bloomberg's corporate information database.

"Decisions like this are never easy to make. Eligible employees will be offered severance packages, including both pay and benefits," the statement said. The Trump

administration has put Huawei on its so-called Entity List, which means US companies need a license to supply it with US technology.

Huawei—a leader in next-generation 5G wireless technology—remains barred from developing 5G networks in the United States, and the Trump administration is trying to convince its allies to do the same. Washington accuses Huawei of working directly with the Chinese government, a claim the company denies. After Donald Trump met China's Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Osaka last month, the US president said he would ease the punitive measures on Huawei as long as equipment sold to it did not pose any risk to national security.

The Washington Post reported this week that Huawei secretly helped North Korea build and maintain the country's commercial wireless network. The Post, citing internal documents it obtained and people familiar with the arrangement, said Huawei has partnered with a Chinese state-owned firm Panda International Information Technology on projects in North Korea over at least eight years. By doing so Huawei, which has used US technology in its components, may have violated US controls on exports to the isolated regime in Pyongyang. — AFP

## US sanctions on Chinese oil trader 'illegal': Beijing

**BEIJING:** China yesterday called US sanctions against Chinese companies "illegal", a day after US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced he was putting a leading oil importer on a blacklist.

Pompeo said Monday that the US was imposing sanctions on Zhuhai Zhenrong and its chief executive Li Youmin as part of a "maximum pressure campaign" for trading in Iranian crude oil.

"They violated US law by accepting crude oil," he said. But Beijing said yesterday it has "consistently and resolutely opposed unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States," slamming the sanctions as "illegal". "The Chinese side has expressed firm opposition and strong

condemnation of the relevant US authorities that have sanctioned Chinese enterprises," said foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying at a regular press briefing.

"The Chinese side has repeatedly stressed that energy cooperation between Iran and the international community, which includes China, falls within the framework of international law and is reasonable and legitimate, and must be respected and protected." Pompeo's announcement over the sanctions was the latest move by Washington to ratchet up economic pressure on Tehran over its alleged military activities in the Middle East and its nuclear program by taking aim at business partners.

But Hua said the US was disregarding "the legitimate rights and interests of all parties". Between them, Zhuhai Zhenrong and Chinese state refiner Sinopec are responsible for nearly all the Iranian crude that China imports.

"We strongly urge the US to immediately correct wrong practices and stop illegal sanctions against Chinese companies and individuals," said Hua. "China will take all necessary measures to firmly safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of its enterprises and individuals." — AFP

## Sterling prepares for rocky ride as Johnson wins race to be PM

**LONDON:** Sterling, already trading near its lowest in two years, was little moved yesterday after Boris Johnson won the contest to be Britain's new prime minister, as investors worried whether he would lead Britain towards a no-deal Brexit. The pound gradually recovered from early losses and edged back into positive territory after Johnson won. But the move was minimal and analysts said it reflected a mini relief-rally following weeks of losses as markets priced in his victory.

Attention now turns to how many ministers opposed to Johnson's tough line on Brexit will resign in coming days, the make-up of his cabinet and the tone of initial negotiations between the man who was the face of the 2016 Brexit campaign and Brussels.

Johnson has said Britain will leave the EU on the Oct. 31 deadline even if no transitional arrangements are in place. That has panicked investors who fear a no-deal Brexit will cause significant damage to Britain's economy. Johnson's belligerent tone has taken sterling 2% lower against the

dollar this month, and it has depreciated in 11 weeks out of the past 12.

"It will be a very Brexiteer cabinet and markets are set up for that. We have roughly 100 days until Oct. 31 to sort this out, it seems unlikely," said David Zahn, head of global fixed income at Franklin Templeton. "What we have seen from the new European (Commission) head is that nothing will be changed, it seems like we are headed towards a no-deal Brexit. If both leaders are so entrenched is there much chance of an extension? This materially increases the no-deal Brexit chances, and sterling is pricing this."

Two junior ministers have already quit over Johnson's plans, and finance minister Philip Hammond and justice minister David Gauke have both said they plan to resign before they are sacked. The pound traded at \$1.2472, down 0.1 percent on the day. Sterling hit a 27-month low of \$1.2382 last week. Against the euro it was down 0.2 percent at 89.640 pence.

Rallying British stock markets were little moved by news of Johnson's victory, while British gilt yields rose marginally after the result but remained near three-week lows. Recent weeks have seen investors sharply cut back on sterling positioning, with short positions growing to a 10-month high in the latest week, Commodity Futures Trading Commission data showed. "(Sterling) is a 'sell on rallies', 100 percent. Regardless of how you slice the cake, we will either end up with a no-deal (Brexit) or a messy general election," said Stephen Gallo, head of European FX strategy at BMO Capital Markets. — Reuters

## 737 MAX crisis hangs over Boeing's results

**NEW YORK:** Boeing could report its biggest loss ever today, sagging under the weight of \$5.6 billion in costs so far due to the crisis surrounding the 737 MAX aircraft. The top-selling plane has been grounded worldwide since March 13 following a second devastating crash. The Ethiopian Airlines catastrophe that killed 157 passengers and crew, came on the heels of a Lion Air crash last fall killing 189 people.

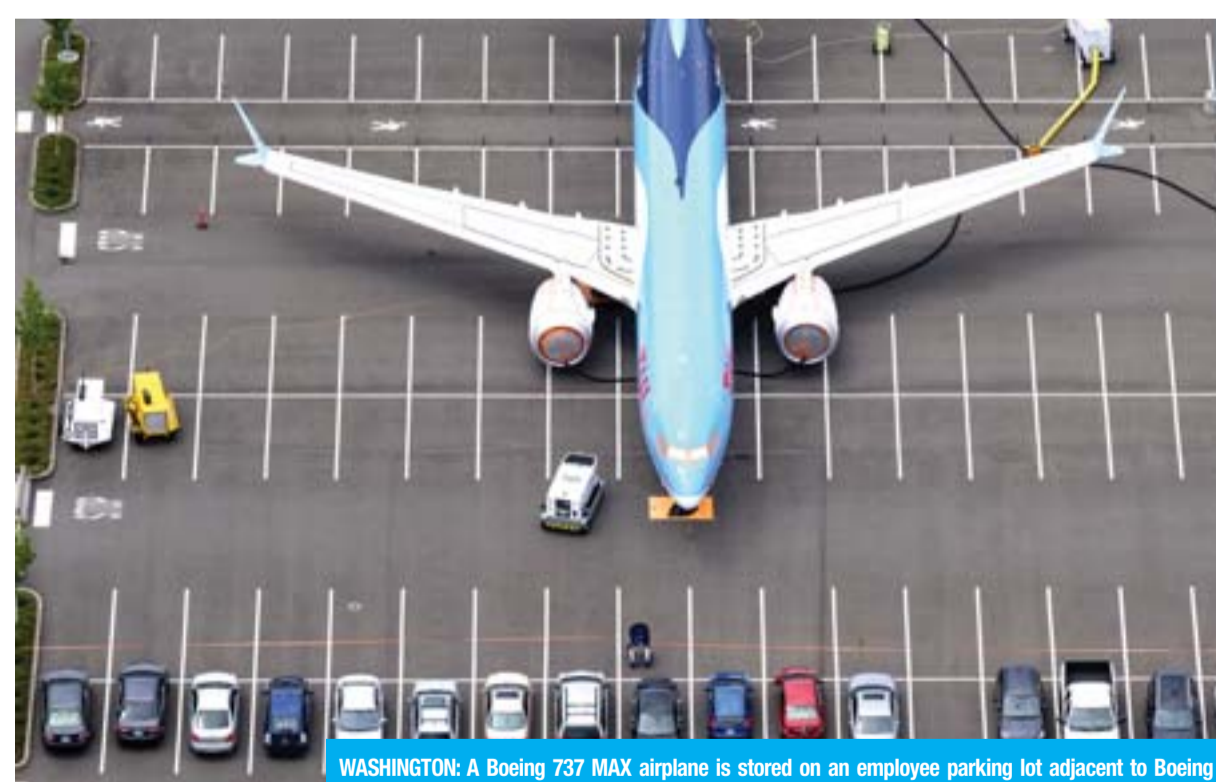
### How does the MAX crisis affect the bottom line?

Boeing's second-quarter results are likely to be ugly after the aerospace giant last week announced it would set aside \$5.6 billion (\$4.9 billion after taxes) to compensate airlines for canceled flights and the delay in plane deliveries. That move could result in a net loss of more than \$3 billion for the second quarter, judging from analyst estimates on S&P Capital IQ. Boeing's revenues are projected to be \$19.2 billion, a drop of more than 25 percent compared with the same period of last year, hit by the halt to deliveries of the MAX.

### What is the total cost of MAX crisis?

Costs from the MAX crisis so far amount to about \$8 billion, but the total hit will not be known for some time. The largest hit (\$5.6 billion) is for compensation to Boeing customers whose operations were impacted by the grounding of the planes, forcing the airlines to cancel flights into the fall.

Boeing said last week the compensation could come in "various forms of economic value," meaning it could pay airlines in rebates on future plane orders or for maintenance and not only in cash. The manufacturer also has recognized \$2.7 billion in costs due to cutting its production of the 737 MAX to 42 a month from 52. But the company has maintained employment levels in spite of the diminished output, resulting in lower profit margins.



WASHINGTON: A Boeing 737 MAX airplane is stored on an employee parking lot adjacent to Boeing Field in Seattle, Washington. Boeing could report its biggest loss ever today, sagging under the weight of \$5.6 billion in costs so far due to the crisis surrounding the 737 MAX aircraft. — AFP

### Will there be other costs?

Certainly. Boeing faces numerous lawsuits filed by families of the victims of the two crashes. The company announced plans to donate \$100 million to victims and communities affected by the accidents, but that will not be the end of the story.

It also could potentially face regulatory penalties, including from a criminal investigation by the US Justice Department. Ratings agencies Moody's and Fitch on Monday lowered the outlook on Boeing debt to "negative," citing the MAX situation, which Fitch said would make Boeing's reputational standing a "watch item for the next year or more."

### What is the status of the investigations?

Aviation regulators in multiple countries continue to investigate the causes of the Ethiopian Airlines and Lion Air crashes.

US criminal investigators are probing Boeing's decisions about a flight handling system that has been linked to both crashes, known as the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System or MCAS.

They are looking into why Boeing did not develop specific training for pilots on the MCAS, and why a "disagree light" system meant to signal a problem in the system was sold as a supplemental feature instead of an essential safety item, a source told AFP. — AFP

## Apple in talks to buy Intel smartphone chip unit

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Apple is in talks to buy Intel's smartphone modem chip unit, a move that would help the iPhone maker control a key component, the Wall Street Journal reported on Monday.

The Journal cited unnamed people familiar with the matter as saying the deal would cover Intel patents and staff valued at a billion dollars, but that it might not come together.

Apple has been investing in its own mobile chips to ramp up performance and features in its devices and reduce its dependence on Qualcomm. Intel earlier this year announced it was abandoning efforts to compete with modem chips for smartphones syched to new-generation "5G" networks.

Intel made the revelation a day after Apple and Southern-California based Qualcomm said they agreed to "dismiss all litigation" against each other worldwide in what had been a sprawling battle over royalty payments. The last-minute settlement cut short a courtroom clash between the tech giants just as it was getting underway in California.

For two years, the companies had fought a multi-front brawl that could have required Qualcomm to pay billions. At the heart of the battle were the royalties Qualcomm charges for its patented chips, which enable smartphones to connect to mobile networks. Apple accused Qualcomm, which holds the most patents for chips, of taking advantage of its dominant position to charge exorbitant amounts for its chips or access to its patents. Qualcomm denied the allegations and accused Apple of abusing its position and of taking legal action to negotiate prices down.

Several hours after the deal was announced, Intel said it was withdrawing from the 5G smartphone modem business, without indicating whether its decision was a cause or consequence of the agreement its rival signed with Apple. — AFP

## Business

# Fraudsters exploit interest in Libra digital currency

## Fake Libra offerings pop up on Facebook and Instagram

SAN FRANCISCO: Fraudsters are out to cash in on interest in Facebook-backed digital currency Libra, hawking bogus buying opportunities at online venues including the social network itself.

Libra is to launch next year, overseen by an association based in Europe, but as with other hot topics it has been seized on by nefarious characters intent on tricking people with false accounts, pages, and information. Fake Libra opportunities or offerings have popped up on Facebook's main social network and its image-centric online community Instagram, according to a report Monday in the Washington Post.

A number of Libra-themed deceptive accounts were removed from the Facebook platform after the California-based company was alerted by the Post, according to the publication.

Some of the fake accounts used the official Facebook logo and photos of chief executive Mark Zuckerberg. "Facebook removes ads and Pages that violate our policies when we become aware of them, and we are constantly working to improve detection of scams on our platforms," the internet titan said in response to an AFP inquiry.

The Libra Association was reported to be working with Facebook to get deceptive pages about the currency deleted. Criminals routinely seize on hot topics to try to dupe people online, from natural disasters and major tragedies to celebrity news.

A buylibracoins.com website accessible Monday offered a fake chance to buy the digital currency, encouraging potential victims to share contact details of friends in a referral program.

Fraudsters were said to be setting also hunting for victims at other online venues such as Twitter and YouTube.

### Financial upheaval?

The rise of fake Libra offerings comes as Facebook tries to dispel worries and build trust in what it hopes will be a global currency that gives life-changing financial tools to people around the world. G7 finance ministers and central bankers last week dealt a blow to Facebook's planned new cryptocurrency Libra, issuing a barrage of warnings about its dangers for the global economy at a two-day meeting outside Paris. Facebook in June unveiled its plans for Libra in an announcement greeted with concern by governments and critics of the social network behemoth, whose reputation has already been tarnished by its role in spreading fake information and extremist videos.

Ministers from the Group of Seven (G7) major global economies "agreed that projects such as Libra may affect monetary sovereignty and the functioning of the international monetary system," France, the current G7 chair, said in a statement. It said projects like Libra with a "global and potentially systemic footprint... raise serious regulatory and systemic concerns, as well as wider policy issues, which both need to be addressed before such projects can be implemented."

US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said his concerns about Libra and other cryptocurrencies—which he had made clear in White House news conference this month—were shared by G7 counterparts. Libra is widely regarded as a challenger to dominant global player bit-



Small toy figures are seen on representations of virtual currency in front of the Libra logo in this illustration picture.— Reuters

coin. Expected to launch in the first half of 2020, Libra is designed to be backed by a basket of currency assets to avoid the wild swings of bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies.—AFP

## Fees help UBS beat low rates squeeze

ZURICH: Swiss banking giant UBS beat analyst expectations by posting a small increase in net earnings, with a rise in fees helping balance out a reduction in interest income.

