

# Friday Times

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## Local

## Policing Kuwait's charities



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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It seems the ministry of social affairs in Kuwait has decided to launch reforms to protect local NGOs, especially those working in the charity sector. The ministry announced that it will request expatriate workers of these NGOs to provide a certificate of clean criminal record and conduct, meaning they are not wanted by authorities for any crime or have been convicted. I believe this paper is important for work in any field, but when it comes to charity and collecting money from the public, it is essential and not a matter of doubt.

Because there has to be a way to ensure that the person has no connection with any prohibited groups or terrorist organizations, or activities that are contrary to the state's laws and regulations. NGOs and the charity field have to be protected and secured. This announcement came after the arrest of some employees at a Kuwaiti charity in the case of the Brotherhood cell and it appears that the ministry is now serious in establishing new rules to recruit expatriates in these associations to ensure the preservation of the reputation of charity work of Kuwait. Well done!

I think the terror cell was a big and bad hit to Kuwait and to charity workers and fundraising, because there were a lot of questions about how these persons were able to sneak into Kuwait to work while they were convicted in their country by Egyptian courts to 15 years in prison. The cell managed to escape from the Egyptian security authorities, making Kuwait as their headquarters until they were all arrested. The detainees confessed to carrying out operations in various locations inside Egypt, and investigations are still ongoing to reveal who helped them. Such people can destroy the image of Kuwaiti charity internationally.

There is no distinction between citizens and expatriates when it comes to the request of a clean criminal record certificate to get a job. It is important to check the person's data to ascertain whether the person has any criminal restrictions or is required by any security authority. The certificate is usually approved by the security administration and given upon request. The employer has the right to know about the behavior of a person and the police is the only official body authorized to issue such certificates of good conduct according to certain procedures.

I was personally surprised that this requirement had been delayed because it is important that those working in the field of charity should not have suspicions or affiliations with prohibited and criminal groups. I hope no leniency is shown over this requirement in the future, because the biggest victim is the reputation of Kuwait and not those people.

In addition, the ministry of social affairs and labor requested from the Municipality prior approval of the ministry or coordination with it in the event an NGO submits a request to issue publications or advertisements. The ministry said it had found publication of magazines and advertisements by some charities without obtaining prior approval.

There was a decision by the Council of Ministers in 2004 on the rules and regulations governing public benefit associations, stipulating that the association may not conduct any activity, including the issuance of publications, fundraising or any other activities without obtaining the approval of official bodies.

I always warn against sending money to unknown individuals, but there are still those who do so despite warnings issued by the ministry of social affairs. I think there is a real effort to preserve the reputation of charitable work of Kuwait, because the damage will be great if we do not protect members of the community from terrorist groups that want to infiltrate into Kuwait and make charitable organizations their hidden nests.

## Miniature ships made of matches, an intriguing hobby



**KUWAIT:** Kuwaitis and Gulf citizens growing up on marine culture are known to create miniature dhows and ships recalling days long gone. Adding a new and intriguing twist to the hobby, Ahmad Hussein spends months and around eight to nine hours daily designing small dhows and ships in a solemn effort to continue the legacy of those who came before him. — KUNA





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Minister of Information Mohammad Al-Jabri handed the Kuwaiti flag to a sailor.



The families bid farewell to their sons.

## Kuwait celebrates maritime heritage with pearl diving trip

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** Under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the 31st Pearl Diving Trip kicked off yesterday with the traditional ceremony of 'Dasha' which celebrates the start of Kuwait's annual pearl diving trip.

Nearly 200 Kuwaiti youth, aged between 14 to 20 years old are taking part in the event, in addition to 13 wooden ships, donated by His Highness the Amir and the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. The youth divers who are involved in the annual tradition are expected to stay at sea until first of August.

Information Minister Mohammad Al-Jabri spoke during the launching ceremony, saying that the support of the Amir for this ceremony is an affirmation of His Highness' interest in the Kuwaiti youth in all fields to teach them the national values inherited from their parents and grandparents to build the new Kuwait.

He added "The anniversary of pearl diving will be firmly in our memories and a wonderful example of determination and overcoming difficulties.

It is certain that this celebration evokes the values of giving and national unity, towards a brighter future with the wisdom of its leadership and its sons in building, development, and stability of the country."

The minister thanked and praised the efforts of the Kuwait Sea Sports Club for its continuous involvement in the pearl diving trip, stressing that it was important to continue this tradition which is an integral part of Kuwait's history.

During the voyage, the youth will learn a variety of skills and participate in many activities including diving, collecting the oysters, team work, ship care, learning the sailor's songs, how to work in a team environment. The sailors also learn about Kuwait's pearling and maritime history, including stories about the most famous dhows.

The 'Dasha' ceremony was attended by senior officials, club executives, and family members of the sailors.



US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman with Minister of Information Mohammad Al-Jabri, at the Kuwait Pearl Diving Voyage launching ceremony. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



The young Kuwaiti sailors leaving for a week's voyage.



## Local



## KUWAITI-HELD EVENT CELEBRATES SOUTH KOREAN CULTURE

**C**elebrating 40 years of diplomatic relations with South Korea, Kuwait's Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Centre is hosting a week-long cultural festival dedicated to the East Asian nation. The event, which was inaugurated on Wednesday by South Korean Ambassador Hong Youngki, aims to showcase South Korea's heritage, traditions and crafts. Competitions and performances common to the Changwon Festival for K-Pop, a modern form of music which has now become globally renowned, will take center stage at the event, along with a folk dance, depicting stories from the country's rich ancient history. Workshops will be held for make-up and hair accessories and traditional cooking alongside the production of jewelry in the country. Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Centre opened its doors to the public in March 2018 with the ambition of becoming one of the world's largest cultural projects. Named after the inspiring Kuwaiti leader, the late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem, it includes a Natural History Museum, Science and Technology Museum, Arabic Islamic Science Museum, Space Museum, Fine Arts Centre, and Theatre. — KUNA





Local



KUWAIT: Models dressed in a Korean traditional 'Hanbok' perform during a show held at Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Centre on Wednesday, on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of diplomatic ties between the Republic of Korea and the State of Kuwait. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat





## Local

# Adasani says to grill premier: Former MP received money from PM office

## Lawmaker wants shops shut for Friday prayers

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** Opposition MP Riyadh Al-Adasani vowed yesterday he would file to grill Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah over claims by a former lawmaker that he received money from the premier's office. Adasani said that the grilling is ready and he will file it once the case goes to court and insisted that if the assembly prevents its debate, he will file more grillings.

The case dates back to several years ago when ex-MP Abdullah Al-Tameemi said when he was an active lawmaker that he received money from the premier's office as an assistance for a Kuwaiti citizens. At that time, MPs called for an investigation into the issue claiming this amounted to bribery.

Several months ago, Adasani raised the issue again and mentioned the name of Tameemi who sued him in court for defamation. The case is still being investigated by the public prosecution which can either press charges or shelve the case.

Adasani said that if the case goes to court, he will demand that the premier testify as a witness in the case. He also said that he will then file the grilling and if the assembly scraps it, he will file a second, a third, a fourth and so on. He said he will also highlight other financial scandals including the so-called deposits case in which several MPs were accused of receiving millions of dinars in political bribes.

Adasani also recalled a case he recently raised in which incumbent MPs and some merchants are accused of money laundering. He said the case is being investigated by the public

prosecution and the merchant has been detained. The lawmaker insisted that he will not leave these financial cases and could go further to demand the confidential spending of the premier to be probed.

In another issue, MP Thamer Al-Suwait yesterday filed a draft law calling to force a mandatory shutdown of all shops, cooperative societies, malls and others during the Friday (Juma) prayer. The draft law proposes a fine of up to KD 1,000 for violators and the closure of the violating shop for one month. The bill does not propose a duration for the closure but left that for by-laws.

The lawmaker said that it is clearly stated in the Holy Quran that work must be completely halted during the Friday prayer and accordingly shops should be closed. The issue was raised before in the assembly but no decision was made.

## Govt studying subsidized gas proposals

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** The government is studying parliamentary proposals to provide citizens with subsidized gasoline prices and give financial allowance to Kuwaitis, said government sources, noting however that such proposals would not be put for debate in the National Assembly during the next term. The upcoming term is the last for the current assembly, which does not leave enough time to discuss such important topic and pass necessary regulations, the sources explained. Meanwhile, the sources noted that the government is not ignoring calls to impose fees on expatriates' money transfers, noting that the subject is on the agenda of the next Parliamentary term as many MPs are in support of this proposal.

In other news, Ministry of Electricity and Water's Assistant Undersecretary for Power Stations and Water Desalination Engineer Khalifa Al-Furaj said 74,680 million gallons were produced during the first half of 2019, adding that the strategic water reserves reached safe levels during that period. He said water consumption reached 74,722 million imperial gallons with a consumption percentage of less than 2 percent compared with the same period during last year.

## Iraqi delegation due in Kuwait for economic cooperation

**BAGHDAD:** Speaker of the Iraqi parliament will pay an official visit to Kuwait tomorrow — his third mission to the neighboring country since taking office. The parliament spokesperson, Hamed Shaker, said in a statement that Al-Halbousi would head an official delegation including the Cabinet Secretary General, Hamid Al-Ghazzi, Chair of the Reconstruction Fund Mustafa Al-Haiti, ten governors, the head of the parliamentary oil and energy commission, Haibat Al-Halbousi, and the chairman of the energy committee, Sherko Miroy. The Iraqi officials and legislators will discuss with their Kuwaiti counterparts means of investing the \$30 billion fund, pledged at the previously held Kuwaiti conference for aiding Iraq. The visit coincides with mutual efforts to cement and expand economic and commercial relations, with plans to carve out a free trade zone, facilitate cross-border commodities' transport and businesses. Officials from the two countries, during a landmark visit by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to Iraq on June 19, held consultations on best avenues for boosting the relations and cooperation in the economic and business sectors. —KUNA

## Firemen help overweight patient to hospital

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Farwaniya rescue teams responded to an emergency call made to help an Arab man who suffers from mobility difficulties due to his heavy weight, and needed to go to hospital. Firemen used a special equipment to lift the man and hand him over to paramedics. Separately, Salmiya and Bidaa firemen put out flames that burned car spare parts which were kept in a building's yard in Salmiya. Firemen managed to put out the fire before spreading to nearby stores and cars.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Municipality said that Hawally branch carried out a campaign which resulted in the removal of 217 encroachments on state property, and detected 22 violations of cleanliness rules. Team Leader Ahmad Ramadan said inspectors issued 95 encroachment warnings and 21 warnings inside violating buildings, removed 258 illegal signs, and placed 17 warning stickers on abandoned cars.

In other news, Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt Gen Essam Al-Naham visited injured police academy student Dughaiman Al-Humaidi in Sabah Hospital. Lt Gen Naham conveyed wishes of



**KUWAIT:** Firemen and paramedics help an overweight patient to hospital.

Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Lt Gen Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah for speedy recovery.

## Kuwaiti, Saudi officials discuss resuming Neutral Zone oil production

**CAIRO:** OPEC members Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have discussed resuming oil production in jointly operated fields in the Saudi-Kuwaiti Neutral Zone, Kuwaiti state news agency KUNA said on Wednesday. Saudi Arabia's minister of state for energy affairs visited Kuwait to "continue to discuss and cooperate on the resumption of oil production in the southern [Neutral Zone] after settling all required technical issues from both sides," KUNA said, quoting a Kuwaiti government spokesman.

The Saudi-Kuwaiti Neutral Zone, or Divided Zone, is an area of 5,770 square km between the two countries' borders that was left undefined when the border was established in 1922. The two countries halted output from the jointly run oil-fields - Khafji and Wafra - more than four years ago, cutting some 500,000 barrels per day or 0.5 percent of global oil supply.

In February, Saudi energy minister Khalid Al-Falih said the country expected to reach an agreement this year to resume oil output from the Neutral Zone. Washington has been pressing its top Gulf ally Riyadh to reduce crude prices by increasing production. Neutral Zone oil output is divided equally between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

The Wafra field is operated by state-run Kuwait Gulf Oil Co and Chevron on behalf of Saudi Arabia. The Khafji field is operated by state oil giant Saudi Aramco and Kuwait Gulf Oil. Tensions have been simmering since the last decade, when Kuwait was angered by a Saudi decision to prolong Chevron's Wafra concession until 2039 without consulting Kuwait. — Reuters



# US blocks UN rebuke of Israeli demolition of Palestinian homes

## Kuwait, Indonesia and South Africa draft statement condemning Israel

**UNITED NATIONS:** The United States on Wednesday blocked an attempt by Kuwait, Indonesia and South Africa to get the United Nations Security Council to condemn Israel's demolition of Palestinian homes on the outskirts of Jerusalem, diplomats said.

Israel said the 10 apartment buildings demolished on Monday, most of them still under construction, had been built illegally and posed a security risk to Israeli armed forces operating along a barrier that runs through the occupied West Bank. UN officials, who had called on Israel to halt the demolition plans, said 17 Palestinians faced displacement.

Kuwait, Indonesia and South Africa circulated a five-paragraph draft statement, seen by Reuters, to the 15-member Security Council on Tuesday that expressed grave concern and warned that the demolition "undermines the viability of the two-state solution and the prospect for just and lasting peace."

Such statements have to be agreed by consensus and on Wednesday the United States told its council counterparts it could not support the text, diplomats said. A revised three paragraph draft

statement was circulated, but the United States again said it did not agree with the text, diplomats said. The United States has long accused the United Nations of anti-Israel bias and shielded its ally from council action.

The demolition of the Palestinian buildings is part of the latest round of protracted wrangling over the future of Jerusalem, home to more than 500,000 Israelis and 300,000 Palestinians. The Palestinians want a state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with east Jerusalem as the capital, all territory captured by Israel in 1967.

US President Donald Trump's Middle East envoy Jason Greenblatt and senior Trump adviser Jared Kushner have spent two years developing a peace plan they hope will provide a framework for renewed talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

Greenblatt told the Security Council on Tuesday a peace plan cannot rely on global consensus, inconclusive international law and "unclear" UN resolutions, sparking pushback from several countries. He said a decision on the release of the political component of the US plan would be made "soon." The buildings demolished on Monday were near what Israel describes as a security bar-



**DAR SALAH:** A picture taken in Dar Salah on Wednesday shows Akram Zwahreh sitting on top of the rubble of his house during a tour for Fatah Movement to the site of demolished buildings in the West Bank, adjacent to the area of Sur Baher in East Jerusalem. — AFP

rier. The initial draft Security Council statement described the construction of the wall by Israel as contrary to international law.

Israel credits the barrier - projected to be 720

km (450 miles) long when complete - with stemming Palestinian attacks. Palestinians call it a land grab designed to annex parts of the West Bank, including Israeli settlements. — Reuters

## Kuwait expresses grave concern over security situation in West Africa

**NEW YORK:** The State of Kuwait expressed late Wednesday grave concern over the deteriorating security situation in West Africa and the Sahel amid terrorist attacks which "have disrupted stability in a number of countries." Speaking to the UN security Council meeting tackling potential sources of conflict in West Africa and Sahel region, Kuwait Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi called on regional governments and the international community to intensify efforts to address the cause of violence. He welcomed the Economic Community of West African States' (ECOWAS) coordination of regional efforts in that to bring peace and stability.

"Kuwait supports all regional initiatives focused on preserving stability," he said, stressing that suicide attacks and attacks on herders and farmers have increased poverty, hunger and displacement. "In 2019, 14 million people will need humanitarian assistance in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Nigeria," he added, urging all parties to respect international humanitarian law and allow aid workers unfettered access to civilians. The United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) has an important and essential role in supporting the political process in the region, indicated Otaibi who praised the role played by the UN Special Representative Mohamed Ibn Chambas in backing up the political and election processes in Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria and Benin.

### Regional cooperation

Meanwhile, Kuwait commended recent positive steps taken by Congo's President Felix Tshisekedi, including tours of Kenya, Angola, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Gabon and Guinea to promote regional cooperation. Addressing a UN Security Council session on Congo, Otaibi appreciated the efforts of the Congolese leader to maintain regional security and stability and to provide



**NEW YORK:** Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi speaks during a UN security Council meeting tackling potential sources of conflict in West Africa and Sahel region. — KUNA

political freedom by freeing political prisoners and unleashing the freedom of expression. He said that such favorable efforts undoubtedly reflect Tshisekedi's interest in creating a congenial environment for reform and development.

The Kuwaiti diplomat also spoke highly of the Congolese president's decision to set up a national observation mechanism for the peace agreement between Congo and regional countries, along with his determination to reform judiciary, fight impunity and back disarmament programs. He also hailed the outcomes of a recent meeting in Kinshasa, which was attended by the security and intelligence chiefs of Congo and neighboring countries and produced an all-out approach to fight armed groups in east Congo. In this context, Otaibi welcomed the support and help of regional and international organizations and partners to Congo at this critical time.

On security, the Kuwaiti diplomat said in spite of security improvement in Congo, violence, armed conflicts, murder, abduction and attacks on military positions are still unabated and worrying. He called on all armed groups to stop such armed and violent acts in order to avoid more bloodshed and ensure security and stability. As for the humanitarian situation, he cautioned that it is very worrying at some Congolese areas as a result of lingering conflicts among armed groups. In this regard, he said 8.12 million people are in need of pressing humanitarian aid, and approximately 13.1 million Congolese people are caught in food insecurity, not to mention 2,000 Ebola epidemic cases. However, the Kuwaiti diplomat commended the efforts of the Congolese Health Ministry, the UN and World Health Organization (WHO) to fight Ebola, while urging armed groups to stop attacks on medics. — KUNA

## Abbas appreciates Kuwait stance on Palestinian affairs



**AMMAN:** Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas meets with Kuwaiti Ambassador to Jordan Aziz Al-Daihani. — KUNA

**AMMAN:** Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas "greatly appreciates" Kuwait's principled and honorable position on Palestinian affairs, the Kuwaiti Ambassador to Jordan said on Wednesday. After meeting the president in Amman, Ambassador Aziz Al-Daihani said Abbas also praised His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as a wise Arab leader. Amid their talks, the president said he was extremely grateful for Kuwait's ongoing support to the Palestinian people and its global endeavors aimed at defending their rights. The ambassador had conveyed the greetings of Kuwait's leadership and its people to the Palestinian president, and underlined Kuwait's commitment to the "primary and fundamental" Arab issue. Last year, Kuwait thwarted a United Nations Security Council draft statement condemning Palestinian resistance in Gaza. Kuwait's representative at the Security Council Mansour Al-Otaibi also presented a draft resolution aimed at the protection of Palestinian civilians in Gaza and the West Bank, which gained unanimous approval, only to be vetoed by the US. — KUNA





UK PM brings Brexit gang back together

**Grannies for Future: 100-year-old German enters politics**



**TUNIS:** Tunisian police officers gather outside the Military Hospital in Tunis following the death of President Beji Caid Essebsi (inset). Essebsi, the North African country's first democratically elected leader, died at the age of 92. — AFP

# Tunisia president dies at 92

## Parliament speaker to serve as president temporarily

**TUNIS:** Tunisia's 92-year-old president, Beji Caid Essebsi, who helped guide the North African country's transition to democracy after a 2011 revolution, has died, the presidency said yesterday. A leading figure in the country's fortunes since 2011, Essebsi was hospitalized late last month for a week after suffering what authorities described as a severe health crisis.

"Yesterday morning, the President of the Republic died at the military hospital in Tunis...The burial ceremony will be announced later," a presidency statement said. The speaker of parliament, Mohamed Ennaceur, said he would be the country's temporary president, in line with the constitution. In a speech on national television, Ennaceur also called for unity following Essebsi's passing.

The prime minister declared seven days of national mourning. A source said Ennaceur's swearing in would take place at 1300 GMT. Essebsi had been a prominent politician in

Tunisia since the overthrow of veteran autocrat Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali in 2011, which was followed by uprisings against authoritarian leaders across the Middle East, including in nearby Libya and Egypt.

Drafted in as prime minister in 2011 after Ben Ali was toppled, Essebsi was elected president three years later, becoming the country's first directly elected head of state after its "Arab Spring" uprising. Parliamentary elections are expected to be held on Oct. 6 with a presidential vote following on Nov. 17. They will be the third set of polls in which Tunisians have been able to vote freely following the 2011 revolution. The presidency statement called on Tunisians to unite and safeguard their country's present and future.

"After the revolution, the president led the people to avoid confrontation and led the democratic transition and was keen to build and complete the constitutional institutions," it said. Analyst Ibrahim Ouslati said the death of Essebsi, one of the world's oldest leaders,

was not likely to disrupt politics. "I don't think there will be any problem because Tunisians have a constitution that clearly shows that the speaker of the parliament occupies the position temporarily," he said. "Politically, there will be no problem. The political elite has enough awareness to manage it wisely like any democratic country."

Tunisia has been hailed as the only democratic success of the Arab Spring uprisings, with a new constitution, free elections and a coalition government with secular and moderate Islamists in a region otherwise struggling with upheaval. But political progress has not been matched by economic advances. Unemployment stands at about 15 percent, up from 12 percent in 2010, due to weak growth and low investment. Essebsi's death comes at a time of fresh attempts to replace dictatorships with democracy in the Middle East.

The armed forces of neighboring Algeria and Sudan ousted long-serving rulers of those countries after mass protests. But it

remains unclear whether greater freedoms will result. Rached Ghannouchi, the influential leader of Tunisia's moderate Islamist Ennahda Party, said Essebsi was credited with leading a smooth transition to democracy by promoting inclusive politics. Essebsi faced criticism that he was seeking a return to a strong state with power concentrated in the presidency, whose role is limited to foreign and defence policies under the new constitution.

Critics also accused Essebsi of attempting a dynastic handover, rowing back on post-revolution freedoms, and failing to support a truth commission seeking justice for the victims of authoritarian rule. Tunisia has been spared much of the violence seen elsewhere in the Middle East since 2011, although it has been the target of militant Islamists over the years. Government troops have been battling militant groups in remote areas near the border with Algeria, while high unemployment has also stoked unrest in recent years. — Reuter



## International

# Trump vetoes measures blocking arms sales to Saudi Arabia, UAE

## Riyadh, allies thwart new Yemen rebel drone attack

**WASHINGTON:** President Donald Trump on Wednesday vetoed three congressional resolutions barring billions of dollars in weapons sales to countries including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which are engaged in a devastating war in Yemen. The resolutions "would weaken America's global competitiveness and damage the important relationships we share with our allies and partners," Trump said in letters to the Senate justifying blocking them.

It is the third time the president has employed his veto power since taking office. The measures cleared Congress this month in a strong rebuke to Trump, whose administration took the extraordinary step of bypassing legislators to approve the sales in May. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had said the administration was responding to an emergency caused by Saudi Arabia's arch-foe Iran.

But lawmakers including some Senate Republicans said there were no legitimate grounds to circumvent Congress, which has the right to disapprove arms sales. Senator Lindsey Graham delivered a stinging rebuke to Riyadh last month, saying he hoped his vote against the sales would "send a signal to Saudi Arabia that if you act the way you're acting, there is no space for a strategic relationship."

The senator was referring to last year's brutal murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Turkey at the hands of Saudi agents, an incident that outraged lawmakers and triggered a full-

blown crisis in Riyadh's relations with the West. Critics also say the arms sales would aggravate the war in Yemen, where Saudi Arabia is leading a US-backed coalition that also includes the UAE in a battle against the Iranian-supported Houthi rebels.

### Worst humanitarian crisis

The UN says the conflict has triggered the world's worst humanitarian crisis. But Trump argued Wednesday that barring the sale of US weapons "would likely prolong the conflict in Yemen and deepen the suffering it causes," and that "without precision-guided munitions, more-not fewer-civilians are likely to become casualties."

The US president also pointed to Iran in justifying blocking the resolutions. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are "a bulwark against the malign activities of Iran and its proxies in the region," and the arms sale licenses Congress sought to block enhance their "ability to deter and defend against these threats," he argued. Tensions between Washington and Tehran have soared since Trump pulled the US out of a deal with Iran last year that was aimed at curbing its nuclear program, and imposed punishing sanctions.

The US has said it brought down one and possibly two Iranian drones last week, and has blamed Iran for a series of mysterious attacks on tanker ships in strategic Gulf waters. Tehran shot down an unmanned US aircraft in June,

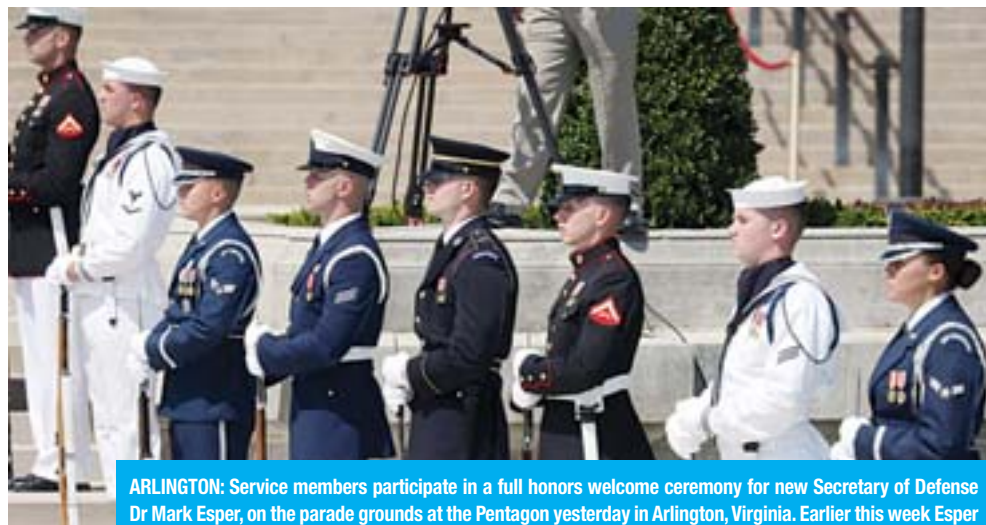
freely elected president in 2010 and was re-elected five years later. He has repeatedly questioned the relevance of presidential term limits, raising the possibility of running again in 2020. In southern Africa's kingdom of Lesotho, Thomas Thabane, 80, has been prime minister since 2017. Malawi's Peter Mutharika, who recently celebrated his 80th birthday, was re-elected as president in May, provoking months of protests.

### Kings

In Saudi Arabia, King Salman, 83, took over the reins of power in January 2015, after the death of his half-brother Abdullah. He has gradually handed over responsibilities to his son, Prince Mohammed bin Salman, 33, who became crown prince in June 2017. Norwegian King Harald V, 82, came to the throne in 1991.

### Around the world

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, 80, became the regime's top authority in 1989, taking over from its founder, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. In Lebanon, former army general Michel Aoun, 84, was elected president in 2016 for a single-term mandate of six years. Pope Francis, 82, is the Vatican's head of state, becoming the first Jesuit and Latin American pontiff in 2013. In Laos, President Bounngang Vorachit, 81, has been ruler of his small communist country since 2016. —AFP



**ARLINGTON:** Service members participate in a full honors welcome ceremony for new Secretary of Defense Dr Mark Esper, on the parade grounds at the Pentagon yesterday in Arlington, Virginia. Earlier this week Esper was sworn in as the 27th Secretary of Defense. —AFP

after which Trump announced that he had called off air strikes on Iran at the last minute because the resulting death toll would have been too high. Trump has said that the choice between war and diplomacy with Iran "could go either way," and that he is "okay either way it goes."

### Rebel drone attack

In another development, Saudi air defenses intercepted a Yemeni rebel drone targeting a

southwestern city yesterday, a Riyadh-led military coalition said, as cross-border attacks by the rebels showed no let-up. The rebels' top political leader, Mahdi Al-Mashat, had said on Tuesday that they were ready to stop attacks on Saudi Arabia and engage in dialogue provided it reciprocated and facilitated the flow of aid. "The drone targeting civilians in the city of Khamis Mushait has been intercepted and destroyed," coalition spokesman Turki al-Maliki told the official Saudi Press Agency. —Agencies

## World's oldest leaders

**PARIS:** After the death of Tunisia's 92-year-old President Beji Caid Essebsi yesterday, there remain three world leaders aged over 90 along with several in their eighties.

