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# Kuwait stocks could receive \$5bn inflows after upgrades

## Bader Al-Kharafi hails Boursa's promotion to MSCI's emerging markets index from 2020

Opinion

### Kuwait's emerging market arrival signals new era of investment



By Bassel Khatoun

Kuwait stands on the cusp of a new era of investment. Promotion to MSCI Inc's Emerging Market Index (MSCI EM) this week, though contingent still on several market features being introduced to international institutional investors before November, puts the country in the 'crosshairs' of deep-pocketed global investors and the roughly \$1.8 trillion that tracks the popular gauge. The significant liquidity surge that typically accompanies MSCI EM promotion also means investors in Kuwait stand to benefit from a more institutionalized and liquid stock market.

Kuwait's likely MSCI upgrade reflects the hard work that the country's Capital Markets Authority (CMA) has undertaken over the past two years to make its stock market more accessible and attractive to global investors. During this time, it has made tangible improvements to its clearing, custody, and settlement services, increased foreign ownership levels (FOL), and eased the process of setting up investor trading accounts. We remain confident that Kuwait can make omnibus account structures and same National Investor Number cross trades available in the coming months, as requested by MSCI, to ensure index inclusion takes effect next year.

According to MSCI, up to 18 Kuwaiti stocks will be eligible for MSCI EM, with the inclusion basket likely to be concentrated in banks (c 70 percent). Actual implementation however will not take place until May 2020. While Kuwait has already been recognized as an "emerging market" by index providers FTSE Russell (FTSE EM) and S&P Dow Jones Indices' Global Benchmark Indices with an emerging market classification.

Continued on Page 24

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti stocks could attract inflows of as much as \$5 billion after a third global index provider upgraded the bourse to an emerging market. Kuwait's stock exchange, known as Boursa Kuwait, rang the opening bell yesterday after MSCI Inc announced the upgrade, to be implemented in 2020, a move that solidifies Kuwait's new status as a regional hotspot for market growth.

MSCI decided to upgrade the market to emerging market status, confirmed Othman Al-Issa, Vice Chairman of Kuwait's Capital Market Authority. Issa noted that the upgrade is the first step towards transforming Kuwait into an international financial and commercial center.

Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan praised the efforts of CMA and Boursa Kuwait. "Kuwait's upgrade to emerging market status by MSCI is the most important step to transform Kuwait and attract foreign capital. Efforts have resulted in including Kuwait in the top three global indices," he said.

Kuwait's stock market joined the FTSE Russell emerging market index last year and this year will be added to S&P Dow Jones Indices' Global Benchmark Indices with an emerging market classification.



Board Member and Head of the Executive Committee of Boursa Kuwait Bader Al-Kharafi

MSCI is the world's largest index provider, whose emerging-market group of indexes has about \$1.8 trillion of assets tied to it. MSCI expects Kuwait to introduce more reforms before the end of 2019, such as introducing omnibus accounts that would allow foreign investors to trade while remaining anonymous, offering the same privileges that local investors now have.

Bader Al-Kharafi, Board Member and Head of the Executive Committee of



Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan

Boursa Kuwait, expressed his happiness with MSCI's decision to upgrade the bourse. "The decision of Morgan Stanley Capital International to promote the Kuwaiti market comes as a culmination of the efforts of the stock exchange team in coordination with the Capital Market Authority and in cooperation with Kuwait Clearing Company," Kharafi said.

He added that the stock exchange has witnessed a qualitative leap and radical



Acting CEO of Boursa Kuwait Mohammad Al-Osaimi

reforms through successful privatization and the transfer of its management to the private sector, which makes it able to cope with the dynamic of continuous development witnessed by international financial markets. Kharafi added that shifting the Kuwaiti bourse from "frontier market" to "emerging market" status would put it under the scope of foreign investments in the near future.

Continued on Page 24

### Kuwait ready for any crisis; Trump talks war; Rouhani conciliatory

By B Izzak

KUWAIT/WASHINGTON: The National Assembly held a closed debate with the government yesterday over its readiness over regional developments amid rising tensions between the United States and Iran. Government spokesman and information ministry undersecretary Tareq Al-Mazrem said government agencies presented the state contingency plan in full in the wake of the developments. He said that the government showed that all its agencies including the military and security are well prepared to face any eventuality.

US President Donald Trump said yesterday he does

not want a war with Iran but warned that if fighting does break out, it "wouldn't last very long", even as Iran's president tried to tamp down soaring tensions. Trump also hinted that any conflict would be waged with air strikes, saying there would be no US boots on the ground. His remarks came after Iranian President Hassan Rouhani tried to rein in the crisis between the two arch foes, saying that Iran "never seeks war" with the United States.

Washington has ratcheted up crippling economic sanctions on Tehran after the Islamic Republic's forces shot down an unmanned US drone in the Gulf region last week, following a series of attacks on oil tankers that Washington blamed on Iran. In an interview on Fox Business News, Trump was asked if America is going to go to war with Iran. "Well, I hope we don't but we're in a very strong position if something should happen. We're in a very strong position. It wouldn't last very long, I can tell you that. And I'm not talking boots on the ground," Trump said, a day after he warned that any

Continued on Page 24

### Hashem slams 'birth tourists'; maternity charges to be hiked

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: MP Safa Al-Hashem yesterday accused expatriates of being the cause for long lines at hospitals and called to send them to hospitals in Farwaniya and Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, two of Kuwait's poorest neighborhoods. Hashem made the remarks when she was commenting on the response of Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah to one of her questions on overcrowding at maternity hospitals in the country.

Continued on Page 24

### Oman to open embassy in West Bank

MUSCAT/MANAMA: Oman said yesterday that it will open an embassy in the Palestinian territories in support of the Palestinian people, in a first for a Gulf Arab state. The announcement coincided with a US-led economic workshop in Bahrain to unveil a Middle East peace plan which is not expected to recognize an independent Palestinian state. "In continuation of Oman's support for the Palestinian people, the Sultanate of Oman has

decided to open a diplomatic mission at the level of embassy in the State of Palestine," the foreign ministry said on Twitter.

A delegation from the ministry will travel to Ramallah, the seat of the Palestinian Authority, to take the necessary measures to open the embassy, it said. The announcement was cautiously welcomed by a senior Palestinian official. "We think maybe first of all it will help us educate the Omani government as to the real nature of the occupation and also working with Palestine directly," Hanan Ashrawi told journalists. But she warned Oman against using the new embassy as a step towards establishing formal relations with Israel. "If this has a political price attached then certainly there will be ramifications," she said.

In Muscat, the Palestinian ambassador to Oman said the opening of an embassy in Ramallah was a "historical decision". "It is an important and indicative step with profound implications, especially at this time, as the Palestinian issue passes through a critical stage," Tayseer Farhat told AFP. "This step represents political and moral support."

Egypt and Jordan are the only Arab countries to have established diplomatic ties with the Jewish state. But Oman was the first Gulf state to receive Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in October 2018. A US ally bordering Saudi Arabia and Yemen, Oman has frequently served as a mediator in the Arab world. Elizabeth Dickinson, senior analyst with the International Crisis Group think

Continued on Page 24



MATAMOROS, Mexico: The bodies of Salvadoran migrant Oscar Martinez Ramirez and his daughter, who drowned while trying to cross the Rio Grande on their way to the US, are seen in state of Tamaulipas on June 24, 2019. — AFP

### Pic of drowned migrant, daughter sparks outrage

WASHINGTON: A heart-rending photograph of a Salvadoran man and his nearly two-year-old daughter drowned in the Rio Grande River fueled angry denunciations yesterday of the Trump administration's immigration policies. "Trump is responsible for these deaths," said Beto O'Rourke, the former Texas congressman who is seeking the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination. "As his administration refuses to follow our laws - preventing refugees from presenting themselves for asylum at our ports of entry - they cause families to cross between ports, ensuring greater suffering & death," O'Rourke said in a tweet.

Continued on Page 24

# Amir, Crown Prince receive top state officials



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. —Amiri Diwan and KUNA



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



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 Minister of Finance Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf.



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



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

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness also received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem. He later received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also hosted Minister of Finance Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem and His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak at Bayan Palace. —KUNA

## Kuwaiti FM hosts Canadian premier's envoy

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received yesterday Jean Charrier, the special envoy of the Canadian premier, along with the accompanying delegation. The two sides discussed the close relations between the two friendly countries, latest developments on the regional and international arenas and other issues of common concern. In other news, Kuwait's National Security Bureau Chief Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali Al-Sabah held talks yesterday with Director General of the Middle East Department at the German Foreign Ministry Philip Akkerman. Discussions between the two sides addressed international and regional issues. The meeting was held on margins of the First Gulf-German Dialogue on Security and Cooperation, due to kick off in Berlin today. —KUNA



Kuwait's National Security Bureau Chief Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali Al-Sabah meets with Director General of the Middle East Department at the German Foreign Ministry Philip Akkerman.



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Jean Charrier, the special envoy of the Canadian premier. —KUNA

## NBK Academy welcomes 22nd batch of trainees

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) recently welcomed to its annual 'NBK Academy' program the 22nd batch of trainees who have successfully met the acceptance criteria specifically designed for this inten-

sive course targeting Kuwait's university graduates. NBK Academy Program, launched 10 years ago, has been supporting NBK's strategy to employ, train and develop the professional skills of newly graduated Kuwaiti talents, in addition to attracting them to work in the financial services industry. The fresh group of trainees was welcomed by Emad Al-Ablani, Group General Manager-Human Resources and Mohamed Al-Othman, General Manager, Consumer Banking Group, in addition to several officials from talent management, training and development divisions.

## Official conveys condolences at Cyprus embassy

KUWAIT: Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah visited the Embassy of Cyprus in Kuwait yesterday to offer the condolences of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, 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, government and people of Kuwait over the demise of former Cypriot President Dimitris Christofias. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah offers condolences over the demise of former Cypriot President Dimitris Christofias. —Amiri Diwan photo

## Awqaf's secretariat pays KD 230,000 tuition fees for 1,000 students

KUWAIT: Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Fahad Al-Shula announced yesterday that the General Secretariat of Awqaf has paid KD 230,000 (about \$690,000) school fees to 1,000 students before the end of the last academic year. Shula said that the General Secretariat of Awqaf, and from its principle of responsibility towards society, decided to pay all fees for the needy students to allevi-

ate the financial burden on their families. He pointed out that this step came to activate the Awqaf role in serving various segments of society that are deserving of this type of assistance, adding that this assistance comes in harmony with the financial and humanitarian aid provided by Kuwait and its people to those suffering inside and outside Kuwait. He pointed out that this assistance included students of different grades in cooperation with Kuwait Red Crescent Society, Najat Charity Association and Kuwait International Charity and Development Association, which paid the amount allocated for this humanitarian project. He stressed that the General Secretariat of Awqaf stipulated that the three agencies implementing this project should coordinate with the central agency addressing the status of illegal residents in this regard. He praised Kuwait's pioneering role in humanitarian work around the world. —KUNA

The program, attended by 12 trainees, extends over a period of four months and covers various aspects of banking operations including: banking principles, risk management, financial accounting, marketing, negotiation, consumer and commercial lending.

It is worth noting that the program's content is subject to constant revision and update in order to keep pace with the latest research and studies in the global banking sector. New and innovative elements were recently added to the program, including design thinking and banking simulation as well as creativity and innovation in the banking environment.

NBK Academy reflects NBK's vision to support sustainable human capital development as one of its top strategic priorities and a shared responsibility between the various governmental institutions and the private sector.

NBK Academy was inaugurated in 2008 with the aim to pave the way for newly Kuwaiti graduates to join the banking services sector. The Academy provides graduates with the best training programs developed in cooperation with leading international institutions and universities to meet the demands of the labor market.



## Local

# New universities law does not cancel co-ed ban: Minister

## Ministry allocates KD 600,000 for school AC maintenance

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Hamed Al-Azmi said the university law that was passed by the National Assembly recently is a development project for the education process, updates previous laws and is not a replacement of the co-ed ban law; rather its introduction mentioned the ban law no. 24/1996. Azmi said the new law cancelled the laws of Kuwait University, Sabah Al-Salem University City, and Jaber University because it includes all existing and future universities, adding that the cancellation was to prevent clashes between laws. He said the co-ed ban law is valid as the new law did not cancel law 24/1996 with regards to higher education in Kuwaiti universities, applied education institutes and private schools. He said the law applies to existing and new universities according to a constitutional law ruling. He said this law provides many educational opportunities for Kuwaiti youth through the establishment of new public universities. He said a new public university will be established without major cost in the current buildings of Kuwait University and will be operational immediately after moving to Shadadiya. He said the law targets education quality control, as it puts the burden of quality on public universities in their programs according to international and local standards.

### KD 600,000

Ministry of Education's (MoE) assistant undersecretary for financial affairs Yousef Al-Najjar said the ministry had signed three contracts to supply, install and maintain 900 air conditioning units in public schools in various educational areas of a total value of KD 223,500, ie KD 74,500 per contract. Najjar said MoE had allocated KD 600,000 to replace malfunctioning air conditioners in some schools so that these schools could be ready before the new academic year begins.

Notably, MoE has had several problems concerning maintenance of air conditioning units at the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year. In another educational concern, educational sources said MoE is working hard to declare the results of the second session exams today; noting that students in the arts section finished their last exam in statistics on Wednesday, while those in the science section finished their last exam in biology on Tuesday.



Education Minister Hamed Al-Azmi

### Co-ops inspections

Ministry of Social Affairs' cooperation inspectors started intensive inspection campaigns in various co-ops to track down any violations, said informed sources, noting that over 100 citations had been issued since May, including 30 in June. The sources added that the violations include bad storage conditions, not separating foul items, unjustified employment and not respecting regulations concerning the number of Kuwaiti employees.

### Mutlaa city

The Public Authority for Housing Welfare followed a number of strict measures with the contractor executing the second contract at Mutlaa city to ensure meeting the contract's schedule and make up for the 30 percent delay to avoid withdrawing the project, said informed sources. The sources added that the authority mandated the contractor to finish the first phase by July 13, add 148 new pieces of equipment and hire 20 subcontractors for drainage works.



## Law targets education quality control

## Kuwait calls on int'l community to support UNRWA

NEW YORK: Kuwait called on the international community to financially aid the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to support its work and efforts. The remarks were made by deputy permanent representative of the Kuwaiti mission at the UN headquarters in New York counselor Bader Al-Munaikh, during the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee of the General Assembly for the Announcement of Voluntary

Contributions to UNRWA late Tuesday.

Since its establishment in 1949, UNRWA has been providing programs on education, health and social care to over five million Palestinian refugees, he said. Kuwait is continuously supporting UNRWA, as the Palestinian cause is a priority to the country, Munaikh noted. He added that Kuwait had donated \$50 million for the agency last September, in response to an urgent appeal launched by the UN body. Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti official said that UNRWA has been suffering a great deficit in 2018 and 2019, also stressing the need for further global cooperation to resolve this issue. Moreover, he called on the international community to pressure Israel into committing to the international law and the humanitarian law, end the siege on Gaza Strip and allow freedom of movement to Palestinians. — KUNA



NEW YORK: Counselor Bader Al-Munaikh speaks during an Ad Hoc General Assembly meeting for the Announcement of Voluntary Contributions to UNRWA. — KUNA

## Local pomfret catch not sold abroad: Union

By Meshal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Chairman of Kuwait Fishermen Union Thaher Al-Sowayyan strongly denied rumors that local pomfret fish is being imported to other countries, adding that a ban is currently in

effect on pomfret fishing. All local pomfret catches are sold in Kuwait, Sowayyan said, stressing that ever since its establishment, the union had been banning local fish exports. Commenting on a video circulating on social media about Kuwaiti pomfret being allegedly sold in the UAE, Sowayyan said that the annual pomfret fishing ban period is currently in place, which makes it impossible that the alleged video is true. "It might be Iranian pomfret that have been re-exported through Kuwait," he said in a statement yesterday, urging the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to investigate the matter.

## Kuwait participates in Vienna int'l conference of science, technology

VIENNA: A delegation from the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) participated Tuesday in the 2019 CTBT Science and Technology Conference held in Vienna. Dr Mane' Al-Sedarawy, Executive Director of Science and Technology, Dr Mufarreh Al-Rashidi, Director of Department of Health and Safety Institute, and Dr Sabah Al-Mumen participated in the conference.

Sedarawy said KISR team presented a scientific paper on the effects of temperature inversion on radionuclides that are measured by the monitoring station located at the main building of KISR. Mumen represented Dr Sameera Al-Sayed Omar, KISR's General Director, in an event on the sidelines of the conference on women and science, as well as a meeting discussing a process including a group of women scientists from around the world. Sedarawy

added, the most important obstacles which limit the engagement of women workforce in the scientific world were reviewed.

The Vienna-based Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is organizing the 2019 Science and Technology Conference that has been held every two years since 2006. KISR is participating because the conference offers a chance for researchers to exchange their scientific experiments and programs, and look into latest developments in these fields. The conference began on Monday to discuss mechanisms needed to strengthen CTBT's abilities to verify nuclear tests. Present in the conference almost 1,000 delegates from scientists, academic and educational institutions. The conference is an attempt to strengthen relations between policy makers on one side, and scientific institutions related to nuclear testing. — KUNA

## IOM lauds Kuwait for Tier 2 upgrade

KUWAIT: The International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Kuwait praises the Government of Kuwait for the upgrade to Tier 2 on the US Department of State's 2019 Report on Trafficking in Persons (JTiP). From 2016 until 2018, Kuwait has maintained its status on Tier 2 Watch List on the annual trafficking report. During those years, the State of Kuwait's efforts in complying to international laws and standards to combat Trafficking in Persons have significantly and consistently increased.

Iman Eriqat, IOM Kuwait's Chief of Mission, said: "This development is in line with the pioneering humanitarian leadership and efforts made by Kuwait, not only locally but also regionally and globally at all levels to contribute to the alleviation of the suffering of those affected by crises regardless of gender, race, nationality, religion or political affiliation."

More potential victims of trafficking are provided with several protective services including the Public Authority for Manpower's (PAM) Shelter for Female Migrant Workers. The shelter is a haven for

workers that have been exploited or trafficked, whether from their country of origin or in Kuwait. A hotline for the shelter has recently been established to process any complaints throughout the day. The State of Kuwait exemplifies its continuous commitment towards the protection of the rights of domestic workers. An anti-trafficking law was officially established in 2013 which ensures that the rights of domestic workers are fully protected. A domestic workers law no. 68/2015 was enforced two years later which provides legal entitlements to protect the rights of both the worker and the employer. Reported potential trafficking cases undergo thorough investigation by the Ministry of Interior's specialized trafficking unit where criminals are then penalized based on the crimes committed.

IOM's mission in Kuwait maintains its strong ties with the State of Kuwait and the Government shelter to by providing technical advice when needed and providing vulnerable migrants with assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR). IOM works in close coordination with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior, Justice and the Public Authority for Manpower. It is important to note that for the first time IOM nominated a Goodwill Ambassador Sheikh Bibi Nasser Al-Sabah, for the GCC based on her admirable efforts in advocating for the rights of migrant workers for the past decade.

What's your plan this Summer ?

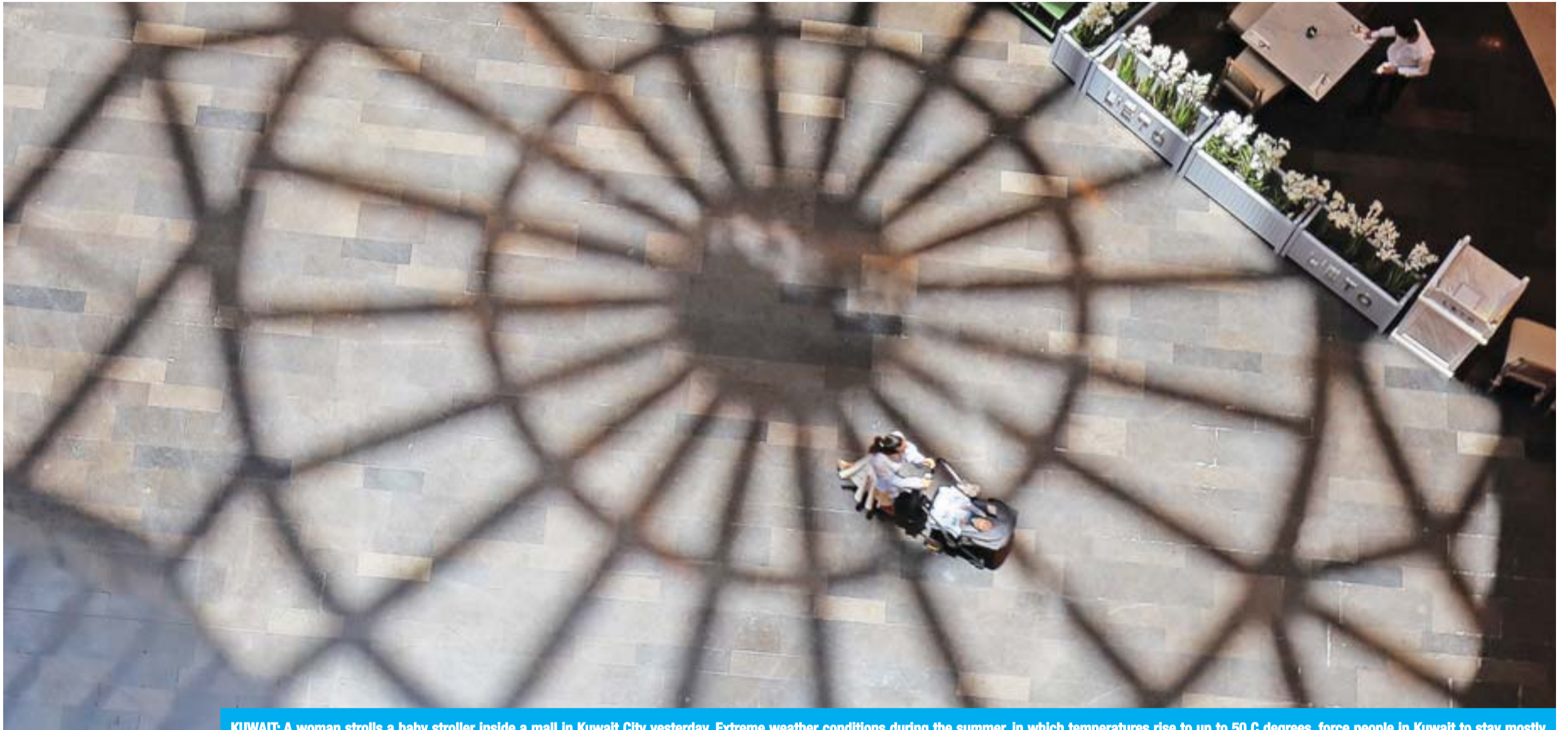
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**KUWAIT:** A woman strolls a baby stroller inside a mall in Kuwait City yesterday. Extreme weather conditions during the summer, in which temperatures rise to up to 50 C degrees, force people in Kuwait to stay mostly indoors during the day and instead go out during the night. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

# Firemen fight four blazes reported around Kuwait

## Man beats up wife over WhatsApp messages



**KUWAIT:** Firefighters extinguish a blaze in a vehicle in Khaitan yesterday.



**Fire engines** seen outside a Qadisiya house under construction where a fire was reported.



**A fireman** inspects damages left by a fire in a civil aviation office at Kuwait International Airport.

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

**KUWAIT:** Firefighters tackled a blaze which gutted a vehicle outside Khaitan police station yesterday. Meanwhile, firemen also extinguished a fire reported a Qadisiya house under construction. No injuries were reported in both incidents, while investigations went underway to reveal the causes of the fires. In the meantime, faulty wiring in an air conditioning unit in two offices of civil aviation department at Kuwait International Airport caused some damage. A security source said smoke was noticed emanating from the offices, so the airport fire station was informed and they dealt with it swiftly. Separately,

a sports car caught fire in Taima without causing injuries. Firemen dealt with the fire, which totally destroyed the car.

### Body found

Hawally police responded to a call about an unconscious person in his vehicle in Zahra. Paramedics who arrived at the scene found he was dead, so forensics men arrived and transferred the body to the coroner.

### Policeman injured

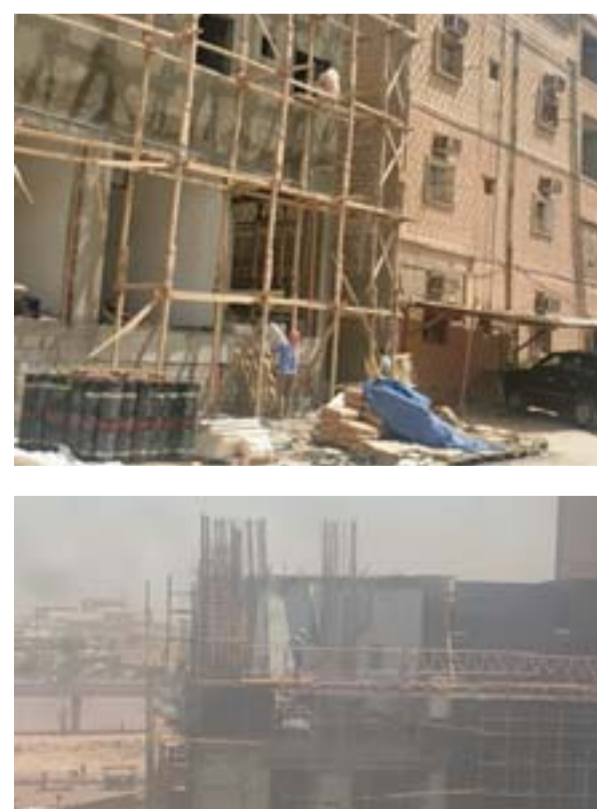
A traffic policeman sustained minor injuries during a collision on Jahra Road. Police and paramedics rushed to the scene and transferred the policeman to hospital.

### Domestic violence

An expat in his 40s beat his wife so badly that he broke her knee. He said that he became furious when his wife wouldn't let him view WhatsApp messages she received on her phone. The wife refused to drop charges.

### Questioning postponed

Sulaibiya police postponed the questioning of a man in his 50s and asked for an ambulance to transfer him to hospital out of fear for his life. The man had stab wounds, and a police patrol accompanied the ambulance to the hospital. Police were earlier surprised by the man bleeding from his head and abdomen, so an ambulance was called.



**KUWAIT:** Despite an outdoor work ban that is in place from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm every day during the summer, some construction companies continue to defy the ban in various parts of Kuwait. These photos taken yesterday between 12:00 pm and 2:00 pm show workers at construction sites in Farwaniya and Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh (Hasawi), working in non-shaded when the maximum outdoor temperature reached up to 50 C degrees in the shade. — Photos by Ben Garcia

Legalese

## Working hours in Kuwait



By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

**A**ny period during which the worker is working, is at the employer's disposal and carrying out his activities or duties is called working hours. Working hours under Kuwait labor law are a maximum of 48 hours per week and 8 hours a day for a 6-day work week. This is generally speaking and for most office jobs; some specific jobs have their own restrictions under bylaws from the ministry. Employees will not be required to work more than 5 consecutive hours without a one-hour break in between. The 8 working hours do not include a one-hour break, and therefore the start and end of a workday can be from 8 am to 5 pm, that is 9 hours in total.

### Laws under Kuwait labor law:

#### Article (64)

Without prejudice to the provisions of article (21) of this law, it is forbidden to allow workers to work for more than 48 hours per week or 8 hours a day, except in such events as are specified in this law. Working hours during the month of Ramadan shall be equal to 36 hours per week. However, it shall be allowed, by a ministerial resolution, to reduce working hours in hard jobs, jobs that are harmful by nature or for severe circumstances.

#### Article (65)

**a** Workers shall not be required to work for more than five consecutive hours a day without a break of a minimum of one hour that is not included in the working hours. The financial, commercial and investment sectors shall be excluded from this provision and the working hours shall be equal to eight consecutive hours.

**b** After having obtained consent of the minister, workers may be required to work without a rest break for technical and urgent reasons or in office work provided that the total daily working hours is one hour less than the number of daily working hours specified in article (64).

### Behind schedule

**Question:** We are construction workers and we are behind schedule with the contractors, and therefore we are now working 24 hours. I have afternoon shifts on some days, and it is extremely hot outside. I do not think I can keep working like this.

**Fajer:** It is illegal for you to be working in the heat outdoors from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm from June 1 until the end of August, and the company can be ordered to pay a KD 200 fine per employee. You will need to file a complaint against your employer in this regard.

### 15 hours a day

**Question:** I am presently working here in Kuwait as a domestic worker. I just want to ask some questions because it is really bothering me. Is it normal to work 15 hours a day? I start working from 9 am to 3 pm; 3 pm to 3:30 pm is my lunchtime, then 3:30 pm till 4 pm I wash too many dishes. Sometimes I finish at 4:30 pm. After I finish washing the dishes, I rest until 5 pm. My employer had given me a schedule earlier providing two hours of rest from 4 pm to 6 pm, but now she does not follow the schedule. Then I work from 5 pm till midnight. My dinner-time is 10 pm to 10:30 pm. The rest of the time, I work. I don't have time to call my family. I wash my clothes at midnight. So I sleep at 1 am. Is it good to work every day like this? I feel tired all the time.