The one percent increase in second quarter net profits to \$1.39 billion (1.24 billion euros) was accompanied by a similar dip in operating income to \$7.53 billion euros. The results easily beat the analyst consensus of \$991 million in profit on \$7.1 million in revenue established by Swiss financial news agency AWP. Chief executive Sergio Ermotti said the bank "achieved the highest second quarter net profit since 2010."

However operating profit at its global wealth management and investment bank dropped, although it increased in the asset management and personal and corporate banking divisions. Net interest income, what a bank earns from traditional lending operations, fell from both the same quarter last year and the first three months of the year, to \$1.03 billion. The ultra-low or even negative interest rates, like in Switzerland, that central banks have put into place to boost economic



activity have made it difficult for banks to earn money from lending, and many including UBS have shifted to rely more on fees to generate revenue.

UBS saw its net fee and commission income rise to \$4.47 billion. "Once again we showed the strength of our business model and its ability to generate competitive returns even with market conditions far from last year's," said Ermotti. Going forward, the bank noted both political uncertainties and geopol-

itical tensions, as well as central banks having indicated they plan to loosen monetary policy.

"A sharp drop in interest rates and expected rate cuts will continue to adversely affect net interest income compared with last year," it warned, while saying diversification as well as income from invested assets should help mitigate the effects.

UBS shares were up 2 percent in midday trading, while the Swiss market index was up 0.4 percent overall.— AFP

## Kenya's finance minister denies corruption charges

NAIROBI: Kenya's Finance Minister Henry Rotich pleaded not guilty yesterday to corruption charges over the award of two dam tenders, a day after his detention in an unprecedented move against a sitting minister in a country notorious for graft. Rotich, who spent the night in a police cell, is accused alongside other senior officials of conspiring to defraud the public, among other charges.

Dressed in a grey pinstripe suit and yellow tie, Rotich denied the charges before a packed court in Nairobi. Not all the 28 accused were in court, but all the others present also pleaded not guilty. The case stems from an investigation into the misuse of funds in two dam projects planned in western Kenya, overseen by Italian construction company CMC Di Ravenna.

Kenya also charged a director of the company, Paolo Porcelli, in absentia with conspiracy to defraud the country. Kenya will seek his extradition from Italy, director of public prosecutions Noordin Haji said yesterday. "We will also issue an international arrest warrant," Haji told Reuters, adding that company had not complied with a request to give statements to Kenyan authorities, he said.

CMC di Ravenna denied wrongdoing on Monday. "CMC is certain of the correctness of the work of the company and its representatives," it said in a statement, adding it had not been informed of any official communication from Kenyan authorities. Officials of the company were not available for comment yesterday.

The two dams were budgeted to cost 46 billion shillings (\$446 million) but the treasury borrowed 63 billion instead, Haji said on Monday, needlessly ratch-

eting up Kenya's ballooning public debt, which stands at around 55% of GDP.

### Ethnic divisions

The shilling has lost 0.5 percent against the dollar since Rotich was charged. It traded at 103.65 yesterday, reflecting market unease about the apparent vacuum at the top of the finance ministry. Rotich has not been fired on formally resigned, and no replacement has been announced. "This has created a power vacuum in Treasury, albeit temporarily," a senior currency trader told Reuters.

Hasnain Malik, managing director of frontier markets equity strategy at London-based firm Tellimer, said Rotich's arrest laid bare splits within the ruling Jubilee coalition. The coalition was "openly divided" between Kikuyu supporters of President Uhuru Kenyatta and Kalenjin supporters of Vice President William Ruto, he said. Rotich is a Kalenjin.

Those divisions could curtail economic growth, with a cap on interest rates having already substantially shrunk credit to the private sector, he said. "Kenyan growth is more reliant on effective public project spending because of the lending rate cap. A divided government is a problem," he said. "Investors should worry that this arrest is a reflection of those divisions." Ruto has made clear he expects the coalition's nomination for the presidency in the 2022 elections, when Kenyatta will have to step down due to term limits.

Haji also cited pressure stemming from politicians speaking to the media, but emphasised there had been no interference in his work. "In terms of (interfering) phone calls, there was none, that I have to be very clear (about)," he told Reuters.

But "people (were) making a lot of noise that we were targeting a certain community. You know that area has been very volatile when it comes to clashes. So we were concerned."

Some 1,200 people were killed in violence following the disputed 2007 national election. Kalenjin lands were a major flashpoint.— Reuters

## Restructuring costs bite into Santander profits

MADRID: Santander, the largest bank in the eurozone by market capitalization, said yesterday its profits tumbled by nearly a fifth due to restructuring costs in Spain and Britain. At 1.39 billion euros (\$1.56 billion) euros, the second quarter net profit still beat the consensus of market analysts surveyed by Factset of 1.27 billion euros.

The drop in profit was primarily due to a charge of 706 million, most of which went to restructuring operations in Spain and Britain, and the rest for compensation for mis-selling insurance in Britain.

Santander is currently trying to cut about 10 percent of its workforce in Spain. Without the provisions, net profit would have climbed by 5 percent to 2 billion euros, driven by



credit growth in Latin America and increased profitability in North America. Unlike many other banks that have seen a reduction in income from traditional lending operations given the ultralow interest rates still prevalent in much of the world, Santander managed a 4 percent increase in net interest income.

Shareholders at an extraordinary meeting yesterday approved a share capital increase, with the new shares to be offered to buy out minority shareholders in Santander's Mexico unit. Shares in Santander rose 2.6 percent in morning trading in Madrid, while the IBEX-35 index was up 0.8 percent.— AFP

and the Americas as well.

Jewelry and home products enjoyed the best second quarter growth of nearly 21 percent, although it makes up less than 8 percent of total sales. The main business line that includes handbags rose by 12.2 percent, while the ready-to-wear and fashion accessories unit rose by 16.9 percent.

"In the medium term, despite growing economic, geopolitical and monetary uncertainties around the world, the Group confirms an ambitious goal for revenue growth at constant exchange rates," said Hermes. It has previously indicated that its operating margin will likely come in at slightly less than the record 34.5 percent it recorded in the first half of 2018 when it publishes half year results in September. Hermes shares slid 0.4 percent in Paris where the CAC 40 index was up 0.4 percent.— AFP

half of the year sales rose by 15.1 percent to 3.28 billion euros.

"Hermes sales were very dynamic in the first half of 2019, in all regions and in all business lines," said chief executive Axel Dumas. Asia excluding Japan led the growth among regions, where sales jumped by 18.6 percent in the second quarter when exchange rates changes are excluded, "with positive momentum in continental China and double-digit growth in all other countries in the area," Hermes said in a statement.

Financial Director Eric du Halgouet acknowledged that sales in Hong Kong were impacted by the pro-democracy demonstrations in June, with two of its six shops there having to make brief closures. However he noted that sales growth there was still in the double digits for the half year.

Sales rose by nearly 10 percent in Japan

## Hermes defies trade tensions as China leads growth

PARIS: Global trade tensions may have sapped growth for many firms, but luxury handbag maker Hermes said yesterday it posted a double-digit rise in second quarter sales thanks in part to China.

For the months of April through June the firm recorded a 14.7 percent increase in sales to 1.67 billion euros (\$1.87 billion), beating the consensus of analyst forecasts compiled by both Factset and Bloomberg. Over the first

## Burgan Bank announces first winners of its 200% cash back draw

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank is pleased to announce the first group of its summer campaign 200 percent Cash Back draw winners for the month of July.

The lucky winners of the Cash Back draw are:

1. Abdulwahab Abdullah Al-Ramadhan
2. Shaikh Mohammed Arif
3. Fouzyah Alkhars
4. Bader Alghaith
5. Talal Ali Malik

Supporting its customers' seasonal financial needs and demands, Burgan Bank's recent summer campaign entitles its credit, debit and prepaid cardholders a chance to win back double their spending when using their cards.

The seasonal offer is designed as a three-month campaign that started on June 16th and ends 29th of September 2019 and announces five winners during July and August and 10 winners during September who will win 200 percent cash back. Customers who spend more will have higher chances of winning, every KD 10 spent in Kuwait using credit cards or prepaid cards will entitle customers to one chance of entering the draw while every KD 10 spent outside Kuwait using credit cards, debit cards, and prepaid cards will entitle customers to three chances of entering the draw.

Burgan Bank debit, prepaid and credit cards accommodate customers' different needs with flexibility and convenience for all financial transactions.

What's on

# Huawei Kuwait celebrates completion of 2019 ICT training summer course

**H**uawei Technologies Kuwait, a leading global Information and Communication Technology solutions provider, marked the successful completion of its 2019 ICT Training Summer Course in a ceremony held on July 22, 2019 at Huawei Innovation and Training Center in Al Hamra Tower. 32 Kuwaiti students graduated from this highly competitive program aimed at building a generation of forward-thinking local ICT professionals.

The closing ceremony was attended by Tahani Jrag, Najat Yusef on behalf of Public Authority of Manpower, Manpower and Government Restructuring Program, the Acting Dean of College of Petroleum and Engineering Kuwait University Dr Raed I Bourisli, students and their families, Huawei executives and the media. Students benefited from cutting-edge training on the latest technologies, including routing and switching, gaining practical skills and boosting their competitiveness in the job market.

The ICT Training Summer Course ran from July 7-18, 2019 and was held in partnership with Kuwait's Public Authority of Manpower and Kuwait University. Speaking at the closing ceremony, Trevor Liu, Huawei Technologies Kuwait CEO said: "We believe the young generation must transform their technological capabilities to adapt to the challenges of the digital era...We would like to provide an ICT study platform to train more and more ICT talent youth for Kuwait. Our target is to have more than 2000 local engineers past Huawei Certified Internetwork Engineer Exam and let them to be the seeds for developing Kuwait into a developed digitalized country."



The summer program is part of Huawei's broader commitment to local communities by elevating talent that expected to lead the ICT sector into the future and enable the growth of critical industries, in line with government priorities outlined in the 2035 Vision for a New Kuwait. Students who graduated from the summer

program will be enrolled in Huawei's prestigious HCIA routing and switching, aimed at further promoting the development and dissemination and ICT technologies and nurturing Kuwait's next generation responsible for driving the digital transformation agenda.

The two-week program enables students to design

and maintain small and medium-sized networks, using Huawei state-of-the-art equipment. Students will learn about network fundamentals, basic network construction, troubleshooting of common network faults getting a head start on their professional careers as ICT leaders of tomorrow.



## Loyac trainees visit NBK

**L**oyac trainees participating in the "Be for social work pioneering" visited National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) in an educational visit that revolved around many significant and attractive topics, that were presented by General Manager of Human Resources Emad Al-Ablani. The students were given the opportunity to look at the bank's operation and social work, besides reviewing more than 60 years of banking, during their visit to the bank's museum. Manager of Social Innovation at Loyac Iman Al-Omar said she was pleased with this visit adding that the students learned many important things about the bank's history starting with the founder, knowing the extent of the bank's appreciation of customer value.



## EQUATE participates in UN High-Level Political Forum

**T**he EQUATE Group, a global producer of petrochemicals, participated in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) of the State of Kuwait held during the United Nations' High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York, showcasing the Company's investments and initiatives in supporting sustainable development.

Commenting on the Company's participation in the Forum, EQUATE Group President and CEO, Dr Ramesh Ramachandran, said: "On behalf of EQUATE, I extend our sincere gratitude to the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development for choosing our Company to represent the State of Kuwait at the Forum. We are proud at EQUATE of the

milestones we've achieved in our Sustainability Strategy and in partnership with public and private organizations around the world."

Speaking on behalf of the Company was Senior Executive for Corporate Communications & Government Affairs, Dr Abeer Al-Omar, who is a member in the Permanent National Guiding Committee of the State of Kuwait. She said: "We believe that the long-term growth of any organization is interlinked with sustainability, this is why we have aligned our strategy with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the New Kuwait 2035 vision, aiming to contribute to economic welfare, social wellbeing and environmental preservation."

Economically, EQUATE Group contributes to over 60 percent of Kuwait's export and economic growth value from non-oil sources, and invested over USD 1 billion in the past five years in the local private sector and a similar amount in payrolls, funneling it back into the economy. In terms of solutions and innovations, EQUATE established Kuwait's first CO2 Recovery Plant, and invested in its own innovations, such as Viridis 25, a new plastic bottle that uses up to 25 percent recycled plastic, which will be commercially available in the next couple of months.

From its long-standing commitment to environmental preservation, EQUATE joined forces with 'The Alliance to End Plastic Waste' on July 8, 2019, to end plastic waste by promoting infrastructure, education and engagement, innovation, and cleanup efforts. We also give equal importance to life on land and under water through our tree-planting initiatives in China and the conservation of the Ellis Bird Farm in Canada. In terms of social sustainability, The Company has also pledged commitment to the United Nations (UN) Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPS) statement and subsequently launched its ELEVATE program which promotes gender equality, in addition to investing in education and development of engineers.

## ACK President welcomes World Bank's Director

**A**n official meeting was held between the Australian College of Kuwait's (ACK) President, Professor Isam Zabalawi and the Resident Representative for the World Bank - Kuwait Ghassan Al Khoja. Attending the meeting also were the Advisor to the Chairman at ACK Dr Osama Jamali, the Senior Economist for the education team at the World Bank of Kuwait Dr Hiba Ahmed and the

Public Relations Senior Manager at ACK May Al Musallam. During the meeting, they talked about their mutual interests and exchanged views on the latest regional educational and economical developments.

The talks were held in a friendly atmosphere that reflected mutual understanding and respect between both parties. Educational cooperation between ACK and the World Bank started two years ago through the World Bank's Outreach Program designed for students' career opportunities with the World Bank. From his end, Professor Isam stated: "We are eager to develop our collaboration with the World Bank and to contribute through education to the welfare of Kuwaitis." The World Bank is committed to its goal of working towards ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity.

Australian College of Kuwait الكلية الأسترالية في الكويت



# Rare footage of Brazilian tribe threatened by loggers

## Journalists accused of wanting tribes to remain in prehistoric state

**RIO DE JANEIRO:** Rare footage of purportedly uncontacted members of a Brazilian indigenous tribe hunting in the Amazon rainforest was released Monday by activists who warn the group could be wiped out by logging. The 58-second clip filmed in the northern state of Maranhao shows members of the Awa tribe, which Survival International says has been frequently attacked by loggers who have been emboldened by pro-business President Jair Bolsonaro.