### 90 plus

The oldest elected world leader in power is Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, who is 94. Born on July 10, 1925, he led Malaysia's government between 1981 and 2003, returning to power in May 2018. With 67 years on the throne, Britain's Queen Elizabeth II - born April 21, 1926 - holds the record for the longest period in power. Now 93, she became queen in 1952 at age 25 after the death of her father, George VI. Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, 90, became the Amir of Kuwait in January 2006. He was de facto leader of the oil-rich emirate for several years before due to his predecessor's ill-health.

### Elderly rulers in Africa

In Cameroon President Paul Biya, 86, has been in power since 1982. Nicknamed the "Sphinx", he was re-elected in 2018 for a seventh seven-year mandate. Guinea's President Alpha Conde, 81, became the country's first

## Facebook removes fake accounts from Thailand, Ukraine, Russia, Honduras

**BANGKOK:** Facebook Inc said yesterday it had erased over 1,800 accounts and pages from Thailand, Russia, Ukraine and Honduras, its latest move to counter deceptive political propaganda and other abuses of its service. Across the four countries, a total of 294 accounts, 1,509 pages and 32 groups were taken down for what the company calls "coordinated inauthentic behavior."

They had a collective following of more than 274,000. The company has been cracking down on such accounts globally after coming under fire from governments and rights groups around the world for not developing tools quickly enough to combat extremist content and propaganda operations.

"We don't see a connection between them, but they all were using networks of fake accounts to mislead people about who they were and what they were doing," Nathaniel Gleicher, Head of

Cybersecurity Policy, told Reuters in a phone briefing. Facebook took action based on deceptive behavior and not the nature of the content posted, Gleicher said. The accounts removed in Thailand used "fictitious personas" to promote narratives about Thai politics, US-China relations, protests in Hong Kong, and criticism of democracy activists in Thailand, Gleicher said.

"We were able to determine conclusively that some of the activities of this network was linked to an individual based in Thailand associated with New Eastern Outlook, a Russian government-funded journal based in Moscow," Gleicher said. Accounts and pages from Russia and a region of Ukraine that discussed Ukrainian politics and criticized the Ukrainian government, using fake accounts impersonating journalists or military officers, were taken down ahead of an election in Ukraine last week.

In Honduras, Facebook said it removed fake accounts and pages posting positive content about the country's president, adding that some of the activities were linked to people who run social media for the government of Honduras. Facebook said it has been increasing the pace of its investigation into fake accounts and coordinated inauthentic behavior. Facebook said it has conducted almost three dozen takedowns so far globally in 2019, well more than about two dozens in the whole of 2018. —Reuters



## International

# Lebanon ups pressure on Syrian refugees to return

## 'Lebanese employees wanted'

**BEIRUT:** In a bustling district of the Lebanese capital, a government inspector issues a fine to the manager of a popular restaurant for hiring 17 Syrian refugees without work permits. In a country brimming with foreign workers, the labor ministry is clamping down on businesses employing foreigners without the required papers. But activists have condemned the crack-down, saying it is a pretext to pressure Syrian refugees to return to their war-torn homeland.

After a long argument with the inspectors, restaurant manager Younes Younes reluctantly accepts the \$3,300 fine. "I can't just replace the Syrian guy who's been preparing my shawarma sandwiches here for years," he said. "Finding Lebanese employees is not easy because they ask for higher salaries," he told AFP. "We've looked for Lebanese to hire... but we haven't found anyone."

On a nearby restaurant window in the Hamra neighborhood, a sign reads: "Lebanese employees wanted." "None available," someone has scribbled over it in red. Lebanon, a small country of just four million people, says it hosts 1.5 million Syrians - just under 1 million of them registered refugees - as well as other foreign workers. Across the country, Egyptians fill up cars at petrol stations, Filipinas and Ethiopians clean homes, and Syrians work in restaurants or in the fields.

### 'Illegitimate pressure'

Due to poor state oversight, employers in

Lebanon often hire foreign workers without employment permits, complaining that the process of acquiring one is long and complicated. Not registering a worker also avoids having to pay social security. The labor ministry says it is now looking to change this. It has erected controversial billboards across the country in recent weeks, urging employers to hire citizens. Last month, it gave business owners a one-month deadline to settle the paperwork of their foreign staff, and has started to address violations in recent weeks.

But experts and analysts question the motives behind the latest measures. "There's a clear strategy to exert increasing pressure on Syrians" to go back, said Nasser Yassin of the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs. Layla, a 20 year-old Syrian hairdresser, said she was forced to leave her job at a Beirut salon along with four Syrian colleagues because they did not have work permits.

"They gave us 48 hours' notice," she said. She too believes that the government's latest measures are meant to persuade Syrians to return home, but said that this is not likely to happen. Instead, refugees will likely seek other illegal forms of employment to make a living, she added. Human Rights Watch and other advocacy groups have accused the Lebanese government of using various methods to put "illegitimate pressure" on Syrian refugees to go home.

"They include ramped up arrests and deportations, closing of shops and confiscation or de-

struction of unlicensed vehicles," HRW said. They came "on top of other longstanding restrictions, including curfews and evictions, and barriers to refugee education, legal residency and work authorization", the group said. Earlier this year, Lebanese authorities gave Syrians living in the eastern region of Aarsal until July 1 to demolish shelters made of anything but timber and plastic sheeting.

ments showed. In 2015, the principal reported Maknun to police, which resulted in her being prosecuted under laws targeting the electronic distribution of pornographic material. Although the case was dismissed by a lower court, prosecutors took it to the Supreme Court and Maknun was jailed for six months and given a 500 million rupiah (\$36,000) fine.

Sri Nurherwati of the National Commission on Violence Against Women said while the amnesty may have lifted Maknun's punishment it would do little to tackle the issue of sexual harassment in Indonesia. There have been a number of high profile cases in Indonesia in recent years that activists say show how victims are often being penalized for speaking out about sexual harassment. Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim-majority country and is predominantly conservative.

While some women have recounted experiences of sexual harassment as part of a #MeToo movement, in general, women are less likely to speak out about abuse compared with women in some other countries, activists say. "We face different risks here when speaking out about anything sexual," said Kartika Jahja, an outspoken artist and rape survivor who has been a strong advocate for gender equality in Indonesia. "Whether it's sexual violence or being sexually expressive, I think the norms here sort of punish women for doing that," said Jahja. In an interview ahead of the decision, Maknun said that if granted an amnesty she intended to take an Umrah Islamic pilgrimage and spend more time with her family after the lengthy time spent fighting the case. — Reuters



**BEIRUT:** Officials from the Ministry of Labor and the Social Security are pictured at a restaurant in Beirut as they inspect the work permits and legal papers of foreign employees. — AFP

struction of unlicensed vehicles," HRW said. They came "on top of other longstanding restrictions, including curfews and evictions, and barriers to refugee education, legal residency and work authorization", the group said. Earlier this year, Lebanese authorities gave Syrians living in the eastern region of Aarsal until July 1 to demolish shelters made of anything but timber and plastic sheeting.

### Lebanon first

There has been mounting political pressure for the Syrians to be sent home, with some politicians blaming them for the country's economic woes. For more than a year, Beirut has been organizing "voluntary" returns. Last month, Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil called on employers to give priority to Lebanese over foreign labor, including Syrians. — AFP

## Sudan arrests top general, officers over foiled coup

**KHARTOUM:** Sudan's military said it had arrested a top general and several others over a foiled coup attempt announced earlier this month. It said the plot aimed to re-install the party of longtime leader Omar Al-Bashir, who was ousted by the army in April after months of protests against his iron-fisted rule. "At the top of the participants is General Hashim Abdel Mottalib, the head of joint chiefs of staff, and a number of officers from the National Intelligence and Security Service," the military said in a statement. "Leaders from Islamic Movement and the National Congress Party" of Bashir were also arrested, the military said in a statement. On July 11 the military announced it had foiled a coup attempt without specifying when it took place.

At that time it said 12 officers, including five who were retired, had been arrested and that security forces were looking for the mastermind. On Wednesday, the military said those detained over the attempted coup were being questioned and would face trial. They stand accused of trying to "help return the former National Congress

Party's regime to power", according to the military statement. General Mohamed Othman Al-Hussein, the new head of joint chiefs of staff, also announced the details of the arrests on state television.

### Video statement

Later on Wednesday, state television broadcast a prepared video statement allegedly recorded by Abdel Mottalib and meant to be broadcast after the coup was successfully carried out. "We announce that the armed forces have seized power and appointed a prime minister to lead the executive power in the country for a transitional period that will not last more than two years," says Abdel Mottalib, wearing a military uniform and reading from the statement.

Sudanese media reported that among those arrested was General Bakri Hassan Saleh, a former first vice president and prime minister and a prominent figure in the 1989 coup that brought Bashir to power. Also arrested was Ali Karty, a former foreign minister and Zubair Ahmed Hassan, a former finance minister, according to the reports. Sudan's Islamic Movement released a statement denying any connection to the plot.

Sudan's ruling military council, which took over after Bashir's overthrow, said last month it had thwarted "more than one coup attempt", with several officers taken into custody. The latest alleged coup attempt came as the ruling generals were negotiating a power sharing deal with protest leaders to form a joint civilian-military governing body. — AFP

## Indonesia pardons woman in sexual harassment case

**JAKARTA:** Indonesia's parliament approved yesterday an amnesty for a woman who was jailed after recording lewd phone calls from her boss in a case that has caused outrage and warnings that it could discourage victims of sexual abuse from speaking out. President Joko Widodo had granted an amnesty to Baiq Nuril Maknun after she had exhausted all other legal avenues in the controversial case. Parliament's approval was met by loud applause as the tearful mother of three who was in the chamber covered her face with her hands before kissing the ground.

Erma Suryani Ranik, a member of parliament, read a statement confirming the decision and said in this case "Baiq Nuril was the real victim, instead of the perpetrator". Maknun, who had been working at a school on the island of Lombok, recorded some parts of lewd telephone calls from the school's principal without his knowledge in 2012 after complaining of sexual harassment.

She then gave a recording to a third person, and distributed it on an electronic device, which resulted in the principal losing his job, court docu-



## International

# Grannies for Future: 100-year-old German grandma enters politics

## 'Grannies Against the Right' action group fights extremism

**KIRCHHEIMBOLANDEN:** German great-grandmother Lisel Heise's ambition to enter politics crystallized a few years before her 100th birthday, when organizers of a public hearing cut off her microphone. Heise, who retired from teaching school 40 years ago, was arguing for the reopening of an outdoor pool.

"When I started out, some people really didn't want to listen to me apparently - they even pulled the plug!" she said, still stunned by the impudence. "Now people from around the world are coming to talk to me. Who's laughing now?" What changed was Heise's election, against the odds, to the town council of Kirchheimbolanden in southwestern Germany just weeks after she embarked on her second century on the planet.

It was no accident that the pool galvanized Heise, given two issues close to her heart: young people and public health. Those concerns have also dovetailed in another pet cause: climate protection. The remarkably spry Heise says she has taken inspiration from the Fridays for Future youth protest movement. "The kids really give me hope. There is a tendency in politics to favor the car industry and that's counterproductive," she said. "It's great that the youth aren't just waiting for the grownups to do something."

### 'Bundles of energy'

Heise, who takes daily walks through the quaint old town of Kirchheimbolanden, population 8,000, is part of a groundswell of seniors unwilling to sit out their dotage on the sidelines of public life. The Omas Gegen Rechts (Grannies Against the Right) action group fighting extremism launched in Austria in 2017 and has since expanded to Germany. It regularly rallies elderly women, drawing on the lessons of history to stand up to racism. Heise's political career began in earnest earlier this year when a town council member, Thomas Bock, 59, saw her as a potential ally.

Bock runs the political group Wir fuer Kibo (WfK, roughly We for Kibo, the town's nickname), which is agitating against the established parties for more transparency and accountability. He needed a candidate who would have the gravitas and passion to fight the powers that be. "She's got a strong character and bundles of energy," he said. Bock said the fact that most middle-aged Kirchheimbolanden natives had had Heise as a teacher when they were young was also a distinct advantage. "Everyone respects her," Bock said.



**KIRCHHEIMBOLANDEN:** Lisel Heise, one hundred years of age and member of the town council poses in the southwestern German city of Kirchheimbolanden. — AFP

### 'Chance to right some wrongs'

The town has been governed for more than two decades by Angela Merkel's conservative CDU, most recently in a "grand coalition" with the Social Democrats just like the one Merkel leads in Berlin. But WfK's success has helped shift the majority, and now a new alliance of left-leaning parties is ready to take over the 24-member council. Heise said her election was pure luck. "But now that I have the chance

to right some wrongs, I'm going to seize it," she added. Not only is Heise a political rising star but also, of course, a witness to much of Germany's tumultuous 20th century. Born in the aftermath of World War I, Heise said her father Fritz Waltgenbach, who owned a shoe factory, was also a town council member.

After the Kristallnacht pogrom in November 1938, he spoke out before his peers against the torching of the local synagogue and the persecution of Jews in their midst. "The Nazis always talked about freedom but (in fact) you had to do what the party said and it led to awful things," Heise said. Waltgenbach spent several weeks in prison until a friend intervened with well-placed connections in Berlin, preventing him from being packed off to a concentration camp. Heise said she likes to think she inherited some of his civic courage. "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree," she smiled.

### 'Ashamed' of Trump link

Heise lives a short walk from the site of the former synagogue, where a mature tree and a memorial now stand, in the sprawling house she once shared with her parents. Widowed four years ago after more than seven decades of marriage, she now lives there with one of her four children and an adult grandson. She has eight great-grandchildren.

Heise regularly entertains visitors in her sitting room, which is filled with books including a prominently displayed volume of photos of Barack Obama. "A politician needs to have a vision and think logically but also humanistically," she said. US President Donald Trump, whose ancestors came from the nearby village of Kallstadt, is "turning the world upside down", she said. "I'm ashamed his grandfather is from here." Heise stays physically and mentally fit working in her flower garden and watching political talk shows.

Cafe owner Sepandar Lashkari, 44, said Heise had been one of his first customers when he opened for business a few years ago and they've been close friends ever since. Lashkari, who moved to Germany from Iran as a teenager, called Heise "great publicity for the town". He said she had also drained some of the cynicism that tends to pervade politics. "A lot of people have become more politically active because of her," he said. "She inspires young and old in a really positive way." — AFP

## Ferocious heatwave breaks temperature records across Europe

**PARIS:** A ferocious heatwave that has broken temperature records across Europe is set to hit its peak yesterday, sparking concerns about public health and new misery for rail travelers whose holiday plans have been badly affected. After all-time temperature records were smashed in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands on Wednesday, Britain and the French capital Paris could to see their highest ever temperatures today.

Trains have been slowed in several European countries to avoid damage to the railway networks and French national operator SNCF has urged travelers to delay journeys planned for yesterday. In the Netherlands, farmers have been leaving their cows outside to sleep, rather than bringing them in at night, while Dutch media said hundreds of pigs died when a ventilator failed at Middelharnis. The heatwave, which is expected to ease up on Friday as rain and thunderstorms

move in, had again focused public attention on the problems caused by climate change. Authorities have warned people to keep an eye on those living alone and also to beware of taking the plunge to cool down after a spike in drownings. Hundreds of travellers were stuck on trains in sweltering conditions outside Paris for several hours late Wednesday after a fire on an electrical transformer halted traffic in and out of the Gare de l'Est station in Paris.

This came after a failure on an overhead power line had halted train traffic between Brussels and London and Paris. It was not immediately clear if the fault was due to the heatwave but Eurostar warned further disruptions were expected today. "I ask everyone who can avoid or delay their journeys to do so," said French Environment Minister Elisabeth Borne, saying workers who can do their jobs at home should not go to their offices. —AFP

## In Georgian valley, war-scarred women battle tradition to make a living

**PANKISI:** Fending for herself after leaving a husband who kidnapped her and then losing two sons in Syria's war, Leila Achishvili has fought hard to secure her independence in fiercely patriarchal north-east Georgia. She has settled in Jokolo, a village in the Pankisi Gorge, a conservative, mainly-Muslim enclave in the majority-Christian country. "I'm happy I'm not married now, I feel free and can do everything by myself. I got a driving license and opened a guesthouse," the 53-year-old said.

She relies on the business, which she set up in 2016, to make ends meet without interference from the male family members who are the community's traditional breadwinners - and to provide a future for her surviving child. "I want to support my daughter in everything and try to send her to study

abroad because there is no development for her in Pankisi," she said. The gorge is linked by mountain passes to the southern Russian region of Chechnya, and many of its inhabitants are ethnic Chechens.

When she was growing up, Achishvili dreamt of becoming an actress, but a visiting Chechen businessman fell in love with her and, she says, abducted her and took her back to his country to be his wife. "I had different plans, I wanted to study and work, not marry," says Achishvili. Before she left him, the couple had two sons, who moved to Austria. Achishvili lost touch with them and only learnt through a friend that they had been radicalised by Islamic State and killed while fighting in Syria. "When I found out my children were dead, I fell down, I could no longer walk," she said.

The Syrian war has directly affected at least one other woman in the valley, who has also faced prejudice in trying to raise a family alone. Sumaya's husband was killed there. Fearing her four children's prospects could be damaged if their name was associated with the conflict, she declined to be identified by her family name. She has opened a gym, which is one of the few public places where women can meet. She says many are too fearful to attend. But Achishvili and her daughter Mariam, 16, plan to go, hoping to show others that practicing sport is nothing to be ashamed of. — Reuters



## International

# Fleeing Bolsonaro, poverty and crime, Brazilians choose Portugal

## 'Returning to Brazil is out of the question'

**LISBON:** "Returning to Brazil is out of the question," says Alexandre Saboia. The Lisbon restaurateur is among tens of thousands of Brazilian entrepreneurs, workers, students or frightened gays who have flocked to Portugal as a safe haven, preferring it over Britain or the United States. Portugal has not seen such a flood of Brazilian immigrants in two decades, sparked by the 2015 economic crisis in their home country and this year's election of far-right President Jair Bolsonaro. Brazilians are now Portugal's largest foreign population.

More than 100,000 Brazilian immigrants were officially registered in 2018, a record set following a jump of 23.4 percent in a year, according to data from the SEF border police. Sociologist Pedro Gois of the University of Coimbra estimates that nearly 300,000 Brazilians currently live among Portugal's 10 million people. Saboia, who emigrated last year with his wife and two teenage daughters, said that "insecurity was getting worse by the day" in Sao Paulo, the world's largest Portuguese-speaking city.

"We hesitated between Miami and Lisbon. In the end, we chose Portugal for its security and the language," said the greying 44-year-old. Saboia sold everything to come to Portugal, buying and fixing up a small restaurant in

Parede outside Lisbon. More than 700 wealthy Brazilians, second only to the Chinese, have obtained residency permits via a 2012 "golden visa" scheme requiring a minimum investment of 500,000 euros (\$560,000) in Portuguese real estate.

### Living in fear 'became complicated'

Another motivation has been that of escaping homophobia in Brazil. Bolsonaro told *Playboy* magazine in June 2011 that he would rather his son "die in an accident" than be gay. Meg Macedo, a 33-year-old lesbian, says she came to Lisbon to study theatre, describing Portugal as "open and progressive". "Living in fear because of who you are, it became complicated," she said.

Debora Ribeiro, a Brazilian student in Porto, northern Portugal, founded Queer Tropical, a network to help gays who have fled Brazil to settle in Portugal.

Increasing numbers of students have also chosen to study in Portugal. From just over 11,000 in 2017, the figure shot up to around 18,000 last year. Portugal's deputy minister for higher education told AFP that Brazilians were attracted by "a country that is culturally close (with) a reputation for quality of life and security."



**LISBON:** Brazilians attend a meeting at the 'Brazil house' association - created by Brazilians living in Portugal. — AFP

Students are also turning away from Britain because of uncertainty over Brexit, while Washington's harder line regarding Latinos seeking student visas is another deterrent, according to Gois. Brazilian immigrants traditionally work in the hotel, services and trade sectors, according

to Cynthia de Paula, head of Caso do Brasil, a group that helps migrants settle in. She arrived around 20 years ago with her husband, and they settled in Figueira da Foz in central Portugal. Since the financial crisis, "we are seeing a second wave of Brazilian immigration," Gois said. — AFP

## Robert Mueller, from shadows to spotlight

**WASHINGTON:** For two years, Robert Mueller operated quietly behind the scenes, a sphinxlike figure carrying out a politically explosive investigation into the President of the United States. On Wednesday, the former special counsel emerged from the shadows, testifying to Congress about his probe into whether Donald Trump's presidential campaign conspired with Russia to get him elected.

For many Americans, the nationally televised hearing was the first close look at the patrician, grey-haired former FBI director, whom Trump has spent the past two years denouncing as the leader of a "witch hunt." What many saw was a cautious career prosecutor who was forced to testify under duress and who deflected questions from both Democrats and Republicans by referring repeatedly to his voluminous report.

They also saw a septuagenarian who strained to hear rapid fire questions from lawmakers and who was evasive at times and defensive at others. "Could you repeat the question?" the 74-year-old Mueller asked numerous times during a tense three hour and 40 minutes before the House Judiciary Committee. Mueller said his report did not exonerate Trump but he mostly deflected questions from lawmakers seeking to score political points for their sides.

That was in keeping with the career of a public servant who has spent four decades serving both

Democratic and Republican presidents. Before taking on the politically-sensitive Russia investigation, the former marine, who was both wounded and decorated for heroism in Vietnam, enjoyed a sterling reputation in Washington. Mueller is a "consummate professional and a straight shooter," current FBI chief Christopher Wray, a Trump appointee, said Tuesday.

### Led FBI after 9/11

As a young prosecutor in San Francisco and Boston, Mueller took on cases involving grisly murders, organized crime, fraud by powerful banks and terror attacks, winning some, losing some, but rarely drawing serious criticism for his work. He was named director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation just days before the September 11, 2001 Al-Qaeda attacks on New York and Washington, which plunged the bureau into an entirely new mission to protect the country from terror plots. Mueller led the FBI for the next 12 years, during which time he built up the bureau's counterterror mission but had some notorious problems, including a botched anthrax investigation and a poorly functioning intelligence unit.

He gained a reputation of being an exacting and tough taskmaster, and despite his early Republican political alignment, someone who was appreciated by politicians of both political parties. After retiring in 2013, he joined a private Washington law practice where he handled official arbiter missions. These included an external investigation of the NFL's mishandling of assault allegations against a star player and reviewing security controls at intelligence contractor Booz Allen Hamilton after several employees stole confidential national security information. — AFP

## Key takeaways from Mueller's testimony

**WASHINGTON:** Former US special counsel Robert Mueller made a long-awaited congressional appearance Wednesday to testify about his investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election and President Donald Trump's conduct during the probe. Here are the main takeaways so far from the marathon hearings before two Democratic-controlled House committees.

### No exoneration

Mueller set out by reiterating what his probe had established: that Russia interfered in the 2016 election "in sweeping and systematic fashion." And he restated that "the investigation did not establish that members of the Trump campaign conspired with the Russian government in its election interference activities." Crucially, he reaffirmed that his team had not investigated "collusion," which is not a legal term-giving the lie to Trump's persistent claims the report established "no collusion."

Mueller also repeated that Justice Department policy meant he could not make a determination as to whether the president committed a crime in his efforts to tamper with the investigation. "That was our decision then and it remains our decision today," Mueller said. But he gave the Democrats a

key victory-and a rare quotable line-when he said "the president was not exculpated for the acts he allegedly committed."

### Trump not immune

Mueller has asserted repeatedly that he was unable to indict Trump or accuse him of a crime due to Justice Department policy against charging sitting presidents. But he was asked if he could "charge the president of the United States with obstruction of justice after he left office" and he replied: "Yes." He appeared however to be making a general point about presidents not being immune from prosecution after their terms expire, rather than commenting specifically on Trump's conduct.

### What he wouldn't say

Republicans and Democrats alike were hoping for significant political capital from Mueller's testimony: a damning quote or a brilliant piece of cross-examination discrediting the investigation. Mueller set the tone, however, by lowering expectations over what his testimony would uncover. "I am unable to address questions about the initial opening of the FBI's Russia investigation, which occurred months before my appointment," Mueller said, nixing the Republicans' hopes of making the session all about what they see as the illegal origins of the investigation. He also dashed Democrats' hopes that he might address the behavior of Attorney General Bill Barr, who was accused of misrepresenting the report to the American public before its release in a manner that was favorable to Trump, saying he would "not comment" on Barr's actions. — AFP



## International

# Britain new leader rejects 'unacceptable' Brexit deal

## Johnson urged EU leaders to rethink their opposition

**LONDON:** Britain's new Prime Minister Boris Johnson yesterday called the current Brexit deal negotiated with the EU "unacceptable" and set preparations for leaving the bloc without an agreement as a "top priority" for the government. In a pugnacious debut in parliament, the former London mayor urged EU leaders to rethink their opposition to renegotiating the deal.

After installing a right-wing government following a radical overhaul, Johnson doubled down on his promise to lead Britain out of the EU by October 31 at any cost. In case of a no-deal exit, he also threatened to withhold the £39 billion (\$49 billion) divorce bill that Britain has previously said it owes the EU and instead spend the money for preparations for leaving with no agreement.

Johnson told a raucous session of parliament in which he was repeatedly shouted down by opposing MPs that the draft deal his predecessor Theresa May reached with the 27 EU leaders would "sign away our economic independence". "Its terms are unacceptable to this parliament and to this country," Johnson said - a day after purging more than half the ministers in his predecessor Theresa May's team. "Today is the first day of a new approach, which will end with our exit from the EU on 31 October," the 55-year-old said.

### Right-wing government

Johnson has assembled a team of social conservatives and Brexit hardliners who argue that leav-

ing the EU after 46 years without an agreement will be less painful than economists warn. The markets were relieved by the appointment of former Deutsche Bank Sajid Javid as finance chief. The pound held steady against the dollar and euro as traders waited for Johnson's first policy moves.

Other appointments were more divisive. Brexit hardliner Dominic Raab became foreign secretary and Jacob Rees-Mogg - leader of a right-wing faction of Conservatives who helped bring about May's demise - as the government's parliament representative. New interior minister Priti Patel has previously expressed support for the death penalty and voted against same-sex marriage. The Labor opposition-backing Mirror newspaper called it "Britain's most right-wing government since the 1980s".

### 'Not in the real world'

Johnson argues that his threat of a chaotic end to Britain's EU involvement will force Brussels to relent and give LONDON better terms that would let it pursue trade deals with powers such as China and the United States. Brexit backers in parliament had accused May of ignoring voters' wishes by promising to keep the UK tied to the bloc's economic rules if necessary to preserve a free-flowing border between EU member Ireland and Britain's Northern Ireland.

Johnson's solution for the frontier revolves around proposals that have been rejected as either



LONDON: Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson speaks in the Houses of Parliament in central London. —AFP

unworkable or insufficient by both EU and Irish leaders. Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar - his heavily trade-dependent nation standing to lose most from a messy EU-UK split - bluntly told Johnson on Wednesday that he needed to compromise. EU spokeswoman Mina Andreeva said in Brussels yesterday that the bloc's position "remains unchanged". "The deal we have achieved is the best deal possible," Andreeva said.

### Diplomatic dilemmas

Johnson will have the backing of his governing Conservative party but not the nation in his first days in office. He beat the now-former foreign secretary Jeremy Hunt by a two-to-one margin in a vote held by fewer than 160,000 paying members of the Conservatives. But a YouGov survey found his approval rating in Britain as a whole at just 31 percent. —AFP

## UK PM brings Brexit gang back together

**LONDON:** From his top cabinet ministers down to his communications staff, Britain's new Prime Minister Boris Johnson has surrounded himself with colleagues who helped him win the 2016 Brexit vote. His decision to get the "Vote Leave" campaign team back together emphasizes how determined he is to take Britain out of the European Union on October 31, even without an agreement with Brussels.

