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Adasani adds interior minister to his grilling list after being grilled

Rights commission to be launched soon • Fadhl urges solution for bedoon problem

Amir receives Iraqi parliament speaker



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives visiting Speaker of the Council of Representatives of Iraq Mohammed Rikan Al-Halbousi at Bayan Palace yesterday. — KUNA

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Riyadh Al-Adasani, who was questioned by the public prosecution yesterday over a defamation lawsuit filed by a former lawmaker, threatened to grill Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. Adasani was sued by former MP Abdullah Al-Tameemi for saying he had received money from the premier's office in aid for a Kuwaiti citizen.

Adasani said he had only repeated what Tameemi had publicly announced, and charged that the report sent by the interior ministry to the public prosecution was not fair and held the interior minister responsible. The lawmaker insisted that he will not change his policy towards the minister and towards pursuing cases of corruption and money laundering. Adasani had vowed to file to grill the prime minister over the same issue.

Meanwhile, the government informed the National Assembly's human rights panel that preparations for the launch of the national human rights commission have been finalized. Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh made the announcement after meeting with the assembly rights panel, adding that the government is ready to implement the rights commission law.

Head of the committee MP Adel Al-Damkhi welcomed

the announcement and said that the executive structure and the necessary bylaws were completed in May and the permanent premises of the commission has been chosen. Member of the committee MP Khalil Abul meanwhile praised the interior ministry for accepting the committee's remarks on the central prison and for improving the situation there.

MP Ahmad Al-Fadhl called on political groups and civil society organizations along with concerned government agencies to cooperate for a comprehensive and durable solution for the problem of stateless people or bedoons, describing it as Kuwait's most chronic crisis. Fadhl praised the efforts of the head of the central agency for bedoons Saleh Al-Fadhlah, who had been strongly criticized by human rights advocates for taking measures deemed oppressive to bedoons. Fadhl said that an expanded meeting between the government and the National Assembly is expected to be held at the speaker's office to debate the problem, which concerns some 120,000 bedoons who have been living in the country for decades.

Also, five MPs submitted a draft law calling for rescheduling the repayments of bank loans of Kuwaiti citizens and re-tabulating them over 12 years. The bill will be first debated by the legal and legislative committee.

Trump rejects racism charges, 'hate agenda'

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump pushed back yesterday against charges that he was racist and promoting a "hate agenda" to win reelection following his attacks on a prominent black lawmaker and his constituency. In a series of tweets, Trump had on Saturday taken aim at Democratic Representative Elijah Cummings, a high-profile critic of his administration whose district covers much of the majority black city of Baltimore, Maryland.

After calling Cummings's district a "rat and rodent infested mess" where no one would choose

Continued on Page 24

Iran says European fleet in Gulf would be 'provocative'

TEHRAN: Iran yesterday slammed as "provocative" a British proposal for a European-led naval mission to escort tankers in the Gulf, amid soaring tensions over the seizure of ships. "We heard that they intend to send a European fleet to the...Gulf which naturally carries a hostile message, is provocative and will increase tensions," said government spokesman Ali Rabiei. Britain said on Monday it was planning a European-led force to escort tankers through the world's busiest oil shipping lane, the Strait of Hormuz, in response to Iran's seizure of a UK-flagged vessel on July 19.

The capture of the Stena Impero came two weeks after British authorities

detained an Iranian tanker - the Grace 1 - off its overseas territory Gibraltar, on allegations it was breaching EU sanctions on Syria. In his comments yesterday, the government spokesman said Iran believed the security of the oil-rich Gulf had to be maintained by countries in the region. "We are the biggest agent of maritime security in the Persian Gulf," Rabiei said, quoted by ISNA news agency.

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said a force like that proposed by the UK would only make matters worse. "The presence of foreign forces will not help the region's security and will be the main source of tensions," Rouhani said after

Continued on Page 24



TEHRAN: Iranian President Hassan Rouhani greets Oman's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah yesterday. — AFP

US peace plan rings alarm bells in Jordan

AMMAN: A controversial US plan for Israeli-Palestinian peace could spell the demise of Jordan and turn it into a "Palestinian state", Jordanians and analysts warn. The initiative launched by US President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner at a June conference in Bahrain dangles the prospect of \$50 billion of investment into a stagnant Palestinian economy. But it fails to address key issues such as an independent Palestinian state, Israeli occupation and the Palestinians' right to return to homes from which they fled or were expelled after Israel's creation in 1948.

The Palestinian Authority boycotted the Bahrain forum, accusing the unabashedly pro-Israel Trump of using the prospect of cash to try to impose political solutions, and of ignoring the fundamental issue of occupation. Trump has taken the landmark step of recognizing disputed Jerusalem as Israel's capital and Kushner has suggested the peace plan would not mention a Palestinian state. Kushner is returning to the Middle East later this month to push his economic plan which has been rejected by the Palestinians and criticized by Jordan.

"No economic proposal could replace a political solution that ends the occupation" of Palestinian territories by Israel, Jordan's foreign ministry spokesman Sufyan Al-Qudah said. Jordan, one of only two Arab countries to have a peace treaty with Israel, sent only a low-level official to the June 25-26 conference in Manama.

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'Slow war of attrition' on Idlib frontline

BEIRUT: For three months Damascus and its ally Russia have been pummeling hospitals, markets and schools in Idlib unleashing a deadly, ferocious campaign aimed at retaking Syria's last rebel-run stronghold, analysts say. Opponents to the regime of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad have denounced what they say call a bid to "exterminate" the region, while the UN has condemned the world's "collective shrug" at the mounting casualties, many of them women and children. Located in northwest Syria, Idlib as well as parts of the neighboring provinces of Aleppo, Hama and Latakia remain under the control of a jihadist alliance Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, led by Al-Qaeda's former Syria affiliate.

The aim of the air raids is to "put pressure on the factions and their popular base," said Nawar Oliver, an analyst at the Turkey-based Omran Center. It is also a prelude to retaking the region - where "all the Syrian

Continued on Page 24



ARIHA, Syria: An image grab taken from a video on July 24, 2019 shows a Syrian man reacting as a dust-covered girl, trapped in rubble, grabs her baby sister by her shirt as she dangles from a bombed-out building. — AFP

Moroccan king marks two stable decades in power

RABAT: King Mohammed VI is preparing to mark 20 years on the throne of Morocco, a North African country seen as a regional island of stability. The kingdom's towns and cities have been decked out with flags to mark the anniversary tomorrow, while newspapers have published editorials praising the monarch's achievements.

When he took the throne in 1999 following the death of his father Hassan II, the then-35-year-old inspired great expectations, earning the nickname "king of the poor". In his first

speech as king he listed the ills facing the country: Poverty, unemployment and social inequality. Royal advisor Omar Azziman, in a rare interview with AFP, admitted that there was "dissatisfaction" in the country. "We can't find jobs for our young people, we have regions that are too poor," he said.

As the Arab Spring swept across North Africa and beyond, Mohammed VI nipped swelling protests in the bud by offering up constitutional reforms and promising to curb his powers. The country's long-marginalized Rif region was rocked by months of protests from late 2016, sparked by the death of a fisherman and spiraling into a movement demanding more development and railing against corruption and unemployment. Several hundred protesters are thought to have been arrested and tried in connection with the demonstrations, but no official figures are available. The king has pardoned

around 250 of them.

According to Abdellatif Menouni, a constitutional scholar and royal advisor since 2011, under Mohammed VI "most of (what is needed) in terms of democracy has been done, it just needs to be deepened". For analyst Mohamed Tozi, Morocco's stability in a tumultuous region is a key performance indicator given the regional context. He cited a 2004 family law boosting women's rights, commissions set up to probe abuses under Hassan II and the existence of political parties as "enormous changes".

But despite that, seven out of ten young Moroccans, seeing few prospects, say they want to emigrate, according to the Arab Barometer survey. The International Monetary Fund has urged the kingdom to move towards a "more inclusive" model of development and tackle inequality, saying it had been slow to push through reforms. — AFP



ABIDJAN: In this file photo taken on May 30, 2015, King Mohammed VI of Morocco greets Moroccan residents of Ivory Coast after he arrived at Felix-Houphouet-Boigny airport during his seven-day trip of Sub-Saharan Africa. — AFP

Local

Amir congratulates former Kuwaiti envoy on receiving Order of Merit

Amir, Crown Prince receives state officials at Bayan Palace



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



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent yesterday a cable of congratulations to Kuwait's former ambassador to Italy Sheikh Ali Al-Khaled Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on the occasion of granting him the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic. Ambassador Sheikh Ali Al-Khaled was decorated during an official ceremony held last Friday at the Palazzo Chigi. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir received at Bayan Palace His Highness the Crown Prince, in addition to National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak and First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah.

Amir mourns New York mass shooting victims



In other news, His Highness the Amir expressed his deepest sympathies yesterday over the victims of a shooting rampage in Brooklyn, New York, where at least one person was killed and dozens were wounded. His Highness the Amir extended his condolences in a cable he sent to US President Donald Trump, saying he was distraught over the tragic loss of life caused by this "criminal act." His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables to the US president. —KUNA



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



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



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

Italy reaffirms support of Kuwaitis Schengen exemption

ROME: Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Enzo Moavero Milanesi reaffirmed yesterday his country's full support of Schengen visa exemption for Kuwaitis. This came during his reception of Kuwait's Charge d'Affaire Counselor Sami Al-Zamanan, who also said that they had discussed the Schengen visa exemption along with Italy's Representative to the European Union Maurizio Massari at the conclusion of an annual conference for Italian ambassadors.

The Minister, according to Ambassador Zamanan, reaffirmed Italy's keenness to develop and strengthen its relations with Kuwait; seen as an important partner on both regional and international levels, adding that Italy and Kuwait are "a bridge of communication between Europe and the Arab world." Zamanan pointed out that the Italian Minister said that his government, based on distinguished relations with Kuwait, supports Kuwait exemption request for its citizens from the Schengen visa.

Ambassador Massari also assured Italy's supporting stance to the Kuwaiti request at the EU and the Schengen group, Zamanan said. Ambassador Massari was following closely the Kuwait exemption file, saying the request had been tabled to the new European Commission and is due to be submitted after completing the technical aspects, Zamanan added. —KUNA



ROME: Kuwait's Charge d'Affaire Counselor Sami Al-Zamanan (right) meets with Italy's Representative to the European Union Maurizio Massari. —KUNA

Delegation shares Kuwait's scouting history at US event

WEST VIRGINIA: A Kuwaiti boy scouts delegation, currently in the US, held a Kuwaiti Day event, sharing their country's scouting history during a camp organized by the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM). Secretary-General of the Kuwait Boy Scouts Association (KBSA) Ali Muharab commended Kuwait's positive participation at the 24th World Scout Jamboree camp held in West Virginia with the participation of 45,000 scouts and leaders representing 167 countries. Under the slogan "Unlock a new world," the camp offers special sustainability initiatives and socializing elements, allowing participants to make friends and share experiences, Muharab said.

Meanwhile, Head of the Kuwaiti Delegation Najem Taleb said that the camp presented participants with new opportunities to explore cultures and create strong friendships. The aim of the participation is to expand the youths' horizons and integrate them into international gatherings to gain new experiences and knowledge, he said, pointing out the eagerness of the KBSA to partake in such events and gatherings to raise the flag of Kuwait in Arab and international forums. He thanked KBSA's Chairman Dr Abdullah Al-Terji and the members of the council for facilitating the Kuwaiti delegation's mission to partake in this event. —KUNA



WEST VIRGINIA: A Kuwaiti boy scout raises Kuwait's flag during a camp organized by the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM).

Local

Kuwait's Amir, top officials receive Iraqi parliament speaker

Defense Minister calls for investing to create decent future for next generation

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem and the visiting Speaker of the Council of Representatives of Iraq Mohammed Rikan Al-Halbousi and the accompanying delegation. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attended the meeting. Acting Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and other officials were also present at the meeting.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received Halbousi and his accompanying delegation at Bayan Palace. Head of His Highness the Prime Minister's Diwan Sheikhha Etimad Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah was present at the meeting. In the meantime, First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met with Halbousi and his accompanying delegation. Sheikh Nasser discussed vital issues with Halbousi, calling for investing the existing resources in order to create a decent future for the next generation, the Defense Ministry's Public Relation and Moral Guidance Department said in a statement. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the visiting Speaker of the Council of Representatives of Iraq Mohammed Rikan Al-Halbousi, in presence of top state officials. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Speaker of the Council of Representatives of Iraq Mohammed Rikan Al-Halbousi.



First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with Speaker of the Council of Representatives of Iraq Mohammed Rikan Al-Halbousi.

Kuwaiti, US diplomats discuss strategic ties



KUWAIT: Acting Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah meets with the visiting US Assistant Secretary of State for Iraq and Iran Affairs Andrew Peek. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Acting Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah and the visiting US Assistant Secretary of State for Iraq and Iran Affairs Andrew Peek held an official meeting yesterday, discussing strategic ties and the latest political developments. The meeting also

touched on regional and international challenges and means to tackle them, said a statement by the Foreign Ministry. Assistant Foreign Minister for the Americas' Affairs Reem Al-Khaled and US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence R Silverman attended the meeting. — KUNA

Kuwait army chief meets Russian military official



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khuder meets with the Russian military attaché at the Russian embassy Colonel Valery Kotogorov. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khuder met yesterday with the Russian military attaché at the Russian embassy in Kuwait Colonel Valery Kotogorov. During the meeting, they discussed the most important issues of common interest,

especially in the military aspects, according to a Defense Ministry statement. Khuder praised the bilateral ties between the two countries, the statement added. Deputy Chief of staff of the Army General Sheikh Abdullah Nawaf Al-Sabah attended the meeting. — KUNA

Kuwait urges protection of civilians in conflicts

CAIRO: The international community should live up to its due responsibility by applying international and international humanitarian laws purposed to protect civilians in armed conflicts, a Kuwaiti official said yesterday. "Unless there is seriousness and a sense of responsibility of the international community for applying laws, there will be no total peace, and, hence, civilians cannot be protected in armed conflicts,"

Acting Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Talal Al-Mutairi said. "Unfortunately, the international humanitarian law is seldom observed during wars and conflicts," he said on the sidelines of an Arab conference on the protection and promotion of human rights.

The Kuwaiti official cautioned against relevant serious reflections as armed conflicts still claim the lives of many people. He added that Kuwait shares with other Arab countries necessary coordination with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) in this regard, noting that Kuwait last month submitted a draft resolution during a UN Security Council (UNSC) session, calling for the protection of missing people in armed conflicts. "It is the responsibility of the international community to protect Palestinian civilians," the Kuwaiti official requested. — KUNA

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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A traditional Kuwaiti house in Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwait won't compromise on protecting oil facilities: Minister

Interior Ministry, KPC sign protocol to enhance security cooperation



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah and other ministry officials in a group photo with CEO of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Hashim Hashim and his accompanying delegation. — Interior Ministry photos



Kuwait Petroleum Corporation CEO Hashim Hashim (left) and the Interior Ministry's Undersecretary Lt Gen Essam Al-Naham sign the agreement.

KUWAIT: Kuwait's security forces stand ready to safeguard the country's oil facilities, a minister said yesterday in the wake of recent attacks on oil tankers in the world's most strategic waterway for oil shipments. The remarks by Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh

Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah came during his meeting with the CEO of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Hashim Hashim, read an interior ministry statement. The talks, which yielded a cooperation deal signed between the ministry and KPC, revolved around matters of mutual concern,

added the statement. The deal is part of efforts to enhance information exchange through greater interaction with government bodies, according to the Interior Ministry's Undersecretary Lt Gen Essam Al-Naham. The KPC official applauded the interior ministry for its commitment to

national security, pointing out that the company's relationship with the ministry has grown over the years. The Interior Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic Affairs and Operations Maj Gen Jamal Al-Sayegh also attended the meeting. — KUNA

KFH opens digital self-banking station in Mangaf Co-op

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) inaugurated its third digital self-banking station KFH-Go in Al-Mangaf Co-op. This state-of-the-art e-branch is unmanned and equipped with an advanced and wide range of technical and self-service devices. The inauguration was attended by KFH-Group CEO, Mazin Al-Nahedh, Group Chief Retail and Private Banking Officer at KFH, Waleed Khaled Mandani, Deputy General Manager Sales and Distribution, Khaled Alsubaie, and officials from the bank and the Mangaf Co-op.

Mandani said that the new 24/7 automated branch is an advanced step that represents clearly the achievements of KFH in diversifying retail banking services and is a new self-banking channel to deliver better and more effective customer experience via an innovative automated branch. He added: "This reiterates KFH drive to lead the market in the field of FinTech and enhance its leadership in the Islamic financial services."

He pointed out that KFH-Go offers customers round the clock services covering over 80 percent of the services and transactions provided by traditional branches, hence making it the preferred choice for many customer sections particularly the youth.

Mandani added that KFH-Go is not staffed and contains state-of-the-art XTMs and ATMs as well as cash deposit machine (Bulk Deposit) capable of accepting 300 notes in a single transaction in KD 6,000. It offers the capability of communicating directly with the telephone



KFH officials at the new digital self-banking station in Mangaf Co-op.



The new digital self-banking station 'KFH-Go'.

service personnel in audio and video calls via XTM machines. Customers can access several services, including cash withdrawals without a card through the mobile phone using the QR code, IDs or phone number, as well as conducting 'Murabaha' financing transactions, requesting credit cards and prepaid cards, updating data and phone numbers, activating bank cards, opening deposits and accounts and a host of banking and financing services, therefore dispensing with the need to visit the branch or deal directly with the staff. This means more fluidity in accessing services quickly, safely and accurately.

Mandani said: "KFH has made great strides in its digital transformation strategy which affirmed its leadership in adopting digital services, pioneering the offering of a

diverse package of innovative e-services in several sectors and in the Group, in addition to increasing its investment in technology."

He added that KFH succeeded in providing a plethora of high-tech banking services, most of which are unique in Kuwait. KFH launched cheque deposit via mobile service, the Queuing System: Skiplino service, the first of its kind in the Kuwaiti banking sector for online appointments booking in the branches via smart phones. KFH launched its Chatbot service in cooperation with Microsoft, to improve interaction with customers who can use this service through different KFH channels such as KFH.com and the mobile app KFHonline.

KFH offers QR, mobile, Civil ID cardless with-

drawals, updating information online, activating the new and renewed debit cards and changing the PIN. The bank introduced a fast cross-border transfer service (KFH Xpress) and operated an instant remittance service using RippleNet. KFH also launched the first banking robot in Kuwait. It launched KFH Pay service, where customers can receive money from any KFH account or local accounts with just a few taps on their mobile. With just their payer's email or mobile number, they can securely receive transfers 24/7. It is worth noting that KFH opened KFH-Go in Eshbiliya, Al-Jabriya and this is the third branch in Al-Mangaf. The bank plans to expand similar e-branches to cover different areas in Kuwait.

Local

Interior ministry supervisor, others sent to prosecution on embezzlement charges

'Priority' to payroll alternative in assembly's next term

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Public Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) sent an interior ministry supervisor and others to the public prosecution. Official spokesman Mohammad Buzubar said the supervisor received undeserved money in 2016-2017 in violation of spending rules at the ministry, and facilitated public funds embezzlement and forged documents for others by claiming they reported to work, contrary to the truth as they were outside the country and did not work at all.

Payroll alternative

The strategic payroll alternative proposal that has been on the National Assembly's agenda for many years will take priority during the next term, as the government gave an indication about its approval of some disputed points, official sources said. The sources described the proposal, saying that it should ensure justice and equality in salaries based on degrees, experience and specialties, so that a university graduate in a certain ministry does not receive a salary higher than another having the same specialty and experience but works in another ministry.

According to the sources, the strategic salary alternative proposal will not affect salaries of current employees

nor their allowances and will not cancel any advantage - rather it will be implemented for new employees. The sources said the proposal requires the government to increase the budget's salaries item for five years, and this item will be reduced significantly from what it is now. They said the major difference is still whether the proposed alternative will apply to the oil sector, where employees receive salaries that are more than double those in the public sector, as MPs want things to remain as they are in that sector.

KD 58 million

Non-government organizations authorized to collect donations as part of the 16th project in Ramadan collected KD 58 million. Acting Social Affairs Ministry Undersecretary Hanaa Al-Hajiri said 36 NGOs participated, in addition to the International Islamic Charity Organization, adding nine organizations did not participate because they did not submit a request.

Hajeri said the final report on field visits and violations seen by follow-up teams showed donations increased to KD 58 million compared to KD 50 million last year, while in 2017 the total was KD 40 million. She said field inspection teams made 1,936 visits to mosques and malls in all governorates, during which 82 kiosks set up to collect

material donations were removed immediately. Nine NGOs committed 12 violations.

New teachers

The education ministry began receiving Kuwaiti teachers nominated by the Civil Service Commission, in addition to those who passed personal interviews. Non-Kuwaiti teachers contracted locally will be received on Aug 4, while teachers from Tunisia, Jordan and Palestine will be received on Aug 12. The ministry set Sept 1 for the annual training course for new teachers (Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis) for seven days, two days for administrative work and five for the academic part.

New aircraft

Kuwait Airways will receive the first A320neo aircraft on August 28, 2019, which will arrive in Kuwait from Hamburg on August 30, Chairman Yousuf Abdelhamid Al-Jassem said. This will be the first of 15 aircraft and five are expected to be delivered by May 2020. He said these are the most modern A320 aircraft that are highly fuel-efficient on short and medium routes. They have a capacity of 134 passengers in both business and economy classes. He said reception of the aircraft coincides with Kuwait Airways' 65th anniversary.

News in brief

Economists downplay Trump's remarks

KUWAIT: Local government and economic officials reacted to calls by US President Donald Trump on the World Trade Organization to change the categories of some countries, including Kuwait, from developing to rich in order to deprive them of facilities and benefits WTO gives to developing countries. Government sources said effects of such calls on Kuwait are minimal, especially since the Kuwaiti economy relies on exporting and selling oil, while the industrial sector which benefits from WTO facilities does not contribute more than 4 percent to the economy. —Al-Qabas

Post privatization

KUWAIT: Informed sources said the general privatization project submitted by State Minister for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel to the Cabinet does not include privatization of postal services. They said the postal services development project relies on moving the postal services from the services ministry to the communications authority so that it supervises, through one or several companies, postal services and its reorganization, and submits new organizational policies along with a study to deregulate the market. —Al-Anbaa

Officials leak information

KUWAIT: Director of the electronic publication department at the Ministry of Information Lafi Al-Subaei said some government officials deliberately leak information to certain Twitter users and provide them with reports, decisions, circulars and publications that affects the core work of ministries and authorities and negatively reflects on the general image of government entities. The Cabinet has instructed the formation of a committee to confront accounts that stir strife and arrest tweeters from abroad who cooperate with individuals domestically to spread rumors and insult Kuwait and its symbols. The information ministry is moving to amend the electronic media law to stiffen punishments for accounts that create strife and close them in coordination with concerned authorities. —Al-Qabas

Property owner voluntarily removes violations

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality Director General Ahmad Al-Manfouhi appreciated the initiative of a property owner who voluntarily removed violations at his building. The removal came following a court ruling which confirmed that violations of construction regulations were present at the property. In other news, 10 unlicensed stores were closed in Sulaihiya farming area during an inspection campaign carried out by Kuwait Fire Service Directorate's Prevention Department, as they did not meet the fire prevention condition.

Cross-dressers arrested

Seven cross-dressers were arrested at an entertainment hall with makeup and women's items, Al-Rai reported yesterday. Policemen who were on patrol at the hall noticed seven men in women's dresses and full makeup surrounded by a crowd. They were sent to vice detectives. Separately, Ahmadi patrols spotted a



KUWAIT: A bulldozer is seen removing violations in the building. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

man walking unsteadily with a bag on his back. The man, when asked to stop, dropped the bag and ran. Policemen found various drugs including shabu, heroin, hashish and various pills in it. Police also found 20 iPhones, a Kuwaiti passport and an Egyptian ID, which were handed to detectives. In another case, a Syrian man

told Ahmadi police that someone stole his wife's jewelry from their home, reported Al-Rai. He said when he returned home along with his family, he discovered the apartment's door was broken, and the jewelry and other valuable items were missing. Detectives are working on the case.



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India boosts Hindu pilgrimage to holy cave

Romanian murder suspect admits killing two teens

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50 countries including Kuwait support China on Xinjiang-related issues



KUWAIT: 50 Ambassadors from Kuwait and other countries to the UNOG co-signed a letter to the President of the UN Human Rights Council and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, voiced their support for China's position on issues related to Xinjiang, China on July 26, 2019. Other countries expressed support in their separate letters and press releases. Many of them have seen the real situation in Xinjiang on their recent visits.

They commend China for its economic and social progress, effective counter-terrorism and de-radicalization measures, and strong guarantee of human rights; appreciate the opportunities provided by China for diplomatic envoys, officials of international organizations, and media professionals to visit Xinjiang. They point to the contrast between Xinjiang in the eyes of those who have visited it and the one portrayed in western media, and urge a certain group of countries to stop using uncorroborated information to make unfounded accusations against China.

Terrorism and extremism are an intractable challenge across the world. In the face of its grave threat, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region responded with a number of lawful steps, including setting up vocational education and training centers, to prevent and combat terrorism and extremism. As a result, the security conditions in Xinjiang made a dramatic turn for the better. For almost three years in a row, there have been no violent and terrorist attacks. Instead,

the people in Xinjiang have enjoyed social stability, ethnic unity, and a peaceful life. All ethnic communities have a much greater sense of fulfillment, happiness, and security and support these policy steps wholeheartedly.

Facts speak louder than words, and justice cannot be overshadowed. The great diversity of countries co-signing the letter—from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe, especially the OIC—makes it clear that the international community has drawn a fair conclusion about Xinjiang's human rights achievement and counter-terrorism and de-radicalization outcome. Those countries that seek to use human rights as an excuse to slander and pressure China have only themselves to deceive.

Together with all parties, China is committed to promoting the healthy development of the international human rights cause by encouraging multilateral human rights institutions to abide by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, handle human rights issues in an objective, impartial, and non-selective manner, and engage in constructive dialogue and cooperation. We oppose any attempt to use human rights issues as a cover for interference in a country's internal affairs. We urge those who are doing so to change course, refrain from politicization and double standard, and stop interfering in the internal affairs of other countries under the pretext of human rights.



Deadly violence mars start of Afghan election season

KABUL: The start of Afghanistan's election season was marred by deadly violence yesterday, just hours after President Ashraf Ghani insisted "peace is coming" to the war-torn nation. At least two people were killed and 25 others wounded in an attack targeting the Kabul office of Ghani's running mate, Amrullah Saleh. The violence came on the official starting day of campaign season for the upcoming presidential elections, serving as a grim reminder of Afghanistan's woeful security situation and the sort of mayhem and murder that have beset previous polls.

The attack began around 4:40 pm, when a huge blast struck near the Green Trend office, a youth- and reform-focused civil society organization Saleh heads. He escaped without serious injury, his office said. Three hours later, the attack was still ongoing. No group immediately claimed responsibility. "The security forces have cordoned off the area. The security forces are trying to kill the attackers as soon as possible," interior ministry spokesman Nasrat Rahimi said.

Health ministry spokesman Wahidullah Mayar said at least two people had been killed and 25 wounded. Earlier yesterday, a buoyant Ghani kicked off his campaign by insisting "peace is coming" and that pivotal talks with the Taliban would take place. He is hoping to fend off challenges from 17 other candidates to score a second term at twice-postponed presidential elections now slated for September 28.

On Saturday, Ghani's peace minister, Abdul Salam Rahimi, said direct talks would take place with the

Taliban within two weeks as part of a larger, US-led push for peace. Such a development could be crucial, as the Taliban—who now control or influence about half of Afghanistan—have so far refused to speak to Ghani's government, as they consider the Kabul administration illegitimate.

Despondent voters

War aside, the country faces a host of major issues ahead of the election, including rocketing crime, a lackluster economy, soaring unemployment, and crumbling infrastructure. Voters are despondent about the prospects of a fair election, and many worry about a repeat of the sort of violent attacks on previous polling stations by the Taliban and other insurgent groups trying to undermine Afghanistan's fragile democracy. Ghani insisted this year's election would be "clean", but distrust is rife.

Sayed Jan, a 27-year-old student, said he won't be voting as he has lost faith since the 2014 election that was mired in allegations of fraud and ballot stuffing. "We have been betrayed by the candidates in the past, we can not trust them this time," he told AFP. "We need peace in Afghanistan instead of elections. Even if I vote, the election will be fraudulent."

Opportunities for peace

In Kabul, security forces fanned out across the city as leading candidates held rallies. Ghani's top rival is Abdullah Abdullah, who currently serves as the president's chief executive under an awkward power-sharing arrangement brokered by the US after the 2014 election. "It is our national and religious duty to take advantage of any opportunities for peace," Abdullah told a campaign rally.

One crucial issue is that the elections happen at all: they were postponed twice this year and further delays could lead to more distrust. Despite Ghani's claim that a summit between his government and the



KABUL: Ambulances bring wounded civilians to the Wazir Akbar Khan hospital following an attack in Kabul. — AFP

Taliban would take place shortly, the insurgents said they would only talk to Kabul after the US had announced a timeline for a withdrawal of foreign forces—a key part of any deal.

"The Kabul administration will be considered a political side, just like others, and not a government," Taliban political spokesman Suhail Shaheen wrote in Pashto on Twitter. Diplomatic sources have told AFP the Afghan-Taliban talks are scheduled to begin in Oslo on August 7. US peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, who is leading a push to forge a peace deal with the

Taliban, said Saturday that new "intra-Afghan" negotiations would only take place after the US and Taliban had concluded their own agreements.

He is expected to fly to Doha next week for what would be the eighth round of direct US-Taliban talks. Other presidential candidates include Ghani's former national security advisor Hanif Atmar and former warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, nicknamed the "Butcher of Kabul" for his alleged role in the killing of thousands of people in the capital in the 1990s.—AFP

International

Iran links tanker row to ailing nuclear deal as parties meet in Vienna

Emergency talks held after tensions mount in Gulf

VIENNA: Iran said yesterday it considered Britain's seizure of an Iranian oil tanker a breach of the ailing 2015 nuclear deal, as the remaining parties to the accord meet in Vienna in another attempt to salvage the agreement. British authorities detained an Iranian tanker off the UK overseas territory of Gibraltar in early July on allegations it was breaching EU sanctions on Syria. On July 19, a British-flagged tanker was impounded by Iran's Revolutionary Guards with its 23 crew aboard in the Strait of Hormuz, which was seen by the UK as a tit-for-tat move.