"Only a global outcry stands between them and genocide," said Stephen Corry, director of Survival International, which published the video that had been shot by a member of neighboring indigenous tribe Guajajara. The footage was shot in August, the NGO said. "Loggers have already killed many of their relatives and forced others out of the forest. President Bolsonaro and his friends in the logging industry would like nothing more than for those who still survive to be eliminated."

In the footage, a young man holding a machete in the rainforest appears to sniff the blade before he looks towards the person filming him. Seconds later he and other members of the tribe carrying spears run away. "We didn't have the Awa's permission to film, but we know that it's important to use these images because if we don't show

them around the world, the Awa will be killed by loggers," said Erisvan Guajajara of Midia India, an indigenous film-making association.

Members of the Guajajara tribe belong to the Guardians of the Amazon group, which aims to protect isolated indigenous people. While most Awa have been contacted, some are known to still live uncontacted in an area of rainforest that is being "rapidly destroyed". Survival International said. Since taking office in January, Bolsonaro has been accused of harming the Amazon rainforest and indigenous peoples in order to benefit loggers, miners and farmers who helped get him elected.

Bolsonaro, whose anti-environment rhetoric has included a pledge to end "Shiite ecologist activism," has questioned the latest official figures showing deforestation increased 88 percent in June compared with the same period last year. He uses the word "Shiite" as a synonym for radicalism rather than denoting a branch of Islam. "We are experiencing a real environmental psychosis," Bolsonaro said Sunday. Bolsonaro also accused foreign journalists Friday of wanting Brazil's estimated 800,000 indigenous people to remain in a "prehistoric state, without access to technology, science and the thousand wonders of modernity". — AFP

“Global outcry stands between them and genocide”



SAO LUIS: Grab of a video shot shows a purportedly uncontacted member of a Brazilian indigenous tribe hunting in the Amazon rainforest near Sao Luis, Maranhao, Brazil. — AFP

## Feline better: New York bans cat declawing

**NEW YORK:** New York on Monday became the first American state to ban the declawing of cats, a practice already illegal in several countries and condemned as cruel by animal rights activists. Governor Andrew Cuomo signed a bill outlawing the removal of cats' claws for cosmetic reasons with immediate effect, in a move hailed by cat lovers. The legislation had been passed by the state assembly in June. "Declawing is a cruel and painful procedure that can create physical and behavioral problems for helpless animals, and today it stops," Cuomo said in a state-

ment. "By banning this archaic practice, we will ensure that animals are no longer subjected to these inhumane and unnecessary procedures," he added. Declawing is an operation that involves the entire or partial amputation of bones in a cat's front feet. The practice is common in the United States where pet owners often do it to stop themselves from being scratched or to protect their furniture. But the New York bill says it can cause cats severe pain and psychological disorders and can also lead to the early onset of arthritis.

"Victory!" tweeted People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, an animal rights group, following the governor's announcement. Declawing, formally known as onychectomy, is banned in most European countries including Britain and Switzerland. The practice is prohibited in several cities in California, according to the bill, but New York is the first to implement a state-wide ban. The legislation will still permit the operation for medical reasons. — AFP

## Astronomers decode Milky Way's violent birth

**PARIS:** The Milky Way gobbled up a galaxy one quarter of its mass 10 billion years ago in a "violent collision" that didn't fully settle for eons, astronomers said in new research published Monday. Previous studies had suggested that our home galaxy was composed of two separate sets of stars, but the precise chronology of the galactic merge remained elusive. Researchers from the Instituto de Astrofisica de Canarias (IAC) used the Gaia space telescope to take exact measurements of the position, brightness and distance of around one million stars in the Milky Way within 6,500 light years of the Sun.

They identified two distinct stellar sets—one "bluer" and containing less metal, one "redder" containing more. After studying their movement and composition, the team determined that both sets of stars were equally old, but the bluer

ones had been set into a "chaotic motion"—evidence of the Milky Way swallowing a smaller galaxy in the distant recesses of time. "The novelty of our work is that we have been able to assign precise ages to the stars that belong to the galaxies that merged and, by knowing these ages, when the merger took place," Carne Gallart, lead author of the study published in Nature Astronomy, told AFP.

She said the collision, around 10 billion years ago, would have taken millions of years to unfold. "It's a very gradual process—it's not something like a car crash—it's something that has an effect on the galaxy as a whole. It's very massive so it happens slowly in human terms, not so slowly in cosmic time." The team believes remnants of the dwarf galaxy, known as Gaia-Enceladus, eventually formed the halo of the present-day Milky Way. They also determined that the collision contributed to "violent bursts" of star formation for around another four billion years, after which gas from those formations settled into the Milky Way's thin disk that runs through the centre of the galaxy. The Milky Way contains at least 100 billion stars and its centre contains an intense radio source believed to be the supermassive black hole Sagittarius A. — AFP

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Canadian Board of Otolaryngology  
Head & Neck Surgery and Facial Plastics.  
Fellow of Royal College of Surgeons-Canada  
A rare Subspecialty in Microscopic Ear Surgery, Cochlear implant & Ear diseases

- Diagnosis/ Treatment of General Ear, Nose, and Throat conditions in adults & pediatrics
- Minimally invasive Endoscopic sinus surgery including Balloon sinuplasty
- Minimally invasive Microscopic Endoscopic Ear surgery
- Diagnosis & treatment of Otolaryngology and Audiology (Hearing loss, Tinnitus & balance disorders)
- Facial Plastic and reconstructive surgeries (Rhinoplasty, Otoplasty, Fillers & Botox injections)
- Diagnosis & treatment of snoring & obstructive sleep apnea in clinic without surgery
- Diagnosis & Treatment of voice and swallowing disorders.
- Diagnosis & Treatment of Head and Neck benign & malignant tumors.

**Salmiya, Belajat Street, Tel: 1881122**

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

**ACADAMIC CERTIFICATES:**

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

**SPECIALIZED IN:**

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

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- Consultant Interventional and conventional cardiologist.
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**مسشفى دار الشفاء**  
Dar Al Shifa Hospital  
Tele:1802 555

**DR KHALED ALMERRI**  
Consultant interventional Cardiology  
Department: Heart & Vascular Center

**Specialized in:**

- 1-Diagnostic and therapeutic cardiac catheterization (Angiography and Angioplasty). Aortic valve implantation.
- 2- Diagnosis and treatment of coronary artery diseases
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**Dr Hamoud Abdullah Alarouj**  
ENT Specialist

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

**Specialized in:**

- Management of benign and malignant vocal cord lesions.
- Vocal cord augmentation.
- Treatment of spasmodic dysphonia.
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- Thyroid surgery.
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- Endoscopic sinus surgery.
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- Treatment of snoring.
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**IC INTERNATIONAL CLINIC**  
American Board Certified in General Surgery  
Member of the Society of American Gastrointestinal & Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES)  
Higher specialization in Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary surgery & Organ Transplantation  
Member of many prestigious surgical societies.

- Day case surgeries
- Minor surgeries (lipoma, sebaceous cyst, ingrowing nail)
- Diagnosis, treatment and follow up of all surgical emergencies
- Hemorrhoids, fistula & anal fissure surgeries
- Surgery for morbid obesity (sleeve, gastric bypass)
- Breast surgeries
- Hernia repair
- Thyroid & adrenal surgeries
- Surgery for reflux disease
- Cholecystectomy & laparoscopic appendectomy
- Liver, pancreas & bile ducts surgeries

**Dr. Hani Haider**  
General Surgery Consultant  
http://www.international-clinic.com  
Tel: 1886677

**Scope of Clinical Practice:**

- General & Laparoscopic Surgery
- Single Port Surgery
- Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, including Colorectal Cancer
- Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abdomen
- Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- WART Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fistaloscope)
- Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- Stomach Balloon Insertion & removal
- Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve-Gastroctomy
- Gallstones & Abdominal Hernia Surgery

**Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:**

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

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

**مسشفى دار الشفاء**  
Dar Al Shifa Hospital  
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**DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM**  
Consultant Pediatrician

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

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

**DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED**  
Consultant of General Surgery  
Laparoscopic and Bariatric Surgery

**Academic Certificates - Training**

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

**Scope of clinical Practice.**

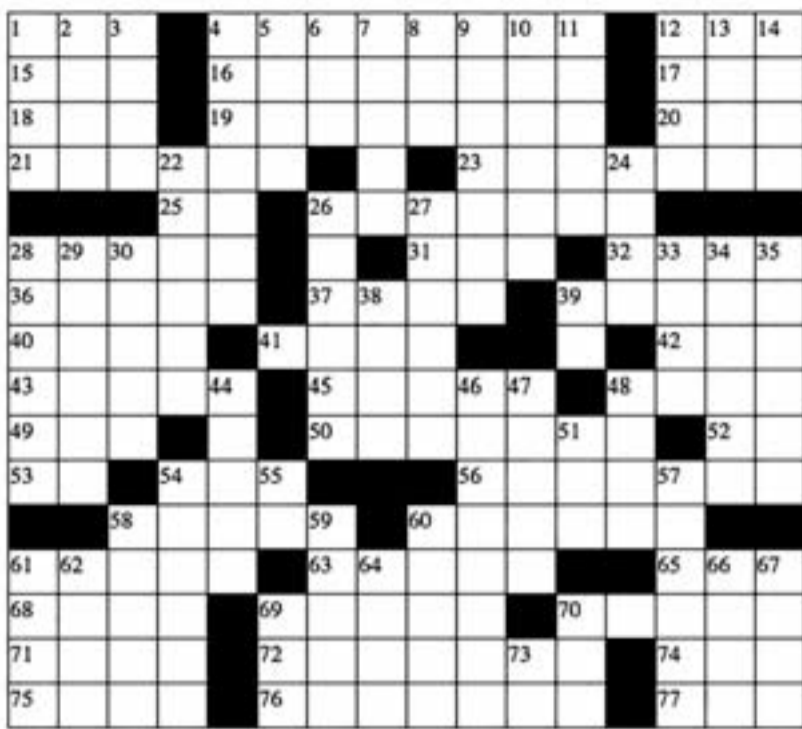
- Bariatric surgeries.
- Gallbladder stones surgeries.
- Abdominal wall and hernia surgeries.
- G.I. surgeries.
- Thyroid and para - thyroid surgeries.
- Anal surgeries.

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



Stars

CROSSWORD 2265



ACROSS

1. A single-reed woodwind with a conical bore.
4. The largest city and former capital of Turkey.
12. The seventh and last day of the week.
15. A user interface in which you type commands instead of choosing them from a menu or selecting an icon.
16. Small genus of tropical evergreen trees or shrubs having pods like those of the acacia.
17. Electronic equipment that provides visual images of varying electrical quantities.
18. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
19. Having or showing an exaggerated opinion of your importance, ability, etc.
20. The month following July and preceding September.
21. A Japanese cheer of enthusiasm or triumph.
23. A historical area and former kingdom in the Czech Republic.
25. Before noon.
28. Do something that one considers to be below one's dignity.
31. Late time of life.
32. Devoid or partially devoid of light or brightness.
36. The capital and largest city of Ghana with a deep-water port.
37. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
40. Being or occurring at an advanced period of time or after a usual or expected time.
41. Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
42. Up to the present time.
43. A social division of (usually preliterate) people.
45. (Babylonian) A demigod or first man.
49. (of securities) Not quoted on a stock exchange.
50. A procession (of wagons or mules or camels) traveling together in single file.
52. A state in northwestern North America.
53. A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.
56. A town in southwestern British Columbia on Vancouver Island west of Vancouver.
61. A large number or amount.
63. A Hindu religious teacher.
65. Type genus of the family Myacidae.
68. A metabolic acid found in yeast and liver cells.
71. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
72. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
74. One of the most common of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
75. A three-tone Chadic language.
76. A member of the Caddo people who formerly lived in the Dakotas west of the Missouri river.
77. 4-wheeled motor vehicle.

DOWN

1. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
2. Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
3. A city of central China.
4. Small genus of perennial herbs or shrubs.
5. (prefix) Half or partial.
6. An enlarged and muscular saclike organ of the alimentary canal.
7. Fruit of the oak tree.
8. A coenzyme derived from the B vitamin nicotinic acid.
9. Perennial herb of North America.
10. Not disposed of by purchase.
11. Club consisting of a heavy stick (often bamboo) bound with iron.
12. A fraudulent business scheme.
13. Wild sheep of northern Africa.
14. A one-piece cloak worn by men in ancient Rome.
22. The capital of Croatia.
24. Tropical starchy tuberous root.
26. A medicinal drug used to evoke vomiting (especially in cases of drug overdose or poisoning).
27. Included seven times in every 19 years.
29. A card game for 2 players.
30. Of or relating to a seizure or convulsion.
33. Any group or radical of the form RCO- where R is an organic group.
34. Desert shrub of Syria and Arabia having small white flowers.
35. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
38. An informal term for a father.
39. Being ten more than one hundred ninety.
44. American civil rights worker in Mississippi.
46. Low stingless nettle of Central and South America having velvety brownish-green toothed leaves and clusters of small green flowers.
47. A genus of Indridae.
48. Type genus of the Anatidae.
51. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
54. A member of an agricultural people in southeastern India.
55. A small pellet fired from an air rifle or BB gun.
57. (prosody) Of or consisting of iambs.
58. An imaginary elephant that appears in a series of French books for children.
59. Irish prelate who deduced from the Bible that Creation occurred in the year 4004 BC (1581-1656).
60. Of or relating to or containing barium.
62. The work of caring for or attending to someone or something.
64. Gully or streambed in North Africa and the Middle East that remains dry except during rainy season.
66. A Hindu theistic philosophy.
67. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
69. An accountant certified by the state.
70. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
73. A colorless and odorless inert gas.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Your way is the only way today. Others may not show great appreciation for this overly independent side of you. You may be dealing with some personal issues today. This may find you at odds with others. This is a very sensitive matter and others can not understand what you refuse to share. Your independence can be a blessing and a curse. You may feel as if no one is there for you when you need them most. This comes from you always putting on a strong front. Everyone needs a shoulder to cry on once in a while. Let your guard down and let others help you for a change.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may find yourself realizing how special you are today. Appreciating all your gifts and talents and feeling a sense of pride. This is a great time of communication with those around you as you are able to express your emotions clearly to others. Dedication and devotion have gotten you to this point in life and you in a position you can provide much help to others. You are in touch with not only your emotions but also very in touch with the needs and emotions of those close to you. This is a very nice time in your life. You may find someone close shows great support and sympathy to you today when a situation you encounter puts you in need of a listening ear.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

This is a time you desire peace and harmony in your world. Make peace with your past. This is a great day to reach out and mend fences with those you have had differences with in the past. This is a great day in the workplace for you. It is your time to shine. Know that all you do will be noticed. You may be asked to represent your company in some way. Your communication skills are on point today and you will be a huge success.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Look for a rainbow today. Something good is happening in your life. It may lead to something important in your career or your personal life. Even if the pleasure you derive from it is not permanent, you can find pleasure in the moment. You're getting a break you deserve. Don't discount it by projecting the future. If you take a "live today" attitude, the future will take care of itself-and you.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

A friend will seek your advice today. What she really wants is your approval for what she has decided to do. If you tell her what to do, it may lead to a rift in your friendship. You can give your opinion, but make it clear that she has to make the decision for herself. You might offer some options and point out the possible consequences of each. That mean she takes responsibility for her action. Regardless of how her decision turns out, your friendship will be strengthened. You are a rock in the lives of many.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You don't need a shovel for the type of digging you are about to begin. This is an emotional venture. Digging deep into your inner workings. What has happened in your life that has molded you into the person you are today? Remember, stress is brought on not by circumstance, but by our reaction to circumstances. Take a step back, take a deep breath, and remember you are in control of your reaction. You have successfully turned stumbling blocks into stepping stones in the past. This has made you who you are today. You not only have the strength, but also the wisdom to make your world a happy place!