But the reshuffle caused alarm among MPs who oppose his "no deal" stance, while some new appointments sparked speculation he is gearing up for an election if parliament tries to stop him. "Brexiters are accused of not taking responsibility. After this shuffle, they can't be," wrote Paul Goodman, editor of Tory grassroots website ConservativeHome. He added: "These are all general election-ready, Vote Leave veterans."

### 'No compromise'

Johnson took over from Theresa May at Downing Street on Wednesday, and within minutes had sacked or forced out around a dozen ministers, while a handful more resigned before they were pushed. His first appointment was Dominic Cummings, a highly effective but combative back-room operator who was Vote Leave's campaign director and is now a top adviser. Johnson kept on Michael Gove, who like the new premier is a key figurehead of the 2016 campaign, but moved him from the environment ministry to a role coordinating "no deal" planning.

Other Vote Leave stars such as Priti Patel, Andrea Leadsom, Dominic Raab and Theresa Villiers - some of whom quit May's cabinet in protest at her Brexit plan - have returned to senior jobs. Campaign chief executive Matthew Elliott, who previously founded the low tax lobbying group the Taxpayers Alliance, is also reported to be an adviser to new finance minister Sajid

Javid. Johnson has promised "strong leadership" to end "three years of indecision" over Brexit under May, and eurosceptics were delighted with his cabinet.

"Wahooooooooo! We're taking back control and defeating the Remain establishment!" tweeted Darren Grimes, another member of the 2016 campaign, citing its pro-Brexit slogan, "Take Back Control". Others were appalled, however. "Johnson's new administration is not only the most rabidly right wing in my lifetime but represents a near wholesale takeover by Vote Leave," said Matthew Pennycook, a Brexit spokesman for the Labour party. "There can be no compromise with it. We have 98 days to do whatever it takes to prevent a disastrous 'no deal' exit from the EU."

### 'Ready for an election'

Leading eurosceptic MP Jacob Rees-Mogg, who was appointed the government's minister in the House of Commons, dismissed talk of a takeover. "To characterize it as a Vote Leave coup is a mistake and is forgetting that the chancellor of the Exchequer (Javid) and the international trade secretary were both remainers," he told ITV news. Javid, a former banker, and new trade secretary Liz Truss have since converted to the Brexit cause. Liam Fox, Truss's predecessor as trade minister, was also a key figure in the 2016 campaign but had been critical of the prospect of a "no deal" Brexit and was sacked. Johnson's critics say he has no plan for delivering Brexit, noting that the challenges that caused May to fail remain.

He has pledged to renegotiate the divorce deal May struck with Brussels, after parliament rejected it three times - but EU leaders say they will not. Meanwhile parliament is strongly opposed to leaving without a deal, setting up a stand-off that many believe can only result in an election. Johnson told his MPs this week that an election was not a priority, but others think otherwise. Rupert Harrison, ex-chief of staff to former finance minister George Osborne, said Cummings "is first and foremost a campaigner - Boris getting ready for an election." —AFP

## Iran poses loyalty test for 'British Trump' Johnson

**LONDON:** Iran's seizure and continued detention of a UK-flagged tanker deals Boris Johnson an immediate loyalty test: Britain's new prime minister may have to choose between Gulf escorts led by Europe or by the United States. Which way Johnson leans could set the tone for a complex agenda that includes withdrawing from the European Union and striking a trade deal with the United States.

It could also maintain or break European efforts to keep alive the deal curbing Iran's nuclear ambitions that Washington pulled out of last year. Some US commentators see this as a make-or-break moment for Europe's policy on Iran as a whole. "Johnson could simply announce that the UK is joining America's maximum-pressure campaign and calls for a new (Iran) deal," the editorial board of The Wall Street Journal wrote. "The rest of Europe would likely have no choice but to join its Anglophone partners - and finally present a united front."

The idea of a European-led mission in the Gulf is carried over from a meeting chaired by Johnson's predecessor Theresa May this week. Britain has proposed that European partners join together in a "naval protection mission" to ensure commercial ships can safely navigate in the Gulf. But such an operation would expose Britain's continued reliance on EU allies at the very same time that Johnson is determined to yank his country out of the bloc on October 31.

Johnson's other option is to sign Britain up to a US-led alliance outlined by Donald Trump's administration at NATO last month. That decision could boost London's chances of reviving stalled efforts to strike a post-Brexit trade deal with Washington. The downside risk is that British warships could be caught up in more aggressive US rules of engagement that London currently does not support. Both Johnson and Trump played up their friendship during the British leadership race. —AFP



## International

# Competing claims make northeast Asian sea a flashpoint amid rifts

## Sea between Japan, Korea, and Russia scene of tensions

**SEOUL:** The wedge of sea between Japan, Russia, and the Korean peninsula became a new flashpoint this week, with a regional airspace dispute, a seized fishing boat, and missile tests by North Korea aggravating longstanding tensions. The patch of ocean is commonly known as the Sea of Japan, but South Korea argues it should be known by the more neutral name the East Sea. The dispute over the name exemplifies the numerous conflicting interests in the area, which has been the scene of sometimes intense military and political brinkmanship.

The most serious encounter this week came on Tuesday when Russian and Chinese warplanes conducted their first joint long-range air patrol in the Asia-Pacific over the sea, triggering warning shots from South Korean fighter jets and a round of diplomatic protests. Analysts say the joint patrol is likely the first of many actions by China and Russia to try to send a message that their collaboration will be an increasingly significant factor in the region.

### Disputed air

Tuesday's air patrol highlighted conflicting claims over various "air defense identification

zones" (ADIZ). An ADIZ is usually an area where countries may unilaterally demand that foreign aircraft take special steps to identify themselves, according to the International Civil Aviation Organization. An ADIZ is different from a country's airspace, which usually means the space above its territory, extending 12 nautical miles away from its coastline. Unlike airspace, there are no international laws that govern air defense identification zones. Russia said it does not recognize South Korea's air defense identification zone, known as KADIZ, while China said the area where Tuesday's patrol occurred was not territorial airspace and that all countries enjoyed freedom of movement in it.

This week makes a total of 39 cases of foreign military aircraft entering the KADIZ without identifying themselves this year, South Korea's defense ministry said, all of them from China or Russia. Tuesday's incident escalated after South Korea said one Russian aircraft penetrated South Korean airspace near a tiny chain of islets claimed by both South Korea and Japan. Russia says its aircraft were never closer than 25 km (15 miles) from the South Korean-

controlled islets. Japan claims its own ADIZ, and says it also scrambled fighter jets to intercept the Russian and Chinese aircraft.

### Disputed islands

South Korea has for decades administered the disputed islets, which it calls Dokdo. Japan calls them Takeshima. A war of words over their ownership spilled over to the Olympics on Wednesday as Japan criticized a South Korean complaint over a map of Japan on the Tokyo Games website, which showed the islets as a small dot, colored as Japanese territory. Artyom Lukin, a professor at Far Eastern Federal University in Vladivostok, said the joint Russian-Chinese exercise, in "one of the most politically sensitive areas in Northeast Asia", was unlikely to have been a coincidence.

"The message is, the Russo-Chinese 'strategic partnership' is now a force to be reckoned with militarily in East Asia," he said. The region is likely to see "more frequent and increasingly assertive" joint military actions by Russia and China, he said. China stressed the importance of its military ties with Russia in a 2019 Defense White Paper released on Wednesday. "The mil-

itary relationship between China and Russia continues to develop at a high level, enriching the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era," China said.

### Disputed seas

On Thursday, North Korea fired two short-range missiles into the sea off its east coast, a test that South Korea criticized as unhelpful in easing tensions on the peninsula. Also this week, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspected a new submarine that he said would soon be operational in the "East Sea of Korea".

On Wednesday, Russia accused North Korea of illegally detaining one of its fishing vessels and its crew in the rich fishing grounds of the sea, and said it would freeze talks with North Korea on fisheries cooperation until the issue was resolved. "This incident could be irritating for Russia, yet will hardly be a major setback for a relationship already under immense strain due to various issues such as sanctions," said Anthony Rinna, a specialist in Korea-Russia relations at Sino-NK, a website that analyses the region. — Reuters

## Puerto Rico, the United States' Caribbean island

**SAN JUAN:** After the governor of Puerto Rico, Ricardo Rossello, bowed to two weeks of protests and resigned, here is some background about the US territory in the Caribbean.

### 100 years of US nationality

A former Spanish colony, it was annexed by the United States after the 1898 Spanish-American War. Its mostly Spanish-speaking people have had US nationality since 1917 but they are not able to vote in US presidential elections. Puerto Rico has limited representation in the US Congress, with only one non-voting delegate in the House of Representatives. It also fields its own Olympic teams. The closest major US mainland city is Miami, about 1,660 kilometers away.

### With its own government

It has had its own government and constitution since 1952 and has chosen not to take the status of a US state. It also has its own flag and national anthem. Two parties have alternated in power since the 1950s - Rossello's New Progressive Party and the opposition Popular Democratic Party. Rossello took over in January 2017, aged 37, after winning November 2016 elections held amid a crippling recession and with the island deep in debt. Protests demanding that he quit began on July 13 after the leak of a group text chat in which he and other officials make fun of journalists, gay people, women and hurricane victims. With no let up in the demonstrations, he announced on July 25 that he would leave office on August 2. — AFP

## Embattled Puerto Rico's governor Rossello quits

**SAN JUAN:** Puerto Rico's embattled governor Ricardo Rossello announced his resignation late Wednesday following two weeks of massive protests triggered by the release of a text exchange in which he and others mocked gay people, women and hurricane victims. Protesters who had thronged the streets near the governor's mansion since the afternoon erupted into cheers as the news broke, shooting fireworks and waving Puerto Rican flags. "I announce that I will be resigning from the governor's post effective today, August 2 at 5 pm," Rossello said, in a video statement posted on the government's Facebook page.

The rallies started July 13, when the Center for Investigative Journalism released 889 pages of text chats on the encrypted messaging app Telegram in which Rossello and 11 other male administration members criticized officials, politicians and journalists. "I trust that Puerto Rico will continue united and move forward as it always has," Rossello said. "And I hope that this decision will serve as a call for reconciliation of citizens."

Rossello said he made the decision taking into account the complaints against him and after discussion with his family. Puerto Ricans had gathered at the gates of the governor's mansion, known as La Fortaleza, in San Juan, ahead of the rumored announcement. "Everyone feels betrayed by him," celebrity musician Rene Perez ("Residente") told Spanish-language news channel Telemundo at the protest, shortly before the governor's announcement.

He later tweeted his delight at Rossello's resignation, saying the country had "discovered that what unites us is the heart". Playwright Lin-Manuel Miranda, creator of the hit musical "Hamilton" and whose family are from Puerto Rico, also praised the protesters on Twitter. Other local celebrities, including pop star Ricky Martin and trap musician Benito Martinez ("Bad Bunny"), have also been leading support for the protests.



**SAN JUAN:** People march in San Juan after the resignation of Puerto Rico Governor Ricardo Rossello. —AFP

### Impeachment on horizon

Forty-year-old Rossello said that Justice Secretary Wanda Vazquez would temporarily succeed him. Puerto Rican House Speaker Johnny Mendez had already convened an extraordinary legislative session that was to begin the impeachment process against Rossello yesterday. At a press conference Wednesday afternoon, Mendez had said that if the governor did not resign, he would be removed. Rossello faced a full-blown political crisis over the chat scandal and corruption cases involving money that was supposed to help victims of Hurricane Maria, which devastated Puerto Rico in 2017 and killed nearly 3,000 people.

More than a dozen other government officials have already resigned in the wake of the scandal. Rossello had reiterated as recently as Tuesday that he would not resign, having already said he would not seek reelection in 2020. Prior to the devastation wrought by Hurricane Maria, Puerto Rico suffered a serious fiscal crisis that forced the government to file for bankruptcy in May 2017. Budget cuts prompted many Puerto Ricans to flee. Combined with the post-hurricane exodus, Puerto Rico lost four percent of its population. — AFP



## International

# Bombs kill at least 11 in Kabul; US general visits

## Islamic State claims responsibility for two blasts

**KABUL:** Three bombs rocked the Afghan capital of Kabul yesterday, killing at least 11 people and wounding 45, officials said, as the chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff was meeting top US and NATO officials in the city. A suicide bomber blew himself near a minibus carrying employees of the ministry and mines and petroleum, killing five women and a child. Video footage shared with reporters by security officials showed the bodies of the women and a child lying on the road in the eastern part of city as bystanders tried to help the wounded.

Health officials said at least 20 people were taken to hospital by civilians, some on wheelbarrows. A second bomb exploded on a road parallel to the site of the bus attack, killing five people and injuring police who were trying to manage the traffic after the first blast. Islamic State claimed responsibility for the two attacks. The third blast, about three km away, wounded at least 17 civilians. The Taliban claimed responsibility.

The Taliban, fighting to restore strict Islamic law after their 2001 ouster at the hands of U.S.-led troops, said their fighters had used a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device to kill

nine foreign forces and destroy two vehicles. On Wednesday, a Croatian soldier serving in Afghanistan was killed and two were seriously wounded in a suicide attack on their convoy outside Kabul, Afghan interior ministry officials said the Taliban have killed or wounded more than 1,000 civilians since April, including more than 150 children.

The attacks came as US Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Marine General Joseph Dunford met Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and the US peace envoy for Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, who is leading talks with militants to end the 18-year-long war. The United States is trying to negotiate a deal that would see foreign forces pull out of Afghanistan in return for security guarantees by the Taliban, including a pledge that the country will not become a safe haven for terror groups.

About 20,000 foreign troops, most of them American, are in Afghanistan as part of the US-led NATO mission to train, assist and advise Afghan forces. Some US forces carry out counter-terrorism operations. Col Sonny Leggett, a spokesman for the US forces in Afghanistan, said the Taliban, despite offering assurances dur-



**KABUL:** Afghan security personnel remove a damage vehicle at the site, following a suicide bombing in Kabul yesterday. — AFP

ing peace negotiations, continue to target innocent civilians. Afghan security experts said the insurgents were increasing attacks to gain greater leverage in the peace talks. The eighth round is expected to begin this month in Qatar.

The Taliban also clashed with Afghan forces in northern province of Takhar to secure control over checkpoints and capture several districts.

Both sides said that they have inflicted heavy damage on their opponents. In the eastern province of Nangarhar, a roadside bomb hit a wedding party on Thursday. Six women and three children were killed in the blast in Khogyani district, the provincial governor's office said in a statement. No group has claimed responsibility for that attack. —Reuters

## North Korea fires missiles in latest provocation

**SEOUL:** North Korea fired two short-range missiles into the sea yesterday, complicating efforts to resume stalled nuclear talks with Washington and signaling its anger over planned US-South Korea joint military exercises. It was Pyongyang's first missile test since an impromptu meeting between US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un last month that produced an agreement to resume a working-level denuclearization dialogue.

But those talks have yet to begin, and North Korea warned recently they could be derailed by Washington and Seoul's refusal to scrap military exercises scheduled for next month. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said the two missiles were launched just after dawn from Wonsan on the east coast. Earlier in the day, a JCS official in Seoul said one of the two weapons flew more than 430 kilometers, while the other travelled 690 kilometers and appeared to be a "new type of missile".

But in the evening Seoul's National Security Office (NSC) of the presidential Blue House said both of the two missiles are "analyzed" to be "new type of short-range ballistic missiles". "We urge the North to stop actions that do not help ease military tensions," said Choi Hyun-soo, a defense ministry spokeswoman for South Korea, while the NSC said it expressed "strong concern". Japan's defense minister called the launches "extremely regrettable" but stressed that the missiles had fallen short of his country's exclusive economic zone.

Pyongyang carried out similar short-range launches in May, which Trump dismissed at the time as "very standard stuff" that would have no impact on his relationship with Kim. The two leaders went on to hold an unscheduled meeting June 30 in the Demilitarized Zone that divides the two Koreas, where they agreed to pick up a nuclear dialogue that stalled after the collapse of the second Trump-Kim summit in February.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the working-level disarmament talks would probably start in mid-July, but last week Pyongyang said they had been jeopardized by the scheduled joint military drills. Condemning the exercises as "blatant pressure", Pyongyang even hinted it could reconsider its moratorium on nuclear and long-range missile testing.

### 'Strong message'

Yesterday's launches came a day after Trump's National Security Advisor John Bolton - an arch-hawk regularly vilified by North Korean state media - held talks with senior South Korean officials in Seoul. The latest missile tests were a "strong message" that should be seen as "part of Pyongyang's protest" against the military drills, said Cheong Seong-chang, an analyst at the Sejong Institute.

There are close to 30,000 US troops stationed in South Korea, and their annual manoeuvres with tens of thousands of South Korean soldiers have always infuriated Pyongyang, which views them as provocative rehearsals for invasion. Other analysts said opposition to the drills was merely a pretext for Pyongyang to pursue its weapons ambitions. "I think today's launches are part of a larger plan for North Korea's advanced missile program, rather than its protest against the upcoming military drill," said Hong Min, a senior researcher at the South's state-run Korea Institute for National Unification. — AFP

## Afghanistan at crossroads as election season kicks off

**KABUL:** After months of delays and political bickering, Afghanistan is preparing for presidential elections which could see more of the bloodshed and fraud allegations that have marred previous polls. Campaign season begins in earnest Sunday, exactly two months ahead of the poll, when 17 hopefuls will try to beat President Ashraf Ghani as he seeks a second term. The cast of contenders - all men - includes a former warlord accused of killing thousands, the brother of a mujahideen icon, and a bitter rival seeking retribution. Here is a look at the key issues:

### What's at stake?

This year's election comes at a crucial moment. The Taliban, who are not taking part, think they are on the verge of beating the United States after nearly 18 years of war. The US is negotiating for a deal that would see foreign forces pull out of the country in return for various Taliban security guarantees, including a pledge that Afghanistan will not become a safe haven for terror groups.

Washington wants a deal by September 1, but this is unlikely given the complexities and sticking points involved. This means Afghanistan's next president must figure out how to deal with the Taliban, who steadfastly

have refused to negotiate with the Kabul government. It is unclear what a final peace settlement could look like. Everything, potentially, could be up for grabs: women's rights, personal freedoms, the constitution itself. Many Afghans fear a quick return to Taliban rule or a spiraling civil war.

Afghanistan's lacklustre economy and entrenched corruption will likely take a back seat to the pressing security situation. The kick off to the campaign season also comes amid a wider surge in violence in Kabul and around Afghanistan, where the war is taking a continued toll even amid the US-led effort to forge a deal with the Taliban. At least 10 people - including several women and a child - were killed and 41 others wounded by a series of blasts that rocked the Afghan capital yesterday, while further east in Nangarhar province nine family members were killed as they headed to a wedding.

### What's the process?

Unless a candidate wins a majority on September 28, voting will go to a second round, probably in late November. One crucial issue is that the elections happen at all. They have already been postponed twice this year and further delays could lead to more unrest, as Ghani's rivals are furious about the unexpected extension to his term. Some observers have said this year's electoral delays were to make room for US-Taliban talks, but more likely it was down to bungling by election officials. Some nine million people have registered to vote but allegations persist that some of those are "ghost" voters. Some candidates have already threatened to boycott the election because they say Ghani is using his position to gain an unfair advantage. — AFP



## International

# Facial recognition push at India airports raises privacy concerns

## Critics say the technology has accuracy problems

**BANGKOK:** The launch of facial recognition technology at two Indian airports and plans to place it in police stations have stoked fears over privacy and increased surveillance among human rights groups in the country. The “paperless biometric technology” launched in Bengaluru airport this week identifies passengers by their face, doing away with the need to present boarding passes, passports and other identity documents, according to a statement from the airport in India’s tech capital.

Another airport in the southern Indian city of Hyderabad is also testing facial recognition technology this month. While airlines, airports and the companies developing the software promise greater security and increased efficiency, some technology analysts and privacy experts say the benefits are not clear, and come at the cost of privacy and greater surveillance.

This is particularly true of India, which does not have a data protection law or an electronic surveillance framework, said Vidushi Marda, a lawyer and advisor at human rights group Article 19. “Entities that deploy facial recognition essentially have carte blanche to do whatever they want with your most intimate data,” she said yesterday. “It is basically surveillance architecture. Facial recognition has no redeeming qualities from a privacy and autonomy lens – it is also famously inaccurate and completely unreliable.”

India’s Supreme Court, in a landmark ruling in 2017 on the national biometric identity card program, said that individual privacy is a funda-

mental right, amid concerns over data breaches and the card’s mandated use for services. Yet the ruling has done little to check the adoption of technologies such as facial recognition, which are “fundamentally contrary to our constitutional rights and principles of criminal justice”, said Marda. Worldwide, the rise of cloud computing and artificial intelligence technologies have popularized the use of facial recognition for a range of applications from tracking criminals to counting truant students.

Singapore’s Changi Airport is considering using facial recognition systems to find late passengers and the country also plans to use the capabilities in a project to fit cameras and sensors on over 100,000 lampposts. But critics say the technology has accuracy problems, particularly in identifying darker-skinned women and those from ethnic minorities. They also warn that users are not being told how the technology works, where their data goes, and whether they can opt out.

In May, San Francisco officials banned the use of facial recognition technology by city personnel in a sign of the growing backlash. India’s home ministry recently called for a tender for facial recognition systems to modernize the police force and its information gathering and criminal identification processes. The Bengaluru airport system, described as “your face is your boarding pass”, offers the “highest degree of safety and security while ensuring stringent standards of privacy,” a spokeswoman for the airport said.



**NEW DELHI:** A man uses a mobile phone leaning on a motorbike along a street in New Delhi yesterday. — AFP

The biometric data is used only for authentication and verification of passengers, and is deleted within a few hours of flight completion, she said. The government’s digital travel policy states that passenger consent is needed for use of their biometric data for marketing purposes, and that users must have the option to opt out.

But passengers are likely to choose convenience if they see no tangible cost, said Marda. “The problem is that there is a huge cost,” she said. “By enrolling, you’re providing a private entity with a biometric map of your face in the absence of accountability and transparency mechanisms, and no data protection,” she said. — Reuters

## Feeling the heat, drug suspects call Belgian police

**BRUSSELS:** It really wasn’t the day to get trapped in a shipping container full of cocaine in the port of Antwerp. Wednesday was the hottest ever recorded in Belgium, and somehow two suspects got stuck in the metal box. As the heat rose, they feared they would suffocate and made a desperate call to the police emergency line, Antwerp prosecutors said.

It took officers two hours to find the container in the huge port, western Europe’s main gateway for smuggled drugs. Guns drawn, police opened the door and the exhausted pair, stripped to the waist gratefully gave themselves up. A social media video of the arrests shows port employees pouring water on the suspects to cool them as afternoon temperatures skirted 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit).

According to a statement from Antwerp prosecutors they had entered the container “to remove drugs”. Much else about the incident remains unclear, but the suspects will appear in court Thursday, prosecution spokesman Kristof Aerts said. Officials have not confirmed the size of the cocaine haul found in the container, but local Antwerp newspaper the *Gazet* said it could have been hundreds of kilos. The suspects were from the Antwerp area. More than 50 tons of cocaine from Latin America were seized in Belgium’s biggest port last year, the largest volume ever recorded. — AFP

## India farmers shocked as suspected meteorite crashes into rice field

**NEW DELHI:** A suspected meteorite the size of a football plunged into a rice field in eastern India, startling farmers, authorities said yesterday. Onlookers said the light brown-colored object sent them fleeing from the field when it fell at their rural village on Wednesday afternoon, sending up smoke.

“The farmers were working in the paddy field when this heavy rock fell from the sky with a very loud noise,” Shirsat Kapil Ashok, the magistrate for Madhubani district in Bihar state said. The villagers returned after the smoke subsided and pulled the rock out from its four-foot-deep crater. “We saw it has very strong magnetic properties, some shine and weighs around 15 kilograms (33 pounds),” Ashok added. The find is being analyzed by scientists as a possible meteorite.

Meteors are particles of dust and rock that usually burn up as they pass through Earth’s atmosphere, with those that survive the fall known as meteorites. In 2016 authorities in southern India’s Tamil Nadu state said a meteorite killed a bus driver and injured three others. While Indian scientists backed the claim of the regional authorities, the US space agency NASA later said did not believe the object was a meteorite. In February 2013 a meteorite plunged over Russia’s Ural Mountains, creating a shockwave that injured around 1,200 people and damaged thousands of homes. — AFP

## Underground water pipes: Another way for cities to keep cool

**BOULOGNE-BILLANCOURT:** As Paris swelters in record-breaking heat, visitors to some of the French capital’s iconic landmarks are being kept cool without even knowing it by a labyrinthine network of underground water pipes. With climate change making hot weather periods more likely each year, proponents of systems known as “district cooling networks” argue the technology could provide a planet-friendly alternative to air conditioning when the mercury soars.

With around 80 kilometers of cooling pipes snaking beneath the French capital, a number of energy firms pump ultra-cooled water from large storage tanks to underground sub-stations and up into the buildings of around 700 clients. Among them are some of Paris’s must-see locales: the Louvre, the National Assembly, the Hotel de Ville and the Galeries Lafayette superstore.

The technology requires electricity to run and the water it uses comes from both groundwater and from the Seine river. But providers insist it is far more efficient and less polluting than air conditioning. Jean-Sebastian Mascroz, operations manager at Climespace, a district cooling network firm, says it provides “four megawatts of cooling for each megawatt of electricity used”-twice as efficient as conventional air conditioning. The International Energy Agency (IEA) last year warned of the vicious warming cycle created by air conditioning: the hotter temperatures get, the more people fire up their AC, producing yet more greenhouse gases that lead to more warming. There are currently around 1.6 billion air conditioning units on Earth. But that number is set to explode to 5.6 billion by 2050 - one for every two humans on the planet. — AFP



# Lifestyle

Friday Times

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FRIDAY, JULY 26, 2019

A file photo taken on November 29, 2017 shows Egyptian actor Farouk Al-Fishawy attending the funeral of the late popular singer and actress Shadia, at the Sayeda Nafisa mosque in the capital Cairo. — AFP

EGYPTIAN ACTOR  
**FAROUK AL-FISHAWY**  
DIES, AGED 67

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## Lifestyle | Features



Lebanese pianist, composer and playwright Ziad Rahbani performs during the Beirut Holidays 2019 Festival at the waterfront in the Lebanese capital. — AFP

## The Tarantino effect: Once Upon a Time in a Land of Sequels

Quentin Tarantino's new film is a love letter to Hollywood—and an important test of whether the under-pressure industry can still make hits that aren't tried-and-tested superhero franchises or nostalgic reboots, analysts say. "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood" is set in 1969 as Tinseltown pivoted from an era of clean-cut matinee idols to the shaggy-haired counter-culture of Roman Polanski, Dennis Hopper and more troublingly—Charles Manson's clique of murderous hippies.

Its world of idealistic auteurs, loyal stunt doubles and Spaghetti Westerns has already tugged at the heartstrings of cinephiles and film critics, earning rave reviews. But when it opens at movie theaters Friday, it will land midway through a year that is far from a Hollywood fairytale. Domestic movie box offices are down more than seven percent from 2018, according to Comscore—something remarkable in a year that has seen superhero blockbuster "Avengers: Endgame" become the highest-grossing film of all time.

Strip out parent company Disney's other lucrative, long-established franchises—with "Toy Story 4," "Aladdin" and "The Lion King," the Mouse House accounts for over 40 percent of this year's box office—and 2019 looks bleak for original movies. With TV and web streaming also muscling in on its profits, Hollywood is watching closely to see if the "Tarantino effect" can help buck this trend in which only established mega-franchises succeed.

### Brand Tarantino

The stakes are high because Tarantino is viewed as something of a dying breed in Hollywood—a distinctive director creating original films that people flock to see. If Tarantino cannot succeed, it bodes poorly for the summer's few other original movies such as critically acclaimed family drama "The Farewell," said Paul Der-

garabedian, senior analyst at Comscore. "He's one of maybe five directors of all time that people on the street know his name automatically—it's Alfred Hitchcock, Steven Spielberg, Francis Ford Coppola... people not in the industry know Tarantino," he added.