Arriving at the meeting in Vienna, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi linked the tanker row to discussions over the nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). "Developments have occurred, such as the seizure of the tanker carrying Iranian oil in Gibraltar, which in our view is considered a breach of the JCPOA," Araghchi said in comments carried on Iranian state TV.

"Countries party to the JCPOA must not create any obstacles in the way of Iran exporting its oil," he added. Araghchi was speaking as envoys from Britain, France,

Germany, China, Russia and Iran gathered for talks in the Austrian capital, a month after a similar meeting failed to achieve a breakthrough.

Mounting tensions

Tensions between Tehran and Washington have escalated since last year when US President Donald Trump pulled out of the accord that was aimed at curbing Iran's nuclear program, and imposed punishing sanctions. Iran said in May it would disregard certain limits the JCPOA set on its nuclear program and threatened to take further measures if remaining parties to the deal, especially European nations, did not help it circumvent the US sanctions.

Even before the latest tanker seizures, pressure had been mounting in the region with a string of incidents involving tankers and drones. The US has said it brought down one and possibly two Iranian drones last week, and blamed Tehran for a series of mysterious attacks on tanker ships in strategic Gulf waters. Iran shot down an unmanned US aircraft in June, after which Trump announced that he had called off retaliatory air

strikes at the last minute because the resulting death toll would have been too high.

The US and Gulf powerhouse Saudi Arabia have accused Iran of being behind multiple attacks on tankers in the Gulf in June, which Iran denies. Efforts by European powers, notably France's President Emmanuel Macron, to salvage the nuclear deal have so far come to nothing. The remaining signatories, however, have pledged to work towards a breakthrough at a future ministerial session, for which no date has yet been fixed.

Referring to the need for a "preparatory meeting before the ministerial level meeting that will be necessary", one European diplomat told AFP it was "imperative to talk to the Iranians after the proven violations of their commitments". The European Union said earlier this week the extraordinary meeting would be chaired by the secretary general of the European External Action Service, Helga Schmid. It said the talks were requested by Britain, France, Germany and Iran and would examine issues linked to the implementation of the JCPOA.—AFP



VIENNA: Abbas Araghchi, political deputy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran, speaks to the media after the meeting of the Joint Commission of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) attended by the E3+2 (China, France, Germany, Russia, United Kingdom) and Iran at the Palais Coburg in Vienna, Austria.—AFP

Sudan generals, protest leaders, meet rebel chiefs in South Sudan

JUBA: Sudanese generals and protest leaders, who signed a power-sharing agreement, held preliminary talks with rebel groups in neighboring South Sudan Saturday as part of ongoing peace efforts. The meeting followed an agreement on Thursday between protest leaders and their rebel partners to end their differences over the accord signed with Sudan's military rulers earlier this month, vowing to work jointly for peace.

Arriving at the airport in the South Sudanese capital Juba earlier Saturday, General Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, the deputy chief of Sudan's ruling military council, told reporters he hoped the meeting would "restore peace" by focusing on "how we can implement the recent peace agreement we signed in Khartoum".

Among those at the meeting were rebel leaders Abdelaziz al-Hilu of South

Kordofan state and Malik Agar of Blue Nile state. The umbrella protest movement on July 17 signed the power-sharing accord with Sudan's generals, which provides for a transitional civilian administration following the ouster of longtime dictator Omar al-Bashir.

Restore peace in Sudan

Daglo was accompanied by two other generals and two senior officials of the Sudanese protest movement, military council and protest movement sources told AFP. After the meeting, rebel leader Agar spoke of "opening the humanitarian corridors to the areas that are affected by war", adding that the meeting had been a "preliminary discussion that is leading to concrete decisions in future... We have actually reached some understanding".

Military council spokesman General Shamseddine Kabbashi added: "We had an understanding on the release of all political detainees and prisoners of war by all the parties that might have been detained by either party." The rebel groups spent years fighting government forces in the Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan regions of Sudan.

Tens of thousands of people have been killed in the three conflicts and



KHARTOUM: Demonstrators burn tires in the middle of a main street in Khartoum as they protest against the results of the probe into the June raid on a Khartoum protest camp revealed.—AFP

millions displaced, with hundreds of thousands still living in sprawling camps. The protest leaders and generals are still to sign a "Constitutional Declaration" dealing with outstanding issues-including justice for demonstrators killed during months of protests.

The rebel groups had demanded that the document call on the new government to make peace negotiations a top priority. Once a peace deal is finalized, sources said the rebel groups want their representatives to be part of the transitional government.—AFP

Canadian air force joins hunt for teen murder suspects

MONTREAL: The Royal Canadian Air Force has joined the hunt for two fugitive teens suspected of triple murder, officials said Saturday, backing up a vast search operation unfolding in Manitoba's remote northeast. The suspects, identified as Kam McLeod, 19, and Bryer Schmegelsky, 18, have been on the run for more than a week. Authorities say they believe the two are behind the killings of 23-year-old Australian Lucas Fowler and his 24-year-old American girlfriend, Chynna Deese, as well as of Leonard Dyck, a 64-year-old Canadian.

Since Tuesday, the village of Gillam, near Hudson Bay, has been at the epicenter of an intense man-hunt involving tracker dogs, a drone and armored

vehicles. The area features dense, sometimes nearly impenetrable forest. Minister of Public Safety Ralph Goodale announced the air force involvement, which followed a request from Brenda Lucki, head of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). The C-130 Hercules arrived in the Gillam area Saturday to assist with aerial search operations, and will have onboard a federal police officer to direct the search, the military said.

Police have said they could not rule out the possibility that the two suspects had altered their appearances and slipped out of the region, possibly with the unwitting help of an area resident. However there were no new sightings "and no new information that would indicate that the suspects have fled the area," the RCMP said Saturday. Earlier in the day officers began an operation canvassing all homes and buildings in the Gillam area and nearby Fox Lake Cree Nation of indigenous peoples, the RCMP said.

The fugitives are thought to have wound up in the village, some 600 miles (1,000 kilometers)

north of Winnipeg, the Manitoba capital, after traveling 2,000 miles from British Columbia on Canada's west coast. The surrounding region is particularly inhospitable, with wild animals including bears, and swampy areas infested with ferocious mosquitoes. Locals say conditions are brutal, and that the suspects, if on foot and unprepared, would have difficulty surviving for long.

There have been two reported sightings of the wanted teens in Gillam, but none since Monday. The two young men have been formally accused in the murder of Dyck, a botany professor, and are suspects in the killings of Fowler and Deese, whose bodies were found along a highway in northern British Columbia. The teenagers were initially considered as missing after their car was found torched on July 19. But police then discovered Dyck's body near another burned-out vehicle believed to have been used by the pair. The father of one of the teens, Alan Schmegelsky, said his son was "on a suicide mission," deeply troubled since his parents' divorce in 2005.—AFP

Morocco's King: Between monarchy and modernity

RABAT: Morocco's King Mohammed VI, who on Tuesday will mark 20 years on the throne, has cast himself as a modernist open to change-while discretely exercising absolute power. He has often presented that duality in photo ops, posing for official pictures in traditional garb then switching to snazzy suits for social media snapshots with celebrities during his frequent trips abroad.

Born on August 21, 1963, Mohammed VI was crowned at the age of 35 after the death of his father Hassan II on July 23, 1999. His rule has been marked by stability despite turbulence across the region-an image he has promoted to reassure allies of the North African kingdom, investors and tourists alike. Like Hassan II, he has taken a tough line on security, particularly after deadly bombings rocked Casablanca in 2003 and Marrakesh in 2011.

While the rise of social media expanded freedom of expression during his rule, the press has remained under tight state control. As the Arab Spring swept across North Africa and beyond, Mohammed VI nipped swelling protests in the bud by offering constitutional reforms and promising to curb his powers. A new constitution passed by a July 2011 referendum strengthened the pow-

ers of the prime minister and parliament. But the king retained overall authority as head of state, chief of the military and the country's top Islamic authority as well as tight control over key sectors of the economy.

Infrastructure boom

Mohammed VI has overseen a boom in infrastructure projects including a high-speed train, a giant solar farm and the Mediterranean's biggest cargo port. He has also fostered political changes both domestically and in the kingdom's foreign relations. In 2004, Morocco adopted a new family code boosting women's rights, despite protests from hardline Islamists-and from feminists who said the changes did not go far enough.

Mohammed VI, revered by Muslims across West Africa as "Commander of the Faithful", pushed for toleration in Islam while ensuring freedom of worship for Jews and foreign Christians. In 2017, Morocco rejoined the African Union after a 30-year absence, as the king pushed to repair relations with the bloc. Most of his diplomacy has focused on endorsing an "autonomy plan" for the disputed Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony partially controlled by the kingdom.

A wave of unrest in 2017 and 2018 in the country's neglected northern Rif region sparked a crackdown by Moroccan authorities and threw the kingdom's system of development into question. "The current model no longer allows us to respond to the growing



TANGIERS: In this file photo Morocco's King Mohammed VI looks on during the signing of an agreement with the French President in preparation of the COP21 climate talks in Paris during a meeting in the Moroccan port city of Tangier.—AFP

demands and needs of citizens, nor to reduce social inequalities," the king said in a February 2018 message.

Lifestyle and trips abroad

Despite a penchant for flashy photo ops, Mohammed VI has been a reserved leader at home. According to his official biography, the king "practices several sports". He often travels abroad, particularly to France where the royal family maintains several residences and where he has had medical treatment including a heart operation in 2018. These fre-

quent absences have sparked criticism online over the monarch's "political choices" and "lifestyle".

In a break with tradition, in 2002 he married Lalla Salma, an engineer five years his junior from a middle class family. They have two children: Crown Prince Moulay El Hassan (born 2003) and Princess Lalla Khadija (born 2007). But princess Salma dropped out of the media spotlight in December 2017. Her apparent Moulay Hassan began appearing with his father at official events when he was 13.—AFP

Iran invites Pompeo for interview by reporter once detained in US

TEHRAN: Iran yesterday invited Mike Pompeo to be interviewed by a state television anchor who was once detained in America, after the top US diplomat said he was willing to talk to its people. Pompeo said Thursday in an interview with Bloomberg that he would "happily" go to Tehran and willingly appear on Iranian television to explain US reasoning behind its sanctions against the Islamic republic.

"Our reporter Ms. Marzieh Hashemi can go and interview (Pompeo) so that he can say what he intends to say," government spokesman Ali Rabiei said, quoted by official news agency IRNA. Hashemi, a black Muslim convert who was born in the United States, works as an anchor for Iran's English-language channel Press TV. She was arrested in the US in January under a law allowing the detention of people suspected of being potential witnesses in criminal cases.

Hashemi, who changed her name from Melanie Franklin after her conversion, was released after being held for 10 days. She later travelled to Iran, and has since accused the United States of violence and discrimination against Muslims and black people. Tehran has been at loggerheads with Washington since President Donald Trump pulled the US out of the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran last year and imposed punishing sanctions which Iran calls "economic terrorism."

The standoff has recently escalated with drones shot down and tankers mysteriously attacked in sensitive Gulf waters. In his remarks on Sunday, Rabiei said Pompeo had been "forced" into saying he was ready to appear on Iranian TV because of his counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif's recent round of interviews with US media. "We do not shy away from hearing what people say, (even though) what they did to our reporters... is an insult to both the media and discussions," Rabiei said.—AFP

Mexico, Honduras agree to create 20,000 jobs and stem migration

MINATITLAN, Mexico: A scheme to create 20,000 jobs in Honduras has been agreed between the country's president and Mexico's leader in an attempt to stem the flow of migrants toward the United States. Mexico, which is a stepping stone to the US for many from Central America seeking to escape violence and poverty, has seen a wave of migrants sweep through in the past few months, causing tensions with Washington.

Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador met his Honduran counterpart Juan Orlando Hernandez in the Mexican state of Veracruz on Saturday to sign an agreement to extend a development program to Honduras, which includes a tree-planting scheme already active in Mexico. Called "Sowing Life", the scheme pays farmers a small monthly stipend to plant trees and crops. Mexico signed a deal with El Salvador last month to introduce the same project to the Central American state.

Hernandez said the scheme was the "correct path" to boost both country's economies and called for the creation of a "great international coalition for generating huge numbers of jobs" in Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. Mexico will support Honduras "to create 20,000 jobs between now and December," said Mexican Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard.

US President Donald Trump had threatened stiff new trade tariffs against the United States' southern neighbor unless it acted decisively to stem the migrant wave. But tensions calmed after Mexico's deployment of thousands of security forces to its borders last month. The large majority of Central Americans who cross Mexico for the US are from Honduras. Some say they are fleeing persecution by the Hernandez government, having participated in protests after his election.—AFP

International

The Trump border wall's slow march towards reality

Trump gets go-ahead to build border wall with Mexico

WASHINGTON: The Supreme Court has given President Donald Trump the go-ahead to divert Pentagon funds to build a border wall with Mexico, a big boost for the US leader's pet project that has faced controversy since its inception. In August 2014, some 10 months before announcing his presidential bid, Trump let loose on Twitter with his now familiar refrain: "SECURE THE BORDER! BUILD A WALL!"

Below is an explanation of the ensuing tug-of-war between Congress, the courts and the commander-in-chief:

A campaign promise

Announcing his candidacy for president at Trump Tower in June 2015, Trump made derogatory statements about immigrants from Mexico. "They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists, and some, I assume, are good people," he said. Building the southern border wall became a central campaign promise as Trump found success in the primaries, and ultimately won the general election. On January 25, 2017, five days after taking office, Trump issued an executive order directing the Department of Homeland Security to identify and allocate funding for "planning, designing and constructing" the barrier along the US-Mexico border.

Difficulties with Congress

Trump initially claimed that Mexico would pay for the wall, which never occurred. By December 2018, the president maintained that the United States' southern neighbor would ultimately pay for the barrier through a renegotiated North American free trade deal. Additionally, Trump asked Congress for \$5.7 billion in border wall funding. An onslaught of political battles between the Republican administration and Democratic opposition, which regained control of the House of Representatives in the November 2018 midterm elections, ensued.

After a face-off that included a record 35-day federal government shutdown, Trump reluctantly signed a spending bill that included appropriations of just \$1.4 billion for border barriers. To remedy the shortfall, he declared a national emergency on February 15, 2019 to build the wall, setting into play a series of court battles that are still underway. The White House says the emergency order empowers it to pull around \$6.6 billion from other sources, mostly already allocated funds in the Defense Department budget.

Looking forward, the White House has laid out an ambitious 2020 budget proposal which contains \$8.6 billion in new wall funding, considerably above the \$5.7 billion originally requested. Both chambers of Congress

voted to overturn Trump's emergency declaration, but were unable to muster enough votes to override his veto.

Abounding appeals

About 20 US states along with rights and environmental groups and border communities are backing lawsuits that claim the emergency declaration violates the Constitution. In May 2019, a California judge blocked the president's emergency declaration. Trump then turned to the Supreme Court which ruled 5-4 in his favor on Friday, writing that the government had "made a sufficient showing at this stage" that the groups did not have the standing to challenge the allocation of funds. This freed up the money for the president's use while litigation proceeds.

Variable size, shape

About a third of the 2,000-mile US-Mexico border is already secured by wall, fence or barbed wire, with the Rio Grande River forming a natural barrier along other stretches. Trump's executive order defines the proposed wall as "a contiguous, physical wall or other similarly secure, contiguous, and impassable physical barrier." At one point he said it would be made with prefabricated concrete panels reinforced with steel rods.



CALIFORNIA: In this file photo migrant caravan demonstrators climb the US-Mexico border fence during a rally in San Ysidro, California. — AFP

Eight prototypes of concrete and steel were unveiled on the edge of San Diego at the border with Tijuana, Mexico in October

2017, and were subsequently inspected by Trump himself. After testing and evaluation, they were torn down 16 months later. — AFP

Journalists investigating Russia targeted by cyberattacks

GENEVA: Reporters investigating Russian military intelligence have been targeted by highly sophisticated cyberattacks through their encrypted email accounts, with evidence suggesting Moscow was responsible, the email service provider ProtonMail and journalists said Saturday. The phishing attack, which sought to dupe users into sharing their ProtonMail passwords, was aimed at journalists from the award-winning website Bellingcat, which helped identify the agents who poisoned former Russian spy Sergei Skripal in Britain.

Geneva-based ProtonMail said in a statement that "the evidence (along with independent third-party assessments) seem to suggest an attack of Russian origin." The company's chief executive Andy Yen told AFP that the operation "was one of the best-run phishing attacks we have ever seen." Bellingcat journalist Christo Grozev, who led the site's work on the Skripal case, said he had no doubt Russia's GRU military intelligence unit was responsible and that it marked "a quantum leap" in terms of their technical sophistication. "It was very convincing," he told AFP, noting that no Bellingcat reporters gave up their passwords.

End-to-end encryption

ProtonMail, which describes itself as the world's most secure email provider, has become increasingly popular with journalists and others who handle sensitive information because user communications are protected by end-to-end encryption. The Harvard-educated Yen, who worked at Europe's nuclear research lab CERN for five years before founding ProtonMail, told AFP that the company could not read users' emails even if it wanted to—in clear contrast with Google's Gmail.

The phishing attacks against Bellingcat reporters occurred this week, with "emails sent to the targeted users claiming to be from the ProtonMail team, asking the targets to enter their...login credentials," the company said. Grozev said that despite his technical savvy and awareness that he was a target, he "would have been fooled" if not for prior warning from a contact who had received a similar phishing email earlier this month.

While the assault on Bellingcat journalists was concentrated over the past few days, Grozev claimed that multiple investigators and researchers from other organizations that work on Russia have received phishing emails in their ProtonMail accounts since April. Yen told AFP that "putting a precise start date as to when other Russia journalists began to be targeted is a bit more complex and not something that we can confirm with full confidence right now."

Has to be investigated

Yen said that ProtonMail has alerted the Swiss Federal Police and the government's computer system security office, MELANI, about the events this week. The company has not yet received any indication that an investigation will be launched, Yen said, noting that he was not optimistic the perpetrators would face justice, in part because Moscow was likely to protect them. ProtonMail however is conducting its own investigation.

But Grozev said the Swiss had a duty to act, given that its .ch domain was used to carry out the phishing operation. "It is essentially a crime within the digital territory of Switzerland," he said, stressing that the entities who registered the malicious .ch websites are "traceable for (Swiss) authorities". Swiss Federal Police and MELANI did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Bellingcat, a highly regarded Britain-based investigative website, has used open-source technology to break a series of stories, notably concerning Russia, including major revelations in the downing of MH17 flight over eastern Ukraine, which has also been linked to Russia's GRU intelligence service. — AFP

Romanian murder suspect admits killing two teens

BUCHAREST: A murder suspect in the southern Romanian town of Caracal has admitted to killing two teenage girls, his lawyer said yesterday, in a case that sparked nationwide outrage over the way authorities handled it. Gheorghe Dinca, 65, a mechanic, has been detained pending an investigation into the deaths of Alexandra Macesanu, 15, who was last seen earlier this week, and Luiza Melencu, 18, who was reported missing in April.

"He confessed the facts," Dinca's lawyer Bogdan Alexandru told reporters at the suspect's residence in Caracal. He said he could not yet elaborate. Macesanu called the European emergency number 112 three times, saying she had been kidnapped by a man while hitchhiking to her home village from nearby Caracal. Official statements show it took authorities 19 hours to locate and enter Dinca's residence, as they struggled to locate her calls with improper technology, tried to secure unnecessary search warrants and dealt with insufficient police staff.

Thousands of Romanians protested against the government on Saturday, outraged by authorities' slow response, as well as changes the ruling Social Democrats made to legislation which not only weakened the fight against graft but also the legal means and instruments to combat wider



BUCHAREST: People light candles at a makeshift memorial site in front of the Romanian Ministry of Interior in Bucharest to commemorate Alexandra, the 15-year-old girl who has been murdered after she telephoned three times to report her own kidnapping. — AFP

crimes. Prosecutors have established both girls were hitching rides to their villages from Caracal when kidnapped. Insufficient public transport is a widespread

problem in Romania. Forensics analysts have yet to confirm the identity of the human remains they found at Dinca's residence. — Reuters

Think the heatwave was bad? Climate already hitting key tipping points

LONDON: "Shall we all just kill ourselves?" It was an odd title for a comedy night, but British stand-up Carl Donnelly turned out to have chosen an environmental theme with impeccable timing. With temperature records tumbling daily in last week's European heatwave, a crowd in an east London bar seemed uniquely primed to appreciate his darkly humorous riffs on the existential threat posed by climate change.

That foretaste of a radically hotter world underscored what is at stake in a decisive phase of talks to implement the 2015 Paris Agreement, a collective shot at avoiding climate breakdown. With study-after-study showing climate impacts from extreme weather to polar melt and sea level rise outstripping initial forecasts, negotiators have a fast-closing window to try to turn the aspirations agreed in Paris into meaningful outcomes.

"There's so much on the line in the next 18 months or so," said Sue Reid, vice-president of climate and energy at Ceres, a US non-profit group that works to steer companies and investors onto a more sustainable path. "This is a crucial period of time both for public officials and the private sector to really reverse the curve on emissions," Reid told Reuters.

In October, the UN-backed Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned emissions must start falling next year at the latest to stand a chance of achieving the deal's goal of holding the global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius. With emissions currently on track to push temperatures more than three degrees higher, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is working to wrest bigger commitments from governments ahead of a summit in New York in September.

Telling world leaders that failing to cut emissions would be "suicidal," the Portuguese diplomat wants to build momentum ahead of a fresh round of climate talks in Chile in December. By the time Britain convenes a major follow-up summit in late 2020, plans are supposed to be underway - in theory at least - to almost halve global emissions over the next decade. "In the next year-and-a-half we will witness an intensity of climate diplomacy not seen since the Paris Agreement was signed," said Tessa Khan, an international climate change lawyer and co-director of the Climate Litigation Network.

Revolution or collapse

As the diplomatic offensive intensifies, the latest scientific studies have offered negotiators scant comfort. US climatologist Michael Mann believes emissions need to fall



CALIFORNIA: Children cool off at a water park in Alhambra, California as southern California endures another summer heatwave with triple-digit temperatures. — AFP

even more drastically than the IPCC assumes since the panel may be underestimating how far temperatures have already risen since pre-industrial times. "Our work on this indicates that we might have as much as 40% less carbon left to burn than IPCC implies, if we are to avert the 1.5 Celsius warming limit," said Mann, director of the Earth System Science Center at Pennsylvania State University.

Mann has urged governments to treat the transition to renewable energy with the equivalent urgency that drove the US industrial mobilization in World War Two. So far, no major economy has taken heed. Although Britain boosted the Paris Agreement in June by committing to net zero carbon emissions by 2050, the country, preoccupied by Brexit, is far from on a climate war footing. Likewise, a push led by France and Germany for the European Union to adopt a similar target was relegated to a footnote at a summit in Brussels after opposition from Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary.

US President Donald Trump remains committed to pulling the world's second biggest emitter out of the Paris deal altogether. Given the uncertain prospects for international cooperation to stabilize the climate on which life on earth depends, some are starting to steel themselves for the unraveling of the world they once knew. "Either we radically transform human collective life by abandoning the use of fossil fuels or, more likely, climate change will bring about the end of global fossil-fuelled capitalist civilization," wrote US author Roy Scranton, in an April essay in MIT Technology Review. "Revolution or collapse - in either case, the good life as we know it is no longer viable. — Reuters

Dozens of migrants still stuck on vessel in Italy port

ROME: An Italian coastguard vessel stranded in the Mediterranean with more than 130 migrants aboard has been allowed to dock in the eastern Sicilian port of Augusta but Rome on Sunday refused to let them disembark until a deal is struck with the EU. "The Gregoretti berthed in the port of Augusta overnight, as is normal procedure for a military vessel. Now the EU has to act because the migration question concerns the whole continent," Transport Minister Danilo Toninelli said in a statement.

Some 140 migrants, who had set off from Libya in two rickety boats, were picked up by Italian patrols on Thursday night and transferred to the Gregoretti ship. The operation took place on the same day that at least 115 other migrants were believed to have drowned in a shipwreck off Libya—the Mediterranean's deadliest tragedy this year, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Several migrants aboard the Gregoretti have already been evacuated for medical attention, including a seven-month pregnant woman, her two children and her partner. However, Italy's far-right Interior Minister Matteo Salvini has reiterated that the remaining migrants would not be able to leave the vessel until other European countries agree to take them in. Salvini, also deputy prime minister, has taken a hard line against migrants rescued at sea being brought to Italy, which he says bears an unfair burden in the crisis.

French President Emmanuel Macron announced last Monday that 14 EU members had approved a plan to redistribute refugees rescued in the Mediterranean, and eight said they would actively take part. The proposal drew Salvini's ire because it still involved allowing migrants to disembark on his country's territory. He said the agreement underscored a demand that Italy "continue to be the refugee camp of Europe".

Pope Francis on Sunday called on the international community to "act swiftly" to help avoid further deaths. "I have learned with sorrow the news of the dramatic shipwreck that happened in recent days in the Mediterranean where dozens of migrants including women and children have lost their lives," he said Sunday during his weekly Angelus address on St Peter's Square. "I am renewing my call that the international community act swiftly and decisively to avoid that such tragedies repeat themselves and guarantee the safety and dignity of all." —AFP

International

Afghanistan 'peace is coming', Ghani claims as campaign starts

President promises that pivotal Taliban talks will take place

KABUL: Afghanistan's president marked the official start of the country's election season yesterday by insisting "peace is coming" and that pivotal talks with the Taliban would take place. Ashraf Ghani is hoping to fend off challenges from 17 other candidates to score a second term at twice-postponed presidential elections now slated for September 28.

"Peace is coming, and the negotiations will take place," Ghani said at a rally marking the start of two months of campaigning. His comments came a day after his peace minister, Abdul Salam Rahimi, said direct talks would take place with the Taliban within two weeks as part of a larger, US-led push for peace.

Such a development could be crucial, as the Taliban — who now control or influence about half of Afghanistan — have so far refused to speak to Ghani's government, as they consider the Kabul administration illegitimate. War aside, the country faces a host of major issues ahead of the election, including rocketing crime, a lackluster economy, soaring unemployment, and crumbling infrastructure. Voters are despondent about the prospects of a fair election, and many worry about a repeat of the sort of violent attacks on previous polls by the Taliban and other insurgent groups trying to undermine Afghanistan's fragile democracy.

Ghani insisted this year's election would be "clean", but distrust is rife. Sayed Jan, a 27-year-old student, said he won't be voting as he has lost faith since the 2014 election that was mired in allegations of massive fraud and ballot stuffing. "We have been betrayed by the candidates in the past, we can not trust them this time," he said. "We need peace in Afghanistan instead of elections. Even if I vote, the election will be fraudulent."

In Kabul, security forces fanned out across

the city as leading candidates held rallies. Campaign posters of Ghani, his main rival Abdullah Abdullah, and other candidates were unveiled across the country. Abdullah is currently serving as the president's chief executive under an awkward power-sharing arrangement brokered by the US after the 2014 election.

"It is our national and religious duty to take advantage of any opportunities for peace," Abdullah told a campaign rally. One crucial issue is that the elections happen at all: they were postponed twice this year and further delays could lead to more distrust.

Despite Ghani's claim that a summit between his government and the Taliban would take place shortly, the insurgents said they would only talk to Kabul after the US had announced a timeline for a withdrawal of foreign forces — a key part of any deal. "The Kabul administration will be considered a political side, just like others, and not a government," Taliban political spokesman Suhail Shaheen wrote in Pashto on Twitter.

Diplomatic sources have told AFP the Afghan-Taliban talks are scheduled to begin in Oslo on August 7. US peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, who is leading a push to forge a peace deal with the Taliban, said Saturday that new "intra-Afghan" negotiations would only take place after the US and Taliban had concluded their own agreements.

He is expected to fly to Doha next week for what would be the eighth round of direct US-Taliban talks. Other presidential candidates include Ghani's former national security advisor Hanif Atmar and former warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, nicknamed the "Butcher of Kabul" for his alleged role in the killing of thousands of people in the capital in the 1990s. —AFP



KABUL: A local resident pushes a wheelbarrow past a billboard with a poster of Afghan presidential candidate and incumbent President of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani during the first day of the presidential election campaign yesterday. —AFP

Further Myanmar Rohingya talks over repatriation from Bangladesh

KUTUPALONG: Talks between Myanmar and Rohingya leaders will be extended after "positive" discussions about the refugees' return to their homeland, Bangladesh officials said yesterday. Some 740,000 Rohingya fled a 2017 crackdown by Myanmar's military and joined another 200,000 already living in squalid conditions in nearly three dozen camps in Bangladesh's coastal Cox's Bazar district.

The two nations signed a repatriation deal two years ago but so far virtually no Rohingya have volunteered to go back to Myanmar, where the group has faced decades of repression. The delegation, led by the country's permanent foreign secretary U Myint Thu, arrived at Cox's Bazar district on Saturday to "explain the preparations" for the Rohingyas' return to northern Rakhine state. "We have in principle agreed to discuss further on three areas," Thu told reporters after the group—which included other representatives from Southeast Asian nations—visited the world's largest refugee settlement Kutupalong. The three areas are extending the dialogue between the two parties, involving delegates from Southeast Asian nations in the discussions, and holding talks with Bangladeshi ministries over the repatriation of Hindu and Christian Rohingyas.

Bangladesh refugee commissioner Mohammad Abul Kalam said the talks were "positive". "If the refugees continue to press for talks, they (Myanmar) will listen. It is exactly what is happening now," he said. Rohingya Muslim community leader Mohib Ullah said he told the delegation people wanted citizenship, safety and security



KUTUPALONG: Rohingya community leaders, left, talk with members of a team from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh. —AFP

as preconditions for their return to Rakhine. They also wanted to return to their villages and not to camps constructed by the government, he added.