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You may look in the mirror and see someone you truly love and respect looking back at you. Today you realize you appreciate who you are and how far you have come in this life. You strive to be a kind person and to help others as much as possible. A giver who attracts takers but doesn't let the users stop you from being you. There is no room for bitterness in your heart. You are determined to leave your mark on this world. What you see today is exactly how those close to you see each day. Know that you are loved and appreciated.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Sit tight. Now is not the time to make any changes concerning your living situation. It is a time to let things remain the same and change shouldn't be an option right now. You may feel alone and disconnected from your friends and crave some time out and about. This is a time you should resist temptation and just keep to yourself to avoid conflict and hard times. Time is best spent at home with your lover, close family, or children right now. Surround yourself with those closest to you who truly understand you best. You may find that the admiration and appreciation you receive from them is just what you need.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

If you find someone challenging your good taste or choices today just brush it off. You may find your mind is a million miles away. Focus may not be a strong point for you today. This probably isn't a great day to make decisions but that is ok. Take a break. Get out and enjoy some of the beauty that surrounds you and enjoy what the world has to offer. Good fortune is soon to come your way. A break from reality may be in order to truly appreciate and recognize the opportunities that are placed in your path.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

All that is dear to your heart takes priority today. You need to love and be loved. Take a chance today. You may receive a great reward. Love is a huge factor in your life today. You are learning to love yourself and pay close attention to the needs and want of those close to you. Getting in touch with your emotions and the emotions of those around you will cause others to be drawn to you. Capricorn, others will value your opinions and sense of independence. You are becoming someone others look up to.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

You may be faced with a career opportunity that goes against what you value. You have always prided yourself for clearly seeing things in life in black and white. There is no room for a grey area. If an opportunity that presents itself to you seems to good to be true, it probably is. Be sure you are able to lay your head down at night and sleep peacefully. You know right from wrong and this is a time for you to make the right choice. Actions have consequences and these consequences will have a lasting effect on your world. Do what satisfies your soul.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

If you ask you shall receive. You seem to have a way of getting exactly what you want. You are most persuasive today. Your words are sweet like honey. This is one of those days that seems to fall right into place for you. Enjoy because it just doesn't get much better than this. A great evening to spend time with someone you love. This could be very beneficial to your relationship.

Wordsearch Puzzle

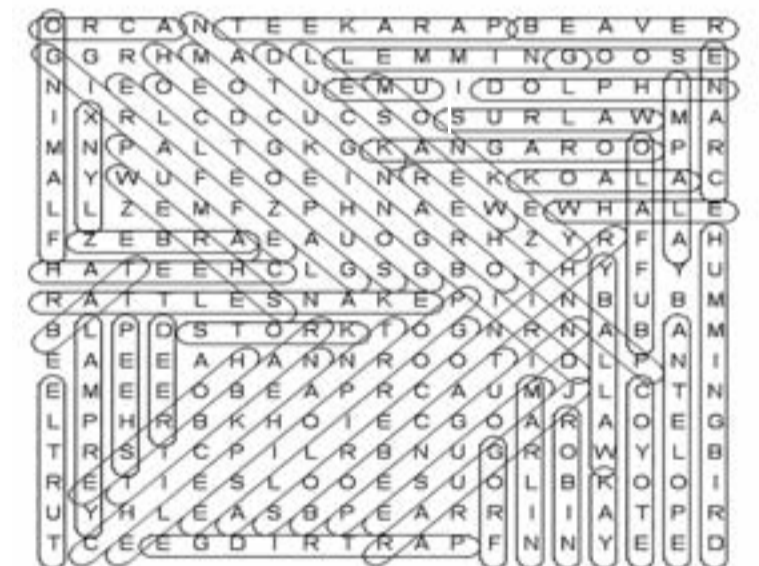
Animals 3

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



- |           |        |          |           |
|-----------|--------|----------|-----------|
| ALBATROSS | EGRET  | LIZARD   | PUFFIN    |
| ALPACA    | ERMINE | LOON     | PYTHON    |
| ANACONDA  | FALCON | MARMOSET | SHARK     |
| ARMADILLO | FERRET | MARTEN   | SKUNK     |
| ASP       | FINCH  | MOLE     | SNAKE     |
| BADGER    | GERBIL | MONGOOSE | SQUIRREL  |
| CARIBOU   | GIBBON | MULE     | SWALLOW   |
| CHAMELEON | GROUSE | MUSKOX   | VULTURE   |
| CONDOR    | GULL   | OCLOST   | WARTHOG   |
| COUGAR    | HARE   | OSTRICH  | WILDBEEST |
| COW       | HYENA  | PANDA    | WOLF      |
| CROCODILE | IGUANA | PHEASANT |           |
| DINGO     | LEMUR  | POSSUM   |           |

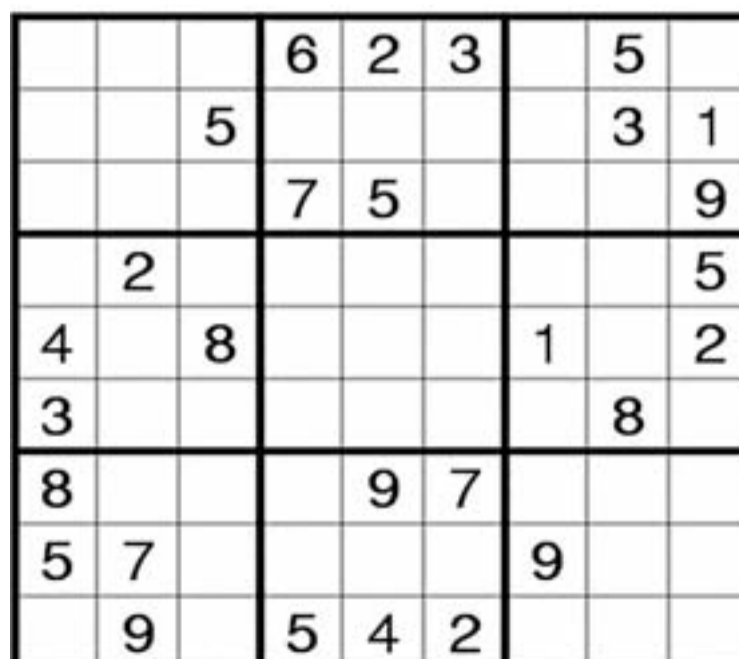
Animals 2



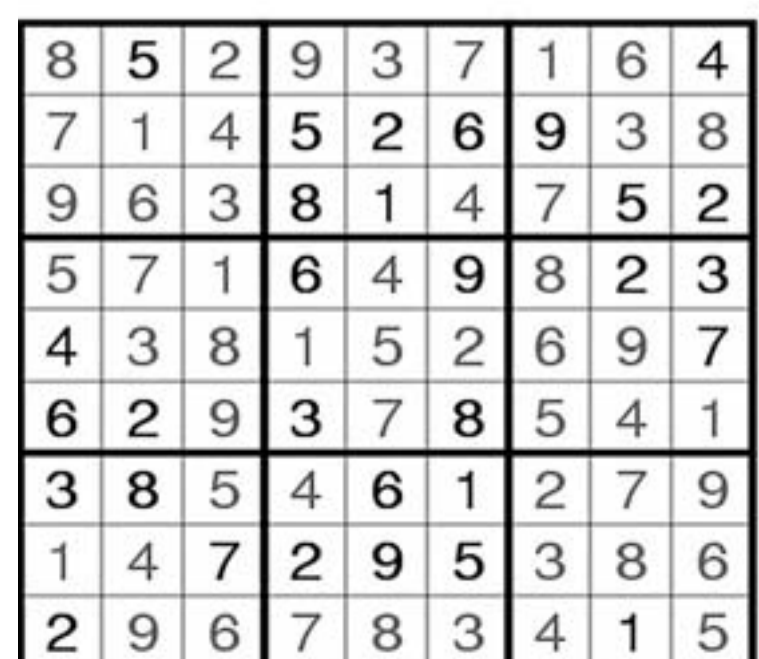
- |          |             |            |             |         |
|----------|-------------|------------|-------------|---------|
| ANTELOPE | ELEPHANT    | JAGUAR     | ORCA        | SHREW   |
| BAT      | EMU         | KANGAROO   | PANTHER     | STORK   |
| BEAVER   | FLAMINGO    | KOALA      | PARAKEET    | TURTLE  |
| BOBCAT   | FROG        | LAMPREY    | PARTRIDGE   | WALLABY |
| BUFFALO  | GAZELLE     | LEMING     | PENQUIN     | WALLRUS |
| CHEETAH  | GIRAFFE     | LYNX       | PORPOISE    | WEASEL  |
| CHICKEN  | GOOSE       | MARLIN     | PUMA        | WHALE   |
| COYOTE   | GORILLA     | MCKINGBIRD | RABBIT      | YAK     |
| CRANE    | HEDGEHOG    | HONKEY     | RATTLESNAKE | ZEBRA   |
| DEER     | HORSE       | MOUSE      | RHINOCEROS  |         |
| DOLPHIN  | HUMMINGBIRD | OCTOPUS    | ROBIN       |         |
| DUCK     | IMPALA      | ORANGUTAN  | SHEEP       |         |

The hidden animal is: GRIZZLY BEAR

Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



# Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, JULY 24, 2019



An Hindu devotee performs with a snake on the bank of the river Ganges during the holy month of Shravan, in Allahabad. Shravan is considered the holiest month in the Hindu calendar with many religious festivals and ceremonies. — AFP



Jennifer Ngobeni (16), a member of "Bigger than Life" the Children's Radio Foundation team based in Alexandra conducts an interview in Alexandra, Johannesburg.



Palesa Motaung interviews Michelle Selemela, both from the "Bigger than Life" Children's Radio Foundation team based in Alexandra.

## South African teens fight gun crime with radio broadcast

Every week a group of bubbly South African teens crowd into a studio to play hip-hop music and trade views on the scourge of neighborhood gun crime for their community radio show. For them, these are not remote topics. The stories they discuss are devastatingly close to home for the young broadcasters—one reporter's father was shot dead on her birthday, while another is the daughter of a reformed gun-wielding criminal. The 20-odd teenagers who host Alex FM's weekly "Bigger Than Life" radio show are determined to help stem the violence that touches so many lives in their densely populated and crime-ridden Johannesburg township of Alexandra.

"I can assure you that every single child of Alexandra can be a living testament... every night, from Friday to Sunday, or even sometimes on weekdays, we always hear gunshots—it is like an always thing," 16-year-old radio host Jennifer Ngobeni told AFP. Nicknamed "Gomorra" after the sinful biblical city, Alexandra was home to Nelson Mandela in the early 1940s as he started off on his anti-apartheid campaign.

Today, it is a poverty-stricken area of about 300,000 people beset by gang violence, joblessness and a lack of basic health and education services, with open sewers and waste dumps defiling its streets. Every Saturday morning, the Bigger than Life crew discuss gun laws, flesh out their personal views and play interviews and music before opening the phone lines for callers from among the station's 150,000 listeners. One co-host, 11th-grader Michelle Selemela, says her father, who has turned away from crime and violence since getting out of jail, encouraged her to get involved in radio. "The only thing I could see when I was young was policemen looking for him," the 17-year-old told AFP as she bobbed and weaved through the local market gathering interviews. "He's a better person now — he helps me structure interviews and ask hard-hitting questions."



Jennifer Ngobeni sits in a studio during a live broadcast.

### 'It becomes emotional'

The township's community radio station Alex FM was established in 1994 — the year when white-minority apartheid rule ended. "Every time we speak about gun violence it becomes emotional in the studio," said technical trainer Sammy Ramodike, from the Children's Radio Foundation (CRF). "We have one young reporter by the name of Monica, her father was shot dead in gun violence and unfortunately it was her birthday when her father got shot." Alexandra is just five kilometers (three miles) from Sandton, the city's affluent business district of skyscrapers and luxury houses—but poverty and danger are ever-present.

The settlement covers seven square kilometers (2.7 square miles), with many of the bare-brick houses and corrugated iron steel shacks lacking running water and electricity. "We live in the perfect conditions to commit and conceal crimes," an infuriated resident said, pointing towards the dark alleyways between dwellings.

Countrywide crime statistics show murders have been on the rise since 2012, with a daily death toll of nearly 57 last year. About a third of those murdered are killed by guns, according to GunFree SA, which supports the Alex FM radio show along with the CRF. South Africa counts at least two million illegal firearms and an estimated three million legally registered firearms, according to a 2017 survey.

### Speaking out

"A lot of people in South Africa say they want guns around for their own protection," said GunFree SA broadcast trainer Mary-Ann Nobele. But she warned that data showed gun owners were four times more likely to be injured by their own weapon than to actually use it for self-protection. The 20-year-old, an Alexandra resident herself, helps the teenagers with radio content. "The youth are affected by gun violence, one way or another," she said. "Having young people take over this medium lets our issues and our stories be heard. It lets other young people know that they are not the only ones going through it."