Tarantino has also been able to lure the industry's top talent—Leonardo DiCaprio reportedly took a pay cut to work again with the director after collaborating on "Django Unchained." "As an audience, no matter what they think of the movie, they know they're in for an incredibly unique experience," DiCaprio said at Monday's glitzy premiere in Hollywood's iconic TCL Chinese Theater. "And that's why people keep coming back," he told journalists. How many will come this time remains to be seen. But while "One Upon a Time" won't touch last week's whopping \$190 million "Lion King" opening, analysts say a healthy \$30 million is realistic.

### Ten and done

Even if he can buck the current "blockbuster or bust" trend, any boost Tarantino can offer Hollywood is likely to be short-lived. The "Pulp Fiction" director says he will retire from directing after his 10th movie. "Once Upon a Time" is number nine. Rumors he could sneak in an R-rated new "Star Trek" movie before he calls it quits have stirred hope among devotees. But if even Tarantino switches to franchise filmmaking, it could be a seminal moment in Hollywood's direction of travel. For now, Hollywood is just happy to see him making waves. "It's getting harder and harder to get original content to a big cinema," said Brad Pitt, the film's other marquee star, at Monday's premiere. "Thank god Tarantino's got one more left in him," he added. — AFP



Director Quentin Tarantino, Brad Pitt, Margot Robbie and Leonardo DiCaprio attend the Sony Pictures' 'Once Upon A Time...In Hollywood' Los Angeles Premiere. — AFP

## Blade Runner actor Rutger Hauer dies aged 75

Hollywood actor Rutger Hauer, who became a global cult icon for his role as the scary yet thought-provoking humanoid android in the 1982 sci-fi classic "Blade Runner", has died at the age of 75. Hauer's non-profit HIV/AIDS charity, the Rutger Hauer Starfish Association, said on his website it was announcing "with infinite sadness that after a very short illness, on Friday, July 19, 2019, Rutger passed away peacefully at his Dutch home".

Dutch media said Hauer was buried at a private ceremony as the film world paid tribute. "RIP the great Rutger Hauer: an intense, deep, genuine and magnetic actor that brought truth, power and beauty to his films," Mexican film-maker Guillermo del Toro Del Toro tweeted. "Rutger was to me what Marcello Mastroianni was to (Federico) Fellini, an alter ego," fellow Dutchman director Paul Verhoeven, who gave Hauer his first big break, told the Dutch national ANP news agency. "I'm especially deeply sad that he's here no more. I am going to miss him terribly," he said.

### Piercing blue eyes

Set in a dystopian Los Angeles of 2019 and directed by Ridley Scott, Blade Runner catapulted the tall, blonde Dutch actor with piercing blue eyes to international stardom. His last haunting monologue in the movie as the genetically engineered replicant Roy Batty could perhaps stand as his own obituary: "I've seen things you people wouldn't believe... all those moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain. Time to die." "Half of Roy is me," said Hauer, who went on to play a number of memorable menacing bad guys who sent shivers down audiences' spines.



This file photo taken on September 01, 2007 shows Dutch Rutger Hauer posing during a photocall at Venice. — AFP

On the 30th anniversary of the film's release in 2012, Hauer told reporters in Milan that it "was completely delicious to work on. I can't even fathom how it feels to be alive and an icon basically because of this movie". Starring Harrison Ford as a special police agent sent to hunt down renegade replicants who have returned to Earth from human colonies in space, "Blade Runner" initially bombed at the box-office. But it went on to become a cult movie, attracting a devoted fan-base. "I feel that the wings of 'Blade Runner' are literally carrying me around. It's unbelievable and beautiful," Hauer told Italian television in a 2016 interview.

### Young rebel

Born on January 23, 1944 in Breukelen just outside Amsterdam to Dutch parents who were both actors and ran an acting school, the young Hauer showed an early rebellious and wild streak. At 15 he ran away to sea, travelling the world on a Dutch Merchant Navy freighter picking up English, German, French and Italian on the way. After returning to the Netherlands, he took up acting properly joining a touring company bringing theatre to Dutch villages. In 1969 he got his first real break when he was cast in the lead role of a swashbuckling historical Dutch television series called "Floris" directed by the then little known Verhoeven. It triggered a years-long collaboration between the two, although it was said they fell out in the mid-80s. Verhoeven cast Hauer in his first major film role in "Turkish Delight" in 1973. But it was when Hauer was teamed up with Hollywood star Sylvester Stallone in the 1981 thriller "Nighthawks" that he first came to the attention of American audiences. — AFP





In this file photo taken on September 03, 2003 Egyptian film stars Leila Elwi and Farouk Al-Fishawy arriving at the 19th Alexandria International Film Festival in Alexandria. — AFP photos



A file photo taken on February 20, 2002, shows Egyptian film star Farouk Al-Fishawy posing with new actress Donya Samir Ghanem at the premiere of 'Haramiah Fi KG2'.

## Egyptian actor **Farouk Al-Fishawy** dies, aged 67, following cancer battle

Renowned Egyptian actor Farouk Al-Fishawy has died at the age of 67, nine months after revealing he was battling cancer. The United star, who has appeared in numerous films and TV shows throughout his decades-long career, passed away on Thursday, according to multiple sources. Al-Fishawy, who most recently appeared in 2018's *Lailat Hana wa Suroor*, revealed his health struggle last year, during the opening of the Alexandria Mediterranean Film Festival in October.

"I was reluctant to say this, because I do not want to see any distress or discomfort from any of you, because I am not upset," he said after being honored at 34th edition of the festival. "After some tests and radiation, my doctor told me I have cancer. I will treat this disease as a headache, and with determination I will win ... I will defeat it and I will attend the next session of the Alexandria Festival to be with you, and to congratulate another colleague for his honor." Al-Fishawy starred in more than 60 films and TV

shows, with his career starting in 1979 when he made his debut in an episode of *Abnaie Al- Aezzaa Shokran*.

He also appeared alongside Adel Imam and Soaad Hosny in 1981's *Al-Mashbouh*, and produced 1986's *Moshwar Omar* and 1985's *A Cry from Beyond*. Some of his other prominent work includes *Ightisab*, *48 Hours in Israel*, *A Man with a Past*, *A Woman Shook the Throne*, *Al-zaman Al-saab*, *The Jeans and Katel Bela Ajer*. His most recent work was alongside Egyptian actor Yehia Al-Fakhrani in *Kourfa Bel Zanjabeel* (*Cinnamon with Ginger*), directed by Omar Abdel Aziz. He is survived by his son, Ahmed, who is also an actor. Ahmed starred in *Sheikh Jackson*, a quirky film about a cleric who becomes obsessed with Michael Jackson. — www.thenational.ae

## Lebanese band to apologize to Christians before home gig

A Lebanese indie band is to play at a music festival in their home country next month, but only after apologizing for two songs deemed offensive to Christians, organizers said. Mashrou' Leila, whose singer is openly gay and whose outspoken Arabic lyrics tackle often taboo social issues, have created waves in the religiously conservative Middle East. They have played frequently in Lebanon since forming in 2008 while studying at the American University of Beirut.

But they have sparked controversy in Egypt and were banned from performing in Jordan. On Monday, Lebanese clerics called for the band to cancel their planned performance at the high-profile summer festival in the seaside resort of Byblos, charging that their songs were offensive to Christians. Late Wednesday, the festival's artistic director, Naji Baz, said a compromise had been reached after a meeting with the town's Maronite bishop. "We reached an arrangement whereby the concert will happen as planned, as long as the band holds a press conference in the coming days," he said.—AFP



Lebanese alternative rock band Mashrou' Leila performs during the Ehdniyat International Festival in Ehdn, Lebanon, August 12, 2017. — Reuters

## Madonna collaborator uploads demos to undercut auction

In a move to undermine a controversial auction of Madonna memorabilia a longtime collaborator of the Material Girl has uploaded a number of her demos to YouTube, including "Like a Prayer." For two years Madonna has been trying to stop a sell-off of private effects including a breakup letter from rap legend Tupac Shakur and cassettes containing previously unreleased demo versions of some of her biggest hits. But more than 70 lots are up at the memorabilia house Gotta Have Rock and Roll, which is hosting the event in collaboration with the Queen of Pop's former art advisor, Darlene Lutz.

Leonard said on Facebook he hoped the YouTube uploads would stop the sale of the demos. "It's not cool that someone is seeking profit from something they had no part in creating," he said. "It's not theirs to sell." One cassette with tracks including "Like A Prayer," "Spanish Eyes" and "Cherish" currently has six bids, the highest at \$1,283, with just over two days left to make offers. The Tupac letter has a minimum bid of \$100,000, but no

takers yet. In 2017 a judge halted an auction with 22 items that once belonged to Madonna, including the 1995 letter from Tupac, who would be shot dead a year later.

"The fact that I have attained celebrity status as a result of success in my career does not obviate my right to maintain my privacy, including with regard to highly personal items," Madonna, 60, said in court papers at the time. But a New York state appeals court ruled last month that her lawsuit fell outside of a three-year statute of limitations on recovering belongs from Lutz, who had a falling out with the singer in 2003. Gotta Have Rock and Roll cited that ruling and called the statements made by Leonard "clearly erroneous as well as defamatory." "Madonna lost the litigation at the trial court and has exhausted her ability to appeal," the house said. "The cassettes are being sold as collectibles only and copyright to the songs contained on the cassettes is not included."— AFP



Lebanese alternative rock band Mashrou' Leila performs during the Ehdniyat International Festival in Ehdn, Lebanon, August 12, 2017. — Reuters





Franky Zapata (center) stands on his jet-powered “flyboard” as he takes off from Sangatte, northern France, attempting to fly across the 35-kilometre (22-mile) Channel crossing in 20 minutes yesterday. — AFP photos



Chrysten, the wife of Franky Zapata, helps him with his pack as he prepares to fly across the Channel standing on a jet-powered “flyboard”.

## Flying Frenchman fails in Channel crossing bid

A daredevil French inventor yesterday failed in his attempt to fly across the Channel standing on a jet-powered “flyboard”, crashing into the sea but vowing to try again. Franky Zapata, 40, a former jet-skiing champion, had to be fished out of the Channel by rescuers after falling into the busy shipping lane between France and Britain during a tricky refueling manoeuvre. But Zapata, who suffered only a scratched elbow, said afterwards that while he was “disappointed” he would be having another go in the future. Zapata took off successfully from Sangatte in northern France and had planned to land in Britain at St Margaret’s Bay outside Dover after a flight of just 20 minutes. But the refueling was always set to be one of the most difficult parts of the operation and Zapata made contact with the refueling platform due to the waves, forcing him into the sea. “I am disappointed. Now it’s certain that I will cross again but I don’t know when. I will need to renegotiate with everyone,” he told AFP after being taken back to France.

### ‘Very, very fast’

Zapata had hoped to make the 35-kilometre (22-mile) crossing in 20 minutes, keeping



Franky Zapata stands on his jet-powered ‘flyboard’ as he takes off from Sangatte.

an average speed of 140 kilometers an hour (87 mph) at a height of 15–20 meters (50–65 feet) above the water. The flyboard is fuelled by kerosene stored in the rider’s backpack. Zapata carried 47 kilos (104 pounds) of it yesterday. But as that would only take him part of the way across the Channel, he needed to pick up a new backpack in mid-Channel for the second half of the trip.

“I think it was just a case of a few meters,

even a few centimeters,” said the mayor of Sangatte, Guy Allemand, after the mid-Channel mishap was confirmed. “Divers jumped right out of the boat to get him back. It was very, very fast,” he told AFP. In a scene resembling a science fiction film, Zapata had zoomed into the sky at the start of attempt wearing a full body suit, helmet and clutching a joystick to control the device.

Onlookers in Sangatte gasped in astonish-

ment as he soared high above the sea and rapidly became just a tiny speck on the horizon. In a tribute to past aviation heroes, Zapata had picked the day that marks 110 years since pioneer Louis Bleriot made the first airplane flight across the Channel on July 25, 1909. His plan had initial snags as French maritime authorities refused to give the project their blessing—while stopping short of an outright ban—due to intense shipping traffic in the Channel. But the maritime authorities said they lifted their “unfavorable opinion” after receiving guarantees from Zapata about his refueling plans and safety. For making a new attempt, Zapata will likely have to open new talks with the authorities.

### ‘Follow in the footsteps’

Zapata sprang to national prominence at the July 14 Bastille Day military parade when he soared above the Place de la Concorde in Paris in front of world leaders including President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel. He carried a rifle during that demonstration and the French defense ministry said it was studying how the flyboard could be used by its troops. “We created a new way of flying. —AFP

## THE MANY WAYS OF CROSSING THE ENGLISH CHANNEL

**PARIS:** By plane, hot-air balloon, gondola or jet-powered wing: the English Channel has been crossed in many inventive ways, even if Frenchman Franky Zapata failed in his bid with a “flyboard” yesterday.

### By plane

The first aeroplane flight between France and Britain was exactly 110 years ago by French constructor and aviator Louis Bleriot. His monoplane took off from Calais on July

25, 1909 and landed in Dover 37 minutes later. Zapata scheduled his attempt for the anniversary of Bleriot’s feat. In 1979 US cyclist Bryan Allen made the same crossing on board a pedal-powered aeroplane, taking three hours.

### By balloon

In January 1785 France’s Jean-Pierre Blanchard and American John Jeffries became the first to cross the Channel by hot-air balloon. Leaving from Dover in England, they touched down in a forest three hours later near Boulogne-sur-Mer. More than two centuries later, in May 2010, US adventurer Jonathan Trappe made the crossing in a chair carried by a cluster of 55 multicolored helium-filled balloons. He travelled around 100 kilometers from Ashford in

Kent, England to a French field outside Dunkirk.

### Swimming

In August 1875 Britain merchant marine captain Matthew Webb became the first known person to swim across the English Channel, which he did in 21 hours and 45 minutes. American Gertrude Ederle was the first woman to do so in August 1926. She took 14 hours and 31 minutes. In September 2010 limbless Frenchman Philippe Croizon became the first quadruple amputee to swim across, taking about 13 hours using specially designed flipper-shaped prosthetic legs.

### On the water

The first hovercraft crossing was in July 1959, piloted by Briton Peter Lamb and tak-

ing around two hours. In August 1984 British brothers Rick and Stephen Cooper did the same on a pedalo in a little over eight hours. Former French cyclist Yvon Le Caer pedaled across on his AquaCycle in September 1985 for a 148-kilometre (92-mile) route that took under 17 hours. Frenchmen Dominique Vaast and Francois Bocquet used a two-person kayak to cross in June 1986. Their 200-kilometre trip between Portsmouth and Le Havre took just over 26 hours. In September 1987 British swimming coach Steve Butterworth, who had one leg amputated, made the journey on monoski pulled by a small speedboat. Venice gondoliers Vittorio Orio and Enzo Liszka navigated their specially adapted gondola from Dover to Calais in July 2001, covering 34 kilometers. —AFP



## Lifestyle | Feature

## Russia hatches plan to become top tourist draw

Fancy a tank ride in the snow, then a night in a Tsarist-era palace? With ambitious plans to become one of the world's top 10 travel destinations, Russia is offering tours off the beaten track and lifting visa restrictions to attract more visitors. A year after it successfully hosted the World Cup, the ex-Soviet country is looking for new ways to attract international visitors with the goal of more than doubling tourism revenues to \$25 billion by 2035. "Young people will now be able to see Russia in a way their parents could not," Maya Lomidze, executive director of the Association of Russian Tour Operators, told AFP. Russia's rich cultural heritage and its spectacular scenery ranging from subtropical Black Sea resorts to Siberia's Lake Baikal and the volcanoes of Kamchatka make the country an obvious draw for visitors.

But the difficulty of obtaining visas, a lack of contemporary-style accommodation and transport links outside the main cities still put off many visitors. Nearly 25 million tourists visited Russia last year, making it the world's 16th most popular destination, according to the World Tourism Organization. They largely came from the ex-Soviet bloc and China. During last summer's World Cup, Russia offered visa-free entry for international fans and Lomidze said the tourism sector had hoped for a substantial boost from the tournament played in 11 Russian cities.

"But the effect of the World Cup was practically reduced to zero by the eternal problems with visas," she said. Apparently aware of the problem, President Vladimir Putin has ordered the government to introduce electronic visas, which are free of charge and issued quickly, for citizens of a number of countries. Electronic visas will come into force in October for stays of up to eight days in the former imperial capital of Saint Petersburg and the surrounding region, though Russia has not yet said which countries' citizens can apply.

From July, there has been a similar deal for travellers from 53 countries visiting the Western exclave of Kaliningrad, formerly part of Germany. Since 2017, nationals of 18 countries have been eligible to receive free e-visas to visit Russia's Far East including the Kamchatka region where tourists can ski and trek in pristine landscapes.

### Arctic tours

Tour operators are seeking to diversify, luring visitors with Arctic tours featuring reindeer herders, rides in Soviet-era tanks or a night at a palace that belonged to Peter the Great. But Russia as a whole only spends around one million euros per year on promoting itself to visitors, according to estimates from the Association of Russian Tour Operators.

The country needs to invest billions of dollars in infrastructure and new facilities for travellers but equally crucial is a major pub-



In this file photo a woman takes a selfie in front of the Kremlin and St. Basil Cathedral at sunset in Moscow. — AFP photos

licity campaign to improve its image tarnished by the conflicts in Ukraine and Syria and spying scandals, experts say.

### Stares from Soviets

Unlike Russia, the USSR made concerted efforts to lure foreign tourists, with posters and magazines extolling the thrill of travels through the steppes of Central Asia and the Caucasus mountains. "First and foremost, the Soviet Union's draw was in its sense of forbiddenness, a bit like North Korea now," said Andrei Sivitsky, deputy director at Intourist, which was founded 90 years ago as the state travel agency. Juliette Spigolis, a retired French engineer from Nice, is revisiting Russia for an epic bus trip that began in Brittany in northwestern France and will end in the Pacific port of Vladivostok.

Speaking to AFP, she recalled that she could not find a map of Moscow on sale when she first visited 35 years ago, due to the secrecy surrounding nearly every aspect of Soviet life. "At the time, foreigners got just as many stares from the Soviets as they did from us," said the retiree as she tried to make her way through a crowd of Chinese tourists milling around Red Square.

Spigolis said she was delighted to discover a new "globalized" Russia but complained that outside popular tourist areas many signs are still only in Cyrillic, making life more difficult for those like her who are "eager to discover this vast country".—AFP



This long exposure photo shows people riding a reindeer-drawn sleigh in Tsaritsyno park in Moscow.



A woman poses next to a tank at the museum-panorama "The Battle of Stalingrad" in Volgograd.



## Lifestyle | Feature



A dish of Meal worms, an ingredient and garnish at Gourmet Grubb.



A dish of Mopani worms, imported from Zimbabwe, an ingredient at Gourmet Grubb.



Mario Barnard, chef at Gourmet Grubb, works at his food stand specializing in using insects in cuisine in Cape Town. — AFP photos

## Bugs up: Cape Town restaurant serves insect menu

Mopane worms are a traditional snack in South Africa, but a Cape Town restaurant is set to crawl into the history books as the first to serve a full menu of bug-infused delicacies. The Insect Experience, which opened its doors this month, is offering an alternative food source to the city's mainstream culinary experience. The restaurant was opened by Gourmet Grub, a company that has already introduced Cape Town to dairy-free ice cream made from insect milk.

Co-founder and head of product development Leah Bessa has been investigating insects as a viable protein substitute. "In general insects are really high in protein and fat, comparable to

red meat in their protein and fat content. The insects we use, the black soldier fly larvae, are much higher in zinc, iron and calcium than beef," she said. According to Bessa, the insects are also high in dietary fibre and have no carbohydrate value.

The bugs are bred by two local farmers and delivered straight to the restaurant. Mealworms and mopane worms are some of the creepy-crawlies that chef Mario Barnard has included in his dishes.

In 2015, he went to Thailand and for the first time experienced dishes made with tarantulas and scorpions. "I knew then that I wanted to hide insects in food, incorporated into little gourmet

dishes, to introduce to South Africans," Barnard said. The restaurant serves mopane worm polenta fries, and black fly larvae chickpea croquettes paired with a mopane hummus and topped off with a sprinkle of dried mealworms. For dessert, it offers a deep-fried dark chocolate black fly larvae ice cream. "I chose these dishes for introducing insects to people because they're already familiar with them—everyone knows polenta fries and croquettes," he said. One customer told AFP: "It's delicious, it's flavorful and spicy, it's everything you want in food." — AFP



A dish of Basil Pesto Tagliatelle, made with ground Black Soldier Fly larvae, and garnished with Mealworms, at Gourmet Grubb.



A dish of Basil Pesto Tagliatelle, made with ground Black Soldier Fly larvae, and garnished with Mealworms, at Gourmet Grubb.





A dish of Wild mushroom and herb croquets with Mopani Humus at Gourmet Grubb.



A dish of Mopani Polenta Fries with smoked tomato chutney at Gourmet Grubb.



Leah Besser, a food scientist and entrepreneur shows off her Gourmet Grubb ice-cream partly made using ground up insects at their food stand specializing in using insects in cuisine.

## Titanic explorer to search for Amelia Earhart's plane

Robert Ballard, the underwater explorer who found the Titanic, has a new quest—searching for the plane of famed aviator Amelia Earhart, who disappeared over the Pacific in 1937. National Geographic said Ballard plans to leave from Samoa on August 7 to carry out the hunt with his state-of-the-art research vessel E/V Nautilus. National Geographic said it plans to film the expedition and air a documentary about it on its television channel on October 20.

Earhart went missing while on a pioneering round-the-world flight with navigator Fred Noonan. Her disappearance is one of the most tantalizing mysteries in aviation lore, fascinating historians for decades and spawning books, movies and theories galore. The prevailing belief is that Earhart, 39, and Noonan, 44, ran out of fuel and ditched their twin-engine Lockheed Electra in the Pacific near remote Howland Island while on one of the final legs of their epic journey. One of the most popular theories is that Earhart and Noonan crash-landed on uninhabited Gardner Island, now known as Nikumaroro, part of the Republic of Kiribati, where she survived briefly as a castaway. —AFP



American female aviator Amelia Earhart looking through the cockpit window of her plane. — AFP

## Sweden to decide on rapper A\$AP Rocky charge

Swedish prosecutors will decide whether to charge rapper A\$AP Rocky, whose detention on suspicion of assault has caused furors among his fans and attracted the attention of President Donald Trump. Since the New York rapper's detention in early July, fans and numerous music stars have waged a social media campaign to demand his release. The 30-year-old artist, real name Rakim Mayers, was arrested on July 3 along with three other people, following a street brawl in Stockholm on June 30. One of them, the rapper's bodyguard, was later released.

On July 5 the Stockholm District Court ordered that Mayers should be kept in custody while the case was investigated as he was considered a "flight risk". The court originally gave the prosecutor two weeks to decide on whether to press charges, but then granted a week-long extension. This means the prosecutor, Daniel Suneson, will need to make a decision or request another extension from the court.

If the prosecutor requests an extension, it will require another hearing to keep Mayers in custody. If he decides to press charges, the rapper can be kept in custody until the trial, which must be held within two weeks. Assault carries a maximum penalty of two years in jail in Sweden.

### #FreeRocky

Mayers' lawyer Slobodan Jovicic did not want to comment ahead of the prosecutor's decision, but has previously stated that if the case went to trial, he was confident Mayers would be ac-

quitted and allowed to return home. The rapper has claimed he was acting in self-defense. Since his arrest, fans, fellow artists and US Congress members have campaigned for the artist to be freed. An online petition called #JusticeForRocky has garnered more than 620,000 signatures, and posters emblazoned with "Free A\$AP Rocky ASAP" have been put up around Stockholm.

Artists including Post Malone, Sean "Diddy" Combs, Nicki Minaj, Meek Mill and Justin Bieber have all voiced their support for Mayers, with rapper Tyler, the Creator saying he would no longer perform in Sweden. Trump also got involved in the case over the weekend, contacting Sweden's Prime Minister Stefan Lofven directly. Trump on Saturday tweeted that he had called Lofven and been assured that A\$AP Rocky would be "treated fairly". "Likewise, I assured him that A\$AP was not a flight risk and offered to personally vouch for his bail, or an alternative," Trump added.

Lofven's press secretary Toni Eriksson confirmed that the call had taken place and told AFP that "the Prime Minister was careful to point out that the Swedish justice system is completely independent". Mayers was born in New York and had a breakthrough in 2011 with the release of the mixtape "Live. Love. A\$AP". He followed that up in 2013 with the debut album "Long. Live. A\$AP". — AFP



A man displays posters reading 'Free ASAP Rocky ASAP' outside the Kronoberg custody in Stockholm yesterday. — AFP



## GRILLED TUNA STEAKS WITH VINAIGRETTE



# How to grill tuna with a smoky char and a tender interior

Perfectly grilled tuna steaks should combine a hot, smoky, charred exterior with a cool, rare center. For a home cook, this ideal can be an elusive goal. For grilled tuna steaks with an intense smoky char and a tender interior, we started with a hot grill. We moistened the tuna steaks' flesh with a vinaigrette to promote browning and allow the oil to penetrate the meat of the tuna steaks. And instead of using sugar in our vinaigrette, we used honey. Both promote browning, but honey does it faster, which was important with the quick cooking times for tuna on the grill. It's easy to add complementary flavors to this dish by mixing up the seasoning in the vinaigrette. Most chefs prefer our tuna served rare or medium-rare. If you like your tuna cooked medium, observe the timing for medium-

rare, then tent the steaks with foil for 5 minutes before serving.

## GRILLED TUNA STEAKS WITH VINAIGRETTE

### Ingredients

### Servings: 6

Start to finish: 25 minutes  
 3 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon red wine vinegar  
 2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme or rosemary  
 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard  
 2 teaspoons honey  
 Salt and pepper  
 3/4 cup olive oil  
 6 (8-ounce) tuna steaks, 1 inch thick

### Preparation

For a charcoal grill: Open bottom vent completely. Light large chimney starter filled with charcoal briquettes (6 quarts). When top coals are partially covered with ash, pour evenly over half of grill. Set cooking grate in place, cover, and open lid vent completely. Heat grill until hot, about 5 minutes.

For a gas grill: Turn all burners to high, cover, and heat grill until hot, about 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, whisk vinegar, thyme, mustard, honey, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and pinch pepper together in large bowl. Whisking constantly, slowly drizzle oil into vinegar mixture until lightly thickened and emulsified. Measure out 3/4 cup vinaigrette and set aside for cooking tuna. Reserve remaining vinaigrette for serving.

Clean cooking grate, then repeatedly brush grate with well-oiled paper towels until grate is black and glossy, 5 to 10 times. Pat tuna dry with paper towels. Generously brush both sides of tuna with vinaigrette and season with salt and pepper. Place tuna on grill (on hotter side if using charcoal) and cook (covered if using gas) until grill marks form and bottom surface is opaque, 1 to 3 minutes.

Flip tuna and cook until opaque at perimeter and translucent red at center when checked with tip of paring knife and registers 110 F (for rare), about 1 1/2 minutes, or until opaque at perimeter and reddish pink at center when checked with tip of paring knife and registers 125 F (for medium-rare), about 3 minutes. Serve, passing reserved vinaigrette.



# Can you have a Baja-style fish taco with just veggies? Sure

A true Baja California experience requires sunny, breezy patios and a plate of tacos. We aimed to re-create the feel of a Baja-style fish taco in our home kitchen, instead bringing veggies to the forefront. We thought that battered cauliflower bites, drizzled with a cool and creamy vegan sauce, were the perfect stand-in for the fish. We wanted to avoid the mess of deep-frying, so we cut the cauliflower into large florets and roasted them.

To boost their flavor, we dunked the pieces in canned coconut milk seasoned with garlic and spices and then rolled them in a mixture of panko bread crumbs and shredded coconut. Not only did this add richness and the flavors of a cabana-shaded getaway, but it also mimicked the crisp exterior texture of batter-fried fish.

A bed of crunchy slaw with juicy mango and spicy jalapeno provided the perfect balance of sweetness and heat. By using equal parts vegan mayonnaise and dairy-free sour cream, plus cilantro and a bit of lime zest, we were able to whip up a vegan crema to top it all off. Just add cerveza and sunshine. For a spicier slaw, mince and add the jalapeno ribs and seeds. Serve with lime wedges.