"They patiently listened to us. We requested them to return with an answer after two months and to continue the talks," he told AFP. Rohingya Christian leader Abu Taher said his community also demanded freedom to practice their religion in Rakhine. Myanmar so far denies the minority citizenship and refers to them as "Bengalis"—implying that the Rohingyas are illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. It is the second time in less

than a year officials have tried to convince the Rohingyas to return to violence-racked Rakhine, with the first repatriation offer rejected by camp leaders in October. The massive camps have sparked tensions between the neighbors, with Bangladesh blaming Myanmar for delays in repatriating the refugees. Dhaka has said it will not force any Rohingyas to leave, while Myanmar has faced international pressure to allow the refugees to return and grant them citizenship rights. The UN has complained that progress to address the refugee crisis has been far too slow.—AFP

Sri Lanka says illegal UK waste offloaded to India, Dubai

COLOMBO: A Sri Lankan investigation into nearly 3,000 tons of illegally imported hazardous waste has shown that some of it was sent on to India and Dubai, a top minister said Friday. Finance Minister Mangala Samaraweera told parliament the importer of the waste had reshipped about 180 tons of raw garbage to India and Dubai in 2017 and 2018. Sri Lanka's customs department found that a local company imported 241 containers from Britain, out of which 15 had been sent to India and two to Dubai.

Sri Lankan customs insist the British authorities should not have allowed the export without first clearing with Sri Lankan authorities if they were willing to accept the untreated waste. The customs service said the consignment was believed to contain mortuary waste among other

garbage which included large quantities of plastic. "We have ordered the importer and shipping agent to take immediate steps to return the containers to its origin (Britain)," the minister said. "I have also ordered that all those responsible be prosecuted immediately."

He said 130 containers had been taken to a free-trade zone near Colombo and some had been emptied causing contamination of water sources and air pollution. "The importer has been asked to immediately repack all the garbage back in the containers," he said adding that all the waste must be sent back to Britain. The company at the centre of the probe, Ceylon Metal Processing Corporation Private Limited, said the storage company at a free trade zone was responsible for processing what they imported as "used mattresses".

Ceylon Metal director Sasikumaran Muthuram denied that the containers, 111 of which are held up at Colombo port, contained bio waste. Sri Lanka customs authorities said Tuesday that the waste had been mislabelled and imported as used mattresses, but contained bio and clinical waste in contravention of international laws on the transport of waste material. —AFP

the dozens of migrants who died trying to reach Europe. "I learned with pain the news of the dramatic shipwreck that happened in recent days in the waters of the Mediterranean Sea, where dozens of migrants, including women and children, lost their lives," Francis said. The pope appealed to the international community to act promptly to guarantee safety and dignity for all. Fifty-five bodies have been recovered so far off the Libyan coast, an aid worker said on Saturday, after a wooden boat carrying hundreds of migrants capsized on Thursday. It was unclear how many were on board and how many were still missing and feared drowned after what the UN refugee agency UNHCR described as "the worst Mediterranean tragedy of this year". —Reuters

Pope offers prayers for migrants killed in Mediterranean shipwreck

MILAN: Pope Francis yesterday offered prayers for migrants who died in the Mediterranean Sea this week, in what the UN refugee agency called the worst shipwreck in the area this year. Speaking to thousands of people gathered in St. Peter's Square for his yesterday's address, the pontiff expressed his sorrow and asked the worshippers to join him in a prayer for

Singapore PM's brother backs new opposition party

SINGAPORE: The estranged brother of the Singaporean prime minister has backed a new opposition party, the latest incident in a bitter feud in the city-state's first family. The Progress Singapore Party (PSP) was formed by Tan Cheng Bock, a former stalwart of the ruling party, to contest elections due by 2021. Tan has been seen in recent months with the premier's sibling, Lee Hsien Yang, local media reported, sparking talk of an alliance. Yesterday Lee posted on Facebook: "I wholeheartedly support the principles and values of the Progress Singapore Party". "Today's PAP is no longer the PAP of my father. It has lost its way," he said. He did not elaborate further or say whether he would join the new party. Business executive Lee and his sister have been embroiled in a feud with their elder brother, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, over the fate of a century-old family bungalow.

The rare public falling out within the city-state's elite erupted following the 2015 death of their father, Singapore's founding leader Lee Kuan Yew. The PAP has governed Singapore for decades and the weak opposition is not viewed as a threat, but backing from a senior member of the Lee family could provide a boost to Tan. A former PAP lawmaker, Tan resigned from the party in 2010 and unsuccessfully ran for president the following year. He will formally launch his party next week. The prime minister, 67, has said he will lead the PAP at the next polls before handing power over to leader-in-waiting, Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat.—AFP

At least 13 killed in Myanmar jade mine landslide

YANGON: At least 13 jade mine workers and security guards in northern Myanmar were killed in a landslide yesterday, authorities said, as rescuers frantically searched for more victims. Dozens die each year in landslides caused by jade mining, a dangerous and poorly regulated industry in Kachin state between the country's borders with China and India. Myanmar's fire services department said in a Facebook post the accident happened in the early morning in Hpakant township.

"We have sent two injured men and the dead bodies of 13 men" to a local hospital, the department said. A police officer on the scene said that the upper part of a mine collapsed and fell around 200 meters onto those sleeping below. Though new reg-

ulations suspend mining during the wet season peak from July through September, some workers stay on site. Heavy rains pounded the area over the last week, according to the officer, who said the search for those missing is ongoing. The deadly landslide is the latest to hit Hpakant, the epicenter of a multibillion-dollar jade trade fueled by insatiable demand in China. In April more than 54 people were killed when a massive landslide buried workers along with dozens of vehicles. Many miners are from impoverished ethnic minority communities who risk their lives hunting the translucent green gemstone.

Drug addiction among workers is also a major problem in Hpakant, which has been turned into a vast moonscape-like terrain by years of mining. Watchdog Global Witness estimated that the industry was worth some \$31 billion in 2014. But corruption means very little reaches state coffers. Jade and other abundant natural resources in northern Myanmar including timber, gold and amber have helped finance both sides of a decades-long civil war between ethnic Kachin insurgents and the military.—AFP

22 students injured in Pakistan accident

PESHAWAR: Twenty-two students of a religious seminary in Pakistan's northwestern tribal region were injured when the tractor trailer they were travelling aboard overturned, officials said yesterday. The incident happened in Kot village on the

outskirts of Dargai tribal district. "The students aged 9 to 16 years were going to a picnic when their tractor trolley turned turtle injuring 22 students," said Inayat-ur-Rehman, a doctor at the hospital where the students were treated. He blamed driver negligence for the accident. Local police confirmed the accident. Pakistan has one of the world's worst records for fatal traffic accidents, blamed on reckless driving, poor roads and badly maintained vehicles.—AFP

Analysis

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Threats 'from all sides' for Latin America's original languages

At school in Tecate in the 1950s, a city sitting on Mexico's border with the United States, Josefina Meza was welcomed by a chorus of children's chants in a language she did not understand. "Pinches indios, pinches indios," her peers called out. At first, Meza thought they wanted to be her friend. But her brother clarified: Using Spanish, which she had yet to learn, they were humiliating her, chanting a slur for indigenous Mexicans that rang as strong as the "n" word in English.

The silver-haired, 72-year-old remembers quizzing her brother in her native Kumiai, now one of the dozens of rapidly disappearing indigenous languages in Latin America. "I asked him what that word, 'indio', meant," the indigenous activist said of how she had not known the term used by some Mexicans to refer to her people, similar to the English "Indian". "But when I started to speak more Spanish and talk with them, I understood the mockery," Meza said.

These experiences were among the reasons the Kumiai people and other indigenous groups the length of Latin America started teaching their native languages to their children less - to avoid discrimination. Decades later, the racism evident in "pinche indio" remains widespread in the region, combining with globalization and technology to threaten with extinction some 170 languages, including the 381-speaker Kumiai, which remains at risk despite efforts by governments and civil society organizations since the mid-20th century.

Though language extinction is a "natural process" due to the constant transformation of cultures, it comes with a price, said Frederic Vacheron, representative of UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in Mexico. "It is not only words that disappear, it is a perspective, a wealth of cultural practices, a worldview," Vacheron said.

UNESCO named 2019 the International Year of Indigenous Languages, committing to working with governments and native peoples to rescue endangered and threatened tongues among the 600-some surviving indigenous tongues in the region. Preserving indigenous languages has become a race against the clock. It may be too late. Brazil, the region's most linguistically diverse country, runs the risk of losing a third of its 180-plus languages by 2030. In Mexico, almost two thirds of its 68 languages are on the brink of disappearance. This trend repeats in Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Central America.

'Our languages are murdered'

In the past decades, some Latin American governments have made efforts to preserve indigenous languages from a decline that has been in process since the arrival of Spanish and Portuguese colonizers five centuries ago. In some cases, government efforts have proven effective. Paraguayan Guarani, one of the two official languages of Paraguay, is still spoken by some 12 million people in South America and nine out of 10 Paraguayans.

In 2016, Peru's state broadcaster launched its first program in Quechua, which is spoken by over 10 million people in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. The broadcaster called the Quechuan program "Nuqanchik" - the language's word for "us." Programs in the languages of Aymara and Ashaninka soon followed.

But across the Americas, indigenous activists say the policy shifts are too little, too late. They say it remains impossible to navigate most countries using indigenous languages, and a number blame governments. "Our languages don't die, they are murdered. The Mexican state has erased them," said Yasnaya Aguilar, who speaks Mixe, the mother tongue of some 90,000 people in southwest Mexico. Aguilar spoke in Mixe to the Mexican Congress in February, blaming discriminatory education, health and justice systems for the loss.

Gasoda Surui, an anthropologist from the Surui-Paiter tribe in the jungles of Brazil, said technology was a challenge for his language, the almost-extinct Tupi-Monde. It has about 200 speakers - and no term for Internet, telephone, computer or car. "We feel the threat from all sides: cultural, environmental, territorial and linguistic," Gasoda said. He confessed that in his village people sometimes forget crucial words in Tupi-Monde, and everyone is bilingual with Portuguese. In the past five centuries, more than 1,000 languages disappeared in Brazil. The government only recognized the right of indigenous people to use their native languages in 1988. Elsewhere, even widely spoken tongues like Quechua face problems when it comes to the language of technology. Former Peruvian congressman Jose Linares was contracted to implement new technologies in 12 schools back in 1996. — Reuters

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A resident, who remains in a wheelchair due to a broken leg, shows groceries and vegetables in her fridge in Petare slum in Caracas on July 25, 2019. — AFP

'Shop window' Caracas angers rest of Venezuela

While authorities concentrate on presenting an image of normality in Caracas, Venezuelans elsewhere in the country who are suffering from severe shortages amid a political and economic crisis are livid. The capital is a "shop window" for ambassadors and foreigners as well as a "propaganda operation," said Andres Canizalez, an expert in political communication. It's an outlook shared by many Venezuelans, who see a harsh reality play out in places like the grocery store and gas station.

Gendry Parra fumed recently as he watched a video of a man in Caracas taking just five minutes to fill his vehicle with fuel. The 44-year-old shopkeeper had spent three days queuing for fuel in Maracaibo, a city in the country's far west close to the border with Colombia. "It disgusts me that we're in the same country and it's one thing there and another here," he said. Parra doesn't have running water, fuel or cash, and blackouts can last days in his hometown of Maracaibo even though it was the first city in Venezuela to have electricity.

It's also the capital of Zulia state, which used to be an important source of Venezuelan oil and gas. Alberto Arriechi, the man pumping gas in the video, said he recognizes the privilege he has over millions of Venezuelans who live in the country's interior and are hit harder by Venezuela's declining oil production and lack of cash for imports. Like other people in Caracas, the 29-year-old engineer does not suffer as severely from electricity rationing carried out by the government ever since a massive blackout in March.

The latest rationing came Monday: Caracas was with-

out power for seven hours, other parts of the country suffered for two days. When it comes to fuel, customers in places like Maracaibo complain that some unscrupulous gas stations illegally ask for payment in dollars. Fuel is heavily subsidized in Venezuela to keep the price absurdly low. Arriechi bought his for a handful of bolivars.

'Everything's got worse'

On the shores of Lake Maracaibo, Johannis Semprun, a victim of the country's economic crisis, sighs. "Right now we have electricity. And I mean 'right now.' Don't be surprised if it goes in a moment," said the 37-year-old, who has six children and a handicapped wife. Due to financial troubles, he had to take his children out of school and they now eat at an evangelical church. "Everything has got worse," he said. Maracaibo was once booming thanks to oil but Venezuela's production has plummeted from 3.2 million barrels a day 10 years ago to just one million. The disparities between life in Caracas and elsewhere have left some feeling envious. Warin Guerrero, a livestock industry leader in the western state of Barinas, has implored cattle ranchers not to send food to the capital. "Over there, they don't have any problems ... we're treated like second class citizens," he said.

While Caracas' special status has historical roots in centralization, nowadays it's about government bias, said Canizalez, the political communication expert. "There's a belief that if there were a social disruption in Caracas, it would spread throughout the rest of the country," he said. "If Caracas is kept relatively well, if it doesn't rebel, everything else will work." The apparent normality of Caracas



Viscera, skin and scraps of meat are sold at a flea market in Maracaibo, Zulia state, Venezuela, on July 23, 2019. — AFP

includes a greater choice of products. There's also a proliferation of imported goods, with prices in dollars. But few can afford them as salaries and savings have been rendered almost worthless by hyperinflation which the International Monetary Fund says will reach 10 million percent this year. At the Las Pulgas market in Maracaibo, it's normal for poor people to buy bones and entrails to eat.

Cleaning lady Josefina Galindo, 49, feels "outrage, impotence" when hearing the price of coffee in a store: \$15 for 250 grams. She earns only \$9 a month. She hasn't bought meat in a year. On her way home she goes through a street market. "All I do is look at meat and the prices," she says. — AFP

Poland needs to save water for (non-)rainy day

With his two fishing rods planted firmly on the bank of the Vistula river, 85-year-old Tadeusz Norberciak peers at rocks exposed on the dry riverbed, a telling sign of Poland's looming water crisis. "I can't remember water levels being as low as what we've seen in recent years, it's tragic", says the pensioner, sporting a fisherman's vest and cap for protection against the blazing sun. "Further north, it's even worse, the Vistula looks like puddles," he told AFP on a part of the waterway passing through the capital Warsaw.

Hundreds of rivers and in Poland are drying up little by little. According to experts, the central European country of 38 million people risks a serious water crisis in the coming years. Poland's Supreme Audit Office (NIK) warned in a recent report that already there is only 1,600 cu m of water available for each Pole per year, which is only slightly more than the EU average. "Our (water) resources are comparable to those of Egypt," it said in the report bearing the ominous title: "Poland, European Desert".

Steppe

Contrary to popular belief, Poland, which is located at the confluence of oceanic and continental climate zones, has never had much water. It receives less rainfall than countries further west, while the rate of evaporation is comparable. Warmer winters with less snow mean that ground-water is not being replenished by spring melts. And Poland captures little of this water, which experts say is a big part of the problem.

The result is that a vast strip of land across the country is slowly turning into steppe - semi-arid grass-covered plains, that threatens agriculture, forests and wildlife. With climate change, more frequent droughts and only brief and often violent rainstorms, experts insist the situation is reaching a critical threshold. "In 2018, a very, very dry year, water levels fell to 1,100 cubic meters per capita, per year, nearly below the safety threshold," says Sergiusz Kiergiel, spokesperson for Wody polskie (Polish waters), the state institution responsible for water policy.

The situation is likely to be even worse this year. The Polish Hydrological Service sounded the alarm in July, warning that groundwater levels in 12 out of 16 Polish provinces could be too low to fill shallow wells. Over 320 municipalities have already imposed water restrictions carrying heavy fines. Some have banned filling swimming pools, watering gardens or washing cars. Skierniewice, a town of



The Vistula River in Warsaw has its lowest water level for years on July 25, 2019, caused by drought. — AFP

47,000 people some 80 km southwest of Warsaw, had to cut water in some districts in early June. For days, water was only available to ground-floor flats. With no running water on upper floors, municipal authorities were forced to distribute ten-litre water bags to furious residents.

Crucial reservoirs

The shortages are triggering social conflict. Residents of Sulmierzyce in central Poland accuse a local open pit brown coal mine of syphoning off water. In Podkowa Lesna, a small leafy town near Warsaw, resident are up in arms against their neighbors in nearby Zolwin, whom they accuse of using too much water from a common source to water their gardens. "Parts of the country are already experiencing hydrogeological drought - a situation when water doesn't enter the deep layers of the soil and is not filtered in springs," says Wody polskie's Kiergiel.

Experts insist that capturing more water is crucial. Lacking sufficient reservoirs, Poland retains only 6.5 percent of the water that passes through its territory, while Spain manages to keep nearly half. To ward off a crisis, the government plans to spend 14 billion zlotys (\$3.6 billion) to build around 30 holding tanks. These should double Poland's water retention capacity by 2027. Farmers will be able to build small tanks up to 1,000 cu m without special permits. "We're only just discovering that Poland has an issue with water... We thought it was a sub-Saharan Africa problem, not a European one," says Leszek Pazderski, an environmental expert with Greenpeace Poland. — AFP

Fighting talk: Ireland raises stakes in Brexit showdown

With the prospect of a no-deal Brexit becoming ever more likely under Boris Johnson, the remaining EU member state with most to lose - Ireland - is hardening its rhetoric. Ireland has a land border with Britain that it wants to keep free-flowing after Brexit and it fears massive economic disruption if Britain crashes out of the EU. Since Johnson took over on Wednesday, Irish leaders have warned his plans are unrealistic and could lead to the break-up of the United Kingdom and a united Ireland.

"The Irish government are responding to facts on the ground" as they emerge, and the fact is that Boris Johnson's current approach is leading to no deal," said Jonathan Evershed, a politics researcher of University College Cork. "I think everything the Irish government has said is a) true and b) an attempt to confront Johnson's government - which has willfully lost its grip on reality."

Duncan Morrow, a politics professor at Ulster University said: "Standing up to a 'bullying' approach by Britain is part of the DNA of Irish politics, so no Taoiseach [Irish prime minister] can be seen to fold simply because a UK premier raises his voice." Varadkar was first to react to Johnson's victory speech on Wednesday, saying his stated goal of renegotiating the Brexit deal entirely by a deadline of October 31 was "totally not in the real world".

Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney on Friday then warned that Johnson was putting Britain "on a collision course with the European Union". Varadkar also on Friday said Johnson was making the prospect of a unification of British Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland more likely. "The Irish government appears to have concluded that the new government in London is not interested in finding a deal and is making it clear that they will not be conceding either," Morrow told AFP. "This remains a protracted game of chicken."

'Lost its grip on reality'

Ireland has found itself at the center of the knot in Britain's tangled bid to leave the European Union. The withdrawal deal agreed under Johnson's predecessor Theresa May failed to pass through British parliament because of the inclusion of the so-called Irish backstop. MPs believe the clause, designed to preserve the EU single market and prevent a hard border in Ireland, would endanger the union of Northern Ireland with Britain.

But on Friday Varadkar issued a warning that a no-deal may itself endanger the union, as citizens in the province look south in hope of remaining in the EU. Following its interventions, the Irish government was accused by the Northern Irish Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) of engaging in "megaphone diplomacy". "Language is being used which is unhelpful or unnecessarily aggressive," said MP Ian Paisley - singling out Coveney's remarks as "downright provocative and disrespectful". The pro-Brexit, anti-backstop DUP has an oversized voice in Westminster because its 10 MPs give the government its working majority in parliament. Experts warned the DUP's influence, rather than any Irish government plans, could undo the union between Northern Ireland and Britain. "There is a risk that the DUP will accelerate that which they most wish to prevent," Morrow said. — AFP

Business

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WASHINGTON, DC: The facade of the US Federal Reserve in Washington. President Donald Trump attacked the independent US Federal Reserve, demanding the central bank reverse course and cut interest rates — something it is widely expected to do this month. — AFP

Fed may tweak key rate amid Trump pressure

US central bank struggles to communicate as the global economy weakens

WASHINGTON: For the first time since the Great Recession a decade ago, the US Federal Reserve is poised to cut interest rates, shoring up America's defenses as the global economy weakens. It will mark a striking about-face for the central bank, reversing a rate increase announced just seven months ago.

And the policy flip comes as the central bank has suffered a number of awkward stumbles in communications, as it has tried to communicate confidence in the economy, while at the same time a readiness to support continued expansion. Fed officials have had to backtrack and clarify recent statements, and amid President Donald Trump's blistering, year-long public campaign against Fed Chair Jerome Powell, one central banker seemed to offer himself as an alternative for the leadership position.

Meanwhile, although the rate cut this week is almost universally expected, economists disagree on whether the Fed is making the right move. Indeed, cutting rates now could appear highly unusual: the Fed has never done so with unemployment so low.

New York Fed President John Williams, the influential

vice chair of the Fed's monetary policy committee, said this month that acting quickly to cut the key lending rate could "vaccinate" an economy against "disease" later on. But his office later scrambled to clarify that the comment was referring to the history of monetary policy and was not a prediction of how the Fed would act on July 31. Trump pounced almost immediately: "I like New York Fed President John Williams' first statement much better than his second."

Diane Swonk, chief economist at Grant Thornton, said the Fed's communication blunders did not help it withstand Trump's onslaught and his demand for lower borrowing rates. "The president might have been right for the wrong reasons because he was destroying the economy himself," she told AFP, saying the damage from the trade battles with China and others has been underestimated.

So "even when they do the right thing it looks like they're capitulating," she said, undermining their credibility. Trump's vocal and repeated attacks on the Fed are unprecedented. And Swonk warned it could backfire.

"What the president's doing now is undermining the most powerful tool the Fed has when he's going to need it most."

Mixed economic signals

James Bullard, the dovish president of the St Louis Federal Reserve Bank, who like Trump has advocated a rate cut, said recently that he would take the job of Fed chair if offered. In the context of reports that Trump has considered removing or demoting Powell, Bullard's comments do little to reinforce confidence in the Fed chief.

Powell has repeatedly said the political considerations have no impact on the Fed's policy committee. But even the economic case is opaque. There are signs the economy does not need central bank stimulus: consumer spending is solid and job growth is steady, not to mention record stock prices on Wall Street. "For what it's worth, we think any rate cut is a mistake," economist Ian Shepherdson said in a recent note to clients.

But others argue the Fed will be making up for the error it made in December. The Fed raised rates in

December despite signs of a weakening global economy and Trump's multiple global trade conflicts.

But central bankers now cite those same reasons as a justification for cutting rates. "I do believe the Fed made a mistake and they know it," Quincy Krosby, chief market strategist at Prudential Financial, said.

And there are a number of reasons to be worried. GDP growth slowed this year. Manufacturing is in recession. The housing market has stumbled. Business investment is flat-lining amid uncertainty caused by the trade wars. Powell told lawmakers this month that Trump's trade wars with China and Europe were a "shock" to American business confidence.

Meanwhile, Europe and China are faltering, eating into demand for US exports and raising the prospect of contagion, while the possibility of a no-deal Brexit, with its uncertain consequences, draws nearer every day. Revised government data released Friday show that at the end of 2018 growth was only half as strong as previously reported-taking the wind out of the economy's sails at the start of this year. — AFP

Ugandan entrepreneurs cook up eco-friendly dryer to cut food waste

KAMPALA: At their workshop in a Kampala suburb, Lawrence Okettayot and his business partner, both in their mid-20s, drilled holes and screws into a steel-lined, green wooden box designed to dry food in an eco-friendly way. Their invention, a low-tech thermal dehydrator, can be used to process fruits like mango, banana and pineapple, as well as vegetables such as okra and eggplant, to stop them spoiling.

It uses heat from briquettes made of discarded paper and other natural materials, including garden waste. Food waste is a big challenge in Africa, with about half of crops lost due to poor harvesting techniques and handling afterwards, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization.

Okettayot had a light-bulb moment in 2016 when his uncle decided to quit farming out of frustration over his produce going to waste because he could not find a ready market. Having grown up in northern Uganda, where a two-decade insurgency by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a brutal rebel group, caused widespread food shortages, Okettayot thought hard about a solution.

After completing their studies in mechanical engineering, he and his childhood friend, Morris Opiyo, embarked on making their first dryer to preserve food. It worked well and was "a good inspiration", Okettayot said. Since then, the pair have made 43 dryers and sold them across Uganda, Rwanda, Zimbabwe and Burkina Faso to individual farmers. They now have plans to ship some to Central African Republic and Mauritius.



Affordable machine to dry fruit and vegetables helps farmers stop harvests spoiling and burns green briquettes, not charcoal, for heat.

The "sparky dryer" has a chamber which is lined with steel and insulated with a thick layer of wood to minimize heat loss. A fan on top allows air to flow into the heating chamber so that few briquettes need to be burned to keep it hot.

The heat is transferred to the drying zone where the sliced foodstuff is stacked on shelves. A catalytic converter also prevents harmful gases from escaping, reducing toxic by-products like carbon monoxide from the smoke-free briquettes and enabling the dryer to operate with zero planet-warming emissions. Two kilograms (4.4 lb) of briquettes are needed to dry 10 kg of mangoes in five hours. — Reuters

Saudi chemical giant profits nosedive over low prices

RIYADH: Saudi petrochemicals giant SABIC said yesterday its net profits for the second quarter and first half of this year dived due to a sharp decline in product prices. SABIC net profit for the three months to June 30 slid by 68 percent to 2.1 billion riyals (\$560 million) from a year earlier, the company said in a statement.

Profit for the first six months of the year plunged 55 percent to 5.5 billion riyals (\$1.47 billion), it said. The slide in earnings was blamed on "lower average selling prices," and a drop in profits made by its associates and joint ventures, said the largest listed company on the Saudi bourse.

Revenues from sales in the first half of the year dropped by 14 percent to \$19.5 billion, reported SABIC, which is among the world's 10 biggest chemical firms. State-owned energy conglomerate Aramco said in March it was buying the government's 70-percent stake in SABIC for \$69.1 billion, in a deal aimed at providing cash to finance the kingdom's ambitious transformation program.

Aramco, the world's most profitable company, is paying most of the price in cash over the next few years but has already raised a \$12 billion loan from leading international banks. Saudi Arabia to start next phase of flour mill privatization.

SAGO sale

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia's state grain buyer SAGO said it will start the next phase of the sale of its flour mills on Wednesday, which will see pre-qualified bidders perform due diligence and present financial offers. The sale is one of the first privatizations the kingdom is planning as part of a wide-reaching overhaul of its economy. It has attracted interest from some of the world's largest agribusiness firms, including Archer Daniels Midland Co and Bunge Ltd.

Still, Saudi Grains Organization (SAGO) in its statement yesterday did not name successful pre-qualified bidders from the first phase of the process last year. Privatization of the flour milling sector is seen as a litmus test for other large state asset sales to follow.

Large grain market players' interest in SAGO's mills comes as Saudi Arabia grows increasingly dependent on grain imports. The kingdom has become a major importer of wheat and barley since abandoning plans in 2008 to become self-sufficient - as farming in the desert was draining scarce water supplies. But grain industry sources have said the lengthy privatization process has since discouraged some potential bidders. — Agencies

Business

Breeders fear EU-Mercosur pact will make mincemeat of Belgium beef

Libramont agricultural show highlights Belgium's beef industry

LIBRAMONT, Belgium: The Libramont agricultural show is the highlight of the year for Belgium's proud beef industry, but this year even the sunny skies of western Europe's record heatwave couldn't chase one looming shadow away. The breeders parading their famous Belgian Blue beef cattle will soon face competition from the vast ranches of the South American pampas.

Resistance is building among some European farmers against a draft trade deal reached by EU officials with the Mercosur group-Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.

After 20 years of negotiations, officials in Brussels — 140 kilometers (80 miles) northwest of the pastures of Ardennes—are very pleased with the accord that could save European exporters four billion euros (\$4.5 billion) in duties per year. But, as member states decide whether to ratify and implement the deal, EU farmers and environmentalists are less excited.

Beef breeders in particular say that EU quality standards are higher than those in Latin America, and fear a flood of cheap meat will drive them to the wall. "We are already close to over-production in all of Europe and in Wallonia as well ... The last thing we need is Brazilian meat, especially when we see the conditions in which it is produced," warns Hughes Falys, beef producer and farmers' union spokesman.

'Bad deal'

"Mercosur isn't a case of 'Yes, maybe' or 'Yes, if'. Mercosur is 'No!'," declares the Wallonia regional farming minister, Rene Collin, to loud applause. Collin might not be a regular on the G20 summit circuit or at WTO get-togethers. But the world's trade negotiators may find they have to listen to the French-speaking Belgian region of Wallonia, home to only 3.6 million people.

In 2016, the region held up Belgium's signature of the CETA trade deal between the entire EU and

Canada, and it could make life complicated for Brussels once again. "We made them evolve CETA. We made them put important safeguard clauses in there. We'll be just as vigilant when it comes to Mercosur," Collin told AFP at the four-day fair and trade show.

And he warns that the regional parliament and Belgium's members of the European Parliament could vote against ratification. The European Commission has tried to reassure farmers, so far to no avail.

The deal contains two big promises to the sector: increased beef imports will be limited to 99,000 tons a year, and one billion euros will be set aside for European farmers. Farmers at Libramont are unconvicted and pessimistic for the future despite the impressive size and quality of their livestock, proudly on display.

"Lots of older farmers find it difficult to sell up, especially livestock farmers," says Beatrice Ghyselen, a 61-year-old farmer from Vedrin, outside the Wallon capital Namur.

'Farmer no longer No.1'

"My children and their spouses are interested in growing crops, but pretty skeptical about betting on beef," she says. Ghyselen's family pioneered the introduction of Limousin cattle in Belgium, and she still has 300 head of cattle.

Beef prices may be high in European shops right now, she admits, but production costs are relatively higher still and farmers' margins are tight. Ghyselen would like to see a more detailed labelling system to educate consumers. For his part, 49-year-old Falys keeps 50 Charolais cattle.

A small herd, but he concentrates on directly serving local retail with high quality product, cutting out the supermarket chains. Jean-Luc Pierret, 64, and his son Xavier, have been growing their cattle with organic feed in Orgeo, outside Libramont since 1999.

Their blonde Aquitaine cattle look fine on the diet,



Vosgian cows graze in a meadow on the ridge of the Vosges mountains, in La Bresse, eastern France. The Vosgian Cow, whose milk produces the Munster Gerome cheese, is adapted to the harsh mountainous conditions. It was a very common species in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By the 1970s only 3,000 cows remained. Today breeders have brought the number up to over 10,000. — AFP

and a magnificent bull wins third place at the fair, but they are not confident of continued commercial success. "I've haven't got a good feeling about it," Xavier says of a future dominated by huge world trading blocs. "From what I can see, the farmer is no longer number

one. I wish the young ones courage, they'll need it."