**Fajer:** According to the domestic workers' law that has been effective since 2015, the maximum hours that a domestic worker should be working is 12 hours a day, which should include breaks. The maximum overtime is an additional two hours, for which the employer should pay an additional half-day salary for those two hours. This means you should be able to get 10 hours of personal time a day. I know that because of the nature of the work, this law might seem difficult to monitor - domestic workers are working inside homes, where no one can assess how many hours they are working, but hopefully people will soon realize the importance of treating other humans with the respect and dignity they deserve.

For questions or queries, please email us at [info@fl-legal.com](mailto:info@fl-legal.com).

# Arab-German Economic Forum kicks off with Kuwaiti participation

## Kuwaiti private sector invested up to \$13 billion in the German market

BERLIN: The 22nd Arab-German Economic Forum kicked off in Berlin yesterday with participation of high-ranking delegation from Kuwait, represented by Chairman of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Ali Mohammed Thunayan Al-Ghanem. Ghanem praised the objectives of the forum and the German Arab Chamber of Industry and Commerce (GACIC), which is exerting all efforts to develop the joint economic work environment between Arab countries and Germany, which has the largest European economy.

Ghanem said that GACIC is one of the most prominent chambers of commerce between Arab countries and foreign countries. He stressed that the German side is very interested in developing economic relations with the Arab countries, which reflected in the German distinguished participation in the three-day forum. He also praised the Kuwaiti participation in the forum, saying that this participation comes in support of the huge Kuwaiti investments in Germany, as Kuwait is considered to be the first Arab country to invest in the stable German market. The Kuwaiti private sector has invested up to \$13 billion in the German market, he said, stressing that the private sector and the Kuwaiti government are among the largest Arab investors in the German market.



Ali Al-Ghanem

euros. He praised the participation of KCCI, saying that Kuwait is one of the largest Arab countries that invest in the German market, which benefits both countries.

### Closer trade relations

In the meantime, Kuwait's Ambassador to Germany Najeeb Al-Bader said that his country is eager to establish closer trade relations with Germany. KCCI aims to reinvigorate trade ties with Europe's largest economy, the diplomat said ahead of an Arab and German economic forum, pointing out that bilateral relations are satisfactory. Kuwait has invested heavily in German markets in an effort to bring its 2035 national development plan to fruition, he explained, saying the talks allow Arab nations the opportunity to rejuvenate trade relations with Berlin.

The event is held under the patronage of the German Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy Peter Altmaier, and Egyptian Prime Minister Dr Mostafa Madbouly, as the Guest of Honor to the Forum. More than 600 leading experts and decision makers from business, politics and science is attending the event. It is a well-established conference that offers an excellent networking opportunity to establish new business relationships and to enhance existing ones with German counterparts. — KUNA

### Great mutual interest

Meanwhile, the head of the Arab-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry Peter Ramsauer said that the German and Arab participation in this year's forum is a sign of the great mutual interest between Germany and the Arab countries. He stressed that the German economy is very interested in the promising Arab economy.

In the meantime, Secretary General of the Arab-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry Abdulaziz Al-Makhlafi praised the growth of the German-Arab economic and trade relations in the past decades, saying that these relations can be further developed and improved in the coming years. The annual trade volume between the Arab countries and Germany worth 50 billion euros, he said, adding that the volume of Arab investments in the German market is about 100 billion



### Kuwait wants to push trade ties with Germany

## Lack of recreational facilities could lead youth to delinquency, says tourism expert

KUWAIT: There is growing deterioration in recreational activities and spending on domestic tourism in Kuwait, which poses considerable social threats to various sects of citizens and residents, a recent report shows. This was mentioned in a report released by the Leaders Group for Consulting and Development, the representative of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in Kuwait, covering the recent developments in the tourism sector in the country. The monthly report discusses collected data about travel traffic during the Eid Al-Fitr vacation, Kuwait's recreational sector and predictions about the upcoming summer vacation.



Nabila Al-Anjari

Leaders Group General Manager Nabila Al-Anjari warned in the report of restrictions made on juveniles and youth who cannot afford to travel, yet cannot find enough recreational facilities in which they can spend their free time during holidays and vacations. "This makes them an easy prey for drugs, violence or any other negative practices that they might resort to just to stream out," she warned.

According to field studies, it costs a Kuwaiti family of four an average of KD 1,500 to travel to Dubai and Turkey for four days during Eid Al-Fitr holiday, for instance. In comparison, this amount is almost the same cost a family would pay to spend the same time in a chalet in Kuwait. "This calls for building more resorts and recreation facilities that families can use for reasonable prices," Anjari added, noting that three quarters of Kuwaitis remained in Kuwait during the recent Eid holidays.

Anjari argued that due to the number of people who remained in Kuwait, all parks and beaches were heavily crowded despite the heat, which she said confirms the need for more recreational facilities. "The deteriorating infrastructure deprives those remaining in Kuwait from decent recre-

ational options," she stressed, comparing this situation with other GCC states.

Further, Anjari said that projects such as the Entertainment City development had been stagnant since the facility closed down for restoration in 2016, which made the Amiri Diwan adopt the project last April and prioritize it. "We hope the project will not be delayed for more than three years," she said, expressing fears that more recreational facilities would deteriorate because nothing had changed so far in their management. She also noted that bad planning for tourism seems to be as depressing as the sluggishness of many other projects related to the New Kuwait 2035 Vision, such as the railway project and many others. "These situations result from defective planning, bad programs, delayed schedules and lack of supervision," she concluded.

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Moon denies US-N Korea nuclear talks in 'stalemate'

Sisters who killed abusive father spark Russia domestic violence debate

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TEXAS: In this file photo Central American migrant families recently released from federal detention wait to board a bus at a bus depot in McAllen, Texas. —AFP

# US border chief Sanders quits

## Uproar over detention conditions of migrant children

WASHINGTON: The acting head of the US Customs and Border Protection agency announced his resignation on Tuesday amid a public outcry over alarming detention conditions of migrant children in Texas. John Sanders, appointed to the post just two months ago, said in a letter obtained by several US media outlets that he planned to step down as acting CBP commissioner on July 5.

Sanders' departure coincides with the revelation of unsanitary detention conditions for children at an overcrowded Border Patrol facility in Clint, Texas, a sign of the increasing strain on resources due to soaring numbers of arrests at the US-Mexico border. The conditions at the center in Clint were described by a team of lawyers, doctors and others who visited the facility about 20 miles southeast of El Paso.

Nearly 250 children were transferred out of Clint on Monday but a CBP official said Tuesday that about 100 were being sent back there. "The three-year old before me had matted hair, a hacking cough, muddy pants, and eyes that fluttered closed with fatigue," wrote Clara Long,

a researcher with Human Rights Watch who accompanied the team. "Children at Clint told us they don't have regular access to showers or clean clothes, with some saying they hadn't been allowed to bathe over periods of weeks and don't have regular access to soap," she said.

### Untenable position

Sanders has led CBP since April, when President Donald Trump tapped CBP chief Kevin McAleenan to replace Kirstjen Nielsen as secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. In a message to staff, Sanders did not give a specific reason for quitting and officials told The Washington Post and The New York Times it was not clear if his resignation was directly related to the handling of underage migrants at the border. Trump told reporters Tuesday he did not ask Sanders to step down but "knew there were going to be changes there."

According to the Post, Trump plans to name Mark Morgan, acting director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), to replace Sanders. In an interview

with CBS News on Tuesday, Morgan said he does not believe there is a "systemic problem" at detention facilities. "I just don't agree that it's egregious conditions, like a systemic problem," Morgan said. "Are there issues that we can improve and get better? Absolutely."

US law requires unaccompanied minors to be returned to their parents or transferred to Health and Human Services facilities within 72 hours. But many of the children held by the Border Patrol in Clint had been there for three or four weeks, according to the team which visited the facility on June 17. Arrivals of undocumented migrants at the southern US border have surged in recent months, with 144,000 taken into custody in May alone.

### Form of slavery

"Everybody understands it is not the Border Patrol's job to take care of children," said Warren Binford, a Willamette University law professor who visited the Clint facility. "They are as upset as we are that these children are being put into their care because they don't have the

ability to care for them," Binford said on MSNBC.

A fierce debate has mushroomed in Congress over how to address the crisis. Late Tuesday the Democratic-led House of Representatives passed a \$4.5 billion emergency funding package for humanitarian aid and security along the border. "We are ensuring the children have food, clothing, sanitary items, shelter and medical care," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said of the measure that addresses migrants in custody.

Nearly all House Republicans opposed the measure, arguing it establishes certain restrictions on migrant detention centers and fails to fund thousands more detention center beds to handle the surge. The Senate is expected to pass its version of the measure this week. Trump previously expressed support for the package, although it reverses his decision to block funding already approved to help conditions in Central American countries, the source of many recent migrants. He added "bad people" were using children to take advantage of lax US immigration laws. "It's a form of slavery, what they're doing to young children," he said.—AFP

## San Francisco first major US city to ban e-cigarette sales

LOS ANGELES: San Francisco on Tuesday became the first major US city to effectively ban the sale and manufacture of electronic cigarettes, as concerns grow over a sharp rise in vaping among youths. The city's legislature unanimously approved an ordinance suspending the sale in shops or online of e-cigarette products that lack approval by federal health authorities. No such approvals currently exist.

Backers said the ban was necessary due to the "significant public health consequences" of a "dramatic surge" in e-cigarette use among teenagers. But the move triggered a swift backlash from critics who say it could drive former smokers back to conventional cigarettes. US health authorities are alarmed by the rise in popularity of e-cigarettes, battery-powered devices that enable users to inhale addictive nicotine liquids that are often fruit flavored.

The potential health consequences of vaping, including fears it could stunt adolescent development, remain largely unknown, in part because the practice is so new. The number of young Americans using e-cigarettes grew by 1.5 million in 2018, with about 3.6 million middle and high school students using vaping products. San Francisco is home to market-leading e-cigarette maker Juul.

City Attorney Dennis Herrera, who co-sponsored the ban, said it closed a loophole that the federal U.S. Food and Drug Administration should have tackled long ago. "E-cigarettes are a product that, by law, are not allowed on the market without FDA review," he said in a statement after the second and final vote to imple-

ment the ban. "For some reason, the FDA has so far refused to follow the law. If the federal government is not going to act, San Francisco will."

### Deadly cigarettes

The city's mayor London Breed has 10 days to sign the legislation—which she has said she will do—with the ban due to take effect seven months later. "We need to take action to protect the health of San Francisco's youth and prevent the next generation of San Franciscans from becoming addicted to these products," Breed said in a statement Tuesday ahead of the vote.

She added that e-cigarette companies were "targeting our kids in their advertising and getting them hooked on addictive nicotine products." But critics say the legislation will make it harder for people seeking alternatives to regular cigarettes. E-cigarettes do not contain the cancer-causing products found in tobacco.

An editorial in the Los Angeles Times noted that regular cigarettes were still for sale in San Francisco, arguing that "it's bad public health policy to come down harder on the lesser of two tobacco evils." Juul said in a statement following the vote that the ban would "drive former adult smokers who successfully switched to vapor products back to deadly cigarettes, deny the opportunity to switch for current adult smokers, and create a thriving black market." The manufacturer called instead for stricter regulation and enforcement including proof-of-age identification.

### Increase risk

Traditional "Big Tobacco" companies have increasingly marketed "smoke-free" products like e-cigarettes as far less harmful alternatives to the deadly habit they have long been peddling. But experts point out that it took decades to determine that smoking tobacco—which accounts for more than seven million premature deaths worldwide every year—is truly dangerous.—AFP

## US prosecutor Mueller to testify publicly on Russia probe

WASHINGTON: Former US special counsel Robert Mueller is to testify in public about his report into Russian electoral interference, paving the way for a historic television moment in which Democrats will attempt to make the case for President Donald Trump's impeachment before the American people. The scrupulously tight-lipped Mueller will appear at back-to-back hearings on July 17 of the House Judiciary and Intelligence Committees, which announced Tuesday that the prosecutor had agreed to abide by subpoenas for his testimony.

"Russia attacked our democracy to help Trump win. Trump welcomed and used that help," House Intelligence Committee chairman Adam Schiff said on Twitter. "As Mueller said, that should concern every American. And now, every American will get to hear directly from Mueller." Trump's apparent response to the announcement came swiftly in a two-word tweet in which he complained, without referring to Mueller, of "Presidential Harassment!"

The Mueller report released in April outlined numerous contacts between Trump's 2016 election campaign and government-linked Russians, as well as evidence that the president tried on several occasions to stymie the investigation. The Democrats have been split on whether to launch impeachment proceedings against the Republican president but-fearing that much of the country is unaware of the Mueller report's contents-have been asking major figures in the probe to testify in public on its findings.

### Six Trump associates charged

But the president has asserted executive privilege to bar current and former aides from cooperating with several congressional investigations into his conduct. Making his only public statement about the high-stakes probe on May 29, Mueller said longstanding Justice Department guidelines prevented him from charging Trump, despite at least 10 possible acts of criminal obstruction by the president.

But not indicting Trump was not equivalent to clearing him, Mueller said, suggesting Congress has both the constitutional powers and the responsibility to pursue the case. Mueller's testimony comes with both parties focused squarely on next year's presidential election. While many of the candidates for the 2020 Democratic nomination support impeachment, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has argued that it would be a risky move without an "ironclad" case and bipartisan support.

If the Democrat-controlled House of Representatives were to vote on formal impeachment charges, the Republican-held Senate would decide whether to convict, which requires an unlikely two-thirds majority. Pro-impeachment House Democrats more than 70 in a caucus of 235 have announced their support so far—hope nevertheless that Mueller's testimony will strengthen public backing for removing Trump.

"Americans have demanded to hear directly from the special counsel so they can understand what he and his team examined, uncovered, and determined about Russia's attack on our democracy, the Trump campaign's acceptance and use of that help, and President Trump and his associates' obstruction of the investigation into that attack," Schiff said in a statement jointly issued with House Judiciary Committee chairman Jerry Nadler. Mueller spent nearly two years investigating Russian election interference and possible involvement by Trump and his inner circle.—AFP

International

# US cyber attack on Iran shrouded in digital 'fog of war'

## Digital weapons allow Trump to show the world he is responding

**DUBAI:** A claim by US officials that a retaliatory cyber attack ordered by the White House crippled Iranian missile launching systems will remain almost impossible to substantiate, experts say. Citing unnamed sources, US media reported last week that the attack launched by the US Cyber Command disabled computers of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard unit responsible for shooting down an American surveillance drone over the Strait of Hormuz on June 20. But Tehran denied the reports, saying "no successful attack has been carried out" by the United States against the Islamic republic.

### All sides 'bluff'

Julien Nocetti, of the French Institute of International Relations, said all sides "bluff" in such cases. "You must not reveal your play," he told AFP. "It's an extremely subtle game of cat and mouse." "It is not surprising the Iranians claim (the cyber attack) failed, and we have no way of verifying the statements of either side," he added. When it comes to cyber conflict, the "fog of war", as military theorist Carl von Clausewitz calls it, is as thick as ever.

There are no fighting fronts or observers, and evidence and clues can be easily manipulated when the confrontation plays out within computer servers. The

fact that US officials chose, or were instructed, to quickly leak news about the alleged cyber attack points to a desire by President Donald Trump's administration to prove it did not stand idly by, even after calling off a military strike against Tehran, experts said. According to Nicolas Arpagian, a cyber security expert, the reality of the attack and its exact objectives and effectiveness will remain a mystery.

"In this case, Iranian military targets were chosen. If they had been civilian targets, it would have been different," he told AFP. "If power plants were targeted, then power would have been cut off. If it were a water company, then people would have lined up to get bottles of water." Arpagian said only the Iranians would know the scope of the damage from a cyber attack, while destruction from missiles would easily be measured.

"Digital weapons allow President Trump to show the world, and especially his supporters, that he is responding (to Iran)," he said. "But the fact that the targets are military means only the Iranians could tell if they have suffered any damage, which they will of course not do." On Monday, Iran's telecommunications minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi acknowledged Tehran has "been facing cyber terrorism-such as

Stuxnet-and unilateralism-such as sanctions".

But said "no successful attack has been carried out by them, although they are making a lot of effort". The Stuxnet virus, discovered in 2010, is believed to have been engineered by Israel and the US to damage nuclear facilities in Iran. Iran at the time accused the US and Israel of using the virus to target its centrifuges used for uranium enrichment.

### Parade in Red Square

Loic Guezo, of the French Information Security Club, said such cyber attacks show that the US "has the resources and technical capabilities... to neutralise an enemy's system". "It is the establishment of a balance of power, the equivalent in wars of the future of a parade in (Russia's) Red Square with hundreds of nuclear warheads," he told AFP. Tensions between Iran and the US have been high since Trump last year unilaterally withdrew from a landmark 2015 nuclear deal signed between Tehran and world powers.

The accord sought to curb Iran's nuclear ambitions in exchange for sanctions relief. But they spiked in recent weeks after Washington accused Tehran of being behind a series of attacks on tankers in sensitive Gulf waters. Iran has denied any involvement. For



WASHINGTON: In this file photo US President Donald Trump speaks before signing an executive order in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, DC. —AFP

Nocetti, the cyber attack is not only a message for the Iranians but for other countries as well. "It is a message for the rest of the world, Moscow and Beijing will be watching closely," he said.—AFP

## Kazakh leader writes off people's debt after protests

**NUR-SULTAN, Kazakhstan:** Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev ordered yesterday a write-off of millions of dollars in debt for some of the country's poorest families in an apparent effort to head off new protests. Tokayev, who was elected president this month following the shock retirement of his political patron Nursultan Nazarbayev, said the move would free 255,000 people of debt completely while alleviating the plight of thousands of others.

Tokayev, 66, has had a difficult start as Kazakhstan's second president in nearly three decades of independence, with

police detaining 4,000 people to tamp down protests on election day and the days that followed. An international observation mission criticized the detentions and said the June 9 vote showed "scant respect" for democracy. The write-offs would cover debts up to 300,000 tenge, or nearly \$800, said Tokayev, adding however that they would be limited to specific categories of debtors.

The order released yesterday said the measure would be available to a number of disadvantaged groups as well as families with many children. The order also included restrictions targeting lenders including "a ban on the provision of loans to citizens with incomes below the subsistence minimum" and additional "measures for the issuance of unsecured consumer loans". In February, Nazarbayev sacked the cabinet, citing economic failures amid repeated protests by low-income mothers who called for better social and housing benefits. The veteran leader whose reign began during Soviet times has retained a number of key titles despite stepping down and is believed to be calling the shots in the oil-rich Central Asian country of 18 million people. —AFP

## Israel protests Chilean president's holy site visit

**JERUSALEM:** Israel protested to Chile yesterday after President Sebastian Pinera visited a highly sensitive Jerusalem holy site alongside a Palestinian minister. Pinera, on a visit to Israel and the West Bank, toured the Al-Aqsa mosque complex on Tuesday, with images on social media showing him accompanied by Palestinian officials, including Jerusalem affairs minister Fadi al-Hadami.

The status of Al-Aqsa, known to Jews as the Temple Mount and located above the Western Wall, is one of the most sensitive issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is the holiest site in Judaism and the third-holiest for Muslims after Mekkah and Madina, administered by the Muslim Waqf but secured by Israeli police. According to Foreign Minister Israel Katz, Chilean Ambassador Rodrigo Fernandez was rebuked for Pinera's visit taking place "in

violation of the regulations and a prior agreement."

"The freedom of worship, which Israel observes more than anyone else has, should be separated from safeguarding our sovereignty on the Temple Mount," he said in a Wednesday tweet. Foreign dignitaries normally coordinate their visits to the volatile site with Israeli officials. An official source in the Chilean delegation said the visit was a "private" one, in which "formally, only the delegation from Chile participated."

Pinera, who landed in Tel Aviv on Monday, was due to meet with Israeli President Reuven Rivlin and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu later in the day. Israel occupied mainly Palestinian east Jerusalem in the 1967 Six-Day War and later annexed it in a move never recognized by the international community. It sees the entire city as its capital, while the Palestinians view the eastern sector as the capital of their future state. Chile is home to the world's largest expatriate Palestinian community. Pinera will meet with Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas in Ramallah on Thursday before taking off for Japan. —AFP

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## International

# Trump makes Melania spokeswoman new White House press secretary

## Grisham becomes White House communications director

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump on Tuesday named Stephanie Grisham—until now spokeswoman for his wife Melania—the chief White House press secretary, taking over an office that has seen sharply deteriorating relations with the media. Trump said Grisham would do a “fantastic job.” “She actually gets along with the media very well, as you know. A lot of the folks in the media like her very much,” he told reporters.

This would mark a change of temperature in the White House, where Trump has labeled journalists the “enemy of the people” and the outgoing spokeswoman, Sarah Sanders, all but abandoned formal press briefings. The appointment, first announced by Melania Trump on Twitter, also gives Grisham the more strategic post of White House communications director. “She has been with us since 2015 - @POTUS & I can think of no better person to serve the Administration & our country,” Melania Trump tweeted. According to Trump, “a lot of people wanted the job, a lot of people.”

### Behind the scenes

Grisham is a Trump loyalist, having joined

his presidential campaign back in 2015 and winning a reputation as a tough operator in the first lady’s office. Melania Trump’s White House activities—principally a campaign for helping children that she calls #BeBest—receive relatively little media attention. But Grisham revealed the behind-the-scenes power of the first lady during an unusual spat last November that effectively saw Melania Trump ordering deputy national security advisor Mira Ricardel to be fired.

The dispute reportedly began when Ricardel was angered by seating arrangements on the government plane taking Melania Trump on a four-country tour of Africa, her first big solo foreign trip. In a highly unusual move, Grisham issued a statement on Ricardel afterward that said: “It is the position of the Office of the First Lady that she no longer deserves the honor of serving in this White House.” Shortly after, Ricardel found herself being shuffled to another role.

### Sanders leaves under shadow

Sanders leaves her job under a considerable shadow. Trump announced her exit in a tweet earlier this month and praised her as a

“warrior.” Sharp, sometimes acid-tongued, Sanders has not been prone to the almost comic slip-ups that embarrassed predecessors in the job, such as short-lived Trump spokesman Anthony Scaramucci. But she has earned a reputation for bruising clashes with journalists whom she finds over-critical—often echoing her boss’s attacks on unfavorable coverage as “fake news.”

Pressed during one particularly combative exchange with reporters to distance herself from Trump’s “enemy of the people” jibes, Sanders refused. Sanders was also seen as responsible for the demise of the formal daily briefing—practically an institution under previous presidents.

Grisham has been supportive of Sanders, reacting to her departure by saying she would “miss her sincere love of country & great sense of humor at the @WhiteHouse.” Whether Grisham will revive the long established norms of the White House press office is an open question. Her boss disdains what he calls the mainstream media and says he prefers to engage with the public via Twitter and other social media—effectively making himself his own press secretary. —AFP



WASHINGTON: In this file photo Stephanie Grisham, White House press secretary and Communications Director, attends the Congressional Picnic on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, DC. —AFP

## France’s Macron says climate ‘red line’ at G20

TOKYO: France wants the G20 to issue a statement committing to strong action on climate change and considers the issue a “red line,” President Emmanuel Macron said yesterday ahead of the summit. Macron was speaking in Tokyo on a visit ahead of this week’s Group of 20 meeting, where climate change will be among several contentious issues on the table, along with trade and tensions with Iran.

The French leader held bilateral talks with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe yesterday, reaffirming an alliance that has been tested in recent months after the arrest of auto tycoon Carlos Ghosn, a French citizen, once headed an auto alliance of Japan’s Nissan and Mitsubishi Motors and France’s Renault, and his arrest has laid bare tensions in the partnership. The G20 is expected to be dominated by the ongoing trade war between China and the United States, as well as concerns that spiraling tensions between Washington and Tehran could lead to war. But climate change will also be a battleground, with Washington likely to oppose strong references to the Paris climate deal, an agreement from which it plans to withdraw.

### Climate red line

Macron said France would refuse to sign any agreement that bowed to such demands, amid reports that Japan is seeking consensus language that could water down previous communique wording on climate change. “I have a red line,” he told a gathering of French citizens before meeting Abe. “If we do not talk about the Paris accord and if, in order to find agreement among the 20 in the room, we are not able to defend climate ambitions, it will be without France.” “If one or the other of them doesn’t want to sign, they can say so, but we must not collectively lose our ambition,” he added. Nearly 200 nations have signed the Paris climate agreement, which commits signatories to efforts to cap global warming at “well below” two degrees Celsius. But US President Donald Trump wants to withdraw Washington from the deal, a process that will take several years.

At a press conference after meeting Abe, Macron also raised the issue of trade tensions, urging a multilateral approach. Trump is expected to hold talks with China’s Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the G20, with hopes that the leaders can agree a truce in a trade war that has been damaging for the global economy. “For me, the solution to the difficulties that we are encountering is not in bilateral accords, is not in bypassing international rules, is not in protectionism,” he said. “It is very clearly in the modernization of the multilateral trade framework,” he said.

### Alliance tested

And he and Abe said they had discussed tensions with Iran and wanted to help stabilize the region as fears grow that Washington and Tehran could be headed for military conflict. Macron’s trip, which will see him become only the second foreign leader—after Trump—to meet Japan’s newly enthroned Emperor Naruhito, comes after a bruising time for ties between Paris and Tokyo.

The alliance has been tested by the arrest of Ghosn and increasingly strained relations between Nissan and Renault, with profound differences remaining over how the auto relationship should evolve. Renault has sought closer integration with Nissan, which the Japanese firm opposes. Earlier yesterday, Macron called the auto alliance something “we value highly”, urging all involved to “make it stronger in the face of international competition”.

“This is something we must do together,” he added. Macron’s comments on the subject are being watched closely by Japanese officials, given that the French state holds a 15-percent stake in Renault. Macron declined however to be drawn on the specifics of Ghosn’s case, saying it was not the role of the French state to intervene directly, beyond assuring Ghosn’s presumption of innocence and right to a defense.

After talks with Abe and the emperor, Macron and his wife Brigitte will stop briefly in Kyoto for a cultural visit before continuing on to Osaka where the G20 talks will run from June 28-29. —AFP

## Sisters who killed abusive father spark Russia domestic violence debate

MOSCOW: A case against three teenage sisters who killed their father after what lawyers say was years of beatings and sexual abuse has sparked protest and highlighted Russia’s dire record on domestic violence. Krestina, Angelina and Maria Khachatryan have been in custody or under house arrest since July 2018, when they stabbed father Mikhail to death.

The sisters—who were 17, 18 and 19 at the time of the killing—face between eight and 20 years in prison if they are convicted of conspiring to murder as a group. But lawyers and activists say the teenagers were forced to act to save their own lives, pointing to poor legal protections for abuse victims in a country where punishments for domestic violence have been scaled back in recent years.

Women’s rights campaigners insist the sisters should receive psychological rehabilitation instead of a prison sentence and demand the father be tried posthumously. The Khachatryan sisters were beaten “practically every day” by their father, who also regularly sexually abused them, lawyer Alexey Liptser told AFP. He also shot at them with an air gun, he added. A neighbor and relative had approached police but their reports were not taken seriously. According to Liptser, Mikhail Khachatryan had “good relationships” with people in law enforcement.

In 2016, Krestina tried to commit suicide but her sisters saved her. Lawyers say last year the father took each girl into his room one at a time and used pepper spray on them, almost suffocating the eldest. Liptser said the two older girls “decided that if they did not act, one of them would die”. They waited until he fell asleep and stabbed him dozens of times. Their trial is expected to begin in mid-August.

## Naked biker, topless row as Europe sizzles

BERLIN: German police cautioned a man riding naked on a moped while topless sunbathers sparked a row in Munich, as temperatures were to soar to record highs in several European countries yesterday. Meteorologists blamed a blast of hot air from northern Africa for the heat wave early in the European summer, which could send thermometers above 40 degrees Celsius in France, Spain and Greece on Thursday and Friday.

Scientists warn that global warming could make such scorchers more frequent. In Germany, where the 70-year-old record temperature for June of 38.5 degrees Celsius could be beaten on Wednesday, police in Brandenburg cautioned a naked man for driving his moped wearing only his helmet and sandals. Brandenburg police, who described themselves as “speechless” over the incident, said on Twitter the man’s response when stopped was: “Is it hot or what?”

### Topless solidarity

However, there was no joking in Munich after burly security guards ordered a group of women sunbathing topless on the banks of the Isar to put their bikini tops back on. The move backfired, according to the Munich daily Sueddeutsche Zeitung, which quoted another sunbather as saying that she and others took their tops off “out of solidarity”.

Munich officials are discussing how much public nudity should be allowed, but Bavaria’s ruling conservative Christian Social Union (CSU) party went a step further. An urgent motion was introduced in a city council meeting Wednesday, reading “the



MOSCOW: Angelina Khachatryan, one of three teenage sisters accused of murdering their father, attends a hearing at a court in Moscow. —AFP

Women’s rights campaigners say Russia’s legal system effectively leaves women without any state protection for abuse in the home. There is no separate law covering domestic violence in cases where the victim is living with the attacker, but rather it is included under the offense of battery. Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree softening the punishment of abuse in families in 2017, making a first offence punishable by only a fine instead of a jail sentence.

Domestic violence is rarely discussed publicly and rights campaigners say police often ignore cases. Instead women who commit violence while protecting themselves from an abuser face heavy jail sentences.