## BAJA-STYLE CAULIFLOWER TACOS

**Start to finish: 40 minutes**

- 3 cups (7 1/2 ounces) coleslaw mix
- 1/2 mango, peeled and cut into 1/4-inch pieces (3/4 cup)
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 1 tablespoon minced jalapeño chile
- Salt and pepper
- 1 cup unsweetened shredded coconut
- 1 cup panko bread crumbs
- 1 cup canned coconut milk
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne
- 1/2 head cauliflower (1 pound), trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 8-12 (6-inch) corn tortillas, warmed
- 1 recipe Cilantro Sauce (recipe follows)

### Preparation

Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 450 F. Combine coleslaw mix, mango, cilantro, lime juice, jalapeno, and 1/4 teaspoon salt in bowl, cover, and refrigerate. Spray rimmed baking sheet with vegetable oil spray. Combine coconut and panko in shallow dish. Whisk coconut milk, garlic powder, cumin, cayenne, and 1 teaspoon salt together in bowl. Add cauliflower to coconut milk mixture; toss to coat well. Working with 1 piece cauliflower at a time, remove from coconut milk, letting excess drip back into bowl, then coat well with coconut-panko mixture, pressing gently to adhere; transfer to prepared sheet. Bake until cauliflower is tender, golden, and crisp, 20 to 25 minutes, flipping cauliflower and rotating sheet halfway through baking. Divide slaw evenly among warm tortillas and top with cauliflower. Drizzle with cilantro sauce and serve.

### Cilantro Sauce

#### Ingredients

Makes about 3/4 cup

- 1/4 cup vegan mayonnaise
  - 1/4 cup dairy-free sour cream
  - 3 tablespoons water
  - 3 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro
  - 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Whisk all ingredients together in bowl.



**BAJA-STYLE CAULIFLOWER TACOS**





# Where to get off the beaten track in INDIA

A little boy peers through the window of the Ooty (Udagamandalam) train as it crosses a bridge on the Nilgiris Mountain Railway



A small village sits in the shadow of hulking mountains of India's Lahaul valley in the Himalayas

**W**ith its rainbow-colored palette of markets, mountains and monuments, India is the stuff of travel dreams. Ten million tourists visit every year, and numbers are climbing fast as more and more people fall for India's temples and tigers, forts and forests, monasteries and megacities. But what happens when you tire of the Taj, grow jaded with Jodhpur or lose the love for Ladakh?

The good news is that India is almost infinite in its variety. For every tourist town on the traveler trail, there's a nearby backwater with just as many monuments but none of the crowds. It would take a lifetime to explore this continent-sized country, but for off-the-beaten track adventures, point your compass at the following spots. If this is your maiden voyage to the Indian subcontinent, make sure you also check out our top tips for India first-timers.

#### For mountain lovers

Travelers flock to Ladakh every summer for a few relaxing months of yoga, yak-cheese and yomping up mountain trails, but the road linking Leh and Manali is the gateway to another mountain playground where you can amble for days without spotting a fellow traveler. Hop off the Manali-Leh bus at Keylong and the thud of tourist-brandished bongo drums and slap of Birkenstocks will fade into the distance as you drift west into the green-and-ochre valleys of Lahaul, where tourists are greeted with a surprised smile and Hinduism and Buddhism share centre stage.

A string of tiny temple towns marks the route from Keylong to the Kashmir valley; as the road becomes ever more treacherous and gravity-defying, you may feel you've wandered right off the map. For the ultimate Lahaul experience,





Late afternoon shot at Om beach in Karnataka

test your courage against the stretch of road from Killar to Kishtwar, often described (with only slight exaggeration) as the world's most dangerous highway. At points, the road is a barely-visible score scratched into a mountain wall, balanced above a thousand-foot drop. Only daredevils need apply.

#### For families

Going off the beaten track in India doesn't have to mean risking life and limb. For Goa-style sand and sun without the package-tour hordes, drift south to Karnataka, where resorts catering to Indian families dot a gorgeous strip of palm-backed coastline. You'll miss out on Goa's Portuguese influence, but find a richly Indian experience: sacred temple towns, sleepy fishing villages, and port-cities famed for their highly-spiced seafood curries.

Gokarna is the favorite stop for those in the know - part temple-town and part laid-back beach retreat. Om Beach is the most stunning strip of sand, but there's a calmer vibe at Kudle Beach and Half Moon Bay, where you'll find a low-key version of the Goa beach scene - so yes to beach-cafes and yoga, no to all-night full-moon parties. A short detour inland is Jog Falls, India's second highest cascade, and strung out along the coastal plain are intriguing pilgrim towns such as Udupi and Murudeshwar, home to India's largest Shiva statue.

#### For vivid color

India's northern plains are painted in a kaleidoscope of colors by rainbow saris and busy bazaars - and, it must be said, by backpacks. Swap the crammed sights of India's Golden Triangle for the dry badlands of Gujarat, where the color comes from lavishly embroidered tribal costumes and fighting kites that fill the sky over every town and village. Reds and yellows flare against the muted tones of the landscape in every corner of the state, from the historic capital, Ahmedabad, to the backwater villages of the Rann of Kachchh and the beaches sprinkled along India's longest stretch of coastline.



Colorful kites fly above the rooftops of Ahmedabad during the annual International Kite Festival





The living root bridges of Meghalaya have become a poster child for the sense of mysticism surrounding India's remote Northeast

There are dozens of ways to go off the beaten track in Gujarat, depending on what lights your travel fire. History buffs can trace the footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi from his birthplace at Porbandar to the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad and the end of the empire-defying Salt March at Dandi. For spiritual sustenance, trade Varanasi for temple-tastic Palitana, where the spires of 863 Jain temples create a porcupine skyline in the Shatrunjaya Hills, or find Islamic India without the Agra crush at Champaner-Pavagadh, one-time capital of the Gujarati sultans.

#### For adventurers

When it comes to escaping the tourist trail, you can't wander much further off the map than Northeast India. Squeezed between Bangladesh, Myanmar and Tibet, the 'Seven Sisters' - Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura - are a little-known wonderland of jungle-cloaked hills, wildlife-crammed national parks and tribal villages, culturally closer to Southeast Asia than the rest of India.

Meghalaya isn't the most remote of the Northeast States, but it's perhaps the most intriguing. This soaring limestone plateau was largely off-limits until the 1990s, and its rain-drenched hills are full of tribal villages, plunging waterfalls and living bridges woven from the roots of jungle trees. The state is often described as the wettest place on earth, but locals defy the climate with tartan shawls and turtle-shaped banana-pith rain shields. The best place to start your explorations is Cherrapunjee, an easy leaping-off point for dramatic cascades and Khasi villages.

#### For Rajasthan without the crowds

Few would deny Rajasthan's myriad tourism treasures: color-coded Brahmin towns, tiger-stalked national parks, wildly romantic desert forts. And few would deny that these wonders would be that little bit more wonderful if you didn't have to share them with a crowd. Enter Shekhawati, Rajasthan's quietest quarter, where the grand mansions of Marwari traders bring the dream of Rajasthan to life in vivid color.

From Nawalgarh, a tangle of single-track roads and railway lines fan out to the sleepy towns where Rajasthan's wealthy merchants built their extravagant cribs. Shekhawati's havelis (mansions) are the end result of an epic battle of keeping-up-with-the-Joneses that took place between rival clans of merchants in the 18th and 19th centuries. Their mural-covered walls tell a pictorial history of Rajasthan, from Hindu mythology to the rise of the Mughal Empire and the arrival of the Europeans, with their trains, airplanes, motor cars and gramophones.

#### For real culture in Kerala

Many travelers rate Kerala as their favorite place in all of India, but drifting from Kochi to Kovalam to the backwaters



Nawalgarh is famous for the striking frescoes on the walls of its havelis

of Alappuzha, you'll spot the same faces on every train, boat and bus. Even Kerala's famous kathakali dance - a combination of sacred art, oral history, and psychedelic expression - can feel a bit commoditized as you sit with a teapot of 'special tea' taking in a show that has been shortened to a traveler-friendly 60-minutes from the original 14 hours.

Leave the trodden path behind by heading north to Kannur, gateway to Kerala's unspoiled northern coast, where the culture on display is the real deal. Theyyam takes the idea of ritual theatre and turns the volume up to eleven, dressing performers in vividly-colored costumes and headdresses that can reach 7m in height. From November to April, performers and pilgrims gather at hundreds of kavus (sacred groves) for rituals that feature frenzied drumming, ceremonial dance and emotional devotees being sent into spiritual trances. Respectful visitors can sit in and connect with the powerful rhythms that drive life in southern India.

#### For wildlife encounters

Everyone wants to spot a wild elephant or a tiger burning bright in the Indian jungle, but the experience can feel a bit less dramatic when you're sharing it with a coachload of fellow wildlife spotters. India's top national parks are mobbed in season, and animals often lie low until the commotion passes. The subcontinent's most rewarding natural encounters involve a bit more effort, in exchange for a lot less company to disturb the wildlife.

To track down the elusive snow leopard, you'll need to trek high into the Himalaya, far from the maddening crowds. Accessible from Leh, Hemis National Park in Ladakh is said to be one of the easiest places to spot snow leopards, but the so-called 'ghost of the mountains' can also be seen on treks through Himachal Pradesh's Great Himalayan National Park and remote Namdapha National Park in Arunachal Pradesh. ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com))



Swap Kerala's kathakali dance shows for a more authentic theatrical experience in Kannur



## Comic

### Word Search

#### Astronomy 2

Find and circle all of the Astronomy related words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.

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

- |                  |               |             |           |
|------------------|---------------|-------------|-----------|
| ASTRONOMY        | FIREBALL      | MAGNETIC    | RADIATION |
| AXIS             | FLARES        | MATTER      | REVOLVE   |
| CELESTIAL        | FUSION        | METEORITE   | RING      |
| CHAOS            | GALACTIC      | NEWTON      | ROCKET    |
| COMET            | GALAXY        | NOVA        | ROTATE    |
| COSMOS           | GRAVITATIONAL | OZONE       | SOLSTICE  |
| DEBRIS           | HYDROGEN      | PARALLAX    | SPACE     |
| EMISSION         | INTERSTELLAR  | PHOTOSPHERE | SUNSPOTS  |
| ENERGY           | LIGHT         | PLANET      | SYZYGY    |
| EXPLORATION      | LUMINOSITY    | PLASMA      |           |
| EXTRATERRESTRIAL | LUNAR         | PROTON      |           |

### Yesterday's Solution

#### Astronomy

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

- |                  |            |                  |               |
|------------------|------------|------------------|---------------|
| ANDROMEDA GALAXY | DEEP SPACE | MOON             | SOLAR SYSTEM  |
| APOGEE           | ECLIPSE    | NEBULA           | SOLAR WIND    |
| ASTEROID         | EQUINOX    | ORBIT            | SPACE SHUTTLE |
| ASTRONOMER       | GALAXIES   | PARSEC           | SPACECRAFT    |
| ATMOSPHERE       | GALILEO    | PERIGEE          | STARS         |
| AURORA           | GRAVITY    | POLARIS          | SUN           |
| BINARY STAR      | HUBBLE     | PROXIMA CENTAURI | SUPERNOVA     |
| BLACK HOLE       | KEPLER     | PULSARS          | TELESCOPE     |
| CONSTELLATION    | LIGHT YEAR | QUASARS          | TIDES         |
| CORONA           | METEOR     | RED GIANT        | UNIVERSE      |
| CRATER           | MILKY WAY  | SATELLITE        | WHITE DWARF   |

Hidden sentence: THE FIRST PERSON TO SET FOOT ON THE MOON WAS NEIL ARMSTRONG

### Crossword 2267



#### ACROSS

- An Indian unit of length having different values in different localities.
- A composer of sacred songs.
- The herpes virus that causes infectious mononucleosis.
- A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
- One of four subclasses or superorders of Monocotyledones.
- American prizefighter who won the world heavyweight championship three times (born in 1942).
- A historical region on northwestern India and northern Pakistan.
- Wet feed (especially for pigs) consisting of mostly kitchen waste mixed with water or skimmed or sour milk.
- A colloid in a more solid form than a sol.
- (Old Testament) The second patriarch.
- Being or reflecting the essential or genuine character of something.
- A salt or ester of acetic acid.
- A copper-nickel alloy with high electrical resistance and a low temperature coefficient.
- A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
- Not divisible by two.
- Any of numerous showy orchids of the genus *Vanda* having many large flowers in loose racemes.
- Lacking in liveliness or charm or surprise.
- Very spicy sauce made from tabasco peppers.
- Relating to or consisting of runes.
- The 18th letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
- One of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
- A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- A unit of force equal to the force exerted by gravity.
- Live off somebody's generosity.
- Any of numerous perennial bulbous herbs having linear or broadly lanceolate leaves and usually a single showy flower.
- West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
- Black tropical American cuckoo.
- Covered with paving material.
- A unit of power equal to 746 watts.
- Extract of the heartwood of *Acacia catechu* used for dyeing and tanning and preserving fishnets and sails.
- An eight-sided polygon.
- South American armadillo with three bands of bony plates.
- A condensed but memorable saying embodying some important fact of experience that is taken as true by many people.
- (Babylonian) A demigod or first man.
- Being three more than fifty.
- The capital and largest city of Equatorial Guinea on the island of Bioko in the Gulf of Guinea.
- A notable achievement.
- The arch of bone beneath the eye that forms the prominence of the cheek.
- Any of several trees of the genus *Platanus* having thin pale bark that scales off in small plates and lobed leaves and ball-shaped heads of fruits.
- Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.

#### DOWN

- A cap with a flat circular top and a visor.
- A musical work that has been created.
- The capital and largest city of Yemen.
- Situated in a particular spot or position.
- A person's brother or sister.
- A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
- Hungarian composer and piano virtuoso (1811-1886).
- A unit of length equal to one thousandth of an inch.
- A material effigy that is worshipped as a god.
- Ability to apply knowledge or experience or understanding or common sense and insight.
- A movable protective covering that provides protection from above.
- A high wave (often dangerous) caused by tidal flow (as by colliding tidal currents or in a narrow estuary).
- Offering little or no hope.
- Mexican revolutionary leader (1877-1923).
- German mathematician (1804-1851).
- (astronomy) The angular distance of a celestial point measured westward along the celestial equator from the zenith crossing.
- A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
- (astronomy) A measure of time defined by Earth's orbital motion.
- Avoid or try to avoid, as of duties, questions and issues.
- Tropical American feather palm having a swollen spiny trunk and edible nuts.
- United States tennis player who was the first Black to win United States and English singles championships (1943-1993).
- Spiritual being attendant upon God.
- A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
- Capital and largest city of Iraq.
- A member of a seafaring group of North American Indians who lived on the Pacific coast of British Columbia and southwestern Alaska.
- A city in northeastern Ohio.
- 100 penni equal 1 markka.
- A high-crowned black cap (usually made of felt or sheepskin) worn by men in Turkey and Iran and the Caucasus.
- The cry made by sheep.
- A heavy odorless colorless gas formed during respiration and by the decomposition of organic substances.
- The Muskogean language of the Choctaw people.
- Parasitic on the digestive epithelium of vertebrates and higher invertebrates.
- (zoology) Lacking a tail or taillike appendage.
- A small pellet fired from an air rifle or BB gun.
- A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
- Naked freshwater or marine or parasitic protozoa that form temporary pseudopods for feeding and locomotion.
- Someone who has won first place in a competition.
- A genus of Ploceidae.
- The capital of Western Samoa.
- (aeronautical) Pertaining to the tail section of a plane.
- A Gaelic-speaking Celt in Ireland or Scotland or the Isle of Man.
- An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
- A quantity of no importance.
- A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
- (slang) A gangster's pistol.
- In operation or operational.

### Yesterday's Solution

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

### Daily SuDoku

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

### Yesterday's Solution

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



## TV Listings



00:00 Patriots Day  
 02:15 Ultimate Justice  
 03:50 Captain America: The First Avenger  
 06:00 Beyond The Edge  
 07:55 Megan Leavey  
 09:55 Captain America: The First Avenger  
 12:00 Beyond The Edge  
 13:55 Six Gun Savior  
 15:40 A Knight's Tale  
 18:00 Vengeance: A Love Story  
 19:45 Captain America: The Winter Soldier  
 22:00 Bloodsport  
 23:35 Ryde

07:20 The First 48  
 08:05 The First 48  
 08:50 Homicide Hunter  
 09:35 Homicide Hunter  
 10:30 Cold Case Files  
 11:25 Homicide: Hours To Kill  
 12:20 Crimes That Shook Britain  
 13:15 Live PD: Police Patrol  
 13:45 Live PD: Police Patrol  
 14:10 It Takes A Killer  
 14:40 It Takes A Killer  
 15:05 Homicide Hunter  
 16:00 The First 48  
 17:00 Cold Case Files  
 18:00 Crimes That Shook Britain  
 19:00 The First 48  
 20:00 Homicide Hunter  
 21:00 Live PD: Police Patrol  
 21:30 Live PD: Police Patrol  
 22:00 The Jail: 60 Days In  
 23:00 Live PD: Police Patrol  
 23:30 Live PD: Police Patrol

20:45 Breaking Magic  
 21:10 Deception With Keith Barry  
 22:00 Tricks On The Streets  
 22:25 Tricks On The Streets  
 22:50 Wild Africa: Rivers Of Life  
 23:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things



00:00 Home Alone  
 01:00 House Of Horrors: Kid-napped  
 02:00 The Real Story With Maria Elena Salinas  
 03:00 People Magazine Investigates: Cults  
 03:45 Home Alone  
 04:30 Hometown Homicide  
 05:20 Border Control: Spain  
 05:45 Border Control: Spain  
 06:10 Gone  
 07:00 People Magazine Investigates  
 07:55 People Magazine Investigates  
 08:50 The Perfect Murder  
 09:45 The Perfect Murder  
 10:40 Border Control: Spain  
 11:10 Border Control: Spain  
 11:35 Hometown Homicide  
 12:30 Grave Secrets  
 13:25 Gone  
 14:20 Nightmare Next Door  
 15:15 Nightmare Next Door  
 16:10 Border Control: Spain  
 16:40 Border Control: Spain  
 17:05 Evil Lives Here  
 18:00 Evil Lives Here  
 19:00 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones  
 20:00 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones  
 21:00 Twisted Sisters  
 22:00 Kiss Of Death  
 23:00 Diabolical: Deadly Love



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

19:25 Liv And Maddie  
 19:50 K.C. Undercover  
 20:15 Disney Mickey Mouse  
 20:20 A.N.T. Farm  
 20:45 Bizaardvark  
 21:10 Tangled: The Series  
 21:35 Bug Juice: My Adventures At Camp  
 22:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
 22:50 Lolirock  
 23:10 Evermoor Chronicles  
 23:35 Binny And The Ghost



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



00:15 Ultimate Survival  
 01:05 Abandoned Engineering  
 01:50 How Do They Do It?  
 02:15 How Do They Do It?  
 02:35 What On Earth?  
 03:20 Wheeler Dealers  
 04:05 Wheeler Dealers  
 04:50 How Do They Do It?  
 05:15 How Do They Do It?  
 05:35 Property Wars  
 06:00 Storage Wars Canada  
 06:20 Property Wars  
 06:45 Ultimate Survival  
 07:35 The Last Alaskans  
 08:20 Gold Rush  
 09:10 Alaska: The Last Frontier  
 09:55 Salvage Hunters: The Restorers  
 10:45 How Do They Do It?  
 11:10 How Do They Do It?  
 11:30 Wheeler Dealers

12:20 Wheeler Dealers  
 13:05 Storage Wars Canada  
 13:30 Property Wars  
 13:55 Secret Space Escapes  
 18:40 How Do They Do It?  
 19:05 How Do They Do It?  
 19:25 Secret Space Escapes  
 20:15 Secret Space Escapes  
 21:00 Unique Rides  
 21:50 American Chopper  
 22:40 Shifting Gears With Aaron Kaufman  
 23:30 The Last Alaskans

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



18:05 Very Cavallari  
 19:00 E! News  
 20:00 Dating: No Filter  
 22:00 Botched  
 23:00 Very Cavallari



00:10 Culinary Genius  
 01:00 Emmerdale  
 01:30 Coronation Street  
 02:00 Coronation Street  
 02:30 The Chase  
 03:25 Her Majesty's Cavalry  
 03:55 Gino's Italian Coastal Escape  
 04:20 Rich House Poor House  
 05:15 Culinary Genius  
 06:15 Couples Come Dine With Me  
 07:10 The Chase  
 08:05 Her Majesty's Cavalry  
 08:35 Gino's Italian Coastal Escape  
 09:00 Rich House Poor House  
 09:55 Culinary Genius  
 10:55 Couples Come Dine With Me  
 11:50 The Chase  
 12:45 Emmerdale  
 13:15 Coronation Street  
 13:45 Coronation Street  
 14:15 Couples Come Dine With Me  
 15:10 The Chase  
 16:00 This Time Next Year  
 16:55 Rich House Poor House  
 17:50 Culinary Genius  
 18:50 Emmerdale  
 19:15 Coronation Street  
 19:45 Coronation Street  
 20:10 The Chase  
 21:00 This Time Next Year  
 21:55 Rich House Poor House  
 22:50 Emmerdale  
 23:15 Coronation Street  
 23:40 Coronation Street



00:15 Weapons At War  
 01:00 UFO Files  
 01:45 Ancient Top 10  
 02:30 The Universe  
 03:15 Hangar 1: The UFO Files  
 04:00 Ancient Aliens  
 04:45 Battles BC  
 05:30 Bible Secrets Revealed  
 06:15 Modern Marvels  
 07:00 UFO Files  
 07:45 Ancient Top 10  
 08:30 The Universe  
 09:15 Hangar 1: The UFO Files  
 10:00 Ancient Aliens  
 10:45 Battles BC  
 11:30 Ancient Aliens  
 12:15 Modern Marvels  
 13:00 Ancient Top 10  
 13:45 The Universe  
 14:30 Hangar 1: The UFO Files  
 15:15 Ancient Aliens  
 16:00 Battles BC  
 16:45 Ancient Aliens  
 17:30 Modern Marvels  
 18:15 UFO Files  
 19:00 Ancient Top 10  
 19:45 The Universe  
 20:30 Hangar 1: The UFO Files  
 21:15 Ancient Aliens  
 22:00 MysteryQuest  
 22:45 Bible Secrets Revealed  
 23:30 Modern Marvels



00:30 Mountain Men  
 01:20 Pawn Stars  
 02:20 American Pickers  
 03:05 Storage Wars  
 03:50 Ax Men  
 04:35 Forged: Iron & Fire  
 05:15 Forged In Fire  
 06:00 Road Hawks  
 06:45 Mountain Men  
 07:30 Pawn Stars  
 08:15 American Pickers  
 09:00 Storage Wars  
 09:45 Ax Men  
 10:30 Forged: Iron & Fire  
 11:15 Forged In Fire  
 12:00 American Pickers  
 15:00 Counting Cars  
 18:45 The Universe



00:45 North Woods Law  
 01:40 Alaska Monsters  
 02:35 Sharkbite Beach  
 03:25 Great White: The Impossible Shot  
 04:15 North Woods Law  
 05:02 Wildest Europe  
 05:49 Pit Bulls & Parolees  
 06:36 Escape To Chimp Eden  
 07:25 Amanda To The Rescue  
 11:00 Wolves And Warriors  
 12:50 Sharkbite Beach  
 13:45 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet  
 14:40 Nature's Strangest Mysteries: Solved  
 15:08 How Do Animals Do That  
 15:35 Alaska Monsters  
 16:30 The Jeff Corwin Experience  
 17:25 Animal Cops Houston  
 18:20 Shark Island  
 19:15 The Vet Life  
 20:10 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet  
 21:05 Wildest Europe  
 22:00 Intruders  
 22:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees  
 23:50 The Vet Life



00:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
 00:30 Broad City  
 00:55 Takeshis Castle Thailand  
 01:20 Tosh.0  
 01:45 Friends  
 02:07 Friends  
 02:30 Kroll Show  
 02:55 Takeshis Castle Thailand  
 03:20 Tosh.0  
 03:45 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
 04:15 Broad City  
 04:40 Impractical Jokers  
 05:00 Real Husbands Of Hollywood  
 07:10 Lip Sync Battle  
 07:35 Lip Sync Battle  
 08:00 Comedy Central Presents: Menna W FINA  
 08:30 Takeshis Castle Thailand  
 08:55 Ridiculousness Arabia  
 09:20 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagaf  
 09:50 Takeshis Castle Thailand  
 10:15 Friends  
 12:20 Workaholics  
 14:30 Lip Sync Battle  
 14:55 Lip Sync Battle  
 15:20 Tattoo Disasters  
 16:15 Tattoo Disasters  
 17:10 Friends  
 19:30 Martha And Snoop Potluck Dinner Party  
 21:30 Teachers  
 22:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
 22:30 Jo Koy: Don't Make Him Angry  
 23:30 Broad City



00:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
 00:30 The Food Inspectors  
 01:20 My Cat From Hell  
 02:10 Bad Dog  
 03:00 The Carbonaro Effect  
 03:25 The Carbonaro Effect  
 03:50 Mysteries At The Museum  
 04:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
 05:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
 05:30 My Cat From Hell  
 06:15 Bad Dog  
 07:00 The Carbonaro Effect  
 07:25 The Carbonaro Effect  
 07:50 Mysteries At The Museum  
 08:40 Weather Top Tens  
 09:30 Bad Universe  
 10:20 How The Earth Works  
 11:10 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
 11:35 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
 12:00 Pawn Queens  
 12:25 Pawn Queens  
 12:50 The Big Brain Theory  
 13:40 Battle Bots  
 14:30 Strange Evidence  
 15:20 The Carbonaro Effect  
 15:45 The Carbonaro Effect  
 16:10 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
 16:35 Kids Do The Craziest Things  
 17:00 My Cat From Hell  
 17:50 Bad Dog  
 18:40 The Carbonaro Effect  
 19:05 The Carbonaro Effect  
 19:30 Guy's Grocery Games  
 20:20 Breaking Magic



00:20 And Then There Were None  
 01:20 Holby City  
 02:15 Mum  
 02:45 The Detectorists  
 03:15 EastEnders  
 03:45 EastEnders  
 04:15 Benidorm  
 05:05 Death In Paradise  
 06:00 EastEnders  
 06:30 EastEnders  
 07:00 Last Tango In Halifax  
 07:55 Holby City  
 08:50 Casualty  
 09:40 Friday Night Dinner  
 10:05 The Detectorists  
 10:35 The Detectorists  
 11:05 Death In Paradise  
 12:00 The Coroner  
 12:50 Holby City  
 13:45 The Musketeers  
 14:40 The Detectorists  
 15:10 The Detectorists  
 15:40 EastEnders  
 16:10 Casualty  
 17:00 Holby City  
 18:00 The Detectorists  
 18:30 Shakespeare & Hathaway: Private Investigators  
 19:20 Shakespeare & Hathaway: Private Investigators  
 20:10 And Then There Were None  
 21:10 Line Of Duty  
 22:10 Les Miserables  
 23:35 The Detectorists



00:00 Homicide Hunter  
 01:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos  
 01:55 Homicide: Hours To Kill  
 02:50 It Takes A Killer  
 03:20 It Takes A Killer  
 03:45 Live PD: Police Patrol  
 04:10 Live PD: Police Patrol  
 04:30 The First 48  
 05:15 Homicide Hunter  
 06:00 Cold Case Files  
 07:00 Live PD: Police Patrol



## Stars



### Aries (March 21-April 19)

Wisdom rather than knowledge is what counts most in your life to you now. You have been down troubled roads and turned each stumbling block into a stepping stone. You have lived and learned and may have an opportunity to share this wisdom with a troubled friend. Don't get discouraged if your advice is overlooked. Remember, no one could have changed your mind about some of the mistakes you made. Realize others too, may have to experience trouble to learn the lessons that are to be learned in their lives. You are a good friend and a good person. You may find today you are shown appreciation and gratitude for who you are to others.



### Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may encounter an unusual amount of stress today. Counter it by taking time for yourself to do what you enjoy most. Paint, write, or escape with a good book. Yoga or meditation may even be something you should consider making a part of your daily routine. Be careful not to shut yourself off from those who care about you. Their support is important. Do not try to conquer every problem on your own.



### Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Teamwork is strongly indicated, but those you work with aren't fond of your day dreamy mood today. Your required tasks pull you into a most productive cycle and you overcome any obstacles you may encounter. You could have a secret you're having trouble keeping; consider the consequences of sharing this. Someone - a younger person - could demand that you decide today when you're just not ready; this could lead to some difficulties. You have an understanding heart when it comes to a friend in need. Sticking to your guns in a sticky situation could prove to be your best bet.



### Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Are you getting mixed signals? That's not unusual. Feelings are complicated, and what one wants from you may change daily, or even hourly. Don't hesitate to ask for clarification. Feelings are abstract. Actions are concrete. Find out what you need to do. Take action and do not look back. Keep your eyes on the prize.



### Leo (July 23-August 22)

Today is a day you have been longing for. You need an escape. Let your hair down and head for wide open spaces. Take a ride in a convertible. Just get outside and breathe in the fresh air. You crave a sense of freedom. Decide exactly what you want out of life and make it happen. This is a great time to make clear decisions about your future.



### Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You will make a new acquaintance today. Don't assume the person is insignificant. There may be connections or influence here that will lead to opportunities for you. Or, it may be that this is the very person you need in your life right now. Be accessible. Make it clear that you are open to what the person has to offer. You may find sharing your feelings openly with others, helps them open up to you.



### Libra (September 23-October 22)

You have a great desire for change. Your career or something concerning your profession seem to be preventing it. You have a deep desire for self-growth and change now. It seems if you continue on the same career path this will be a huge interference for you. You may find that your sensitivity is stifled by your job requirements. Too much work and no play is never a good thing. Find your balance.



### Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Wisdom rather than knowledge is what counts most in your life to you now. You have been down troubled roads and turned each stumbling block into a stepping stone. You have lived and learned and may have an opportunity to share this wisdom with a troubled friend. Don't get discouraged if your advice is overlooked. Remember, no one could have changed your mind about some of the mistakes you made. Realize others too, may have to experience trouble to learn the lessons that are to be learned in their lives. You are a good friend and a good person. You may find today you are shown appreciation and gratitude for who you are to others.



### Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Today is a great day to just go with the flow. Go ahead and take advantage of opportunities that present themselves to you. Don't be surprised if taking a chance brings great reward. You may feel extra close to a loved one today. Aris, this may be the day you learn to truly learn to love and appreciate yourself for who you have become and where you are in life. You have been feeling a that need to be needed and appreciated and today may just the day you receive that reward you have been longing for.



### Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Let your hair down and take a drive. A horseback ride would be even better. Turn the music up loud and throw your cares out of the window. Find an escape and route to peace. Enjoy this day and all it brings. Spoil yourself. You may find you are more materialistic than usual. A shopping trip is in order to satisfy this need. Head to the mall and go for it! You work hard and deserve to be free from want.



### Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Close relationships take on more emotional depth, power and importance in your world now. You feel as if you are needed and cared for. When these two feelings are missing you automatically have a feeling of uneasiness come over you. You were not made to be alone. Expressing your desires and vulnerability, helps draw your special someone closer to you. You may find the more you allow yourself to open up the closer you two become.



### Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You are being noticed in the workplace. It may become very obvious to your superiors at work that you are talented beyond the title you hold. You may find that you are in line for a promotion or you will be assigned a special project due to your leadership abilities. Everyone has their eye on you. From your personal life to your career, you are beginning to outshine those around you. You may find your analytical skills are in top shape and you are not only able to solve every problem you come across but may be finding satisfaction in spending your spare time solving puzzles or playing word games. You are in the mood to exercise your mind.

## Country Codes

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



# CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times  
248 33 199

Friday, July 26, 2019

**DR. MOHAMMAD AL HAJRY**  
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Head & Neck Surgery and Facial Plastics.  
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- 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.

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Department: Heart & Vascular Center

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**Dr Hamoud Abdullah Alarouj**  
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- Member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
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**Dr. Abdullah Al Haddad**  
Surgery Department  
Consultant General Surgery, Laparoscopic & Colo - Rectal Surgeon

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**Dr. Ahmad Alaeddine**  
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Science

# Shrinking glaciers and rockfalls point to climate change in Alps

**CHAMONIX, France:** High in the French Alps on the famed Mont Blanc mountain range, it is not hard to find evidence of the toll of global warming. Visitors arriving from the last tramstop before the 4,809-metre summit are forced to take 20 steps more each year to reach the retreating "Mer de Glace", or Sea of Ice glacier, France's largest. At one point, a sign on the edge of the valley says: "Level of the Glacier: 1990." Now the ice has shrunk far below.

Older visitors who return can recall a time when they could touch the ice just outside Montenvers tramstop near the

summit. On the glacier itself, the once immaculate pristine surface is now depressed and grayish. A grotto visible through the glacier's blue frozen mass lit up with festive lights like a nightclub has become a popular stop for tourists. Now workers have draped white tarpaulins held in place with large stones over the ice tunnel in a bid to protect it from the sun.

And mountaineers on the surrounding peaks follow a new ritual. Over the sound of mountain water, they stop more often to listen for the clatter of falling rocks on Europe's tallest peak. The damage is increasingly clear from rockfalls that scar

the mountainside and damage routes used by climbers visiting Mont Blanc. Most spectacular of these rockfalls affected the Bonatti pillar, a massive rock column named after Italian climber Walter Bonatti that collapsed into a cloud of dust in June 2005.

In 2011, smaller collapses also hit the same area and four years later landslides in the Couloir du Gouter prevented hundreds of mountaineers climbing Mont Blanc by the usual busiest routes. More falls have followed. During the 1970s, the famed French alpinist and mountain guide Gaston Rebuffat noted Mont Blanc's hundred finest

routes. Half a century later, a team of researchers analysed snow conditions, ice and rock state, accessibility and risks on 95 of Rebuffat's routes.

The study published in June by Jacques Mourey, a doctoral student at the EDYTEM laboratory at the University of Savoie Mont Blanc, found 93 affected by climate change, 26 of which were severely impacted and three no longer existed. Among the changes that made these routes more complex and technically challenging are the appearance of bedrock, more fragile snow and ice and widening of crevasses.—AFP

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 Sunday, Monday and Tuesday from 9:30 am to 5 pm  
 Thursday from 9:30 am until 1 pm

Friday is a holiday.

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- Faculty member of (BEST).
- Member of Kuwait Surgical Association.

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# Classifieds

## CHANGE OF NAME

**I, ALEIXO ANTONIO FERNANDES** S/o ANTONIO FERNANDES holder of Indian Passport No. H9001947 resident of H.No. 356-2, GODGAL AMBAULIM, QUEPEM, GOA-403705 has changed my name from ALEIXO ANTONIO FERNANDES to ALEIXO FERNANDES hereinafter in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by name of ALEIXO FERNANDES. (C 5566) 26-7-2019

**I, MAZINA PEREIRA** R/o H.No. 902/1, Sibrete Velim, South Goa have changed my name from MAZINA REBELLO to MAZINA PEREIRA, hereafter in all my dealing and documents, I will be known by the name MAZINA PEREIRA. (C 5565) 25-7-2019

**I, ALFEEYA** currently holder of Indian Passport No. Z1852112, issued at Kuwait on 04-August-2010, permanent resident of Mohammadi Pura Timba, Sagwara, District Dungarpur (Pin: 314025) Rajasthan, India and presently residing in Kuwait, do hereby permanently change my name from Alfeeya to Name: ALFEEYA and Surname: HASHIMI

HUSSAIN, with immediate effect 22-07-2019.

**I, Hashimi M. Hussain** father of Zaina Manager who is holder of Indian Passport No. P9484557, issued at Kuwait on 02-February-2017, permanent resident of Mohammadi Pura Timba, Sagwara, District Dungarpur (Pin: 314025) Rajasthan, India and presently residing in Kuwait, do hereby permanently change my daughter's name from Zaina Manager to Name: ZAINA and Surname: HASHIMI HUSSAIN, with immediate effect 22-07-2019. (C 5663)

**I, GUDURU BALAKRISHNA**, holder of Indian Passport No. L0079449 hereby declare to change my daughter's name from GUDURU SUSHANI VARMA (Indian Passport No. M6715101) to NEW NAME: GUDURU SUSHANI VARMA (C 5564)

**I, ARWA ZAFAR** holder of Indian Passport No. N1652003 issued at Kuwait on 14/01/2016. Permanent resident of 4/13 old Kotha Parcha, Farrukhabad, U.P, India. Correct given name ARWA ZAFAR ALI. (C 5563) 22-7-2019

## STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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### Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Very hot with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 38 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

**BY NIGHT:** Hot to relatively hot with light to moderate freshening at times over costal areas north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 40 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 25/07/2019 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	50 °C	36 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	51 °C	33 °C		
ABDALY	50 °C	31 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	50 °C	36 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	47 °C	29 °C		
SALMIYAH	45 °C	32 °C		
AHMADI	41 °C	34 °C		
NUWAISIB	48 °C	31 °C		
WAFRA	50 °C	28 °C		
SALMY	48 °C	30 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	07/26	Very hot and some scattered clouds will appear with a chance for rising dust	47 °C	35 °C	NW	20 - 55 km/h
Saturday	07/27	Hot with a chance for rising dust over open areas	46 °C	31 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h
Sunday	07/28	Hot	45 °C	30 °C	NW	10 - 30 km/h
Monday	07/29	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	46 °C	31 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 28 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:33
Sunrise	05:04
Zuhr	11:54
Asr	15:30
Sunset	18:45
Isha	20:13

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	50 °C
MIN. Temp.	35 °C
MAX. RH	19 %
MIN. RH	06 %
MAX. Wind	N 43 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

## Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
	22087426
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22456700
Air India EXPRESS	22438185/4
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9



# Business

FRIDAY, JULY 26, 2019

**39** Facebook firm in its quest to launch Libra cryptocurrency



**40** Big Tech antitrust review: Tough policy or publicity stunt?



**41** Nissan quarterly net profit plunges, 12,500 job cuts planned



KUWAIT: An archive photo showing a general view of Kuwait City's skyline. — KUNA

## CBK sees higher bank profitability

### OPEC agreement supports oil prices, govt revenues

**KUWAIT:** Central Bank of Kuwait's profitability is likely to stay healthy on back of better economic conditions, marginally higher interest income, improved credit off-take, lower provisions and a modest increase in non-performing loans, said Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) Governor Mohammad Al-Hashel in a press release on Wednesday on the occasion of the CBK's 2018 financial stability report. He stated that liquidity levels will also remain comfortable, and resumption in government debt issuance (subject to the passage of public debt law) will offer banks additional opportunities to invest in risk free government paper.

In view of the foregoing, the domestic banking sector is generally well placed to remain resilient in the near term, he said, noting that the risks emanating from banks' foreign operations can increase, particularly in countries with challenging security and/or economic conditions. Financial buffers help the government adopt a countercyclical fiscal policy, increasing public sector wage bill will make the future path less sustainable. The

OPEC agreement of December 2018 and its extension in mid-2019 for another nine months has supported oil prices and government revenues, providing further breathing space, he said.

Yet only comprehensive fiscal and structural reforms will eventually enable Kuwait to wean itself off oil dependence. Thanks to its enormous financial savings and low public debt, Kuwait can afford the reforms to be smooth and gradual as long as the measures are sustained, Al-Hashel added. Banking system assets, on consolidated basis, grew by 4.3 percent in 2018 on the back of higher private sector credit off-take, he said, adding that lackluster growth in investments amid non-issuance of public debt weighed down on overall asset expansion.

Still, domestic credit by Kuwaiti banks was up 4.9 percent, compared to 3.9 percent observed in 2017, the CBK governor pointed out. Credit to the real estate sector, on the other hand, contracted by 0.7 percent after growing by 4.4 percent in 2017, notwithstanding the strong recovery in real estate market which picked up pace as the year drew to

a close, he said. Growth in banks' investments plateaued amid non-issuance of domestic sovereign bonds after the expiry of public debt law in late 2017. Reflecting a bid to search for alternatives, lending to other banks increased sharply, making it the third key recipient of fresh lending in 2018.

Likewise, banks' investments in other fixed income securities as well as to the GCC increased. While the growth in banks' consolidated deposits moderated to 2.4 percent as deposits from abroad contracted by 1.9 percent, the banking system continued to enjoy a stable funding base with time deposits accounting for 66 percent of the total deposits, Al-Hashel said. Asset quality of the banking system has visibly improved over the years, exhibited by a steady decline in both the gross and net non-performing loan ratio (NPLR).

The gross NPLR, on a consolidated basis, further dropped to a historically low level of 1.6 percent (1.3 percent on domestic, Kuwait-only basis) as of December 2018, well below 3.8 percent observed in 2007 before the global financial crisis

struck, he added. The impressive progress in bringing down the NPLR over the current decade is particularly evident if the existing NPLR (1.6 percent) is compared with the double-digit NPLR (11.5 percent) recorded in 2009. Still, the coverage ratio (available provisions to NPLs) remains robust at 254 percent (367.6 percent, if viewed on domestic basis), substantially greater than the pre-crisis ratio of 87 percent observed in 2007, he noted.

Banks' net income, on a consolidated basis, grew by 18 percent during 2018 compared to 9 percent a year earlier, lifting average ROA and ROE to 1.3 percent and 10.7 percent respectively, he added. Al-Hashel predicted that high provisions would continue to support an active write-off policy, helping banks avoid any serious formation of infected loans on their books. He concluded by saying that ample provisions have already helped banks smoothly transition towards IFRS-9 rules where applicable (as banks are required to maintain provision under the CBK rules or the IFRS-9 standards). —KUNA



## Business

# ECB prepares some sub-zero relief for wilting Europe

## Swiss bond curve negative yields as 50-year succumbs

**LONDON:** The euro and bond yields wilted yesterday as a slump in German business confidence added to pressure on the European Central Bank to push interest rates even deeper into sub-zero territory later. With the chance of an ECB rate cut now priced at about 50-50, the euro was at a two-month trough, German Bund yields were slipping back towards record lows and Europe's main stock markets shuffled higher.

New German data added to the call for ECB action as it showed business morale there had hit its lowest level since April 2013. The ripple effect saw bond yields bow across Europe. Neighboring Switzerland's 50-year government bond yield even went negative, meaning that none of its bonds now offer buyers any interest. "The weak macro data this week means the ECB will be forced to act sooner than later," said Daniel Lenz, a rates strategist at DZ Bank in Frankfurt.

"The German economy is navigating troubled waters," Ifo President Clemens Fuest added, saying companies there were increasingly concerned about the outlook for their businesses. Overnight it had been a happier story. Wall Street's S&P 500 and Nasdaq had both hit record highs after reassuring comments from Texas Instruments about global chip demand blunted the impact of weak earnings from Boeing and Caterpillar.

Facebook also announced forecast-beating revenues, sending its shares higher in extended trading after the closing bell. The social media company's stock has surged over 56% so far this year, despite warnings on future revenue growth from new data privacy rules and forthcoming privacy-focused product changes. Asia then managed to overcome some early wobbles to finish higher and with some striking milestones.

Japan's Nikkei touched a near three-month high, although Australia stole the glory as it ended near a 12-year peak after its central bank chief stressed interest rates could continue to fall. Chinese blue-chips also added 0.5% in Shanghai. Investors there looked with hope to a meeting between top U.S. and Chinese negotiators next week, even if there are few signs that it will produce real progress in the two countries' trade war. "Lower rates are generally, in a traditional, mechanical way, good news for equity prices," said Jim McCafferty, head of equity research, Asia ex-Japan, at Nomura.

### Talking Turkey

For all the ECB focus, the day's real fireworks were already going off in Turkey. The country slashed its main interest rate to



**NEW YORK:** Traders work ahead of the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), while logo for Pinterest Inc. is pictured on the screens during the company's IPO in New York City.— AFP

19.75 percent from 24 percent in the first rate meeting since President Tayyip Erdogan sacked the former central bank chief for not cutting rates fast or furiously enough. New governor Murat Uysal didn't waste anytime and the lira rose 0.3 percent in response. "The CBRT (Turkish central bank) had room for manoeuvre given real rates are at 8 percent, and decided to front-load some of its expected easing," said Standard Chartered economist Carla Slim.

"It likely deemed the global market and geopolitical backdrop benign enough to give more weight to domestic issues. The risk is that cutting too much too soon could unnerve markets." Back among the major currencies, the dollar was down against the yen at 108.07 and the dollar index, which tracks it against six major

currencies, barely budged at 97.757. Sterling was broadly flat at \$1.2475, after falling for several sessions as market participants feared the looming possibility of a no-deal Brexit under Britain's new prime minister, Boris Johnson.

"If talks between the UK and EU break down, the GBP could see further losses," said Steven Dooley, currency strategist at Western Union Business Solutions. In commodities, US crude added 20 cents to \$56.08 per barrel while Brent crude climbed 15 cents to \$63.33. The advance came amid Middle East tensions and a big fall in weekly U.S. crude stockpiles, although the gains were curbed by a frail demand outlook and increasing signs of slowing global economic growth. Spot gold slipped 0.2 percent to \$1,423.09 an ounce, short of last week's peak of \$1,452.60.— Reuters

## Tata says lower Jaguar Land Rover sales behind new loss

**MUMBAI:** Tata Motors plunged back into the red in the first quarter of 2019-20 with India's number one car maker yesterday blaming the losses on lower sales by its luxury Jaguar Land Rover brand. Tata said it lost 36.99 billion rupees in the three months up to June 30, up from a loss of 19.02 billion rupees a year earlier. The heavily indebted company has now suffered losses in four of the last five quarters. It managed a profit of 11.17 billion rupees for the previous quarter.

Rating agency Fitch also downgraded Tata Motors, citing risks to its "profitability and cash generation over the next two-

three years". This sparked a 4.5 percent fall in Tata Motors shares on the Bombay Stock Exchange yesterday. Fitch highlighted uncertainty about Britain's withdrawal from the European Union. Most Jaguar and Land Rover production is in Britain.

Tata Motors chief executive Guenter Butschek said "the continued slowdown across the auto industry due to weak consumer sentiments" had hit sales of Jaguars and Land Rover. Tata Motors said its revenue fell by 7.7 percent, but record sales in Britain helped offset the poor market. "With China stabilizing and an exciting product lineup, JLR expects to return to growth soon," Butschek added. The company is now investing in electric cars in a bid to rejuvenate its image. Tata said it sold 1.36 million vehicles in the latest quarter, down 22.7 percent against the same quarter last year. Earlier this month, India reported its eighth successive monthly fall in car sales as a weak economy hits demand. Several carmakers, including Mahindra & Mahindra, have slashed production.—AFP

## Turkey makes big rate cut

**ANKARA:** Turkey's central bank surprised markets yesterday by cutting its main interest rate by 4.25 percentage points, less than a month after its governor was sacked. The bank said the one-week repo rate was lowered to 19.75 percent from 24 percent, a bigger cut than the two or three percentage points the markets had been expecting. Governor Murat Cetinkaya was fired on July 6, having reportedly clashed with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan who opposes high interest rates, and replaced with his deputy, Murat Uysal.

Contrary to orthodox economic thinking, Erdogan claims high interest rates cause high inflation and is calling for lower rates to stimulate growth. Explaining the decision, the bank said that recent data "indicate a moderate recovery in the economic activity" and pointed to "strong tourism revenues". The bank said the price outlook "continued to improve" after consumer price inflation fell to 15.72 percent in June from after a 15-year peak of 25.24 percent in October.—AFP



## Business

# Facebook firm in its quest to launch Libra cryptocurrency

## FINMA to conduct oversight of Geneva-based Libra Association

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg on Wednesday reaffirmed his commitment to the social network's quest to launch Libra cryptocurrency despite pushback from governments and critics. Facebook last month unveiled plans for Libra in an announcement that sparked fears of the unintended consequences of a loosely supervised global currency.

Switzerland's financial watchdog FINMA has already pledged to conduct oversight of the Geneva-based Libra Association that will watch over the digital money, which is expected to debut next year. Zuckerberg backed the Libra project while fielding questions on an earnings call, saying Facebook publicly released details to invite the kinds of queries and open dialogue currently taking place. "Facebook from a few years ago would have probably just showed up and tried to release a product on our own," Zuckerberg said of Libra during the call with analysts.

The California-based company's approach regarding sensitive territory is now to outline ideas and allow "a period of however long it takes" to get feedback and figure out the best path forward, according to the Facebook chief executive. "That's certainly what we're planning to do with Libra," Zuckerberg said.

"We are trying to provide a safe and stable and well-regulated product; that's always been the strategy and we'll continue to engage here."

Libra would be independent of Facebook, which will be a member in an administrative association that already has 27 companies on board.

### Money and community

A global digital payment platform would play into Facebook's efforts to make it easy to spend or send money using the company's family of services including Messenger, Instagram and WhatsApp. "In each of these apps, we have opportunities to help people get more value from the networks that they've created," Zuckerberg said. "It's one of the biggest areas that we're focused on for the next several years."

Libra is widely regarded as a challenger to dominant global player bitcoin. 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. Ministers from the Group of Seven (G7) major global economies and central bankers last week dealt a blow to the Libra plans, issuing a barrage of warnings about its dangers for the global economy at a two-day meeting outside Paris.

G7 ministers "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



PARIS: In this file photo in Paris the logo of social network Facebook is displayed on a screen and reflected on a tablet. — AFP

"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 imple-

mented." Fraudsters are already trying to cash in on interest in Libra, hawking bogus buying opportunities at online venues including Facebook itself. —AFP

## Legal woes dent Facebook profit

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Facebook reported Wednesday that its quarterly profit plummeted due to the cost of a US privacy settlement and forecast that regulation would slow its money-making ad machine. Profit in the second quarter fell 49 percent from a year ago to \$2.6 billion while revenues increased 28 percent to \$16.9 billion. The lower profits were due in part to Facebook setting aside an extra \$2 billion to cover a massive settlement with US regulators on privacy and data protection.

The \$5 billion settlement announced by the Federal Trade Commission calls for revamped federal oversight of the social network's privacy policies. Facebook also will be required to conduct a privacy review of every new or modified product, service, or practice before it is implemented, including for its WhatsApp and Instagram services. In the earnings report, the leading online social network beat market expectations on revenue and user growth, and shares rose slightly in after-hours trade that followed release of the earnings figures.

"We had a strong quarter and our business and community continue to grow," said Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg. The number of people using Facebook monthly grew eight percent to 2.41 billion in the quarter that ended June 30. The number of monthly users topped 2.7 billion when taking into account Instagram, WhatsApp and Messenger along with the main social network, according to Facebook.

"This company has repeatedly shown that it can grow both its ad revenue and its user base, even in the face of enormous challenges," said eMarketer analyst Debra Aho Williamson. "Today's earnings release demonstrates

that it still has that power." Williamson said that for the moment, advertisers "remain dedicated to Facebook despite its problems. However, they are also paying more attention than ever to those problems."

### Headwinds to ads

During an earnings call, Facebook executives warned that regulation and efforts inside the company to ramp up privacy would be "headwinds" to ad targeting that powers the company's revenue. Compounding the effect of controls such as the General Data Protection Regulation in Europe and increased focus on privacy in operating systems and products are "creating headwinds that we think are going to impact us as we get later in the year and into 2020," said chief financial officer David Wehner.

Privacy and compliance efforts also require significant investment in process, people and infrastructure, he added. The Facebook workforce had grown to 39,651 by the end of the quarter, with the Silicon Valley company hiring aggressively, particularly workers focused on security, privacy and eliminating content deemed unacceptable. Zuckerberg renewed his call for legislators around the world to set clear, uniform standards on important issues such as balancing free speech with fighting online bullying or election meddling.

"Either the right regulations will get put into place, or we expect frustration with our industry will continue to grow," Zuckerberg said. "We think that having a more democratic process for setting what some of those norms are would be helpful." Also factored into the quarterly results was a tax expense of \$1.1 billion stemming from a court decision on the treatment of stock-based compensation. Facebook shares gained 1.1 percent during Wednesday's trading session and swung slightly higher in after-hours exchanges following the earnings release. —AFP

## Tesla shares sink as Musk changes tune on profit

**NEW YORK:** Shares of Tesla Inc sank 11 percent yesterday, on course to knock more than \$5 billion off the electric car-maker's market value, a day after it disappointed Wall Street by softening its language on turning a profit this year. Only two Wall Street brokerage reduced their existing share price target for the firm but a batch of downbeat research notes from analysts focused on concern over shrinking margins for the Elon Musk-led firm, as it strives to find a path to sustainable profitability.

The outlook given with second quarter numbers after markets closed on Wednesday said the firm would still aim to be profitable in the third and fourth quarter but put the emphasis on volume growth, increasing production capacity and generating cash. That contrasted with Musk's promises this time last year that the company would be profitable and cash flow positive "henceforth".

"For Tesla to be more than niche, one of the core challenges will be for Tesla to

improve its gross margin profile," a Credit Suisse analyst wrote in a research note. Wedbush Securities cut its price target on the stock from \$230 to \$220, citing the softer margin profile. The stock was down 11.34 percent at \$234.84 in trading before the opening bell, still 3% above analysts' median price target of \$227.5.

Prices of its \$1.8 billion junk bond, which debuted just shy of two years ago, also fell more than 2 full points in price in European trading, pushing its yield, which moves in the opposite direction, back above 8 percent for the first time since July 1. The spread of its yield over Treasuries, a key measure of the added risk investors assume for holding Tesla's speculative-grade rated debt over safer US government securities, widened by nearly 50 basis points.

In all, it was the bond's biggest loss since early last September when its chief accounting officer quit after just a month on the job and Musk was filmed smoking marijuana and wielding a sword on a webcast. A number of analysts were also concerned by the resignation as chief technology officer of the pioneer of the company's electric batteries, J B Straubel, the last of the company's old guard left in its top echelons outside Musk himself. "Straubel has been at the forefront of the company's technology leadership, which we believe will increasingly be called into question as competitors catch up," Cowen analysts said. —Reuters



## Business

# Big Tech antitrust review: Tough policy or publicity stunt?

## Lawmakers raise concerns about growing dominance of online giants

WASHINGTON: The antitrust review of Big Tech announced by US regulators could signal a tough new stand on competition policy, but it may just be a political publicity stunt. Legal experts said any antitrust enforcement action against technology giants remains far off, and that a breakup of any of the Silicon Valley titans is a remote possibility. The review announced by the Justice Department on Tuesday for major online platforms amounts to gathering information for antitrust enforcers, which could lead to a long and painstaking investigation of individual companies which may need to go before a federal court.

"I wouldn't expect any of the recent news to ripen into meaningful antitrust enforcement," said Christopher Sagers, a professor of antitrust law at Cleveland-Marshall College of Law. "I think it's possible that this is entirely grandstanding and that there isn't even a serious intent to do anything." Sagers noted that antitrust enforcers under President Donald Trump who have been wildly inconsistent on policy decisions would need to make a strong case before "a very skeptical" federal judiciary. "It's a very, very conservative antitrust regime that doesn't believe in monopolization enforcement, and it is just talking the talk because it gets headlines and suits the popular political mood."

### Political pressure

Avery Gardiner, a former antitrust trial attorney with the Justice Department who is now a senior fellow at the Center for Democracy & Technology, said the announcement of a review of the sector without a specific target was "very unusual." Gardiner said this type of information gathering is routine for antitrust enforcers. "The fact that they made it public is an indication they are feeling some

political pressure," Gardiner said.

"They wanted to make clear to the Hill and to the public that they are doing their job," she said, adding that the news may be viewed as an act of "transparency." The antitrust division is reviewing "whether and how market-leading online platforms have achieved market power and are engaging in practices that have reduced competition, stifled innovation, or otherwise harmed consumers," the Justice Department said in a statement.