The EU-Mercosur pact won't enter into effect until the parliaments of all 28 — or 27 after Brexit-member states give the go ahead. The ratification process is expected to take at least two years. — AFP

Air France to place mega-order for A220 jets

PARIS: Air France will this week announce plans to purchase between 50 and 70 Canadian-made Airbus A220 medium-haul jetliners, part of a keenly-awaited revamp of its fleet, France's Journal du Dimanche newspaper reported yesterday.

Air France's board is expected to confirm the huge order on Tuesday, a day before the carrier publishes its results for the first half of 2019. It could include an option on "other aircraft of the same type" but contrary to previous speculation is not expected to include any of Airbus' popular narrow-body A320neo jets, the Journal du Dimanche reported.

No estimate was given for the value of the deal. Air France refused to confirm the order, saying that "no decision has been taken at this stage". Airbus refused to comment.

The A220 was known as the Bombardier C Series before Airbus bought a majority share



The A220 medium-haul jetliner was known as the Bombardier C Series before Airbus bought a majority share in the loss-making aircraft last year and rebranded it. — AFP

in the loss-making aircraft last year and rebranded it. Assembled in the Canadian province of Quebec, it can carry between 100 and 150 passengers and has a range of more than 6,000 kilometers (3,730 miles).

Benjamin Smith, who became the first non-French chief executive of Air France-KLM

last year, is also Canadian. He is on a drive to cut the carrier's costs and help it compete against low-cost rivals by closing or reducing loss-making short-haul routes and making use of smaller aircraft. In May, he announced plans to cut up to 465 jobs through voluntary redundancies. — AFP

Wall Street Week Ahead

Even if Fed cut is a given, Powell seen as wild card for stock market

NEW YORK: US Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell will have to walk a fine line to avoid roiling the stock market next week, even if the central bank delivers on expectations and lowers interest rates for the first time in more than a decade.

Investors are betting that the Fed most likely will cut the federal funds rate by 25 basis points to a range of 2.00 percent to 2.25 percent at the end of its two-day meeting on July 31. Whether that kicks off the first full-blown rate-easing cycle since September 2007, when the financial crisis was starting to build, or a more limited spurt of "insurance" cuts, is far from clear. Regardless, the S&P 500 has a history of rising in the months following the onset of Fed cutting cycles, even the pair of mini-cycles in the mid-1990s.

But with the benchmark index already up 20 percent year-to-date partly due to rate-cut expectations, a quarter-point cut may not be enough to expand on or even sustain 2019's gains. Instead, the market will look to Powell's view on the economy and hints about his appetite for further cuts. "You'll see a lot of volatility from the announcement through the end of the press conference because investors are going to parse every single word," said Paul Nolte, portfolio manager at Kingsview Asset Management in Chicago.

Many are looking for Powell to signal more rate cuts.

For example, if Powell says his next steps will be guided by numbers, this may suggest an open mind about future cuts, says TD Ameritrade chief market strategist JJ Kinahan. But if the Fed chief also comments on progress made in the economy, this may erode easing hopes. "We're limited on the upside, but he could say a lot of things that are received poorly. What he says and how it's interpreted could be what disappoints," said Kinahan. "Every word has to be perfect. That's a tough line to walk." Friday's stronger-than-expected reading of second-quarter US gross domestic product will certainly add weight to the argument that a full-on easing cycle may not be warranted for now. How Powell characterizes the Fed's actions against that backdrop is key.

Quincy Krosby, chief market strategist at Prudential Financial in Newark, New Jersey, says investors will look for Powell to mention "cross-currents" from trade again and to say he will do what he can to keep the expansion intact. Even so, "you may see after the meeting that the market takes a breather and consolidates as it waits for the next catalyst," said Krosby, who sees a US-China trade deal as the next big catalyst. Even if the short-term reaction is muted next week, history shows a positive longer-term trend for stocks after the commencement of a rate cutting cycle. Going back to 1954, the S&P 500 rose an average of 14 percent in the 12 months after the Fed started a rate-cutting cycle, according to Audrey Kaplan, head of global equity strategy at Wells Fargo Investment Institute. The S&P fell in the 12 months following the start of just three of 16 easing cycles. In two of those periods - 2001 and 2007 - the economy was already on the cusp of a recession when the cycle started, according to Kaplan. But Kaplan does not see a recession on the horizon this time. — Reuters

Trump adviser says currency intervention off the table; Trump less clear

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration has "ruled out" intervening in markets to lower the US dollar's value, even though President Donald Trump is concerned other countries are weakening their currencies to gain a trade advantage, a top White House adviser said on Friday.

"Just in the past week, we had a meeting with the president and the economic principals and we had ruled out any currency intervention," White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow told CNBC.

White House adviser Peter Navarro, a trade hardliner, presented Trump on Tuesday with ideas on how to devalue the dollar as a way to pressure China in an ongoing trade fight, according to a source familiar with the matter, confirming a Politico report, which said the president quickly dismissed the proposals. Asked why he had decided not to act on them, Trump told reporters at the White House, "I didn't say I'm not going to do something."

Trump has publicly complained about the strength of the dollar, saying it hurts American competitiveness, but Kudlow disputed an assertion that the president wanted a weaker greenback. Rather, he said, other currencies should be stronger.

"I don't agree with your assertion that the president wants a weak dollar," Kudlow said. "What the president is concerned about is that foreign countries may be manipulating their own currencies lower to try to gain some short-term, temporary trade advantage." Kudlow told reporters later on Friday that the president wanted a steady dollar. — Reuters



White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow

Burgan Bank announces winners of Yawmi account draw

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000.

The lucky winners are:

1. Adnan Mohammed Hamdan Alhamad
2. Abdulnaser Mohammed Abutaleb
3. Alaa Abdullah Dahnan Altemeemi
4. Maali Ali Khalil Al-Qattan
5. Salem Ahmad Ali Alibrahim

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a quarterly draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily

and quarterly draws, wherein the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning.

If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.

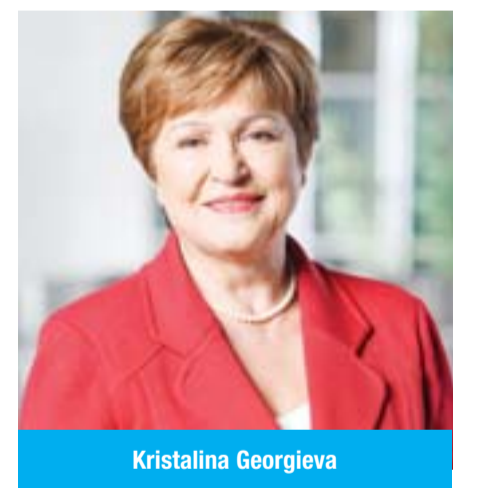
WB's Georgieva added to EU list of candidates to lead IMF

BRUSSELS: European Union governments are working to select one European candidate from a list of five names to succeed Christine Lagarde at the helm of the International Monetary Fund, a French official said on Friday. Bulgaria's Kristalina Georgieva, chief executive of the World Bank, has been added to a list of four names that were discussed by EU finance ministers at a G7 meeting last week, the official said. France is leading the selection process for a European candidate. The managing directors of the Washington-based IMF have so far always been European, under a deal with the United States that gives the presidency of the World Bank to a US candidate.

In addition to Georgieva, the other four European candidates that are under consideration at this stage are: Jeroen Dijsselbloem, the Dutch former head of euro zone finance ministers; Spanish economy minister Nadia Calvino; Mario Centeno, the Portuguese chairman of euro zone finance ministers; and Finnish central bank governor Olli Rehn.

EU governments remain split, with northern European countries preferring Dijsselbloem or Rehn, and southern states pushing for Calvino or Centeno, a European official said. Georgieva, 65, is likely to have the support of eastern European countries, but her candidacy would require a change in the IMF's rules, which require candidates for the post of managing director to be less than 65 years old.

EU states agreed those rules should be changed, but the decision can only be taken by the IMF itself, which has begun a debate on the matter, the



Kristalina Georgieva

French official said. The IMF board announced on Friday that the selection process for the next IMF head will start on July 29 and will last until Sept. 6, which will be the last day to submit a candidacy. The new managing director will be chosen by Oct. 4.

If Europeans failed to reach a compromise on any of the five names under discussion, they could field more than one candidate, the European source said, although that would be "a bad signal" and could weaken Europe's chance of reappointing the IMF chief. European Central Bank President Mario Draghi on Thursday ruled himself out of contention for the IMF job on Thursday, after reports that France was lobbying hard for him to take the role. Lagarde has been nominated to succeed Draghi at the ECB.

Candidates from other countries are also likely to be pushed forward to lead the Fund, whose membership includes nearly all the world's nations. If divisions remained within the EU bloc, new European names could also emerge, the official added. France's Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire had said he was aiming for a decision on a European candidate by end-July.

But if no compromise is found by next week, the decision could be made on the sidelines of a G7 leaders' summit on 24-26 August in Biarritz, France, the European official said. — Reuters

Business

Lexus wins Autoindex Norway for the 8th consecutive year

Lexus is again the undisputed leader in the prestigious Autoindex survey in Norway



KUWAIT: Autoindex is Scandinavia's largest car survey among private car owners. It looks at the entire customer experience that car buyers have with their vehicle and its brand's sales and after-sales support. This year, more than 11,000 Norwegian car owners have contributed to the survey.

"We want to give a unique experience to our customers, from their first visit to a dealer until they drive their new car and when they need service or follow-up. We work hard during the whole year, even sending our employees to elite courses in Europe and Japan to keep

improving our service. It is wonderful that customers reward us year after year with this 'best in the industry' accolade," commented Knut-Erik Jahnsen, head of Lexus in Norway.

Autoindex is conducted annually by Loyalty Group International and looks at several factors: the car and the driving experience (40 percent of the score), the dealer and the purchase experience (20 percent), service at the workshop (20 percent) and loyalty to the brand (20 percent). This year again, Lexus won in all 4 categories.

Lexus is known for being a dedicated engineer company, delivering unique solutions and high-quality products. But the secret ingredient behind the dominance in Autoindex is, according to Jahnsen, to be summarized in one word: Omotenashi, the Japanese sense of hospitality.

"Omotenashi is a core value in Japanese culture. And thus, also for Lexus. It's with us all the time. It's about our dedication to the customer and the product, and how, for example, thousands of hours are spent perfecting details such as color choices and the sound of



the car door when closing. Omotenashi is for us a constant reminder to anticipate our customers' needs and always deliver something more than what is expected. Simply showing an unconditional respect and care for the customer."

Synology urges action to protect data from ransomware attack

DUBAI: Synology recently found that several users were under a ransomware attack, where admins' credentials were stolen by brute-force login attacks, and their data was encrypted as a result. Synology investigated and found that the causes of these attacks were due to dictionary attacks instead of specific system vulnerabilities. This large-scale attack was targeted at various NAS models from different vendors;



Hewitt Lee

therefore, Synology strongly recommends users check their network and account settings to protect data from ransomware.

"We believe this is an organized attack. After an intensive investigation into this matter, we found that the attacker used botnet addresses to hide the real source IP," said Ken Lee, Manager of Security Incident Response Team at Synology Inc. "After collecting admin account passwords with brute-force attacks, the attack was launched on July 19 and caught users off guard. We therefore informed TWCERT/CC and CERT/CC immediately of this matter in hopes of accelerating the collaborative efforts to resolve this incident."

Since this attack is not related to system security vulnerabilities, it is recommended that Synology users utilize built-in network and account management settings to enhance system security level, preventing malicious attacks from the Internet.

"We urge all Synology users to take immediate action to protect their NAS from the ransomware attack," said Hewitt Lee, Director of Product Management at Synology Inc. "Users' data security is always our priority. For those who are not using Synology NAS, we still recommend you take corresponding actions to protect your precious data."

Please make sure you go through the checklist below:

- Use a complex and strong password, and Apply password strength rules to all users.
- Create a new account in administrator group and disable the system default "admin" account.
- Enable Auto Block in Control Panel to block IP addresses with too many failed login attempts.
- Run Security Advisor to make sure there is no weak password in the system.

To ensure the security of your Synology NAS, we strongly recommend you enable Firewall in Control Panel and only allow public ports for services when necessary, and enable 2-step verification to prevent unauthorized login attempts. You may also want to enable Snapshot to keep your NAS immune to encryption-based ransomware.

OMEGA celebrates 1-year countdown to the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020

KUWAIT: As the Official Timekeeper of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, OMEGA has celebrated the one-year countdown to Tokyo 2020, together with the Tokyo Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. To mark the special occasion, an official countdown clock was proudly unveiled in Marunouchi Central Square in downtown Tokyo.

Measuring almost 4m high, the unique clock has been inspired by the rising sun of Japan, as well as elements of the Tokyo 2020 emblems. On one side, the clock counts down to the beginning of the Olympic Games on the 24th of July, while the opposite side counts down to the beginning of the Paralympic Games, beginning on the 25th of August.

To set the time in motion, Christophe Savioz, President and Representative Director of Swatch Group Japan was joined by Yoshiro Mori, President of the Tokyo 2020 Organizing Committee; Alain Zobrist, CEO of OMEGA Timing; and John Coates, IOC member.

The list of VIP speakers also included proud representative of the host city, Yuriko Koike, Governor of Tokyo; and Yuji Fukasawa, President and CEO of East Japan Railway Company. Christophe Savioz said, "I'm particularly proud to represent OMEGA and the Swatch Group in Japan at this incredible time. There is a great feeling of anticipation and excitement that is shared between everyone within the brand as well as the host city."

John Coates also commented on the event, saying, "We are privileged to share this moment together with OMEGA, a long-standing partner of the IOC. They bring a level of time-keeping precision and experience that is vital to the Olympic Games and all the athletes who compete."

Alain Zobrist said, "Tokyo is a host city of incredible tradi-



tion and modern technology, which are the very same qualities that OMEGA brings to its timekeeping duties. I am sure this will be an Olympic Games to truly remember."

As a special tribute to tradition, Alain Zobrist also presented Yoshiro Mori with an OMEGA last lap bell. These historic pieces of timekeeping equipment are still used today in certain Olympic Games events and provide a close connection to sport and Swiss-made craftsmanship.

OMEGA is also particularly thankful for the support of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and for the special contribution of East Japan Railway Company, which was a vital partner in support of placing the Countdown Clock in such a key city location.

Tokyo 2020 will mark OMEGA's 29th occasion as Official Timekeeper of the Olympic Games since 1932. As well as recording the dreams of history's greatest athletes, the brand has continually developed and evolved many of the most sophisticated timekeeping technologies in the world of sport.

In its preparations for next year, OMEGA has also launched two Limited Edition watches in time for the 1-year countdown. Both watches are limited to 2,020 pieces each:

- The Seamaster Aqua Terra Tokyo 2020 Limited Edition is a stainless steel timepiece that features a blue ceramic dial with a laser-engraved pattern inspired by Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games emblem. The Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games emblem has been beautifully transferred onto the sapphire crystal caseback.
- The Seamaster Planet Ocean Tokyo 2020 Limited Edition is a special tribute to Japan. The polished white ceramic dial continues the Tokyo theme with a special li-



Alain Zobrist, CEO of OMEGA Timing



lipop central seconds hand, to represent the country's flag. Elsewhere, there is a red liquid ceramic number 20 on the bezel and a sapphire crystal caseback with a transferred Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games emblem.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds holds raffle draws



KUWAIT: The raffle draw winners of "Sparkling Summer" campaign Rajkumar, Deepak Khatter, Muhammed Kasim Shaik, Aarcha Krishna Das and Jiltamol P Uthup are receiving the prize of 100 GM gold bar each from officials of Malabar Gold & Diamonds.

5 reasons why Huawei Mate 20X 5G is the phone you need

KUWAIT: Nowadays countries are racing to deploy 5G networks. 5G will not only make our smartphones better, but it will also usher in new immersive experiences. But to enjoy the vast goodies a 5G network brings, you would need a 5G-supported phone. The new Huawei Mate 20X 5G not only supports 5G but is also compatible with multiple generations of network technology. It is an absolute BANGER with high connectivity speeds, massive display area, three

Leica cameras and monstrous performance. Why are we so in love with the new Huawei Mate 20X 5G? We have 5 good reasons why.

Enjoy true speed like never before

Since being on the Internet is an 'all day, every day' activity, The Huawei Mate 20X 5G offers one of the world's fastest connectivity thanks to 5G, saving you lots of frustration when streaming and downloading. Huawei Mate 20X 5G is compatible with multiple generations of network technology including 4G, 3G and 2G, this phone has it all. And no matter how mature or immature your mobile network is, high speed connectivity is guaranteed thanks to two chipsets: Kirin 980 and the 5G multi-mode chipset Balong 5000.

View content on a bigger screen

Most of us watch movies online on a smartphone nowadays, but a small screen means

squinting and straining your eyes. A large display area make all the difference. The HUAWEI Mate 20X 5G comes with a 7.2 inch dewdrop display, perfect to immerse yourself in an exceptional entertainment experience. It also takes gaming to a new space, where you take control of all the action in a game and always lead the way.

Finally a camera that will 'do it justice'

Huawei Mate 20X 5G has three Leica cameras - 40MP wide angle camera, 20MP ultra-wide camera and the 8MP telephoto camera. With these giant capabilities, you will be able to fit large uninterrupted views in one picture. It's as close as it gets to the real view, crisp, clear and with a three dimensional effect - what you see is what you snap. Extreme close-up shots referred to as 'Macrography' are now possible with Huawei Mate 20X 5G. This phone camera can land a focus on an object as close as 2.5cm.

A battery that is up to the task

It's quite heartbreaking when your device dies down and you need it badly to watch a live fashion show or football game. Thankfully, this is a thing of the past. The Huawei Mate 20X 5G has a 4200mAh battery that is one of the biggest smartphone batteries available on the market, and it is as safe as it is large - being TÜV Rheinland certified. Additionally, it also has Huawei 40W SuperCharge to top up your device in as much less time as possible.

Literally cool

Even if you're running graphically-intensive games at high settings, this device stays cool and responsive thanks to the integration of Huawei SuperCool - a groundbreaking cooling solution that utilizes graphene film and vapor chamber to deliver an outstanding cooling performance. The Huawei Mate 20X 5G is available on all Huawei's store in the State of Kuwait on the 18th of July 2019 for KD 299.9.



What's On



LAPA opens children camp



Loyac Performance Arts Academy (LAPA) opened its Lapa Camp for children, which started on July 7, and will continue until Aug 6, 2019. The academy was keen on organizing the LAPA camp at a higher level through a previous study that included all aspects that develop children's knowledge through art and entertainment activities, and motivates them to develop their hobbies.

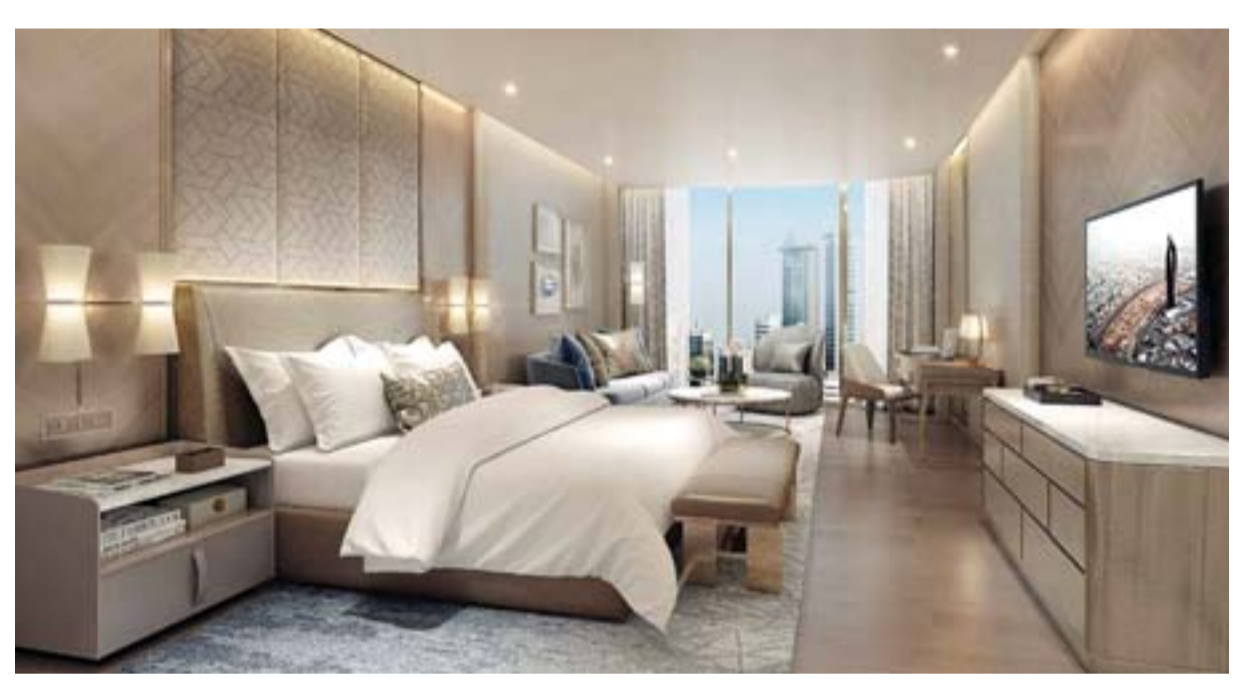
Marina Hotel promises dreamlike wedding at their wedding ballroom

Overlooking the beautiful scenes of the gulf, Marina Hotel has one of the best weddings' ballrooms in Kuwait. Guests looking for a dreamlike wedding can visit the elegantly decorated Sheikhha Salwa Al Sabah Theatre and Hall and enjoy the aesthetic appeal in addition to several add-on features to ensure the highest standards of guest services. Marina Hotel promises to elevate guests' celebrations and guarantees a breathtaking and an unforgettable wedding.

The wedding package includes a designed cake,

different seating styles for the guests to choose from and beautiful table arrangements. The hotel also offers a complimentary late check-out, valet parking, and room upgrade upon availability with breakfast in the next day. Sheikhha Salwa Al Sabah Theatre and Hall can accommodate 500 guests in roundtables and 800 in theater style. It has all the necessary equipment including a soundproof system. Its decor features light colors that give the hall a spacious look. The wall designs and carpets add to the luxury feel.

Sheikha Salwa Al Sabah Theatre and Hall includes a VIP Lounge with a private entrance; this is where the bride and her family can relax during the wedding celebration. The reception area has an incredible outdoor terrace that allows guests to enjoy their meals while taking in panoramic view of the Arabian Gulf. Nabil Hammoud, General Manager of Marina Hotel Kuwait said: "Marina Hotel promises you and your wedding guests an unforgettable memory and a timeless experience." "With our superior hospitality services, we are committed to making every moment worth it," he added.



Sheraton Kuwait to commence renovation

We are delighted to announce that Sheraton Kuwait, a Luxury Collection Hotel will commence a phased renovation of its guest rooms and suites. This renovation is a key milestone for this iconic hotel and reiterates our commitment towards creating an elevated brand experience for our guests. This renovation presents to you its unique selection of exquisite designs and pleasant colors aimed to provide our guests with a luxurious and modern touch for an exceptional experience.

During this renovation, Sheraton Kuwait continues to offer its authentic rooms and suites, in addition to our spacious ballrooms and variety of cuisines from around the world to meet the needs and expectations of its guests. The Management of Sheraton Kuwait is working closely with the contractors to minimize the impact on our guests and ensure that we remain a welcoming and comfortable place to stay and continue to deliver the highest standards of service.

In the occasion of this renovation, Fahed Abushaar, Complex General Manager of Sheraton Kuwait provided a detailed overview of this plan in collaboration with Marriott International and the owners to accomplish a complete project in the next three years which aims to meet our high standards and services which helps us to be recognized as the pioneer for the hospitality industry.



Nargis Al-Shatti handed over a financial donation to the Ambassador of the Republic of Sierra Leone, to provide livestock to people in need in the Republic of Seirra Leone during the holy feast of sacrifice "Eid Al-Adha". The ambassador assured that the amount will be put to proper use under her close supervision.

Tensions surge over Serbia's small hydropower plants

Rural community fears plant will devastate fish stocks

RAKITA: Deep in the isolated forests of eastern Serbia a digger gouges a channel through the trees for a pipeline to siphon river water, as the coal-reliant country's efforts to clean up its energy habit triggers a hydro "gold rush". The remote and sparsely-populated Bulgarian border region of Stara Planina, which means Old Mountain in Serbian, is famed for rugged peaks and pristine rivers cascading through dense woodlands.

But it is at the heart of a backlash against a rash of controversial small-scale hydro projects, which Serbia has encouraged in order to try to meet ambitious renewables targets as part of efforts to join the European Union. "You are not welcome" reads a signboard in the hamlet of Rakita. The message is aimed at hydropower laborers, who are protected by guards as they work to lay the pipes that will divert up to 90 percent of the local river's water to an energy-generating turbine.

The rural community views the Raktika river, which runs through the village itself, as a lifeline and fears the plant will devastate fish stocks, cause wells to dry up and deprive livestock of water. Police intervene regularly to avert clashes. Rakita locals have spent two years fighting against the power plant, holding protests in Belgrade or closer to home in the town of Pirot. They are not alone.

The battle over energy policy is sweeping through much of the Balkans, where campaigners say the proliferation of small-scale hydropower projects threaten the future of some of Europe's most unspoiled waterways and the vast swathes of flora and fauna they support.

Environmental group RiverWatch has said there is a "gold rush atmosphere" in the region over the hydropower projects, with some 3,000 planned, many in otherwise pro-

TECTED areas. "It would be like destroying cathedrals to build shopping malls to make more money," said RiverWatch founder Ulrich Eichelmann recently in Belgrade.

Coal habit

Serbia relies on coal for some 70 percent of its electricity, with hydropower accounting for around a quarter. Wind and solar power currently provide only a tiny fraction of its energy. But the country, which is negotiating EU accession, is keen to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and has signed up to an ambitious renewables target of 27 percent by next year. The European Commission said the country was "not yet on course" to meet the target in a 2018 report.

The focus has turned to water. So far, about 100 small hydropower plants have been constructed in Serbia, according to the environment ministry. The EPS state power company is offering heavy subsidies-committing to buy electricity generated by small hydropower plants at a price 50 percent higher than the market rate. That has attracted wealthy individuals, many with no prior experience. Contacted by AFP, EPS referred to the energy ministry which did not reply. According to Milos Bakovic Adzic, of the Right to Water association, these plants have become an "easy way" to earn money. The Belgrade lawyer who finances the Rakita plant could not be reached by AFP.

No magic wand

The environmental impact of small-scale hydropower is not a secret, said Dragan Josic, head of the national association of private investors in the sector. But "it's nothing compared with the effect produced by coal-fired power plants," he told AFP. "There is no magic wand, if we want



RAKITA: A photo shows the construction site of the Mini Hydro-Power Plant in the village of Rakita, Serbia. — AFP

electricity we have to produce it from the potential we have." According to a recent study by the Health and Environment Alliance non-governmental organization, coal pollution is responsible for premature death of 570 people annually in Serbia, the heaviest toll in the Balkans.

But Ratko Ristic, dean of the Forest sciences faculty at Belgrade University, sees coal as a pragmatic option. "We simply cannot close the power stations and go back to the stone age," he said. According to projections dating from the 1980s, he notes some 856 small hydropower plants were earmarked for Serbia, but argues they would produce only "two to three percent of our annual electricity needs". But they would put "into tubes 2,400 kilometers of rivers in the most vulnerable regions", he said. RiverWatch

and campaigners EuroNatur say there is another way-arguing that nations could meet or even exceed the power from small hydro projects with other renewables, particularly solar and wind.

In January, Rakita residents found an ally in the environment ministry, which ordered a halt to construction work. Minister Goran Trivan said at the time that the energy "contribution" of such plants "is small compared to the damage" caused. But the ban had no effect, because it has to be implemented by other government departments. Abandoned and dilapidated houses now dot the village, which has seen its population wither from 2,000 people to just 200. Even if their protest fails, some are determined not to give up. —AFP

Seven dead tigers found in Vietnam

HANOI: A haul of frozen tiger carcasses found in a car in Hanoi has led to the arrest of a key wildlife trafficking suspect, Vietnamese state media said Friday, as the country tries to tackle a well-worn smuggling route from Laos. Nguyen Huu Hue, who is believed to have smuggled animals in from neighboring Laos for years, was arrested Thursday with two other people after seven dead tigers were discovered in their vehicle at a parking lot, according to Cong An Nhan Dan newspaper.

"Hue set up a company... which sells building material as a cover for the illegal trading of tigers and wildlife," Cong An Nhan Dan, the official mouthpiece of the Ministry of Public Security, reported. All seven tigers appeared to be cubs, according to photos of the seizure. It was not immediately clear if the dead tigers had come from the wild or from the many illegal tiger farms in Laos, which supply much of Asia's demand for tiger meat and parts.

Police have previously busted several other members of the same wildlife trafficking ring, which has been running for several years from a central province which shares a border with Laos. Vietnam is both a consumption hub and popular smuggling route for illegal wildlife—from tigers to elephant tusks, pan-

golins and rhino horn. Some of it is destined for domestic consumption in Vietnam, while the rest is smuggled on to China.

Tiger parts are used for traditional medicine or jewelry in Vietnam, where the once-large population of the endangered cats has dwindled dramatically. Their bones are commonly boiled down and mixed with rice wine to make an elixir believed to treat arthritis and promote strength.