The youth radio volunteers tell of a culture of fear that permeates the township and silences residents, fuelling the violence as victims are reluctant to go to police. Radio host Ngobeni said criminals make money, then "become heroes in the community". She said the sense of insecurity seeps into every home. "You can never enjoy the joys of being home alone," she said. "You really have to lock your doors because someone might run into your house...They'll just open the door and run in." But she is hopeful that the radio show is having an effect. "Us talking about gun violence actually makes people realize that it is not ok for someone to be killed." — AFP



(From left) Sithembile Daza(18), Michelle Selemela (17), Keabetswe Lebakeng (15), and Gomolemo Seboko (18) stand in a studio.



(From right) Michelle Selemela (17) and Jennifer Ngobeni (16) conduct an interview.



Mpho Molutsi (18) talks in a studio during a live broadcast. — AFP photos



## Chance the Rapper forced to eat vegetable after losing bet

**C**hance the Rapper was forced to eat broccoli after losing a bet to Megan Thee Stallion. The Chicago native isn't a fan of vegetables and the rising US star thought it would be fun to make him eat the greens if she got her verse for a song on his upcoming album, 'The Big Day', completed on time. Alongside a clip of the 'Blessings' hitmaker eating a broccoli stalk, she wrote on Instagram: "Okay y'all this is RARE FOOTAGE@chancetherapper does NOT eat vegetables right and I've been on the road so much that I haven't been able to record a lot rn. I bet him that if I had my verse to him in the amount of time he needed it by he would have to eat broccoli we see who won (sic)" Chance - whose real name is Chancelor Bennett - is a huge junk food fan, and previously campaigned for US diner Wendy's to bring back their spicy nuggets, and he's also publicly declared his love for Doritos and Kit Kats. Meanwhile, Chance's debut album will be released on Friday and features previously released single 'GROceries'. The record is inspired by Chance's wed-

ding to wife Kirsten Corley - with whom he has three-year-old daughter Kensli - which was attended by the likes of Kanye West and his wife Kim Kardashian West and comedian Dave Chappelle. He explained previously: "The whole album has been inspired by the day that I got married and how I was dancing that day. [...] It was the hardest I ever danced in my life and I'm a great longtime dancer. "Everything in it is all the different styles of music that make me want to dance and remind me of that day and remind me of that night and all those people that were there. "I've been waiting to make an album for a long time. So, the process has been just me being back in the studio all the time. "Just making two songs a day. And trying to have fun. "But at the same time, I understand that it's going to be more. More songs. More flexes. More dancing. Just more." The 'I'm The One' hitmaker's wife is currently expecting the couple's second child, and he thanked her for giving him all the support whilst making the album whilst she is pregnant. He wrote on Instagram in April: "I've been really happy the past few weeks. My

wife gave me the go ahead to put everything else on hold and really go to work on my debut album. Its been a lil hard at times, I obviously miss Chicago and family and working on other stuff, but there truly is no joy like making a project. "Somehow I always forget that i'm so, so good at this. And every night i surprise myself again. (sic)" Chance admitted releasing the record will be "bitersweet" because he enjoys recording so much but he urged his fans to "thank" Kristen for letting him focus on the LP while coping with her pregnancy and their daughter with "so much grace". He added: "July is gonna be bitersweet because as much as i can't wait to be done, the process is the best part! "Y'all should thank Kirsten cause she dont gotta share me wit NOBODY. But she knows what i do and is handling this pregnancy and our family with so much grace. Babe I have to appreciate u supporting me all these years and I swear i can't wait to get jukeed on to these new songs. (sic)" The album follows his acclaimed 2016 mixtape 'Coloring Book'.

## Sandler announces cast for Netflix film

**A**dam Sandler has announced the cast for his upcoming Netflix movie. The 52-year-old actor-and-producer is working on a Halloween themed movie for the streaming service and, according to Deadline, the film's cast will include Sandler's long-time collaborator Rob Schneider who has starred alongside him in films such as '50 First Dates', 'Little Nicky' and 'Grown Ups'. The movie will also star 'Modern Family' actress Julie Bowen who appeared in Sandler's 1998 comedy 'Happy Gilmore', 'The Good Place' actress Maya Rudolph and 'Miracle Workers' actor Steve Buscemi, both of whom starred in 'Grown Ups' and 'Saturday Night Live' comedian Kenan Thompson. Other cast members include Ray Liotta, Michael Chiklis, China Anne McClain, Paris Berelc, Tim Meadows, Colin Quinn, June Squibb, Shaquille O'Neal, Karan Brar, Noah Schnapp, Mikey Day, Melissa Villaseenor, Kym Whitley, Lavell Crawford, Betsy Sodaro, George Wallace and Blake Clark. Sandler's last foray with Netflix was this year's comedy film 'Murder Mystery' which starred Sandler and Jennifer Aniston as a married couple who are caught up in a murder investigation on a billionaire's (Luke Evans) yacht. The film was released last month and according to Netflix, nearly 31 million accounts in North America viewed the new film over its first three days, an opening weekend record for the streaming service. In 2014, Sandler signed a four-

movie deal with the streaming service with his Happy Madison productions and in 2017 agreed to make another four and his works so far include 'The Ridiculous 6', 'The Do-Over', 'Sandy Wexler', 'The Week Of' and 'Father of the Year'.



## Quentin Tarantino teases Kill Bill 3



**Q**uentin Tarantino and Uma Thurman have been discussing ideas for a third 'Kill Bill' film. The 'Pulp Fiction' director has revealed that he and Uma - who played assassin Black Mamba on a murderous revenge mission in the two previous films - have "talked about" creating a new chapter in the martial arts franchise and he has been considering a number of ideas for a new story. Speaking on MTV's 'Happy Sad Confused' podcast, he said: "Me and Uma have talked about it recently, frankly, to tell you the truth, I have thought about it a little further. We were talking about it literally last week. If any of my movies were going to spring from my other movies, it would be a third 'Kill Bill'." It seems sequels are on Tarantino's agenda at the moment because as well as a third 'Kill Bill' film he is also pitching an idea for a 'Star Trek' movie to producer J.J. Abrams. The 'Once Upon A Time In Hollywood' director showed an R-rated script for an installment in the rebooted sci-fi franchise to Abrams which is being strongly considered. Tarantino, 56, previously said: "It's a very big possibility ... We've talked about a story and a script. The script has been written and when I emerge my head like Punxsutawney Phil, post-'Once Upon a Time in Hollywood', we'll pick up talking about it again."

— Bang Showbiz

## Former James Bond star David Hedison dies age 92

**D**avid Hedison has died at the age of 92. The late star was known for his roles as Felix Leiter in the 'James Bond' franchise and passed away peacefully with his children at his side in Los Angeles on July 18. In a statement, his daughters Alexandra and Serena said: "Even in our deep sadness, we are comforted by the memory of our wonderful father. He loved us all dearly and expressed that love every day. He was adored by so many, all of whom benefited from his warm and generous heart. Our dad brought joy and humor wherever he went and did so with great style." David starred alongside the late Sir Roger Moore in the 1973 007 film 'Live and Let Die' and then again in 1989 alongside Timothy Dalton with 'License to Kill' - becoming the first star to portray the character twice. David was also known for his work as Captain Lee Crane in the sci-fi television series 'Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea', in which he co-starred with Richard Basehart, and the show ran from 1964 to 1968. Hedison signed a film contract with 20th Century Fox in May 1957 and his first movie with the studio was the 1957 war film 'The Enemy Below' which also starred Robert Mitchum followed by his role as crazed scientist turned human insect in the first iteration of horror classic 'The Fly'. David lost his wife Bridget Hedison - a producer who worked on the 1980s Aaron Spelling shows 'Dynasty' and its spin-off 'The Colbys' - in 2016 at the age of 71 following a battle with breast cancer. He is survived by his daughters Serena and Alexandra, who is the wife of Hollywood star Jodie Foster.



## Stanley Tucci joins Jolt

**S**tanley Tucci has joined the cast of action-comedy 'Jolt'. The 58-year-old actor has boarded the Kate Beckinsale led female-driven film for Millennium Media helmed by Tanya Wexler and written by Scott Wascha alongside 'Ant-Man' star Bobby Cannavale, 'Suicide Squad' star Jai Courtney and 'Orange Is The New Black' actress Laverne Cox. 'Widow' star Kate, 45, will play a homicidal security guard named Lindy who controls her murderous urges using an electrode-lined vest which shocks her back to normalcy, however, when her boyfriend is murdered she goes on a revenge-fuelled rampage to find the killer while the police pursue her as their chief suspect. Sherryl Clark and Millennium Media's David Bernardi and Les Weldon will as producers while Avi Lerner, Trevor Short, Boaz Davidson, Jeffrey Greenstein and Jonathan Yungler of Millennium Media are all on board as executive producers. 'Jolt' marks Millennium Media's first project with a woman as the lead, female director and female producer and shooting on the picture is scheduled to begin on July in the UK. In a statement, Wexler said: "'Jolt' is a kick-ass and painfully funny script. When I saw that Kate Beckinsale was attached to play the lead, I jumped at the opportunity to make the movie. This is the movie for right now - a revenge-action film for every woman (and man) who wants to turn their inner 'Thelma & Louise' up to 11." Stanley is best known for his wide range of supporting roles in films such as 'The Lovely Bones' - for which he won an Academy Award - 'The Devil Wears Prada' alongside Meryl Streep and dystopian franchise 'The Hunger Games'.



## ROCK'S SAW REBOOT SET FOR RELEASE IN MAY 2020

**C**hris Rock's 'Saw' reboot has been moved forward to May 2020. The re-imagining of the \$1 billion horror franchise, which will be helmed by director Darren Lynn Bousman, was due to hit the big screen on October 23, 2020, but is now slated for release on May 15, 2020. The movie will star Chris, 54, as well as Samuel L. Jackson and the screenplay has been penned by Pete Goldfinger and Josh Stolberg, who wrote the script for the eighth installment of the franchise, 'Jigsaw', based on a story by Rock. It was previously announced that the Chris had partnered with Lionsgate to create "a really intense and twisted" reboot of the series, which already comprises eight feature films and was created by James Wan and Leigh Whannell. Bousman, 40, previously teased that "no one is ready" for the "insanity" in the forthcoming remake. The filmmaker previously posted on Twitter: "Start shooting the new Saw film in just a few days. Something I never thought I be typing again! Gotta be honest. No one is ready for the insanity about to bleed out on screen!" The original series follows psychopathic serial killer John Kramer, known as the 'Jigsaw Killer' or 'Jigsaw', who traps his victims in horrifically perilous situations that he calls

"games" to test their will to live through physical and psychological torment in a bid to rehabilitate them for their perceived sins. Announcing the reboot, Rock said: "I've been a fan of 'Saw' since the first film in 2004. I am excited by the opportunity to take this to a really intense and twisted new place."



## Bebe Rexha prefers Netflix to raving

**B**ebe Rexha prefers to chill and watch Netflix than go out raving. The 'Call You Mine' hitmaker has admitted she isn't a fan wild nights out dancing to EDM music and would rather be at home watching TV. Speaking on 'House Work Radio with Jax Jones' on Apple Music's Beats 1, she confessed: "Nah. The only way ... I'm only raving at home. "On my couch, watching Netflix. "I'm sorry, I don't have time for that. Sorry about that. "Maybe you could teach me how. I'll rave my fridge. "That's the only type of raving I know how, honey." The 29-year-old pop star is supporting 'The Jonas Brothers' on their 'Happines Begins Tour', which begins next month, and she says she won't be keeping up her "exemplary food diet" on the road. DJ-and-producer Jax - who teamed up with Bebe on recent single 'Harder' - then asked: "Alright, are you gonna keep that going? "You're exemplary food diet while you're on tour with The Jonas Brothers? "You bringing a chef?" Bebe supported Ellie Goulding on her 2016 'Delirium World Tour' and recalled how she had her own vegan chef. She replied: "Oh no. I was on tour with Elle Goulding and she had a vegan chef. "Breakfast, lunch, dinner, she had a chef, a trainer, this, that ... but, that's ... when you're at that level, you know." Meanwhile, Bebe can't wait to hang out with Priyanka Chopra and Joe Jonas on the tour. The 'I Got You' singer is looking forward to spending time with Nick Jonas - who she has been close friends with since she opened for him on his solo tour in 2015 - his 'Baywatch' actress wife and Joe Jonas and his 'Game of Thrones' actress wife Sophie Turner. Asked if Nick is like a sibling to her, Bebe exclusively told BANG Showbiz: "Absolutely. I went on tour with him when he released 'Jealous' and it was a huge success for him and he asked me to open up his tour. It was a really special moment." Bebe hasn't met the third Jonas Brother, Kevin Jonas, but she knows it's going to be a lot of a fun. She continued: "I've met Joe before but I haven't met Kevin. It's going to be a really cool environment. "We get to hang with the families. I get to see Sophie Turner, I love 'Game of Thrones', and Priyanka Chopra ... Seriously! It's going to be sick."

Lifestyle | Music & Movies

# In Lebanon, calls to cancel gig by gay-friendly band

They sparked controversy in Egypt, and were banned from performing in Jordan. Now alternative rock band Mashrou' Leila might have a concert cancelled at home in Lebanon over alleged offence to religion. The Lebanese group, whose singer is openly gay and whose Arabic lyrics tackle a range of social issues, is rarely outspoken for the region's music scene. They have often played in Lebanon since forming in 2008 while its members were still students at the American University of Beirut.

But now several religious figures have called for the cancellation of an upcoming concert on August 9 in the seaside town of Byblos, seemingly over a graphic mash-up using an image of the Virgin Mary. The overwhelmingly Christian town's Maronite archbishop on Monday asked for the gig to be cancelled over the "group's aims and the content of their songs".

They "undermine religious and human values, attack sacred symbols of Christianity", he said in a statement. The Catholic Information Centre, an authority that works with the Lebanese authorities to censor artistic content, called the group a "danger to society". "It is not permissible to insult religions under the guise of freedoms," said its head Father Abdu Abu Kassa. The complaints seem to



have been made after lead singer Hamed Sinno on Facebook shared an article containing an image in which the Virgin Mary's face had been replaced by that of American pop star Madonna.

The director of the Byblos International Festival said it was working on solving this issue out of the public eye. The band on Monday in a statement said they "respected all religions and their symbols", and they were saddened

by "wrong interpretations" and "the distortion of the lyrics of some of our songs". Former lawmaker for Byblos, Fares Said, came to the band's defense. "Boycott if you want, it's your right. But let Lebanon retain its taste of freedom," he wrote on Twitter.