BERLIN: A woman sits in a chair as she cools off in Lake Wanasee in Berlin, as temperatures topped 33 degrees Celsius. —AFP

bathing costume statutes of the state capital Munich will be amended to the effect that bathing costumes must completely cover the primary sex organs—to allow topless bathing.

On the north coast, sweltering temperatures bent railway tracks out of shape on a popular tourist route near Rostock on the Baltic Sea and an official said a track-laying company were trying to fix the damage.

### Hell is coming

Authorities were taking no chances in France, where a heat wave in August 2003 was blamed for 15,000 deaths. Some schools are expected to close Thursday and Friday, while several cities including Paris and Lyon have restricted traffic to limit a build-up of pollution. The country’s weather service, Météo-France, says the intensity of the heat is unprecedented since 1947, when detailed surveys started.

In Spain, a TV weather presenter

tweeted “el infierno (hell) is coming”, with the centre and northeast put on alert for soaring temperatures. The mercury could top 39 degrees Celsius in Zaragoza or Navarre—a new record for June in those regions. The worst is expected Friday, when 33 of the 50 Spanish provinces face extreme temperatures, which could reach 44 degrees Celsius in Girona.

In Austria’s Innsbruck, the world-famous carriage horses were given time off as the city recorded 36.7 degrees Celsius late Tuesday, breaking the 2012 record for Tyrol state of 36.6 degrees. Innsbruck passed legislation last year taking horse-drawn “fiaker” carriages off the streets when temperatures rise above 32 degrees. In Poland, the interior ministry said 90 people have drowned this month while seeking to cool off in lakes or rivers. In Lithuania, 27 people were reported to have drowned so far as temperatures in the Baltic state soared above 35 degrees. —AFP

### Living in hell

More than 160,000 people have signed an online petition to free the sisters and campaigners have held small protests outside the court where pre-trial hearings have taken place. “The girls were living in hell,” said Anna Rivina, who runs a centre providing free legal help for victims of domestic violence. “They saved their lives like that because they knew there will be no help from anyone—not from the police, the neighbors or teachers,” she said.

“Domestic abuse against women is not recognized by the state, there is no lawful mechanism to protect these people,” She partly blames Russian state media for only covering domestic abuse stories “when there are injuries, corpses or limbs cut off”. Rivina referred to the widely-covered case of Margarita Gracheva, whose husband took her to a forest where he tortured her and chopped off her hands in December 2017. Her complaints to police had been ignored.

### Catastrophic consequences

Alyona Popova, one of Russia’s leading women’s rights activists, said a guilty sentence for the sisters would have “catastrophic” consequences for other victims of domestic violence. “There will be more fatalities,” she said, adding that the trial will show “if the state supports abusers or victims”. The outcry around the case, she said, will affect similar ongoing trials. In one case, 19-year-old Daria Agenty faces nine years in prison for using a pencil-sharpening knife to fend off a male attacker.

In another trial in southern Russia, 28-year-old Kristina Shydukova faces 15 years for killing her abusive partner with a knife during a regular beating. Online petitions calling for charges to be dropped against the two women have gathered a total of almost 300,000 signatures. Activists expressed hope that campaigns were raising awareness of violence against women in Russia. Rivina said such efforts had led to small victories in the past. Last year a court in far eastern Nakhodka overturned the three-year sentence of Galina Katorova, who killed her husband after long-term abuse and complaints to police that were ignored. She served over a year behind bars but her release was “seen as a victory,” Rivina said. “Now if we defend the Khachatryan girls, it will also be a victory,” she said. —AFP

## Mauritania cracks down on two opposition parties after election

NOUAKCHOTT: Mauritanian police raided the headquarters of two opposition parties, closing one of them amid high tension followed a disputed outcome to presidential elections, sources said Tuesday. The operation late Monday came after police clashed with opposition supporters angered over the declared victory of ruling party candidate Mohamed Ould Ghazouani, they said.

A former general and long-time ally of outgoing president Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, Ghazouani was credited with 52 percent of the ballot, averting the need for a runoff vote. “Police arrived at the headquarters of candidate Biram (Ould Dah Ould Abeid) and tossed teargas grenades inside, smashing windows and doors, making the place unusable,” Abeid’s spokesman, Hammada Ould Lehbouss, said on Tuesday.

They also raided the headquarters of opposition candidate Kane Hamidou Baba, the four candidates told a press conference late Monday. His premises were closed by the authorities, opposition sources said on Tuesday. The two buildings, located close to each other in the capital Nouakchott, were deserted early Tuesday and rocks used to form roadblocks and burned tyres were scattered outside, an AFP reporter saw.

Mauritania’s internet connection appeared to be restricted from 1500 local time/GMT on Tuesday with no access to Whatsapp or Facebook, AFP correspondents said. The government said later Tuesday that it had arrested more than one hundred foreigners, blaming opposition parties for contacts with outside forces seeking to destabilise the country through protests.

“There is a foreign hand behind these events,” Interior Minister Ahmedou Ould Abdallah told reporters. He did not give any more details or nationalities, only saying the foreign presence was “linked to certain candidates”. “We have arrested a hundred foreigners whose presence cannot be explained in the context of the election in a country that is not their own,” the minister said.

The vote on Saturday had been touted as a historic moment in the conservative Saharan desert nation, marking its first democratic transition after decades of coups. Ghazouani easily beat Abeid, an anti-slavery activist credited with 18.58 percent of the vote, according to results published by the CENI electoral commission. —AFP



## International

# Moon denies US-N Korea nuclear talks in 'stalemate'

## Moon to host Trump as Pompeo raises hope for N Korea talks

SEOUL: South Korean President Moon Jae-in yesterday dismissed the idea that nuclear negotiations between Pyongyang and Washington had stalemated but stressed patience was needed to bridge a 70-year "sea of mistrust". In written answers to questions submitted by leading media, Moon—who brokered talks between US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un last year—also urged Pyongyang to resume the dialogue to show its desire to denuclearize.

Moon is set to host the US leader this weekend as he tries to rekindle nuclear talks that have stalled since the collapse of a second summit between Trump and Kim in Hanoi in February. The pair failed to reach an agreement on sanctions relief and what the North might be willing to give up in return, and Pyongyang has since not responded to calls for dialogue, maintaining only minimal contact.

"There is no reason to regard the current situation as a stalemate in the peace process on the peninsula just because the pace has remained slow," Moon said. Trump and Kim's willingness to engage in dialogue had "never faded", he added in the interview with editors of major news agencies including AFP, noting a recent exchange of letters between them. On Sunday, the North's state media reported that Kim received a personal message "of excellent content" from the US president, just days after Trump said the North Korean leader had sent him a "beautiful letter".

Trump has insisted he was in "no rush" for a third meeting with Kim, but Moon said yesterday that "behind-the-scenes talks" were going on between Pyongyang and Washington for another summit. Despite the top-tier correspondence, US officials say

privately the North has been sitting on their offer for working-level talks and the South Korean unification minister recently admitted that the talks process was at a standstill.

### Missile launch

Moon said the implementation of agreements between the US and North Korea requires patience, given their long history of hostility. "As their hostile relations have persisted for more than 70 years, it will be difficult to cross a sea of mistrust all at once," he added. The two have blamed each other for the collapse of the Hanoi summit, with the US saying Pyongyang sought the lifting of effectively all major sanctions for partial disarmament, while the North says it wanted some measures eased for closing all the nuclear facilities at its Yongbyon complex.

North Korea has since accused the US of acting in "bad faith" and last month raised tensions by launching short-range missiles for the first time since November 2017. But Moon insisted that the resumption of missile tests did not trigger a "sudden hike in tensions" nor lead to "a breakdown of the denuclearization dialogue". On the question of the North's commitment towards a full dismantlement of its nuclear program, Moon called on Pyongyang to return to the dialogue table "at the earliest date possible".

"If Pyongyang leaves behind the passive stance it has adopted following the summit in Hanoi... this will help it win the trust of the international community," he added. At the same time, Moon said, "North Korea must trust the promise of the international community to ensure its security and a bright future." —AFP



SEOUL: South Korean President Moon Jae-in, right, speaks with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (not pictured) during a meeting at the Presidential Blue House in Seoul.—AFP

## N Korea blasts Pompeo as obstruction to nuclear talks

SEOUL: North Korea denounced US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo as an obstruction to nuclear negotiations yesterday, days before President Donald Trump visits Seoul while talks with Pyongyang are deadlocked. The process has been stalled since a second summit between Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Hanoi in February collapsed, after they failed to agree on what the North would be willing to give up in exchange for sanctions relief.

The two sides have had minimal contact and Trump is due to fly to Seoul at the weekend for talks with South Korean President Moon Jae-in. But a spokesman for the North's foreign ministry criticized Trump's top diplomat yesterday, calling recent comments by Pompeo "a manifestation of the most extreme hostile acts" against Pyongyang.

The top US diplomat told reporters this week the resumption of working-level talks with the North was becoming "a very real possibility", adding: "Some 80-plus percent of the North Korean economy is sanctioned." He immediately corrected himself, saying he had misspoken and the figure applied to the effect of US sanctions on Iran, but the remarks were nonetheless deemed "reckless" by Pyongyang.

"If the US sanctions are affecting 80-plus percent of our economy, as Pompeo mentioned, the question is whether the US target is to raise it up to 100 percent," the foreign ministry spokesman said in a statement carried by the North's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). Hostile comments and actions by US policymakers were hampering top-level efforts to revive the stalled diplomacy, the spokesman added, so that it would be "difficult" to look forward to "the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula". —AFP

## US soldiers killed in Afghanistan

KABUL: Two US service members were killed in Afghanistan yesterday, NATO said, the latest international casualties as the US and the Taliban prepare for a new round of talks. NATO's Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan gave no further details, but the deaths came less than 24 hours after US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo made an unannounced visit to Kabul and said he hopes for a peace deal with the Taliban "before September 1".

"In accordance with US Department of Defense policy, the names of the service members are being withheld until 24 hours after notification of next of kin is complete," NATO said in a statement. The Taliban claimed in a statement they killed two American soldiers in an ambush in Sayed Abad district of southern Wardak province yesterday, but there was no immediate confirmation from NATO whether it was the same attack.

The blast brings to nine the number of US service members killed in Afghanistan so far this year, compared to 12 killed in all of 2018. In his visit with President Ashraf Ghani, Pompeo said peace was Washington's "highest priority". Last September the US began a fresh push to bring the Taliban to the negotiating table to end America's longest war. The next round of talks between the Taliban and the US are set to begin on June 29 in Doha.—AFP

## Indonesian police beat protesters during deadly riots

JAKARTA: Indonesian police beat protesters during last month's deadly rioting in Jakarta, Amnesty International said, as it called for an independent probe into "grave human rights violations", including the killing of demonstrators. In May, peaceful protests against president Joko Widodo's re-election victory in the world's third-biggest democracy erupted into street battles between police and rioters in central Jakarta.

At least nine demonstrators were killed and hundreds more injured in the city's worst violence in years. Police have been under the spotlight after online videos surfaced that appeared to show a group of officers viciously beating a protester as he lay on the ground. "Amnesty International found that at least four other men were beaten by the police during that incident," the rights group said in the letter dated Tuesday.

"The evidence we have obtained indicates that the police carried out torture or other ill-treatment against persons in their custody in other areas of Jakarta," it added. Amnesty also said it had received "credible reports" that paramilitary police were involved in the deaths of 10 demonstrators including one at a protest in Pontianak on Borneo island. Usman Hamid, Amnesty Indonesia's executive director, told AFP on Wednesday that the rights group was not directly accusing police of killing demonstrators, but said the reports should be probed by an independent body.

In response, National police spokesman Dedi Prasetyo said police were conducting their own investigation into the beating allegations and protester deaths. "Let's wait for the results of the probe," he added. Questions have swirled about how the demonstrators—including a high school student—died in the chaos.

Police insisted they did not shoot live rounds, but instead used rubber bullets, water cannons and tear gas to push back the crowds. Some of the dead were



JAKARTA: Protesters, bottom, argue with plain-clothed police, top, during a rally near the constitutional court in Jakarta.—AFP

reported to have gunshot wounds. On Thursday, Indonesia's Constitutional Court is expected to rule on claims by Widodo's defeated challenger, ex-gener-

al Prabowo Subianto, that he lost the election because of voter fraud and widespread cheating-allegations that sparked the riots.—AFP

## Thailand orders phone users in Muslim-majority south to submit photos

BANGKOK: An order for mobile phone users in Thailand's restive south to submit a photo of themselves for facial recognition purposes is causing uproar from opponents who see it as further curtailing the rights of the Muslim-majority population. But an army spokesman yesterday defended the move, saying the facial identification scheme is needed to root out insurgents deploying mobile phone-detonated home-made bombs.

Thailand's three southernmost states—Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat—have since 2004 been rife with conflict between Malay-Muslim rebels and the Buddhist-majority Thai state, which annexed the region around a century ago. The tit-for-tat violence has claimed around 7,000 lives, mostly civilians of both faiths, and security forces have detained individuals suspected of being

separatist rebels without warrants in the past.

Now telecoms companies are requiring all users of the region's 1.5 million mobile numbers to submit a photo of themselves for facial recognition purposes following orders from the army—a move that is drawing anger from rights groups as the deadline to register photos nears. A military spokesman defended the move yesterday, saying it was necessary to identify perpetrators who use mobile phone reception to set off home-made bombs.

"In cases where the attacker uses a SIM card to detonate a bomb, we can trace the perpetrator," said Colonel Watcharakorn Onngon, deputy southern army spokesman. Registration ends on October 31, and anyone who fails to submit their photo in the three southern provinces and four districts in neighboring Songkhla province will have their mobile reception cut off, he said.

Junta leader-turned-premier Prayut Chan-O-Cha on Tuesday also said the scheme provides "evidence" about who the real owner of each SIM card is. "People in the south are not complaining... they know it truly helps reduce violence," he said. The Muslim-majority south and rights groups have long accused the Thai state of heavy-handed sweeps of the Malay-Muslim populations, raising tensions in communities who feel targeted in their homes.—AFP

## Malaysia busts attempt to smuggle 5,000 terrapins

SEPANG, Malaysia: Malaysian customs officers arrested two Indian men attempting to smuggle over 5,000 terrapins through the country to be sold as pets, officials said yesterday. The Southeast Asian country, home to rare animals such as orangutans and tigers, has become a hub for wildlife trafficking. The men were detained at Kuala Lumpur's main airport last Thursday after they arrived from China with 5,255 red-eared terrapins.

The creatures—packed into plastic containers inside two suitcases—were worth 52,550 ringgit, senior customs official Zulkurnain Mohamed Yusuf said.

Some died on the journey, although a large number survived. "Our initial investigations found that (they) were brought in here for the purpose of being brought back to India," he told reporters.

Red-eared terrapins—also known as red-eared sliders—are popular pets and can be found in many shops around the world. While they are not an endangered species and are commonly traded, permits are required to import them into Malaysia. The suspects did not have the correct documents, and face up to five years in jail and a fine if convicted.

Zulkurnain said the two men, whose identities were not disclosed, had been remanded in custody and that the terrapins would be handed over to relevant officials. Kanitha Krishnasamy, regional director of the wildlife trade watchdog Traffic, called the case "bizarre" as trade in the terrapins is legal. "What is clear is how crazy the pet trade has become," she said. Customs officials have in the past seized animal parts at Kuala Lumpur airport, but it is unusual for them to find a huge stash of live creatures.—AFP



SEPANG: Seized red-eared slider tortoise are pictured during a press conference at the customs authorities building in Sepang after a foiled smuggling attempt by a syndicate.—AFP

## Analysis

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## In the heart of the metropolis, a king of herder Fulani

The Sarkin Fulani of Lagos sinks into his white upholstered throne, lays a hand on the sculpted golden cow head that forms the armrest and scans the subjects gathered at his feet. Mohammed Abubakar Bambado is a busy 49-year-old businessman with a successful port handling firm in Nigeria's economic metropolis. He is also a king. The Sarkin Fulani of Lagos is one of Nigeria's most influential members of a mainly Muslim community of nomadic herders from the far north, at a time when relations with the country's largely Christian farmers are deteriorating.

All of those waiting for an audience to air their problems in Bambado's cramped assembly room are ethnic Fulani-Hausa, two closely-tied northern ethnic groups. But few of them know the herding life. Fulani-Hausa now make up around a quarter of the population of Lagos - around five to seven million people - in the ethnically Yoruba-dominated south of Nigeria. The congregation is overwhelmingly urban - district chiefs kneel alongside the representatives from the ranks of the "okada" motorcycle taxis and the beggars who wander between the racing traffic in downtown Lagos.

"I am here to solve their problems," said Bambado, a thick-set man with a Mercedes 4x4 who himself does not fit the stereotype of the weather-beaten wanderer. Their problems are centred on the push and hustle of life in Nigeria's frenetic economic capital. A money-changer was kidnapped and murdered. His family does not trust the police, and begs the influential chief to follow up on the investigation. He says he will. There are land disputes, family quarrels, beatings and armed robberies, all brought to the chief for advice and help. He has no official powers, but when he speaks, the police and politicians listen.

"He is a good man. When something serious happens, even if he is travelling overseas he always picks up his phone. And if it is necessary, he flies back to Nigeria," says Suleiman Ibrahim, a trader who has come to Bambado to adjudicate a family feud. Indeed, the time Bambado spends on his gilded throne in his somewhat ramshackle palace in Surulere, the popular residential district of Lagos where he lives, is just part of his busy schedule. The married father-of-three often travels for work and spends around half the year in London and Dubai on business.

### Blood and belief

The Fulani seem to be a people without borders - the wider community is estimated at between 30 million to 40 million scattered across fifteen countries from Senegal to the Central African Republic. In the north, every city has a Sarkin Fulani or a Sarkin Hausa. Officially, Bambado's authority extends only to the borders of Lagos, but his influence spreads wider and he is a powerful player in Nigeria's political mosaic. That position has become increasingly important in recent years as conflicts between Fulani and sedentary farmers have swept Nigeria's fertile central region.

The bloodshed has been stoked by demand for water and access to land, driven in part by a surging population in a country of 200 million. The Fulani have also been accused of "terrorism" and aggression. "Anywhere you see a Fulani man, people see them as killers," said Bambado. "But it is not true. A Fulani man is a wonderful person, he accommodates, he likes his people, he likes his neighbors, he interacts, he is a very social person. But you know what? There is no society that has no bad eggs."

Bambado's grandparents were from an educated, religious family and were among the first migrants to leave the arid northern state of Jigawa and travel south at the beginning of the 20th century. They eventually settled on the Atlantic coast and his grandfather, a trader in kola nuts and gold nuggets, increasingly became a linchpin of the Fulani community. "When people from the north stayed in Lagos, he was the one to welcome them. They became more numerous. So one day, they decided that they needed a leader: My grandfather," said Bambado, who inherited the title when his father died in 1994. — AFP



Mohammed Abubakar Bambado

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Hausa-Fulani pastoralists move while their cattle graze near some farms on the outskirts of Sokoto in Sokoto State, Nigeria, on April 22, 2019. — AFP

## Forces of history drive herder-farmer conflict

Beneath an escalating conflict between herders and farmers in central Nigeria lies a relentless but often under-reported force: History. Events in the 19th century helped shape today's violence between mainly Muslim Fulani cattlemen and largely Christian farmers - a battle of blood and identity. Sokoto, an ancient city in northern Nigeria, is where many Fulani, a semi-nomadic people stretching from Lake Chad to the Atlantic coast, have their spiritual roots.

Cross-legged, his eyes closed and palms turned upwards to the heavens, Saidu Bello prays before a huge marble tomb covered in blue velvet: The resting place of Usman Dan Fodio, revered by many as a Muslim saint. "I pray Allah to give me the same strength as he gave to the Shehu," says Bello, a 29-year-old trader, referring to Fodio. "Whenever I have doubts, I come here for his help to make the right decision."

### Caliphate

In 1804, Fodio, a learned Fulani, declared holy war on despotic leaders. Urging Muslims to observe a "pure Islam", he launched an insurrection that, four years later, led to the establishment of the caliphate of Sokoto. The state was as large as it was prosperous, extending from modern-day Burkina Faso to Cameroon - an area that took four months to cross end-to-end. The caliphate ended when its last leader was killed by the British in 1903.

"Usman Dan Fodio united former Hausa kingdoms and brought peace to the whole region," says Sambo Wali Junaidu, advisor to the current sultan of Sokoto, a direct descendant of the first caliph and Nigeria's highest-ranking Muslim. "He fought social injustices and

undue privileges." Fodio's charisma and writings - treatises and poems written in Arabic, Hausa and the Fula language - inspired Fulani jihads in West Africa throughout the 19th century. And his popularity persists today. At the shrine in Sokoto, pilgrims come from as far as Senegal, laden with offerings. Many of these faithful are barely-literate Fulani herders who have not read any of Fodio's writings but learned of him through madrasas, or Islamic schools.

### Roots of conflict

The conflict in Nigeria between Fulani and sedentary farmers has erupted in a fertile central region called the Middle Belt. Demand for water and access to land, driven in part by a surging population in a country of 200 million, are among the contemporary causes for the fighting. But there is a deeper reason: the Middle Belt lies in Nigeria's religious faultline, between the predominantly Muslim north and mainly Christian south.

It is also a region that, historically, suffered chronic unrest. Lying on the southern rim of the caliphate of Sokoto, the Middle Belt was largely populated by animist communities. These were frequently raided by the caliph's troops to provide slave labor for the plantations, salt mines or burgeoning iron industry which made the empire so prosperous.

Contemporary descriptions by traders are eye-opening. In 1824, in the great commercial hub of Kano, the ratio of the population was 30 slaves to every one free man. "Native populations, living in this zone of influence during the time of pre-colonial Islamic empires, were psychologically scarred" by the raids and the enslavement, says Alioune Ndiaye, a specialist on Nigeria at the

University of Sherbrooke in Quebec, Canada. Many became Christian as a result, and the traumatic episode resonates in Nigeria today, he says. "There is still this dread among people in the south that the northerners are coming 'to dip the Quran in the ocean,' as the saying goes," Ndiaye says.

### 'Blame the Fulani'

This backwash of fear and mistrust is often reflected in the Nigerian media, whose main outlets are owned by a southern tycoon. Fulani herders are routinely called "terrorists", and a supposed Fulani "plot" to Islamize Nigeria, begun under Fodio, is also media fodder. Stigmatization worsened after the election in 2015 of President Muhammadu Buhari, a Muslim Fulani from the north. His every decision - from the speed with which he has condemned massacres to the response of the armed forces and the appointments he makes in the army and police - is scrutinized through the lens of ethnic bias, says Ndiaye.

Ibrahim Abdullahi, who represents an association of herders in the northern city of Kaduna, says the notion of a modern-day "Fulani jihad" is a "pure fantasy" that was being manipulated for political ends.

Unlike Mali and Burkina, where jihadist groups exploit ethnic resentment to recruit among Fulani people, the Fulani in Nigeria generally have no claims based on religious ideology. "Most of the Fulani pastoralists are poor and haven't been to school. They don't have a voice, there's no organization or political elite speaking on behalf of all of them," he said. "That's why each time something goes wrong in Nigeria, people blame the Fulani." — AFP

## Hunger for beef offers rewards and risks for Nigeria's pastoralists

With over 200 million people and an emerging middle class, Nigeria is witnessing a boom in demand for meat that offers potential but also risks for the semi-nomadic herders who provide most of its beef. According to government estimates, Nigeria, consumes 360,000 tons of beef each year, accounting for half of all West Africa. In per-capita terms, consumption is low compared with advanced economies, but it is growing fast, and expected to quadruple by 2050. Today, most of the demand is met by pastoralists from the ethnic Fulani group, who follow time-honored techniques of raising cattle, driving them south to pastures and taking them to market. During the dry season, the herders come down from the arid Sahel to the fertile plains of central and southern Nigeria, seeking water and pasture for their livestock.

### Tensions

The millennia-old activity has been thrust into the spotlight in recent years because of worsening confrontations with sedentary farmers over access to land and water. Clashes have claimed 7,000 lives over the past five years and cost the Nigerian economy \$13 billion annually, according to a report in May by the NGO Mercy Corps. The friction has roots dating back more than a century. Droughts, population growth, the expansion of sedentary farming into communal areas but also poor governance have all played a role.

Such neglect has pastoralists feeling isolated, according to Ibrahim Abdullahi, secretary of Gafdan, a national union of herders. "Nothing was done to implement the grazing reserves designed by the law in the 1960s - most of the land has been sold and is now cultivated by farmers who grow crops," he said. Nomadic herders also find themselves far from the channels of the meat trade, while many markets and outdoor slaughterhouses lack basic sanitary conditions, such as running water, animal shelters and cold storage rooms, he said. "At all the levels of government, the livestock sector was always marginalized in favor of agriculture. Some states still allocate less than two percent of their budget to livestock," he added.

### Opportunity

As Nigerians clamor for meat, can this ancient practice - with its long supply chains, climate risks and social tensions - compete against sedentary farming, which has high productivity and lower risks? Jimmy Smith, director of the Institute for International



Hausa-Fulani pastoralists and cattle buyers wait for cattle transactions while sitting on a metallic fence at Kara Cattle Market in Lagos on April 10, 2019. — AFP

Research on Livestock Farming (ILRI), based in Nairobi, argues that the system can not only survive but also flourish - in the right conditions. "Pastoralism has been established for millennia - in the past we've seen it's a very efficient system if you look at the input/output relationship. Very little is invested, but a reasonable amount is harvested," he told AFP.

This model can prosper if the right support is put in place, he said. "For example, it is possible to grow more forage and grain in sub-humid zones to create and develop feed markets for livestock based in northern areas, where it's dry." "One animal which can give two litres of milk today could give 10 litres in the future." The government is mulling several plans to boost cattle raising and ease tensions over access to land. They include initiatives for the creation of "cattle colonies" - dedicated areas where pastoralists can graze their animals and have access to veterinary and other care. But these schemes are expensive and have already drawn flak from Nigerian states, which oppose handing over land for this use. Another idea, for encouraging ranching, is doubted by agricultural experts. They point to a long list of past failures, during the French and British colonial period, to set up high-productivity "modern farms" in West Africa.

### Imports

Nigeria has considerable livestock - nearly 20 million cattle, 40 million sheep and 60 million goats - but about 30 percent of slaughtered animals are purchased from abroad, mainly from neighboring Cameroon, Chad, Mali and Niger. Often the herds are driven for hundreds of kilometres to be sold at border markets like Illela, a trading post between Niger and Nigeria. The animals are then trucked to the cities, where they are sold again, slaughtered and butchered. "As it is now, there's no way Nigeria can produce all the meat and the milk it needs for its growing population," said Smith. "A significant proportion of animal source food demand will most likely continue to be met by importation."

Nigeria's hunger for meat is likely to be replicated across Africa, if expectations of population and income rise hold true. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates the continent will experience a doubling in consumption of beef, pork and chicken between 2015 and 2050. With most of the meat consumed in Africa still coming from pastoralism, Smith said, "All we need is to modernize it." — AFP

## Business

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BASSE-GOULAIN: Photo shows the production line of the 'Petit beurre' biscuit at the factory of French biscuit manufacturer LU, in La Haye-Fouassiere, near Nantes, western France. — AFP

# Robots to take over 20 million jobs

## Forecast highlights growing concerns on worsening social inequality

WASHINGTON: Robots are expected to take over some 20 million manufacturing jobs worldwide by 2030, extending a trend of worsening social inequality while boosting overall economic output, a new study shows. The forecast set to be released yesterday highlights growing concerns that automation and robots, while offering economic benefits, are disproportionately killing low-skill jobs and aggravating social and economic stress. The study by Oxford Economics, a private British-based research and consulting firm, said job displacement from the rise of robots will not be evenly spread around the world, or within countries.

Robots have already taken over millions of manufacturing jobs and are

now gaining in services, helped by advances in computer vision, speech recognition and machine learning, the study noted. In lower-skilled regions, job losses will be twice as high as those in higher-skilled regions, even in the same country, the study concluded. The research comes amid intense debate on the rise of technologies such as self-driving cars and trucks, robotic food preparation and automated factory and warehouse operations and their impact on employment.

Many analysts point out that automation has generally led to more job creation than it destroys, but that in recent years the trend has created a skills gap that leaves out many workers. According to the latest study, the cur-

rent wave of "robotization" is likely ultimately to boost productivity and economic growth, generating roughly as many new jobs as it destroys. At the high end of the forecast, the researchers see a \$5 trillion "robotics dividend" for the global economy by 2030 from higher productivity.

"We found that jobs where repetitive functions are required are most affected, with those such as warehouse work at imminent risk," the authors wrote. "Jobs in less structured environments and which demand compassion, creativity or social intelligence are likely to be carried out by humans for decades to come." It added that "robots will increasingly play in sectors including retail, healthcare, hospitality, and trans-

port as well as construction and farming." The impact will be uneven depending on the country and regions within each country, the study said.