The smugglers' arrest in Hanoi follows a record seizure in Singapore this week of nearly nine tons of ivory and a huge stash of pangolin scales destined for Vietnam. Hanoi has long vowed to crack down on the illegal wildlife trade, though conservationists say the black market persists thanks to weak law enforcement. — AFP



HANOI: In this photo seven tiger carcasses seized by police are pictured in Hanoi. — AFP

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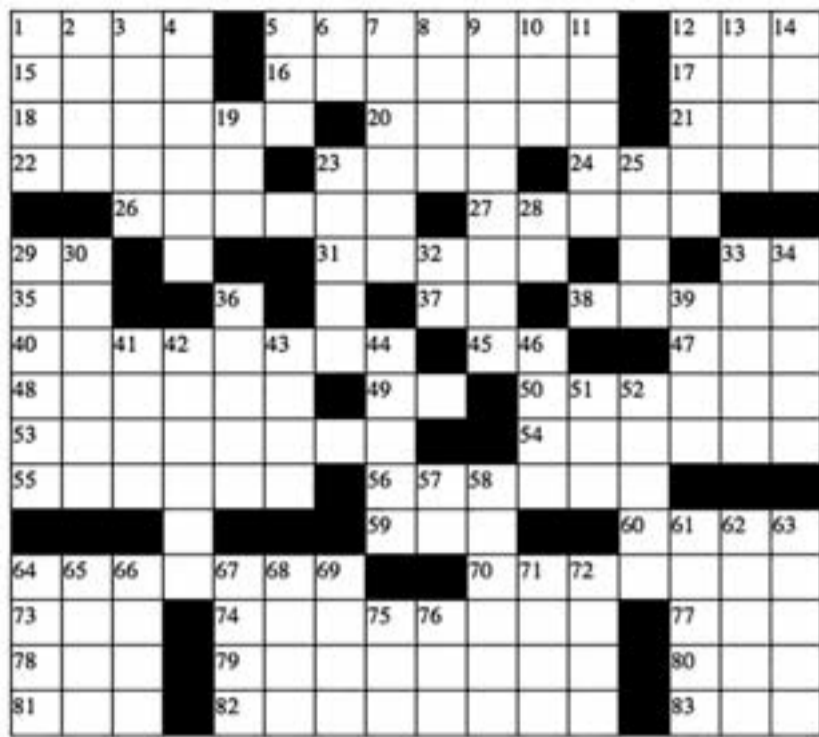
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2269



ACROSS

- Made from residue of grapes or apples after pressing.
- Loose temporary stitches.
- Being one hundred more than two hundred.
- Large elliptical brightly colored deep-sea fish of Atlantic and Pacific and Mediterranean.
- A formal charge of wrongdoing brought against a person.
- A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
- Feeling an inappropriate lack of seriousness.
- The address where a person lives.
- Having undesirable or negative qualities.
- Any of several tall tropical palms native to southeastern Asia having egg-shaped nuts.
- A condensed but memorable saying embodying some important fact of experience that is taken as true by many people.
- Syncopated music in duple time for dancing the rumba.
- Employing variations in pitch to distinguish meanings of otherwise similar words.
- A metallic element of the rare earth group.
- A unit of dry measure used in Egypt.
- The branch of engineering science that studies the uses of electricity and the equipment for power generation and distribution and the control of machines and communication.
- A colorless and odorless inert gas.
- An assertion of a right (as to money or property).
- (sometimes followed by 'to') Meeting the requirements especially of a task.
- The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- A nucleic acid consisting of large molecules shaped like a double helix.
- An immovable joint (especially between the bones of the skull).
- A unit of magnetomotive force equal to 0.7958 ampere-turns.
- Joint capital (with Mecca) of Saudi Arabia located in the central oasis.
- In a linear manner.
- The French-speaking part of the Canadian Maritime Provinces.
- Render capable or able for some task.
- The twelfth month of the Hindu calendar.
- A police officer who investigates crimes.
- A town and port in northwestern Israel in the eastern Mediterranean.
- Symptom consisting of a localized collection of pus surrounded by inflamed tissue.
- Dyed with henna.
- The syllable naming the sixth (submedian) note of a major or minor scale in solmization.
- An antineoplastic drug used to treat certain malignancies.
- A master's degree in business.
- The sound made by corvine birds.
- (zoology) Having a tail or taillike appendage.
- A decree that prohibits something.
- A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
- Genus of tropical American timber trees.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

- Among the largest bony fish.
- Someone who copies the words or behavior of another.
- Someone who rants and raves.
- Affectedly trendy.
- (used of animals especially a horse) Of a moderate reddish-brown color n1.
- A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- Of or relating to a directionless magnitude.
- Conduit consisting of a long hollow object (usually cylindrical) used to hold and conduct liquids or gases.
- Order of social insects that live in colonies, including.
- A coenzyme derived from the B vitamin nicotinic acid.
- Gather, as of as crops.
- A clique that seeks power usually through intrigue.
- A steep rugged rock or cliff.
- (of a young animal) Abandoned by its mother and raised by hand.
- The 19th letter of the Greek alphabet.
- At or near or toward the stem of a ship or tail of an airplane.
- Tropical woody herb with showy yellow flowers and flat pods.
- A Russian river.
- A member of the a nomadic tribe of Arabs.
- An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
- Of or relating to or supporting Hinduism.
- A member of the Siouan people formerly living in the Missouri river valley in NE Nebraska.
- Of or relating to the dura mater.
- (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- An inactive volcano in Sicily.
- The French-speaking capital of the province of Quebec.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- A republic in northeastern Africa known as the United Arab Republic until 1971.
- (informal) Exceptionally good.
- A hospital unit staffed and equipped to provide intensive care.
- A language group of the Hokan family.
- A very light colorless element that is one of the six inert gases.
- Common house and field crickets.
- A Bantu language spoken by the Kamba people in Kenya.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
- Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
- A neutral middle vowel.
- Make an etching of.
- A carriage consisting of two wheels and calash top.
- Perennial of wet and marshy places in the northern hemisphere.
- A fencing sword similar to a foil but with a heavier blade.
- A quantity of no importance.
- A lyric poem with complex stanza forms.
- Of a light yellowish-brown color n1.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

It may seem as if your life has taken on a somewhat mystical quality at an emotional and instinctive level. You find your dreams take priority over your realities. Forgiveness is on your mind and you long to have harmony in all of your relationships. A sense of true peace is what you desire. You may find with minimal effort today is a day that you are able to dissolve barriers. Fences may be mended, and awkward relationships may fall right back into place. You long for peace and it may seem as if peace is longing to return to your life. Wishes do come true and today will be proof of this in your world. Enjoy all this day has to offer.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Whether a surprise to day is good or bad depends on your interpretation. Look on the positive side of things. Assume the situation will have a good outcome, and then work to make it happen. You can do anything you set your mind to do. You have tremendous powers that are waiting to be activated. Believe in yourself, Taurus. In addition to convincing others, you may have to convince yourself.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Forgiveness and understanding are two awesome qualities to possess. You are able to put both of these to great use today. Both mending fences and repairing relationships are on the top of your priority list. You seem to be focused not only on the past but also on the future. You know to move forward and be at peace you need to let by gones be by gones. This will be a very emotional but empowering time in your life. The decisions you make today will have lasting effects on your life. You seem to really be in touch with a psychic ability you possess today. You are able to read the reaction of the people you approach. Love and luck are in your favor today.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You have the ability to get outside yourself and see what is going on with others. This may mean you see things others are unable to see. It is a gift that could serve you well in journalism or crime detection. Or, you may just find it useful in personal relationships. You can see beyond the "what" and identify the "why" in the behavior.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

This is a time of healing in your life. You may see barriers seem to dissolve and relationships repaired. Life is to short to hold grudges and you seem to be willing to do whatever it takes with anyone you feel as wronged you. This will bring peace and harmony into your life.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

People are attracted to your non-judgmental attitude. You always give the benefit of the doubt. This leads people to trust you when you make suggestions for change or improvement. Your friends and coworkers all know they can depend on you to come through for them. The downside may be that you don't see character flaws. This can lead to deep disappointments. Don't change your attitude Virgo. It's a valuable asset. Just watch for it.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You are at peace. You have stability in your life and this is very comforting to you. Comfort and happiness are very familiar in your world. Now is a time music seems to draw you in. An outdoor concert, playing an instrument, or simply turning up your favorite tunes will bring a great sense of peace into your world today. There is a nagging feeling to be free from what seems to be coming over you today. A shopping trip or taking some time to spoil yourself is in order. You work hard and constantly do for others. Take the time this evening to do something special for you, Libra. You deserve it.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

It may seem as if your life has taken on a somewhat mystical quality at an emotional and instinctive level. You find your dreams take priority over your realities. Forgiveness is on your mind and you long to have harmony in all of your relationships. A sense of true peace is what you desire. You may find with minimal effort today is a day that you are able to dissolve barriers. Fences may be mended, and awkward relationships may fall right back into place. You long for peace and it may seem as if peace is longing to return to your life. Wishes do come true and today will be proof of this in your world. Enjoy all this day has to offer.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

It seems as if your job requirements could stifle your sensitivity and hold you back from growing. Do not let all the seriousness take away your emotion. Take special care when handling this situation. It seems as if everything is bringing out the best in you. Your unique and unusual qualities seem to shine now. You are blessed to find someone close to you shows you much support. They may find your eccentricities refreshing and find that they are drawn to you. This would be a great time to find new solutions to old problems or great inventions.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Call it intuition or psychic ability. Whatever label you choose, now is a time you clearly see what the future holds, the next move others are about to make, and the consequences before the action occurs. You are in touch with your spiritual side. You are extremely sensitive to all that is around you. The feelings of others seem to weigh heavily on you, as if they were your own. You may feel as if you are weighed down with emotional baggage. This is not from personal issues, rather from the negative energy you seem to be absorbing from others. This is a good time for you to make arrangements to spend some time alone. This is a time to remember, the only person you can change is you.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Life seems to take on a mystical quality for you now. You may find you develop a greater understanding of just how fragile life is. A wake-up call seems to make you realize each day you are alive is a blessing. You are determined to live life to the fullest. This is a time you may start living as tomorrow will not come. Life is short and you are determined to love hard. This seems to influence you to be more affectionate and loving to those you are close to. You are in love with your life and all those in it.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You are sensitive and understanding. This makes you a friend that others want to have. Not only do you find others turning to you for advice, but you feel loved and admired. You are in a great position for your voice to be heard. You will be able to share your opinions on the matters that mean the most to you and will find that you will easily gain support and backing for your cause. You feel great about who you are and what you stand for and are eager to have others join your team. Pisces, keep your

Wordsearch Puzzle

Autumn

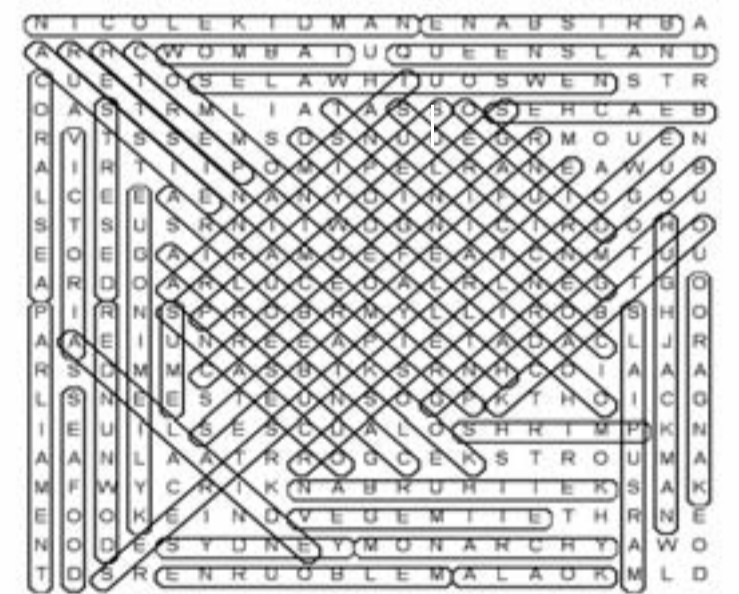
Find and circle all of the Autumn words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message - an Albert Camus quotation.



- | | | | |
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| ACORN | EQUINOX | NOVEMBER | SEPTEMBER |
| APPLE | FALL | OCTOBER | SHORTER DAYS |
| BIRD MIGRATION | FARMING | ORANGE LEAVES | SQUASH |
| BLOWING LEAVES | FEAST | PIE | SWEET POTATOES |
| BLUSTERY DAY | FROST | PUMPKIN | THANKSGIVING |
| CANNING | HALLOWEEN | RAKE | TURKEY |
| CHESTNUTS | HARVEST | RED LEAVES | WINDY |
| CHILLY | HAYSTACK | SCARECROW | YELLOW LEAVES |
| COLD | HICKORY NUTS | SCHOOL | |
| CROPS | LONGER NIGHTS | SEASON | |

Yesterday's Solution

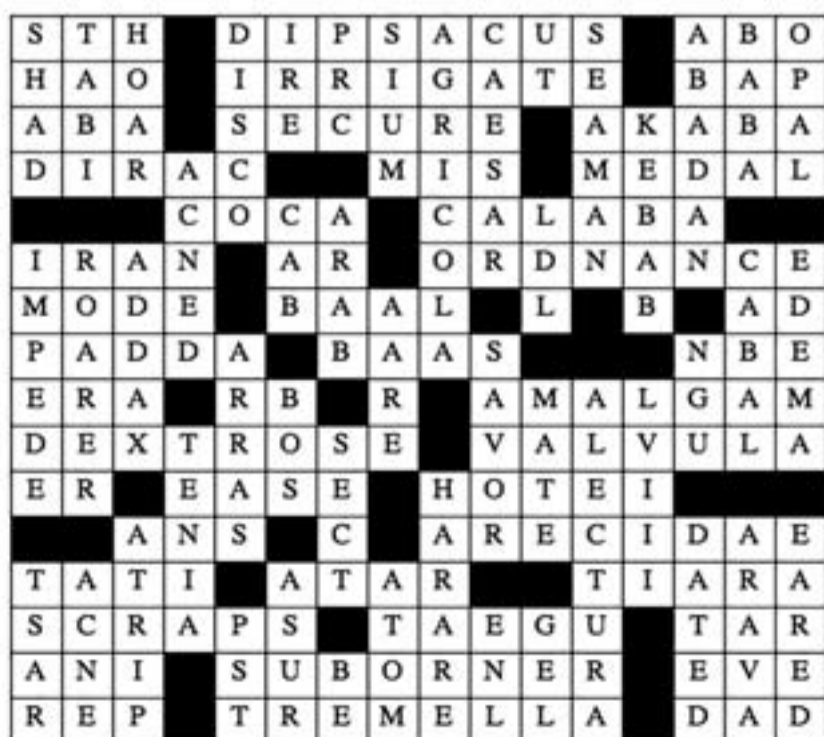
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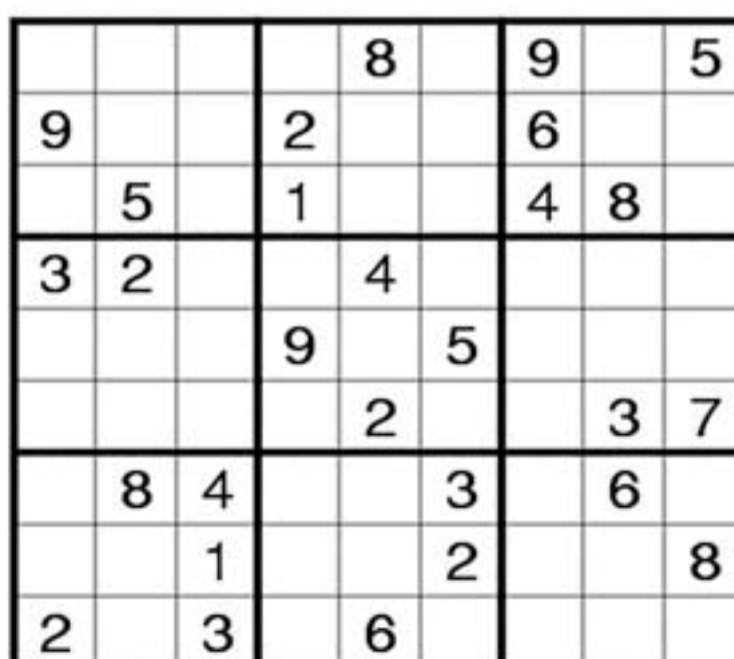
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The hidden message is: AUSTRALIA'S MOUNT AUGUSTUS IS THE LARGEST ROCK IN THE WORLD

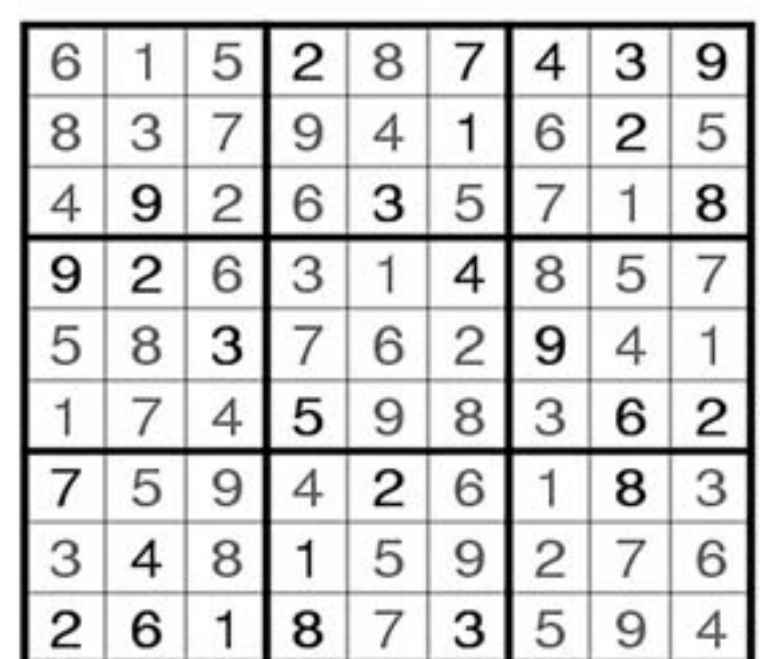
Yesterday's Solution



Daily Sudoku



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Lifestyle

MONDAY, JULY 29, 2019



Syrian Kurds in traditional clothing dance the "Dabke" in a street festival in the city of Rumaylan (Rmeilan) in Syria's northeastern Hasakeh province. — AFP

Russi Taylor, voice of Minnie Mouse, dies at 75

Russi Taylor, Disney's official voice of Minnie Mouse for more than three decades, has died, the entertainment giant announced Saturday. She was 75. Taylor, who was prone to giggles just like the character she voiced, captured the heart and sound of Mickey Mouse's counterpart on TV, in cartoons and film, and at theme parks. "Minnie Mouse lost her voice with the passing of Russi Taylor," Bob Iger, chairman and chief executive of The Walt Disney Company, said in a statement.

"For more than 30 years, Minnie and Russi worked together to entertain millions around the world—a partnership that made Minnie a global icon and Russi a Disney Legend beloved by fans everywhere. "We take comfort in the knowledge that her work will continue to entertain and inspire for generations to come," Iger said. Taylor died in

Glendale, California on Friday, Disney said. The company did not give the cause of death. Taylor had been Disney's pick from a group of 200 candidates at a 1986 audition.

The Massachusetts native said she actually met Walt Disney as a girl, on a visit to Disneyland. "At one point during our chat, he asked me what I wanted to do when I grow up, and I said, 'I want to work for you!' So he said, 'Okay!—and now I do!' she was quoted as saying in a profile released by Disney. Life imitated art when Russi met her real-life Mickey in the 1980s: it was Wayne Allwine, who had voiced Mickey Mouse since 1977. "Wayne was coming out of a session as Mickey for 'Totally Minnie.' We met in the hallway. We just blended really well," Taylor told the LA Times in 2014.

They wed in 1991 but generally "kept it quiet. We didn't

want it to be about Mickey and Minnie being married. It was about Wayne and Russi being married. We had the best time. We laughed a lot. We were always singing. We always had music in the house." The duo stayed as close as their animated counterparts until Wayne's 2009 death. "I really want whoever comes after us to be aware of the history and the tradition, and to love the characters as much as we do," she said of herself and Allwine. "I never wanted to be famous," she said. "The characters I do are famous, and that's fine for me." In addition to Minnie Mouse and other Disney characters, Taylor was also the voice of Strawberry Shortcake and Pebbles Flintstone. She worked in television for decades, including on "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" and "The Simpsons." — AFP



Russi Taylor, voice of Minnie Mouse.

AFRICAN SATIRIST MAMANE PLANS DRAMA SCHOOL TO PROMOTE 'FREEDOM'

On a dusty patch of land on the outskirts of the capital Niamey, Niger's most famous comedian Mamane shows off a site he says will host a drama school to promote African artists and freedom on a continent rife with corruption and strife. Largely unknown in the Anglosphere, the performer is famous in French-speaking Africa for the satirical radio show "The Very, Very Democratic Republic of Gondwana" spoofing crooked regimes and the rich nations that prop them up. Having spent a large part of his career in France, Mamane smiles with pride as he describes plans to construct a drama school that will offer comedy and other entertainment training to Niger's youth.

"We are all Muslims, Christians—we are human beings—and it will be a school to really learn freedom, the love of life, Living together is what we want," he said. Rated by the United Nations as one of the world's least developed nations, the push to open a drama school is an unusual step in a country better known for its entrenched poverty and jihadist insurgency. "All that

the jihadists don't like is to see people live, enjoying their freedom to the full. They want to constrain people and lay down the law," Mamane said. "This (school) aims to provide jobs to young Africans, giving hope to these young people, telling them that we can create jobs here in Africa," he said.

It is the latest step in a career that has already won over an international radio audience of some 30 million people, according to a Radio France International estimate, and a switch to the big screen with the 2016 satirical film 'Bienvenue au Gondwana' ('Welcome to Gondwana'). Like Mamane's radio work, the movie made fun of an African state whose venal dictator is set on clinging to power. "Policemen in Africa sometimes call me 'Mr President'," Mamane told AFP after being pulled over by a policeman during a routine check on the road and then saluted in jest by the cop who recognized him as the comedian. "This is African second-degree humor, a way of laughing while criticizing the system. It's a kind of resilience."

'Project of my life'

Born in 1966, Mamane spent his formative years living in foreign capitals with six siblings as their father was a career diplomat. He embarked on a scientific career and moved to France in 1991 to finish a master's degree in plant physiology. But once in Paris, the underbelly of power he observed as a child came to the fore as he took to the stage and honed an act known for tackling touchy topics and lambasting African rulers. Now branching out, Mamane says he plans to take his irreverent stand-up act to the English-speaking world.

"I'm preparing a bilingual show with Anglophone humorists from Nigeria, Cameroon and Rwanda in October," he told AFP. "I haven't played in Anglophone countries yet but it's my next step." But his focus is still on the sandy patch of ground which he says one day will help develop a new generation of Niger comedians. "This school will grow and it will really be the project of my life," he said. — AFP



Nigerian humorist Mamane shows the site where he will construct his future school of comedy, in Niamey.

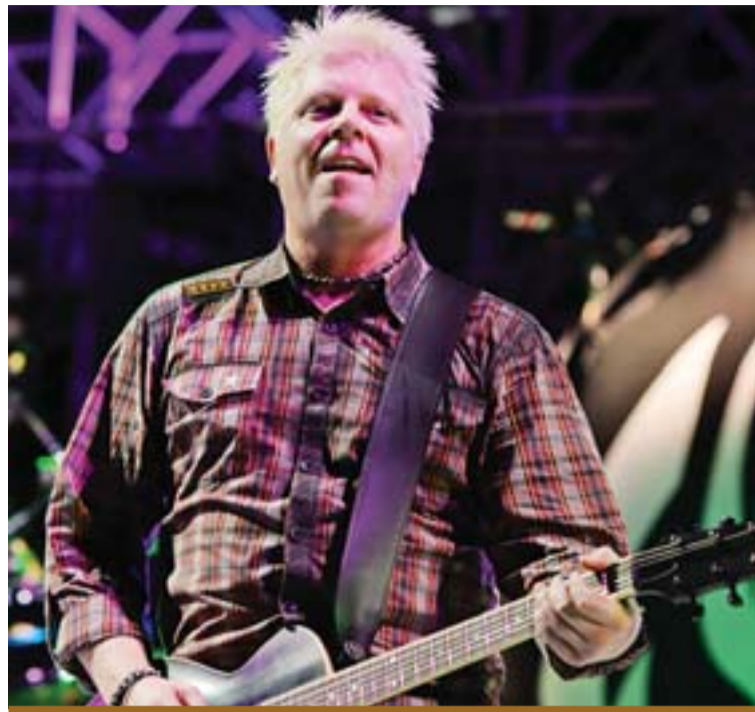


Nigerian humorist Mamane poses in the Palais des sports theatre of Niamey, ahead of his show.



Nigerian humorist Mamane performs on stage during his show at the Palais des sports theatre of Niamey.— AFP photos





The Offspring had an 'amazing time' reuniting with producer Bob Rock

The Offspring had an "amazing time" working with long-time producer Bob Rock on their first album in seven years. Frontman Dexter Holland has teased that the band's first studio effort since 2012's 'Days Go By' has "a lot of pretty fast stuff" and surprising tracks on there and gushed about how great it was to reunite with the studio wizard again. Dexter said: "We've had an amazing time in the studio with Bob. We have history with him—he knows what works for us and how to get the best out of us. "Save for a few small things, we're pretty much wrapped and excited to get these tunes out there. "We have a lot of really fast stuff on there, plus a couple of things that you might not really expect from us." And guitarist Noodles added that the new material is much like their old stuff too. He added: "People keep asking me what it sounds like and I say, it sounds like ... us. "It's all there-

the melody, the powerful drums, bass and guitar. We dig it. You'll dig it." A release date and album title is yet to be revealed by the band. The 'Pretty Fly' hitmakers previously revealed that they were contemplating releasing their latest music on two separate albums as there's a wide array of songs on the latest record, some of which are more "left field" than the group's usual sound. Noodles said: "I think there's a record's worth in there, but we're thinking that maybe the songs are just a little too different. We know there's a song or two on every record that comes out of left field for us, but it's more than just a couple this time. "Right now, we're entertaining the idea of doing two records - one where we can put all of these, and another of straight-up Offspring songs."

Cilmi admits working with brother Joseph had its challenges



Gabriella Cilmi and her brother shouted and slammed doors when they first started working together. The 27-year-old singer and her sibling Joseph co-wrote her upcoming new EP - which features her single Ruins - and while it helped collaborating with a family member, the experience still had its fair share of challenges. Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz, she explained: "He's kind of harder on me than anyone else, in the sense that he's watched me since I was a kid. He knows all my strengths, and he knows probably my weaknesses too. "It helped to be honest - there's so many conversations you can have with your brother that you can't have with someone that you're working with. "When we first started working together it was pretty hard, there were some screaming sessions and slamming the door type things. But we got through it, we complement each other. He thinks quite analytically and I think the other way." Gabriella - who was just a teenager when her single 'Sweet About Me' topped the Australian charts 11 years ago - wanted her new material to be more raw and honest, which was reflected in the way she went about writing the songs. She said: "My brother and I would literally sit around with the mobile phone and record loads of ideas. Some days we might get five - some of them might be completely not very good, but some of them tend to work. "I guess it's just that stream of consciousness capturing a moment and that's what I wanted it to feel like." Working on a record in this way brought about "a lot of trial and error" before Gabriella settled on the style she knew was right for this stage of her career. She added: "There was a lot of trial and error. I tried a lot of different things before I worked out what exactly it was that I wanted to do. "There was a lot of experimenting with production, and that kinda wasn't working out. So I thought, screw it, let's strip it back. "I started writing on acoustic and keeping it really simple, and that's when creatively things started working for me."

Swedish pop star LEON wants to write for Adele

LEOON would love to pen a song for Adele. The Swedish star - who counts Katy Perry as a fan - has revealed she is hoping she will be able to devote herself to someone else and write music for other artists one day, and the 'Hello' hitmaker is at the top of her wish list. In an exclusive interview with BANG Showbiz, she said: "I think it's hard for me to put myself aside. "But I am going to work on it. "I always have such admiration for songwriters who are amazing singers but they don't have an artist career and give all of themselves to someone else." Asked who would be her dream person to write for, she said: "There are a bunch of people. "Not to sound too cliché, but I would love to write a song for Adele. "I think she's incredible and I would love to write for her." She joked: "I mean, she is better off on her own, but yeah." LEON recently revealed she would "love to" collaborate with Katy Perry after she received a shout out from the US pop superstar in 2015 when the 34-year-old singer described her as "one to watch". She said: "I would never turn down a collaboration with Katy Perry, I would love to. We are such different artists but I would not say no. It depends on what it would be for, never say never." And the rising star - whose real name is Lotta Lindgren - still finds it surreal to have received the praise from Katy, who tweeted a link to her song 'Tired of Talking' four years ago, and said it was her "song of the day". She said: "It's just crazy that she discovered my music. I guess everything is so global now, but I have no idea how she found out. "She is great. The fact she did that meant so much. She always does that with a lot of up-and-coming artists. "I think it's really cool that she is willing to shine a light on smaller artists that just started." LEON - who released her self-titled debut album in March - says the 'Chained To The Rhythm' hitmaker now follows her on social media, and although the pair don't know each other personally, she thinks Katy is a "good gal". She added: "She started to follow me on Instagram and sometimes she will like my posts. I met her one time and she is a good gal. I don't know her, but she is great."



Drake legal cases get resolved



Numerous lawsuits tied to Drake's first six albums were resolved on Friday. The 32-year-old rap star - who is now among the best-selling musicians in the world - signed with Aspire Music Group in 2008 and the label subsequently accused Cash Money Records of failing to pay its due share from his first six albums. Aspire's argument centered on its claim that it signed Drake on an exclusive recording agreement in 2008, only for the 'Hotline Bling' hitmaker to strike a deal with Cash Money in June 2009. Under the supposed terms of that agreement, Drake was afforded the chance to record for the label in exchange for one-third of the net profits as well as one-third of the master recording copyrights of his first six albums. According to Aspire, the label only received "a few modest advances" for Drake's first six albums, Billboard reports. What's more, Aspire said that monthly accounting - which it was supposedly entitled to - was irregular and erroneous, before it stopped altogether. The company alleged, too, that Cash Money made a conscious effort to cut Aspire out of their arrangement entirely, even though it had a legally-binding agreement with the rapper. Aspire's claims have now been resolved, but the terms of the settlement have not been revealed publicly.