After a Mashrou' Leila concert in Egypt in 2017, at which members of the audience waved a rainbow flag, the authorities launched a crackdown on the country's LGBT

community. Its concerts in Jordan were cancelled in 2016 and 2017. Same-sex acts between consenting adults in private are treated as a criminal offence in most of the Arabic-speaking world. — AFP



## Disney's 'Lion King' roars as Cameron salutes new 'Avengers' record

"The Lion King" roared to a huge \$191.8 million opening weekend in North American theaters, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations reported Monday, consolidating Disney's record-breaking reign at the box office. It was the eighth-biggest domestic opening of all time, surpassing "Avengers: Age of Ultron," Disney said. Director Jon Favreau's update of the classic 1994 animated film employs hyper-realistic computer-generated images and has a voice cast including Donald Glover as Simba and Beyonce as Nala, as well as Seth Rogen, Chiwetel Ejiofor and James Earl Jones. Worldwide, the movie has already passed the half-billion-dollar mark.



The July record opening comes as director James Cameron congratulated "Avengers: Endgame"—another Disney property—for beating his film "Avatar" to become the highest-grossing movie of all time. The Disney-owned Marvel superhero blockbuster ended the 10-year reign of "Avatar" Sunday after its global box office haul rose to \$2.7902 billion. "Congratulations to Avengers Endgame on becoming the new box-office king," Cameron wrote in a tweet showing an image of Marvel's Iron Man hero surrounded by "woodsprite" plants from the alien moon Pandora of "Avatar."

Both "Avatar" and "Endgame" are now owned by Disney following its takeover of 21st Century Fox. Well back in second place at North American box offices this weekend was "Spider-Man: Far From Home" at \$21.2 million. A collaboration between Sony and Disney's Marvel Studios, the latest installment in the blockbuster franchise picks up where "Avengers: Endgame" left off, with Tom Holland as Peter Parker/Spider-Man atop a cast including Samuel L. Jackson, Zendaya, Jake Gyllenhaal—and Favreau. In third was "Toy Story 4," taking in \$15.5 million in its fifth week out, while fourth spot went to Paramount's "Crawl," at \$6.1 million.

The disaster thriller tells the story of a father and daughter (Barry Pepper and Kaya Scodelario) battling hungry gators after a hurricane hits their Florida town. And in fifth was Universal's "Yesterday," at \$5 million. The sweet comedy is based on the entertaining if fantastic premise of a struggling musician (Himesh Patel) suddenly becoming one of the only people on Earth who remembers the Beatles. Rounding out the weekend's top 10 were:

- "Stubber" (\$4.1 million)
- "Aladdin" (\$4.1 million)
- "Annabelle Comes Home" (\$2.6 million)
- "Midsommar" (\$1.6 million)
- "The Secret Life of Pets 2" (\$1.5 million)—AFP

## New Orleans funk icon Art Neville dies at 81

Art Neville, a New Orleans funk legend and co-founder of the Neville Brothers, has died, his brother said Monday. He was 81 years old. The singer and keyboard player who answered to the sobriquet "Poppa Funk" was well known as the voice of the "Mardi Gras Mambo," which quickly became a mainstay of his home city's famed carnival after he first played it at age 17. "Artie Poppa Funk Neville you are loved dearly by everyone who knew you. Love always your lil' big brother AARON (we ask for privacy during this time of mourning)," his brother, soul singer Aaron Neville, tweeted.

His death follows that of another famed New Orleans musician, the blues pianist Dr. John, who died last month. Born Arthur Lanon Neville on December 17, 1937, the funk icon grew up admiring the work of doo-wop stars like Fats Domino. He joined the Navy in the late 1950s and 1960s but maintained his love of recording music, going on to found the Neville Sounds, which later became the Meters.—AFP



In this file photo Art Neville sings with The Neville Brothers during the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival at the Fair Grounds Race Course in New Orleans, Louisiana. — AFP



Rocker Mick Jagger

## Mick Jagger back to Venice fest with art heist thriller

Veteran rocker Mick Jagger will return to the silver screen at the Venice film festival in September for the premiere of art-world thriller "The Burnt Orange Heresy", alongside Donald Sutherland. The adaptation of American author Charles Willeford's novel was filmed before Jagger, 76 on Friday, underwent heart surgery in April. Directed by Italian Giuseppe Capotondi, the film features Jagger as wealthy art collector Joseph Cassidy who proposes to a young couple to visit the studio of famous artist Jerome Debney, played by Sutherland, in order to steal one of his works of art.

The film, also starring Denmark's Claes Bang and Australia's Elizabeth Debicki will close the Venice Mostra on September 7, organizers said on Monday. Legendary frontman Jagger in June resumed performing with the Rolling Stones two months after doctors performed a minimally invasive transcatheter aortic valve replacement, allowing the artist to avoid a major operation that would require surgeons to open his chest.—AFP

# The 2019 Comic-Con International at San Diego Convention Center



Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, Madelaine Petsch, Camila Mendes, and KJ Apa speak at the "Riverdale" Special Video Presentation and Q&A during 2019 Comic-Con International at San Diego Convention Center.



(From left) Misha Collins, Jensen Ackles, and Jared Padalecki speak at the "Supernatural" Special Video Presentation and Q&A during 2019 Comic-Con International at San Diego Convention Center on July 21, 2019 in San Diego, California. — AFP photos



(From left) Misha Collins, Jensen Ackles, Jared Padalecki, and Alexander Calvert speak at the "Supernatural" Special Video Presentation and Q&A during 2019 Comic-Con International at San Diego Convention Center.



(From left) Cole Sprouse, Camila Mendes, Lili Reinhart, Madelaine Petsch, and K.J. Apa attend the "Riverdale" Photo Call during 2019 Comic-Con International at Hilton Bayfront.



# Tokyo 2020 COMES TOO EARLY for karate kid's Olympic dream

Sweat pours off Mahiro Takano as the 13-year-old karate black belt trades blows with a grown man almost twice her size, finishing with a blood-curdling roar, then a dainty bow. The petite schoolgirl is used to punching above her weight—since taking up karate in kindergarten she has done much to boost the profile of the Japanese martial art, set to make its Olympic debut next year. But when Tokyo 2020 kicks off a year from now, little Mahiro will be too young to compete. “It has been my dream to win an Olympic gold medal since I was small,” Mahiro told AFP after training in her hometown of Nagaoka, a two-hour bullet train ride north of Tokyo.

“It’s sad that the Olympics are coming to Tokyo and I can’t take part because of my age,” Mahiro is the fresh face of a form of warrior combat dating back centuries to what is now Okinawa, in subtropical southern Japan. She has helped put karate on the map in Japan—where it has traditionally been overshadowed by judo and kendo—by appearing in commercials since she was a toddler and acting as an ambassador for the sport. But Mahiro insists her Tokyo Olympic heartbeat will make her stronger. “It gives me incentive to compete at future Olympics when I’m bigger,” said the karate pin-up. “I’ll watch the Tokyo Olympics and learn from the world’s best to be ready when my time comes.”

### Waiting game

However, Mahiro could face quite a wait to demonstrate her explosive technique on the Olympic stage. Karate was left off the list of four sports recommended by 2024 Paris Olympic organizers, which included surfing, skateboarding, sport climbing and breakdancing—all since approved by the International Olympic Committee. A 1.46 meter (4ft 8in) bundle of energy, Mahiro has won a record six successive national titles at elementary school level. Paired with a 43-year-old man during training, she is a whirl of perpetual motion.

Ponytail flicking from side to side as she ducks under her hulking opponent and unleashes punches of her own, Mahiro’s face contorts into a picture of intense focus, bordering on rage. “I’m not trying to look scary,” she said with a giggle. “But when I’m concentrating, my face naturally looks like that.” For Mahiro, the bigger they are, the harder they fall. “It doesn’t matter how big they are,” she smiled. “I just give it everything I have.” Mahiro prefers the stylistic “kata” form of karate usually practised solo over “kumite”, which pits fighters against one another.

“Karate makes me stronger and teaches me better manners,” said Mahiro, who followed her elder brother into karate when she was four. “It has helped me acquire good habits for later life.” Takako Kikuchi, who coaches Mahiro, knew her star pupil was special from day one—and admits she can be a little intimidating despite her size.

### ‘A little scary’

“From the start she was different—she wasn’t your average four-year-old,” said Kikuchi. “Mahiro puts adults to shame with her fighting spirit. “She becomes another person—it can be a little scary,” Kikuchi added with a laugh. “She’s a real battler, but she’s also very humble and eager to learn.” Kikuchi expressed sadness at karate’s exclusion from the 2024 Paris Olympics, leaving it an uphill struggle to be reinstated for the 2028 Los Angeles Games. “It’s just achieved Olympic status, which is a great chance to raise the sport’s profile in Japan,” she said.

“It’s a shock for everyone involved in karate.” As Mahiro packed up her karate gear, Kikuchi added: “Karate that builds character—I’m sure it will return to the Olympics.” With Kikuchi out of earshot, Mahiro revealed a secret method she uses to polish her kata technique, one her sensei might not approve of. “I picture an imaginary opponent in front of me—like my brother,” she whispered. “Because he’s a real pain.” Away from the karate dojo, Mahiro says she is just a regular schoolgirl who enjoys chatting with classmates, reading and listening to Justin Bieber and Korean boy band BTS. “But I love karate more,” she insisted. “So I’ll keep training hard so I can get to the Olympics one day.” — AFP



These photos show young Japanese karate competitor Mahiro Takano training in Nagaoka, Niigata Prefecture. — AFP photos











## Sports

# Oldest slinger in town: Sri Lanka to bid farewell to shaggy-haired Malinga

## Proved his enduring worth when he tormented England during the World Cup

**COLOMBO:** Sri Lanka will start looking to replace key wicket-taker Lasith Malinga when the shaggy-haired fast bowler calls it quits after the first one-day international against Bangladesh on Friday. Both teams go into the three-game series nursing a World Cup hangover, with Sri Lanka facing an especially tough rebuilding task with the loss of the instantly recognizable Malinga.

The blond-highlighted bowler with the distinctive sling action proved his enduring worth when he tormented England during the World Cup, taking four for 43 as Sri Lanka stunned the eventual champions in the group stage. Malinga, 35, is Sri Lanka's third-highest ODI wicket-taker with 335 wickets from 225 matches, behind only Chaminda Vaas (399) and Muttiah Muralitharan (523). Malinga needs three wickets to overhaul Anil

Kumble's 337 for ninth place on the international list.

Sri Lanka captain Dimuth Karunaratne said finding a replacement for Malinga is just one of many challenges ahead following a disappointing World Cup. "I think if you take the World Cup, we did fairly good. In patches we did really well and sometimes we didn't do very well," he said. "We need to find the bowlers who can take wickets in the middle part and the early overs. Those are the areas. I need some good youngsters, we need to groom some youngsters for the next World Cup."

Malinga said yesterday he hoped to play T20 cricket and had his sights on the 2020 World Cup in Australia. "I hope to be able to take Sri Lanka to the next T20 World Cup," he said. "I hope I will have an opportunity to play in that tournament, but if there are better players than me, I

don't mind being left out." The country's cricket board confirmed Malinga would be available for selection for the T20 squad, as Sri Lanka Cricket chief Ashley de Silva hailed him as "one of the most outstanding players Sri Lanka has ever produced".

### Coaching exodus

Apart from the search for new fast bowlers, Sri Lanka also has to contend with a coaching exodus. Coach Chandika Hathurusingha and his assistants will be shown the door after the Bangladesh series because of their sixth-place finish in England. Meanwhile Bangladesh, who finished eighth of the 10 teams, are entering a new era after they sacked coach Steve Rhodes following the World Cup.

The visitors are also without key players, including skipper Mashrafe Mortaza

and inspirational vice-captain Shakib Al Hasan. Mashrafe has a hamstring injury while Shakib, who scored 606 runs and claimed 11 wickets in the World Cup, is being rested. Opening batsman Tamim Iqbal, interim captain for the series, said Bangladesh's younger players will get a chance to impress. "I think that whoever plays the first one-day match, they need to cash in on the opportunity," he said. Bangladesh are the first foreign sports team to visit Sri Lanka since the Easter Sunday suicide attacks this year, which killed 258 people.

The team were given security usually reserved for visiting state dignitaries, with extra forces at their hotel and armed guards for their bus. "I think the security has been fantastic. All the facilities they have given to us have been top notch," said Tamim. — AFP



**COLOMBO:** Sri Lankan cricketer Lasith Malinga (L) and Bangladesh bowling coach Champaka Ramanayake (R) look on during the one-day warm-up match between President's XI and Bangladesh. — AFP

## Anderson out of Ireland Test with Roy to make debut

**LONDON:** James Anderson has been ruled out of England's four-day Test against Ireland at Lord's starting today but World Cup star Jason Roy will make his debut. Opening bowler Anderson has failed to recover from the right calf injury he sustained when playing for his county Lancashire against Durham on July 2.

"Jimmy will continue to be assessed" ahead of the first Ashes Test at Edgbaston on August 1, an England and Wales Cricket Board statement said yesterday. Chief selector Ed Smith stated when naming the squad last week that England's record wicket-taker would not be risked ahead of the Ashes series if there were any lingering doubts over his injury. Bowling resources have already been stretched by side strains sustained by Mark Wood and Jofra Archer in the recent World Cup victory over New Zealand.

Warwickshire paceman Olly Stone will make his Test debut in Anderson's absence, with World Cup-winning batsman Roy also playing his first Test after featuring in 84 one-day internationals. England will play two spinners in Jack Leach and Moeen Ali in an attack led by Stuart Broad, with uncapped all-rounder Lewis Gregory missing out from the original 13-man squad. Test skipper Root, speaking at Lord's on Tuesday, said Anderson could have played against Ireland but stressed that England did not want to take any chances with their prize asset ahead of a five-Test Ashes series.

"Jimmy probably would have been able to get through this Test match but (it's) just making sure that he's absolutely ready," Root explained. "We thought the last thing we want is him carrying a niggle going into a series so we tried to be sensible about it and give him as much time to be 100 percent going into that series — a five-match series. So we're very confident that he'll be fit (for the Ashes)."

### Roy impact

The powerful Roy will open the innings, as he did during the World Cup, even though he is a middle-order batsman in first-class cricket. "With Jason, we want him to be himself, express himself and trust his instincts as much as possible," Root said. "He brings something different to our Test batting side, he's a proven performer in international cricket and fully capable of making big contributions. I hope he doesn't try to play differently, I hope he'll go and be himself."