"Automation will continue to drive regional polarization in many advanced economies—and this trend will intensify as automation spreads to services," the authors wrote. But they cautioned against policymakers acting to slow the adoption of robotic technology. "Instead the focus should be to use the robotics dividend to help those in vulnerable regions ready themselves for the major upheaval ahead," they wrote. "Preparing for and responding to the social impacts of automation will be the defining challenge of the next decade."—AFP

## Swiss ban planemaker Pilatus from operating in Saudi Arabia, UAE

ZURICH: Switzerland has banned planemaker Pilatus from operating in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), saying yesterday the company had breached Swiss rules on giving logistical support to foreign armed forces now engaged in a war in Yemen. The Swiss foreign ministry said it had gathered "sufficient evidence" that Pilatus failed to declare activities backing foreign militaries, as required by Swiss law, and added it has reported the shortcomings to the nation's attorney general for further investigation.

The Swiss government has been investigating Pilatus for months. In 2017 the company signed a contract with Saudi Arabia to support a fleet of PC-21 turboprop planes operated by the Royal Saudi Air Force, according to the Stans-based firm's annual report. The Western-backed Sunni Muslim coalition led by Saudi

Arabia and the UAE intervened in Yemen in 2015, helping plunge the Middle Eastern country into a humanitarian crisis.

"Support services supplied by Pilatus Aircraft to the armed forces of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates... are incompatible with the federal government's foreign policy objectives," the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) said in a statement. "The FDFA has therefore called for these services to be discontinued."

Privately held Pilatus now has 90 days to pull out of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, the FDFA said, adding the company could still supply armed forces in Qatar and Jordan. "Pilatus Aircraft Ltd will review the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs' decision and provide a response in due course," the company said.—Reuters

## Gulf Air appoints Country Manager in Dubai

MANAMA: Gulf Air, the national carrier of the Kingdom of Bahrain, announces the appointment of Esam Abdulhameed Al Hammadi as a Country Manager for its Dubai station. With a vast experience in airline sales and having managed Gulf Air's hub station in Bahrain, Al Hammadi will transfer his years of knowledge and practice to manage one of the airline's main stations, Dubai.

The airline operates multiple flights to and from Dubai on daily basis and has a solid customer base in the UAE. With this appointment Al Hammadi will take on the challenge of further strengthening Gulf Air's growth in the UAE. Al Hammadi has been part of the Gulf Air family for 8 years, during which he was country manager for Bahrain as the hub of Gulf Air.

"This is a great challenge for me as I move from the hub of Gulf Air to one of its most successful and revenue generating stations - Dubai. Although Bahrain and Dubai markets have similarities in terms of customer behavior and travel patterns, I am sure there will be so much

to learn." Al Hammadi added at the announcement of his promotion, "Gulf Air has been a big part of my life and I will continue to serve our airline from a different geographical location aiming to promote Bahrain and Gulf Air to a wider audience."

Gulf Air is committed to invest in its Bahraini workforce and their career development and as such, it continues to provide opportunities for Bahraini nationals to take over senior positions in the company. Earlier this year Gulf Air welcomed the return of its Country Manager UK to its headquarter in Bahrain to take on the role of Senior Manager Sales managing the entire Europe and Levant regions. With 90% of employees that are based at the headquarters in Muharraq being Bahraini along with nearly 70% of its pilots, Gulf Air is a leader in the Bahrainisation program in the Kingdom as it provides the opportunity for local talents and experienced personnel to work in its various areas of the airline's business.



Esam Abdulhameed Al Hammadi

## S Korea, Saudi sign \$8 billion economic co-operation pact

SEOUL: South Korea and Saudi Arabia signed an \$8.3 billion economic co-operation pact yesterday during Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's first visit to Seoul, as the oil-rich kingdom looks eastward following Western criticism over journalist Jamal Khashoggi's murder. Saudi Arabia is resource-poor Seoul's biggest oil supplier and most of the agreement is accounted for by a \$6 billion deal between oil giant Saudi Aramco and Korean firm S-Oil to build refinery and downstream facilities in South Korea.

A giant banner welcoming the crown prince was hung on the Seoul headquarters of S-Oil, South Korea's third-biggest refiner, which is majority owned by Saudi Aramco. Saudi Arabia is South Korea's "biggest construction market overseas, the largest investor in the country among countries in the Middle East and also the biggest trading partner in the region," President Moon Jae-in said at a meeting with Prince Mohammed. The welcome offered to the crown prince in Seoul sits in contrast to the global outcry over the Khashoggi killing, and is part of Saudi Arabia's wider diplomatic charm offensive in Asia.

Prince Mohammed, the kingdom's de facto leader, visited Pakistan, India and China in February, and is scheduled in Japan later this week to attend the G20 summit in Osaka. Khashoggi, a fierce critic of the prince, was killed at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in October, a murder that tarnished the image of the kingdom and of the crown prince in particular. Riyadh initially denied the killing, then gave several conflicting accounts of Khashoggi's death, and now claims he died in an unauthorized operation that did not involve Prince Mohammed.

The murder sparked global indignation, with US lawmakers pushing for Washington to distance itself from the crown prince, but the White House has maintained close relations with Riyadh, a major ally in the Middle East. A Blue House spokeswoman told reporters yesterday that Moon had "no plans" to discuss Khashoggi's death with the visiting prince. The economic pact also involved several other deals between Saudi Aramco and Korean firms, including Korea National Oil Corporation, Hyundai Heavy Industries and carmaker Hyundai Motor.—AFP



## Business

# Stocks gain; trade talk hopes rise as rate-cut pressure ebbs

## European stocks gain after CNBC fuels trade talk optimism

LONDON: European stocks and US equity futures were higher yesterday after a report fuelled optimism about progress in US-China trade talks, offsetting disappointment about the size of potential US interest rate cuts. Global shares had opened weaker after comments by Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell and St Louis Fed President James Bullard tempered the market's bets on aggressive US rate cuts next month.

But US futures suggested a higher open for Wall Street and European equities gained after CNBC reported that US Treasury Secretary Mnuchin said the US-China trade deal is 90% complete. Nasdaq futures were up 0.8% and S&P 500 futures indicated a 0.5% rise. The pan-European STOXX 600 was last flat to slightly higher as some analysts doubted the comments revealed anything new. The MSCI World Shares index was down 0.1%.

"What he (Mnuchin) actually said was that we were 90% of the way there, which is where we were in April," said Michael Hewson of CMC Markets. "The big question is have we gone backwards or forwards from here." The United States hopes to revive trade talks with China after US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping meet in Japan during the G20 summit on Saturday. However, Washington will not accept any conditions on tariffs, a senior administration official said on Tuesday.

Richard Dias, multi-asset strategist at Pictet Asset Management, said he did not expect an immediate resolution. "Everyone is desperate for a deal, but why would they do it then? It is a lot more than just trade, trade is a red herring, what matters is technology, and I don't know how we are going to agree on this," Dias

said. "What incentive does Donald Trump have to do a deal now, anyway," Dias said. "It is better to drag it out until before the election and show a big win." Comments by Fed Chair Powell downplaying market expectations for a cut of half a percentage point in US interest rates also undermined stocks.

Powell said the central bank is "insulated from short-term political pressures". But he said the Fed was grappling with whether Washington's conflict with trading partners and tame inflation require a rate cut. The dollar rebounded and gold prices retreated after Powell's comments. The dollar rebounded from three-month lows against a basket of other currencies in the previous session at 95.843. It was up 0.1% at 96.222.

Equity markets have rallied this month in anticipation of Fed rate cuts, but Powell's remarks cast doubt on those expectations. According to latest data from CME Group's FedWatch program, federal funds futures implied that traders now see a 27% chance the Fed will lower rates by half a percentage point in July, compared with 42% on Monday. However, not all see the comments as evidence of a policy u-turn. Pictet's Dias said the Fed had effectively backed itself into a corner, making a cut in July or September highly likely.

"So many cuts are priced in and the market has rallied on this news and the bond market has rallied, so if they don't deliver what they have telegraphed, their credibility will be impinged," he said. He expects a cut of 25 basis points. "They would never do 50 bps. We are not in a recession," he said. A sell-off in US Treasuries, which often sets the tone for other major bond markets, failed to have much effect on the euro zone. Ten-year Treasury yields fell to 1.98% on



BEIJING: A man pulls a trolley carrying a bag of flour and two bottles of soy sauce along a road in Beijing yesterday. — AFP

Tuesday, before rising above 2% yesterday.

European bond yields remained at record lows, unmoved by the apparent shift in tone from the Fed. Germany's 10-year benchmark bond yield held around -0.31%. And with the seemingly insatiable bid for bonds continuing, Austria opened books on a 100-year bond, a

tap of its existing September 2117. Gold pulled back from the near-six-year highs it reached on Tuesday amid escalating tensions between the US and Iran, slipping more than 1% yesterday. US crude oil futures advanced roughly 2% to a four-week high of \$59.10 per barrel after data showed a decline in US crude stockpiles. — Reuters

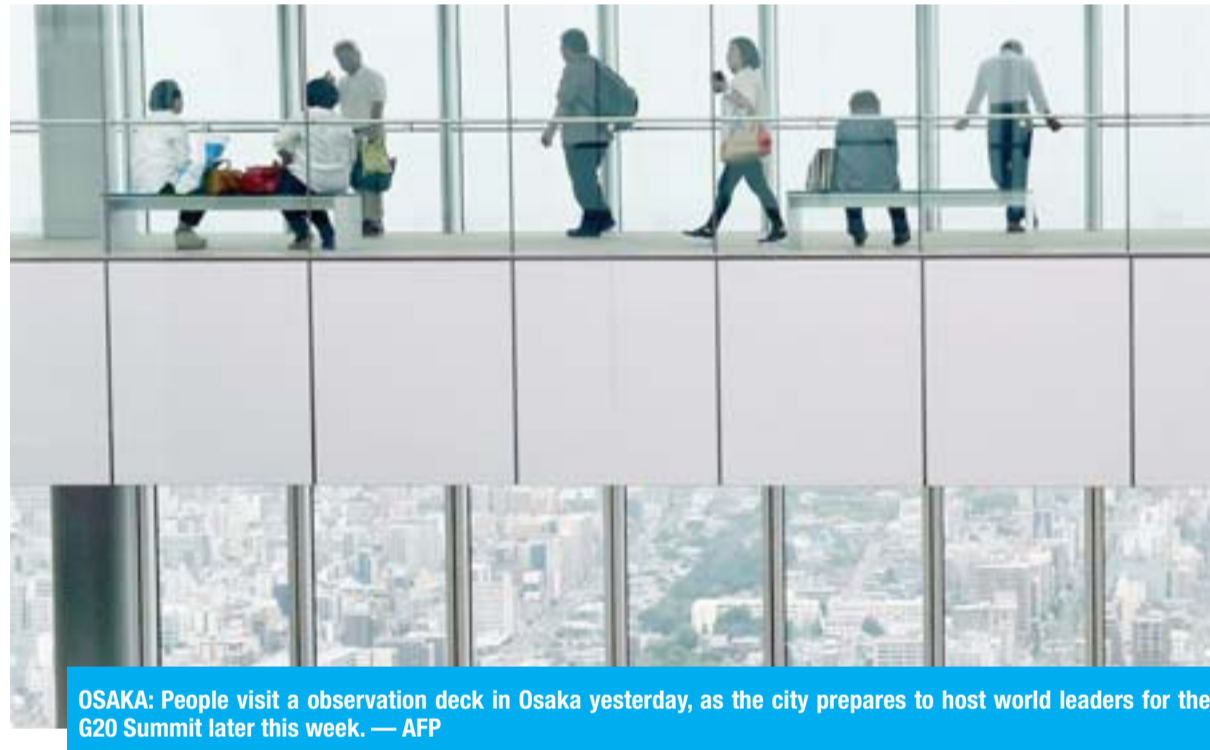
## Masters of what universe? Central bankers in a bind

TOKYO: For decades the United States led the push for lower tariffs worldwide, but President Donald Trump is testing the solidarity of his G20 peers with a protectionist line on trade, putting central bankers in a tough spot with depleted resources to battle a downturn that may be coming sooner than expected. The US-China trade war is the elephant in the room at this week's G20 summit of the world's top economies, and major central banks may find themselves pressed into defensive action in short order should an expected face-to-face meeting between Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping go badly.

The resulting race to the bottom in interest rates - and currency values - could rekindle the kind of acrimony among G20 officials so evident during the years of massive bond buying by the US Federal Reserve after the financial crisis. And the race may already be under way. Under pressure from financial markets and wary of signs the global economy might be slowing, the Fed earlier this year called an effective halt to further rate increases, and at its meeting this month indicated rate cuts may be on the way.

While Fed officials on Thursday pushed back on market expectations for a significant, half a percentage point rate cut as soon as next month, the US central bank is still seen lowering rates once or twice by the end of this year. It is a shift that could make for tense talks at the G20 meetings, and force a discussion on how to fight the next recession before Europe and Japan end the extraordinary monetary steps taken to fight the previous one.

The impact of looser Fed policy may be felt around the world through a decline in the dollar, which could pressure Europe and Japan to follow suit to keep their exporters competitive - the makings of the tension over currency that has plagued G20 meetings before. "It is hard to see how you get a cooperative outcome," said Vincent Reinhart, chief economist at Standish Mellon Asset Management and a former top staffer at



OSAKA: People visit a observation deck in Osaka yesterday, as the city prepares to host world leaders for the G20 Summit later this week. — AFP

the Fed. "A trade dispute can become a currency dispute pretty quickly. If what the United States ultimately wants is a depreciation, I don't see others raising their hands and saying I will take the appreciation ... We don't have many trading partners that are in a position to share weakness."

European and Japanese policymakers say they will abide by the G20 agreement to refrain from competitive currency devaluation, and use monetary tools only for domestic purposes. With little firepower left, however, the ECB and the BOJ both have good reason to try and prevent a spike in their currencies from weighing on already soft exports and inflation. Some ECB policymakers have already expressed concern in the June policy meeting that any easing from the Fed could drive the euro higher, supporting the case for more ECB easing.

"I'll give you five reasons for a rate cut," said a policymaker, who asked not to be identified, before repeating "exchange rate" five times. Bank of Japan

Governor Haruhiko Kuroda also signaled last week his readiness to ramp up stimulus if growth slumps, going so far as to say any step the central bank takes could take full effect at minimum cost. If Fed rate cuts trigger a spike in the euro, that could put pressure on the ECB to ramp up stimulus to counter the pain, analysts say. The ECB next meets for a rate review on July 25.

There is also increasing market speculation the BOJ, which applies a 0.1% negative short-term rate and a zero percent cap on long-term rates, will ease as early as its rate review on July 29-30 depending on the Fed's moves. "If the Fed cuts rates, the BOJ and the ECB must do something more powerful to contain currency appreciation," said Sayuri Shirai, a former BOJ policymaker who is currently professor at Japan's Keio University. "They might be acting to achieve their domestic mandates. But the fact is such action would affect the global economy and yet, the G20 isn't discussing this." — Reuters

## Collapsed dreams: Construction workers risk lives for 'riches'

SIHANOUKVILLE: When Sam Sok took a \$6-a-day job as a construction laborer in Sihanoukville she knew it could be dangerous, but the deaths of 28 workers in a building collapse-with her nephew among the missing-has laid bare the risks many like her face to earn a living. She left her eight-year-old son with neighbors more than 100 kilometers, one of thousands pushed by poverty seeking to cash in on the once sleepy seaside town's Chinese-funded construction boom. The work is mostly unregulated, low paid, often dangerous-and sometimes deadly. "We do this because of money but now... we are afraid that we might meet the same unfortunate end," the 32-year-old said.

"We work in fear now," she said, from a hospital in Sihanoukville, where she was searching for her missing nephew. Many were buried in their sleep when the Chinese-owned building-which was still under construction-crumbled before dawn on Saturday, and she fears her nephew was among them. Like most migrant workers, the laborers lived in the structure they were building, having travelled far from home to earn a bit of cash to get by. Several Chinese nationals face manslaughter charges over the incident.

### Safety short-cuts

Like so many others, Sam Sok chased rumors of riches in Sihanoukville, having heard from villagers in her hometown about the money to be made. She earned \$6 a day ferrying metal and wooden planks at different sites in the fast-booming city, where dozens of Chinese-funded casinos and hotels are being built to serve a mushrooming tourist industry fuelled by visitors from the mainland.

With day wages reaching as high as \$10, the money is often better than what workers could make on a farm or even in a factory. Cambodia's per capita GDP has climbed in recent years as the economy slowly shifts from agricultural to industrial-with many workers now finding work in the garment and services sector-and opportunities in the construction sector are multiplying quickly.

But the World Bank still classifies about a third of the country as "near poor", and the average annual income is around \$1,380, lower than many of its Mekong neighbors. Chinese investment has helped propel the shift away from agriculture, pouring money into new roads, new ports and new buildings across Cambodia, a strategically important Southeast Asian ally for Beijing. But that building frenzy has also sparked concerns about sub-standard safety regulations in a country where most of Cambodia's 200,000 construction workers have few legal protections.

The majority are day-laborers, don't belong to unions, and aren't protected by minimum wage laws, according to the International Labor Organization. Building owners often flout safety measures, taking shortcuts that could lead to accidents, said Kong Athit, secretary general of the Cambodian Labor Confederation. "It's the responsibility of the owners and the government that they must take a serious pre-check before allowing any construction of a building to start," Athit said. — AFP

## 5G is 'business as usual' despite US sanctions: Huawei

SHANGHAI: Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei said yesterday that its 5G business has not been impacted by the recent US sanctions amid a prolonged trade war between the world's two largest economies. "I can clearly tell everyone here that our current 5G technology solutions are completely unaffected by the sanctions," said Ken Hu, Huawei's deputy chairman, during a press conference at the Mobile World Congress in Shanghai.

"For the contracts that we have signed and the ones that we are going to sign in the future, we can fully guarantee the supply to our customers." The Trump administration has been pressing other countries to ban Huawei equipment from their networks, particularly in the coming rollout of super-fast 5G networks, a global project in which Huawei had been expected to play a leading role.

Huawei said it has signed 50 commercial contracts for 5G with a majority of European clients and that it will continue to maintain or even increase investment in the next-generation wireless network. "Huawei has already invested \$4 billion into 5G and our investment strategy will not change in the next stage," Hu said. — AFP

## Warba Bank announces Al Sunbula weekly draw

KUWAIT: Warba Bank, "the Best Investment Bank" and "Best Corporate Bank" in Kuwait, will be organizing its weekly Sunbula draw number today at 11:00am in presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Bank officials. Al-Sunbula both account and fixed deposits are the perfect choices for customers who wish to save money and achieve steady returns while at the same time gain the opportunity to win prizes throughout the year.

In line with the bank's mission to develop and differentiate its offerings, Warba Bank has enhanced its Sunbula campaign for 2019 with more cash and prizes reaching more than 1 Million Kuwaiti Dinars. In the running campaign, Warba Bank continued its weekly draws for 5 winners of KD 1,000 each throughout the year, yet introduce the "Mega Draws" that take place on a quarterly basis to reveal five winners, the 1st winner gets KD 100,000 in cash! The four winners thereafter will each get the latest 2019 Land Cruiser 5.7 VXR. And more, as the last Mega Draw will give away 2 more Land Cruisers!

As per the winning chances, each customer will be participating in the draw for each KD 10 in the Sunbula Account. It is also worth noting that the Sunbula Fixed



Deposit rewards its investor with both high expected returns, reaching up to 3.5%, as well as winning chances. And such investors have full flexibility in choosing the desired tenure and the profit distribution method.

Furthermore, Warba Bank is leveraging on its Customer Onboarding solution, in line with its ambitious five-year strategy that enables non-Warba Bank customers to request the opening of Al-Sunbula account in a simple electronic manner without having to visit the branch, through 5 simple steps in 5 minutes.

New customers will be able to request opening the account at anytime, anywhere, through the new and unique electronic system used to implement this service. Representatives will then contact the customer to determine the appropriate time to visit the branch to get required signatures, verify the customer's identity, deliver his/her debit card, and activate the account.

## Business

# Bitcoin reaches 18-month high; Facebook's Libra spurs interest

## Analysts point to safe-haven bids, Libra enthusiasm

LONDON: Bitcoin jumped to an 18-month high yesterday, a surge analysts said was caused by nervous traders looking for safety in alternative investments and expectations that Facebook's Libra could turn cryptocurrencies mainstream. The world's biggest cryptocurrency has surged in value since April and was trading close to \$13,000 yesterday. It is now up 240% since the start of the year, although it remains below its all-time high of nearly \$20,000.

Investors have flooded back into digital currencies after a bruising 2018. Bitcoin has risen for eight consecutive days. And now Facebook has said it would offer its own cryptocurrency, the Libra coin, by end of June 2020. Analysts say Facebook's announcement this month has revived interest in coins, while investors seeking safety have also pushed up Bitcoin's price.

"It obviously does appear to be benefiting from some sort

of flows that gold is benefiting, too," said Michael Hewson, chief market strategist at CMC Markets. "You've got all this stuff about Libra going on, which is renewing interest in bitcoin. Crypto is back in vogue." He added, though, that the investors buying bitcoin were speculative. With major central banks keeping interest rates near all-time lows, investors have been looking for ways to diversify their portfolios, including through cryptocurrencies, analysts say.

Bitcoin CME futures volumes have increased in the past few days as investors look for ways to get their hands on the coin via the derivatives market. Bitcoin last traded at \$12,430 on the Bitstamp exchange after reaching a high of \$12,935 earlier in the Asian session. The cryptocurrency has rocketed 150% since early May, along with big rises in other smaller digital currencies such as Ethereum's ether and Ripple's XRP. — Reuters



**Bitcoin rockets towards \$13,000**

## KIPCO invites shareholders to participate in share capital

KUWAIT: KIPCO - the Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) - invited existing shareholders to participate in the increase of the company's share capital. The increase of 452,748,662 new ordinary shares represents approximately 29.3% of the existing issued share capital of KIPCO, at an offer price of 210 fils per issue share. The offering period begins on June 27 and will close on July 17.

KIPCO's Board of Directors had approved the rights issue in late January, and necessary regulatory procedures have since been completed. Faisal Al Ayyar, KIPCO's Vice Chairman (Executive), said: "As our portfolio companies grow, it is important for us to ensure that KIPCO maintains a solid capital structure to support its Group companies. This capital increase falls in line with our long-term strategy of strengthening and expanding the activities of our companies in the banking, media, insurance, industrial and education businesses."



Faisal Al Ayyar



## CBK Laborers' Account Unit

KUWAIT: Headed by CEO, Elham Mahfouz, the Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK)'s executive administration recently visited the laborers' account unit at the operations sector. Speaking during the visit, Mahfouz explained that the labor account unit is concerned with opening bank accounts for laborers working for various companies and establishments, issuing their ATM cards and transferring salaries to their bank accounts with CBK and other banks. She added that the unit also upgrades clients' information and follows up their complaints at all times.



## KFH supporting the Vision 2035

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in "The Role of the Private Sector in the Future of the Kuwaiti Economy" conference organized by The Business Year (TBY) magazine and sponsored by KFH. The conference was held in partnership with Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) in London, UK.

In the conference, KFH Group CEO- Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh demonstrated the importance of digital transformation in the banking sector, and the role of Kuwaiti banks in supporting Kuwait Vision 2035. Al-Nahedh tackled instrumental topics of which is the significant role of KFH in supporting the Kuwaiti economy and the expertise of the Bank in the Islamic finance industry.

"In line with Kuwait's national development plan that stems from his Highness the Amir's vision of a new Kuwait by 2035, the country is working to diversify its economy and I believe that the private sector, in particular the banking sector is well-equipped to play a positive role in Kuwait's future economic development", Al-Nahedh said. "As Kuwait has \$32bn-worth of public projects, in its near-term pipeline, the banking sector is well-equipped to play an important role to support the long-term development of Kuwait's infrastructure given the prospect of greater expected project activity in the second half of 2019 and in 2020.

This role involves financing of these projects, providing banking services starting from basic lending activity to more complex transactions as well as consulting, trade facilities and other banking business". Al-Nahedh explained. He mentioned that the Kuwaiti economy witnessed several changes and developments that resulted in necessary reforms, adding that Kuwait enjoys high levels of accumulated fiscal and external buffers and has major competitive advantages to be a global trade and investments hub.

### A major role

He laid stress on the participation of the banking sector to achieve Kuwait's Vision 2035 and transform the country into a world-class financial and commercial center, adding that with the talented pool of highly educated young Kuwaiti nationals the local banks have, the banking sector is a vital contributor in achieving this vision. Al-Nahedh explained that the banking sector in Kuwait will have a major



Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh

role to play in supporting the government in the implementation of some of the key plan pillars that target the transformation of Kuwait into a leading regional, financial, commercial and cultural hub by 2035.

Meanwhile, he said that KFH is involved in nearly every major financial transaction in Kuwait, from financing government and private companies for local projects to financing their ventures abroad more recently KIPIC's LNG ventures internationally. Along with the rest of the banking sector, Al-Nahedh said that KFH is a key component of the 2035 vision as it is a leading Islamic financial institution enabling national development and growth of the financial services industry while also helping facilitate the growth and diversification of investment efforts of many other economic sectors.

He also expressed confidence that the role played by the private sector, especially banks, will create a diversified and prosperous economy in the coming five or ten years. Thanks to Pushed by reforms, regulations and technology, the Kuwaiti private sector will need to understand their role in establishing and rejuvenating the economy, exploiting the opportunities it offers in the best way possible and be prepared to reap the benefits of the last reforms and ambitious programs according to the pillars of Kuwait's national development plan, he added.

### Digital transformation

With regards to the technology and digital transformation in the banking industry, Al-Nahedh said that the banking sector is being transformed through technology, adding that the industry is undergoing a process of digital transformation where many processes are being fully automated. He mentioned that the future of banking is technology, explaining that the banking and financial industry has seen huge innovations and use of technology in recent years. In the era of disruptive innovation, the mobile banking, contactless payment technology, Blockchain, cryptocurrencies,

robotics, big data, Artificial intelligence becoming an integral part of our everyday lives, he added.

Al-Nahedh noted that more than three quarters of financial institutions will increase internal efforts to innovate, with many businesses embracing the disruptive nature of FinTech according to a report issued by PwC. In this regard, he stressed that Kuwaiti banks are keen to invest in banking and financial technology and digital transformation, saying that this trend will enhance the role of the private sector in the Kuwaiti economy as it is a key part of Kuwait's efforts to become a regional financial and commercial hub.

In this context, he explained that KFH is an undisputed leader in innovation to expand and enhance the range of products and services. KFH released the first fully automated 24hr digital self-branches in Kuwait under the theme of KFH-Go and the first automated virtual queuing system for costumers, showing the emphasis on convenience and higher levels of service. Most importantly, KFH deployed a cross border remittance service with RippleNet, putting KFH at the forefront of innovation in the region as KFH taps into blockchain technology as an enabler for its growth.

### Supporting economic

KFH's participation came within the framework of its commitment to supporting the economic and investment efforts and highlighting the importance of the role of the private sector in economic development, while encouraging investments of added value to the Kuwaiti economy as this conference showcases the country's ambition to the entire global investor community.

The conference highlighted the role of the banking sector, and the investment opportunities available in the public and private sectors, while discussed developments in the business environment and the financing solutions, especially that Kuwait is increasingly looking to the private sector to diversify and boost its economy across a range of sectors in line with its "New Kuwait 2035 Vision" to transform Kuwait into a financial and commercial hub.

The conference discussed different topics in several panels such as: Kuwait's financial sector: cornerstone of the country's privatization, the increased diversification of the Kuwaiti economy as a fuel for the future, and digital economy and entrepreneurship to promote digital transformation and spur economic diversification. Bringing together senior public officials and top local and foreign business leaders, the event inspired a dialog that will bring new momentum to Kuwait's vision.

## Mimecast announces the winners of Middle East Partner Awards

DUBAI: Mimecast (NASDAQ: MIME), a leading email and data security company, yesterday announced the winners of its Middle East Partner Awards 2019. Five channel partners from the UAE were recognized across six categories for their performance over the past year. Mimecast revealed the winners during its annual Mimecast Partner Connect, held in Dubai, UAE in June 2019.

The following partners were recognized as top performers during the prior financial year: Largest Deal - IDC; Legend of The Year - Sincy Santosh, Bulwark Technologies; Technical Legend of the Year - Deepu Thomas, Bulwark Technologies; Growth Partner of the Year - Cloud Dynamics; Technical Services Partner of the Year - Teksalah; Partner of The Year - Newlogix.

Mimecast's Vice President of Channel Operations, Dan Gradidge and Director of Channel Programs, Nikki Downing, attended the event to honour the top performing partners and to provide a

comprehensive overview of the Mimecast Global Partner Program. As a channel-focused business, Mimecast has worked closely with its regional partners to help them successfully integrate Mimecast solutions into their full suite of ICT solutions under the Global Partner Program. The Program is designed to offer more rewards resellers can leverage to attract new clients into long term business relationships and build their reputations as trusted business advisors.

At the event, attendees received an update on the program and were introduced to collateral and supporting information that can help them offer customers guidance to solve their cyber resilience challenges. Partners also learned more about product roadmaps, the Legendary Customer Success program and Mimecast's interoperability with several leading complementary technology vendors via its API partnerships.

"We are privileged to work with some of the best channel partners in the Middle East who are committed to helping businesses improve their security and compliance, with solutions that mitigate risk and reduce the cost and complexity of becoming cyberresilient organisations," said Nikki Downing, director of channel programs, Mimecast. "It gives us great pleasure to recognise the passion and commitment of five partners from the region who are committed to helping customers solve their cyber resilience challenges."