Lawson to step back and let new music 'come' to him

Jamie Lawson is going to step back and let his new music "come" to him. The 'Wasn't Expecting That' hitmaker has been pretty prolific with two albums 'Happy Accidents' and 'The Years In Between' released within two years of each other, but he plans to not go chasing the inspiration for his next batch of songs. In an interview with BANG Showbiz, he said: "I'm gonna wait for the songs to come a bit. "Last time I really chased the songs for 'The Years In Between' record to try and get it out as quickly as possible. "That came about pretty well, I was pretty happy with that. "This time I will step away for a while and see what happens. "I am not in such a rush this time." Jamie was the first artist signed to Ed Sheeran's label Gingerbread Records and he hasn't been able to catch up with his globetrotting pal, who is currently on tour, released the star-studded 'No.6 Collaborations' album, made a cameo in the film 'Yesterday' and even released his own Heinz Ketchup advert this year, but he's planning to meet with his mentor after the tour. Asked if he's seen him much lately, he said: "Not really. For those reasons. I think this tour ends for him towards the end of August. Hopefully I will be able to catch up with him after then." Meanwhile, Jamie recently revealed he's yet to get a call back from One Direction's Niall Horan to work on music for him. The 43-year-old musician supported One Direction on their 2015 'On the Road Again Tour' and he has revealed he spoke to the Irish hunk - who has been working on his second solo album, following the release of 2017's 'Flicker' - about sending him some of his ideas. He said: "I'd love to. I have offered. I have bumped into Niall a couple of times so ... he hasn't called me yet, but it would be nice to."



Mendes 'can't believe' Chance The Rapper collaboration

Shawn Mendes "can't believe" he was given the opportunity to feature on Chance The Rapper's debut album. The 20-year-old singer and the 26-year-old rap star joined forces to collaborate on the track 'Ballin' Flossin', which features on Chance's album 'The Big Day', and Shawn relished the experience of making the record. He wrote on Twitter: "Cant believe I get to be a part of this album @chancetherapper you're truly the best man thank you! #BallinFlossin (sic)" The Twitter post came shortly after Chance revealed how their collaboration unfolded. He shared: "I've known him for about four or five years. "I met him at a show I played a long time ago, and we just never got some music together. He was in Chicago a few weeks ago and I had this house beat I was working on, and he came through the studio and was like, 'I love this one.' He laid the vocals and it was incredible." Chance also spoke glowingly about Kanye West, describing him as an "amazing friend". The rapper revealed Kanye was a major influence behind his new album, even though the outspoken musician doesn't feature on the record. Chance said: "He's one of the most supportive people in my life. "I went and spent some time with him a couple weeks before the album dropped. He just gave me some ideas. We've spent a lot of time on the phone in the past two days. That's fellowship and it's strengthening each other."



50 Cent: The music industry tried to shun me

50 Cent thinks the music industry tried to shun him when he first came on the scene. The chart-topping rap star released his debut album 'Get Rich or Die Tryin'' in 2003, and has claimed that much like his hit TV show 'Power', the album was overlooked for awards because of a widespread prejudice within the industry. Asked why the predominantly black TV show had been overlooked at the Emmys, he said: "I like to say it's racial. "That's the easy way to get out of things. People who are running and connected to these ceremonies are not necessarily cool people." But 50 admitted it wasn't the first time in his career that he'd been overlooked for awards. The 44-year-old star - who is one of the best-selling rappers of all time - explained: "This project is the same material I used for my music. "I didn't receive an award for Best New Artist when I had the largest debut for a hip-hop album. I sold more records for a first album today. I look at it the same. I'm going to make the numbers." Ultimately, 50 - who plays the part of Kanan Stark on the show - believes the industry will eventually regret overlooking 'Power' and the buzz it's created. He said: "The viewership before we're done with it, they'll be looking around saying 'Yeah, we messed up again.'"



Lifestyle | Gossip



Bell couldn't shake off 'hostile energy' of Skin character

Jamie Bell found it difficult to shake off the "hostile energy" of his character in 'Skin'. The 33-year-old actor stars in the biographical drama as former skinhead group member Bryon Widner, the co-founder of a violent white power group in Indiana called Vinlanders Social Club, who marries a woman called Julie Larsen who - with the help of a black rights activist - helps him turn his back on hate and leave his own organization. Jamie confessed that although he can usually disassociate himself from his roles, he

found it tough to separate himself from the "angry, standoffish, hostile tight energy" of his alter ego. In an interview with The Beat, he said: "I always like to think that being an actor, you always can check the role at the door. You take the costume off and you walk off the set and then it's easy to kind of drop it. "I did think that I was doing a good job of that. It wasn't until about a week later once production was done, I was back home and my wife one day was like, 'Can you just go take a walk or go run it off?' "I think I was just carrying around this hostile

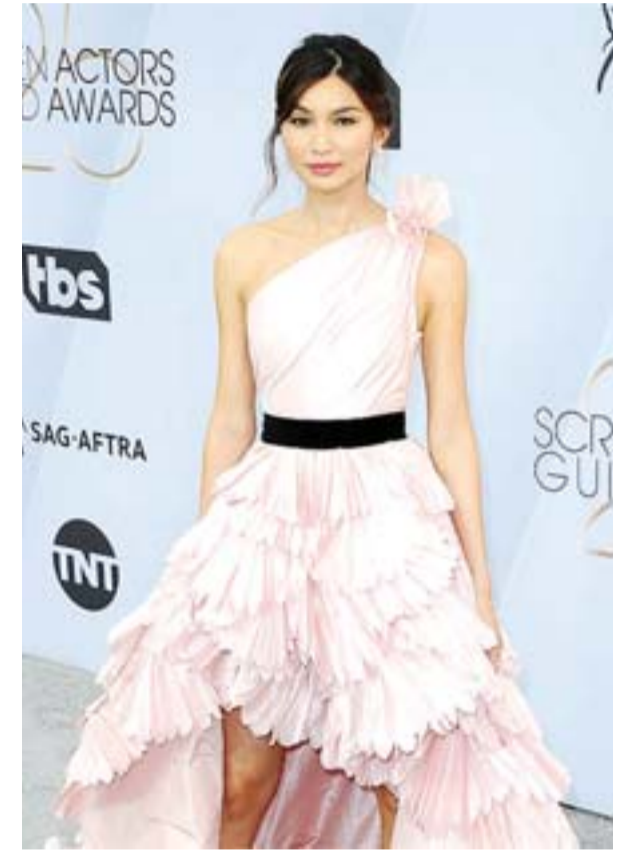
energy. This angry, standoffish, hostile tight energy that I think when you're in the mix of a small movie like this especially, there's no real-time to turn off doing many scenes a day. "There's no luxury of time. You're just in the thick of it. I thought I was actually doing okay, but she disagreed. Just walking around with that attitude just can't be good for you."

Guillermo del Toro isn't 'interested' in scares as director



Guillermo del Toro says he "isn't interested" in scaring his audience. The 53-year-old filmmaker confessed that while working on the genre as a director, he will use "horror images" but likes to treat his films "more like a fairytale". In an interview with SFX magazine, he said: "As a director, I'm not that interested in scares. I use my horror movies more like a fairytale. I do horror images, but like a fairy tale. Guillermo is currently producing the big-screen adaptation of Alvin Schwartz's collection of short horror stories 'Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark' with Andre Ovredal at the helm and confessed that as a producer on a film, he is "very interested" in scares as it's something he "enjoys watching". He said: "As a producer, I'm really interested in the scares with Juan Antonio Bayona in The Orphanage, and with Andy Muschietti on Mama, and Andre Ovredal on [Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark]. I'm

very interested because it's something that I enjoy watching. "In this movie, you need to coax the audience with very elegant camera work and very good set-ups. There's a high production value, too. Plus, I have lots of empathy with the characters." The 'Hellboy' helmer went on to explain that although this film - which is rated PG-13 - is made for families to watch together, he hopes audiences who are children now will be able to appreciate the film in the future. When asked whether the movie was made for children, he said: "When I made the first 'Hellboy', I thought, 'The audience that I really want for this movie is going to be able to tell me what they think 10 years from now!' "I was making that movie for kids and, sure enough, the people who grew up with it are the people who love it most. "However, the beauty of this project is the way that it's a horror movie that can be watched with the family."



Pugh excited by 'boldness' of Black Widow movie

Florence Pugh feels excited by the boldness of the 'Black Widow' script. The 23-year-old actress stars alongside Scarlett Johansson in the much-discussed Marvel movie, and she's admitted to being surprised by some aspects of the film's script. Asked about her initial reaction to the script, Florence told Collider: "I was excited to see how bold it was - and to see how raw it was ... and to see how sad it was. It was a script that I didn't expect to see associated with this. "That was part of the reason I got so excited, and with Cate Shortland attached [to direct] and telling the next part of [the Black Widow's] history, it was only thrilling to be a part of." Earlier this month, Scarlett - who plays the titular character in the movie - said she wants the 'Black Widow' movie to "elevate" the superhero genre. Speaking about the eagerly-awaited film, she explained: "I think even just looking at Cate Shortland's filmography and knowing she's directing this film... "Like, it all clicks together, you understand, people say, 'What's the movie like? What does it look like? What clues can you give us?' "The biggest clue I can give you is that Cate Shortland is directing it. "And her movies are so brutal and breathtaking and raw and truthful and like visually masterful ... that's what I envision for the Black Widow and that's how we can elevate the genre with 'Black Widow'."



Phoenix thinks 'people will be mad' with Joker movie

Joaquin Phoenix thinks "people are gonna be mad" that 'Joker' doesn't "follow anything" from the original comic books. The 44-year-old actor fears that the upcoming movie based on the origin of the DC Comics villain may not live up to fans expectations as he and director Todd Phillips chose to stray from the original DC material and focus on the "story of becoming Joker". Phoenix said: "We didn't follow anything from the comic books, which people are gonna be mad about. We just wrote our own version of where a guy like Joker might come from. "That's what was interesting to me. We're not even doing Joker, but the story of becoming Joker. It's about this man. "The 'Gladiator' actor added that he thought the project sounded "super ambitious" when he first discussed it with Phillips. He told Empire magazine: "I thought it was crazy-ambitious. Todd said to me 'I have this idea, I wanna tell the origin story of the Joker. I said 'Wow okay'. The 'War Dogs' filmmaker went on to explain that he didn't use "one green-screen" in the film as he feels the "energy" from an actor is different if they're filming in real locations rather than a studio. Phillips said: "In the most reductive way it's the New York of 1981 that I remember. It's a broken-down city, and the people in it are broken down. "The energy you get from the actor is different on 179th street and Jerome Avenue in the Bronx than if we did that green-screen, which, by the way, I don't even know how to do shit like that. There's not one green screen in this movie."

Andy Serkis to direct Venom 2?

Andy Serkis is reportedly among the candidates to direct 'Venom 2'. The 55-year-old actor - who directed 2018's 'Mowgli: Legend of the Jungle' - is one of a number of people who've met with Sony about helming the company's 'Venom' sequel, according to The Hollywood Reporter. Ruben Fleischer helmed the first 'Venom' movie, which starred Tom Hardy as Eddie Brock, aka Venom, but he is not returning to direct the sequel. The original movie made as much as \$856 million at the global box office and Sony is determined to start shooting the follow-up before the end of the year, with the company reportedly hoping to begin production work in November. Meanwhile, Andy - who is best-known for his motion-capture work - previously insisted he isn't motivated by accolades. The acclaimed actor claimed he is simply determined to make the best movies he can possibly make, rather than chasing awards. Speaking after making 'Mowgli: Legend of the Jungle', Andy shared: "We don't make films to win awards, it's very lovely if it comes along. "But for me the reward is fulfilling a vision and being in a privileged position to make a film like this where you're going to be sharing it with an audience and hopefully in some small way, changing the perception of humanity."



Gemma Chan: I've tried to mask my nerves

Gemma Chan has "worked hard" to mask her nervousness. The 36-year-old actress - who starred in 2018's 'Crazy Rich Asians' - has claimed that in spite of working in the movie business, she is naturally "shy". She shared: "People don't believe it, but I'm naturally quite shy. I've had to work really hard to mask that, not appear anxious or nervous." Despite her rise to fame, Gemma remains anxious when she takes to the red carpet. Speaking to the Observer newspaper, she explained: "I've nearly fainted before, because you don't realize you're not breathing and all of the flashes start going off in your face." The actress explained that she's developed an alter ego, much like Beyonce's Sasha Fierce, in order to combat her own nerves. She said: "In character I feel like I can do anything, really. That's part of what attracted me to acting. "But if you ask me to make a speech as me, I find that so difficult. I hate my own birthday. I hate being the center of attention." Meanwhile, Gemma previously slammed the "unrealistic" pressure on women. The actress believes society places "crazy" expectations on women and girls across the world. She said: "I think it's crazy how getting pregnant is drilled into you as the worst thing that could happen to you when you're a teenager or in your early 20s. "Then suddenly when you got your mid-30s, the message is that you're running out of time. "You essentially have a few years where you're supposed to meet the right person, settle down and start a family. "I think that can be quite unrealistic."



Kim Cattrall: I choose roles based on how fun they are

Kim Cattrall chooses her acting roles based on how "fun" they are. The 62-year-old actress - who recently played Agrippina in the children's comedy 'Horrible Histories: The Movie' - doesn't take her long-running career as "seriously" as she once did because she prefers to have a "great time" on set whilst working on a project. Kim said: "One of the reasons I said yes to Horrible Histories was also because I'm not taking my career now, in my sixties, as seriously as I did in my 30's, my 40's and my 50's. "I'm kind of making choices on the level of 'Is this something that I'm really going to have fun for a week, or two, three weeks'. "I'm just about to go back and do a series in the states and one of the criteria was 'Who are the people? Is it going to be fun? Let's do it!' "Not 'Is this going to get me to this level? I used to think it's a hit if people really like it, I think it's a hit if I had a great time." And the 'Sex and the City' star thought being part of the star-studded 'Horrible Histories: The Movie' cast, which also includes Nick Frost, Emilia Jones and Derek Jacobi to name a few, was simply "fantastic". She added to BBC Radio 2: "I'm in a really lucky position, monetary issues obviously help

you be in the state of mind, but you could be in that state of mind if you're aware of what's going on out there and trying to connect yourself to those kind of productions. A lot of people say 'Why would you do a film like this?' I say 'It was fantastic!' The 'Mannequin' actress also insisted she loves to "work hard" but keeps her priorities "aligned" to make sure she has balance in her life. She continued: "I think I'm doing something that I really enjoy, I'm spending time with people that I love, I'm still out there but I think I have my priorities more in align and I think that's changed throughout the decades. I see that I want to have fun, I want to work hard but I also want to have some time away, just me time. "Just time to be in nature, we have a place in Canada where I grew up Vancouver Island, and it's just lovely to get away, have no part of show business, and watch movies I've never seen or missed because I was working so hard. It's not called retirement, but I think that's that thing that I've gotten right, to pace myself and come from a place of real joy in the decisions that I make." — Bang Showbiz

Lifestyle | Fashion

Ralph Lauren documentary to be released this year

A documentary about Ralph Lauren is set to be released later this year. The new HBO feature-length film titled 'Very Ralph' will chronicle the life of the 79-year-old designer, who founded his eponymous Polo menswear brand in 1968, and his six decades in the fashion industry. The film will tell the story of his childhood in the Bronx as well as detail his five-decade-long marriage with Ricky Anne Loew-Beer, the early days of his brand, response to negative criticism and his innovations in design and advertising. 'Very Ralph' will include an array of interviews with friends and family of Ralph, including late creative director of Chanel, Karl Lagerfeld, who died earlier this year aged 85.

Naomi Campbell, Anna Wintour, Calvin Klein, Hillary Clinton, Martha Stewart, Diane von Furstenberg and Jessica Chastain make appearances in the documentary. The film will be directed and produced by award-winning documentarian Susan Lacy and will premiere on 12 November on HBO. Earlier this year, Ralph received an honorary knighthood from Prince Charles at London's Buckingham Palace for his services to fashion -and became the first American designer to be awarded with the UK's highest honor. Ralph - whose label is celebrating its 50th anniversary - admitted at the time that the accolade is "very special" to him and revealed that his iconic designs have always been "inspired" by British

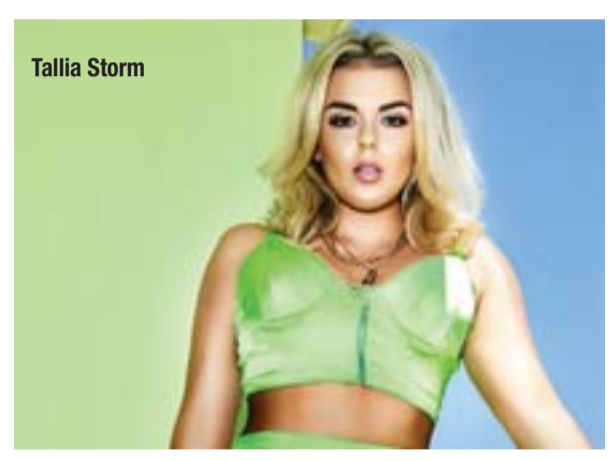
culture. He said: "To have the honorary KBE conferred on me by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and presented to me personally by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales is an honor I have humbly accepted. "I have always been inspired by the history, traditions and culture of Great Britain and the historic relationship our two countries have shared. This is one of the most meaningful honors bestowed at this very special moment in my 50th anniversary." — BangShowbiz



Ralph Lauren

Tallia Storm announced as face of Miss Pap summer campaign

Tallia Storm has been announced as the face of Miss Pap's high summer campaign 2019. The 20-year-old singer has teamed up with the latest of Boohoo's clothing brands to debut a new TV ad campaign which parallels with the release of her latest single 'Needy Gemini' - that dropped last week and plays over the advert. The campaign was shot in Ibiza and will be going live across networks on Monday 29th July and the 'Mind Games' hitmaker can be seen wearing £45 baby pink denim dress which she pairs with a sparkling belt and statement heart-shaped sunglasses. The 'Celebs Go Dating' star can also be seen wearing a white shirt dress also priced at £45 which she pairs with a small yellow bag secured around her waist with a gold chain, a £20 yellow skin-tight midi dress which she rocks with a sparkling choker necklace.



Tallia Storm

The collection also includes a pink mesh co-ord for £20 which she pairs with several layered gold necklaces and bracelets and a baby pink silk blazer the star teams with matching pink denim shorts. Meanwhile, the 'Ring Ring Ring' singer recently revealed her #ArmsUp campaign with 'Strictly Come Dancing' star Dianne Buswell and Dove promoting the 'imperfect' underarm. Tallia was seen proudly flaunting her underarm, which was decorated with gold stars, in a bid to make women feel more com-

fortable with the body part after research showed nine in 10 women feel self-conscious about their underarms. She previously said of the campaign: "I think everyone should be celebrating their underarms and getting their arms in the air. When I'm on stage my arms are all over the place so I want to celebrate underarms." — Bang Showbiz

Elizabeth Hurley's son Damian recreates her iconic Versace look

Elizabeth Hurley's son Damian recreated one of her most famous red carpet looks. The 17-year-old actor and model has paid homage to his mother by re-imagining the 'safety pin' Versace dress Elizabeth, 54, wore to the after party of Richard Curtis' 'Four Weddings And A Funeral' in 1994 with her then-boyfriend Hugh Grant. Attending the launch party for Pat McGrath Labs new product range Sublime Perfection The System at Selfridges in London, Damian wore a pair of black cigarette trousers and a matching black blazer emblazoned with seven oversized gold safety pins. Damian fronted the Sublime Perfection campaign and recently took to Instagram to share his excitement about being the new face of the brand.



Damian Hurley

He wrote: "So excited to show you guys something secret [that] I've been working on with the divine, Pat McGrath". It appears the feeling between the model and the designer is mutual as McGrath previously dubbed Hurley "a bright, young, emerging star". He said: "A super-model is born. It's no surprise that as the offspring of the iconic Elizabeth Hurley, Damian is a bright, young, emerging star who has an absolutely magnetic personality, energy, and an exceptional look."

Damian added of McGrath: "Pat is an artist and visionary, who has truly changed the face of beauty, especially for my generation." Despite the dress being

one of Elizabeth's most iconic looks, the 'Royals' star previously admitted that the dress was "fished a dress out of a white plastic bag". She said: "I urgently needed to find a dress to wear for Hugh [Grant]'s premiere, and in those days I had no idea about fashion. "I remember going to an office where they literally fished a dress out of a white plastic bag."



Jamil was told she was 'too fat and old' to move to make it in the US

Jameela Jamil was told she was "too old" and "fat" to chase her American dream aged 28. The 33-year-old actress - who has made a name for herself by speaking out issues such as gender inequality and the trend for celebrities promoting weight loss products - has recalled the time she was bodyshamed by someone who advised her against moving to the US because of her ethnicity and weight, but Jameela didn't listen and counts it as one of the "bravest" decisions she's ever made in her life. She said: "The bravest thing I've done in my life was move to Los Angeles even though I was told I was too old at 28 and too fat. And they said I was too ethnic. Going anyway and not listening to people, recognizing that people were projecting their own personal fear onto me, and just getting up and booking a one way ticket and coming to America with no visa - sorry, (President) Trump - no money, really, because I had spent all of it on charity, and I had no contacts, and no friends here. I did it anyway, and I think trying is winning and everything else is just cake and orgasms."

And Jameela's move to the US was inspired by her body "challenging" her and suffering a breast cancer scare at aged 28, which made her compile a bucket list of everything she'd ever "dreamed" of doing. 'The Good Place' 'W' magazine: "Once every decade, my body decides to challenge me. When I was seventeen, I damaged my back very badly in a car accident and that taught me how to respect my body in a way that I'd never done before. When I was twenty-eight, a doctor found a giant lump in my breast and I had a week in which I would find out whether or not it was cancer. And during that week, I made a bucket list and the number one thing on that list was move to California because I'd always dreamed of it. So, when I found out it wasn't cancer, I had to have an operation and six weeks from the operation date you're allowed to fly." The 'Good Place' star later booked a ticket "six weeks" from the operation to have the lump in her breast removed. She added: "And so I booked my ticket for exactly six weeks from that day, and I got on a plane on my own. I had no idea what was going to happen here. And I'm not talented at sex, so I couldn't be a porn star. It's just not the thing that's great about me." — Bang Showbiz



Designer Gaurav Gupta (center) looks on at his show during the FDCI India Couture Week 2019 in partnership with HT in New Delhi on July 27, 2019. — AFP photos



Models present creations by designer Gaurav Gupta during the FDCI India Couture Week 2019 in partnership with HT in New Delhi.



The FDCI India Couture Week 2019



Classifieds

Monday, July 29, 2019



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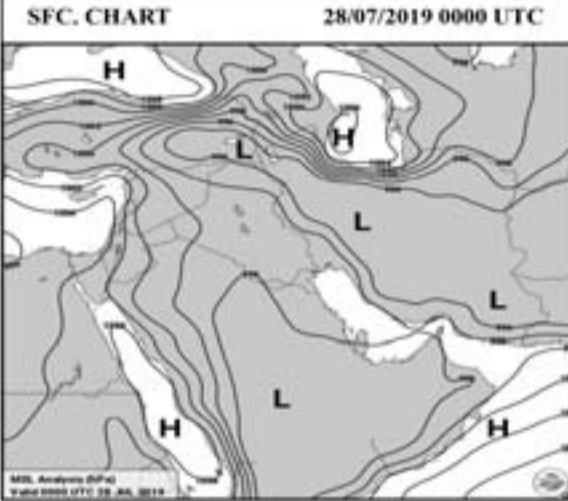
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www.met.gov.kw



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate variable wind to easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Hot to relatively hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate easterly wind to variable wind, with speed of 06 - 24 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 28/07/2019 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	46 °C	35 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	45 °C	27 °C			
ABDALY	46 °C	30 °C			
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C			
JAHRA	47 °C	34 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	45 °C	29 °C			
SALMIYAH	42 °C	35 °C			
AHMADI	44 °C	34 °C			
NUWAISIB	44 °C	33 °C			
WAFRA	46 °C	33 °C			
SALMY	45 °C	27 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	07/29	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas and some high clouds will appear	47 °C	33 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 26 km/h
Tuesday	07/30	Very hot	48 °C	30 °C	VRB-NW	08 - 30 km/h
Wednesday	07/31	Very hot	49 °C	32 °C	NW-SW	12 - 40 km/h
Thursday	08/01	Very hot	50 °C	33 °C	NW-N	15 - 45 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:35
Sunrise	05:05
Zuhr	11:54
Asr	15:30
Sunset	18:43
Isha	20:10

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	00 °C
MIN. Temp.	00 °C
MAX. RH	00 %
MIN. RH	00 %
MAX. Wind	N 00 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SALVADOR GABRIEL SOFIA D'SILVA currently holder of Indian Passport No. K4650361 issued at Kuwait on 11/03/2012, presently residing in Kuwait, my permanent address: Pequeno Rumbordem, Curtorim, Salcette, Goa, pin code: 403709, India, do hereby permanently change my name as SALVADOR

GABRIEL SOFIA DA SILVA.
 (C 5567) 29-7-2019

I, ALEIXO ANTONIO FERNANDES S/o ANTONIO FERNANDES holder of Indian Passport No. H9001947 & Civil ID No. 270042505672 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) 28-7-2019

EMERGENCY 112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is **1889988**

Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
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



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

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Monday 29/7/2019				Departure Flights on Monday 29/7/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
FEG	441	Asyut	00:05	AIC	982	Ahmedabad/Chennai	00:05
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	MSC	412	Asyut	00:15
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	MSR	615	Cairo	00:30
JZR	254	Amman	00:20	FDB	072	Dubai	00:30
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	FEG	342	Sohag	01:05
KAC	102	London	00:50	JZR	713	Sohag	01:10
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	IGO	1758	Kochi	01:10
KAC	504	Beirut	01:00	KAC	677	Dubai	01:40
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	THY	773	Istanbul	01:50
RJA	642	Amman	01:20	DLH	625	Frankfurt	01:50
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC	363	Colombo	02:00
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	KAC	417	Manila	02:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:50	JZR	285	Dhaka	02:00
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	111	Doha	02:10
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	THY	1079	Istanbul	02:50
JZR	262	Beirut	02:05	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:50
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KKK	1269	Istanbul	02:55
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
THY	1404	AYT	02:45	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:10
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:50	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30
JZR	502	Lahore	02:55	THY	769	Istanbul	03:50
THY	768	Istanbul	02:55	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:00
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	QTR	1087	Doha	04:15
JZR	406	Kochi	03:05	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	RBG	552	Alexandria	04:30
RBG	1551	Alexandria	03:15	JZR	1735	Cairo	04:40
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	QTR	1077	Doha	05:00
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	OHY	351	Istanbul	05:00
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:00	IGO	1752	Chennai	05:10
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:15
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	THY	1465	Istanbul	06:00
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	FDB	070	Dubai	06:00
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:50	THY	771	Istanbul	06:30
KAC	382	Delhi	04:55	GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	RJA	643	Amman	07:00
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:05	JZR	251	Amman	07:10
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	RBG	121	Dubai	07:15
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	MSR	550	Alexandria	07:30
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	BAW	156	London	07:40
KAC	552	Cairo	05:45	KAC	173	Munich	07:55
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	MSR	602	Cairo	08:00
BAW	157	London	06:10	KAC	193	Trabzon	08:10
JZR	702	Asyut	06:10	KAC	181	Paris	08:10
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	IGO	1756	CNN	08:10
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	RBG	214	Sohag	08:15
KAC	204	Lahore	06:45	KAC	163	MXP	08:35
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35
MSR	601	Cairo	07:00	KAC	545	Cairo	08:50
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:05	KAC	157	Istanbul	08:55
IGO	1755	CNN	07:10	KAC	561	Amman	08:55
JZR	714	Sohag	07:20	KAC	121	AGP	09:00
RBG	211	Luxor	07:25	MSC	402	Alexandria	09:00
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	117	New York	09:05
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	QTR	1085	Doha	09:10
MSC	401	Alexandria	08:00	IRA	666	Esfahan	09:10
IRA	601	Tehran	08:10	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:15
KAC	352	Kochi	08:20	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KAC	741	Dammam	09:40
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	KAC	773	Riyadh	09:40
OMA	641	Muscat	09:00	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	JZR	731	Cairo	09:45
KAC	334	Trivandrum	09:00	KAC	195	BJV	09:50
GFA	209	Bahrain	09:05	KAC	505	Beirut	09:50
KAC	384	Delhi	09:10	UAE	856	Dubai	09:50
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	JZR	301	Istanbul	09:55
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	09:55
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	OMA	642	Muscat	10:00
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20	KAC	101	London	10:05
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	GFA	210	Bahrain	10:05
AXB	395	Kozhikode	10:40	QTR	1071	Doha	10:30
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	617	Doha	10:40
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	FDB	056	Dubai	10:40
MSR	3132	Cairo	11:00	IGO	1754	Ahmedabad	10:40
JZR	1736	Cairo	11:05	JZR	221	Riyadh	11:20
THY	1282	Trabzon	11:05	AXB	890	Mangalore	11:20
JZR	122	Dubai	11:45	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
AXB	789	CNN/Bahrain	12:10	JZR	309	BJV	11:45
JZR	252	Amman	12:20	AXB	396	Kozhikode	11:50
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	MEA	405	Beirut	11:55
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:30	MSR	3133	Cairo	12:00
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	THY	1283	Trabzon	12:00
MSR	610	Cairo	12:45	JZR	213	Jeddah	12:05

Israel, US successfully test ballistic missile interceptor

JERUSALEM: Israel and the United States have successfully carried out tests of a ballistic missile interceptor that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said yesterday provides protection against potential threats from Iran. The tests of the Arrow-3 system were carried out in the US state of Alaska and it successfully intercepted targets above the atmosphere, Israel's defense ministry said in a statement. "The flight tests were conducted

in Alaska in order to test capabilities that may not be tested in Israel," the statement said.

Netanyahu said "today Israel has the ability to act against ballistic missiles that could be launched against us from Iran or anywhere else". "This is a great achievement for the security of Israel," he added. US ambassador to Israel David Friedman joined Netanyahu at a cabinet meeting in Jerusalem yesterday to watch video

footage of the tests. In January, Israel said it also carried out a successful test with the United States of the Arrow-3 in Israel. A series of tests were also conducted before the missiles being deployed in 2017 to Israeli airbases.

Officials said that the one deployed was an older version and the upgraded system will provide more advanced protection. The Arrow system, partly financed by the United

States, was developed and produced by Israeli Aerospace Industries in partnership with Boeing. Arrow-3 is intended to serve as Israel's highest-altitude missile interception system. Systems for intercepting incoming missiles at lower altitudes also exist.

Since 2015, Israel's main enemy Iran has continued developing and testing ballistic missiles which it says are for defensive purposes only. Israel has the most powerful mil-

itary in the Middle East and is widely considered to be its sole nuclear-armed power, though it has never acknowledged the capability. The tests come with tensions high between the United States and Iran. Those tensions followed Washington's sanctions against Tehran after US President Donald Trump's withdrawal from a nuclear deal between the Islamic republic and world powers. —AFP



A man tries to catch locusts while standing on a rooftop as they swarm over the Houthi rebel-held Yemeni capital Sanaa yesterday. — AFP

US peace plan rings alarm ...