"There were occasions in the World Cup when he had to trust his defence and he might have to draw that out a bit longer in Test cricket — but he can go and put the pressure back on the opposition. He's one of the best in the world at that," Anderson, 36, no longer plays ODI cricket so did not play in the World Cup. The Lancashire swing bowler, with 575 scalps, trails only the spin trio of Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralitharan (800 wickets), Australia's Shane Warne (708) and India's Anil Kumble (619) in the all-time list of Test wicket-takers.

England team to play Ireland:

Jason Roy, Rory Burns, Joe Denly, Joe Root (capt), Jonny Bairstow (wkt), Moeen Ali, Chris Woakes, Sam Curran, Stuart Broad, Olly Stone, Jack Leach. — AFP

## West Indies recall Narine and Pollard for T20s against India

**ST JOHN'S, Antigua and Barbuda:** West Indies have turned to experience with the recall of veteran duo Sunil Narine and Kieron Pollard for the first two T20s against India next month. Explosive hitter Pollard was left out of the West Indies team for the recent 50-over World Cup and played his last T20 in India last November.

Spinner Narine's last appearance in a T20I for West Indies came against England almost two years ago at Chester-le-Street. He opted out of the 50-over World Cup because of a finger injury. "We felt that players like Narine and Pollard, who have played well in T20 leagues around the world, once they are fit and mentally ready to play, we must give them the opportunity to represent the West Indies again," said interim chairman of selectors, Robert Haynes.

Wicketkeeper/batsman Anthony Bramble, who will understudy Nicholas Pooran, is the only newcomer in the 14-member squad which is captained by Carlos Brathwaite. Andre Russell, who is still recovering from a knee injury that saw him leave the World Cup early, also returns. — AFP

## All Blacks fired up for World Cup rehearsal

**WELLINGTON:** All Black lock Brodie Retallick predicted a fireworks against South Africa in Wellington this Saturday, as the southern hemisphere rivals both seek a mental edge ahead of the Rugby World Cup. The Rugby Championship clash is a dress rehearsal for the global showpiece in Japan, where New Zealand and South Africa will face each other in their opening Pool B match on September 21.

Adding further spice to this weekend's fixture, the Springboks upset the world champions 36-34 a year ago when they last played in the New Zealand capital. Retallick noted that New Zealand and South Africa both rested key players for their victories over Argentina and Australia respectively last weekend with the Wellington showdown in mind. "I think it's going to be a fiery one... there's going to be some fresh bodies, so no doubt there's going to be plenty of energy," he said. "They won here last time in Wellington and obviously we want to be winning every time, so I guess it'll be a big one. Wait and see."

Assistant coach Ian Foster confirmed the All Blacks were fired up as they prepare to chase their third straight World Cup and fourth overall. "It's on everyone's mind, you can't deny that," he said. "That brings out a real hunger, particularly in your top athletes who have been eyeing the prize for a long, long time. "There's no doubt there's an edge in the group."

Hulking South African hooker Malcolm Marx said the Springboks would not be taking a backward step in Wellington. He said last year's victory was pivotal in rebuilding a side that had slipped to seventh in the



**BUENOS AIRES:** New Zealand's All Blacks rugby players perform the haka before start the Rugby Championship match against Argentina's Los Pumas at Jose Amalfitani stadium. — AFP

world rankings and endured a 57-0 mauling in their previous appearance in New Zealand. "It was important for SA rugby to be honest... it built a lot more confidence in South African rugby," he said. Marx said another win in Wellington could give the Springboks a similar boost ahead of the World Cup but it was a feat easier said than done.

"I wouldn't say we're underdogs, we're focusing on ourselves and where we can improve, not on them," he said. "I think it might bring a bit of momentum, obviously,

but we have to focus on (the match) first." Assistant coach Matt Proudfoot said the Springboks could not afford to think too far ahead. "When you're playing the world's best team in their own backyard you pay respect to that and prepare yourself for that challenge, irrespective of what's at stake later in the year," he said. Proudfoot said his forwards were relishing the prospect of testing themselves against the All Blacks. "We want to deliver ball to our team that we can play off and set our game plan down... we really want to put our standard down." — AFP



**LAS VEGAS:** Kostas Antetokounmpo #37 of the Dallas Mavericks looks on during the game against the Brooklyn Nets during Day 1 of the 2019 Las Vegas Summer League on July 5, 2019 at the Cox Pavilion. — AFP

## Lakers gain the rights to Kostas Antetokounmpo

**LOS ANGELES:** The Los Angeles Lakers confirmed Monday they have gained the rights to Kostas Antetokounmpo, younger brother of Milwaukee's NBA Most Valuable Player Giannis. Kostas Antetokounmpo, 21, was signed to a two-way contract by the Lakers. He appeared in two games for the Dallas Mavericks last season and played 40 games for the Texas Legends in the NBA's developmental G League.

Selected by the Philadelphia 76ers with the 60th

## Cowboys extend reign atop most valuable teams list

**HOUSTON:** The Dallas Cowboys were ranked the world's most valuable sports team for a fourth consecutive year according to an annual list published by Forbes on Monday that was dominated by National Football League clubs. The NFL's Cowboys, who unseated Spanish soccer club Real

overall pick in the 2018 NBA Draft, Antetokounmpo was acquired by the Mavericks in a draft-night trade. Kostas is one of three Antetokounmpo brothers to play in the NBA. The eldest, 27-year-old Thanasis, has played in Greece, the G League and signed with the Bucks this off season. That puts him on the team where Giannis has emerged as a superstar, leading Milwaukee to the best record in the NBA last season.

The Bucks fell to the eventual NBA champion Toronto Raptors in the Eastern Conference finals. When Giannis collected his MVP award, he thanked his brothers and his parents — Nigerian immigrants to Greece — in his speech. Giannis, Thanasis and Kostas have all been named in Greece's squad for the basketball World Cup that tips off in China on August 31. There's one more Antetokounmpo brother in the NBA pipeline, with teenager Alex hoping to make it there one day. — AFP

Madrid for top spot on the list in 2016, were valued at \$5 billion, a 4% rise when compared to last year, Forbes said in a statement.

Major League Baseball's New York Yankees, who last year enjoyed a 10% jump in attendance along with strong ratings on the team's YES Network, moved up three spots to sit second on the list with a value of \$4.6 billion. Real Madrid (\$4.2 billion), Spanish soccer club Barcelona (\$4.02 billion) and the National Basketball Association's New York Knicks (\$4 billion) rounded out the top five.

"The values of teams in major sports leagues are booming thanks to sky-high TV deals, both local and national," said Kurt Badenhausen, senior editor, Forbes Media. — Reuters

## Ireland set for landmark test against England

**LONDON:** Ireland's march to becoming a fully fledged member of cricket's elite will reach another important staging post when they play their first Test against England at Lord's today. The Irish men's side only made their Test debut last year, suffering a final day defeat by Pakistan in Dublin in a creditable display before being well beaten by fellow newcomers Afghanistan.

Since the turn of the century, Ireland have become known for their one-day exploits, beating the likes of Pakistan (2007) and England (2011) at World Cups. But Test status was always the dream. Now this match at Lord's is set to be the highlight of Ireland's year given they did not qualify for the reduced 10-team World Cup won just over a week ago by tournament hosts England in a thrilling final against New Zealand, which also took place at 'the home of cricket'.

The sport has a long history in Ireland and cricket was hugely popular there in the 19th Century. But a rising tide of Irish nationalism and the growth of the Gaelic Athletic Association led to cricket being declared a "garrison" or "foreign" game. Irish cricket went into something of a retreat although memorable occasions such as a televised win over the touring West Indies in 1969 helped to change attitudes.

Several of the present side have played county cricket, including Tim Murtagh, a stalwart for Lord's based-Middlesex, who recently took his 800th first-class wicket. Meanwhile fast bowler Boyd Rankin was briefly an England player when that was the only way Irishmen could play Test cricket before switching back.

### 'Dream come true'

"It is a dream come true, and it is something I never thought would happen in my playing career," said Rankin, who played just the one Test for England on their ill-fated 2013/14 Ashes tour of Australia. "You can't get much better than a Test match at Lord's." England will be resting several of their World Cup stars, including fast bowler Jofra Archer, all-rounder Ben Stokes and batsman Jos Buttler.

Eoin Morgan, their victorious Dublin-born captain, no longer plays Test cricket with Joe Root, a fellow World Cup winner, in charge. But they could still field Test new-ball bowler Stuart Broad, with all-time leading wicket-taker James Anderson struggling with a calf injury. Somerset's Lewis Gregory and Warwickshire's Olly Stone could come into the attack. As for the batting, England could give a Test debut to World Cup-winning opener Jason Roy.

The match will only last a maximum of four days rather than the standard five, a consequence both of being shoehorned into the narrow gap between the end of the World Cup and the start of England's five-Test Ashes series against Australia next month and a desire by officials to experiment with 'spectator friendly' playing hours. "It is one Test before the Ashes gets going so hopefully we can cash in," said England opener Rory Burns. "There is a chance to score runs here, so you have to back yourself and the game plan."

Certainly an Ireland win would be a huge upset for all they recently beat Zimbabwe in a one-day series. "In my generation I don't think any of us expected to be playing a Test match at Lord's, so to have the opportunity is great," said Ireland wicketkeeper Gary Wilson. "But we mustn't lose sight of the fact that we have to come here and perform as well. I mean that's what it is about, it's not just turning up and having all the fanfare around Lord's. "We have to try and put in a good performance against a very good England side, but we've got some good players as well and we're confident we can do that." — AFP

## Sports

# Chelsea clinch 2-1 win over Barcelona in Japan friendly

## Griezmann and de Jong make their unofficial debut

SAITAMA: Goals from Tammy Abraham and Ross Barkley saw Chelsea grab a 2-1 victory against Barcelona yesterday in an exhibition match in Japan. World Cup-winning French striker Antoine Griezmann and former Ajax midfielder Frenkie de Jong made their unofficial debut for the Spanish giants, pleasing some 51,126 fans who cheered every move during the star-studded game.

Chelsea striker Abraham opened the scoring in the 34th minute by pouncing on a mistake by Barcelona midfielder Sergio Busquets who attempted to clear the ball. But with Chelsea midfielder Jorginho applying pressure, the ball rolled towards Abraham who only had to step past rushing goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen and gently send it into the net. Chelsea coach Frank Lampard was all praise for his young striker. "Tammy, he is a goal scorer. He is hungry for goals," he said.

Despite facing a transfer ban, Lampard said Chelsea's two-game tour in Japan showed he had a "competitive" and "determined" team. "What I have learned about players was that they are a good strong group, a determined group. I am very happy," he said. "There is more work to do but it's been a good trip. It's been positive in all senses," he said.

Minutes after the first goal, Chelsea midfielder Christian Pulisic showed off his speed and footwork to infiltrate the Barca defence, but his left footer went just wide. Barcelona went on the offensive in the second half, with substitute striker Carles Perez leading the way. But superb saves by Chelsea goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga repeatedly denied Barca any attempt to equalize. In the 55th minute Perez zipped past three Chelsea defenders but his left toe kick finish was not good enough to get past Arrizabalaga. A few minutes later, he dashed deep

into the left side to feed a high-speed cross to striker Malcom, but Arrizabalaga again denied them.

### 'Dangerous' Griezmann

Chelsea made it 2-0 with less than 10 minutes left as midfielder Barkley picked up a cross in front of the box and curled it into the net, with substitute keeper Neto getting a touch but unable to block it. Just before injury time, Barcelona got a free kick just outside the box but midfielder Ivan Rakitic's shot went above the bar. Rakitic however quickly redeemed himself in injury time, picking up a cross and firing a lightning right footer that went deep into the net for a consolation goal for Barcelona.

Barca coach Ernesto Valverde, echoing Lampard, said the match was a good test that showed signs of excellence as well as areas to improve. Valverde was tightlipped about whether they were moving to acquire Neymar from French side Paris Saint-Germain. But he has high hopes for Griezmann, whose 120 million euro (\$135 million) transfer was contested by Atletico. Griezmann "needs to get used to the team and how we play".

"But he proved himself as a dangerous player on the ball. He has a lot of ideas," Valverde said through a translator. "This is only his debut game. He will have to fit into Barca's style. I am sure he will become better and better." Griezmann said he hoped to shine at his new club. "Personally, I want to play in many games, score more goals than the last season, more assists than last season," he said through a translator, adding that he had his eye on a "big title." The Spanish giants will play a friendly on Saturday against Japan's Vissel Kobe, who feature ex-Barca players Andres Iniesta, David Villa and Sergi Samper. — AFP



SAITAMA: Chelsea's English midfielder Ross Barkley (L) fights for the ball with Barcelona's midfielder Frenkie de Jong during a football friendly match between Spanish Liga team Barcelona and English Premier League club Chelsea. — AFP

## Guardiola blasts 'false' report of Man City 'disrespect' in China

HONG KONG: Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola blasted a report in Chinese state media as "false" yesterday after the Premier League champions were accused of showing "utter disrespect" during their tour of China. Guardiola hit out at the lengthy commentary posted on the English-language website of Xinhua, the state news agency, which said Manchester City snubbed fans and only visited China for commercial reasons.

"I don't agree but I should say too that it's false. To make a statement like this they have to know exactly what's happening in our club," Guardiola told media in Hong Kong. "I don't understand how people can say that. Maybe one journalist is a little bit upset, I don't know why. But it's far away from what is reality," he added. The opinion piece, which accused City of an "attitude of arrogance" and lashed out at arrangements for Chinese media, brought a sour end to a difficult tour of mainland China.

A frazzled City — minority-owned by a Chinese state investment company — arrived two days late and played two games in four days, before heading off for further friendlies in Hong Kong and

Japan. "So we came here, 23 hours. One day later we travelled two hours by train to play in another city, then came back to Shanghai and now here, and then we're going to Tokyo," Guardiola said. "And always with the biggest smile. We don't sleep that well during the night but we had good training sessions. I'm impressed with all my players, what they have done so far."

### Hong Kong protests

Guardiola, who earlier said the whirlwind visit was all about "survival", will take City into the Community Shield, the English season's curtain-raiser, against Liverpool in less than two weeks. England striker Raheem Sterling said he thought the players had made a "really good connection" with fans during their time in China.

"We took a little bit longer than we expected to get to China, the turnaround was a bit fast and there was a lot we had to catch up on as well. A lot of us have been struggling with sleep," he said. "But no, in China I thought it was a great experience. We all loved it." Guardiola also insisted he felt completely safe in Hong Kong, which has been rocked by



SHANGHAI: Manchester City's coach Pep Guardiola gives instructions during the match against Wolverhampton Wanderers' at the 2019 Premier League Asia Trophy football tournament at the Hongkou Stadium. — AFP

weeks of anti-government protests and where a stick-wielding mob indiscriminately attacked people at a railway station on Sunday, injuring dozens.