## VC-Turbo: World's first variable compression ratio engine

KUWAIT: The VC-Turbo, the world's first variable compression ratio engine, was recognized with high scores at The International Engine + Powertrain of the Year Awards. The 272PS (268 horsepower) VC-Turbo was named in two key categories: 250PS to 350PS and Best New Engine, competing with other engines and powertrains the automotive industry has launched this year. The VC-Turbo engine is able to intelligently switch between compression ratios of 8:1 (for power) and 14:1 (for efficiency) in just over a second. It can also operate at any ratio between the two to suit the demands of the driver and road conditions.

The awards jury is made up of 70 automotive journalists representing 31 countries and many more publications, highlighting the global impact VC-Turbo

has made. The engine was first introduced in the 2019 INFINITI QX50 midsize luxury SUV, which also features standout design and unrivaled interior space, all on an entirely new platform. The VC-Turbo engine is seen as a bridge to electrification for INFINITI, as the company moves to revealing an electrified product portfolio within the next few years.

A 2.0-liter turbocharged and inter-cooled engine, the VC-Turbo is the result of more than 20 years of ingenuity and passion within Nissan Motor Co. More than 100 development engines were created in the development process and, at one point, the highly advanced work came to a halt as the computer power needed to finalize the design was not available. When computers caught up with the engineering dream, VC-Turbo became a reality.



What's On

# ACK receives World Blood Donor Day 2019 award

The Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) was among those honored by the Central Blood Bank of Kuwait in a World Blood Donor Day 2019 ceremony held on June 15, 2019. The ceremony was held in order to honor those whose efforts made a positive impact for blood donations in Kuwait. ACK was honored because of its accomplishments during the blood drive event hosted and it was the only educational institution honored during the ceremony. ACK was represented by Abdulmohsen Al-Rifai, Health and Safety Senior Manager, and Mariam Al-Maraghi, Health and Safety Business Development Manager.

"Being a humanitarian is a high achievement that some people have managed to attain, and I believe our students managed to attain it during this event," said Al-Rifai. "Here we can see the results of the principles we tried to instill in these generations that are full of humanity. I would like to say thank you to each student who helped in the Blood Donation Drive, and that we are honored that you volunteered in our event," he added. ACK would like to thank the Central Blood Bank of Kuwait for its recognition, and to also thank all those who volunteered to help for making our blood drive possible.



## Sheraton Kuwait celebrates 53 years of excellence

The first five star hotel in Kuwait and the first hotel to be managed under Marriott International in the Middle East and Africa region, Sheraton Kuwait, a Luxury Collection Hotel celebrates its 53rd anniversary since its inception in 1966. During the past 53 years, Sheraton Kuwait has been known for its achievements and success which has led the hotel to being recognized as the pioneer for the hospitality industry both locally and regionally and as Kuwait's Enduring Social Icon as it continues to deliver its legendary hospitality and excellent service to our VIP guests, regional & international organizations and all individuals.

Throughout the hotel's exceptional history, it has been acknowledged for its remarkable admiration from global leaders and has received numerous esteemed awards from prestigious organizations. Furthermore, Sheraton Kuwait has been recognized for nine consecutive years as 'Kuwait's Leading Hotel' by the World Travel Awards (WTA) to mark another year's achievement.

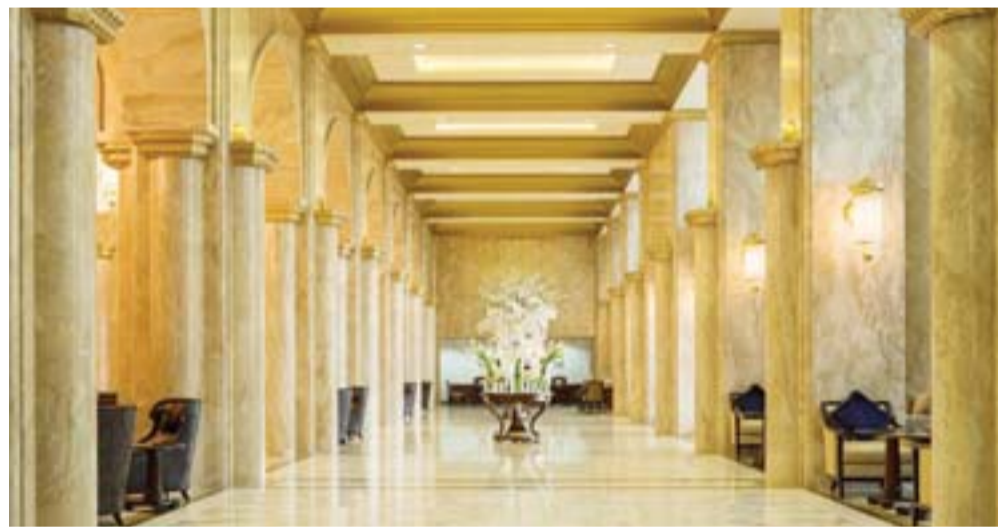
On this special occasion, Fahed Abushaar, Complex General Manager of Sheraton Kuwait Hotel, expressed his delight at the exceptional performance of the hotel. "I am delighted to know that our Sheraton family has progressed through another magnificent year with 53 years of excellence. We are also extremely proud to be known as a complex property with a comfortable gateway to the best of Kuwait, the Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait and its achievements throughout this year after its brilliant beginning since its expansion," he said.

"I would like to take this opportunity to express my personal appreciation and congratulate all the associates for their amazing

effort, their hard work and determination to ensure that the unequalled hospitality and distinctive service are bestowed to each and every guest which has truly played a large role in the success of the hotel. I would also like to extend my sincerest appreciation to all those who have supported us during the last 53 years .... Your loyalty is absolutely timeless and enduring like the memories that were created and we continue to make, right here at the Sheraton Kuwait," he added.

In addition, Abushaar also stated that Sheraton Kuwait, a Luxury Collection Hotel

has commenced 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.



## KNAFEH

### INGREDIENTS: FOR THE SYRUP

- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/2 tsp lemon juice
- Handful of dried rose petals / 1 tsp rose water (optional)

### FOR THE KNAFEH

- 200g knafeh dough
- 6 tbsp melted ghee
- 1/2 tsp orange powder coloring (optional)

### FOR THE KNAFEH FILLING

- 75g ricotta cheese
- 125g grated mozzarella

### DECORATE WITH

- Crushed pistachios

### PREPARATION

Start by making the syrup - add the sugar, water, lemon juice and rose petals/ rose water to a pan over a medium to high heat and stir until the sugar has dissolved. Set aside and leave too cool.

For the knafeh, take the knafeh dough (katayif pastry) and pull apart/ shred so the strands are separated. I also like to cut the dough so that the strands are shorter (around 5cm long).

Add in the ghee and mix well using your hands.

Add about 1/2 tsp of orange food coloring and a little bit of ghee to a round baking dish. Using a pastry brush spread the coloring and ghee all over the pan. This step is optional but I like to do it as it gives the



knafeh a beautiful color.

Add half the knafeh dough to the pan. Press down firmly with a glass.

Spread on an even layer of ricotta cheese and be sure to leave about an inch of space around the edge so that the cheese doesn't ooze out. Next, top with mozzarella.

Add on the second half of knafeh dough and press down gently.

Bake at 200 degrees C for around 20-30mins until the dough is golden.

Remove the knafeh from the pan and drizzle with sugar syrup and decorate with pistachios.

## ICSK senior organizes awareness program

An awareness program on educational and career opportunities in Germany was organized by the ICSK Senior School on May 29, 2019 in the school auditorium. The resource persons for the awareness program were Ellen Bach, Second Secretary, culture, press and protocol affairs and Zaina Al Zeir, Press and Public Relation Officer, Embassy of The Federal Republic of Germany.

The program was set in motion with a silent prayer followed by the welcome address by the ICSK Senior Principal and Senior Administrator Dr V Binumon. The quite informative session was initiated by Ellen Bach with a presentation on the multitudinous opportunities, slots and breaks available and attainable in Germany.

She also edified the children about the pros and cons of procuring such courses in order make them excogitate and logically think before they make decisions about their career. A wide forum was opened for the students for clarifying their queries and concerns and their questions were clearly answered by the resource persons. At the end of the conference, the vote of thanks was proposed by Dr Navjot Kaur, Head of the Department of Psychology, ICSK Senior.



## Recipe

## RICE PUDDING

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 egg
- 4 cups milk
- 1 pkg JELL-O Vanilla Flavor
- 1 cup instant white rice, uncooked
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp ground nutmeg

### PREPARATION:

Beat egg with wire whisk in large saucepan. Gradually add milk, beating until well blended. Add dry pudding mix; stir 2 minutes or until well blended. Stir in rice and raisins.

Bring to full rolling boil on medium heat, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Cool 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Pour evenly into 10 dessert dishes or 1-1/2-quart serving bowl.

Sprinkle evenly with cinnamon and nutmeg. Serve warm. Or, cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.



# Plastic shopping bags face the bin in Pakistan's northern mountains

## Provincial government tackles pollution

**HUNZA:** In this district in northern Pakistan flanked by soaring mountain ranges and glaciers, plastic shopping bags are now illegal. In late April, the provincial government banned their "use, purchase, export or import" in an effort to cut plastic waste and pollution, and rolled out first deliveries of cloth shopping bags. Now those hang in shops, and many customers have started bringing bags from home - though not everyone is happy with the change.

"The use of plastic bags is not only handy, but also very cheap as compared to cloth and paper bags," said Ikram Jamal, a trader in the city's main market. "It is a challenge for customers as well as for traders to instantly ban plastic bags, amid the lack of availability of an alternate option," he said, noting only a limited supply of cloth bags was so far available. But 50-year-old Shamim Bagum, a shopper in the market, said she was adjusting. "After shopkeepers refused to give us polythene bags, I now myself bring a cloth bag to take groceries home," she said.

Carrying cloth bags for all shopping can be a challenge, but people need to obey the government's decision, she said. Around the world, cities, regions and countries are trying to cut back on plastic waste, banning the use of items such as throw-away plastic shopping bags and drink-

ing straws. The pioneers of the movement, however, are not just in richer nations, but in many developing ones as well, from Tanzania to Bangladesh and now Pakistan's Gilgit-Baltistan region, the country's northernmost territory.

### Widening bans

Hunza was the first district in Pakistan to ban plastic shopping bags, said Malik Amin Aslam, the prime minister's adviser on climate change. But the bans are now spreading, with Punjab province and the city of Quetta now outlawing bags as well, and Islamabad set to do the same in August.

In Hunza, the provincial government worked with the Gilgit-Baltistan Environmental Protection Agency and the Karakoram Area Development Organization to launch the pilot ban, which aims to clean up the narrow, mountain-flanked valley that attracts more than half a million tourists a year. The scenic Karakoram Highway, which connects Pakistan with China, runs through the district. At least some tourists stopping in Hunza said they thought the bag ban was a good idea.

"The shopkeeper declined to give me plastic bag when I purchased a bottle of mineral water from his shop in a market in Hunza. This is a positive change," said 30-year

Ishtiaq Bhatti, visiting Hunza's Sikandarabad village from Lahore. Kamal Uddin, chief executive of the Karakoram Area Development Organization, said the ban came about after his group and the city of Hunza discovered in a survey that about 70,000 plastic bags were used and discarded each month in the valley. Uddin said using cloth bags for shopping is hardly an innovation - until the arrival of cheap plastic bags it was the norm in the area, he said.

Restoring the use of cloth bags also can provide jobs, he said. At least 50 local women and more than a dozen disabled people have been hired to stitch bags, he said. An initial 10,000 shopping bags, carrying slogans about the anti-plastic campaign, were provided by the government and distributed free locally, said Shahzad Shigri, director of the Gilgit-Baltistan environmental protection agency. But additional bags will be produced locally, Uddin said.

### Support - and challenges

Local people and traders say the plastic ban is a good step toward greater environmental protection - but the changeover is proving a bit of a headache. "We appreciate the initiative for a good cause," said Taj Muhammad Rumi, a trader in Sust market near the Chinese border. He said population growth and a large number of tourists have had

an adverse impact on the area's environment. "But the challenge is still there that no proper and systematic mechanism is in place to provide cloth bags," he said.

Qasim Ejaz, Hunza's assistant district commissioner, said the plastic bag ban needs to be expanded to all plastic throwaway items. But policing even the bag ban will be challenging, he said, with tourists often bringing in bags from outside. The valley sees 600,000 to 700,000 visitors a year, he said. Shigri, of the Gilgit-Baltistan environmental protection agency, said his agency now aims to expand the plastic bag ban to all national parks in the northern territory.

For now, despite the ban, plastic bags still lurk in the region's markets. A young trader in the main Aliabad city market said that shop owners are still parceling a few out to customers that come without a shopping bag, particularly if cloth bags are unavailable. "Though there is no open display of plastic bags in the market due to fear of administrative curbs, yet they are still in use in some areas amid unavailability of cloth and paper bags," he said. Uddin, of the Karakoram Area Development Organization, said that's to be expected. "It is a huge task and will take some time to completely phase (plastic) out," he said. — Reuters

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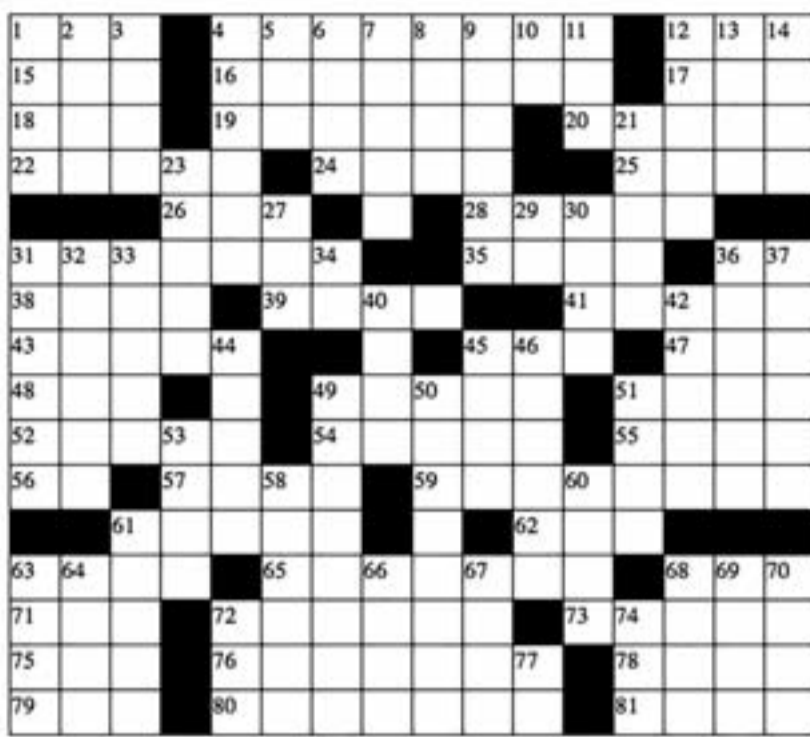
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Stars

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ACROSS

- The United Nations agency concerned with international maritime activities.
- The highest waterfall in Canada.
- The cause or intention underlying an action or situation esp in the phrase "the whys and wherefores".
- Of southern Europe.
- The quality of being alien.
- Fish eggs or egg-filled ovary.
- A unit of force equal to the force exerted by gravity.
- A midnight meeting of witches to practice witchcraft and sorcery.
- Port city on southern Honshu in Osaka Bay.
- English scholastic philosopher and assumed author of Occam's Razor (1285-1349).
- Situated in or facing or moving toward the east.
- A state in the western United States.
- An informal term for a father.
- A virtually extinct Caucasian language spoken exclusively in Turkey.
- (of tempo) Moderately slow n.
- A Loloish language.
- Acquire or gain knowledge or skills.
- A bag made of paper or plastic for holding customer's purchases.
- Make a loud, roaring sound, as of a car engine, while moving.
- (Old Testament) The second patriarch.
- A vinyl polymer used especially in paints or adhesives.
- The compass point midway between south and southwest.
- An irrational but irresistible motive for a belief or action.
- A promontory in northern Morocco opposite the Rock of Gibraltar.
- English prelate noted for his pessimistic sermons and articles (1860-1954).
- A soft yellow malleable ductile (trivalent and univalent) metallic element.
- The basic unit of money in Ethiopia.
- Seeds for birds.
- A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
- By bad luck.
- A metrical unit with unstressed-unstressed syllables.
- Committee formed by a special-interest group to raise money for their favorite political candidates.
- (folklore) A corpse that rises at night to drink the blood of the living.
- A federal agency that supervises carriers that transport goods and people between states.
- Of or relating to or characteristic of Asia or the peoples of Asia or their languages or culture.
- A commercial leavening agent containing yeast cells.
- Relating to or characteristic of or occurring on the sea or ships.
- An impressive country house (or castle) in France.
- According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).

DOWN

- The villain in William Shakespeare's tragedy who tricked Othello into murdering his wife.
- One thousandth of a second.
- An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
- Dutch navigator who was the first European to discover Tasmania and New Zealand (1603-1659).
- A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
- Ulcerated chilblain on the heel.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- Type genus of the Anaticae.
- Fishtail palm of India to Malay Peninsula.
- A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
- The United Nations agency concerned with the international collection of meteorological data.
- Intense anger (usually on an epic scale).
- A member of a North American Indian people speaking one of the Hokan language.
- Not only so, but.
- A Chadic language spoke south of Lake Chad.
- A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
- Acute delirium caused by alcohol poisoning.
- A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
- A name for the Old Testament God as transliterated from the Hebrew YHWH.
- The capital of the Bahamas.
- Showing the wearing effects of overwork or care or suffering.
- (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- Herb native to southern Europe.
- Filled with the emotional impact of overwhelming surprise or shock.
- A team of professional baseball players who play and travel together.
- Speak one's opinion without fear or hesitation.
- A seat for one person, with a support for the back.
- Surrealist Spanish painter (1904-1989).
- Fungus used in the preparation of punk for fuses.
- Evergreen trees and shrubs.
- Give equal rights to.
- Any orchid of the genus Disa.
- Wading birds of warm regions having long slender down-curved bills.
- Pungent fleshy edible root.
- Tropical woody herb with showy yellow flowers and flat pods.
- The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
- A cord that is drawn through eyelets or around hooks in order to draw together two edges (as of a shoe or garment).
- (informal) Very tired.
- An elaborate song for solo voice.
- A woman hired to suckle a child of someone else.
- The basic unit of money on Malta.
- A metrical unit with unstressed-stressed syllables.
- Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- A ductile malleable reddish-brown corrosion-resistant diamagnetic metallic element.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

It seems the focus in your life is beginning to change. You have a strong desire to be in total control of everything and everyone surrounding you. You are ready to get things organized. You are driven by ambition and are becoming very responsible. You may find you are so focused you are moving full steam ahead. Pace yourself as to not burn out before you accomplish all of your goals. Sometimes you need to remind yourself to work smarter, rather than harder. Do not let frustration get in your way. Keep your focus and drive but remember to do always do the right thing. You can expect great rewards from your hard work.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Talk about bringing home the bacon and frying it up in the pan! This is you all day every day. You are able to balance career and home life all with ease. You are a jack of all trades. You have a deep desire to strengthen the foundation you have built for all. You desire a sense of roots and family, home, and relatives are where your focus is. You want to feel as if you belong on a personal and private level. You have an intimate desire to know that you are needed. Taurus. The energy and effort you put into taking care of others does not go unnoticed. You are loved, needed, and appreciated.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Taking charge and being in control are two things that seem very appealing to you now. You may find that you are more determined than ever to get your life in order. You will begin to get not only things in your life, but also people organized. There is a place for everything, and everything has a place. You are on a mission to make that happen. This is a very ambitious and responsible now. You may need to take a step back and slow yourself down a bit. You do to want to burn out. Remember, work smarter, not harder.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You are ready to take total control of your life. Taking charge of your situation has become a major focus for you. You are ready to get things organized. You really have the initiative and drive to get things done. This is a time of ambition and responsibility for you. Keep your cool, stay focused, and pace yourself. Too much of anything can be a bad thing. Do not push too hard. There is no need to burn yourself out.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

If you could choose any magic trick to be able to perform, today's choice would be a disappearing act. You need to take a break. An escape is in order. Try spending some time curled up with a romantic book or watching a movie. The only way you will be able to get back to being your productive self is by taking care of yourself. Everyone has their breaking point and you passed it miles ago. You are the only person you can change. Leo. Keep this in mind.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Don't be surprised if you cross paths today with someone who just doesn't sit right with you. You have a feeling that something about them just isn't right. You may feel as if you want to get away from this person as soon as possible. Your virtues are simple. You prefer this way of life. Today may be a day you are having difficulty with focus and performing your daily tasks. You seem in a dreamy mood and unable to snap back. Deep in thought you seem to have too much on your mind. This may be a good time to sit back and reorganize and restructure your surroundings and goals. You are in a way shutting down due to an emotional overload.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

No one likes to be stood up. This may be the action you take that puts strain on your relationship with friends. Though you would love nothing more than to be out with friends socializing and have some fun, your more responsible side knows where your priorities lie and are unable to go through with plans you have made. Your mind is sharp, and you find yourself very productive which is the reward you need to make up for having to miss out and play adult today. You may find your experience leaves you with a great sense of sympathy for those close to you. Libra. Wisdom not knowledge is what now counts most in your life.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

It seems as if your romantic and social relationships are comfortable. Getting along with those closest to you seems very natural. You are persuasive with others and able to communicate with ease when it comes to relationships, new and old. This may be a time of great financial gain in your life. You could find yourself crossing paths with others who and find business opportunities seem to fall in your lap. You desire power and control and it seems as if you are gaining both of these in every aspect of your life. This is a great time for you, Scorpio, face every new opportunity with an open mind.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You have the ability to get outside yourself and see what is going on with others. This may mean you see things others don't see. It's a gift that could serve you well in journalism or in crime detection. Or, you may just find it useful in personal relationships. You can see beyond the "what" and identify the "why" of behavior. It helps. You will be able to use this gift in a very positive manner today.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Today may not be an easy one for you. You may feel as your emotions do not align with the way things truly are in your world today. You need to take a step back and relax. You may find if you push too hard you may break something that can not be repaired. Patience is needed and you need to wait this one out and let it blow over. You may find these circumstances aggravate and anger you. Do not let yourself become over emotional and fly off the handle. Nothing good can come from a negative reaction. Find a positive way to look at the situation you are in and sit back and wait for it to change.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Taking charge and being in control seem to be major desires in your life. You want to get things organized and now is the time you have the initiative to do it. This is a great time of ambition and taking on new responsibilities for you. Keep your cool and pace yourself. You know it is always best to work smarter rather than harder. You should accomplish much at this time. Your ambition and drive are to be admired. You are not only making clear decisions about your life and the path you are taking but you are able to be clear decision concerning the lives of those close to you. You may find someone seeking your advice today.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Emotionally you may have one desire, but it could be at odds with what is in your best interest. Doing for others comes naturally for you. This is a time you need to put you and yours first. Being too generous could leave you in a bad situation. This is a great time to work on budgeting your resources. Taking charge and being in control seem to be a great desire you have now. Take control of yourself, your life, and your finances first.

Wordsearch Puzzle

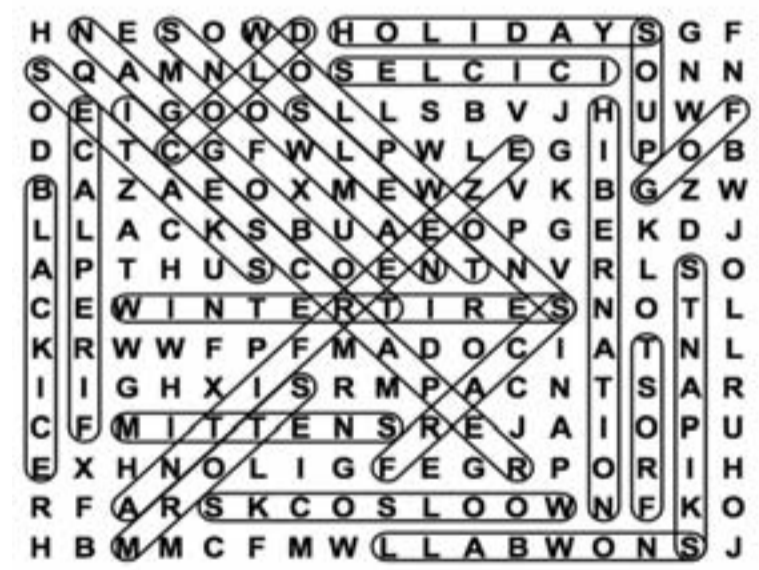
Winter 2 - Word Search



- |          |             |             |
|----------|-------------|-------------|
| BLIZZARD | HAIL        | SKIS        |
| BOOTS    | HOCKEY      | SLED        |
| CARNIVAL | ICE FISHING | SLIPPERY    |
| EGG NOG  | KNIT CAP    | SNOW BLOWER |
| FIREWOOD | OLYMPICS    | SNOW SHOVEL |
| FREEZE   | PARKA       | SNOWFLAKE   |
| GLOVES   | SEASON      | SOLSTICE    |
|          | SKIING      |             |

Yesterday's Solution

Winter 1 - Solution



- |             |             |              |
|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| ANTIFREEZE  | ICE SCRAPER | SNOWBALL     |
| BLACK ICE   | ICICLES     | SNOWMAN      |
| COLD        | MITTENS     | SOUP         |
| FIREPLACE   | SCARF       | STORM        |
| FOG         | SKATES      | TOBOGGAN     |
| FROST       | SKI PANTS   | WINTER TIRES |
| HIBERNATION | SLEET       | WOOL SOCKS   |
| HOLIDAYS    | SNOW PLOW   |              |

Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



# Lifestyle

THURSDAY, JUNE 27, 2019



People visit an immersive exhibition about Vincent van Gogh in Beijing.—AFP

## Frida the rescue dog retires in Mexico



In this file photo a rescue dog from the Mexican Navy, Frida, and her trainer Israel Arauz Salinas, take a break during a training session in Mexico City.—AFP photos

Frida the rescue dog, a Labrador retriever who gained worldwide fame for her heroics after the earthquake that devastated Mexico on September 19, 2017, officially retired from duty Monday. Frida, who adorably sniffed through the rubble in her protective goggles and booties in the hours after the tragedy, was sent into doggy retirement at 10 years old in a ceremony at the canine unit of the Mexican marines. "Our dear Labrador Frida is starting a new era," said Deputy Naval Minister Eduardo Redondo.

"Frida stole the heart of all Mexico and thousands more abroad... Her bark always gave hope, and in moments of pain and uncertainty she brought relief." Frida saved 12 people's lives across her decade-long career as a search



A rescue dog from the Mexican Navy, Frida, takes a break during a training session in Mexico City.

and rescue dog, the navy said. The emergency response efforts she took part in included earthquakes in Haiti and Ecuador in 2010 and 2016, respectively, and an explosion at the headquarters of Mexican state oil company Pemex in 2013.

Her job after the 7.1-magnitude earthquake that shook Mexico City was to look for survivors in the rubble of the Rebsamen elementary school, where 19 children and seven adults were killed. Frida's handlers removed her famous mask and booties at the ceremony, and she received a chew toy as a symbol of her new life in retirement. "Frida, mission accomplished, with honor," said Redondo.—AFP



In this file photo a painting believed by some experts to be Caravaggio's "Judith Beheading Holofernes" is pictured at the Marc Labarbe auction house in Toulouse.—AFP

## Lost '\$170 million Caravaggio' snapped up before French auction

A painting thought to be a "lost masterpiece" by Italian painter Caravaggio has been bought two days before it was due to go under the hammer in France. "Judith and Holofernes", which was found under an old mattress in the attic of a house in the French city of Toulouse, was snapped up by a foreign buyer, the auction house selling it said on Tuesday. Art expert Eric Turquin—who authenticated the painting—said it was worth between 100 and 150 million euros (up to \$170 million), although several Italian specialists have doubts about the canvas.

But Turquin, France's leading authority on Old Masters paintings, had staked his reputation on the work being the fiery artist's lost "Judith and Holofernes". The painting depicting a grisly biblical scene of the beautiful Jewish widow Judith beheading a sleeping Assyrian general was

## Venus de Milo to get an extra whiff of glamour

Soon we are going to find out what the "Venus de Milo" smells like. The Louvre in Paris has asked two of France's top "noses"—otherwise known as perfume creators—to come up with fragrances to go with some of its greatest treasures. Ramdane Touhami and Victoire de Taillac roped in some of the biggest stars of the olfactory universe to help them find the right notes to go with statues of the goddess of love as well as the "Winged Victory of Samothrace". The pair, founders of the Officine Universelle Buly parfumerie, were also asked to pair fragrances with Ingres' two most sensual works, the "Grande Odalisque" and "The Valpincon Bather" as well as Gainsborough's "Conversation in a Park".

But for now there will be no perfume for "Mona Lisa"—the museum's most famous work—who will guard her fragrance, like so much else, secret. Controversially, among the paintings chosen is Fragonard's "The Bolt", the famous

seduction scene that some feminists critics now say raises questions of consent. They argue that the woman in the scene appears to be resisting the young man as he bolts shut the bedroom door.