The news comes after lawmakers and activists raised concerns about the growing dominance of online giants such as Google, Facebook and Amazon in key segments of the digital economy. Once seen as the darlings of Washington, Silicon Valley firms have become targets for politicians of all stripes. US regulators this week imposed a record \$5 billion fine on Facebook for lapses in privacy and data protection, including the leaking of private data for political consultancy Cambridge Analytica.

Trump and his allies have also complained, with little evidence, that online platforms use "bias" to suppress conservative views. That may be cause for greater scrutiny even if it does not provide grounds for antitrust action. Some lawmakers including Democratic presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren have been calling for a breakup of major tech firms, saying they are too big and powerful.

Tech firms and their backers deny monopolistic conduct and argue the fast-evolving digital economy has robust competition and has led to lower prices and more choice for consumers. "US technology companies make the United States a global leader in innovation, power the economy, and deliver transformative benefits to people



AMIENS, France: A picture shows the Amazon logo at the entrance of the Amazon logistics centre in Amiens, northern France. —AFP

worldwide," said Jason Oxman, CEO of the Information Technology Industry Council, representing major tech firms. Oxman said any review should be done "with precision and be consistent with existing law, and avoid harming America's economy and innovative edge."

### Remedy options

US antitrust enforcers have broad authority over companies and can impose fines for violating antitrust law, impose "structural" remedies to allow for more competition or even break them up. Breakups have been ordered only for Standard Oil in 1911 and AT&T in the 1980s, and many analysts say they are unlikely to be applied to Big Tech.

Gardiner said that while enforcers may seek a breakup a range of other options may be on the table as well, such as "behavioral" remedies which open up platforms to rivals or give competitors better access.

"This could be a major development in the internet industry but until we get more details we don't know," said Eric Goldman, director of the High Tech Law Institute at Santa Clara University. Goldman said the unpopularity of tech platforms has fueled talk of breaking them up but that such measures are unlikely to resolve the underlying complaints. "The breakup option is like a nuclear remedy that everyone knows is possible but no one wants," he said.—AFP

## Saudi Arabia struggles to end oil addiction

DUBAI: When Saudi Aramco was on the verge of a deal last year to buy a stake in an Indian oil refinery, its boss quickly boarded a company jet in Paris and flew to New Delhi. Chief executive Amin Nasser arrived unannounced early on April 11, 2018, finalized the agreement and signed it later that day. Negotiators had just finished hammering out the details. His last-minute flight, after a business trip to France with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, underlined the importance of the deal both to Saudi Arabia and its huge state oil firm. The planned investment in the \$44-billion refinery and petrochemical project on India's west coast is a prime example of how Aramco is trying to squeeze value out of each barrel of oil it produces by snapping up refining capacity, mainly in fast-growing Asia. But it also underlines the challenge Saudi Arabia faces in reducing its heavy economic reliance on oil. The results of its program to diversify have been mixed, some projects are moving slowly and others are too ambitious, economic and energy analysts say. Prince Mohammed's stated goal of being able to "live without oil" by as early as 2020 looks set to be missed. "Saudi Arabia's oil addiction is as strong as ever... economically, of course, the Saudi economy runs on oil. Oil still dominates GDP, exports and government revenues," said Jim Krane, energy fellow at Rice University's Baker Institute.

"That said, Saudi Arabia is changing its relationship with oil.

The dependence remains. But the kingdom is squeezing more value out of its oil," he said. The slow progress means the Saudi economy is likely to remain hostage to oil prices for longer than planned. Any delay in implementing change also risks denting Prince Mohammed's image as a reformer.

### Securing the future

Announcing his plan three years ago, the Crown Prince said Saudi Arabia must end its "oil addiction" to ensure the world's biggest oil exporter and second largest producer cannot be "at the mercy of commodity price volatility or external markets." He spoke after a fall in crude oil prices boosted the Saudi fiscal deficit to about 15 percent of gross domestic product in 2015, slowing government spending and economic growth.

This year the deficit could hit 7 percent of GDP, according to the International Monetary Fund, as oil-related growth slows following production cuts led by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries. Aramco is central to the Crown Prince's reform plan in several ways, not least because its planned partial privatization will generate income for the reforms. The company has also been involved in most of the kingdom's high-profile deals in the last two years as it increased investment in refining and petrochemicals.

In that time, Aramco has announced at least \$50 billion worth of investments in Saudi Arabia, Asia and the United States. It aims to almost triple its chemicals production to 34 million metric tons per year by 2030 and raise its global refining capacity to 8-10 million barrels per day (bpd) from more than 5 million bpd. In March last year, Aramco finalized a deal to buy a \$7 billion



BEIJING: Saudi Aramco CEO Amin H Nasser attends the China Development Forum in Beijing, China. —Reuters

stake in a refinery and petrochemicals project with Malaysia's Petronas. A month later, Nasser and a consortium of Indian companies signed the initial deal that would give Aramco a stake in the planned 1.2 million bpd refinery in India's western Maharashtra state. In February of this year, Aramco signed a \$10 billion deal for a refining and petrochemical complex in China. Last month it signed 12 deals with South Korea worth billions of dollars, ranging from ship building to an expansion of a refinery owned by Aramco.—Reuters



## Business

# Nissan quarterly net profit plunges, 12,500 job cuts planned

## Nissan undergoes overhaul after Ghosn scandal

**YOKOHAMA:** Crisis-hit Japanese automaker Nissan said yesterday it would cut 12,500 jobs and announced a plunge in quarterly net profit as it struggles with weak sales and the arrest of its former chief. The embattled firm has been buffeted by poor performance in the United States and Europe as well as the scandal of financial misconduct charges against former boss Carlos Ghosn. "We acknowledge the first-quarter results were very tough," chief executive Hiroto Saikawa said.

"We knew the pace of sales would be tough, but I think we have to admit that it was slightly below our expectations," he added. "But I believe we can fully recover to our expectation levels in the second and third quarter." Nissan said net profit slumped nearly 95 percent in the April-June quarter due to falling sales and growing costs. The automaker's bottom line profit dropped to 6.4 billion yen for the three months to June, from 115.8 billion yen last year, on sales down 12.7 percent at 2.37 trillion yen.

"Profitability was negatively impacted by the decrease in revenues and external factors such as raw material costs, exchange rate fluctuations and investments to meet regulatory standards," Nissan said. Operating profit fell 98.5 percent, to just 1.6 billion yen, but the firm left its full-year earnings forecast in place, predicting net profit of 170 billion yen on sales of 11.3 trillion yen for the fiscal year to March 2020.

### No magic formula

The automaker said it was laying off thousands of employees as it works to cut costs and streamline production. "Nissan will reduce its global production

capacity by 10 percent by the end of fiscal year 2022. In line with production optimizations, the company will reduce headcount by roughly 12,500," it said in a statement. Saikawa said 6,400 job cuts had already been carried out in the 2018 and 2019 fiscal years at eight locations.

He declined to identify the six locations at which the firm plans to make another 6,100 cuts between fiscal 2020-2022, saying some factories would close while others would operate with fewer production lines. "Broadly speaking, unprofitable lines, and relatively speaking, more overseas-based lines will be affected," he told reporters at the firm's headquarters in Yokohama outside Tokyo. Analysts say the cuts are necessary as Nissan tackles excess capacity.

"Nissan decided not to pursue the volume for volume's sake," said Tatsuo Yoshida, an analyst at Sawakami Asset Management. "The company has no other choice than reducing capacity or trimming the number of people employed in order to survive the difficult period," he told AFP. But he warned there was "no magic formula to revive Nissan immediately".

### Tough for Nissan

On top of stagnant sales, the company has also faced tensions with its French partner Renault, which owns 43 percent of the Japanese manufacturer. The two companies, which with Mitsubishi Motors form a top-selling auto alliance, have seen relations falter in the wake of the Ghosn scandal and over persistent differences in how closely integrated they should be. "Business circumstances remain quite tough for Nissan," Satoru Takada, an auto analyst at Tokyo-based



**TANGERANG:** Visitors take a look at the Nissan display at the Gaikindo Indonesia International Auto Show (GIIAS) in Tangerang, Banten province.—AFP

research and consulting firm TIW, told AFP before the widely expected figures were announced.

"The outlook for Nissan is still unclear, as the company is facing a number of obstacles, including ties with Renault," Takata said. Nissan is currently undergoing an overhaul intended to strengthen governance after the Ghosn scandal. Last month, Nissan shareholders voted in favor of various measures including the establishment of three new oversight committees responsible for the appointment of senior officials, pay issues and auditing.

They also approved the election of 11 directors as the firm restructures, among them two Renault executives as well as Saikawa. The reforms are designed to put Nissan on a more stable footing after the shock caused by the arrest of Ghosn, considered one of the auto industry's most powerful executives. Ghosn, who has been sacked from auto industry leadership roles, is awaiting trial in Japan on charges of under-reporting millions of dollars in salary and of using company funds for personal expenses.—AFP

## Trade conflicts and auto slowdown hit BASF in Q2

**BERLIN:** German chemical giant BASF on Wednesday reported ebbing second-quarter revenues and a plunge in underlying profit, as trade conflicts hit key client industries like cars and farming. Operating, or underlying profit at the group excluding special items fell 47 percent year-on-year, to one billion euros, BASF said in a statement. Sales fell four percent to 15.2 billion euros, in line with expectations from analysts surveyed by Factset.

"Global risks have increased significantly in the last few months, driven by continuing trade conflicts between the United States and its trade partners," chief executive Martin Brudermueller said in a telephone conference. With a "noticeable slowdown in economic growth worldwide, especially in China... customers in all industries are currently very cautious in their projections and orders," he added. "The car industry, our most important customer sector, will not recover in the course of this year," Brudermueller said.

Automakers saw a six percent worldwide slump in production in the first six months, BASF found, and 13 percent in vital market China. Meanwhile, bad weather hitting North American farms squeezed demand for the company's agricultural products. "Even with a very strong start (to the season) in the southern hemisphere... we won't be able to balance it out," chief financial officer Hans-Ulrich Engels said.

But the group was able to report a massive boost in net

profit, from 1.5 billion euros in April-June 2018 to 6.5 billion this year, as it netted a windfall from the merger of its Winterhall hydrocarbons division with DEA. BASF shares weakened in morning trading in Frankfurt, shedding one percent to trade at 63.20 euros just before 11 am (0900 GMT) while the overall blue-chip DAX index was in positive territory.

### No miracles in second half

Earlier this month, BASF shares plunged as the Ludwigshafen-based firm slashed its full-year earnings forecast. It now expects "a slight decline" in revenue, while operating profit before special items could fall up to 30 percent compared with the 7.6 billion euros booked in 2018. BASF finds itself battling the business headwinds soon after launching a far-reaching restructuring, which will see it slash 6,000 jobs worldwide by 2021.

"More than 1,100" employees had already signed termination agreements by the end of June, the company said. "Everything that's in our internal responsibility is going very much according to plan, but we can't create a miracle resurgence in the second half of the year," CEO Brudermueller said. One area where BASF has taken proactive steps is preparing for potential low water in the vital Rhine river inland waterway, which hobbled production in the second half of 2018.

A heatwave in Germany saw a new all-time national temperature record of 40.5 degrees set in western city Geilenkirchen on Wednesday. "We've done a lot in logistics, the same thing won't happen this year as last year with critical raw materials," Brudermueller said. With only a limited number of shallow-draught ships available in Germany, "BASF has booked all the transport capacity there is," he added, although "seen from today, we don't expect a critical situation in the next few weeks".—AFP

## Samsung to launch foldable smartphone

**SEOUL:** South Korean electronics giant Samsung announced yesterday it will release its cutting-edge foldable smartphone in September, despite a trade dispute between Seoul and Tokyo which analysts say will affect delivery. Tokyo earlier this month restricted export to South Korea of several key materials crucial to its world-leading electronics and smartphone companies, including market leader Samsung.

The decision was made in response to a South Korean court decision ordering Japanese firms that used forced labor during World War II to compensate Korean victims. Tokyo's move has raised international concern about the effect on global tech supply chains and the possibility of price hikes for consumers worldwide. Samsung's Galaxy Fold is among the end products that will be affected as it relies on a chemical film produced by Japanese firm Sumitomo Chemical, said IHS Markit display research director Tadashi Uno.

Samsung had planned to launch the Fold in April, but pushed back the release date after early reviewers reported screen problems after just days of use. The smartphone giant said it has "made improvements" to the device since then. Samsung has spent nearly eight years developing the Fold in an effort to spark demand and potentially revive a sector that has been struggling for new innovations. Tech companies are already under pressure from a weakening global outlook, while the chip sector in particular is suffering from weak demand.—AFP



## Sports

# Cards' DeJong blasts 3 homers

**PITTSBURGH:** Paul DeJong went 4-for-4 with three homers, a double and five RBIs, and the St. Louis Cardinals outslugged the Pittsburgh Pirates 14-8 Wednesday night. DeJong, Andrew Knizner and Paul Goldschmidt all hit two-run homers in the Cardinals' nine-run second inning, helping St. Louis earn its fourth win in a row and its third straight to start a four-game series. Starling Marte went 4-for-5 with three doubles and three RBIs for the Pirates, who have lost four in a row.

## Indians 4, Blue Jays 0

Shane Bieber pitched a one-hit shutout with 10 strikeouts, Greg Allen had three hits and an RBI, and Cleveland defeated host Toronto. Bieber (10-3) walked one and hit a batter as the Indians won the rubber match of the three-game series and completed the season series against the Blue Jays with six wins in seven games. Toronto's only hit was Eric Sogard's leadoff double in the seventh inning. Bieber fired his second complete game of the season, both shutouts. He threw a five-hitter against the Baltimore Orioles on May 19.

## Nationals 3, Rockies 2 (Game 1)

Anthony Rendon belted a go-ahead homer to lead off the seventh inning as host Washington won the opening game of a doubleheader. Adam Eaton homered to lead off the fifth inning, and Gerardo Parra worked a bases-loaded walk for the Nationals. Ryan McMahon had a run-scoring single among his two RBIs, and Yonder Alonso ripped a pair of doubles and scored twice for the reeling Rockies.

## Nationals 2, Rockies 0 (Game 2)

Patrick Corbin scattered three hits over six innings as host Washington completed the doubleheader sweep of Colorado. Yan Gomes belted a solo homer in the seventh inning for Washington, which improved to 36-15 in its past 51 contests and 12-3 in its past 15 at home. Corbin (8-5) settled down after walking three of the first six batters he faced to retire 15 of his last 17. He finished with seven strikeouts and three walks in a 106-pitch performance.

## Yankees 10, Twins 7

Aaron Hicks, Gleyber Torres and Edwin Encarnacion homered, and Didi Gregorius had a single, a double, a triple and three RBIs to lift New York over Minnesota in the rubber game of a three-game series in Minneapolis. Mike Tauchman also doubled and tripled and drove in two runs, and Encarnacion, Hicks, Aaron Judge each had two of the Yankees' 15 hits. Nelson Cruz homered for the third straight game, and Eddie Rosario and Marwin Gonzalez also went deep for Minnesota. Nestor Cortes Jr. (4-0) picked up the win, allowing one run on three hits in 3 1/3 innings of relief. Aroldis Chapman pitched a scoreless ninth to pick up his 26th save.

## Angels 3, Dodgers 2

Kole Calhoun hit a home run for the second consecutive night, and the visiting Los Angeles Angels finished a perfect 4-for-4 against the Los Angeles Dodgers this season. Calhoun had two doubles and two RBIs, and Mike Trout hit a sacrifice fly as the Angels won both games at Dodger Stadium this week. Justin Turner hit a home run for the Dodgers. The Dodgers' frustration boiled over in the eighth inning when Cody Bellinger was ejected after disputing a strikeout. The hosts also lost starter Ross Stripling (neck) and second baseman Enrique Hernandez (hand).

## Astros 4, Athletics 2

Jose Altuve and George Springer each hit a two-run homer, and host Houston took the rubber game of a three-game series with Oakland. Justin Verlander (13-4) allowed two hits over six innings and struck out 11 for his third straight win. He moved into the AL lead with 13th victory. Springer took Oakland starter Chris Bassitt deep to left field in the third inning for his 23rd home run of the season, surpassing his total from last season. Altuve hit his 15th home run of the season in the fifth, also off Bassitt.

## Rays 3, Red Sox 2

All-Star pitcher Charlie Morton struck out 11 in seven strong innings, and Guillermo Heredia doubled in the go-ahead run to lead Tampa Bay past Boston in St. Petersburg, Fla. Morton (12-3) allowed two earned runs and five hits in beating the Red Sox for the second time this season. He also won for the fourth time in his past five decisions. The win allowed the Rays to avoid a sweep in the three-game series and broke Boston's five-game winning streak at Tropicana Field. The victory also knotted the season series at 6-6 but was just Tampa Bay's second in its past nine games.



**PITTSBURGH:** Paul DeJong #12 of the St. Louis Cardinals hits a two-run home run in the second inning against the Pittsburgh Pirates at PNC Park. —AFP

## Cubs 4, Giants 1

Javier Baez hit the eighth pitch of the game for a home run, and Kris Bryant and Albert Almora Jr. added homers, allowing Chicago to beat host San Francisco. Emergency starter Tyler Chatwood worked four effective innings as the Cubs salvaged a win in the three-game set. In the wake of a pair of 5-4 losses to open the series, Chicago learned before the Wednesday afternoon game that Jon Lester would have to be scratched due to an illness. Chatwood, who hadn't started a game since June 27, took the ball and allowed the red-hot Giants just one run in four innings, leaving with a 4-1 lead.

## Mariners 5, Rangers 3

Daniel Vogelbach hit two solo home runs, and host Seattle beat Texas in the rubber game of a three-game series. Vogelbach sparked a four-run inning with a leadoff home run in the fifth. After the Rangers scored three runs in the sixth, Vogelbach went deep again with one out in the bottom half of the inning to stretch the lead back to 5-3. Seattle's Mike Leake (9-8) went seven innings, allowing three runs and nine hits. He struck out seven and didn't walk a batter.

## Royals 2, Braves 0

Brad Keller threw seven shutout innings, and Kansas City beat host Atlanta to sweep a two-game interleague series. Keller, who grew up a Braves fan in nearby Flowery Branch, Ga., was making his first career start against Atlanta. He allowed only four hits and one walk while striking out three, throwing an economical 88 pitches, 62 for strikes. It was the fourth straight solid start, and fourth straight win, for the big right-hander, who has allowed four earned runs over his past 27 innings. Keller (7-9) also singled to right-center for his first career RBI.

## Phillies 4, Tigers 0

JT Realmuto and Nick Williams hit solo homers, Vince Velasquez pitched 5 2/3 scoreless innings, and Philadelphia silenced host Detroit. Realmuto hit his 12th homer of the season while Williams notched his second. Cesar Hernandez had two hits, a run and an RBI, and Rhys Hoskins singled and tripled while driving in a run. Velasquez (3-5) scattered four hits and two walks while striking out nine. He recorded his first victory since May 24.

## Brewers 5, Reds 4

Yasmani Grandal hit a go-ahead, two-run, bases-loaded single in the fifth inning, and host Milwaukee averted a three-game sweep with a win

over Cincinnati. Milwaukee snapped a five-game losing streak to the Reds after allowing 20 runs in the first two games of the series. The Brewers loaded the bases for Grandal when Christian Yelich worked a walk against Amir Garrett. Grandal then gave Milwaukee a 5-4 lead when he hit a full-count fastball just out of shortstop Jose Iglesias' range into left field, allowing Orlando Arcia and Lorenzo Cain to score.

## Diamondbacks 5, Orioles 2

Taylor Clarke pitched six strong innings, Carson Kelly hit a three-run homer, and Arizona held on to win the rubber match of a three-game series against Baltimore in Phoenix. With a 5-2 lead entering the ninth, Arizona closer Greg Holland walked the first two batters on nine pitches before manager Torey Lovullo pulled him for Yoan Lopez. Lopez, who twice gave up three runs against the Milwaukee Brewers in the previous series, earned his first career save by retiring the next three batters on four pitches. Clarke (3-3) gave up a pair of solo home runs — to Anthony Santander in the fourth and Trey Mancini in the sixth — but got through six innings for the first time in nine starts and for only the third time in his 12 outings.

## Padres 7, Mets 2

Craig Stammen struck out Michael Conforto to escape a bases-loaded jam in the seventh inning, and San Diego pulled away to defeat host New York. With the Padres leading 4-2, Stammen created the jam by allowing a double to Amed Rosario ahead of walks to pinch hitter J.D. Davis and Jeff McNeil. Following a mound visit from pitching coach Darren Balsley, Stammen regrouped and struck out Conforto swinging at a 1-2 sinker that appeared out of the strike zone. The Padres then added two runs in the eighth on an RBI double by Austin Hedges against Jeurys Familia and an RBI single by Fernando Tatis Jr. against Tyler Bashlor.

## Marlins 2, White Sox 0

Cesar Puello snapped a scoreless tie with a two-run home run in the eighth inning, and rookie Zac Gallen pitched seven shutout innings to earn his first career victory as Miami shut out Chicago. With one out in the eighth, Puello drilled Reynaldo Lopez's first pitch into the left field seats to provide all the offense Miami needed to secure an interleague series win. Until that point, Lopez had matched Gallen, a right-hander making his sixth major league start, nearly pitch for pitch. Gallen limited Chicago to two hits while walking one and striking out nine. He threw 68 of his 95 pitches for strikes. Lopez yielded two runs on four hits and a walk while striking out 10 in eight innings. —Reuters



## Sports

# Kawhi, George seek more for Clippers than beating Lakers

**LOS ANGELES:** Kawhi Leonard and Paul George made their debuts Wednesday as Los Angeles Clippers teammates, vowing to turn their hometown club into an NBA champion and eclipse city rival Lakers. "We're not looking at the Battle of LA. We've got bigger goals in mind," George said. "We're not thinking about the Lakers shadow. We want to be holding that trophy and we'll build up Clipper Nation along the way."

Leonard made the biggest free agent signing in the NBA this month by leaving the Toronto Raptors after leading them to the NBA title while George was obtained in a blockbuster trade deal with the Oklahoma City Thunder at Leonard's request. "I'm on my next journey," Leonard said. "These guys have got a great future. Paul is a player I always wanted to play with. Both LA guys. Played down the street from each other. Now we're on the Clippers. "We've got something special. I think we can make history." Clippers owner Steve Ballmer's high-octane introduction video became a quick social media sensation, the 63-year-old former Microsoft chief executive screaming and yelling his joy and excitement about his club suddenly becoming a prime NBA contender for the first time. "I'm just fired up to be here today," Ballmer yelled. "It's pretty cool. It's pretty damn cool."

In a much more low-key manner, George and Leonard also showed their excitement about what the future has in store for them and the Clippers as they accepted blue Clippers jerseys, George number 13 and Leonard number 2. "I'm extremely happy and extremely excited to be back home," George said after thanking the Thunder for making the trade deal. "Ultimately they helped me find my way back to LA. I'm pretty appreciative of that."

## Clippers outshine Lakers lately

The Clippers are second favorites among Caesar's Palace sportsbook NBA championship oddsmakers at 7-2, trailing only the 3-1 odds for the Los Angeles Lakers, who boast LeBron James and Anthony Davis plus a host of solid support talent after being unable to add Leonard to their own lineup. The Lakers have won 16 NBA titles but none since 2010 with retired star guard Kobe Bryant as the NBA Finals Most Valuable Player.

Leonard instead chose a Clippers' squad that has never gone past the second round of the NBA playoffs, never reaching even a conference finals since being formed in 1970 as the Buffalo Braves. But in each of the past seven seasons, the Clippers won more games than the Lakers, a trend Leonard plans to continue. "The last few years, the Clippers have been better," Leonard said. "They are going to get the attention — the Lakers have been winning championships for a long time."

"Who knows how the Clippers will change things over? I'm not focused on that. I just want to win. My goal is just to make us happy. If we're winning and not getting no coverage, that's fine with me." Asked about the growing power of NBA players under contract to force teams into trade deals, George said, "As long as there's a mutual respect between both (club and player), there's nothing wrong with it."

## Inspiring next generation

George hopes that with both players being among the NBA's top defenders, the Clippers will alter dynamics to bring more attention to two-way work than simply scoring skills. "What me and Kawhi can do is inspire the next



**LOS ANGELES:** (L-R) Head coach Doc Rivers, Paul George, Kawhi Leonard and owner Steve Ballmer of the Los Angeles Clippers attend the Paul George and Kawhi Leonard introductory press conference at Green Meadows Recreation Center. —AFP

generation, go out and play hard on both ends," George said. The Clippers' existing core was attractive to Leonard and George.

"Everybody elevated their games. To be part of that camaraderie, what they already had, to sprinkle in what we have to offer, that's what made it such an attractive spot," George said. Leonard was happy the team kept contract talks from leaking to the public.

"They were true to their word. Nothing got out," Leonard said. "I just felt like it was a good decision for me. "It's a good pairing. They go hard both ways. They want to win. That's my competitive mindset when I step on the floor. I'll pass the ball to someone else. That's the culture here. "It's going to be a team effort. It's going to take 15 guys to make this work." —AFP

## NFL's highest-paid left tackle says he failed drug test

**NEW YORK:** Tennessee Titans offensive lineman Taylor Lewan, the NFL's highest-paid left tackle, announced Wednesday he has failed a doping test for a banned substance he says he unknowingly ingested. The 28-year-old blind-side blocker for Tennessee quarterback Marcus Mariota, who has never started a game without Lewan protecting him in four NFL seasons, could face a suspension for the first four games of the upcoming season. Lewan posted an emotional video on social media saying the NFL sent him a letter saying he tested positive for the World Anti-Doping Agency banned substance Ostarine. "I'm completely responsible for the things that are in my body whether the supplement I'm taking has it on the label or not," Lewan said. "I want everyone to know that I've never taken supplement knowingly and I've never cheated the game and I never will." Lewan, who signed a five-year contract extension worth \$80 million with \$50 million guaranteed last July to become the NFL's top-paid offensive lineman, said he took a lie-detector test about knowingly taking the drug and passed it. "What really is important to me is that people know I'm not a cheater. I went and did a polygraph test about Ostarine and knowingly taking it and I passed that test," he said. —AFP

## Rose eyes defending PGA playoff crown

**WASHINGTON:** Britain's Justin Rose enters this week's WGC St Jude Invitational hoping to position himself well for next month's US PGA playoffs, where he attempts to become the first back-to-back champion. Rose enters the 63-player event at TPC Southwind in Memphis, Tennessee, coming off a share of 20th at last week's British Open at Royal Portrush in the penultimate event before the season-ending three-week playoff showdown.

Rose, the 2013 US Open winner, ranks 11th in the FedEx Cup playoff standings. Last year he was high enough to share fourth at the season-ending Tour Championship and still win the overall \$10 million playoff prize, which jumps to \$15 million this year. "The next few weeks are really important, to be among the leaders and really make a run," Rose said. "We're kind of tunneling in on the playoffs. I think I'm in a decent position - 11th is a decent defense so far."

The playoff format has changed this year with major schedule changes and a revamp to make the Tour Championship winner the overall champion. There are only three playoff events instead of four as in past years. At the Tour Championship, the season points leader begins at 10-under par, the second-ranked player is on 8-under and players start deeper under par the higher they rank

among the field of 30 in the finale field.

"We all know once the playoffs come around you have to play your best, especially with the changes to the format," Rose said. "You really have to position yourself going into East Lake to not have too much of a deficit." At his current 11th, Rose would start seven strokes behind the leader, who at the moment is reigning PGA Championship winner and four-time major champion Brooks Koepka, just ahead of fellow American Matt Kuchar with four-time major winner Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland third.

Rose, 38, plays alongside Kuchar and Jordan Spieth in the first two rounds at Memphis. Justin Thomas, who won last season's final WGC event at Firestone, is 17th in the points race despite being winless this year as he chases a second playoff crown in three years. He has made only 16 starts this season due to a wrist injury after nine wins in the three prior campaigns. "Every event is very important over the course of the entire year, but it definitely is now because you're running out (of time)," Thomas said.