Continued from Page 1

In Amman, protests have been staged against what has been dubbed the "deal of the century".

"It would mean the end of the Palestinian cause and it would wipe out Jordanian identity, both in one go," said Khaled Al-Khrisha, a 65-year-old Jordanian, at a rally last month outside the US embassy. "Jordan will be the biggest loser after the Palestinians." Another demonstrator, 81-year-old Widad Al-Aruri whose family originates from the West Bank, said the deal "means selling off the Palestinians and is dangerous for Jordan". The kingdom hosts millions of Palestinians who poured into the country in two waves, after Israel's creation and following the 1967 Six-Day War, when Israel occupied the West Bank, east Jerusalem and Gaza.

The largely desert country - which has little resources and relies heavily on international donors, including \$1 billion a year from Washington - is home to 9.5 million people, more than half of them of Palestinian origin. Two thirds of them are Jordanian citizens, while the others are considered refugees who many Jordanians fear will be settled permanently and given citizenship as well if the Kushner plan goes through. More than two million Palestinians in Jordan are UN-registered refugees.

"Jordan is worried because the deal ignores the idea of an independent Palestinian state," said Oraib Rintawi

who runs the Al-Quds Centre for Political Studies. As a result, he said, "this will mean that the sustainability of a Palestinian nation would be conditioned to it being linked somehow with Jordan and that will open the gates of hell for Jordan". And under pressure, Jordan would be forced to take in more Palestinians and eventually give them Jordanian citizenship. "This is a nightmare," he added.

With an unemployment rate of about 18.5 percent, Jordan, whose stability is seen as vital for the volatile Middle East, was last year shaken by widespread economic protests. In addition to hosting millions of Palestinians, the country has taken in a mass influx of refugees from its conflict-riddled neighbors Syria and Iraq, stretching its cash-strapped economy.

Ahmad Awad, head of the Phoenix Centre for Economics and Informatics Studies, said: "Forfeiting the right of return and compensation (for refugees) will be dangerous for Jordan and the Palestinians". He noted that a majority of Jordanians are of Palestinian origin, and a large number of West Bank residents are Jordanian citizens. Jordan administered the West Bank, including east Jerusalem, until the 1967 war. It remains custodian of Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, whose status is one of the thorniest of the decades-long Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

"Jordan has no choice but to reject the (US) plan... and has already rejected it quite firmly (because)... it would turn Jordan into a Palestinian state," said analyst Kirk Sowell of Utica Risk Services. Jordan's King Abdullah II has repeatedly ruled out a confederation with the Palestinians or giving up custodianship of Jerusalem holy sites, calling them "red lines". — AFP

Tlaib said on CNN.

In an op-ed piece for The Washington Post late Friday, 148 African Americans who served under former president Barack Obama pledged their support for the four lawmakers "as well as all those currently under attack by President Trump". Obama, who has rarely spoken out since leaving office in 2017, retweeted the piece on Saturday.

Trump's chief of staff, Mick Mulvaney, argued yesterday that Trump's attack on Cummings is justified because the latter had criticized Trump - and said things that were not true, according to Mulvaney - over his administration's treatment of undocumented migrants trying to cross over from Mexico. "I think the president's right to raise that it has absolutely zero to do with race," Mulvaney told Fox News.

But leading Democrats laid into Trump over his latest comments. "The president is, as he usually is, or often is, disgusting and racist. He makes these charges with no base at all," said Congressman Jerry Nadler, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee. Nadler said Trump is trying to divert attention from congressional probes into Russian election meddling and obstruction of justice by the president.

Presidential candidate Bernie Sanders reiterated his assertion that Trump is a racist. "That is a disgrace and that is why we're going to defeat this president," Sanders told CNN. Sanders also said he does not believe Trump's race-based strategy is going to work. "I think at the end of the day the American people understand that whether you're black, white, whether you're Latino, Asian American, Native American, we need an agenda that works for all of us," said Sanders. — AFP

'Slow war of attrition' on Idlib ...

Continued from Page 1

opposition and the families of fighters are based" - a move "temporarily delayed" by a September truce deal between Syria, Russia and Turkey. It's a "terrifying war of attrition with civilians, health institutions and other infrastructure all being targeted," said Oliver.

The region is now home to about three million people, most of whom have been displaced from other areas during Syria's grueling war, now in its ninth year, which has so far claimed some 370,000 lives. Launched in late April, the campaign has yet to secure major regime gains. But it aims to sap morale and erode support for those running Idlib, analysts said. The air strikes have claimed more than 740 lives since late April, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. The UN says more than 400,000 people have been displaced.

Idlib was meant to be protected from any regime assault by the Sept 2018 buffer zone deal, signed by Russia and rebel backer Turkey. But the United Nations' humanitarian coordination office OCHA has documented 39 attacks against health facilities or medical workers in the area in three months. At least 50 schools have been damaged by the air strikes and shelling over the same period, it reported.

"These are civilian objects, and it seems highly unlikely, given the persistent pattern of such attacks, that they are all being hit by accident," UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet said Friday. She condemned "international indifference" over a mounting civilian death toll, adding she was concerned the continued carnage in Syria "is no longer on the international radar". "Airstrikes kill and maim significant numbers of civilians several times a week, and the response seems to be a collective shrug," she said.

Iran says European fleet in Gulf would...

Continued from Page 1

talks in Tehran with Oman's minister in charge of foreign affairs, Yusuf bin Alawi. Alawi said the sultanate, which maintains cordial ties with both Iran and Britain, was not mediating on the issue. But he said Muscat was "concerned" about security in the Strait and was "in contact with all parties". "Any error or miscalculated move could hamper navigation in international waters and harm everyone," he told state broadcaster Oman TV after meeting with Rouhani.

Britain on Thursday ordered its navy to escort UK-flagged ships through the Strait, where the Stena Impero was seized by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. But it has so far only received a cool response from the continent to its proposal for a multi-national escort fleet that would exclude the United States. France said on Thursday it was not willing to send extra military assets to the Gulf, but would share information and coordinate its currently deployed assets.

The US military has said it is already monitoring the

Regime air raids have mostly targeted southern Idlib as well as nearby territory in northern Hama, where clashes between Syrian government forces and jihadists have emptied entire villages of their inhabitants. "Russia is now pushing more concertedly than ever for a complete reintegration of Syria under Assad's rule," said Samuel Ramani, a Syria researcher. Both Damascus and Moscow are presenting Idlib as the "final battle; the last terrorist holdout", seeking to lend legitimacy to the bombing campaign, Oliver said. Damascus commands around 60 percent of the country, with the Idlib region and Kurdish-held territory in Syria's northeast both remaining outside its control.

Analysts attribute the regime's failure to advance deeper into Idlib to efforts by rebel backer Turkey, which has deployed forces in northwest Syria in agreement with Russia and Iran. Ankara's military assistance to rebels, including "logistical cooperation through observation points, as well as direct arms and munitions transfers" is impeding Assad's progress, Ramani said.

Moscow wants Turkey to cease such support, but whether Ankara will compromise is unclear, the expert said. Instead, "it seems as if Ankara is supporting the rebels with greater enthusiasm than it has in a long time," Ramani added. Turkey, which hosts around 3.5 million Syrians, fears an all-out regime assault on Idlib will trigger a massive wave of displacement towards its southern border. Thousands of Syrians have already streamed into camps and open-air settlements near the frontier in recent weeks to escape bombardment.

According to Nick Heras of the Center for a New American Security (CNAS), the destruction of civilian infrastructure in Idlib will only make the local population more dependent on Turkish support. Concern over the flare-up in Idlib will likely take center stage during next week's round of Syria peace talks between Russia, Turkey and Iran in the Kazakh capital. Turkey wants "to stabilize Idlib so refugees can start returning there, which means greater Turkish control and influence," Heras said. "Moscow can live with increased Turkish influence in Idlib, for the short term, but Damascus wants Turkey out of Syria now," he added. — AFP

area and developing a "multinational maritime effort" dubbed Operation Sentinel to increase surveillance and security in key Middle East waterways. The 33-km wide Strait of Hormuz provides the eastern entrance and exit point into the Gulf and runs between the United Arab Emirates and Iran.

Iran's high-seas standoff with Britain comes amid rising hostilities between the Islamic republic and the United States. The archenemies have been locked in a battle of nerves since President Donald Trump withdrew the US from a landmark 2015 deal aimed at limiting Iran's nuclear program and began reimposing sanctions. The situation has worsened since the Trump administration stepped up a campaign of "maximum pressure" against Iran this year, with drones downed and tankers mysteriously attacked in Gulf waters.

Rouhani said Washington sparked the crisis when it pulled out of the 2015 nuclear deal, known by its formal name, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. "The unfortunate incidents and tensions in the region today have their roots in the unilateral US withdrawal from the JCPOA agreement and the delusions of the country's administration," the Iranian president said. "Iran will strongly stand against any wrongdoing and illegal activity that would threaten maritime security in the Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz and the Sea of Oman," ISNA quoted him as saying. — AFP

Trump rejects racism charges...

Continued from Page 1

to live, Trump insisted yesterday that he was just telling things as they are. "There is nothing wrong with bringing out the very obvious fact that Congressman Elijah Cummings has done a very poor job for his district and the City of Baltimore," Trump said, without providing evidence to support his claim.

Saturday's diatribe ignited a storm of criticism and came less than two weeks after the House of Representatives condemned Trump for "racist" comments targeting four first-term Democratic congresswomen who are from ethnic minorities. Trump's remarks on Cummings and the congresswomen are seen as a calculated but risky appeal, both to the disgruntled white, blue-collar base that helped get him elected in 2016, and to other whites who haven't decided whom to support in next year's elections.

Many in the country see his remarks as blatantly racist; coming from anyone else they would certainly spell political doom. Yet after Trump's tweets attacking the four non-white lawmakers known as "the Squad," his approval among Republicans rose five points to 72 percent in a Reuters-Ipsos poll. One of the lawmakers, Rashida Tlaib, charged yesterday that Trump does not even care about doing things to help the country. "Look, our president has a hate agenda. He doesn't have a policy agenda and that is what he falls down on,"

Sports

Hiura blasts walk-off HR in the 10th for Brewers

MILWAUKEE: Keston Hiura hit a two-run walkoff homer to cap a three-run 10th inning, and the Milwaukee Brewers beat the Chicago Cubs 5-3 on Saturday night. Albert Almora, Jr homered leading off the 10th to give the Cubs a 3-2 lead, but Milwaukee's Christian Yelich answered with a homer off Cubs closer Craig Kimbrel (0-2) leading off the bottom of the inning. Tyler Saladino followed with a walk, and Hiura lined a 1-2 pitch to right for his 11th homer of the season. The Cubs' bullpen surrendered two late leads Saturday after also giving up a late lead in Friday's loss. Yelich had three hits, and Ben Gamel hit a pinch-hit homer for Milwaukee.

Astros 8, Cardinals 2

Gerrit Cole completed his second consecutive unbeaten month, and Carlos Correa hit his first career grand slam in his second game back from a 50-game injury absence, as visiting Houston beat St. Louis. Cole (12-5) allowed one run, four hits and three walks while recording seven strikeouts over seven innings. After earning American League Pitcher of the Month honors in June — when he finished 3-0 with a 1.89 ERA over six starts — Cole completed July 4-0 with a 1.85 ERA over five starts. Cole is 8-0 with a 1.96 ERA over his last 12 starts, with his last loss coming on May 22 to the White Sox.

Dodgers 9, Nationals 3

Will Smith homered, doubled twice and drove in six runs to help lift visiting Los Angeles to a win against Washington in the second game of their three-game series. Smith, a rookie catcher who was playing in his 10th major league game after getting recalled from Triple-A Oklahoma City on Friday, hit a solo homer in the third after the Nationals had taken an early 2-0 lead. Dodgers left-hander Clayton Kershaw (9-2) went six innings, allowing two runs and three hits. The three-time NL Cy Young Award winner struck out nine and walked three.

Red Sox 9, Yankees 5

JD Martinez hit a go-ahead two-run homer in the fourth inning, and host Boston recorded a victory over suddenly slumping New York. The Red Sox won their third straight over the Yankees and for the 15th time in their last 22 games overall. The Yankees dropped their third straight and lost for the fifth time in seven games as their lead in the AL East fell to eight games over Boston. The Red Sox rallied from a pair of early one-run deficits and went ahead with a three-run fourth off CC Sabathia (5-6). They padded their lead with a three-run sixth off Chad Green.

Mets 3, Pirates 0

Steven Matz threw the first complete game of his big-league career, tossing a five-hit shutout as the Mets topped visiting Pittsburgh. Michael Conforto and JD Davis each homered for the Mets, who have won three straight to improve to 9-4 since the All-Star break. The Pirates have lost seven in a row and are 2-14 in the second half. Matz (6-6), who hadn't pitched into the eighth inning since Aug. 14, 2016 and completed eight innings just once in his first 89 big league starts (May 25, 2016), walked none and struck out seven while throwing just 99 pitches, including 67 for strikes.

Blue Jays 10, Rays 9 (12 innings)

Teoscar Hernandez led off the bottom of the 12th with

his second homer of the game, and Toronto came back from a seven-run deficit to defeat visiting Tampa Bay. The first career walk-off homer by Hernandez — and his 14th homer this season — came against Emilio Pagan (2-2). Willy Adames and Travis d'Arnaud each hit a three-run homer in the second inning to help the Rays build a 9-2 lead by the top of the sixth. The Blue Jays' bullpen retired 21 straight batters to finish the game, with Daniel Hudson (6-2) contributing a perfect 12th to earn the win.

Orioles 8, Angels 7

On a night when both teams set home-run marks, visiting Baltimore moved one victory away from a four-game sweep by defeating Los Angeles. The Orioles got home runs from Pedro Severino and Jonathan Villar to give them at least two home runs in 10 consecutive games to set a major league record. But it was a two-run single in the eighth inning from Hanser Alberto that proved to be the difference. The Angels put on their own power display, getting home runs from Mike Trout, Shohei Ohtani and Albert Pujols, who became the sixth player to hit 100-plus homers in two ballparks. The Angels put together one last rally in the ninth inning, getting a run on a David Fletcher single, but Mychal Givens struck out Trout and then got Justin Upton to pop out with the bases loaded for his ninth save.

Indians 9, Royals 1

Jason Kipnis' grand slam with nobody out in the first inning gave Cleveland a lead it would not relinquish in a victory over host Kansas City. Mike Clevinger (5-2) gave up just one run over seven innings. He allowed eight hits and struck out seven. Clevinger improved to 8-0 in his career against the Royals, the most victories for any pitcher without a loss against the Royals. With Minnesota's loss to the White Sox in Chicago, Cleveland has made up 10 games on the first-place Twins since June 15. They now trail the Twins by just one game in the AL Central.

A's 5, Rangers 4

Chad Pinder threw out Elvis Andrus at the plate while he was trying to score on Nomar Mazara's single to right field in the seventh inning, short-circuiting a Texas rally and allowing host Oakland to hold on for victory. The win was the A's first of the four-game series after 11-3 and 5-2 losses, and came after home runs by Mark Canha, Marcus Semien, Matt Chapman and Ramon Laureano had produced a 5-0 lead. New A's closer Liam Hendriks pitched around a two-out single by Danny Santana in the ninth for his ninth save.

Padres 5, Giants 1

Fernando Tatis Jr. hit a two-run homer a pitch after being knocked down by right-hander Shaun Anderson, and Greg Garcia hit a two-run, pinch-hit single as San Diego defeated visiting San Francisco. Although he had his streak of 18 straight scoreless innings snapped in the sixth, Padres right-hander Cal Quantrill (4-2) held the Giants to one run on three hits and four walks with four strikeouts over 5 1/3 innings. The Padres won for only the seventh time in their last 22 games and snapped an eight-game home losing streak. Anderson (3-3) suffered the loss — only the fifth for the Giants in their last 23 games — giving up four runs on seven hits and two walks with seven strikeouts in five-plus innings.



MILWAUKEE: Ryan Braun #8 of the Milwaukee Brewers falls to the ground after swinging at a pitch in the third inning against the Chicago Cubs at Miller Park. — AFP

Reds 3, Rockies 1

Eugenio Suarez belted a two-run homer, and Josh VanMeter went deep in his third straight start as host Cincinnati defeated Colorado. Rookie Nick Senzel had a pair of hits in his return from an illness for the Reds, who avenged a 12-2 setback in the series opener on Friday to improve to 2-3 against Colorado this season. Anthony DeSclafani (6-5) picked up the win after allowing one run on four hits in five-plus innings. He struck out five after fanning a career-high 11 batters in Sunday's 3-1 setback to St. Louis.

Braves 15, Phillies 7

Left fielder Adam Duvall celebrated his return to the big leagues with a home run, one of four struck by visiting Atlanta in a win over Philadelphia. Duvall was recalled from Triple-A Gwinnett on Saturday to replace veteran Nick Markakis, who was placed on the injured list with a fractured wrist. Duvall, who was leading the International League with 29 homers, went 3-for-5 with two runs scored, two RBIs and the home run. The Braves have won the first two games of the three-game series to expand their National League East lead to six games over the Washington Nationals and 6 1/2 over the Phillies.

White Sox 5, Twins 1

Yoan Moncada homered and doubled twice, and Ivan Nova allowed just two hits over six innings as Chicago snapped a four-game losing streak with a victory over

visiting Minnesota. Moncada also scored two runs to go with two RBIs. Adam Engel drove in two runs, and Leury Garcia and Yolmer Sanchez each had two hits for the White Sox. Nova (6-9), coming in off a four-hit complete-game 9-1 victory over Miami on Tuesday, allowed just an unearned run, walking one while striking out four. Byron Buxton doubled and had two hits for Minnesota, which saw its American League Central lead shrink to one game over the Cleveland Indians.

Diamondbacks 9, Marlins 2

Nick Ahmed slugged his second career grand slam and added an RBI double, leading Arizona to a win over host Miami. Arizona improved to 30-26 on the road this season, which is better than its 23-26 home record. Miami, which had its three-game win streak snapped, is just 19-33 at home. Rookie left-hander Alex Young (4-0) earned the win, allowing two runs on eight hits and a walk in six innings. He struck out two.

Mariners 8, Tigers 1

Marco Gonzales pitched seven strong innings as Seattle defeated visiting Detroit. Austin Nola had a double, triple and three RBIs for the Mariners, who have won four games in a row for the first time since April. Rookie Ryan Court, making his first major league start, also drove in three runs. Omar Narvaez went 4-for-5, and Tim Beckham was 3-for-4 with two doubles. The Tigers suffered their fifth consecutive defeat and dropped to 2-13 since the All-Star break. — Reuters

Felix falls just short as Kerley, Kendrick shine

DES MOINES: Allyson Felix's bid to qualify for the World Championships fell just short while 400m runner Fred Kerley and pole vaulter Sam Kendrick lit up the US Athletics Championships on Saturday. Felix, 33, racing in her first meeting for more than a year after taking time off to give birth to her daughter, finished sixth in the 400m final at Drake Stadium.

Although Felix could still travel to Doha as part of the USA's 4x400m relay squad, it will be the first time she has not entered an individual event at a major championships, ending a sequence of appearances that stretches all the way back to 2003. "I just didn't feel great," Felix said afterwards. "I knew that it was a less than ideal situation for me." Felix, however, said she was encouraged by her performances in Iowa as she looks towards the 2020 Olympics.

"I am grateful more than anything," she said. "It would be crazy for me to say that I was disappointed. I have my health, I have my family and I couldn't ask for anymore than that." Asked if she would take a place on the US relay squad for Doha if it was available, Felix said form and fitness would influence her decision. "If I feel like I'm in good form to be able to help the team, then yes," she said. "If not I'll be a cheerleader."

Norman upset

The upset of the day came in the 400m, where rising star Michael Norman was beaten for gold by the powerful Kerley. Norman has lit up athletics in his first professional season this year with a world leading 43.45sec. But he was unable to overhaul Kerley down the stretch as the 24-year-old Texan muscled his way to the line in a personal best of 43.64sec, making him

Davis dismantles Nunez with a round two TKO

WASHINGTON: Gervonta Davis remained unbeaten with a second round technical knockout on Saturday over Ricardo Nunez in a super featherweight homecoming bout on Saturday. The 24-year-old from Baltimore surprised Nunez with a devastating left hook midway through the second round before finishing him off with a series of left and rights on the ropes.

"I am ready all the time and he wasn't alert," said Davis of the left hook that proved to be the



DES MOINES: Allyson Felix competes in the Women's 400 Meter semifinal during the 2019 USAF Outdoor Championships at Drake Stadium. — AFP

the seventh fastest 400m runner of all time.

In the women's 100m hurdles, world record holder Keni Harrison produced a flawless display to take gold in 12.44 sec, with Nia Ali second in 12.55sec and Olympic champion Brianna McNeal third in 12.61 sec. There was another dominant victory in the men's 400m hurdles where the 22-year-old Rai Benjamin registered an emphatic win, surging clear of the field to win by around 10 meters. Benjamin's time of 47.21sec was the third fastest time of 2019. He already owned the second-quickest of the year of 47.16 and only Norway's Karsten Warholm has run quicker, with a 47.12.

Kendricks soars

The outstanding field event performance of the day came in the men's pole vault, where world

champion Sam Kendrick soared to a world leading jump of 6.06m, a new American record. Only two men, Ukrainian legend Sergey Bubka and France's Renaud Lavillenie, have ever jumped higher. The popular Kendrick was buried under a pile of his fellow competitors after clearing the height, which was also a new personal best. "As I was falling I was thinking 'They are going to come tackle me,'" Kendrick said of his fellow competitors. "We're a pretty tight-knit group all around the world in the pole vault."

Elsewhere Saturday, Christian Coleman and Noah Lyles remained on course for a 200m showdown after sailing through their heats. Coleman, who romped to an emphatic victory in the 100m final on Friday, was always in control of his heat, easing up well before the finish to qualify with a time of 20.70sec. — AFP



Asian Boxing Championship preparations are complete

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Boxing Federation has completed its preparations for the Asian Boxing Championship which is scheduled from August 3rd to 9th, under the patronage of Kuwait Olympic Committee President Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. The tournament will see 215 boxers competing, with delegations to start arriving tomorrow. All the matches will be held at Kuwait Sports Club hall.

Kuwait Boxing Federation Chairman of the Board Mohammad Mansi Al-Enezi said all preparations are ready to hold the Asian Boxing Championship to the best of their ability including logistics, media, hotels and all other preparations and delegations will stay in four hotels. He said the boxing ring has been constructed for the tournament according to the International Boxing Federation with direct supervision from the ABF and IBF officials.

Mansi was lauded by the major sup-



Mohammad Mansi Al-Enezi

port of the Public Authority for Sports (PAS) to ensure the tournament success. He also thanked Chairman of Kuwait Sport Club Khalid Al-Ghanem who offered all the facilities in the club, being an example for the cooperation between clubs and sports associations in favor of public interests and Kuwait sports. Mansi said the opening ceremony will include an operetta about lifting of the suspension besides other shows, while all activities will be broadcast live on TV. He said Kuwait National Boxing team is still in the midst of their training regiment in Kuwait following its training camp in Azerbaijan.

Sports

Verstappen wins, Hamilton crashes in a spectacular German Grand Prix

The race was a disaster for champions Mercedes

HOCKENHEIM: Max Verstappen took full advantage of his rivals' calamities yesterday to win an epic, rain-lashed and wildly-spectacular German Grand Prix for Red Bull ahead of Sebastian Vettel of Ferrari. The 21-year-old Dutchman secured his second win of the season and seventh of his career, finishing ahead of four-time world champion Vettel, who had started 20th and last on the grid. New dad Daniil Kvyat of Toro Rosso was third as he secured only his third Formula One podium.

The race was a disaster for champions Mercedes who were celebrating their 200th Formula One start of the modern era and 125 years of motorsport, both defending five-time champion Lewis Hamilton and his team-mate Valtteri Bottas crashed and failed to score any points. Hamilton eventually finished 11th after making six pit-stops as he missed out on a points finish for the first time in 23 races while Verstappen continued his rich streak of consistency.

Lance Stroll of Racing Point came home fourth to deliver his team's best finish ahead of Carlos Sainz of McLaren, Alex Albon of Toro Rosso and Kimi Raikkonen of Alfa Romeo. Romain Grosjean was eighth for Haas ahead of Antonio Giovinazzi of Alfa Romeo and Kevin Magnussen who was 10th for Haas. "It was amazing, but really tricky out there," said Verstappen, who made four pit-stops and survived a complete 360-degree spin. "To make the right calls, you had to be focussed. We put on the slick tyres and we had a 360! But it was alright."

Vettel, for whom the result brought redemption after he had crashed out while leading in heavy rain last year, said: "It was a long race and at some stages it felt like it was never-ending. I am just very happy." Kvyat confirmed that he became a father on Saturday night when his partner Kelly gave birth to a daughter. He said: "It is amazing to be back on the podium and incredible for Toro Rosso, after so many years." After the record-breaking heat, the race began in steady rain with the field on full wet tyres behind

a Safety Car through four formation laps before a standing start. The conditions did nothing to deter Hamilton who made a near-perfect start from his 87th pole position.

Safety car interventions

The race distance was reduced to 64 laps as the spray rose high in plumes throughout the pack, Vettel romping forward from 20th to pass six cars in the first five corners. Leclerc, in the other Ferrari, rose to sixth from 10th on the opening lap. Hamilton led by two seconds from Bottas after lap one, Verstappen having made a poor start, as the field jostled for space and grip. Sergio Perez spinning backwards into the stadium entry wall and damaging his Racing Force.

That required a Safety Car intervention for three laps, during which the leaders pitted for intermediates, before racing resumed. After 25, Verstappen pitted for medium compound slicks, a gamble by Red Bull. The Dutchman complained vigorously about his tyres before spinning at the final corner and recovering. Another Virtual Safety Car was then deployed briefly, as Hamilton pitted for softs from the lead, before Leclerc went off at Sachs Curve.

The Monegasque screamed aloud as Vettel pitted, returning to 'inters', before Hamilton went off, snapping his front wing. The Englishman recovered, cutting across the circuit into the pit lane. He was repaired and fitted with 'inters' before re-joining fifth behind Verstappen, Hulkenberg, Bottas and Albon. Hamilton was given a five-second penalty for missing a bollard at the pits entry, but he was soon back to third behind the Dutchman and Bottas.

Hulkenberg slid off at the final corner to instigate another Safety Car outing that heralded Verstappen, and Vettel, in 10th, pitting for fresh inters. Racing resumed on lap 46, Verstappen pulling clear before pitting for slicks, followed by Bottas, Sainz, Gasly and Albon. Hamilton led



HOCKENHEIM: Red Bull's Dutch driver Max Verstappen wins the German Formula One Grand Prix at the Hockenheim racing circuit. — AFP

before he pitted on lap 47, leaving Stroll, who pitted for slicks under the Safety Car, to lead before Verstappen passed him. Hamilton fell to 12th, having taken his penalty. "How's this gone so bad?" asked Hamilton. Mercedes'

nightmare was not over and their anniversary weekend ended with Bottas spinning at Turn One. Out came the Safety Car for a fourth time as Hamilton pitted again — leaving him to make a failed bid for a top ten finish. — AFP

McIlroy in front at WGC St Jude event

LOS ANGELES: Rory McIlroy birdied the last three holes, closing with a dramatic 27-foot putt, to seize a one-stroke lead over top-ranked Brooks Koepka after Saturday's third round of the WGC St. Jude Invitational. The four-time major winner from Northern Ireland fired an eight-under par 62 to stand on 12-under 198 after 54 holes at par-70 TPC Southwind in Memphis, Tennessee.

"To birdie the last three holes and take the lead puts me in a really great position going into tomorrow," McIlroy said. "I've holed a lot of putts this week, which is nice." Third-ranked McIlroy's second-lowest round of the season, eclipsed only by a 61 in the final round of his Canadian Open triumph last month, comes a week after a disappointing missed cut at the British Open at Royal Portrush in Northern Ireland.

It also booked the 30-year-old a first-ever Sunday pairing with four-time major winner Brooks Koepka in the last group for the final round of the elite World Golf Championship event. "Rory is playing with some heat," Koepka said. "I'm just going to have to take it deep." England's Matthew Fitzgerald fired a 69 to stand third on 200, one stroke ahead of Spain's Jon Rahm, Sweden's Alex Noren and Australian Marc Leishman. McIlroy birdied the last three holes on both the front and back nine.

"I had a lot of good numbers where I could make a full committed swing," McIlroy said. "One of my goals was to hit it pin high and I did that for most of the day." McIlroy sank a six-foot birdie putt on the opening hole and dropped one that was half as long at the third, then reeled off a 23-foot birdie putt at seven and back-to-back seven-footers for birdies at the par-3 eighth and par-4 ninth. After finding water off the 12th tee and taking his lone bogey of the day, McIlroy answered by dropping his tee shot to five feet at the par-3 14th and sinking the birdie putt. McIlroy then closed with a six-foot birdie at the par-5 16th, a 16-foot at 17 and his dramatic long birdie effort at 18. "I just put it a little outside right and it went in, which is nice," McIlroy said of his final putt.

Koepka clings to second

Koepka, who defended a major title at this year's PGA Championship, saw his ball cling to a slope on the rough over greenside water at 18 but got up and down for par to close on 64. "I saw some putts go in and that's always nice," Koepka said. "The holes seemed to open up for me today." Koepka, who has never won a WGC title, could become only the fourth player to win WGC and major events in the same year.

"Every time I tee it up I feel like I have a chance to make some history," he said. "I'm enjoying it while it lasts." Overnight leader Fitzpatrick had six birdies, three bogeys and a double bogey in a roller-coaster round as the five-time European Tour winner chases his first US PGA triumph. A victory would see the 24-year-old Englishman book a place in the US PGA Tour's season-ending playoffs.