### 'No limit on budgets'

Touhami told AFP that he wanted to gather the very best noses for the job. "It is about adding an olfactory dimension to a visual experience. I chose eight parfumeurs, all stars and gave them 100-percent freedom, with no limit on their budgets," he added. Dorothee Piot, who works for Robertet house in the French perfume capital of Grasse, chose Gainsborough's 1745 masterpiece. "I wanted to create something fresh and delicate to go with their bucolic exterior scene," she said of the self-portrait of the artist with his wife Margaret in a Elysian English landscape.

"I loved the candour and the grace of the two of them, so I came up with a perfume inspired by roses that have just come out surrounded by greenery," she told AFP. Museum spokesman Adel Ziane said the idea of the perfumes was "to help wake all the senses of visitors as they view the work at the Louvre. "I think that the scents have a lot to say on the collections, particular the ancient works," he said. The eight different fragrances will be uncorked and will also go on sale at the pop-up shop from July 3 until January next year.—AFP



In this file photo tourists look at the "Venus de Milo" sculpture as they visit the Louvre museum in Paris.—AFP

by the volatile and violent genius, who created it while he was on the run from a death sentence for murder. "Not only is it a Caravaggio, but of all the Caravaggios that are known today, this is one of the great pictures," he insisted. "The painting is in an extraordinarily good state, much better than the Caravaggios I have seen in Naples," he added. But although experts are united in hailing the quality of the work, a minority of specialists—particularly in Italy—have their doubts. They believe it is a copy made by the Flemish artist Louis Finson, who worked alongside Caravaggio as he painted. But Turquin is adamant it is the original from 1606 whose existence was first noted in letters between Italian dukes and art dealers four centuries ago.—AFP

### Price kept secret

Labarbe said he could not reveal the name of the buyer or the price paid because of a confidentiality agreement. But he confirmed that the painting—dated to 1606—will leave France after an export bar, which classed the canvas as a "national treasure", was not renewed in November. Turquin had earlier told AFP that he was sure the painting



## The Damned announce London show

The Damned plan to break the record for the greatest gathering of Vampires the world has ever seen at their upcoming London concert. The 'Eloise' hitmakers will play the city's Palladium on October 28 this year and have called for concertgoers attending the 'Night Of A Thousand Vampires' show to do so in fancy dress as they need more than 1,040 to beat the current record. And in keeping with the theme, frontman Dave Vanian will be arriving for the show in style. His bandmate, Captain Sensible, said: "I believe Dave, who drives a hearse, is going to drive down the street that evening. He took me for a lift one evening, we were driving round Harrow, and at the end I said, 'Oh that's really good, the first time I've driven in a hearse', and Dave said, 'It won't be the last.' " The group have teamed up with Hammer House Of Horror for the special show, which will be an immersive theatrical experience, and studio boss Simon Oakes has promised a special prize for the

best-dressed fan. Asked at a London Q&A event - which Dave missed because he was running late - by Jonathan Ross if they will offer a prize for the best costume, Captain Sensible said: "An evening out with Captain Sensible - and [they] are paying." Jonathan quipped: "You would say Dave but he won't turn up!" But Simon then offered: "A walk-on part in a Hammer film." The event also saw the announcement of a new compilation album, 'Black Is The Night', which will be released on October 25, and Captain Sensible promised it will be the "definitive collection". He said: "The band have put together what we believe to be the definitive compilation. "The die-hards have got most of these tracks but there's obscurities we're throwing in... "Every home should have one." Tickets for 'A Night Of A Thousand Vampires' goes on sale on Friday.

## Stormzy got Ed Sheeran and Adele's advice for Glastonbury



Stormzy sought the advice of his showbiz pals Ed Sheeran, Adele and Chris Martin for headlining Glastonbury. The 'Vossi Bop' hitmaker has admitted he is feeling both "scared" and confident about making his Pyramid Stage debut at the world famous music festival on Friday and after a pep talk from two of the world's biggest pop stars, who closed the main stage in 2017 and 2016 respectively, and the Coldplay frontman - whose band made history as the only act to headline the Worthy Farm extravaganza four times - gave him the "tips and powers" to smash it. Speaking on KISS Breakfast with Tom & Daisy, the rapper said: "This is real name-dropping - I've spoken to Ed, Chris Martin and Adele about it. "They've given me the tips and powers. "That sounds like a cliché, 'Oh go do your thing', but that's what they've said." The 'Big For Your Boots' hitmaker is up for the "challenge" and teased that he's about to deliver "the biggest" show the UK has "ever seen". He added: "The Glasto stage is the world stage, the biggest in the world. "It's a challenge for myself but also me saying I'm Stormzy, I'll give you a headline show and I might just give you the biggest one the country's ever seen. That's fighting talk. "It's two sides of the coin because one day, I'll say I'm really scared and there's times where I'll say, 'Nah I'm the man.'" Meanwhile, Stormzy also teased that his second album - the follow-up to 2017's acclaimed 'Gang Signs and Prayer' - is on the way. He said: "It's definitely coming and I'm so excited. "Everyone says the second album is difficult because of what you've achieved with the first, but also you need to take it to the next level. "It's about balancing new with old and I know I've done the best job I need to make and coming with quality music." Listen to KISS Breakfast with Tom & Daisy every weekday from 6am, [kissfm.com](http://kissfm.com).

## Adam Lambert is Comin In Hot with sizzling new single

Adam Lambert has dropped sizzling new single 'Comin In Hot' from his two-part LP 'Velvet'. The groove-led number is the third release from the 37-year-old 'American Idol' alumni's upcoming fourth studio album, which the first part, 'Side A', is due out in September. The Miles & AJ-directed music video follows on from the 'New Eyes' promo, and sees trans-activist Miss Shalae aka 'The Goddess' "casts love spells" on the guests at a steamy nightclub she performs at. Adam released the album track 'Feel Something' in February, but embarked on a new chapter with lead single 'New Eyes' from his long-awaited follow-up to 2015's 'The Original High', a rock-influenced number, which has a "romantic, earthy vibe", and sees the pop star - who has been dating Spanish hunk Javi Costa Polo for a few months - sing about having "chemistry like candy" and being "naked and free". He belts out: "This chemistry like candy to me/I'm addicted to the sweet, sleepy haze/ So whisper at me, get me wavy/ Naked and free, never no room for shame." Speaking about the track, the 'For Your Entertainment' singer said previously: "I wanted my first single to reflect my current state of mind and to bring listeners into a romantic, earthy vibe. 'New Eyes' is a love letter to innocence and to finding new passions." As well as his new solo music, Adam will embark on an extensive North American stadium tour with Queen in 2020, and he's also voicing Emperor Maximus in animated-live action hybrid movie 'Playmobil: The Movie' which is released on August 7. Adam recently shared how he has "learned a lot" from fronting Queen. The 'Whataya Want From Me' singer has spent eight years leading the legendary rock band - in place of legendary late singer Freddie Mercury - and he revealed his time with the group has helped inspire 'Velvet'. He said: "It does give me a perspective of what a good song is and why it works. I've learned a lot from singing those Queen songs for audiences. "You go, 'OK, this is a good chorus, this is a good hook, this is a good message'. I suppose that's one of the things that inspired a lot of my new songs."



## Crow's 'at peace' with Threads being her final album

Sheryl Crow is "at peace" with 'Threads' "more than likely" being her last album. The country music superstar has "loved" making all 10 of her studio albums but she feels its pointless to put all the effort into a whole body of work when music fans "cherry-pick songs" on streaming platforms. The 'All I Wanna Do' hit-

maker said it felt "right" to go out on a high with a career-spanning record with A-list collaborations. Speaking to NME.com, she admitted: "I think more than likely it will be my last album. "I'm really at peace about that. I have loved my career, I don't feel like my career is over, but I feel like things have just changed so drastically. "I've loved making records, I've loved producing, but I feel like for the love and the time and the emotion that goes into creating an artistic statement, a full body of work, that now with technology people kind of just cherry-pick songs, and it seems sort of futile to me. "And this just felt like the right project to go out on: a project that is a timeline from my earliest years all the way up until now and even into the future." The upcoming duets LP, released on August 30, features Fleetwood Mac legend Stevie Nicks and Maren Morris on 'Prove You Wrong', Bonnie Raitt and Mavis Staples on 'Live Wire', plus songs with Eric Clapton, Sting and Willie Nelson. Sheryl first admitted 'Threads' may be her final album at the CMT Music Awards in Nashville, earlier this month, where she explained: "It's very collaborative. I actually called in a lot of my friends who inspired me forever. "It may be my final album, so I am going out big. "I grew up in the age where people made albums. "But now, I think people do playlists and they will only hear one of two songs off a full-length album that you tried to make a full artistic statement. I kind of like the idea now of just putting out songs." However, the 57-year-old superstar reassured her fans that she will still release singles. She added: "[This will] not [be] my last music, but probably my last album project as a whole."



## ALEX JAMES: BLUR AND OASIS OWE A LOT TO THE BEATLES

Alex James says Blur and Oasis "wouldn't have existed" without The Beatles. The former Britpop rivals were both massively influenced by the iconic Liverpool band and following the release of Danny Boyle's movie 'Yesterday' - which follows struggling musician Jack Malik (played by Himesh Patel) who one day wakes up to discover he's the only person who knows The Beatles and can remember their songs - the 50-year-old bassist has admitted the world would suck if the 'Let It Be' group's music wasn't around now. In a feature for The Sun newspaper, Alex wrote: "It's hard to imagine a world without The Beatles. No 'Yesterday'. No 'Hard Day's Night', no 'Eleanor Rigby', no 'All You Need Is Love'. Anyone who has grown up in the Western world will have been touched, in some way, by a Beatles song." Alex documented his own personal history with the Liverpool legends and how the death of frontman John Lennon - who was assassinated in New York City in 1980 at the age of 40 - had a huge impact on him when he was a child. He said: "My love of music went supernova because of them. I was off school with chicken pox when John Lennon was shot in 1980. "I spent the week watching a VHS recording of The Beatles film 'Help!',

which was broadcast on TV the day he died. I still watch it once a year. "Then I bought a Beatles songbook and a guitar, figured out the chord shapes and started strumming and singing along. I never looked back." Oasis frontman Liam Gallagher, 46, named his eldest son Lennon - his child with ex-wife Patsy Kensit - after the iconic musician and continues to pay homage to his idol, with his second solo LP 'Why Me? Why Not' named after two separate self-portraits drawn by the late singer. Alex also believes the likes of the Rolling Stones, who formed two years after the 'Come Together' hitmakers - who were completed by late guitarist George Harrison and surviving members Sir Paul McCartney and Sir Ringo Starr - and even 70s punk rockers Sex Pistols, who are the antithesis of The Beatles, who promoted "peace and love", wouldn't have emerged without their influence. He added: "Blur certainly wouldn't have existed without The Beatles and it's fair to say Oasis owe them a thing or two as well. "But you couldn't have had the Rolling Stones without The Beatles either, or just about any band from Genesis to the Sex Pistols."

## Take That's greatest hits tour didn't have space for Williams

Gary Barlow says it would have taken too many "rehearsals" to slot in Robbie Williams on Take That's greatest hits tour. The trio - completed by Mark Owen and Howard Donald - have been performing across the UK and Europe in support of their 30th anniversary LP 'Odyssey', and the frontman has admitted they wanted to make it all about the three of them, so part-time member Robbie, who was reported to be in talks to rejoin the group for the special milestone run, was left out this time. Speaking to the Daily Star newspaper's Wired column, Gary spilled: "The tour is very much about the three of us, the three of us celebrating the music and the show we made. "Because it's all come from this album, you know we are basically playing the album from beginning to end as an album and we have never done that before. "And to slot someone else into it would have taken weeks of rehearsals." However, Howard insisted they will never "shove aside" Robbie and Jason Orange's contributions to the Manchester boyband. He added: "They have been part of our history and you can't just shove that aside." The reason rehearsals would have been required is because some of their greatest hits were reworked for 'Odyssey' by their long-time producer Stuart Price. There had been talk of both of them rejoining the group for the special milestone. However, Robbie - who quit Take That in 1995, a year before they originally split, and rejoined from 2009 to 2012 - admitted that although he would have loved to mark three decades of the band, he'd only be willing to do it if Jason came back after leaving in 2014. He said: "I'm up for it. But I don't know what their calendar says, what my calendar says. I don't know what their manager says. "We'd all love to do it. I'd love to get Jason back involved, realistically I don't think so. "If we could get Jay back it would be perfect."



## Ross praises producer Ronson as 'really incredible'

Diana Ross has hailed "doll" Mark Ronson a "really incredible" and "humble" producer. The 75-year-old Motown star has opened up about what fans can expect from her first album of new material in 14 years, which is due out in 2020, and heaped praise on the 'Uptown Funk' hitmaker ahead of entering the studio to work with him on her follow-up to 2006's 'I Love You'. The 'I'm Coming Out' hitmaker also said her new material will show the "positive" place she is at in her life "at this time". Speaking at a Q&A at Toronto's Sony Centre for the Performing Arts as part of her TD Toronto Jazz Festival concert, Diana said: "I'm getting ready to go in the studio and do another album and I want to do songs from where I am at - is that the right English? - at this point in time in my life because I feel so incredibly grateful and appreciative of you. "I don't want to sing the blues. I want to sing songs that really speak to you and where I'm at at this time in my life, and optimism, and positive." The 'Upside Down' singer also recalled asking Mark, 43, about winning an Oscar for co-writing 'Shallow' for 'A Star is Born' and how modest he was. Diana continued: "So I met with this really incredible producer. His name is Mark Ronson. "And he is such a doll. He's so humble. I said, 'How do you feel after winning an Academy Award?' "And he went, 'Next.' He's ready to go to work. He's lovely, lovely." Little else is known about the new record, which came to light last week when Diana told fans at her recent Los Angeles concert that it's in the works. It was previously revealed that she penned a track called 'A Whole Lotta Lovin'' with her son Evan Ross, 30, and his wife Ashlee Simpson Ross, 34, though it's not known if that will feature on his mom's 25th studio album. He teased: "She [Diana] wrote a song with us, it's an amazing song called 'A Whole Lotta Lovin'." The last release from Diana came in the form of 2015's 'Diana Ross Sings Songs From 'The Wiz'', a collection of tracks that were stored in Motown's vaults for years. — Bang Showbiz



## Lifestyle | Music &amp; Movies



Sudanese music producer and guitarist Amjad Badr plays the guitar as singer MaMan performs at Sudanese English-language Capital Radio in Khartoum. — AFP photos



Ahmad Hikmat, content and program manager at Sudanese English-language Capital Radio, is pictured in Khartoum.



A Sudanese visual artist works at Sudanese English-language Capital Radio.

## Sudan's underground musicians turn defiant after uprising

During the day, Gadoora checks his patients at a clinic near Khartoum, but at night he locks himself in his room rapping songs which echo the sentiments of Sudan's "revolution". "The revolution broke the long-standing wall of fear," said Gadoora. "Songs have become much more daring now," added the doctor, who chose to use his stage name. A surge of freedom has taken over Sudan's underground music scene since the army ousted longtime ruler Omar al-Bashir in April after months of nationwide protests against his rule. From rap to afrobeat, musicians living in Sudan and overseas have composed tunes punctuated by some of the protest movement's most popular slogans.

During Bashir's ironfisted rule of three decades, Sudanese rappers had been unable to express themselves openly. Gadoora, who has been composing music since 2006, had often resorted to metaphors to make political insinuations. "It's hard to dissociate politics from your daily life," he told AFP at a busy Khartoum cafe. "No matter how much you try to escape it, it always finds you."

Gadoora is particularly influenced by the June 3 crackdown on a protest camp outside Khartoum's army headquarters that left dozens dead and hundreds wounded. Days after the carnage he composed "Blood"—a song that is now online and brings out his feelings of the violent dispersal of the protest. "The people took to the streets

chanting a peaceful slogan looking for freedom but they were greeted by barbaric militias," Gadoora sings the lyrics in a sober voice. "Their foreheads are smeared with blood for eternity".

## 'Creative hub'

Protesters accuse the feared paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, which are part of Sudan's armed forces, for the June 3 bloodshed. Medics linked to the protesters say at least 128 people have been killed in the crackdown on demonstrators, the majority of them on June 3. Officials have given a lower death toll of 61 nationwide for that day. Sudan's ruling generals insist they did not order the crackdown on the sit-in, where thousands had initially rallied against Bashir before pressing on with calls for civilian rule after the military took over.

Musicians still remember the festive, carnival like atmosphere at the protest camp before the bloodshed. "The sit-in was a creative hub," said Ahmad Hikmat, content and program manager at English-language Capital Radio. "Music and revolution are just one thing," said Hikmat, dressed in a traditional Sudanese robe and cap.

Sudanese musicians started producing revolutionary songs around six months ago, he said, following the start of anti-Bashir protests in December. At a villa housing the popular radio station, a vast collection of vinyl records of



A collection of vinyl records is pictured at the Sudanese English-language Capital Radio in Khartoum.

singers like Bob Marley and Michael Jackson are neatly lined on shelves. The voice of Sudan's uprising was primarily spread on the internet, which has been largely cut since the crackdown. "We were fighting the previous regime through the internet," said Hikmat, acknowledging that the blackout is a major setback for protesters.

## 'Peace and justice'

For singer MaMan, the sit-in was a replica of a utopian society where "democracy" flourished. "What happened in the sit-in is exactly what we want for our life in the future," said the musician, who did not want to give his real name. "It was like a small Khartoum ... We did music in the middle of the sit-in and then people just gathered around." With that he sings his song, "Angora", in a deep voice marked by guttural intonations of the Sudanese Arabic dialect. "I stand shouting for an hour, looking for peace and justice. Give my bloodied t-shirt to my mama, tell my daughter about her papa," sings MaMan, who sports short dreadlocks.

MaMan, 28, is still shocked by the death of his friend Mohamed Mattar in the June 3 raid. "Most of the time all I am thinking about is him," he said. Mattar's death had triggered a social media campaign under the hashtag #BlueForSudan, prompting many users to change their profile photos to plain blue. "It was hard to look at pictures of the martyrs and then you see your friend," MaMan said, describing his shock when he found out that Mattar was killed. "I kept checking over and over, and it turned out to be him." — AFP



Cardi B departs from court after being arraigned on misdemeanor assault charges at the Queens Criminal Court in New York City. — AFP

## Rapper Cardi B denies strip club brawl charges

Rap superstar Cardi B on Tuesday pleaded not guilty to attempted assault charges including two felonies filed in connection with her alleged involvement in a New York strip club brawl. "Not guilty sir; honor," the 26-year-old artist said before a packed courtroom in Queens, looking swank in a fitted, low-cut navy blue and baby pink double-breasted pant suit and razor-sharp straight blue-hued bob. The brash rapper appeared calm throughout the proceedings, her hands clasped behind her back, showing her talon-esque hot pink nail extensions to the room.

The arraignment came days after a grand jury indicted Cardi B in connection to the incident, with court documents showing 14 counts including two felonies against the rap superstar. On August 29, 2018, Cardi B was in the Angels Strip Club in Queens when her group reportedly lobbed bottles, chairs and a hookah pipe, which police said bruised a female employee's legs. Cardi B allegedly ordered an attack on two sisters working at the club because one of them slept with her husband, the rapper Offset.

Initially facing only misdemeanor charges, the Bronx rapper in April rejected a plea deal from the Queens district attorney's office. That offer would have given the Grammy winner a conditional discharge if she pleaded guilty to one misdemeanor. The revamped charges include two felony counts of attempted assault with intent to cause serious physical injury, according to the case docket. The order of protection preventing Cardi B from returning to the scene of the incident or communicating with the alleged victims was extended for one year, a condition of her parole. Upon leaving the courtroom the rap star smiled and waved, blowing a kiss to a throng of journalists and onlookers.

## 'Ain't going to jail'

But over the weekend she took on bolder airs, suddenly dropping an expletive and exclaiming: "I ain't going to jail, I got a daughter!" while performing in Los Angeles, a frank reaction not out of character for the off-the-cuff star. "We don't believe that the indictment changes anything," her lawyer Jeff Kern told journalists outside the courthouse. "We understood that it was a possibility." The rapper has also invited Drew Findling—the so-called #BillionDollarLawyer who has made a name for himself representing hip-hop stars in Atlanta, Georgia, the de-facto capital of rap—to join her legal team.

"I know Cardi; I know Cardi on a personal level," he said. "I know Cardi as a wife, as a mother, as a daughter, as a sister. I know Cardi to be a decent and kind human being." "We have no doubt that when all is said and done, there will be a positive outcome in favor of Cardi."

There are two co-defendants in the case alongside the rapper, both of whom also pleaded not guilty. Born Belcalis Almanzar to a Dominican father and Trinidadian mother, Cardi B's meteoric rise began during her days as a stripper, when she carved out a social media personality on platforms including Instagram. After becoming the first female solo artist to win the Grammy award for Rap Album of the Year, over the weekend Cardi B topped this year's Black Entertainment Television Awards, taking home prizes for Album of the Year and Best Female Hip-Hop Artist. Just after the arraignment the intensely scrutinized rap star announced on Twitter the Wednesday release of her music video for her latest hit "Press," in which she voices exasperation with the media. — AFP

## Cosby appeals sexual assault conviction

Comedian Bill Cosby, who is serving a three and a half year jail sentence, on Tuesday appealed a Pennsylvania court's verdict that found him guilty of drugging and sexually assaulting a woman 15 years ago. "This filing is an important step in ensuring that Mr Cosby receives a hearing from a fair and impartial court," the actor's spokesman, Andrew Wyatt, said. "The Constitution guarantees that right to Mr Cosby—and to all Americans—and he looks forward to securing justice in the court of appeal," he said in a statement.

The 81-year-old, who shattered racial barriers with his pioneering role as a dad and doctor on the hit television series "The Cosby Show," (1984-1992), was found guilty in April 2018 of drugging and sexually assaulting Andrea Constand, now 46, at his Philadelphia mansion. It was the first trial and first guilty verdict for sexual assault since the advent of the #MeToo movement. An earlier trial in June 2017 ended in a mistrial after the jury was unable to reach a unanimous verdict. In September 2018, a Pennsylvania judge sentenced the actor to three and a half years in prison on three counts of aggravated indecent assault. He was immediately incarcerated.

Although more than 60 women charged that they had been victims of sexual assault by Cosby, the famous comedian was tried criminally only for Constand's assault, since the statute of limitations had expired in the other cases. Cosby insists he was unjustly convicted. "America will be great when it fulfills the last four words of the revered Pledge of Allegiance ... 'and justice for all,'" Cosby's wife Camille said in the statement. A dozen women who say they were victims of Cosby have filed civil suits against the actor seeking compensation for damages. — AFP



Bill Cosby

## Chinese war film cancels premiere in apparent censorship

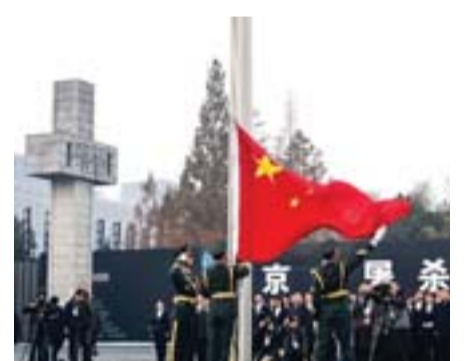
The premiere of Chinese war epic "The Eight Hundred" has been cancelled, an apparent result of censorship after an association of retired party cadres deemed it "inappropriate" ahead of Communist China's 70th anniversary. Hailed as the Chinese "Dunkirk", the film details a story of a Chinese army unit fighting against Japanese invaders in the 1937 Battle of Shanghai during the Second Sino-Japanese War. After consultation between the production team and other parties, the July 5 premiere was cancelled and will not be released this summer, according to a statement posted on Tuesday on the film's Weibo account, a Twitter like platform.

"The new release date will be announced at a later time," the statement said, without explaining the reasons behind the decision. The movie had already been abruptly yanked from the Shanghai International Film Festival earlier this month due to "technical issues"—a term often used as a euphemism for censorship. The abrupt cancellation of the premiere fuelled speculation about the motives on social media. "The film industry cannot go on like this," Chinese film director Jia Zhangke wrote on Weibo.

Five days before the film was removed from the festival, the Chinese Red Culture Research Association held an academic seminar on filmmaking in which the storyline of "The Eight Hundred" was criticized because it glorifies the heroic role of Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang). The Kuomintang eventually lost the civil war that led to the Communist Party's triumph and creation of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949. The film is very "inappropriate" to be regarded as a tribute to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the PRC, according to a report on the website of the association cited by Chinese media.

The Chinese Red Culture Research Association, which is managed by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, bills itself as a volunteer organization that promotes the Communist Party's history. Most of its members are retired party cadres and

writers. "It makes use of fragments of history to cover up the essence of history. It seriously violates the historical facts of the Kuomintang's resistance," the report added. "That should not be encouraged." The original report has been taken down from the association's website for unknown reasons. "The Eight Hundred" is produced by the Huayi Brothers and directed by Guan Hu, who spent 10 years filming it.



The film details a story of a Chinese army unit fighting against Japanese invaders during the Second Sino-Japanese War. — AFP

The first Chinese film shot entirely on digital IMAX cameras reportedly spent more than \$80 million in production costs. Censorship has increased in China since President Xi Jinping took office in 2012. The most powerful Chinese leader since Mao Zedong has sought to whip up patriotic sentiment in the country. Other films have recently faced setbacks. Zhang Yimou's film "One Second"—set during China's politically sensitive Cultural Revolution—was pulled from the Berlin Film Festival in February.

The Chinese youth drama "Better Days", which contains a scene of violent bullying, said on Monday it would cancel its release in China just three days before the film was to hit theatres. It had already been removed at the last minute from the Berlin Film Festival in February as well. — AFP

## Marvel re-releases 'Avengers' as box office record looms

Marvel announced plans Tuesday to re-release "Avengers: Endgame" with bonus material in theaters, as the summer's biggest blockbuster drew agonizingly close to breaking the global box office record. "Endgame" has pulled in \$2.749 billion around the world, according to industry watcher Exhibitor Relations—the second-highest haul of all time, trailing James Cameron's "Avatar" by around \$40 million. But from Friday, Marvel hopes to entice die-hard fans back into theaters for one last viewing of "Endgame" with an "unfinished deleted scene" and a new video introduction by director Anthony Russo.

Fans attending what Marvel is calling the "Bring Back event" at specific US cinemas will

also receive limited-edition Avengers artwork—a statement on the company's website announcing the move featured a poster with Tony Stark's catchphrase "We Love You 3000." "If they can get this re-release going and get enough interest and have it out there long enough, who knows—maybe it can get there," said Comscore's Paul Dergarabedian, referring to the "Avatar" record.

But the publicity from the re-release would also help to promote next month's release of "Spider-Man: Far From Home," he added. The latest Spider-Man film is a collaboration between rival studios Sony and Disney-owned Marvel, and picks up the story after the events of "Endgame." A "special sneak peek" of the film will also be included in the "Endgame" re-

release. "This just keeps that Marvel magic going in so many ways," said Dergarabedian.

Despite the buzz among Marvel fans about the re-release of its biggest hit, "Endgame" has in fact never been out of theaters—it was still playing in 985 locations across North America at the weekend, earning another \$2 million. It already holds the record for the highest opening weekend, both in North America and globally. But the chances of "Endgame" breaking the North American all-time box office record appear slimmer—it still trails "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" by more than \$100 million domestically. — AFP

## Lifestyle | Features



Mirazur Argentine chef-owner Mauro Colagreco (center) celebrates with his team after he was crowned the world's best restaurant during the World's 50 Best Restaurants Awards Ceremony, in Singapore. — AFP photos



Mirazur Argentine chef-owner Mauro Colagreco delivers a speech, flanked by his team, after he was crowned the world's best restaurant during the World's 50 Best Restaurants Awards Ceremony, in Singapore, on June 25, 2019.

## French restaurant run by Argentine chef crowned world's best

France's Mirazur restaurant—whose Argentine chef Mauro Colagreco draws inspiration from the sea, the mountains, and his own garden—was crowned Tuesday the world's best by an influential trade list, beating contenders from Denmark and Spain. The accolade came just months after Colagreco was handed a third Michelin star, and was the first time a French establishment has triumphed in the World's 50 Best Restaurant list. "I'm in the sky and I'm waiting to come back here," Colagreco said as he collected his award for his restaurant in the French Riviera town of Menton. "I don't have words to explain," he said.

In second spot in the awards—which took place in Singapore, their first time in Asia—was Noma in Copenhagen, and third was Asador Etxebarri in Spain. Gaggan in Bangkok was fourth, the highest ranked Asian restaurant. Fifth was Geranium in Copenhagen, and sixth was Central in Lima, tagged as Best in South America. The top restaurant award has gone to Spain seven times, the most of any country. Last year Italy's Osteria Francescana took the number one spot. Mirazur took the third spot in the awards last year.

### 'Feet on the ground'

After his victory was announced, Colagreco took to the stage joined by his Brazilian wife carrying a banner representing four flags—those of Argentina, Brazil, France and Italy. "Thank you my team. You deserve it, all these years.



In this file photo Argentinian chef Mauro Colagreco poses in front of "Mirazur" restaurant on the French Riviera city of Menton.

"Thank you friends for supporting us during these last 13 years," he said. Colagreco is the only foreign chef working in France to have been awarded three Michelin stars. He opened the restaurant in 2006 and was awarded his first star the following year, before getting his second in 2012. The Argentine-born chef moved to France in 2001 and worked with Bernard Loiseau, Alain Passard and Alain Ducasse before spending a year at Le Grand Vefour.