"I'm pretty sure that people are going to reach an agreement," he said. "Just sit and talk like human beings.

Both sides talk and talk and they are going to solve the problem." Today's friendly against Hong Kong club Kitchee could be affected by the political turmoil, as there have been calls for a protest against Hong Kong police during the game. — AFP

## Edu urges Arsenal to rediscover winning mentality

LONDON: Arsenal's new technical director Edu has challenged the Gunners to find a winning mentality as they bid to erase memories of last season's disappointments. The former Arsenal midfielder, who was a member of Arsene Wenger's 'Invincibles' squad who won the 2004 Premier League title without losing a game, says it is vital for the club to build the mental strength that was so key to their success in those glory days.

"To work with a strong mentality, you don't do it like that (instantly). You build a good mentality," Edu said in an interview with Arsenal Media, his first since returning to the club. "When you talk about mentality, it's not only the players. The club has to have the same mentality as the players. We have to have the same mentality, and the mentality of Arsenal, we always had to have winning in front of us. That's football. That's the real world."

Edu was working as Brazil's technical director before moving back to north London and is now

taking stock of the club's situation after arriving to work with boss Unai Emery as the Spaniard enters his second season with the Gunners. Last year the Gunners misfired badly, missing out on Champions League qualification after finishing fifth and suffering a Europa League final thrashing against Chelsea. The 41-year-old, who played under Emery at Valencia, says the key to a winning mentality and a good season is results. "When you're talking about good jobs, doing other things, without results I'm not sure (it works)," he says. "It's unfair maybe, but the reality is like that. We have to fight very hard for results and we have to understand the real world, where you live and where you are right now. So we are at Arsenal, we are a big club and we have to understand the situation."

Edu recalled how Wenger's squad would thrive off the continued quest for more success, which spread throughout the club. "I remember we were winning a lot of things, our team was really strong and there were big names around, but the mentality of the group, the guys around, the staff, was so great," he said. "We were working hard but at the same time, we were enjoying it. That was important because at the time winning was important, but you have to enjoy it as well and we did that with our group." Arsenal open their Premier League campaign away at Newcastle on August 11. — AFP



COMMERCE CITY: An Arsenal fan cheers at Dick's Sporting Goods Park. — AFP

## Bale won't leave Real Madrid on loan: Agent

LONDON: Gareth Bale will not be leaving Real Madrid on loan during the transfer window despite falling out of favour under Zinedine Zidane, his agent said yesterday. The Real boss said at the weekend the La Liga giants were poised to offload the 30-year-old Wales star. But his representative, Jonathan Barnett, told Sky Sports News any deal would have to be a permanent one.

"There will be no makeshift deals to get him out of the club," said Barnett, who said previously that Zidane has shown "no respect" for Bale's achievements at Real. "Gareth is one of the best players on the planet. I can guarantee you he will not be going on loan to any club." Bale has been deemed surplus to requirements at Real despite helping his side to a Spanish title and four Champions League crowns since arriving from Tottenham Hotspur six years ago.

His brace, including a brilliant bicycle kick, sank Liverpool in the 2018 final but he was not used as a regular starter by Zidane after the Frenchman returned to the Real bench in early March. "Gareth is a Real Madrid player and for now he's staying as a Real Madrid player," said Barnett. "If something comes along that suits us, then things could change and he could be gone in a day or a week. Or he could still be a Real player in three years, when his contract ends." Real are playing Arsenal in a friendly on Tuesday at the FedExField — home of the NFL's Washington Redskins.

Meanwhile Real Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane has denied disrespecting Wales star Gareth Bale as he discussed the expected transfer of the 30-year-old forward from the La Liga giants on Monday. Speaking to reporters on the eve of Real Madrid's friendly with Arsenal at FedEx Field — home of the NFL's Washington Redskins — Zidane said it was Bale who chose not to play in Madrid's 3-1 friendly defeat to Bayern in Houston on Saturday. "I did not disrespect anyone, least of all Gareth," a frustrated-sounding Zidane said. "I said that the club is working to facilitate Bale's departure, nothing more. The other day, Gareth did not dress for the game, he did not want to because the club was negotiating his departure," he added. Zidane had been branded a "disgrace" by Bale's agent for his comments after the Saturday match, when he said he hoped Bale's move from the club happened soon "for everyone's sake." — AFP

### News in brief

#### De Gea keen to captain United

LONDON: Manchester United goalkeeper David de Gea, reported to be on the verge of agreeing a six-year contract extension, has said he would welcome being captain of the Premier League club. De Gea, 28, has long been linked with a move away from Old Trafford but said he wanted to help the team return to the summit of English soccer at a supporters' event in Singapore. United's previous captain Antonio Valencia left at the end of last season and De Gea is one of several players in the frame to replace him along with Ashley Young, Juan Mata, Chris Smalling and Paul Pogba. "I've been captain for some games. Of course it is amazing to be captain of a club like Manchester United and defend this badge," De Gea said. "It's amazing, so of course I'll be really, really happy to captain. It's my ninth season, I feel like one of the most experienced players. We have to improve a lot. We are Manchester United, we need to fight for trophies. When you put on this badge, that's what it means - fight for everything, give your best and bring the team again to the top." United, who have not lost a match on their pre-season tour so far, beating Perth Glory, Leeds United and Inter Milan, take on Tottenham Hotspur in Shanghai on Thursday. — Reuters

#### Fekir moves to Real Betis

LYON: Olympique Lyonnais captain Nabil Fekir has moved to Spain's Real Betis for an initial 19.75 million euros (\$22.12 million) fee, the French club has said. The attacking midfielder was a target for Liverpool last season but the deal fell through after the player failed a medical and the French club decided to sell him to Betis after he entered the final year of his contract. The deal for the 26-year-old Frenchman includes up to an additional 10 million euros in add-ons and Lyon will also receive a 20% sell-on fee if he leaves Betis. "Olympique Lyonnais thanks Nabil for all he has brought to the club, for his professionalism and especially for his involvement in the professional group as team captain." Fekir's younger brother Yassin, 22, has also moved to Betis, with Lyon to receive 50% of any future transfer fee for the striker if he leaves the La Liga side. Nabil Fekir scored 69 goals in nearly 200 matches with Lyon, becoming club captain in 2017 before winning the World Cup with France last year. — Reuters

#### Brazil women's coach resigns

SAO PAULO: Brazil have parted ways with Vadao, the coach of their women's football team, the country's football confederation said on Monday. "After a year and 10 months, following his second stint with the CBF, the coach Oswaldo Alvarez, (aka) Vadao, is no longer in charge of the Brazilian women's team," the CBF said in a statement. Vadao, who previously coached the team for two years from 2014, was removed just four weeks after Brazil were knocked out the World Cup by France. His team had lost their previous nine games before the tournament but performed well enough to reach the last 16 where they were beaten 2-1 by the hosts after extra-time. Under Vadao's tutelage, they reached the semi-finals of the 2016 Olympic tournament in Rio and won two Copas America and a Pan American Games title. "The CBF is working to define the name of a new coach for the women's team in as short a time period as possible," it added. — Reuters

**25** Twins hit five HRs, turn triple play en route to 8-6 win over Yankees



**26** Oldest slinger in town: Sri Lanka to bid farewell to shaggy-haired Malinga



**27** Chelsea clinch 2-1 win over Barcelona in Japan friendly



## WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS GWANGJU 2019



GWANGJU: Gold medalist China's Sun Yang (2L), silver medalist Japan's Katsuhiko Matsumoto (L) and tie bronze medalists Russia's Martin Malyutin (2R) and Britain's Duncan Scott (R) after the final of the men's 200m freestyle event during the swimming competition at the 2019 World Championships at Nambu University Municipal Aquatics Center. — AFP

# Sun rages at Scott over medals snub

**A furious Sun barked at him 'You lose, I win!'**

GWANGJU: Chinese juggernaut Sun Yang suffered another salty snub yesterday after retaining his 200 meters freestyle world title on a controversial disqualification that sparked howls of protest. Lithuania's Danas Rapsys beat the Olympic champion to the wall in a pulsating final, only to see the dreaded "DQ" flash up on the giant screen for having twitched on the starting blocks.

Briton Duncan Scott, who tied for the bronze medal, refused to shake Sun's hand on the podium — as Australian Mack Horton had after losing to the Chinese giant in the weekend's 400m final. Sun is competing under a doping cloud after a leaked FINA report alleged that he smashed blood samples with a hammer after being visited by testers last year.

Scott also declined to step up to the top step for

official photos, prompting a furious Sun to bark at him "You lose, I win!" as they walked downstairs for their lap of honor. The European champion then marched away from the pool deck, leaving Sun and the other medalists to pose for more photographs, triggering loud jeers from Chinese fans. Scott blanked waiting journalists but fellow Briton Adam Peaty backed his team mate.

"He's completely right," said Peaty after qualifying fastest for Wednesday's 50m breaststroke final. "(Sun) should be asking himself whether he should really be in the sport," he added. "I wouldn't have gone on the podium. The most important thing as a sportsperson is you have the right to a voice and Duncan showed his voice." Sun, branded a "drug cheat" by Horton at the 2016 Rio Olympics over a previous three-month ban for

taking a stimulant he maintains was for a heart condition, pumped his fists and let out a throaty roar after being gifted an 11th world title.

### 'I want my gold back'

Greeted like a rock star by a noisy section of adoring female fans, Sun clocked one minute, 44.93 with Japan's Katsuhiko Matsumoto (1:45.22) pocketing silver as Scott and Russia's Martin Malyutin (1:45.63) shared the bronze. "That maybe my luckiest ever gold medal," said Sun after his sixth race of the week. "But fortune rewards those who work hard and I've been working so hard for this." South African Chad le Clos, runner-up to Sun in the 200m free at the Olympics, said: "It's good that people are taking a stand — I want my gold medal back from Rio and (fourth-placed) James Guy should

get his bronze, because it shouldn't be allowed to have people cheating in sport."

American Lilly King, who let rip at Sun and FINA doping controls earlier this week, beat Russian rival Yulia Efimova — another former convicted doper — to retain her women's 100m breaststroke crown in 1:04.93. Elsewhere, Italy's Simona Quadarella snaffled gold in the women's 1,500m free in a final missing American great Katie Ledecky, who pulled out of her title defense after feeling unwell. "I can't stop crying," sobbed the 2017 bronze medalist after going 15:40.89 to claim an unexpected upgrade. Canada's Kylie Masse claimed her second successive women's 100m backstroke title in 58.60 while China's Xu Jiayu matched her by retaining his men's 100m backstroke crown with a time of 52.43. — AFP

## Ewan wins again as Alaphilippe keeps Tour lead

NIMES: Caleb Ewan sprinted to his second victory on the Tour de France yesterday as Frenchman Julian Alaphilippe kept the overall lead after stage 16, where Geraint Thomas fell but finished with all the main contenders. As France experienced a heatwave defending champion Thomas mis-timed a curb and was left with a gash on his left leg after hitting the tarmac hard on the 177km run around the southern city of Nimes.

After his third fall during this Tour, Team Ineos' sports director Nicolas Portal said Thomas felt fine. "He's OK, he needed another bike. All his left side is a bit messed up but nothing serious," he said. "We have to refocus after the rest day," added Portal. Thomas remains 1min 35sec behind Alaphilippe in the overall standings ahead of three challenging days in the Alps.

He also tumbled after flying over a barrier in the wild atmosphere in Brussels on the opening day, and again on the road to Saint-Etienne on stage eight. This time the 33-year-old had no problem getting back to the pack on a flat stage with no wind to split the peloton. Ewan meanwhile was following up his victory on stage 11 at Toulouse and with Nimes melting under 35 degrees Celsius (95 Fahrenheit) the Australian was favorite for a repeat performance, this time edging Italian Elia Viviani on the line.

Some fans stayed away due the extreme afternoon heat on this southern French route, but the conditions failed to slow the peloton as it sped past the celebrated regional vineyards and olive groves. One of the great pre-race favorites Jakob Fuglsang, the Criterium du Dauphine champion, pulled out with 25km to go after falling and



NIMES: Stage winner Australia's Caleb Ewan celebrates his victory on the podium of the sixteenth stage of the 106th edition of the Tour de France cycling race between Nimes and Nimes. — AFP

hurting his hand.

Dehydration was a major issue as team cars were carrying an average of 200 water bottles, many of them with added minerals and saline with riders expected to drink 15 of the half liter bidons each. Wednesday's 17th stage sees the Tour head north towards its Alpine reckoning with a 200km run from the Pont du Gard bridge in the Camargue to Gap, where bonus seconds atop a climb 10km from the finish line ensure further drama ahead of the three much awaited stages that follow it. — AFP

## Cristiano Ronaldo will not face rape charges in US

LOS ANGELES: Juventus star Cristiano Ronaldo will not face any charges over an alleged rape in Las Vegas a decade ago after US prosecutors said Monday they did not have enough evidence to proceed. A district attorney in the state of Nevada said it would not prosecute the Portuguese soccer player because it "cannot be proven beyond a reasonable doubt" that a sexual assault occurred.

Kathryn Mayorga, a former model, alleges that Ronaldo raped her in a Las Vegas hotel in 2009. The former Manchester United and Real Madrid forward reached a financial settlement with her one year after the incident. He has always denied allegations of sexual assault, insisting their encounter was consensual. The Clark County District Attorney's Office said it had received a report from Mayorga — who it identified only as "V"

— on June 13, 2009, reporting that she had been the victim of a sexual assault.

Police could not conduct "any meaningful investigation" at the time because she declined to say who assaulted her or where it occurred, the office said in a statement. As a result, detectives were "unable to search for and impound vital forensic evidence," and video showing Ronaldo and Mayorga together was lost, it added. Mayorga contacted police in August of last year to ask that the case be reopened, at which point she named Ronaldo as the alleged assailant.

The case was reopened "in spite of the passage of over nine year," prosecutors said. "Based upon a review of the information presented at this time, the allegations of sexual assault against Cristiano Ronaldo cannot be proven beyond a reasonable doubt," prosecutors said. "Therefore, no charges will be forthcoming."

Mayorga's attorney has stated that she agreed to an out-of-court settlement to keep her name from going public, but was later inspired to speak out by the #MeToo movement against sexual harassment. Mayorga has also said that her emotional trauma at the time did not allow her to participate in the mediation process for the financial settlement. — AFP