"I really feel like I'm trending in the right direction... I feel like I'm very, very close to winning again." While top players tee off in Memphis in an event that moved from Akron, Ohio, last season, other players will compete in the PGA Barracuda Championship at Reno, Nevada. The event uses the Modified Stableford scoring system which awards two points for birdies and subtracts one for each bogey. —AFP



## Sports

# Dressel scorcher as China slam ‘unacceptable’ doping protests

**GWANGJU:** American Caeleb Dressel swam the second-fastest 100m freestyle in history to retain his world title yesterday as China lashed out at the anti-doping protests targeting Olympic star Sun Yang. Dressel, 22, clocked a jaw-dropping 46.96 seconds in Gwangju, pipping Olympic champion Kyle Chalmers to win swimming’s blue riband event in swashbuckling style.

Meanwhile, Australian Matt Wilson tied the men’s 200m breaststroke world record to underline his title credentials, before Australia set a new world mark in the women’s 4x200m free. The lightning-fast performances helped refocus attention on the pool after a week dominated by protests centering on China’s Sun, the triple Olympic champion who is accused of destroying blood samples after a visit from drug testers.

China’s head coach Zhou Jijong called the actions against Sun, when Australia’s Mack Horton and Briton Duncan Scott both snubbed him on the podium, “harmful” and “prejudiced”. “It is unbelievable and unacceptable that some people publicly defiled the innocence of an elite athlete based on speculation and hearsay,” Zhou told Chinese media.

In the highlight of the evening races, Dressel exploded from the blocks to lead by a body-length at the turn and finished strong as he bagged his third gold of the week. “It hurt, it hurt really bad to be honest,” winced the tattooed American. “You don’t get that magical feeling every night — you’ve just got to shut the brain off and go.”

Dressel, who racked up seven world titles in Budapest two years ago, high-fived his Aussie rival Chalmers before perching himself on a lane rope

to milk the crowd’s applause, raising a fist to flag-waving American fans. Chalmers touched in 47.08 with Russia’s Vladislav Grinev the best of the rest in 47.82. The world record of 46.91 was set by Brazilian Cesar Cielo in 2009. “I gave it my all tonight,” said Chalmers. “But I saw Caeleb did 46.9 — which is absolutely mind-blowing.”

Elsewhere, Daiya Seto captured Japan’s first gold medal of the competition by sweeping to victory in the men’s 200m individual medley in 1:56.14. Seto, twice a 400m medley gold medallist, refused to buckle under pressure as he held off Switzerland’s Jeremy Desplanches to win by just under half-a-second, with defending champion Chase Kalisz taking bronze. Wilson won his 200m breaststroke semi-final in 2:06.67 — tying the world record held by Japan’s Ippei Watanabe, who also qualified for Friday’s final.

## ‘Beyond my wildest beliefs’

“It’s beyond my wildest beliefs,” said Wilson. “It’s given me a world of confidence.” Boglarka Kapas made it a Hungarian double in the 200m fly as she stormed to women’s gold in 2:06.78 from American Hali Flickinger, 24 hours after countryman Kristof Milak pulverised Michael Phelps’s 10-year-old world record.

American great Katie Ledecky returned to the pool after pulling out of her 1,500m title defense and the 200m free heats earlier in the week, producing a strong second leg in the women’s 4x200m free. But the Aussies clung on, as Emma McKeon anchored the green and gold to a third relay title of the week in a world-



**GWANGJU:** USA’s Caeleb Dressel celebrates winning the final of the men’s 100m freestyle event during the swimming competition at the 2019 World Championships at Nambu University Municipal Aquatics Center. —AFP

record 7:41.50 with the United States also ducking under China’s old mark.

World-record holder Sarah Sjöström qualified fastest for the women’s 100m final in 52.43 from Cate Campbell, whose blistering anchor leg brought Australia a gold medal in the 4x100m mixed medley relay on Wednesday. “I was definitely up pinging a little bit last night,” Campbell

said. “Tonight was all about conserving energy — I just knew I had to stick with Sarah and if I did then I would qualify no worries.” However, there was drama as American Lilly King was disqualified from the women’s 200m breaststroke heats for an illegal turn. A subsequent appeal was rejected and King’s bitter rival, Russian Yulia Efimova, secured lane four for Friday’s final. —AFP

## Phelps hails ‘incredible’ Milak for world record

**GWANGJU:** Michael Phelps paid tribute to Hungarian teenager Kristof Milak’s “beautiful technique” after he took down the American legend’s long-standing 200 meters butterfly record at the world championships in South Korea. Phelps described Milak’s time of one minute, 50.73 seconds in Gwangju as “incredible”, although he admitted his astonishment was tinged with sadness at losing a world record which had stood since 2009.

“As frustrated as I am to see that record go down, I couldn’t be happier to see how he did it,” Phelps told the New York Times. “That kid’s last 100 was incredible. He put together a great 200 fly from start to finish.” The 19-year-old Milak sliced a whopping 0.78 seconds off Phelps’s previous world best, which was achieved during the bodysuit era, after flirting with the record for much of the past season. “It happened because there was a kid who wanted to do it, who dreamed of doing it, who figured out what it would take to do it,” said Phelps, who had a special fondness for the 200m fly. “(He) worked on his technique until it was beautiful and put in the really, really hard work that it takes to do it — my hat’s off to him.”

Milak became the first swimmer to go under 1:51 minutes, while his winning margin was, remarkably, more than three seconds as Japan’s Daiya Seto finished a distant second and the South African Chad le Clos third. Le Clos, who famously beat Phelps in the 2012 London Olympic final, shrugged: “Kristof is in another league — he’s a hell of a lot faster than all of us.” Milak said he was “honored” to break a world record held by Phelps, who he had worshipped growing up and watched videos of to polish his technique. “I wasn’t expecting to break the record,” he admitted. “But if you put in the hard work, good things happen and I was ready. I just tried to block everything out and find a good rhythm.” —AFP

## Campbell stalks Manuel at swimming worlds

**GWANGJU:** Defending champion Simone Manuel set the pace in the women’s 100 meters freestyle yesterday as normal service resumed at the swimming world championships after a doping storm threatened to spiral out of control. As fallout lingered on two separate podium protests made by athletes after FINA doping testers alleged China’s Sun Yang had destroyed blood samples, there was more drama as American Lilly King suffered a shock breaststroke disqualification in Gwangju.

A buzzing Cate Campbell posted the fourth fastest time in Gwangju the morning after her blistering anchor leg brought Australia gold in the 4x100m mixed medley relay and looks a serious threat to Manuel. “I was definitely up pinging a little bit last night,” Campbell told AFP after clocking 53.36 seconds. “But I got enough sleep to get through this morning, so I’m happy with that. I’m really looking forward to a big nap today.”

Manuel, who tied for 2016 Olympic gold with Canada’s Penny Oleksiak, topped the time sheets with a 53.10 heading into the evening’s semi-finals. But Campbell could have the American’s number after chasing her down in Wednesday’s mixed relay and Sweden’s Sarah Sjöström also lurks having set the second fastest time, just one hundredth slower than Manuel. Sjöström, who was carried out on a stretcher on Wednesday after taking bronze in the 200m freestyle, joked: “I felt great after they gave me the oxygen — maybe I should take that all the time.” Italian Federica Pellegrini, who retained her 200m title, failed to qualify.

## Sun snub

King was booted out of the women’s 200m breaststroke after winning her heat after the American was adjudged to have failed to touch with both hands at a turn, prompting an appeal from the United States. The 22-year-old, along with several top swimmers



**GWANGJU:** USA’s Simone Manuel competes in the semi-final of the women’s 100m freestyle event during the swimming competition at the 2019 World Championships at Nambu University Municipal Aquatics Center. —AFP

including fellow Olympic champion Adam Peaty, has expressed solidarity with Australian Mack Horton and Briton Duncan Scott after they snubbed Sun Yang on the podium after losing to the hulking Chinese swimmer.

Horton, beaten in the 400m free last weekend, and Scott, bronze medallist behind Sun in the 200m free, sparked a furious reaction from China’s sporting idol and the communist country’s state-run media. Canada’s Sydney Pickrem, who has collected bronze in the women’s 200 and 400m individual medley at these championships, set the best time in the 200m breaststroke heats in 2:24.53.

Meanwhile, American great Katie Ledecky continues to struggle with a mystery illness that forced her to pull out of the 1,500m freestyle final and 200m free heats earlier in the week. Team USA officials confirmed that the 14-time world champion could swim the women’s 4x200m freestyle relay but a final decision would be made before Thursday’s late final. —AFP



## Sports

# Bangladesh will not be distracted by Malinga's farewell, says skipper

**COLOMBO:** Stand-in Bangladesh captain Tamim Iqbal yesterday paid tribute to retiring Sri Lankan star Lasith Malinga but said the fast bowler's farewell match would not distract his team from winning. Malinga will play his final one-day international in Colombo Friday in the first of three one-day internationals against Bangladesh, although he hopes to continue playing in the shorter T20 format.

"I think he is a great ambassador of this game," Tamim told reporters Thursday in Colombo, adding that Malinga's achievements were "extraordinary". "Tomorrow is a special game for him. But one thing is for sure — when we play against him we will not keep it in our head that it will be his last match and will try to play as hard as possible. "We will try to win the game for Bangladesh."

Malinga said yesterday he was "very happy" to make way for younger players after calling time on his illustrious 15-year career in the 50-over format. "I am very happy to leave at this time. This is an opportunity for new players to prove themselves and prepare for the next World Cup," Malinga, 35, told reporters at the team's final training session.

"We may have had some setbacks, but we have the capability to win another World Cup," he added, pointing to Sri Lanka's success at the 1996 World Cup and 2014 T20 World Cup.

Malinga — known for his trademark blond-highlighted mop and piercings — called on cricket administrators to be patient with up-and-coming stars and let them develop ahead of the next ODI World Cup.

"The young players need to believe that they can deliver. They need to be dedicated and develop to a level that they can decide for themselves when they go to the middle," Malinga said.

Malinga — who is leaving as Sri Lanka's third-highest wicket-taker in ODI cricket — has said he was sidelined by selectors two years ago but was able to prove his value at the recent World Cup, where he took four for 43 in Sri Lanka's group-stage win over eventual champions England.

The match also holds special meaning for Tamim, who will make his debut as 14th ODI captain for Bangladesh with Mashrafe Mortaza out injured.

He will lead a new-look team that will also miss the services of star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, wicketkeeper-batsman Liton Das and all-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin.

Shakib, who made 606 runs and grabbed 11 wickets, has been rested alongside Liton while Saifuddin was ruled out with a back injury.

"My captaincy was a last-minute call because our regular captain got injured the night before



**COLOMBO:** Sri Lankan cricketer Lasith Malinga (C) attends a practice session at R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo yesterday, ahead of their first one day international (ODI) match of a three-match ODI series against Bangladesh. —AFP

we travelled. But whatever the opportunity I get, I always try to make the best use of it," Tamim said. "I already spoke to the players and explained them their role in the team and what we

were expecting from them... when we go to play we will try to execute the plan."

The second and third matches will be held at the same venue on July 28 and 31. —AFP

## PAS director meets with Boxing Federation Chairman

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Acting Director General of Public Authority for Sports (PAS) Dr Saqer Al-Mulla recently received the Chairman of the Board of Kuwait Boxing Federation Mohammad Mansi Al-Enezi. During the meeting, Mansi handed Al-Mulla an invitation to the opening ceremony of the first Asian Championship on August 3, 2019 under the patronage of Kuwait Olympic Committee President Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad.

The Acting PAS Director General was briefed on the ongoing preparations for the championship and expressed PAS's readiness to present all forms of support to ensure the success of this continental championship. He also expressed confidence in the ability of Kuwaitis to organize and host the championship in a civilized manner that suites Kuwait's sport stellar reputation. Dr Al-Mulla wished KBA every success in this their participation at the international level after lifting the suspension on Kuwait sports.



## Vaughan slams 'embarrassing' England collapse

**LONDON:** Former captain Michael Vaughan labeled England an "embarrassment" after they were dismissed for 85 before lunch on the first day of their one-off Test against Ireland. England won the toss yet were unable to cope with the early movement as Tim Murtagh took 5-13 at Lord's, where the seamer has long been a mainstay for county side Middlesex.

Ireland, in just their third Test, were dismissed for 207, with England ending Wednesday's opening day on 0-0, a deficit of 122 runs. "When the ball does anything you shut your eyes and hope England get through it," Vaughan told Test Match Special. "There were some good balls but there was also some timid play and poor strokes." "Let's be honest, it's an embarrassment — you're at 'the home of cricket', in a Test against Ireland and you're all out for 85, there is no other word to describe it," the former Yorkshire batsman added.

England have now lost all 10 wickets in a single session four times since 2016, having previously not done so since 1938.

"All out for 85 against Ireland is probably the lowest of the low out of those," said Vaughan after England came back down to earth with a bump following their World Cup triumph at Lord's 10 days earlier.

The Ireland match is England's last Test before they attempt to regain the Ashes from Australia, starting on August 1 at Edgbaston. "England have so much talent, they have got the game to be successful, but you worry about the mentality of the team when it becomes tricky and the ball moves around," said Vaughan. "Unless they change their mentality when playing the moving ball, there are going to be many more days like this over the coming weeks. "You wouldn't want to have third-day Test tickets for the Ashes." But another former England captain, Alastair Cook, said all was not lost for Joe Root's side against the Irish.

"If Ireland get a few early wickets in England's second innings the pressure will be really on them because then they really should win this Test," said Cook, still opening for Essex after retiring from England duty last year. "England are still in this game, which is remarkable after getting bowled out for 85 batting first. "They will have to bat very well now but anything over 160-170 will be incredibly hard for this Ireland side to chase." —AFP



## Sports

# Tokyo Olympic construction race raises worker safety questions

**TOKYO:** As Tokyo 2020 Olympics preparations enter their final stage, officials are touting the city's readiness, but activists and workers groups say speedy venue construction has had dangerous consequences. The Olympic opening ceremony is now less than a year away and more than half the new venues being built for the Games are already complete.

"We are where we want to be," Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike confidently told reporters earlier this month. But some argue the city has kept on schedule at the cost of the health and safety of the thousands of workers building the sites. An official tally shows there have been at least two deaths linked to Olympics construction in Tokyo.

In 2017, a 23-year-old Olympic stadium worker killed himself after clocking nearly 200 hours of overtime the month before, with the local labor office recognizing his suicide as a case of death from overwork, a phenomenon known as "karoshi". The following year, a man was crushed to death between a crane and scaffolding. Fourteen people have also been injured during construction, according to official records through the end of 2018.

But while London had a near perfect construction safety record for the 2012 Games, Tokyo is still doing significantly better than other Olympic hosts. In Rio, at least 11 people were killed during construction for the Games, and in Beijing authorities acknowledged at least six deaths but media reports said more than 10 people were killed.

## 'Too busy'

Still, workers in Tokyo say they are being squeezed by the twin pressures of labor short-

ages and a tight schedule. "The work is hard," said one veteran contractor in his sixties, who works as a sub-subcontractor on a project to build the Olympic Village. He said manpower was about 40 percent short, and the pressure to stay on schedule has led to safety shortcuts.

He described days when he and his colleagues continued to work as a crane arm clutching a huge block of concrete moved overhead. They didn't move even after safety whistles were blown. "We were too busy," he told AFP on condition of anonymity. "It's like an assembly line for cars. You have to install the hoods no matter what because those putting in the windshields are waiting next." They would only move when labour office inspectors came over.

"The breaks resulted in us being forced to hurry even more for the rest of the day, only increasing the risks," he said. Labor unions say the problems with Olympic construction reflect issues in the industry in Japan more broadly, including the widespread use of multiple subcontractors who have little power to protest poor conditions. Six-day work weeks are common, and the ageing country's labour shortage means workers are stretched thin. One in four workers in Japan's construction industry is 60 or older, far outstripping the number of workers aged 30 or younger. Overwork is also a problem for workers in other industries, despite government efforts to address excessive hours.

## 'Conditions are really good'

The conditions have raised concern among labor activists. In May, the Building and Wood Worker's International union reported "alarming" testimony from 40 workers building the new national stadium and Olympic village. The report

## 'It works, but it's dangerous'

A virtuoso downhill racer with nerves of steel, Alaphilippe uses the tuck position to pick up speed before getting back onto the saddle and kicking into the pedals, but most riders don't dare. "I've no idea where it came from or who started it," Ireland's Dan Martin told the Cycling Weekly website.

The UAE Emirates captain is on record as saying he is more security conscious since the birth of his twins. "When guys are on their own, fair enough, but in the peloton, it's just dangerous," says Martin. Winner of three breakaway Tour de France stages, Sandy Casar told AFP he was divided on the issue. "It works because aerodynamics are better, because you take less wind. And because you are leaning forwards, you pick up speed," he explains. "But it's dangerous, look at Philippe Gilbert's fall last year. You have less control and because of the position your muscles are less relaxed."

Gilbert, a teammate of Alaphilippe, had been using a crouch going into a corner that he took too wide. He survived that corner but went over a verge on the next one. "But for me, it works," insists Casar. The University of Liège, in the city where the Liege-Bastogne-Liege race is run, has even been conducting research into the tactic.

They use a wind tunnel lab where researchers and engineers are studying the aerodynamics of professional cyclists' bicycle positions. Former champion Froome's celebrated descent of the Pyrenean Col du Peyresourde on the eighth stage of the 2016 Tour caused a sensation as the Briton went on to win his third Tour de France. According to studies at the Sart Tilman campus, it gave him a 'nine percent' advantage over a classic position. — AFP



**TOKYO:** This file photo taken on November 7, 2018 shows a construction worker monitoring as the centre section of the timber roof is raised, at the Ariake Gymnastics Centre construction site ahead of the upcoming Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. — AFP

warned of "dangerous patterns of overwork" and alleged some workers had been forced to buy their own protective equipment.

It said workers described unsafe conditions and that half of those interviewed did not have formal contracts — a situation not illegal in Japan but uncommon in industrialized countries. It also accused employers of creating a "culture of fear" with workers afraid of losing their jobs if they complained or reported problems. Olympic organizers, along with the Tokyo local government and the Japan Sport Council (JSC)

in charge of building the new stadium, said they are discussing the report with BWI.

JSC vice president Jugo Imaizumi said he thought there had been a "misunderstanding". "Many people who came back here after working elsewhere say they realized conditions here are really good," Imaizumi told AFP. Olympics worksites close at night to prevent overwork and employees have Sundays off, he added. Officials also say only a handful of complaints have been submitted to the Tokyo local government and Olympic organizing committee. — AFP

## Tour de France's downhill 'supertuck': Dashing or dangerous?

**GAP:** Tour de France leader Julian Alaphilippe is one of a clique of daring cyclists using a dangerous downhill crouch to gain extra speed and leave more nervous rivals trailing. The daredevil Alaphilippe is far from the first rider to draw gasps from fans with Marco Pantani's swashbuckling crouch in the 1990s and Chris Froome's nerve-tingling forwards crouch from 2016 setting precedents.

Alaphilippe clutches the very tips of his handlebars, sticks his chin over the front and moves his behind off the saddle to sit on the frame of the bike, as he did coming down hill in the Champagne region to clinch the yellow jersey. The Frenchman used the move to stunning effect on stage three when he used his trademark kick to chase bonus seconds atop a climb at 15km from the finish line at Epernay. He clinched five seconds on the smallish Cote de Mutigny hill, but then charged downhill using his tuck, took another 10-second bonus at the finish line after a heroic effort for the stage win. He came in 26sec ahead of the pack, with defending champion Geraint Thomas another five seconds behind.

## Fake queues as Tokyo sweats over Olympic heat

**TOKYO:** Tokyo Olympics organizers tested misting sprays and air-conditioned tents and even told volunteers to queue for a mock security check as they trialled cooling methods in case of severe temperatures at next year's Games. Tokyo's hot and humid summer weather is a major concern for Olympic organizers, particularly after a deadly heatwave that engulfed the city last year. While temperatures have been cooler this summer, organizers insist they will be prepared for intense heat and used an international beach volleyball Olympic test event Thursday to trial proposed measures. Officials handed out free folding fans and towels to help sweaty spectators cool off. "Heat mitigation measures cover very broad aspects," said Hidemasa Nakamura, Tokyo 2020 Games delivery officer.

"There are athletes, spectators, volunteers, foreigners, the elderly, small children, individuals with special needs. We will offer a detailed response," he said. The Tokyo Open of the FIVB Beach Volleyball World Tour is being staged at an ocean-side park where the mercury went beyond 30 degrees Celsius (86 degrees Fahrenheit) yesterday. A measure of the heat stress in direct sunlight, called the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT), hit a level that is considered dangerous for exercising outdoors.

As part of the tests, Olympic organizers operated a mock security checkpoint with some 150 volunteers queuing, some under tents and others under the scorching sun. "Naturally, having tents made a big difference. We are reminded that it's important to make the wait as short as possible," Nakamura said. Other cooling measures include fire engine-sized misting stations pumping out sprays of water, air-conditioned cooling tents and potted flower fences that organizers say help "psychologically" cool those around. — AFP



# United starlet Gomes hits winner as tempers flare against Spurs

**SHANGHAI:** Teenager Angel Gomes squeezed in the winner 10 minutes from time as Manchester United beat Tottenham Hotspur 2-1 in an occasionally bad-tempered friendly on Thursday in Shanghai. French striker Anthony Martial put Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's United ahead in the first half, before Spurs substitute Lucas Moura replied with a scrappy effort in the second.

After wholesale changes from both sides — Solskjaer swapped out all 11 starters at the break — Spurs had looked the more dangerous, before the 18-year-old Londoner Gomes struck. Victory makes it four wins from four pre-season games for United. The Norwegian Solskjaer, under pressure to prove that he is the man to take United back into the Champions League, named a strong side that included wantaway midfielder Paul Pogba and new signings Daniel James and Aaron Wan-Bissaka.

Counterpart Mauricio Pochettino fielded a more experimental team, but started the England international duo of Dele Alli and Harry Kane, along with new man Tanguy Ndombele. United nearly took the lead on just four minutes when Martial fired across stand-in goalkeeper Paulo Gazzaniga, but his powerful effort struck the post.

Despite the fierce humidity there was an edge to the International Champions Cup game not al-

ways present in pre-season friendlies. Alli should have scored when all alone minutes later but he scuffed his shot with only David de Gea to beat. Attacking midfielder Alli, perhaps frustrated with himself, was booked on 12 minutes after a second late challenge at a full Hongkou Stadium. He was booed off when subbed on an hour.

Martial, whose United career has threatened to peter out at times, made no mistake on 21 minutes when he rifled the ball under Gazzaniga from close range. United were incensed when Moussa Sissoko left the sprightly winger James in a heap by the corner flag, suspecting a stamp by the Spurs midfielder. Tottenham captain Kane angrily waded in and there was a scuffle, with Gazzaniga leaving his goal to join in and several United players also involved.

Andreas Pereira, a combative midfield presence for United, was next to be booked after he cut down Kane. Young Spurs defender Japhet Tanganga was yellow-carded too. Spurs, fresh from a 3-2 win over Juventus in Singapore on Sunday, brought South Korean forward Son Heung-min on at the break in place of Kane. Brazil's Moura also came on. United face Norwegian side Kristiansund in their next friendly, on Wednesday, while Spurs play Real Madrid. —AFP



SHANGHAI: Manchester United's Scott McTominay discusses with Tottenham players during the International Champions Cup football tournament between English Premier League sides Manchester United and Tottenham at Hongkou Football Stadium. —AFP

## Liverpool finish US jaunt with draw against Lisbon

**WASHINGTON:** Liverpool wrapped up their US tour with a 2-2 draw Wednesday against Sporting CP as the English Premier side failed to win a game in their first trip abroad since being crowned European champs. Liverpool finished with no victories to show from their three-match stateside tour but did manage to salvage a tie against the reigning Portuguese champions at Yankee Stadium in New York.

Marcus Wendel tied the game at 2-2 in the 53rd minute with a right footed shot from the centre of the box to the bottom right corner after being set up by midfield star Bruno Fernandes. Fernandes and Wendel also combined on the first goal of the game in the fourth minute for the 18-time Portuguese champs. Fernandes right footed a seemingly harmless long shot that Liverpool goalkeeper Simon Mignolet mishandled before it went into the net.

Divock Origi and Georginio Wijnaldum scored goals for the Reds who played all three

exhibition contests in iconic American sports venues. Jurgen Klopp's side was missing several of their top players, including forwards Roberto Firmino, Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane, who were taking a break after competing in COPA America and African Cup of Nations. Goalkeeper Alisson also decided not to make the trip.

Liverpool came into the contest wondering how they managed to drop their first two games. They lost a 2-1 decision to Spanish club Sevilla on Sunday at Boston's Fenway Park, following a 3-2 defeat to Germany's Borussia Dortmund at Notre Dame Stadium on Friday. Sporting's Luciano Vietto had one of the best scoring chances of Wednesday's game but was stopped twice in a row from point-blank range by Mignolet just before the half.

Teen sensation Sepp van den Berg made his exhibition debut for Liverpool in the Yankee Stadium showdown, as the 17-year-old Dutch defender came on in the 89th minute. Liverpool signed the teen over the summer from Eredivisie side PEC Zwolle. Liverpool will now head home to Merseyside before facing Napoli in Edinburgh this weekend and then depart for a training camp in Evian. —AFP

## FIFA bans ex-Liberia football chief over Ebola funds theft

**GENEVA:** FIFA on Wednesday banned the former head of the Liberian Football Association from football for 10 years

over corruption, including misuse of funds intended for an Ebola awareness campaign. Musa Hassan Bility, an executive committee member at the Confederation of African Football (CAF), was also hit with a 500,000 Swiss franc (\$507,000, 455,000 euros) fine by judges at FIFA's independent ethics committee.

FIFA's investigation targeting Bility, launched in May 2018, "related to the misappropriation of the funds granted under FIFA's '11 against Ebola' campaign," the world football's governing body said in a statement. The campaign that saw top football

## Griffiths helps fire Celtic to 5-0 Champs League stroll

**PARIS:** Leigh Griffiths marked his return to the starting line-up following an eight-month absence with a goal as Celtic trounced Estonia's Nomme Kalju 5-0 in the first leg of their Champions League second round qualifier. The Scotland international, who had been sidelined after being diagnosed with depression, curled in a 30-yard free-kick to put Celtic three ahead in first-half stoppage-time.

Kristoffer Ajer and Ryan Christie (penalty) had earlier sent Celtic on their way. Christie, with his second of the night, and Callum McGregor were on target in the second-half to virtually ensure Neil Lennon's team a spot in the third qualifying round. "I'm delighted for Leigh. There is an amount of anticipation and to be fair the reception he's got from the players, the supporters, the club, that makes me very proud,"

said Lennon. "It'll do his confidence the world of good."

Should 1967 champions Celtic come through the second leg next week, they will face either Cluj of Romania or Israel's Maccabi Tel-Aviv. Cluj will take a 1-0 lead to Israel next week. On Tuesday, PSV Eindhoven forward Donyell Malen struck in injury time to earn the former European Cup winners a last gasp 3-2 win over Basel. Basel were on their way to an important away win after goals from Albian Ajeti and Alderete Fernandez.

PSV's new Portuguese winger Bruma had given the Dutch giants a 14th minute lead but with a minute of normal time remaining it looked to be Basel's night. But then late substitute Sam Lammers put them back in business with an 89th minute equalizer before Malen grabbed an unlikely decider in the second minute of injury time. In other ties Tuesday, Dinamo Zagreb put one foot in the next round with a 2-0 win at Georgians Saburtalo and Copenhagen beat Welsh outfit The New Saints by the same margin. Olympiakos and Viktoria Plzen ended goalless while APOEL go into their second leg against Sutjeska Niksic with a 1-0 away win. —AFP

stars promoting Ebola awareness measures was formed in November 2014, near the peak of a pandemic that killed more than 11,000 people across Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea.

In addition to stealing Ebola prevention funds, FIFA judges found Bility guilty of misusing others resources sent to the LFA and diverting money to businesses controlled by him or his family. Bility had attempted to run as a candidate to replace FIFA's disgraced former president Sepp Blatter in a 2015 campaign ultimately won by Gianni Infantino. But he was barred at the time from contesting after failing to pass integrity tests. —AFP





# Dressel romps to 100m freestyle world title

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