He said that he ended up in Menton by chance. "The

owner of the place was the perfect stereotype of an Englishman on the Cote d'Azur, a white linen outfit and a Panama hat," he told AFP in a recent interview. "He saw that I had no money but he wanted to know what an Argentine was doing in Menton... He rented me his restaurant for a ridiculous sum." This "gave me a lot of freedom" to experiment, he said. The early days were tough but since being awarded the second star the restaurant has seen its popularity grow. Mirazur, located in southeast France near the Italian border, offers dishes made with ingredients from Colagreco's own backyard farm, including fresh vegetables and seafood. Despite his growing fame, Colagreco said that he wants to "keep his feet firmly on the ground."

### First time in Asia

For their first foray into Asia, award organizers picked Singapore, which is well-known for its buzzing culinary scene. But Europe continued to dominate with 25 restaurants named in the best 50, including seven in the top 10. Asia won seven, the United States six, and Latin America six. The awards are organized by British magazine Restaurant, owned by William Reed Media. They were launched in 2002 and are now as coveted as Michelin stars, although the methodology used to select the best restaurants has faced criticism, especially from several French chefs who say it remains unclear.

There are no criteria for putting a restaurant on the list,



In this file photo Italian-Argentinian chef Mauro Colagreco poses for a photo session in the "Mirazur" restaurant on the French Riviera city of Menton.

which is based on an anonymous poll of more than 1,000 chefs, restaurant owners, food critics and other industry insiders from around the world. Each member gets 10 votes and at least four of those votes have to go to restaurants outside their region. The event has been held before in Spain, London, New York and Melbourne. —AFP

## Jerusalem's Tomb of the Kings to reopen to public

The Tomb of the Kings, a 2,000-year-old archaeological gem in the heart of Jerusalem owned by France, is to reopen to the public for the first time since 2010, the French consulate said yesterday. The elaborate Roman-era tomb with stone shelves that once held sarcophagi, considered among the largest in the region, will be opened tomorrow, and the following Tuesday and Thursday mornings, the consulate's website said.

Visits will be limited to 15 people in 45-minute stretches, the ticket order page said, noting the need for "proper dress" at the Tomb of the Kings, which is a funeral site. The graves themselves will remain closed to the public for conservation and safety reasons. The vast site, located in east Jerusalem some 700 meters (yards) north of the Old City, is hidden behind a wall with a metal gate marked by a French flag. It has been closed since 2010 due to renovations costing around a million euros (\$1.1 million). A spokeswoman for the French Consulate General said that in opening the site, France was implementing a decision and a commitment "made a long time ago".

Jews consider the tomb a holy burial site of ancient ancestors and demand the right to pray there. Israel occupied mainly Palestinian east Jerusalem in the 1967 Six-Day War and later annexed it in a move never recognized by the international community. It sees the entire city as its capital,

while the Palestinians view the eastern sector as the capital of their future state. Excavations of the site began in the 1860s, with Felicien de Saulcy of France taking on the project in 1863 and seeking to confirm it was the tomb of biblical figures King David and Solomon, giving rise to the site's name.

That theory has been ruled out, but the name has endured. Several sarcophagi were found inside and are now in the Louvre museum in Paris, including one with an Aramaic inscription. According to the most commonly accepted theory, it refers to Queen Helena of Adiabene, in today's Iraqi Kurdistan, and she may have built the tomb for her dynasty. After de Saulcy's excavation, the tomb was purchased by the Pereire brothers, a Jewish banking family in Paris that would later hand the property over to France. Israel and France had negotiated the site's status and reopening, but a French consulate spokeswoman declined to give details.

"We are reopening in accordance with the rules we set for ourselves," she told AFP. Israel's foreign minister welcomed France's decision to open the tomb. "(I) invite the public to visit the site, which has great significance to the Jewish people, and is further testimony to the deep and multigenerational connection of the Jewish people to its eternal capital Jerusalem," Israel Katz said in a statement. — AFP



## Bum move: Kardashian 'kimono' shapewear sparks Japan debate

American television star Kim Kardashian has sparked debate in Japan by naming her new line of shapewear "Kimono," prompting some to accuse her of disrespecting the traditional outfit. The pop culture icon unveiled the new "Kimono" line on Twitter, revealing she had been working for a year on the underwear to offer "solutions for women that actually work." But the announcement garnered mixed reaction both at home and in Japan, with some offering their criticism on Twitter using the hashtag #KimOhNo. "She's been to Japan many times. I'm shocked. She has no respect," tweeted one user in Japanese. "I like Kim Kardashian, but please pick a name other than kimono if it's underwear," wrote another.

"The Japanese government should file a protest against Kardashian," wrote a third. Kimono literally means "something to wear," while Kardashian's use of it appeared to be a play on her first name. The new line's website offered no explanation, and Kardashian has yet to respond to her online detractors. And not everyone was opposed to the name, with some users arguing it could offer a chance to promote a traditional outfit that is declining in popularity even in Japan. Once a standard of the Japanese wardrobe, the kimono is now often reserved for special occasions, such as weddings and coming-of-age ceremonies, and is mostly worn by women. — AFP

## Onstage, the queen of the Court reigns supreme, even in tragedy

Slowly, a slight figure steps onstage. The audience goes wild, but Ruth Bader Ginsburg, matriarch of the United States Supreme Court, calls for quiet. This is no time for celebration—she is here to judge Electra, the ancient Greek tragic heroine. "I am so excited," says one audience member as she sees the progressive pop culture icon, affectionately nicknamed "the notorious RBG," enter the scene. "Go RBG!" yells someone else in support of the 86-year-old judge, who underwent lung surgery in December.

With a slow gesture, Ginsburg silences the crowd. Her voice, reedy but clear, can be heard throughout the room at Washington's Sidney Harman Hall: "The Supreme Court of Athens will hear the case of Orestes v. Electra." Ginsburg, who has become something of a celebrity after being the subject of a hugely successful documentary and a Hollywood movie starring Felicity Jones, enjoys theatrics herself as a member of the Shakespeare Theatre Company's Bard Association. The group offers leading legal figures the chance to tread the boards twice a year as part of its "Mock Trial" series, in which they judge characters from classical tragedies.

In Monday's trial, Aeschylus's tragic heroine Electra has been ordered to pay damages to her brother Orestes for allegedly convincing him to murder their mother Clytemnestra, causing the young king to lose both his reputation and his mind. Electra insists her brother acted

under orders from the Oracle of Delphi and that she is innocent. She appealed her case to the Supreme Court of Athens, asking them to overturn her sentence. "King Orestes is not happy," says Electra's lawyer—real-life Washington legal eagle Beth Brinkmann.

"He wants to make Athens great again," which has not worked, and so he turned against his sister and attempted to "lock her up," argues Brinkmann. It is the first in a series of references to President Donald Trump and his infamous campaign slogan, "Make America Great Again."

### 'Dysfunctional'

Orestes's lawyer, Elizabeth Wydra, has a similarly dry line of argument. "My client is the victim of a witch hunt," she says, in another Trump reference—this time evoking his favored phrase to denigrate the investigation into Russian involvement in the 2016 presidential election. The zingers hit their targets, and the audience laughs uproariously. Washington is an overwhelmingly Democratic city, and Trump criticisms are common, both open and anonymous. But Ginsburg, a figurehead of the left due to her defense of women's rights and environmental causes, can't afford to be so liberal with her critiques. She already came under fire in 2016 for calling Trump a "faker." This time, she sticks to fact-based questions. —AFP

## Global cosmetics industry expected to project 648.31 million dollars with growing consumer demand in the Middle East

The cosmetics and beauty products market has witnessed growing consumer demand for skin-care, make-up, hair care, bath and body products. Recent markets reports have projected an increase of approximately 648.31 million dollars in growth by 2026. The rise in market value incorporates rising consumer demand within the Middle East, one of the key market segments highlighted in the report. Within the Gulf region, it is no surprise that the Kuwaiti market is amongst the top within this industry, with retailers offering beauty line products from all around the globe to cater to the high demand of luxury skin-care and beauty products. Over the last couple of years, the local retail market has progressively developed, offering products from renowned international brands, while introducing new local players to the market.

In more recent news, Kuwait's Boutiqaat, an online beauty platform offering over 700 international, local and exclusive brands, signed an exclusive agreement with NARS Cosmetics, a French cosmetics and skin care company founded by make-up artist Fran ois Nars in 1994, to

distribute their products through Boutiqaat's innovative platform. This agreement is one of many that Boutiqaat has concluded this year to exclusively offer beauty products from an internationally recognized cosmetics and skin care company. Since it was established, NARS cosmetics leveraged Fran ois Nars' vision to transform the company into one of the key players driving innovation in the cosmetics



industry around the world. By partnering with Boutiqaat, NARS Cosmetics products will now be offered to customers on Boutiqaat's unrivaled platform.

Within the local market, Boutiqaat has built a strong reputation of being the one-stop-shop for cosmetics, beauty and skin-care products. Co-founder Abdulwahab Al-Essa welcomed NARS Cosmetics to the Boutiqaat family in an exclusive interview, highlighting some of the key advantages of adding yet another international player to the platform's strong portfolio. The e-commerce platform currently offers over 700 international and local brands, make-up tutorials, exclusive celebrity boutiques, fashion tech accessories and more. The Kuwaiti based platform incorporates a social element, connecting customers to their favorite influencers and celebrities from across the region.

When asked about the agreement, Al-Essa said, "Our vision of becoming a regional one-stop-shop will only become a reality if we consistently focus on offering our valued customers a variety of different products that cater

to their needs. We believe that day by day, we are getting closer to achieving our vision. These exclusive agreements help strengthen our brand while giving us a competitive advantage in the market through an innovative platform that is frequently updated and enhanced to provide our customers with a unique memorable experience."

Boutiqaat has gained regional exposure at a rapid pace, when asked about the platform's future outlook, Al-Essa said, "One of our key objectives is to continue providing our customers with an unrivaled experience, in order for us to achieve that objective, we consistently introduce new product lines that we believe will add great value to both our clients and brand. We manage customer expectations through our team of industry experts and analysts who keep track of the latest fashion trends. We utilize our team's passion, expertise and knowledge within the industry to make sure that we provide our customers with the products they are looking with ease of access. We plan on building and maintain this momentum as we move forward and expand our geographical reach."







## Sports

# Yankees set homer record in win over Jays as Nationals cruise past Marlins

## La Stella's inside-the-park HR guides Angels past Reds

**NEW YORK:** DJ LeMahieu and Aaron Judge hit back-to-back homers in the first inning as the New York Yankees set the major league record by homering for the 28th straight game and held on for a 4-3 victory over the Toronto Blue Jays on Tuesday night at Yankee Stadium. The Yankees broke the mark for the longest team homer streak previously held by the Texas Rangers, who achieved it from Aug. 11-Sept. 9, 2002, when Alex Rodriguez hit 16 of their 55 home runs. LeMahieu broke the record on the sixth pitch from Clayton Richard (0-4) when he drove a 2-2 slider into the second deck in left field. Judge followed LeMahieu's 11th homer by hitting a 1-1 slider into the right-center-field seats. It was Judge's first homer since April 20 — the same day he strained his left oblique. He did not return until last Friday. Gleyber Torres and Edwin Encarnacion also went deep for the Yankees, who won for the 10th time in 11 games.

### Padres 8, Orioles 3

Manny Machado celebrated his return to Baltimore with a home run, and San Diego belted four overall, pummeling the slumping Orioles. Machado played with Baltimore from the middle of 2012 until last July, when the Orioles traded him to the Los Angeles Dodgers as his contract was running out. The third baseman/shortstop then signed a long-term deal with San Diego in the offseason, and he returned with the Padres for a brief two-game series at his old home. Baltimore, which introduced No. 1 overall draft pick Adley Rutschman to the local media in the afternoon, put up a video montage saluting Machado before his first at-bat. The fans also gave him an ovation, and Machado waved from home plate.

### Twins 9, Rays 4

Eddie Rosario collected four hits and two RBIs, and Kyle Gibson tossed seven mostly effective innings as Minnesota beat visiting Tampa Bay in the opener of a three-game series at Minneapolis. The Twins have won three of four. The Rays fell to 2-6 on a 10-game road trip that is scheduled to conclude Thursday afternoon. Rosario doubled leading off the second against Rays starter Blake Snell (4-7) and scored the Twins' first run on a two-out single by Willians Astudillo. An inning later, Rosario extended Minnesota's lead to 3-0 with a two-out RBI single. He capped a three-run fourth with another RBI single before singling in the sixth.

### Red Sox 6, White Sox 3

Xander Bogaerts crushed a tiebreaking two-run home run in the fifth inning, and Rafael Devers had three doubles among his four hits as Boston beat visiting Chicago. David Price struck out nine over six innings for the Red Sox, who will seek a series sweep Wednesday afternoon. Price (5-2) allowed three runs (two earned) on eight hits and walked none. Jon Jay had three hits in his second game of the season for the White Sox, who lost their fourth straight. Chicago shortstop Tim Anderson exited in the fifth inning with a sprained right ankle sustained on a running throw to first. X-rays were negative, and he will be re-evaluated Wednesday, the team announced.

### Dodgers 3, Diamondbacks 2

Enrique Hernandez and Justin Turner homered, and Los Angeles' bullpen pitched six scoreless innings in a victory over Arizona in Phoenix. Arizona's Nick Ahmed singled with two outs in the ninth and stole second, but Kenley Jansen retired Carson Kelly on a pitch in the dirt, when Kelly's check swing tapped the ball forward

and catcher Will Smith pounced on the ball and threw to first to end the game. Jansen earned his 23rd save in 26 chances. Diamondbacks starter Robbie Ray (5-5) allowed a home run to Hernandez to begin the game but didn't give up another hit until Turner tied the game at 2 with a one-out blast in the sixth. Alex Verdugo followed by slapping an opposite-field double down the left field line, and Chris Taylor drove in the go-ahead run by lining a double that went off the glove of backtracking right fielder Adam Jones.

### Braves 3, Cubs 2

Ozzie Albies hit a go-ahead, two-run home run in the seventh inning, Max Fried struck out eight over six innings, and Atlanta held on to beat host Chicago. Ronald Acuna Jr also homered for Atlanta, which won despite tallying only three hits. The Braves pulled even in the four-game series with one win apiece. Willson Contreras hit a two-run double for Chicago, which lost for the third time in five games. Fried (9-3) earned his second straight victory by limiting the Cubs to two runs on two hits and five walks. Cubs reliever Mike Montgomery (1-2) drew the loss after giving up two runs on two hits in 2 1/3 innings.

### Athletics 7, Cardinals 3

Chad Pinder and Marcus Semien hit back-to-back homers as part of a six-run fifth inning, and visiting Oakland beat St. Louis. Matt Olson had a homer and a single for the A's, who opened a six-game road trip. Oakland starter Chris Bassitt allowed three runs in 3 1/3 innings before being lifted. Reliever J.B. Wendelen (1-1) pitched two-thirds of an inning for the win. Five Oakland relievers combined to throw 5 2/3 scoreless innings with seven strikeouts. Matt Carpenter had a two-run triple for St. Louis, and Marcell Ozuna had two hits and walked twice. Cardinals starter Jack Flaherty (4-5) was charged with seven runs on nine hits—three of them homers—over 4 2/3 innings.

### Astros 5, Pirates 1

Gerrit Cole proved resourceful and elusive on the mound, Alex Bregman and Yuli Gurriel slugged home runs in support, and Houston claimed the opener of its three-game interleague series against visiting Pittsburgh. Cole (7-5) posted a season-low three strikeouts across six strenuous innings. He produced just one clean frame, the top of the fourth, and that required a splendid catch at the wall from right fielder Josh Reddick, a grab that cost Pirates center fielder Starling Marte his 12th home run. Despite allowing seven hits and issuing two walks, Cole departed with a 2-1 lead in his first appearance against the organization that selected him first overall in the 2011 draft.

### Phillies 7, Mets 5

Maikel Franco, Brad Miller, Scott Kingery and Rhys Hoskins homered to lift host Philadelphia past New York despite Phillies starter Jake Arrieta (7-6) struggling through six innings. Arrieta allowed nine hits and five runs. Hector Neris earned his 16th save in 17 chances after recording four outs to lock down Philadelphia's second win in a row. Amed Rosario and Dominic Smith each hit a home run while Jeff McNeil had four hits for the Mets. Mets starter Walker Lockett tossed 5 1/3 innings and allowed five hits and four runs as New York dropped its third straight.

### Rangers 5, Tigers 3

Jesse Chavez didn't give up an earned run in his first extended start of the season, Ronald Guzman homered



**NEW YORK:** Freddy Galvis #16 of the Toronto Blue Jays scores a run during the sixth inning on a sacrifice fly ahead of the tag from Gary Sanchez #24 of the New York Yankees at Yankee Stadium in New York City. — AFP

and drove in two runs, and visiting Texas downed Detroit. Chavez (3-2) lasted 6 1/3 innings and gave up one unearned run on five hits while walking none and striking out seven. He notched his first win as a starter since June 6, 2017, also against Detroit. He had been used as an opener and long reliever this season. Texas slugger Joey Gallo was activated off the 10-day injured list after recovering from a left oblique strain, and he batted fifth in the lineup. Gallo went 1-for-4 with a walk and drove in a run. Logan Forsythe scored and knocked in a run.

### Mariners 8, Brewers 3

Marco Gonzales won his fourth consecutive start, and Daniel Vogelbach hit a two-run homer as Seattle beat host Milwaukee in the opener of a three-game series. Gonzales (9-6) allowed three runs (two earned) on eight hits in five innings, with no walks and four strikeouts. Mariners relievers Cory Gearrin, Austin Adams, Anthony Bass and Matt Festa combined for four scoreless, hitless innings. Brewers right-hander Zach Davies (7-2) went four innings, allowing six runs (four earned) on six hits with two walks and four strikeouts. He is 0-2 in his past three starts.

### Angels 5, Reds 1

Tommy La Stella hit an inside-the-park home run, and Luis Rengifo had a three-run shot to help lift Los Angeles past Cincinnati in the opener of a two-game series in Anaheim, Calif. Andrew Heaney (1-1) went 5 1/3 innings, allowing one run and five hits. The left-hander struck out four and walked four in his sixth start of the season. Noe Ramirez, Ty Buttrey and Hansel Robles combined to blank Cincinnati over the final 3 2/3 innings. Reds starter Tyler Mahle, who went to high school about 12 miles from Angel Stadium in Westminster, Calif., allowed four runs and six hits in five innings. Mahle (2-8) struck out four and walked two.

### Nationals 6, Marlins 1

Max Scherzer pitched eight solid innings, and Trea Turner homered to lead visiting Washington over Miami. The Nationals' ace allowed one run on five hits

and no walks while recording his seventh double-figure strikeout performance of the season, finishing with 10. Scherzer (7-5) now has 2,605 career strikeouts, two behind Tom Glavine for 26th all-time. He won his fifth straight start. Scherzer also went 2-for-3 and scored twice for the Nationals, who have won six of eight. Anthony Rendon had two hits, and Turner's three-run home run in the fourth gave Scherzer the additional run support he has lacked in many of his starts. Washington's offense scored three runs or fewer in 10 of Scherzer's first 16 outings.

### Giants 4, Rockies 2

Madison Bumgarner spoiled the major league return of Chi Chi Gonzalez with six strong innings and an RBI single, delivering host San Francisco a victory over Colorado. Bumgarner (4-7) struck out 11, and he was charged with two runs on three hits with three walks. Brandon Belt, Donovan Solano and Tyler Austin also drove in runs for the Giants, who evened the three-game series after having been shut out 2-0 on Monday. Gonzalez (0-1) was pitching in the majors for the first time since July of 2016. He underwent Tommy John surgery in 2017 and pitched only briefly in the minors late last season before signing with the Rockies in December. Gonzalez allowed three runs on six hits in five innings.

### Royals 8, Indians 6

Hunter Dozier belted a grand slam to highlight a five-run uprising in the ninth inning as visiting Kansas City beat Cleveland by getting to closer Brad Hand (4-3) for five runs. Hand, who converted all 22 of his previous save opportunities this season, surrendered five hits on 13 pitches without retiring a batter to turn Cleveland's three-run lead into a two-run deficit. Nicky Lopez's infield single plated Martin Maldonado to trim Kansas City's deficit to 6-4 before the Royals loaded the bases for Dozier, who deposited a first-pitch slider over the wall in left-center field. The late uprising allowed Kevin McCarthy (2-1) to pick up the win after retiring all three batters he faced in the eighth inning. — Reuters

## Kuwait ready for Asian Boxing Championship

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Chairman of Kuwait Boxing Association (KBA) Mohammad Mansi Al-Enezi said Kuwait is ready for the Asian Boxing Championship which will start August 1st and will continue until the ninth. Al-Enezi, who spoke to the media committee of the tournament said



work on the final preparations is ongoing, and lauded the role of the public authority for sport in removing all obstacles be it financial or administrative. Al-Enezi said 22 countries confirmed their participation and expected the number to reach 24, as registration for the tournament will be closed at the start of next month. KBA chairman appreciated the Asian Federation in Kuwait's ability to organize the championship, and the federation is following the preparation through its executive office.

He said President of the International Boxing Federation will attend the tournament, besides the Asian Federation officials. Al-Enezi hoped the tournament comes out as planned as it is among the five top tournaments, and it is the first for Kuwait after lifting the suspension on its sport.

Meanwhile Kuwait National Boxing team is getting ready and is currently in training camp locally, then it will leave in July to Azerbaijan for more training.

## IOC approves exclusion of boxing body from Tokyo 2020 Games Olympics

**LAUSANNE:** The International Olympic Committee yesterday officially took over the boxing qualification and competition for next year's Tokyo 2020 Olympics and suspended international boxing federation AIBA following a vote at its session.

The IOC voted unanimously to implement a recommendation of its executive board to oust troubled AIBA from the Tokyo 2020 Games over issues surrounding its finances and governance and suspend the body until the issues are resolved.

AIBA has been in turmoil over its finances and governance for years with the federation \$16 million in debt and an ongoing bitter battle over the presidency that has split the body internally. Serbian IOC member Nenad Lalovic, who heads an IOC task force to look

## IOC overhauls bidding process for Games to stop dropouts

**LAUSANNE:** The International Olympic Committee outlined plans to overhaul the bidding process for future Games, stating that cities interested in hosting the Games should hold referendums before submitting official tenders to avoid having to withdraw their candidacy at a later date.

The IOC has seen many cities in recent years drop out of bidding for the Olympics in mid-race, scared off by the size or cost of the Games or due to strong opposition from

into the ties with AIBA, earlier on Wednesday delivered a damning report to the IOC session, saying the association could reach a debt of as much as \$29 million.

He also said AIBA had failed to reform at the top of the organisation. AIBA president Gafur Rahimov suspended himself from the post in March because of his presence on an US Treasury Department sanctions list "for providing material support" to a criminal organisation. The Uzbek strongly denies the allegations.

Rahimov's presence on that sanctions list was extremely damaging to the IOC though he has been replaced on an interim basis by Mohamed Moustahsane. "It exposes the IOC and its commercial partners to unacceptable reputational, legal and financial risks," Lalovic said. He said AIBA's debt meant money would not go to sports and the athletes in the future and the organisation still faced problems with refereeing.

### START FROM SCRATCH

Among those voting in favour of the exclusion was former AIBA President CK Wu, who was Rahimov's predecessor before stepping down in 2017 after a bitter dispute with his own executive committee. "I think that today... all members of the AIBA Executive Committee will understand that we need to unite and

local populations. For the 2026 Winter Olympics, which this week was awarded to Milan and Cortina D'Ampezzo, four cities pulled out.

Only the winners and Stockholm were left in the race for potential host cities after Switzerland's Sion, Japan's Sapporo, Austria's Graz and 1988 hosts Calgary in Canada pulled out. It was a similar situation for the 2022 and 2024 Games. Local referendums have also killed off many bids or planned candidacies, including in Switzerland, Germany, Austria and Canada among others.

"We need to continue to evolve," IOC member John Coates, head of the working group, told the session. These reforms include the creation of future host commissions that will look at possible hosts well before any official candidacy is launched.

Cities will also need to get any referendums on the Games out of the way prior to the submission of an official bid so that there are no dropouts during the process. The seven-year period between awarding the Games and host-

ing the Olympics was also scrapped with the IOC eager to be flexible to fit the timeline to the capabilities of each city.

"Everyone guilty of what brought AIBA to this, must confess, apologise to the boxing community and leave. Our task, as members of the AIBA executive committee, is to unite, to accept early reforms and to start everything from scratch together to bring boxing back to a high level." AIBA largely depends on Olympic Games revenues to survive between Games and has started letting people go as a result of its Olympic exclusion. The sport's governing body will discuss the IOC decision at its executive committee meeting today.

Japanese IOC member Morinari Watanabe, president of the international gymnastics federation, heads the task force to organise qualifiers and the Tokyo Games competition. The IOC will almost treble the number of women boxers in Tokyo to 100, up from 36 at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games. Men's numbers will be reduced from 250 to 186 with the total of 286 boxers remaining identical from Rio.

There will be four regional qualifiers—Africa, Europe, Asia/Oceania and Americas—between January and April 2020 while hosts Japan can directly qualify four men and two women. A final Olympic qualifying event will probably be held in May next year to allow athletes a second chance to qualify, the IOC has said. — Reuters

There must be responsible and flexible timing as to when elections take place," Coates said. "So they (cities) can align a potential Olympic candidacy with the growth and development in a particular region."

The Games have stopped being an attractive prospect for many cities with ballooning multi-billion dollar budgets putting a strain on countries' economies as was the case with the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics with the country in recession.

The IOC has already taken steps to reduce the cost of both bidding and staging the Games while also increasing its contribution to host cities once they are awarded the Games. That has not stopped the drain of cities and led to an unprecedented double awarding for the 2024 summer Olympics (Paris) and the 2028 Games (Los Angeles) in 2017 after Budapest, Boston and Hamburg scrapped their 2024 Games bids. — Reuters

## Sports

# Chris Gayle says he is among West Indies greats

## Always cherish two decades playing for the West Indies: Gayle

**MANCHESTER:** Chris Gayle says he deserves to be considered alongside the greats of West Indies cricket but is refusing to set a definite date for his retirement. The swashbuckling opener is still hoping the West Indies can sneak into the World Cup semi-finals, with India next in line at Old Trafford today, but the odds are stacked heavily against them.

Jason Holder's team began the tournament with a comprehensive seven-wicket win against Pakistan but soon lost momentum and that remains their only victory in six matches. Self-styled "Universe Boss" Gayle, who hit 87 in his team's heartbreaking five-run loss to New Zealand on Saturday, said he would always cherish his two decades playing for the West Indies.

"I'm definitely up there with the greats, without a doubt. Like I say, I enjoy each and every moment playing for West Indies," Gayle said yesterday. "It's still not the end. I still have a few games to go. Maybe another series to go. Who knows? We'll see what happens."

"I started my career with the likes of Courtney Walsh, Curtly Ambrose," he added. "You watch them on TV and you realise they're in the dressing room, it's just a bunch of guys." The 39-year-old had previously hinted he could retire from one-day international cricket after the World Cup but then prevaricated following a run-filled series against England.

West Indies host India for two Tests, three ODIs and three Twenty20 internationals in August and September and Gayle believes that might be the time to bow out. "Maybe a Test match against India and definitely play the ODIs against India. I won't play the T20s. That's my plan after the World Cup," said a smiling Gayle, who last played Test cricket in 2014.

Gayle, who has amassed more than 10,000 runs in ODIs, admitted winning the World Cup would have been the ideal end to his career. Barring a freak set of results, the two-time champions, who have three games left, will be heading home before the semi-finals.

"What I really wanted was actually to be in that final four and then to be able to get my hands on the World Cup. We'll see what happens," Holder said Gayle had been a positive influence on the younger players.

"I think he's done a hell of a job, more so off the field and also on the field. And he's been obviously one who holds a presence in the dressing room," said the skipper. "And the guys really look up to him and they shared a lot of knowledge over the past couple of weeks. He's been firm when he had to be firm and he's been honest." —AFP



**MANCHESTER:** West Indies' Chris Gayle (R) and West Indies' Oshane Thomas (L) at Old Trafford in Manchester, north-west England, yesterday, ahead of their group stage match of the 2019 Cricket World Cup against India. — AFP

## England criticised for not making most of conditions against Australia

**LONDON:** England's 64-run loss to Australia in the World Cup on Tuesday left their semi-final qualification hopes in the balance and British media outlets settled on a similar theme, focusing on the hosts' lack of application as compared to their rivals.

Australia (12 points) sealed the first semi-final spot with their sixth win while England-fourth with eight points and two games left—must now keep one eye on other results with Bangladesh and Sri Lanka breathing down their necks.

England great Geoffrey Boycott called their batsmen "one-dimensional" and "flat-track bullies" and that was evident from some of their dismissals by bowlers Jason Behrendorff (5-44) and Mitchell Starc (4-43), who thrived in seam-friendly conditions.

"England have simply been unable to deal with surfaces that have not allowed them to play their go-to explosive and aggressive game," former cricketer Steve James wrote in *The Times*. "(Eoin) Morgan said afterwards that it would have been a 'horrific' decision to bat first... in these conditions, but from now on should he consider batting first? That is three losses chasing now."