Fitzpatrick sank an 18-foot birdie putt at the par-3 11th to seize a one-stroke lead, but sent his next shot off the 12th tee into the water on the way to a double bogey that dropped him behind Koepka and McIlroy. He followed with bogeys at 13 and 15 but answered with birdies at 16 and 17 to stay on the leaders' heels. Leishman fired a 63 with an eagle and three birdies over the last five holes. The Aussie sank a 12-foot birdie putt at 14, holed out from 43 feet from the rough at the par-5 16th and closed with back-to-back birdie putts from just over three feet. — AFP

Bayliss hopes Roy can solve England's top order problems

LONDON: England coach Trevor Bayliss accepts the Test side's top order has been their Achilles heel "for the last six or seven years" as he looks to World Cup winner Jason Roy to make a success of the position during the Ashes. After Andrew Strauss retired in 2012, England great Alastair Cook got through a dozen opening partners of his own before calling time on his Test career last year.

Meanwhile the vexed question of who should bat at number three has been another long-running issue during Bayliss's four-year reign, which will end after an Ashes series that starts in Birmingham next week. Fears about England's fragility at the top of the order were reinforced by their first-innings collapse to 85 all out in the first session of their inaugural Test against Ireland at Lord's this week. That their bowlers bailed them out of trouble by dismissing Ireland for just 38 on Friday to seal a 143-run win did little to allay the longstanding concerns over England's specialist batsmen.

Bayliss, asked if England's top order presented the team's biggest problem, replied: "You don't have to be Einstein to work that out. They have been for the last six or seven years, but it didn't stop us (winning the Ashes) four years ago," the Australian added. The top three who played against Ireland — Test debutant Roy, Rory Burns and Joe Denly — have all been retained in a 14-man squad for the first Test against Australia that begins at Edgbaston on Thursday. Burns averages just 22.28 in seven Tests and Denly 24.16 in three. Now England are hoping Roy can follow the example of Australia's David Warner by taking his white-ball form into the Test arena. Fresh from playing a key role at the top of the

Ashes contest too close to call, says Steve Waugh

LONDON: Steve Waugh says the Ashes are too close to call as England and Australia prepare to resume battle, with the visitors seeking their first away win in the series for 18 years. With the exception of the 2010/11 series in Australia, which England won 3-1, home advantage has been decisive since Waugh's side triumphed 4-1 away in 2001. But the former Australia captain, 54, said it was "50-50" as to who would emerge triumphant over the course of the five Tests starting at Edgbaston on Thursday.

"I really believe it's a big ask for the fast bowlers on both sides to play five Tests in six weeks and that could have a big impact on the whole series, so for instance Jimmy Anderson gets injured, or Mitchell Starc gets injured for us, it could really affect the line-up. "Depth in the squad will be important but I honestly think if I was a betting man I wouldn't back either side because I don't know who's going to win. It's going to be that even. I think it's going to be a fantastic series."

Waugh, who is mentoring the Australians, said it was a mystery why Australia had not won in England for so long but his advice to the players would be to "make your own history". "We've come up against some really good England sides in those last 18 years. We've had some tight series and moments when we could have won the series, probably a bit like the other way round for England in that period where they lost a lot."

World Cup boost?

England go into the series buoyed by winning the World Cup for the first time — they beat 2015 champions Australia in the semi-final — but Waugh said that triumph would have no impact on the Ashes. "One-day cricket is irrelevant to Test cricket," he said. "They're different teams, different captains. It's a different sport really. If you compare Test cricket and one-day cricket you're almost not playing the same sport. It's played in a totally different way. "England will say it's important for everyone and sure, if you win that's great but when it comes to the first Test at Edgbaston it's not going to matter what happened in the one-day World Cup." The first Test is taking place in



LONDON: England's Jason Roy plays at the ball on the first day of the first cricket test match between England and Ireland at Lord's cricket ground. — AFP

order in England's victorious World Cup campaign. Roy made 72 in his second Test innings against Ireland. The 28-year-old has played the bulk of his first-class career with Surrey as a middle-order batsman and doubts remain about his ability to cope with new-ball seam movement. "Like any debutant, he looked nervous but to score 70-odd in your first Test was a good effort," said Bayliss.

'Selective'

"There was a bit more in those wickets than I'm sure he's been used to in white-ball cricket over the last few years but runs are runs. He wouldn't be the first player to look scratchy and eke out runs. In fact, that's a good sign, I think. "We want him to go out and play his natural game but in red-ball cricket you have to be a little more selec-

tive. You've got to make a conscious effort to say to yourself, 'I'm not going to go for the big cover drive on the up until I'm really settled, the wicket is flat or the ball's not doing as much'.

"Jason probably looked a little scratchy but he got 72 and helped us win the game." Traditionally, the best batsman in a Test side has come in at number three but England captain Joe Root, the most talented member of his side's top order, prefers to bat at number four. But this means the Yorkshireman has started many of his recent Test innings with England in trouble having lost two cheap wickets. "Joe knows how I feel," Bayliss said. "It's been my thought for a few years (that Root should bat at number three). "But he's the captain and he'll make the final decision." — AFP

Beating Pumas give Wallabies belief against All Blacks

BRISBANE: The Wallabies' battling win over Argentina has given them belief they can threaten reigning world champions New Zealand in upcoming back-to-back Tests, coach Michael Cheika says. A week after a disappointing 35-17 Rugby Championship loss to South Africa, Australia dominated the Pumas at the scrum to hold on for a confidence-boosting 16-10 win in Brisbane on Saturday.

With the World Cup in Japan fast approaching, it was a desperately-needed result after just four victories in their previous 14 matches. Cheika said he was seeing progress and the team was ready to take the next step up against the All Blacks at Perth in a fortnight, before a return clash a week later with the world title-holders in Auckland. "It's (going to be) the step that we're prepared to take," he said of facing the All Blacks, who were held to a thrilling 16-16 draw by the Springboks in Wellington on Saturday.

"We're prepared to go up another, I don't know how many levels it might take, but whatever it is, it's about whether we want to take a step up and whether we will take a step up to go and compete there." The Wallaby defense, which leaked five tries against South Africa, was vastly improved this week as they easily handled the threat from the dangerous Argentine outside backs. Australia also benefited from a slick backline with Will Genia, Christian Lealiifano and Kurtley Beale impressive. The only cracks appeared in the final 20 minutes when wholesale changes were made.

Cheika has been keen to use the opening two Rugby Championship games to experiment with combinations and the selection panel's picks for Perth could signal how he sees his World Cup starting fifteen shaping up. "I think anyone that comes in, whether they've played games or they haven't, they'll be ready to go and try to build on that momentum. We know how difficult that task will be but I really believe in these players," he said. "Just the environment they're creating at the moment amongst themselves... will help them down the line to achieve bigger things than they thought they could earlier on in the year." Both sides scored one try each in Brisbane, but three penalties from Lealiifano — back with the Wallabies after fighting off leukaemia — saw them home. — AFP



LONDON: In this file photo taken on July 14, 2019, former Australian cricketer Steve Waugh (L) poses with former West Indies cricketer Brian Lara ahead of the start of the 2019 Cricket World Cup final between England and New Zealand at Lord's Cricket Ground. — AFP

Birmingham, where England have not lost since 2008, but Waugh said he would be telling his players to put that out of their minds. "I've won there in Ashes contests," he said. "I think if you start believing something and building it up it becomes true but in my mind it shouldn't be an issue."

The former skipper, known for his uncompromising approach on the field, said he expected some rough treatment from English crowds for Steve Smith and Dave Warner. The two batsmen were each banned for 12 months over their involvement in a ball-tampering scandal in South Africa last year. Cameron Bancroft, also named in the Test squad, was banned for nine months. But Waugh said Australia had turned a corner.

"Australia had to reset and revisit a few things, which is unfortunate because of what happened. I think they're in good shape. (Test captain) Tim Paine's done a really good job and he's a good leader. Hopefully you'll still see the Australian team play the Aussie way on the field. "We've got to be combative and play in a positive frame of mind because that's the way we play our cricket."

He added: "Things culminated in Cape Town and were out of control there and there were a couple of ordinary series between different sides.... It did get to the point when it was over the top and something needed to be done so unfortunately for the guys involved they were the ones that paid the price. "The good thing is now that everyone knows where the line is and you can't cross that line. — AFP

Sports

Dressel 'hair loss' after Brits foil his bid for a magnificent seven

'I've got pimples on my face from the stress of the meet'

GWANGJU: American swim sensation Caeleb Dressel complained of losing his hair yesterday after Duncan Scott's electrifying relay anchor leg denied him a seventh world title in eight days. Hot on the heels of Britain's stunning 4x100 meters medley gold, there were no such mistakes from the United States women's team, who obliterated their own world record to close out a controversial week in Gwangju in flamboyant style.

"I don't think there will ever be an instance where I get two silvers and six golds and be upset," said Dressel. "It's a very tough week — part of me is very happy, part of me wants to cry that I'm done with it," added the 22-year-old, who swept to seven gold medals at the 2017 world championships in Budapest. "I've got pimples on my face from the stress of the meet. I'm losing some hair."

Dressel, swimming's chiseled, tattooed pin-up, has lit up a meet plagued by doping protests and mud-slinging and would have expected to pocket a seventh gold medal after giving teammate Nathan Adrian a lead of half a body length with the fastest butterfly split ever on the third leg. But Scott, who sparked angry scenes with his podium snub of Chinese giant Sun Yang last week, exploded from the blocks to smash the anchor leg, hunting down Adrian as he fired off a sensational 46.14 to give the Brits a famous gold — and a third of the week for Adam Peaty.

'Sort of speechless'

"I can't say I thought I had that split in me," grinned Scott. "I'm sort of speechless I've been able to put that race together. The boys put me in position and I just used adrenaline to come home. It was great to dethrone the Americans — I've got to put that down as my best

swim." Simone Manuel romped to victory in the 50m freestyle before returning to anchor the American women to a world best of 3:50.40 in the 4x100m medley — boosted by a backstroke world record of 57.57 from teenage lead-off swimmer Regan Smith.

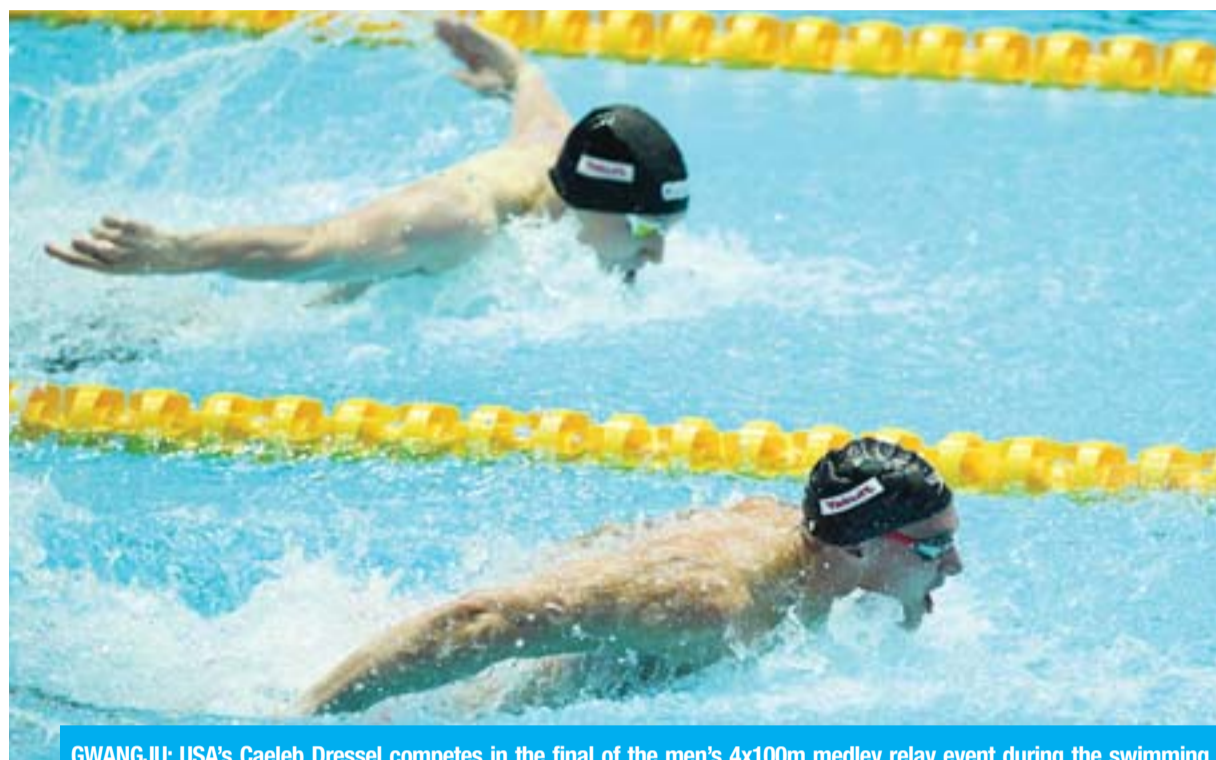
"To start off with a world record from Regan really pumped us all up," said Manuel. "We definitely wanted to finish off the meet on a good note." Olympic champion Katinka Hosszu got it done yet again, Hungary's "iron lady" sweeping to gold in the women's 400m individual medley to become the first female swimmer to win five world titles in a single event. "We Hungarians like it when everyone is bleeding and we have to go into war," said Hosszu, who threw up after the final. "It felt like a bit of a dog fight. But I like it this way, bring it on!"

Germany's Florian Wellbrock won a pulsating men's 1,500m freestyle final to become the first swimmer to capture gold medals in two sports at a single world championship after winning the 10km open water title.

Doping row

Dressel's exploits in Gwangju have been largely overshadowed by a doping row and protests by athletes targeting Sun after a leaked FINA doping panel report alleged China's triple Olympic champion had allowed vials of blood to be smashed after being visited by testers last year. Australia's Mack Horton and Scott both refused to shake Sun's hand after losing to the hulking Chinese swimmer, triggering a furious reaction from Sun.

Sun, who retained his 200 and 400m world titles in Korea, denies doping and insisted he was "protecting each and every athlete" by refusing to let what he called "unlicensed" testers take his blood. Following Horton's protest, Australian officials announced at the



GWANGJU: USA's Caeleb Dressel competes in the final of the men's 4x100m medley relay event during the swimming competition at the 2019 World Championships at Nambu University Municipal Aquatics Center. — AFP

weekend that relay star Shayna Jack had tested positive for a banned substance before the championships. That came after the shocking news that two people had died and several athletes had been injured when a balcony collapsed inside a local nightclub. Elsewhere on the

final night, American Lilly King crushed Russian Yulia Efimova to retain her 50m breaststroke title, while Japan's Daiya Seto romped to gold in the men's 400m individual medley to become the first male swimmer to capture three world titles in the event. — AFP

Dembele double fires Lyon to victory against Arsenal

LONDON: Substitute Moussa Dembele scored twice as Lyon came from behind to beat Arsenal 2-1 in a pre-season friendly in London yesterday. Gunners boss Unai Emery had opted against including Sead Kolasinac and Mesut Ozil in his squad after they were involved in an attempted car-jacking during the week.

He also named new signings Dani Ceballos and Gabriel Martinelli on the bench, with the pair coming on as the Ligue 1 side overturned Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang's opener to win the pre-season trophy. Alexandre Lacazette limped off injured early as Arsenal dominated the opening half, Aubameyang smartly tucking home Henrikh Mkhitaryan's cross 10 minutes before half-time.

But after the break, with changes taking place for much of the half, Lyon battled back and Dembele struck either side of Martinelli having a debut Emirates Stadium goal ruled out for handball. Before kick-off the fans observed a period of applause in memory of Jose Antonio Reyes. The former Arsenal forward died in a car accident on June 1.

African Nations qualifiers

Malian Moussa Kone and Namibian Elmo Kambindu scored twice each as their countries built first-leg leads with away wins this weekend in 2020 African Nations Championship qualifying. While Mali, Namibia, Uganda and Ethiopia returned home with aggregate advantages and



LONDON: Arsenal's Spanish defender Nacho Monreal (R) crosses the ball in front of Lyon's French defender Mapou Yanga-Mbiwa (L) during the pre-season friendly football match for the Emirates Cup between Arsenal and Lyon at The Emirates Stadium. — AFP

Mauritania and Zambia forced away draws, Burundi were the only home side to succeed.

Kone put 2016 runners-up Mali ahead within two minutes in Guinea-Bissau and added a second before half-time. Issiaka Samake and Dusse Kodjo netted inside six minutes midway through the second half to complete a 4-0 victory that virtually assures Mali of a place in the final qualifying round. Mauritania are the likely opponents of Mali during September and October after forcing a 0-0 draw away to debutants Cape Verde in Praia.

Kambindu netted twice during the second half as Namibia avenged an away defeat by the Comoros in 2018 qualifying with a 2-0 victory in Moroni. It was an impressive showing by the visitors, who went ahead on the hour and sealed success with a second goal 10 minutes from time. Assuming Namibia do

not slip up at home next weekend, they will face Madagascar or Mozambique for a place at the 2020 tournament in Cameroon. Goals from Patrick Kaddu, Mustafa Kizza and Taddeo Lwanga earned Uganda a 3-1 win over Somalia, who staged their home match in neighboring Djibouti for security reasons.

Kaddu and Lwanga were part of the Uganda squad that reached the last 16 at the Africa Cup of Nations in Egypt this month before losing narrowly to eventual runners-up Senegal. While there are no Cup of Nations selection restrictions, the Nations Championship is confined to footballers playing in their country of birth. Ethiopia, the original 2020 hosts who were replaced by Cameroon after falling behind with preparations for the biennial 16-team tournament, edged Djibouti 1-0 in Djibouti City. — AFP

Japan launch World Cup warm-ups with Fiji win

TOKYO: Kotaro Matsushima scored two tries as Japan beat Fiji 34-21 in a confidence-boosting win ahead of their home World Cup. The Brave Blossoms bagged five tries to Fiji's three in their opening match of the Pacific Nations Cup Saturday, two months before Japan hosts the first World Cup to be held in Asia.

Earlier, Samoa opened the tournament with a 25-17, come-from-behind win against Tonga in a match played in a greasy mudbath in Apia. Japan, hosting their first Test match at World Cup venue Kamaishi, which was ravaged by the 2011 tsunami disaster, took an early lead. After a Yu Tamura penalty, Kenji Fukuoka dived over for their first try before Levani Botia crossed at the other end for Fiji.

However, Matsushima scored his first try shortly afterwards before Timothy Lafaee and Kazuki Himeno made it four tries to Japan in the opening half-hour. Matsushima's second effort, in the second half, rounded off the scoring for the hosts in front of 13,000 fans. "I'm so glad to win against the wonderful team," fly-half Tamura said. "We outperformed them in contact," he added. Captain Michael Leitch said: "We really felt progress in our team. Fiji were really tough. People's strife was our motivation," added Leitch, referring to Kamaishi's efforts to recover from the 2011 disaster. Kamaishi's World Cup stadium is on the site of two schools devastated by the tsunami, where 400 pupils managed a miraculous escape.

Quagmire

Earlier Tonga, hampered by the late withdrawal of the inspirational Nasi Manu, had two players in the sin-bin when Afasetiti Amosa and then Belgium Tuatagaloa swung the game Samoa's way with tries in the closing minutes.

Napoli could hijack Arsenal's Pepe deal

LILLE: Arsenal target Nicolas Pepe is also weighing an offer from Napoli and will decide his future at the start of the coming week, a source close to the deal said yesterday. A second source said French champions Paris-Saint Germain had also entered the race to sign the 24-year-old. The Ivory Coast striker, who featured on five occasions for his country at the African Cup of Nations, scored 22 goals last season as Lille finished in a surprising second place in Ligue 1.

British media reported on Sunday the Gunners had scheduled a medical for Pepe. The first source told AFP it was

Manu, who was cleared of testicular cancer only last month, was set to cap his remarkable recovery by captaining Tonga, but a few hours before kick-off the Tonga Rugby Union tweeted that the affable 30-year-old was injured and out of the tournament.

Torrential rain before kick-off reduced Apia Park to a quagmire which affected the game as a spectacle despite a willingness by both sides to throw the ball around. Samoa dominated possession and territory but were kept out in the first half by the staunch defence of Tonga who led 10-3 at the turn with two tries coming when they reverted to wet-weather rugby.

The first was initiated by a raking kick downfield by Samisoni Fisiilau with Cooper Vuna winning the race for the ball to toe it over the line to score. Human battering-ram Ben Tamiefuna scored the second from a close-range charge through the Samoan pack. A short lineout early in the second half finally exposed a hole in the Tongan defence with the debutant Amosa strolling through a gap to put Alapati Leuia away for the try.

Fly-half Ulapano Seuteni, another of the four Samoans playing their first Test, landed the conversion to level the scores and then kicked a close-range penalty to put the hosts ahead for the first time. Replacement hooker Sefo Sakalia scored under the posts to regain the lead for Tonga but then undid the good work by being yellow-carded for pulling down a maul, when his side was already a man down following a Onehunga Havili no-arms tackle.

Elsewhere, the USA kicked off their Pacific Nations Cup account with a 47-19 rout of Canada in front of a standing room only crowd at Infinity Park in Glendale, Colorado. AJ MacGinty was good on the touchline conversion in the first half and the Eagles led 14-0. Moments later, Phil Mack was dinged for offside and MacGinty launched another kick from 45 meters to make it 17-0 and the beating was on. The US then led 20-0 at the half. The Americans didn't let up in the second half with the subs on. Hooker Kapeli Pifeleti got over the line and touched down in the right place to make it 40-7. — AFP

Aussie swimmer Jack vows to clear her name after positive drug test

MELBOURNE: Australian relay world-record holder Shayna Jack yesterday revealed the drug she tested positive for was a banned substance that aids muscle mass, while maintaining her innocence and vowing to clear her name. The 20-year-old, part of Australia's 4x100m freestyle team that set a world record at last year's Commonwealth Games, failed an out-of-competition test late last month.

But it only came to light on Saturday, initially in a media report, before Jack confirmed it. She had returned home days before the start of the world championships in South Korea citing "personal reasons". The revelation was hugely embarrassing for Australian swimming, coming just days after Olympic champion Mack Horton's high-profile protest against Chinese rival Sun Yang in Gwangju over salacious claims he smashed vials of blood following a test last year.

In an emotional Instagram post yesterday evening, Jack said she tested positive to Ligandrol, also known as selective androgen receptor modulator, intimating that it can be found in contaminated supplements. "I was in complete shock, asking myself how and why is this happening to me. My brain repeated over and over: 'I have always checked my substances', 'I didn't do this', 'why is this happening to me?'. I've done nothing wrong," she said.

"I didn't intentionally take this substance; I didn't even know it was in my system. It just didn't make any sense, and still doesn't to this day." She added that "the day I found out was the day I began my fight to prove my innocence". Swimming Australia chief executive Leigh Russell yesterday called the test result "bitterly disappointing and embarrassing". She said she knew of the failed test on June 26, but maintained the governing body was required to keep the details



MELBOURNE: Swimming Australia chief executive Leigh Russell speaks to the media in Melbourne on July 28, 2019, after a member of the country's 4x100m freestyle team that set a world record at last year's Commonwealth Games failed an out-of-competition test late last month. — AFP

confidential "until such time as either ASADA or the individual athlete release details of an adverse test result"

Richard Ings, the former head of the Australian Sports Anti-doping Authority (ASADA), questioned this in a tweet late Saturday and called Jack's explanation for missing the world championships "an untruth". In a follow-up tweet yesterday, he added: "If Swimming Australia and ASADA have a policy of not announcing provisional suspensions then they should quickly change it." Major global sports all announce provisional suspensions. You can't hide suspended athletes. It always gets out. Transparency is permitted by WADA (World Anti-Doping Authority)." — AFP

25 Hiura blasts walk-off HR in the 10th for Brewers



26 Verstappen wins, Hamilton crashes in a spectacular German Grand Prix



27 Dressel 'hair loss' after Brits foil his bid for a magnificent seven



COLOMBO: Sri Lankan cricketer Angelo Mathews plays a shot as Bangladesh wicketkeeper Anamul Haque (L) looks on during the second one day international (ODI) cricket match of a three-match ODI series between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh at R Premadasa Stadium. — AFP

Sri Lanka seal series against Bangladesh

Openers set the tone for an easy chase

COLOMBO: Avishka Fernando hit a quick-fire half-century as Sri Lanka eased to a seven-wicket win over Bangladesh in the second one-day international to seal the three-match series in Colombo yesterday. Opener Fernando made 82 off 75 balls, helping Sri Lanka reach 242-3 in 44.4 overs after Bangladesh were restricted to 238-8, despite wicketkeeper-batsman Mushfiqur Rahim making an unbeaten 98 runs.

Fernando and skipper Dimuth Karunaratne set the tone for Sri Lanka's run chase with 71-run stand before Bangladesh had their first success through off-spinner Mehidy Hasan. Mehidy bowled Karunaratne for 15 but Fernando and Kusal Perera continued the hosts' onslaught to put Sri Lanka, who won Friday's opening game by 91 runs, firmly in control. Mustafizur Rahman

dismissed Fernando and Perera, who made 30 off 34 balls, in quick succession to revive Bangladesh's hopes but Kusal Mendis and Angelo Mathews denied them further success.

Mathews struck occasional leg-spinner Sabbir Rahman for a four to complete Sri Lanka's win. He was unbeaten on 52 runs facing 57 balls. He was well supported by Mendis, 41 not out, in an unbroken 96-run fourth wicket stand. "I am disappointed to not get to the three-figure mark and hopefully I can convert my starts into bigger knocks in the future," said man-of-the-match Fernando. "The track was a bit slow and also spun a bit. I am glad that I was able to make a contribution," he added. Mustafizur finished with 2-50 for Bangladesh.

Mushfiqur falls short

Bangladesh had Mushfiqur to thank for providing them something to fight with after their top-order crumbled for the second time in the series. Mushfiqur slammed six fours and a six in a 110-ball innings to bail out Bangladesh who lost their first six wickets for 117 runs. Mushfiqur and number eight Mehidy shared 84 runs, a seventh-wicket record for Bangladesh against Sri Lanka to give the visitors' innings some respectability.

Mehidy made 43 off 46 balls with six boundaries before he was caught by Sri Lankan skipper Dimuth Karunaratne at mid-off off Nuwan Pradeep. Pradeep, fellow pace bowler Isuru Udana and leg-spinner Akila Dananjaya claimed two wickets each for Sri Lanka.

Bangladesh were in trouble soon after skipper Tamim Iqbal won the toss and elected to bat at the R Premadasa Stadium.

Pradeep trapped opener Soumya Sarkar leg-before for 11 before Tamim dragged an Udana delivery onto his stump after making 19. Dananjaya removed Mohammad Mithun for 12 and bowled Mahmudullah Riyad for six before Sabbir Rahman's run out for 11 compounded Bangladesh's woes. Mushfiqur began his fight back with Mehidy after Udana had Mosaddek Hossain caught by Kusal Perera for 13. Mushfiqur went off the strike in the fifth ball of the final over to miss out on his eighth ODI hundred by just two runs. The third and final match of the series will be held at the same venue on Wednesday. — AFP

Real Madrid block Bale China transfer

MADRID: Gareth Bale's move to Chinese side Jiangsu Suning collapsed yesterday after Real Madrid cancelled the proposed deal due to wrangling over the fee, a source told AFP yesterday. Bale, 30, who has been in the Spanish capital since 2013, was expected to join the Chinese Super League outfit on a three-year-deal worth £1 million (\$1.1 million) a week.

The source dismissed reports by Spanish daily Marca which said the Welsh player's family had blocked a potential move to Asia. Marca said those close to Bale had asked his representatives to look for clubs in Europe "before definitively saying yes to Jiangsu Suning's offer". The Chinese transfer window closes on Wednesday. The 77-time capped Welsh international had been told by Real coach Zinedine Zidane he does not form part of his future plans at the Bernabeu.

The former Tottenham Hotspur winger came off the bench to play half an hour in Real's record 7-3 defeat to rivals Atletico Madrid in a friendly match in New Jersey on their pre-season tour of the United States on Friday. Real boss Zidane said last weekend he thought it would be "best for everyone" if Bale's departure could be arranged quickly — comments Bale's agent branded "disrespectful" of a player who helped the side to a Spanish league title and four Champions Leagues since arriving from Tottenham six years ago. However, injuries have limited Bale to fewer than 80 starts in La Liga in the last four seasons while he has been the subject of criticism in the Spanish media for his struggles with the language and even the time he had spent on the golf courses.

'No makeshift deals'

Zidane insisted he meant no disrespect before Bale came on as a



MADRID: In this file photo taken on April 06, 2019 Real Madrid's Welsh forward Gareth Bale looks on during the Spanish league football match between Real Madrid CF and SD Eibar at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium. — AFP

substitute in a midweek 3-2 friendly win over Arsenal, also in the United States. "He had a good game and I'm happy for him," Zidane said at the time. "I do not know what's going to happen, for now he's with us. It did not change anything," he added.

Bale's agent Jonathan Barnett has already insisted that any deal which sees the Welshman leave the Bernabeu would have to be a permanent one and not one that sees him shipped out on loan. "There will be no makeshift deals to get him out of the club," said Barnett. "Gareth is one of the best players on the planet. I can guarantee you he will not be going on loan to any club." — AFP

India threatens Commonwealth Games boycott

NEW DELHI: The Commonwealth Games Federation yesterday pledged to hold talks with India after its Olympic body threatened a boycott of the 2022 event in Birmingham over the exclusion of shooting. India topped the table for shooting at last year's Commonwealth Games in Australia, taking home 16 medals including seven gold for a total tally of 66 medals — the third-best performing nation.

Shooting and archery were last month nominated by the Birmingham organizing committee as events to be dropped from the 2022 Games program, and for women's T20 cricket, beach volleyball and para-table tennis to be included. The decision has to be ratified by Commonwealth Games Federation members. The Indian Olympic Association wrote to the government noting that if shooting events were removed, the country's medal haul would take a big hit.

"The impression that will go down is of bad performance because (the) overall number of total medals may come down along with the overall ranking based on medals won," the association said in a letter to India's Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju. "We want to express our protest by not taking part in 2022 CWG Games in UK." The association said it would like to hold talks with Rijiju. In the letter, president Narinder Dhruv Batra added his organization would not attend the Commonwealth Games Congress to be held in Rwanda in early September.

It was also withdrawing its two candidates for elections to be held there. In response, the Commonwealth Games Federation said in a statement to AFP yesterday that "we absolutely want India to participate wholeheartedly in Birmingham 2022". "We... look forward to meeting our colleagues in India over the coming months to discuss their concerns and future ambitions," the statement said. — AFP