Although England won the toss and elected to bowl at an overcast Lord's, Morgan was let down by his bowlers as Australia's patient 123-run opening stand gave them a platform to set a competitive total.

By contrast, England were stumbling at 26-3 with James Vince, Joe Root and Morgan back in the pavilion by the end of the sixth over.

"England were guilty of bowling too short in seam-friendly conditions as Aaron Finch (100) and David Warner (53) made headway in an opening stand... their third ton-plus partnership of the tournament," David Ruse wrote on Sky Sports.

"Australia were 44 for no loss after their first 10 overs as they dealt with the short stuff, England were reduced to 39-3 after their initial 10 as they floundered against the pitched-up deliveries."

Former English captain Michael Vaughan was particularly critical of Vince, who he gave 1/10 in his player ratings in *The Telegraph*, after Jason Roy's replacement failed for the third time and fell for a duck in the second ball of the innings.

"England have a decision to make. No point continuing to play him (Vince) after three failures," Vaughan wrote. "How is he going to suddenly turn it on against India in a game when if they lose they could be out (of) the World Cup when he has no form behind him?"

"They will have to wheel out Jason Roy or, if not, promote Moeen Ali or Chris Woakes to open. Neither options are ideal but they can't do any worse."

England's final two matches are against the two remaining unbeaten sides in the tournament—India and New Zealand. They are two teams England have not beaten in seven attempts at the World Cup since 1992, prompting another former captain Mike Atherton to borrow a phrase made famous by former Manchester United boss Alex Ferguson. "It is squeaky bum time now." — Reuters

## Australia's Starc reveals fan banter inspired his England demolition

**LONDON:** Australia pace bowler Mitchell Starc revealed a breakfast confrontation with a bantering fan inspired his ferocious spell in Tuesday's World Cup win against England. Starc's wife Alyssa Healy, who plays for the Australia Women's team, brought the incident to light on Twitter, claiming an England supporter had fired up her husband with his taunts at the team hotel earlier in the day.

Starc confirmed he had been targeted but insisted the jibes weren't especially hurtful. "I was still half-asleep. It was some bloke in a suit, having a go at my strapping tape and having a go at my bowling. I was just hungry," he said after taking four wickets in Australia's 64-run win over their old rivals at Lord's.

"He was just having a laugh at my strapping tape and what I was eating. I had a few poached eggs, three I think. "It's all been good fun throughout the tour around the crowds and at the hotel. It's just part and parcel of a World Cup."

Starc believes the holders' comprehensive win was the perfect preparation for the World Cup knockout stages after Aaron Finch's side sealed a place in the semi-finals. Australia dominated from start to finish against one of their main rivals for the title and Starc expects the impressive performance to stand them in

## How can England rescue faltering World Cup bid?

**LONDON:** England are in grave danger of leaving their own party early after slumping to a third defeat at the World Cup, raising serious questions over their ability to cope with the pressure. The hosts have become the undisputed top dogs in one-day cricket since an embarrassingly limp display at the 2015 World Cup in Australia and New Zealand. But beating teams in bilateral series is one thing—doing it on the biggest stage of all at a World Cup in your own country is a different level of challenge entirely. AFP Sport looks at what England need to do to get their campaign back on track.

### FIRST OF ALL, PRAY

Specifically for a miracle recovery for injury-hit Jason Roy. When he limped off the field with a torn hamstring against the West Indies, alarm bells did not ring too loudly. The in-form opener is a major weapon at the top of the order but England were flying high and that day cruised to an easy win in the Southampton sunshine. But for all of England's much-vaunted batting strength, the powerful Roy has been badly missed. His replacement, James Vince, has done nothing to silence his detractors in his three innings and former England Test captain Michael Vaughan believes he should be dropped for the India game on Sunday. It's in the lap of the gods and England need to seek divine intervention in the hope that Roy will be ready in time. Their ultimate decision could depend on how the World Cup table looks on the morning of the match.

### BAT FIRST

Should England have batted first against Australia at Lord's despite the heavy skies and a bit of dampness in the air? England's attack made it tricky for Aaron Finch and David Warner in the early overs but the opening batsmen survived and established a good platform for Australia. Morgan's side have looked comfortable chasing big totals in the past but they have now lost three of the four matches at the World Cup in which they have batted second. Only Bangladesh have successfully chased more than 250 to win a match, despite the expectations that bat would dominate ball at the tournament. If England bat first they would be able to build an innings at their own pace without "score-board pressure", relying on their formidable bowlers to complete the job.

### BE FLEXIBLE

England have been criticised for their one-dimensional

good stead in the latter stages of the tournament.

"It's an interesting one. It's a World Cup. I guess playing at Lord's today, where the final is going to be, is great for us," he said. "Obviously we are into the semi-finals now so we have to make sure we play some good cricket, finish as high as we can in the group and hopefully get into that final."

Australia have two games left in the 10-team pool stage before the semi-finals begin and next up for the leaders is a clash with fellow title contenders New Zealand on Saturday. Starc urged his team not to rest on their laurels and use the New Zealand clash to make another statement of intent.

"Now we've got to play New Zealand, which is going to be tough for us," he said. "They have gone under the radar. No-one has really spoken about them too much but they keep winning games."

"They are playing some fantastic cricket. Kane Williamson is obviously their lynch-pin and they have good bowlers who swing it. It's another big game." After a third defeat in the event, hosts England are now in danger of failing to qualify for the semi-finals despite starting the World Cup as favourites due to their status as the world's top-ranked ODI side.

Starc doesn't believe the comfortable nature of Australia's success doesn't mean England should be written off just yet. "England are a heck of a side and I think they are still definitely favourites, but they've got some work to do," he said.

Starc had plenty to do with England's downfall as he ripped the heart out of their batting line-up, with an assist from Jason Behrendorff, who grabbed his first five-wicket ODI haul. The decisive blow came when Starc produced a stunning yorker to bowl Ben Stokes, effectively removing England's last line of resistance.

"He's a fantastic player one of their key batters,



**Mitchell Starc**

watching that game against Sri Lanka he nearly got them home with that 80-odd he scored," Starc said. "We knew while he was batting we couldn't rest up and cruise. We had to keep taking wickets. Fortunately I got one through the gate. "I've said it for a while, execution is a big part of this bowling group and me personally as well." —AFP



**LONDON:** England's Ben Stokes reacts after his dismissal during the 2019 Cricket World Cup group stage match between England and Australia at Lord's Cricket Ground in London. — AFP

approach even though it has brought them so much success in recent years. The team made a conscious decision to keep attacking at all costs and it has paid off spectacularly. But when it goes wrong it can go badly wrong. England had the chance to construct a measured reply against Sri Lanka last week but slumped to 212 all out. They found themselves in deep trouble against Australia but rather than taking time to regroup, Morgan and Jonny Bairstow holed out. If England are going to reach the semi-finals, they might need to learn to play with a bit more patience.

### REWRITE HISTORY

England's last two matches are against India and New Zealand, neither of whom they have beaten at a World Cup since 1992. They will probably need to win one, and maybe even both, of those games to go through. If they are not up to the task, Morgan's side, currently clinging on to fourth spot, are at risk of being caught by Pakistan, Sri Lanka or Bangladesh.

### RELAX

For all their struggles, England can look back to the 1992 and 1999 World Cups for inspiration. In both of those tournaments, eventual winners Pakistan (1992) and Australia (1999) made sluggish starts before finding their form later in the tournament. If England can rediscover their verve they have the talent in both batting and bowling to become champions on home soil. But the pressure is mounting. — AFP

## Brumbies' Powell keen to show up mentor Cubelli in Super semi

**BUENOS AIRES:** ACT Brumbies scrumhalf Joe Powell has more than just a place in the Super Rugby final to motivate him when the Australians meet the Jaguares in the semi-final tomorrow.

He also has a mentor to upstage. The Brumbies have made the long trip from Canberra to Buenos Aires for the semi-final at Jose Amalfitani stadium, with the winner due to face the Canterbury Crusaders or Wellington Hurricanes next week.

The 25-year-old Powell made his Super Rugby debut in 2015 after being signed as a short-term replacement for the injured Nic White but then joined the squad full-time the next season.

Powell, however, spent much of 2016 warming the bench behind Tomas Cubelli, the Argentina scrumhalf who he is likely to face tomorrow. With five years of test experience behind him with the Pumas, Cubelli was more than willing to pass on tips to Powell during his two-year tenure in Canberra. "He was the starting halfback in my first year of professional rugby, and he really helped me out and definitely it'll be enjoyable to play against him this weekend," Powell said in comments published by Rugby Australia's website (rugby.com.au).

"His ability to back himself and his running game, that's something he really taught me. "Just to have a go, back yourself and see what you can do." Powell, capped four times for the Wallabies, stepped into the starting role in 2017 when Cubelli spent four months on the sidelines with a knee injury then returned to his native Argentina the following season.

Cubelli did not play in the match last season in Canberra, while Powell was a second-half substitute when the sides clashed earlier this term, the Jaguares clinching a 20-15 victory. That week 11 loss for the Brumbies saw them slump to 12th on the table and in danger of missing out on the playoffs for the second successive year.

The Brumbies are undefeated since and their 38-13 victory over the Sharks 38-13 in Canberra last week was their seventh win in succession. Powell said Dan McKellar's side had shown in the second half of the season how tough they were to beat when the players were all on the same page. "We had few tough times early in the year and learned a lot about how we play the game and react under pressure," he said.—Reuters

## Sports

# Netherlands, Italy through to quarter finals as Europe dominates World Cup

## 'Japan will now look ahead to the Olympics in Tokyo next year'

RENNES: A last-minute Lieke Martens penalty took the Netherlands through to the women's World Cup quarter-finals on Tuesday as they joined Italy in the last eight, confirming Europe's supremacy at the tournament and ending Asian interest already.

The Dutch scraped past Japan 2-1 to set up a quarter-final on Saturday in Valenciennes against the Italians, who had beaten China 2-0 earlier in the day thanks to goals from Valentina Giacinti and Aurora Galli. Those results mean seven of the eight quarter-finalists in France are European, with holders and favourites the United States the sole exception. There had never previously been more than five European sides in the last eight of a women's World Cup.

Such an early exit is particularly painful for Japan, who won the World Cup in 2011 and were beaten finalists four years ago in Canada. The Nadeshiko had their hearts broken in Rennes as Barcelona star Martens converted a 90th-minute spot-kick awarded after a Vivianne Miedema shot had struck the arm of captain Saki Kumagai in the box. The European champions, who lost by the same scoreline to Japan at the same last-16 stage in 2015, are through to the quarter-finals for the first time. "It is history that we have made. We are really proud about that but we are not done yet here. We are really looking forward to the next game and we hope we can surprise more," said Martens.

### TEARFUL KUMAGAI

She had given the Netherlands a 17th-minute lead with a superb backheel flick into the net from a Sherida Spitse corner, but Japan equalised just prior to half-time when Mana Iwabuchi supplied Yui Hasegawa to fire high into the net.

Japan had hit the post before that through Yuika

Sugasawa, and Hina Sugita smashed a shot off the underside of the crossbar during a second half in which Japan were superior. Extra time was looming when the Honduran referee penalised Kumagai, who could do nothing to get out of the way of a shot that was nevertheless heading towards the target.

"It was a penalty, it struck my hand. Of course it is very hard to accept. I am sad but I know that that's football," admitted a tearful Kumagai.

Coach Asako Takakura added: "VAR is there. Sometimes cruel decisions have been taken in other matches. Today it went against us. We have to look forward and accept it." Japan will now look ahead to the Olympics in Tokyo next year after joining Thailand, South Korea, Australia and China in being eliminated. It is the first time that no Asian representatives have made it to the last eight at the women's World Cup, with 1999 runners-up China going out after a 2-0 defeat at the hands of Italy in Montpellier. A 15th-minute tap in from Giacinti and substitute Galli's fierce drive three minutes after the break saw Milena Bertolini's side see off a committed Chinese team and match Italy's best run in the competition back in 1991.

### 'WORK TO DO'

"Today wasn't a display of beautiful football but the girls gave everything and we were clinical," Bertolini told TV station Rai. "To reach the quarter-finals is hugely satisfying." Italy, ranked 15th in the world, have been a revelation at this World Cup, but China have been hugely disappointing and go home with just a solitary goal scored, in their 1-0 win over South Africa.

"That is football. The team that makes the first mistake pays for it," said China coach Jia Xiuquan. "This is a major tournament which allows us to see our weak-



MONTEPELLIER: Italy's forward Valentina Giacinti (L) vies with China's defender Shanshan Liu during the France 2019 Women's World Cup round of sixteen football match between Italy and China, at La Mosson stadium in Montpellier, south western France. — AFP

nesses. We still have work to do to improve Chinese football. We have lots of room for progression."

Wednesday is a rest day before the first quarter-final today pitches England against Norway in Le

Havre. With much of France in the grip of a heatwave, temperatures in Paris are expected to reach 35 degrees centigrade on Friday when the hosts take on the USA at the Parc des Princes. —AFP

## Oscar seals Asian q-final for SIPG

SEOUL: Former Chelsea star Oscar held his nerve to seal a penalty shootout as Shanghai SIPG came from behind to beat Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors and reach the Asian Champions League quarter-finals yesterday.

Oscar buried the winning spot-kick as the Chinese champions prevailed 5-3 on penalties in a wet Jeonju after the second leg finished at 1-1 after extra time and 2-2 on aggregate. SIPG, into the last eight for the third time, qualified alongside Japan's Urawa Reds who dismantled Ulsan Hyundai 3-0 away to overturn a 2-1 deficit from the first leg.

They join two-time winners Guangzhou Evergrande

and defending champions Kashima Antlers, who both went through on Tuesday. Jeonbuk held the advantage thanks to their away goal in last week's 1-1 first leg in Shanghai, and the hosts took a grip on the tie when Kim Shin-wook scored within the first half-hour.

The towering South Korea international stretched his long right leg to reach a volley ahead of SIPG's Wei Zhen after Son Jun-ho's dinked cross into the box. At the other end Brazil international Hulk, leading a star-studded front line for well-heeled SIPG, saw a half-volley tipped wide by Jeonbuk goalkeeper Song Beom-keun. SIPG's Brazilian attack nearly grabbed the equaliser on 72 minutes when Hulk slammed a shot against the post, Elkeson played the ball back in and Oscar skied his shot over the bar. But the South American trio finally got the equaliser, with the help of some kindly officiating, with 10 minutes to go.

Oscar's cross appeared to have gone out when Elkeson nodded it back in for Hulk to finish, but the goal was allowed to stand after the assistant referee

ruled the ball was kept in play. In the first period of extra time, Jeonbuk coach Jose Morais had his head in his hands when Kim put an easy header wide, and Hulk nearly snatched it at the end of the second added period when he stabbed a shot against the bar.

Seconds later, the match was briefly halted for a melee when Jeonbuk's Moon Seon-min was sent off for lashing out at Li Shenglong and the teams were drawn into an ugly shoving match. But SIPG quickly regained their composure for the shootout, where Hulk, Elkeson, Odil Ahmedov, Wang Shenchao and Oscar were all on target, while Yan Junling saved from Korean veteran Lee Dong-gook.

In Ulsan, the home side only needed to avoid defeat to Urawa after last week's 2-1 away win but they were up against it when Shinzo Koroki headed in Tomoya Ugajin's cross just before half-time. With 10 minutes to go, Koroki stole in at the far post for another header before Ewerton wrapped it up for the two-time Asian champions in the 87th minute. — AFP

## Romania defy holders Germany in heated Euro U21 championships

BOLOGNA: Surprise package Romania take on holders Germany in the European Under-21 Championships semi-final today in a heated atmosphere on and off the pitch in Italy. A scorching 41 degrees Celsius (105.8 Fahrenheit) is forecast in the northern Italian city of Bologna when the match kicks off in the Stadio Renato Dall'Ara at 6:00 pm (1600GMT).

Romania technical director Mihai Stoichita fears it will be "too hot" for the players and has urged European football governing body UEFA to push back the time of the match, local media reported. Four-time winners Spain and France line up in the second semi-final at 9:00 pm in Reggio Emilia — 74km north-west of Bologna—where forecasts for kick-off are around 32 degrees Celsius. The Romanians have been the revelation of the biennial tournament finishing top of their group ahead of France, who advanced as the best second-placed team at the expense of hosts Italy.

Some 10,000 Romanian fans have been following the team as they booked their first semi-final berth after a goalless draw against France on Monday, ensuring a return to the Olympic Games next year for the first time since 1964.

The match in Cesena ended with clashes as Italy missed out as a result, with the girlfriend of Romania international Cristian Manea, hospitalised and receiving stitches to her lip amid the skirmishes.

Romania's stand-out player has been Ianis Hagi, scorer of two goals in the tournament and the 20-year-old son of national idol and former Real Madrid and Barcelona star Gheorghe Hagi. Germany have on-form Freiburg forward Luca Waldschmidt, 23, scorer of five goals in three matches, and Augsburg's Marco Richter, 21, with three goals and two decisive passes. France also have a big task in hand as they take on last year's runners-up Spain, who are looking to match Italy's record of five European titles. The Spanish have reached three of the last four finals, lifting the trophy in 2011 and 2013, with France's only U21 trophy backing in 1988. — AFP



CESENA: File photo shows France's goalkeeper Paul Bernardoni (L) and France's defender Kelvin Amian (C) defend against Romania's midfielder Alexandru Cicaldau during the Group C match of the U21 European Football Championships between France and Romania. — AFP

## Nigeria receives 'part' of money owed to players for Cup of Nations

CAIRO: Nigeria's football federation (NFF) says it has received "part of the money" allocated by the government for the national side's participation at the Africa Cup of Nations in Egypt amid threats of protests by the players.

Forward Ahmed Musa failed to take part in a press conference in Alexandria on Tuesday with coach Gernot Rohr telling reporters that the players had an "important meeting." The BBC said that the team, who face Guinea in Group B later, were an hour late for training on Tuesday and have not ruled out further action.

The NFF's acting president Seyi Akinwunmi said in a statement that it had received enough money to pay the players their win bonus for beating Burundi 1-0 in their opening game on Saturday plus cash other games.

Akinwunmi expressed gratitude to the country's president Muhammadu Buhari. "We want to specially thank His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari for his keen interest in resolving this matter quickly, which has enabled us to receive part of the money in record time," he said.

"We have immediately started the process of converting the money to American Dollars at the Central Bank in order to pay the players the bonus for the win over Burundi three days ago as well as plan for subsequent games."

Akinwunmi said he had a "telephone discussion" with team captain John Obi Mikel and "can safely say that all clarifications have been made and the usual cordial relationship and understanding between the players and we the administrators is still intact."

He added: "I have challenged them to go all out and win the trophy assuring them that their monies all the way to the final is guaranteed. It is now for the players to focus on the championship and deliver glory to the nation."

Pay disputes before major competitions are not unusual for African soccer federations who often do not have sufficient resources to pay their players high sums. Cameroon's players refused to board their flight for Egypt due to a dispute over bonuses last Thursday and eventually travelled the following day despite saying they were still not satisfied. They beat Guinea Bissau 2-0 in their opening match on Tuesday. Nigeria won the trophy in 2013, then astonishingly failed to qualify for the last two tournaments in 2015 and 2017. —Reuters



SAO PAULO: Colombia's players take part in a training session within the Copa America football tournament, at Pacaembu Stadium, in Sao Paulo, Brazil. —AFP

## Colombia's Copa football emulating its sumptuous coffee

SALVADOR: Boasting the only 100 percent record and yet to concede a goal, Colombia have seduced at the Copa America so far under the wily stewardship of Portuguese Carlos Queiroz. In the country famed for the world's best coffee, belief is growing that the football team can conquer South America this year.

The "Cafeteros" (coffee-growers) made an impressive start to the Copa America, defeating Lionel Messi and Argentina 2-0 in their opening match. A hard-fought 1-0 win over Qatar sent Colombia through to the knock-out stages—the first side to do so—with a game to spare.

That win also guaranteed them top spot in Group B and even though Queiroz changed 10 players for their final pool match against Paraguay, they won that too, 1-0. "Our biggest victory against Paraguay was taking to the field knowing that we have 22 players ready to work hard," said Queiroz, coaching his fifth national side across four continents. "I don't have replacements in the team, I have a beautiful but very difficult headache!" he said about the selection dilemma he will have for the next games. In the forward positions alone he has an embarrassment of riches, with players who each offer something a little different.

Radamel Falcao is a proven goalscorer, Duvan Zapata offers a towering muscular target and comes into the tournament in red-hot form following a goal-packed season with Italy's Atalanta. Juan Cuadrado brings the finesse, Roger Martinez is busy and bullocking on the flank while the currently injured Luis Muriel has buckets of pace and flair. With James Rodriguez showing the kind of form that convinced Real Madrid to spend 70 million euros (\$79.6 million) to take him to the Santiago Bernabeu following the 2014 World Cup, Colombia have the stand out side of the group stages.

It's that strength in depth that has allowed Queiroz—only signed in February after leading Iran to the semi-finals of the AFC Asian Cup—to blend his side so quickly into a winning outfit. Including friendlies in March and May, Colombia have won six out of seven matches under Queiroz. "In a tournament with six matches in four weeks, everyone can win a couple of matches with a couple of players, but if you want to end as champions you need to know that everyone must be ready to play and everyone needs to know that you often start a tournament with certain players and finish with others," said the Portuguese, a former Real coach and assistant to Alex Ferguson at Manchester United.

Since replacing the popular Argentine Jose Pekerman, Queiroz has instilled a hard running, high press style on his athletic players, but the 66-year-old says his team is still a work in progress. "We're a long way from the football we want to see," he said.

That should send shock waves through the rest of the teams given how well Colombia have played so far. Since the days of Carlos Valderrama and Faustino Asprilla, Colombia have long given the impression of perennial underachievers. —AFP

**25** Yankees set homer record in win over Jays as Nationals cruise past Marlins

**26** Australia's Starc reveals fan banter inspired his England demolition

**27** Netherlands, Italy through to quarter finals as Europe dominates World Cup



## Pakistan beat NZ to keep WCup hopes alive

Babar became the second-fastest to reach 3,000 ODI runs



EDGBASTON: Pakistan's Haris Sohail (L) is run out by New Zealand's Martin Guptill during the 2019 Cricket World Cup group stage match between New Zealand and Pakistan at Edgbaston in Birmingham, central England, yesterday. —AFP

**BIRMINGHAM:** Pakistan kept alive their chances of reaching the World Cup semi-finals yesterday, cruising to a six-wicket win against previously unbeaten New Zealand at Edgbaston. New Zealand scored 237 for six in their 50 overs but that total proved inadequate as Babar Azam scored an impressive unbeaten 101 and Haris Sohail (68) offered valuable support.

Pakistan reached their target off the first ball of their final over, finishing on 241-4. "The wicket was difficult

but my aim was to bat for 50 overs and if I did I knew Pakistan would win the match," said man-of-the-match Babar. "We know we'd need to score runs off the pace bowlers. Once (Mitchell) Santner came on it was doing stuff off the pitch so (Mohammad) Hafeez told me to stick at it and score three or four runs an over."

Sarfaraz Ahmed's side, who beat South Africa on Sunday to revive their flagging World Cup campaign, now have seven points, level with fifth-placed

Bangladesh and just one point behind hosts England.

During the course of his innings, Babar became the second-fastest to reach 3,000 one-day international runs in front of thousands of fanatical Pakistan fans. Babar, 24, took 11 innings more than South Africa's Hashim Amla, who reached the milestone in 57 innings, but overtook West Indies great Viv Richards (69 innings). He reached his hundred off 124 balls with 11 fours. Earlier, Jimmy Neesham hit a career-best 97 not

out while Colin de Grandhomme made 64 after New Zealand won the toss and chose to bat.

Left-arm seamer Shaheen Shah Afridi (3-28) starred as Pakistan reduced New Zealand to 83-5, with in-form captain Kane Williamson dismissed by leg-spinner Shadab Khan for 41. New Zealand are second in the table on 11 points behind Australia, the only team who have qualified so far. The top four teams qualify for the semi-finals. —AFP

## Can Federer defy age to lift ninth Wimbledon title?

**PARIS:** Twenty years after his debut, Roger Federer will take aim at a ninth Wimbledon title and a place in history as the oldest man to capture a Grand Slam singles crown. Federer, who turns 38 in August, is already the oldest player to win the Wimbledon men's title in the modern era, a feat achieved in 2017 when he was 35. Australia's Ken Rosewall was only just past 37 when he won the 1972 Australian Open, an age barrier Federer hopes to smash when Wimbledon starts Monday. "I love being around here. It's a good vibe. I have great memories. My heroes all won here," said 20-time major winner Federer.

"Every time I come back here, I try to be like them." However, despite his lifetime affection for the All England Club, the tussle to add to his London silverware has become increasingly fraught.

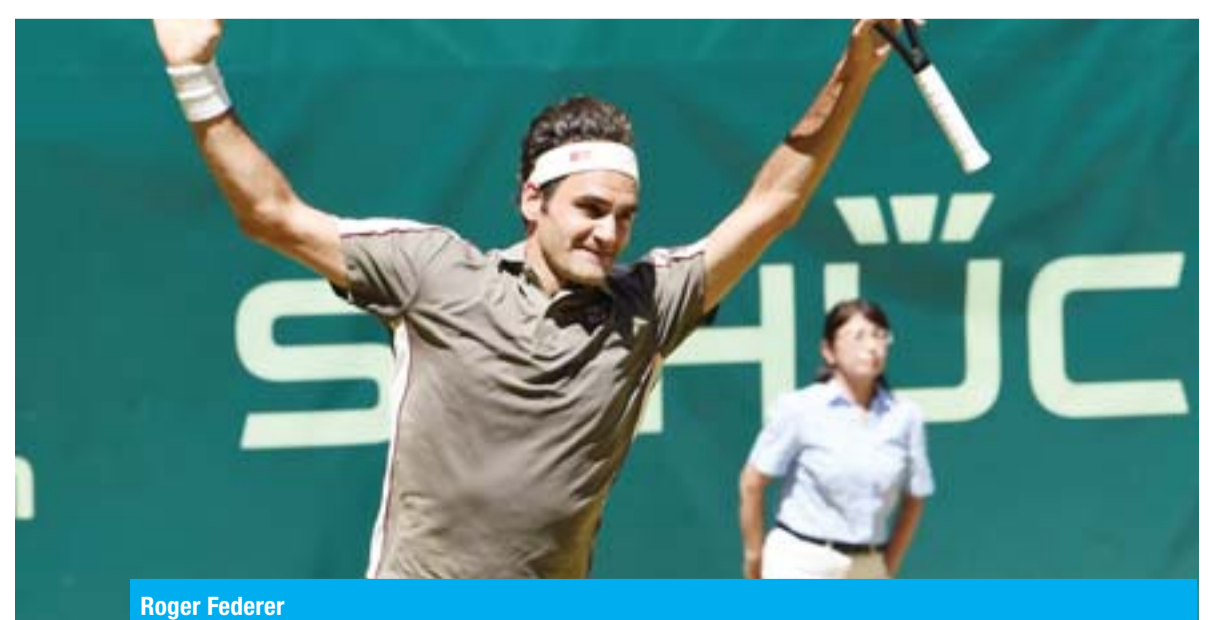
His eighth and most recent Wimbledon title came off a straight-sets demolition of an injury-hit and tearful Marin Cilic in the 2017 final. Federer was a force of nature that year, not dropping a set in the

entire fortnight as title rivals fell by the wayside.

Novak Djokovic retired with an elbow injury in the last-eight against Tomas Berdych while Rafael Nadal was stunned by Gilles Muller 15-13 in the final set of his last-16 engagement. Federer's seventh Wimbledon title had come five years earlier with a final win over Andy Murray. His first six arrived in 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2009. But 2017 aside, recent trips to London have proved disappointing for the Swiss star whose first experience of Wimbledon was an opening-round loss to Jiri Novak of the Czech Republic in 1999.

In 2013, he was shocked in the second round by Ukrainian serve-and-volleying journeyman Sergei Stakhovsky. The next two seasons saw runners-up finishes to Djokovic while the 2016 campaign ended with a five-set loss in the semi-finals, blown away by the heavy artillery of Milos Raonic.

Last year was particularly painful for Federer, beaten by Kevin Anderson in the quarter-finals in a 13-11 final set. "The losses hurt more, that you don't want to be on the loser's side. It motivates me to do extremely well here because I don't want to sit here and explain my loss. "That's the worst feeling you can have as a tennis player," he said in the aftermath of that loss to the giant South African in a tie where he held match points in the fourth set. Despite that shattering loss 12 months ago, Federer will still go into this year's Wimbledon as one of the favourites alongside four-time champion Djokovic.



Roger Federer

Having seen Nadal win a 12th Roland Garros to move within two majors of Federer's record 20 for the first time, the Swiss headed to Halle where he won a 10th title at the grass court event. "To win 10 times in one place is a very special moment in my career," said Federer who now has 102 career titles, just seven off the all-time record held by Jimmy

Connors.

It also made him the oldest tour-level champion since 43-year-old Rosewall won at Hong Kong in 1977. "Every time I've won in Halle, I went on to play really well at Wimbledon," added Federer. "It's never a guarantee of course, but I've been on the Tour for long enough to know what it means." —AFP